

advanced software. Only through a balanced combination of technological competence and humanistic depth can real progress in the humanities be achieved in the era of digital globalization.

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## MULTICULTURAL DIMENSION OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

An important aspect of the internationalization of higher education is the internationalization of the curriculum, which encompasses a variety of measures aimed at giving educational programs a greater international orientation. Universities focused on internationalization seek to integrate an international and multicultural dimension to some extent into the individual curricula of all students. As Nilsson (2000) argues, an internationalized individual curriculum provides, within the framework of global education, the acquisition of sociocultural and intercultural knowledge and skills that ensure the successful preparation of students for professional, social and emotional activities in an international and multicultural context (p. 22). Despite efforts to create international and multicultural educational programs, the reality in most internationalizing universities is that the training of specialists – such as teachers and

specialized administrators – remains on the periphery of the system, even though they are potentially a key force capable of strengthening the entire system of multicultural higher education (Mestenhauser, 2002, p. 175).

Educators also identify other current challenges in the field of internationalization of higher education in the country, despite certain achievements in this area, in particular in the aspect of educating a multicultural personality. In particular, there is an uneven participation of universities: there are still universities that have internal barriers (language - lack of an adequate level of English among many participants in the educational process), funding, etc.), which hinder internationalization in these higher education institutions. Also, there is often a lack of balance between the number of foreign students and the quality of their reception (sociocultural integration, housing, household services, support services for foreign students, etc.) (Haug & Vilalta, 2011).

Spanish educators see the solution to the above problems in turning to virtual mobility. Therefore, today, according to our observations, the method of global classrooms is often used in higher education, which allows to increase the volume of international experience of students without physical mobility. It is an integral part of the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program, which brings together students and teachers from different countries for joint learning activities, allowing participants to work on projects and discuss them with students from all over the world (Ramírez, 2022). The term “global classrooms” usually refers to structured virtual/hybrid classes, where two (or more) groups of students from different countries are combined into one online learning group: students work in mixed teams on projects, attend joint workshops, exchange materials and reflect on their intercultural experiences. Virtual exchange is an educational approach that uses technology to bring together people from geographically and/or culturally distant locations in long-term online interaction, often aimed at developing their intercultural awareness and understanding. Although this practice has been around for several decades, it has gained

popularity in recent years, partly due to the recent Covid-19 pandemic and the turn to online tools for international and intercultural learning (Helm, 2024).

A typical “global classroom” is usually built around a partnership between two teachers who agree on learning outcomes, assessment criteria and student interaction formats. Based on these agreements, a common content module or project is created: a central topic is determined (this could be a cross-cultural case, comparative study or group project), the roles of participants and deadlines. To implement the “global classroom”, an appropriate technological infrastructure is selected – the use of a learning platform (e.g. Moodle or Aula Global) with synchronous tools such as Zoom or Collaborate (for live meetings, discussions, presentations), as well as asynchronous work tools – forums, Padlet, Google Workspace (for self-paced work, group documents, exchange of ideas). Such a multi-level platform allows for both regular interaction and flexible processing of materials (Ramírez, 2022). The first stage of cooperation is preparatory classes: introductory activities, discussion of rules of interaction, agreement on expectations, time zones and assessment criteria. Research emphasizes that it is this initial intercultural preparation that is critical for the success of the entire “global classroom”. After the completion of the educational interaction, an assessment takes place, within which the criteria of the partner universities and joint team results are combined. Students also perform reflective tasks aimed at developing intercultural competence and awareness of their own educational progress (Helm, 2024; Ramírez, 2022).

In general, a well-structured “global classroom” based on interdisciplinarity promotes effective intercultural interaction, the development of digital skills and global cooperation skills, ensuring the upbringing of the multicultural personality of each student. It should be noted that the success of the implementation of the “global classroom” depends on the careful design of the educational component, student training and technical support.

Therefore, the internationalization of higher education is considered as a strategic tool for improving the quality and competitiveness of the university system in the context of globalization. It is interpreted as a process of integrating the international, intercultural and global dimension into the goals, functions and educational practices of universities. Along with traditional student and teaching mobility, the concept of “internationalization at home” is being introduced in higher education, aimed at forming intercultural competence as a component of global competence in all students through the international content of curricula and the development of a multilingual educational environment. The internationalization of educational programs involves the integration of global and multicultural educational components that contribute to the preparation of students for future professional activity in an international context. At the same time, the uneven level of internationalization of different universities, language barriers and limited resources remain significant challenges. One of the effective tools for overcoming these limitations is the development of virtual mobility, which provides international experience without physical mobility. Joint online courses and projects with universities in different countries contribute to the formation of intercultural competence, the development of digital skills, and the preparation of students for global cooperation.

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