



TRANSFER FROM SCHOOLING TO UNIVERSITY STUDIES ABROAD – A CHALLENGE FOR FOREIGNERS IN UKRAINE

A *The article deals with a complicated and rather timely issue concerning the transfer of foreign citizens from schooling to university studies in Ukrainian higher educational establishments. The process is associated with certain difficulties characterized by a crisis situation, a high level of stress and risk of maladjustment or maladaptation. Adaptive problems do not enable students to demonstrate their real educational abilities adequately, to reveal their individual potential. Maladaptation causes conflicts, emotional problems and psychic disorders of non-psychotic spectrum. To help the students to adapt easier is one of the main tasks of university pedagogical staff. In order to attract more foreign citizens to Ukrainian higher schools the whole teaching staff of universities and institutes should focus their attention and work on urgent and alarming issues especially concerning involvement of foreign citizens into active student life together with their Ukrainian peers.*

Key words: adaptation; maladaptation; foreign students; education; medical-psychological issues; questionnaires

Introduction. Educational work is an integral part of professional-pedagogical activity of a higher medical establishment. At the same time, it is a complicated problem, as young people studying at the University have got their basic education at home and at school, which both present different views concerning upbringing process. In addition, the process of professional development of a student, future specialist, consists of several stages: awareness of the human social role, realizing the requirements of future profession, conscious application of these requirements to his/her personality, self-education and self-realization [2, p. 109].

Transfer from schooling to the studies at a higher educational establishment is characterized by a crisis situation, a high level of stress and risk of maladjustment or maladaptation. It is connected with considerable differences in the organization and structure of the educational processes at schools and higher educational establishments, often – with changing the place of residence and living conditions, in case of foreign students – with changing climate, language, social-cultural surroundings and so-called «cultural shock». Adaptive problems do not enable students to demonstrate their real educational abilities adequately, to reveal their individual potential. Maladaptation causes conflicts, emotional problems and psychic disorders of non-psychotic spectrum (most often – depressions and anxiety-phobic disorders). In this respect the role of lecturers and tutors working at Higher State Educational Establishment of Ukraine «Bukovinian State Medical University» (BSMU) is to assist newcomers in different possible ways – to support them in new unknown surroundings, to give necessary advice, to introduce new student life involving them into various extra-curricular activities, sports, scientific and volunteer work etc. Moreover, the national communities of foreign students are a part of the University Students Government serving as organizing and coordinating authorities within the University structure. They are responsible not only for involving their countrymen into an active University life but for the adaptation of first-year students to their new role – from a student to a young highly qualified medical specialist.

The stages of professional adaptation are of great importance, as this is the time when a student is in a rather difficult situation to acquaint with new forms of activity, surrounding, communication, leisure time etc. He/she compares his/her own expectancies with reality and realizes himself/herself in future profession.

The problem of adaptation to the requirements of a higher educational establishment is especially acute for international students getting their education at Ukrainian schools. This is a complicated process of social-cultural, social-communicative, social-moral, everyday, and professional adjustment. In this respect, the University authority and international communities collaborate together in creation adequate living conditions in the University hostels, giving help to first-year students in organization their everyday life, taking meals, doing necessary shopping etc. [2, p. 110].

Our sufficient experience of work with international students suggests the arguments in support of mixed groups, where representatives of different countries study together. In these multinational groups there is a special working friendly atmosphere created by the students themselves and coordinated by the instructor/tutor. Legitimate expectations appear to develop under psychologically compatible relations between representatives of different nationalities with different historical, cultural and religious traditions. The students of mixed groups manage to learn one from another, to respect and support each other [1, p. 36].

Adaptation of international students is a many-sided process promoting the development of personality, and it is an essential part of mastering the profession. The main consultant of students in this direction is a group and faculty tutor. The tutor of international students group should perform different functions of: «informer» (timely transmission of necessary information to the students concerning schedule, various events etc.); «administrator» (control of academic progress of the students and registration of attendance); «organizer» (promotes integration of students into the social space of the Faculty, University, the whole surrounding, ensures learning the requirements and rules of social activity in new social-

cultural medium); «psychotherapist» (ensures psychological support of the students, helps to solve personal problems, interpersonal conflicts etc.); «partner» (helps the students and gives them advise in making their decision, formation of their ability to correct and evaluate their own activity) [3, p. 13].

The University Medical-Psychological Center, established in 2004 as an educational, consulting and methodological unit of BSMU, is very much helpful in fulfillment the tasks of adaptation of foreign citizens who come to the University to get their higher medical education. The aim of the center is to ensure psychological promotion and enhance the efficacy of educational and scientific process, protection of psychic health and social well-being of all the participants of the process: students, teachers, scientists and other University employees, teaching the subjects of medical-psychological and psychic profile to the students, interns, physicians at the stage of post-graduate training.

The Center is in charge of the projects to elaborate and introduce a number of diagnostic, educational and correction measures helping the students to overcome adaptation crisis successfully and to adjust to new conditions of studies quickly. To understand better real difficulties of adaptation the students are facing and what kind of help they need during the first weeks/months of education the questionnaires for the students are worked out. In the form of open and closed questions the groups of problems are planned to be isolated, first of all connected with studies, conditions of life, interaction with surroundings (group-mates, teachers, family) etc. The content of the questionnaire enables the students recollecting the beginning of their own studies to reproduce those difficult moments when they needed help, to indicate problematic situations and information lacunas requiring to be filled in. The questionnaires enable to obtain subjective diagnostics and information concerning available difficulties of social and psychological character, personality orientation, to follow maladaptive signs. The results obtained are compared with the results of standard psychological-diagnostic methods, according to which adaptive abilities, nervous-psychic stability, moral norm, and level of student communicative skills are examined.

The **objective** of our investigation is to learn the attitude of foreign students to their Ukrainian colleagues, to the University policies concerning foreign citizens, their participation in the University extra-curricular activities, and to compare all these issues in temporal relation on the basis of the questionnaire designed specifically for this purpose. The analysis of the questionnaire will help to make adaptation at a higher educational medical establishment easier.

Materials and methods. The questionnaire includes seven statements: 1) there are no differences in skills and talent among representatives of different nationalities; 2) any violation of national or ethnic rights must be severely punished; 3) the University Authority help international students to create friendly relations with Ukrainian students; 4) I would like to study in a group together with Ukrainian students; 5) international students of BSMU have the same rights as Ukrainians in the work of the University Student Government and other activities; 6) I would like to live in the dormitory together with Ukrainian students; 7) national, ethnic or religious affiliation cannot be a cause/reason of conflicts between people. Respondents were supposed to express their attitude to the statements choosing one of the variants (absolutely agree; agree; rather agree than don't; rather disagree than don't; do not agree; do not agree categorically). The questionnaire was anonymous with the only indication of sex (male/female). Frank answers were appreciated. The study involved the first-year (165 individuals including 57 girls – 34.5% and 108 boys – 65.5%) and fifth-year students (100 individuals including 40 girls – 40% and 60 boys – 60%). To summarize the results obtained a statistical method was applied. The statistical data were processed on the individual computer.

Results and discussion. The analysis of questionnaires filled in by the first-year students found several statements were ignored: the first, third, fourth, sixth and seventh – one time, the second – twice, and the fifth – four times. The fifth-year students did not answer the first, fifth, sixth and seventh statements once, and the third – twice. The obtained results are presented in the following *tabl. 1, 2*:

Table 1.

The results of the 1st-year students survey (n, %)

№	Statement	Absolutely agree	Agree	Rather agree than don't	Rather disagree than do	Do not agree	Do not agree categorically
1	There are no differences in skills and talent among representatives of different nationalities	34 – 20.6%	47 – 28.5%	32 – 19.4%	5 – 3%	39 – 23.6%	7 – 4.2%
2	Any violation of national or ethnic rights must be severely punished	69 – 41.8%	73 – 44.2%	5 – 3%	8 – 4.8%	5 – 3%	3 – 1.8%
3	The University Authority help international students to create friendly relations with Ukrainian students	51 – 30.9%	44 – 26.7%	16 – 9.7%	11 – 6.7%	38 – 23%	4 – 2.4%

The end of the table 1.

№	Statement	Absolutely agree	Agree	Rather agree than don't	Rather disagree than do	Do not agree	Do not agree categorically
4	I would like to study in a group together with Ukrainian students	46 – 27.9%	60 – 36.4%	22 – 13.3%	5 – 3%	31 – 18.9%	-
5	International students of BSMU have the same rights as Ukrainians in the work of the University Student Government and other activities	60 – 36.4%	69 – 41.8%	14 – 8.5%	6 – 3.6%	11 – 6.7%	1 – 0.6%
6	I would like to live in the dormitory together with Ukrainian students	48 – 29.0%	55 – 33.3%	20 – 12.1%	4 – 8.5%	32 – 19.4%	6 – 3.6%
7	National, ethnic or religious affiliation cannot be a cause/reason of conflicts between people	47 – 28.5%	90 – 64.5%	8 – 4.8%	3 – 1.8%	14 – 8.5%	2 – 1.2%

Table 2

The results of the 5th-year students survey (n = %)

№	Statement	Absolutely agree	Agree	Rather agree than don't	Rather disagree than do	Do not agree	Do not agree categorically
1	There are no differences in skills and talent among representatives of different nationalities	37	34	9	2	16	1
2	Any violation of national or ethnic rights must be severely punished	50	39	5	2	3	1
3	The University Authority help international students to create friendly relations with Ukrainian students	8	21	12	4	49	4
4	I would like to study in a group together with Ukrainian students	21	21	14	11	27	6
5	International students of BSMU have the same rights as Ukrainians in the work of the University Student Government and other activities	22	28	7	5	32	5
6	I would like to live in the dormitory together with Ukrainian students	26	25	9	7	31	1
7	National, ethnic or religious affiliation cannot be a cause/reason of conflicts between people	42	32	10	4	10	1

Note: the total number of the 5th-year respondents is 100, therefore, percentage is equal to the number.

The left half of the tables can be relatively called «positive», while the right one – «negative». Simple calculation of the total positive and negative answers demonstrates the following dynamics from the first to the fifth year of studies. 68% of the first-year and 80% of the fifth-year students consider skills and talent do not have a nationality, although in course of time only 19% of the seniors do not agree with this statement while this percentage

is approximately 31% among the juniors. Both the first and fifth-year students in the prevailing majority think that any violation of national or ethnic rights is unacceptable – 89.1% and 94% respectively. The attitude of the students of both groups concerning the assistance they get from the University Authority in respect of creating friendly relations with their Ukrainian peers differs much. 67.3% of the first-year students have positive impression, but this number is only 41% among the fifth-years students. Moreover, 32% of juniors consider that the University does not work properly

in the direction of mutual collaboration and friendship between students of different nationalities. As to the fifth-year students, this number is 57%. It means that more than a half of international students having passed 5 years at the University are disappointed probably due to their negative experience. 77.6% of juniors would like to study in a group together with Ukrainians, and this number is only 56% among the seniors. It can be explained by the fact that freshmen are full of expectations and open for friendship, while practically a half of seniors changed their opinion probably due to bad experience they have had (from 21.8% at the first year to 44% at the fifth year of those who do not want to be in one group with their Ukrainian peers). The analysis of negative opinion concerning the studying in mixed groups between girls and boys shows significant difference: the number of first-year students both girls and boys who are against joint studies is practically equal (22% and 21.2% respectively). These numbers are 50% and 38.3% (girls and boys respectively) among the fifth-year students. The analysis of the next issue concerning the equal rights of Ukrainian and foreign students in respect of their participation in the University Student Government and other activities presented still more alarming results. The first-year students looking through the rose-colored glasses hope and believe it is true (86.7% of respondents), while only 57% of the fifth-year students have the same opinion. It should be noted that from year to year the number of foreign students participating in the work of the University Student Government, associations of foreign communities, scientific clubs, conferences, cultural events, sport competitions etc. has become bigger and bigger. Although the data obtained are indicative of the fact that the team of the teachers and tutors should be improved and more focused on involving foreigners into the University life as much as possible. The comments on the statement concerning joint residence of Ukrainian and foreign students in one dormitory are practically similar to those concerning their studying in one group: 74.5% of juniors and 60% of seniors. The last statement concerning national, ethnic, or religious affiliation reflects the opinion of civilized people who do not consider these issues to be a cause of misunderstanding or confrontation: 87.9% of the first-year students and 84% of the fifth-year students believe that it cannot be the reason for conflicts.

The analysis of the questionnaire demonstrates that two types of measures should be initiated to improve the situation: preventive (prophylactic) and corrective.

Preventive (prophylactic) measures, first of all, include adaptive training before the beginning of studies which is first of all the task of tutors and the University Medical-Psychological Center (acquaintance with the country, its culture, traditions, laws, code of behavior; acquaintance with the town/city and its infrastructure, main institutions, places of recreation, shops, educational establishments, medical establishments, banks; acquaintance with the educational establishment itself, its main structural units, location of buildings, canteens, auxiliary services, university rules and regulations, the structure of educational process, algorithm to solve problematic issues, receiving various help). Training before the beginning of studies can be conducted (especially for students – foreign citizens) in the form of «Orientation week» with the help of

senior students, representatives of the appropriate foreign student communities. Previously trained senior students can be involved into conducting these measures as volunteers.

In addition, during the first three months adaptive training is planned to be carried out in the membership of the groups formed (meeting, establishing relations, formation of favorable social-psychological climate).

Implementation of correction measures requires detection of the risk group, that is, students experiencing certain difficulties in adaptation.

Individual psychological consultation, designing of correction program and conducting a number of group classes in the form of training/psychological correction group are planned for such students. The purpose of this group is to analyze the causes of complicated adaptation, mastering new, effective behavioral pattern, useful communication and educational skills, getting support in the group. The classes in these groups are conducted by qualified psychologists, but such students from risk groups should be found by group tutors.

In addition, a number of diagnostic, preventive and information measures are suggested to be conducted:

- in the period before examination sessions the quality of student life will be examined on the level of meeting the main requirements (regular meals, adequate sleep, hygiene, communication) and emotional feelings;
- twice a year (in autumn and spring) express-diagnostics of depressions, level of anxiety and spread of bad habits will be conducted in the risk group;
- students will be informed several times concerning their possibilities to get help in the medical-psychological center (oral announcements and by means of printed material and e-portal).

Conclusions. Educational work at higher educational establishments of Ukraine is an important and integral part of the whole pedagogical process and professional training. It has certain specific features concerning foreign students. In order to attract more foreign citizens to Ukrainian higher schools the whole teaching staff of universities and institutes should focus their attention and work on urgent and alarming issues especially concerning involvement of foreign citizens into active student life together with their Ukrainian peers. Special preventive and corrective measures and projects are essential to be applied in order to help foreigners to adapt to new surroundings easier and to prevent possible severe and undesirable consequences of maladjustment.

Prospects of further studies. Further investigation is planned to be conducted in the period from the first to fifth year of studies in the same group(s) of students with the purpose to follow their development and dynamics of changes occurring. Moreover, the investigation should distribute students not only according to sex, but according to the country of origin. It will help to find and implement an individual approach in solving problems with maladjustment and as a result poor learning, psychological disorders etc. Adaptive programs should be designed considering age, sex and place of the previous residence and training the student (native, from another town/city, from another country).

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Войткевич Ніна, Войткевич Юля. Перехід від навчання у школі до університету за кордоном – виклик для іноземців в Україні.

А Розглядається складна та досить нагальна проблема для іноземних громадян, які переходять до навчання в українських закладах вищої освіти. Даний процес пов'язаний із певними труднощами, що характеризуються кризовою ситуацією, підвищеним рівнем стресу та ризиком виникнення порушеної або поганої адаптації. Проблеми адаптації заважають студентам адекватно продемонструвати їхні справжні здібності у навчанні та розкрити їхній індивідуальний потенціал. Порушення адаптації породжують конфлікти, емоційні проблеми та психічні розлади неспсихотичного спектру. Одним із основних завдань університетського педагогічного колективу є допомогти студентам адаптуватися. Щоб залучити більше іноземних громадян до навчання в українських закладах вищої освіти, педагогічні колективи університетів та інститутів України повинні зосередити свою увагу та роботу на невідкладних питаннях, особливо залученню іноземних студентів до активного університетського життя разом з українськими однолітками.

Ключові слова: адаптація; погана адаптація; іноземні студенти; освіта; медико-психологічні проблеми; анкета

Войткевич Ніна, Войткевич Юля. Переход от обучения в школе к университету за границей – вызов для иностранцев в Украине.

С Рассматривается сложная и достаточно злободневная проблема для иностранных граждан, приезжающих на обучение в украинские вузы. Данный процесс сопряжён с определёнными трудностями, характеризующимися кризисной ситуацией, повышенным уровнем стресса и риском возникновения нарушенной или плохой адаптации. Проблемы адаптации препятствуют студентам адекватно продемонстрировать их настоящие способности в учёбе и раскрыть их индивидуальный потенциал. Нарушения адаптации порождают конфликты, эмоциональные проблемы и психические расстройства неспсихотического спектра. Одной из основных задач университетского педагогического коллектива является помощь студентам адаптироваться. Чтобы привлечь больше иностранных студентов на учёбу в украинских вузах, педагогическим коллективам университетов и институтов Украины следует сосредоточить своё внимание и работу на безотлагательных вопросах, особенно привлечению иностранных студентов к активной университетской жизни вместе с украинскими сверстниками.

Ключевые слова: адаптация; плохая адаптация; иностранные студенты; образование; медико-психологические проблемы; анкета