E-learning and Intercultural Competences Development in Different Countries

University of Silesia in Katowice,
Faculty of Ethnology and Sciences
of Education in Cieszyn

E-learning and Intercultural Competences Development in Different Countries

Monograph

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies are marked by new global trends - economic, cultural, technological, and environmental shifts that are part of a rapid and uneven wave of globalization. The growing global interdependence that characterizes our time calls for a generation of individuals who can engage in effective global problem solving and participate simultaneously in local, national, and global civic life. Put simply, preparing our students to participate fully in today's and tomorrow's world demands that we nurture their global competence. (Mansilla V. B,. & Jackson A. 2014)

It has been estimated that the e-Learning market in Europe is developing at an annual rate of 30%. This is a significantly higher growth rate than that experienced by traditional university courses; many universities are now heavily committed to developing, and are involved in delivering, e-learning programmes.

The causes of these changes have included moves in the economy, increased global competition, technological change and demographic trends all of which demand flexible and multi-skilled workers. In turn this flexibility, on the part of workers, is viewed by employers as promoting competitiveness, economic growth and guaranteeing employment. (Simmons J. 2006).

Nowadays, we can observe a rapid transition of the knowledge society to the "society of global competence", in which both the global economy and the education systems are undergoing changes. It is evident that without an active implementation of innovative forms and methods of education, and above all, distance learning at all levels of education these objectives cannot be successfully achieved. At the same time we should identify the existing problem - the fact that e-learning methodology is not yet fully developed and specified, both within the EU and in third countries. As a response to these challenges a monograph has been prepared and the IRNet project has been launched (www.irnet.us.edu.pl).

The monograph "E-learning *and Intercultural Competences Development in Different Countries*" includes the best papers, prepared and presented by authors from eight European countries and from more than twenty-five universities during the scientific conference entitled "*Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Distance Learning*", subtitled: "*E-learning and Intercultural Competences Development in Different Countries*", which was held on 13-14.10.2014 at the Faculty of Ethnology and Sciences of Education in Cieszyn, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

The speakers were from the University of Ostrava (Czech Republic), Extremadura University (Spain), Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (Slovakia), University of Twente (The Netherlands), The Lisbon Lusíada University (Portugal), Curtin University in Perth (Australia), Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University (Ukraine), Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, St. Petersburg, (Russian Federation), Dniprodzerzhinsk State Technical University (Ukraine), Jagiellonian University (Poland), Warsaw University (Poland), Silesian University in Opava (Czech Republic), University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), University

of Defence in Brno (Czech Republic), Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (Poland), Lublin University of Technology (Poland), Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (Poland), Cracow Pedagogical University (Poland), Centre for Innovation, Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw (Poland), Dragomanov National Pedagogical University (Ukraine), State Higher Vocational School in Krosno (Poland), Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (Poland), University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw (Poland), Poznań University of Medical Sciences (Poland), Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, (Poland), Centre for Higher Education Studies in Prague (Czech Republic), University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw (Poland), University College of Social Sciences, Częstochowa, (Poland), Jesuit University of Philosophy and Education "Ignatianum" in Cracow (Poland) and other educational institutions.

The authors include well-known scholars, young researchers, academic lecturers with many-years' training and experience in the field of e-learning, PhD students, distance course designers, writers of multimedia teaching materials, designers of web-sites and educational sites.

I am convinced that the monograph will be an interesting and valuable publication, describing the theoretical, methodological and practical issues in the field of the use of e-learning for societal needs, offering proposals of solutions to certain important problems and showing the road to further work in this field, allowing for exchange of experiences of scholars from various universities from many European countries and other countries of the world.

This book includes a sequence of responses to numerous questions that have not been answered yet. The papers of the authors included in the monograph are an attempt at providing such answers. The aspects and problems discussed in the materials include the following:

- contrastive analyses and evaluation of the ICT and e-learning competences in different countries;
- e-learning methodology which is not yet fully developed and specified, both within the EU and in third countries;
- information and educational environment of blended learning: aspects of teaching and quality;
- intercultural aspects of higher education in globalisation world;
- e-learning as an innovation methods and techniques in the different education system;
- the legal, ethical, human, technical and social factors of ICT and e-learning development and the state of intercultural competences in different countries;
- effectiveness and quality of e-learning in various areas of science and education;
- ICT competence in modern school and university;

- formal, non-formal and informal distance education and LLL;
- a new role and possibilities of using e-learning for lifelong learning (LLL);
- teachers' and learners' competences in distance learning and computer science;
- a relation between building an information educational environment of the university (school) and forming lecturers' (teachers') ICT competences
- an efficient use of e-learning in improving the level of students' key competences;
- pedagogical and methodical aspects of cloud computing;
- mobile technologies – effectiveness of online technologies used in real education;
- distance learning of humanities as well as science and mathematics – a differentiated approach;
- how to successfully use e-learning in the training of professionals in the knowledge society;
- psychological, cultural and social aspects of distance learning;
- e-learning and social media for the disabled; the use of Internet technology and social media for people with limited abilities and special needs – theoretical and practical aspects of their use;
- appropriate, efficient methods, forms and techniques in distance learning;
- educational strategies to enhance learners' motivation in e-learning, etc.

Publishing this monograph is a good example of expanding and strengthening international cooperation. I am very grateful for valuable remarks and suggestions which contributed to the quality of the publication. Here I especially want to thank Andrzej Szczurek for his assistance in editing this publication. Also, I would like to say 'thank you' to the authors for the preparation and permission to publish their articles. I wish all readers a pleasant reading. Thank you.

Eugenia Smyrnova-Trybulska