THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to establish the extent to which education can impact intercultural awareness, skills and competence. In order to determine the significance of education, assessment was carried out with regard to its role in promoting cultural awareness and facing cross-cultural challenges posed by unfamiliar cross-cultural contexts. The hypothesis of this study is that cultural education is a key factor for achieving a significant increase of cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness in order to ensure successful cross-cultural communication and increase mobility of students / working professionals. For this study, it was assumed that cultural awareness of students increases due to the courses they take and their overall study experience. A special questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this research, and the obtained results were statistically analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics, the non-parametric chi-square test, and the Mann-Whitney test. The research has shown that intercultural competence has a statistically significant positive effect on the readiness of students to participate in study and work programs abroad. Thus, it is mandatory that foreign language competence as well as intercultural competence be a priority of the curriculum if we are to increase the number of highly educated experts who will be capable to compete successfully as students or professionals in all fields and all cultural areas. If we recognize that globalization has made the world a global village, we all need the intercultural competence to successfully live in it.

Keywords: globalization, intercultural competence, cross-cultural communication, intercultural education

Biography:

Jadranka Zlomislić grew up in the United States where she received her elementary and high school education. She earned her BA in English and German language and literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Osijek, her MA from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb and her PhD from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, where she teaches British and American Culture and Civilization as well as English language courses as an assistant professor. Her research interests include American and British cultural studies, and cultural studies in language teaching.