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The ways of intercultural communication to promote multicultural education in Georgia

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Globalization and Communication

We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now. *Attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Citizens of 21th century

In the global society it is crucial to recognize the individuals of different cultures with different cultural norms, practices and expectations.

The future generations need to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to become successful members of the Global World within their own countries and any other place.

IT & intercultural communication

Technological development and cooperation in various fields necessitates closer cooperation among different cultures.

Multiculturalism & Education

Transferring multiculturalism in education creates intercultural educational environment.
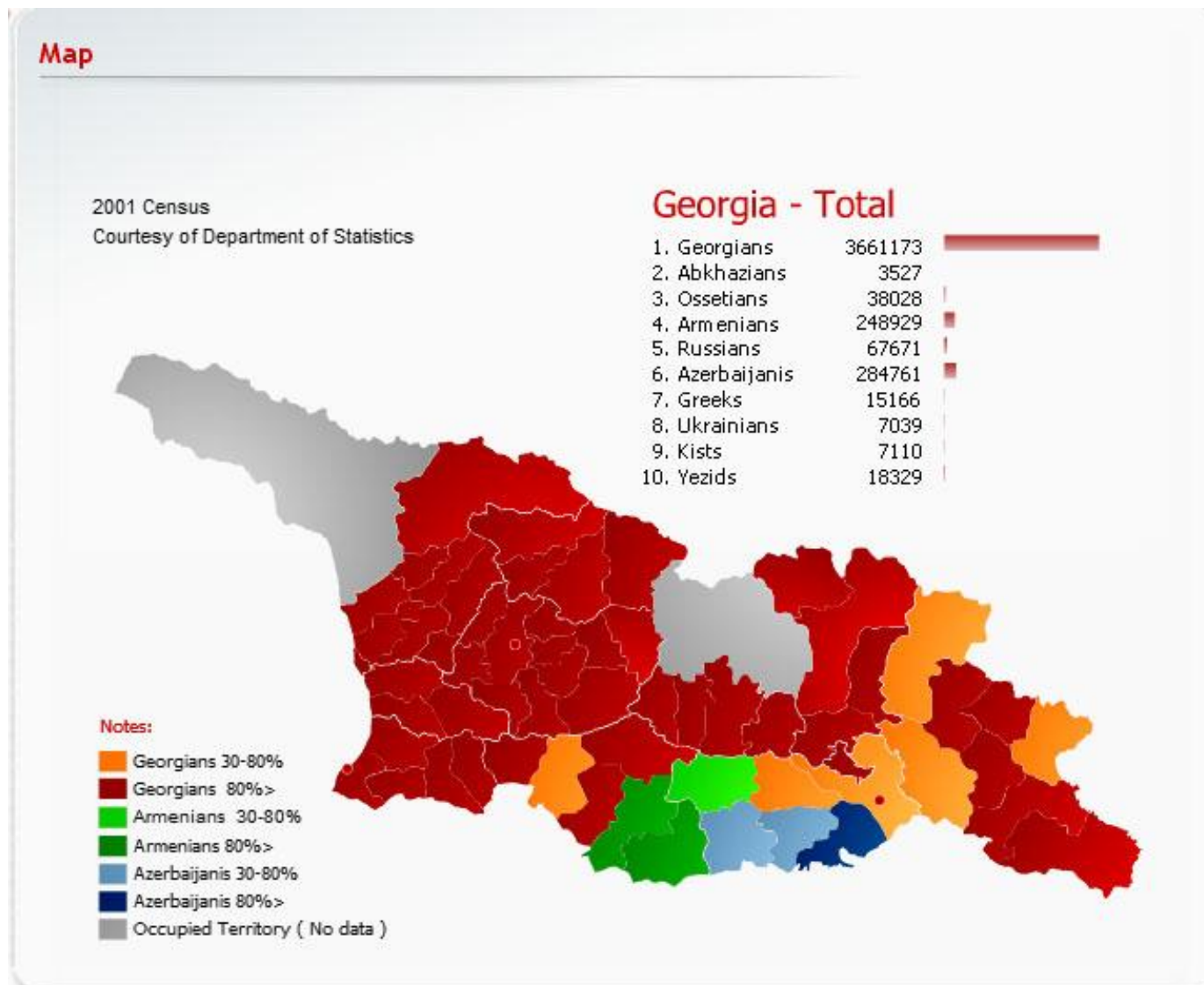
Why we need Intercultural Education?

Intercultural training promotes:

➢ Better understanding of cultures in modern society;

➢ Improvement of communication skills between representatives of different cultures;

➢ Open attitude towards cultural diversity;

➢ Social interaction skills, development of sense of identity and belonging to mankind.

Diversity of Georgia

Source: www.diversity.ge

The basis for ethnic, religious and cultural tolerance was formed and supported by long-term and multilateral relations with neighboring civilizations.
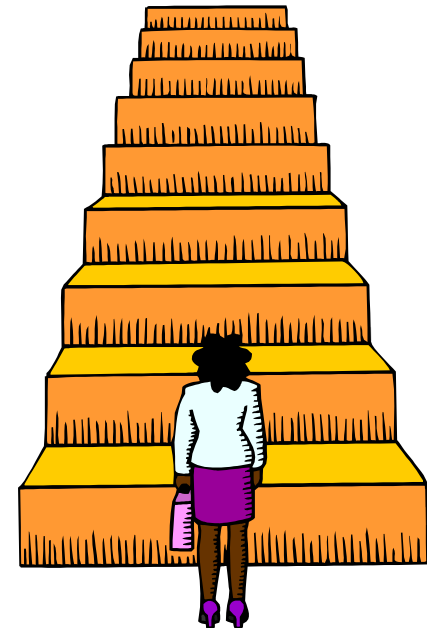
Education in multicultural environment

According to the statistics (2009) of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, there are 234 non-Georgian and 140 mixed type schools in Georgia, which is about 11% of the total number of public schools. There are approximately 72 thousand ethnically non-Georgian students. As for the number of teachers in non-Georgian schools it amounts 9.5% (6541 teachers) of the total number of public school teachers (68779 teachers).

Source: www.mes.gov.ge

Goals of General and Higher Education

- "A public school is obliged to keep and promote the establishment of tolerance and mutual respect among pupils, parents and teachers regardless of their social, ethnic, religious, language and ideological affiliation". (*Paragraph 6, Article 13, Georgian Law on General Education*);

- To promote the development of Georgian and world culture values, orientation on the ideals of democracy and humanism, which are necessary for the existence and development of civic society;

- To support in realization of personal potential, development of creative skills, training of competent persons capable of meeting contemporary requirements, to ensure the competitiveness of individuals with higher education on internal and external labor market (*Georgian Law on Higher Education, Georgia 2012*)

Since 2012, five higher education institutions and two non-governmental organizations have been involved in the Tempus project -" Development of International Model for Curricular Reform in Multicultural Education and Cultural Diversity Training (DOIT) initiated by Academic Gordon College of Education (Israel) and coordinated by Dr. Rhonda Sofer. Alongside seven higher education and one non-governmental institution from Israel there are six educational institutions from Europe involved in the project. The number of institutions involved in consortium and the scope of project clearly shows the topicality of multicultural education for involved countries and institutions.

Pedagogical Approaches that Promote Multicultural Understanding in the Classroom

Aimed at BA, MA level students and in-service teacher training programs. Within this course, the unit titled "Communication and Social Media" was developed by DOIT project members

Nino Chiabrishvili (Ilia State University),

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Ina Baratashvili (Tbilisi State University).

Holistic approach

The unit on Communication and Social Media was designed according to holistic approach, on the basis of the following formula: Knowledge + Skills + Attitude /Disposition = Competence

- In the process of incorporating the holistic approach we shared the idea developed by James Banks[1], that for multicultural education teacher should be able to learn and also be able to teach to students following three things: to know and be able and to take, "Knowledge - Skills – Attitudes" model, which is also called "Three H" model after the first letters of three important words – Head, Hand and Heart.

- Thus, according to the model, it is important: (a) to know, or Head – one should have knowledge, (b) to be able to do, or Hands – one should have skills, (c) to want to do, or Heart – one should care.

[1] Banks, James A. and Michelle Tucker. "Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions". Retrieved from: http://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf

Course rationale

Good communication can help to promote a productive multicultural environment. Communication is at the core of any business, especially in the field of education. The course is about how we share information, how we establish trust, how we develop relationships and how we maintain effective relationships in multicultural settings. The course will promote effective communication in diverse environment; show the risks and difficulties of misunderstanding reasoned by miscommunication; offer effective tools of skillful verbal and non-verbal communication. Social media as a potent tool of communication in the contemporary world can be efficiently employed for promoting effective intercultural communication among representatives of diverse cultural backgrounds. It is important to teach students how to get maximum benefit by using various new media - social media technologies to establish positive, mutually beneficial communication.

Course objectives

The objectives of this educational unit are incorporated based on Banks' 5 dimensions for Multicultural Education. Namely:

1. The dimension of knowledge construction:
   - To improve basic skills in listening, outlining, using verbal and visual supporting materials, language use, nonverbal cues, and other components of effective oral communication;
   - To enhance awareness of the importance of social media in multicultural communication
2. The dimension of content integration
   - To provide examples of successful/unsuccessful communication; analyze/discuss the reasons; provide tips for successful communication
3. The dimension of Equity pedagogy:
   - Learning oriented on action (e.g. creating and carrying out an event via social networking);
   - Project Based Learning (PBL)
4. The Dimension of prejudice reduction
   - To show the risks of miscommunication and offer effective tools of successful communication
5. Empowering school culture
   - To develop relevant skills for establishing effective intercultural communication on school level via personal communication & social networking.

Last but not least

- Let us share the animation which proves the importance of our efforts:

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_N1Cmt_QB0

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSt_op3fQck