The impact of digital technologies on the development of students' intercultural skills

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Abstract. As information and communication technologies advance and permeate every facet of human life, the creation of information-rich environments highlights the critical need for modern competencies in using these technologies effectively. Mastery of these skills is essential for future graduates of higher educational institutions to adapt proactively to changes in diverse spheres of public life. Additionally, the adoption of these technologies significantly accelerates the learning process for foreign languages, stimulates cognitive engagement and independence, and enhances motivation for learning. It is crucial to emphasize that alongside the imperative of nurturing comprehensive personal development, the Federal State Educational Standard for higher education prioritizes integrating interactive (electronic and information communication) learning technologies with active (communicative) methods in educational programs. Despite the growing prevalence of information and communication technologies, including the Internet, their adoption and application in higher professional education remain somewhat limited. This constraint arises from ongoing efforts to explore innovative ways to integrate these technologies into educational practices while balancing traditional teaching methods. Challenges also include the need for further development of effective methodologies for leveraging information and communication technologies, as well as addressing the current lack of adequate resource support for educational activities.

1 Introduction

The rapid technological advancements in communication means during the 20th and early 21st centuries represent one of the most significant factors shaping modern societal conditions. These new information and communication technologies have profoundly influenced how various social groups, individuals, and societal layers interact. The digitization of communication spaces has also exerted a substantial impact on political relations. In response to these new realities, political systems are adapting to maintain their effectiveness in managing society.

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The evolution of communication technologies has progressively become a catalyst for shaping diverse social and political processes, driving social change. Information and its dissemination channels have emerged as pivotal resources across all spheres of activity, including politics, setting new goals and objectives for both society and governmental institutions.

While not all scholars attribute social progress directly to technological development, critics of theories related to post-industrial and information societies highlight that advancements in technology, including information and communication technologies, also introduce new challenges. These challenges include deepening social inequalities, uneven global development, societal dehumanization, the proliferation of mechanisms for manipulating public opinion, erosion of traditional values, and fractures in social cohesion between generations and different social groups. Addressing these issues requires theoretical understanding and rigorous analysis, as they significantly influence both societal development and the prospects for progress.

A critical imperative for ensuring sustainable social development is the institutionalization of information culture transmission within lifelong education systems. Of particular importance is the internalization of its norms and values by young people. Their active engagement in shaping and implementing effective life strategies within the information society ensures the continuity of socio-economic progress.

In essence, the cultivation of information culture not only equips individuals with tools for navigating modern complexities but also serves as a foundation for societal resilience and advancement in an increasingly interconnected world.

### 2 Materials and methods

The specific characteristics of modern global community development have generated an immediate societal demand for specialists possessing high levels of intercultural competence. These professionals must be prepared to collaborate, exhibit tolerance, flexibility, and social mobility within the pan-European and global labor markets. They effortlessly integrate into the global multicultural environment, actively engaging in intercultural communication as equal participants, and demonstrating effective interaction in diverse cultural settings. Intercultural competence holds significant importance both globally — as a vehicle for socialization and a prerequisite for a fulfilling life in a multicultural society — and within the Russian higher education system, where it is recognized as a crucial professional quality requiring development during university studies.

### 3 Results and Discussion

The intercultural dimension of overall cultural competence focuses specifically on interactions between cultures and the dialogue among them. It necessitates knowledge of universal cultural values, human behavioral patterns, linguistic worldviews, psychological dimensions of cultures, principles of cultural interaction, and skills in forming communication strategies. Within communicative competence, the intercultural aspect involves understanding how different cultures represent their value orientations, awareness of intercultural differences, knowledge of the psychology behind intercultural interactions, recognition of barriers to intercultural communication and strategies to overcome them, adapting behavior to fit the norms of a foreign culture during intercultural interactions, and skills to prevent conflicts, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism while promoting fruitful intercultural exchanges in professional contexts.
In terms of social competence, the intercultural aspect includes understanding culturally determined differences and behavioral norms in intercultural communication situations, recognizing how social factors influence language choices, adapting behavior to foreign language culture standards, acting as a cultural mediator, and applying knowledge to foster mutual understanding through shared meanings in communication practices. Personal qualities essential for successful professional activity in intercultural contexts encompass openness, tolerance, flexibility, empathy, self-assurance, and a readiness for dialogue.

Therefore, it is crucial at this stage of societal and educational development to emphasize the intercultural component within professional competence. University education must include tasks aimed at developing intercultural competence, which is often overlooked in current educational practices.

Drawing from the core aspects of "intercultural competence," it is beneficial to identify the following components: motivational-values, cognitive, activity-behavioral, affective, and reflective. These components can be nurtured and enhanced through purposeful activities. Telecommunications and the internet offer substantial didactic potential for fostering intercultural competence in language teaching at universities, enabling activities that develop this competency and facilitate creative learning experiences.

Studies in internet-based learning highlight various student activities online, including information retrieval, communication, and content publication. These activities serve as the basis for integrating telecommunication technologies into educational processes through scripted scenarios designed to guide expected learning events effectively. Currently, there is a significant increase in the demand for students to acquire practical skills alongside solid theoretical knowledge. One of the most effective formats for developing these practical skills is through laboratory workshops. Engaging in laboratory work activates students' cognitive abilities, fosters independence, enhances their understanding of complex phenomena and processes, and cultivates their creativity.

Various researchers, including Yu.A. Grushevsky, V.A. Katorgina, Yu.F. Kolontaevsky, P.P. Golovina, M.N. Lyashko, M.F. Posnovoy, B.C. Yampolsky, and others, have contributed significantly to the didactic support of laboratory workshops in general technical disciplines. For instance, V.A. Katorgina's work outlines laboratory practices across the electrical engineering curriculum, focusing on assembling and testing circuits using standard equipment and breadboards.

In Yu.F. Kolontaevsky's work, a comprehensive set of laboratory equipment is presented for conducting workshops in radio electronics, accompanied by methodological recommendations. This equipment includes stands where circuits under study are assembled and connected to measuring instruments.

To enhance students' technical and creative thinking, an innovative approach involves leveraging modern technical tools and their vast capabilities. This includes circuit modeling and design systems that enable manipulation of components to achieve didactic objectives. Authors like V.I. Karlashchuk, V.D. Razeviga, A.B. Liventsova, and S.N. Shailanov have explored this approach in their work on laboratory workshops.

However, despite the potential benefits, the integration of computer technology into learning environments for general technical disciplines remains underdeveloped in pedagogical universities. There is a lack of cohesive efforts to establish comprehensive courses that actively utilize new information technologies as cognitive tools in the educational process. Instead, the use of computer technology as a teaching aid in general technical disciplines is sporadic and isolated. This one-sided approach underscores the urgency and relevance of further research in this area within university settings. In Russian universities, there is a recognized need to cultivate communicative competence among students pursuing various social professions. However, the approach to integrating the communicative component into education varies,
often lacking a cohesive theoretical foundation in communication studies, which hinders effective solutions to this issue.

Currently, Niklas Luhmann's concepts regarding communication as a fundamental characteristic of society are gaining renewed significance. The theories of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas and communicative rationality (J. Habermas, K.-O. Apel, N. Luhmann) remain highly relevant. These social theories elucidate the nature of communicativeness, communicative acts, communicative communities, communicative spaces, communicative environments, communicative actions, and communicative processes. They are pivotal not only for advancing communication sciences but also for informing educational practices.

Theoretical frameworks, such as the system-structural approach to studying communication, are now well-established. Consequently, various university education programs incorporate knowledge about communication processes into their curricula.

5 Conclusion

The realm of popular culture, as an integral part of human experience, serves as a conspicuous mirror reflecting socio-cultural transformations brought about by the widespread adoption of new information and communication technologies. These transformations have given rise to novel cultural phenomena and practices, engaging thousands of individuals. The pervasive dissemination of these practices profoundly impacts specialized professional domains and catalyzes the evolution of traditional cultural institutions.

The influx of amateurs into cultural production blurs distinctions between consumption and production, leisure and labor, creativity and mundane routines, audience and authorship. The active involvement of audiences in media content creation, voluntary unpaid contributions during leisure time, and the commercial utilization of mass amateur creativity are fostering significant social changes. These dynamics of popular culture are intricately intertwined with the "digital" economy of post-industrial society.

The evolving landscape of popular culture challenges established cultural theories, necessitating a reevaluation of fundamental concepts. There is a compelling need to legitimize and systematically study various cultural practices that have proliferated in recent years. The rapid pace of change in this domain, driven by digital technologies and the Internet, demands deeper theoretical scrutiny. The emergence of Web 2.0 represents a new paradigm within the broader evolution of "new" media, prompting scholars to characterize the current milieu as a phase of "post-cyberspace" (K. Bassett). Yet, comprehensive theoretical frameworks and studies examining the socio-cultural implications of these new cultural forms and practices remain insufficient in Russian scholarship.

The understanding of popular culture in Western humanities and social sciences differs significantly from that in Russian research circles. This disparity can be attributed to the earlier adoption of digital technologies in the West and distinct historical and institutional trajectories in cultural studies within Russia. Persistent biases among Russian theorists towards "mass culture" as embodying inauthentic or superficial needs and interests further contribute to this divide. Consequently, the study of mass and popular cultures continues to occupy a peripheral position in domestic academic discourse, leaving vast areas of cultural experience and phenomena associated with "new" media largely unexplored.

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