

**TEACHING AT THE
UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Cross-Cultural Perspectives from
the United States and Russia

Edited by

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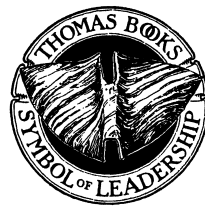
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ANNOTATION

T*eaching at the University Level: Cross-Cultural Perspectives from the United States and Russia* provides an overview of important social-pedagogical bases of teaching students in colleges and universities as seen from two different cultures. The book discusses the uniqueness of the educational environment in institutions of higher education and introduces specific teaching techniques of motivation and management, techniques of teaching students with special emphasis directed to methods of active teaching at the university level, specialized processes of teaching and personal development in a multicultural group, and criteria for the evaluation of student learning outcomes. The book also gives special attention, through two different cultural perspectives, to the purpose of higher education and the faculty member's role in realizing this purpose. The textbook is written for those working in or interested in observations on teaching at the university level in the United States and Russia.

FOREWORD

I am pleased to join my colleague, V.I. Zhukov, president of Russian State Social University, in introducing this instructive text that is the product of international collaboration. Faculty members from two universities, located thousands of miles apart and from distinctly different cultures, have coauthored a work focused on the study and practice of teaching excellence in higher education.

With President Zhukov, I acknowledge a peculiarity of postsecondary teaching, that is, graduate studies thoroughly provide disciplinary content but neglect to provide preparation for effective classroom teaching. Consequently, many faculty members teach as they were taught, primarily through emulating former teachers who used expository or lecture delivery. This book is an important step in balancing disciplinary knowledge and teaching skills and in identifying important aspects of the teaching learning process in higher education from two different cultural perspectives.

Measuring good teaching in the short term is not easy. The best measure of successful teaching is successful learning which is realized years after the student has graduated. I think all of us appreciate the good teaching of our colleagues when former students cite some professor who has profoundly influenced them.

Faculty members need to be able to assess their students in ways that ensure that their students not only have an understanding of information, but also that they have the ability to use the information that they understand. Essentially, student assessment should reflect the overall purpose of the instruction—learning for the purpose of doing.

To positively influence student learning, faculty need to have a sound understanding of the teaching and learning processes. University students expect a challenging experience of participatory learning. We are joined with our students in this expectation. The analogy that comes to mind is the case of diminishing audiences for even

our most prestigious orchestras. Apparently, increasingly few of us are willing to be passive recipients of even great performances. Our students mirror, and amplify, our own demand for participation in whatever experience is occurring. Faculty members need to have an understanding of what motivates students, what constitutes a motivational environment, and how to create a motivational environment in their teaching. Faculty members need to ensure that students are active learners invested in their own learning.

Our students expect real-world experiences that prepare them for productive citizenship. An educational experience that fails to expose students to multicultural perspectives or that does not offer interactions in a diverse community simply cannot measure up. We must continue to build a multicultural academic community because it is an essential ingredient in an excellent education. Drawing from faculty knowledge and experience that reflects a multicultural base has the potential to strengthen the instructional process but also to increase faculty and university interinstitutional collaboration. Universities that fail to provide welcoming, supportive environments for multiculturalism will be unable to recruit and retain the brainpower needed to sustain themselves. They will rapidly become irrelevant anachronisms. On the other hand, universities that respond to these new realities and build on the intellectual strengths that proceed from diversity will attract and retain talented students, faculty, and staff from all segments of society and accrue an enormous competitive advantage.

Our students are technologically adept and expect learning environments to employ technology in meaningful and purposeful ways. More and more, students are entering institutions of higher education with a wealth of experience in using technology in their lives. Many have grown accustomed to communicating regularly with technology. Accordingly, students today have new and different expectations than they did even ten or fifteen years ago. Faculty members need to be able to utilize technology not only to deliver content, but also to motivate students and manage the learning process. Without the use of technology, this book would not have been possible. Technology enables the communicative collaboration that characterizes the best teaching and learning environments and the contemporary workplace.

This textbook is an invaluable guide for those who work and teach in institutions of higher education. Faculty will benefit from the presentations that speak to becoming an effective college or university

teacher. Moreover, the international collaboration explores common and differing views on issues related to higher education. I applaud the efforts of the Russian writers as well as those from my own university and hope that their work will serve to encourage others to find useful collaborations for professional growth and advancing individual disciplines. This is an important text not only in terms of a cross-cultural perspective, but also in a focused attention to improving teaching and learning environments at the higher education level.

Ronald R. Ingle
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PREFACE

This textbook is the result of a joint project of scientists of Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia, and Coastal Carolina University, Conway, South Carolina, USA. It is intended to assist beginning faculty members and doctoral students in successfully addressing their teaching responsibilities at institutions of higher education. It is also intended to offer a view of the field of higher education from two very different cultural perspectives.

Historically, little attention has been given to the pedagogical preparation of doctoral students at institutions of higher education. As a rule, they are primarily engaged in the preparation of dissertation research and preparation for passing candidate examinations. Every doctoral student, however, according to his or her program of study, should be involved in the process of teaching. Doctoral students are expected to give seminars after the teacher's lectures, and, by the end of their education programs, give lectures themselves in small groups, but while there is an expectation for teaching, there is no special discipline in the curriculum of their preparation designed to develop their pedagogical skills.

The course, *Methods of Teaching at Schools of Higher Education*, has been introduced recently into the curriculum of future specialists at universities. Its aim is to give doctoral students and young teachers an understanding of the art and science of teaching, to acquaint them with modern methods of teaching and new pedagogical techniques focused not only on the transfer of knowledge, but also on the development of a student's aspiration to acquire knowledge independently. Education can be successful only when the process of teaching is considered as a joint process of the comprehension of knowledge where a teacher and a student are equal participants in the education process, mutually enriching one another.

It is no doubt impossible to address all of the questions of effective educational methods in one textbook; in this text, the authors have posed those questions which are most important to them. In so doing, they have selected questions that have broad application to any institution of higher education. "How can effective learning environments be developed in university classrooms?" is one such question. This is a critically important question as it is in the learning environment where both teacher and student have an opportunity to develop themselves to the highest degree. Such an environment does not develop naturally on its own. During the education process, the teaching staff is organized and the students' group is formed. There also should be the development of a learning community with a uniform coexistence of teacher and students. In this development, the teacher's personality has special value as it is through one personality that another one develops. The culture of pedagogical communication, the art of pedagogical influence, and the art of managing an audience are discussed in this textbook.

Currently, faculty members in higher education face challenges of creating the most effective learning environments possible. The teacher should not only be able to make correct decisions, but should also be able to teach students to do the same. Without logical methods of decision-making, the teacher will not be able to effectively organize the education process, maintain the attention of all students, and create an effective learning atmosphere for the entire group.

Student motivation plays an important role in an effective learning environment. The motivated student can be successful in undertaking great academic loads, keeping cognitive activity sustained for long periods of time, and consistently showing high levels of achievement.

The choice of techniques and methods of teaching also has great value in the development of teaching/learning processes. Significant attention is given in today's higher education classrooms to the use of active methods of teaching, which are characterized by students being directly involved in cognitive activities. It is not necessary, however, to consider that active methods are the only effective methods from which to choose. From the experience of the best teachers, the highest results are achieved by those who naturally combine both traditional and active methods of education in their pedagogical work.

Another important problem discussed in this textbook is the specificity of responding to conditions of multinational student groups.

Russia is a multicultural and multireligious state, as is the USA. This cultural diversity, in fact, is one important reason that there is such interest in each other. It is through the education system where feelings of respect for peoples' cultures are formed and why this dialogue has been established. Developing tolerance and communication skills are two of the main challenges of any teacher working with multinational student groups.

For the last few years, where there have been intense contacts between the states in various spheres of activity, and where mobility has become a sign of the times, the question at hand is the ongoing exchange and application of knowledge and educational resources. It is on these conditions, where the estimation of the quality of knowledge, coordinated between the countries, is necessary. The estimation expects that the teacher assess not only his or her students' achievements, but also the productivity of his or her own teaching practices and activities. In the concluding chapter, the American colleagues share their experience of the estimation of the quality of knowledge learned which is of great interest for Russia.

The present textbook is the first experience of collaboration of the Russian and American scientists. We hope that this cooperation will continue to develop in the future. The authors of the textbook are:
Coastal Carolina University: D.G. Wiseman and G.H. Hunt.
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**TEACHING AT THE
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Chapter 1

SOCIO-PEDAGOGICAL BASES FOR SOCIAL FIELD SPECIALISTS' PREPARATION AT UNIVERSITIES

V.I. ZHUKOV

The changing world pedagogical view has brought about a special kind of style, content, and method of education which has been needed for some time. While different viewpoints exist regarding the purpose of education, this view emphasizes that teaching, i.e., education, should be carried out for the purpose of maintaining social progress. Pedagogy for this purpose has a number of identifiable components:

- a combined science and education component,
- a political-economic(al) component which depends on the course (actions) of the government of a country in the field of domestic and foreign policy, and dominating and political economic processes (trends) in the world,
- a coevolutionary component which is the result of interaction between nature and society, and
- a spiritually-moral-based component on a level of cultural development, moral potential of the civilization, mechanisms for the harmonization of interethnic, confessional, and other inconsistencies.

The educational system of any country is its major social institution and the universal tool for an individual's socialization. Consequently, all education is social. Social education, as a guiding philosophy and technique of the educational system, reflects that level of scientific and educational development where there is assimilation based on the interaction between natural-science and humanitarian knowledge, and where this assimilation has had impact on both science and education.

Natural-science and *humanitarian* are terms that characterized the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries and reflected the direction taken in the development of education and knowledge during this period. These terms are replaced today by *social education*, including methods and techniques of knowledge, especially for the so-called exact sciences, which, in turn, become more humanitarian as they are released from excessive technocratism. Social education may be seen as a systematic process of accumulating, storing, distributing, and transforming knowledge received through the development of fundamental and applied social sciences as a result of an individual's social experience learned through training and personal development.

Social education in higher education today applies to the preparation of students to become specialists and to the retraining of personnel for social management of the social development of the country, for social-labor organizations, and for the welfare field and the bodies that direct them. This view puts social education on the same level as engineering, pedagogical, and medical education.

As a new component of general and vocational training, social education has a number of characteristics determined by the level of its development and conditions under which it is being developed. The first attempts to explain why social education is not yet perceived by the pedagogical society as an independent and large-scale phenomenon; the second influences the definition of the subject field of a new interdisciplinary field of knowledge. Social education is a result of the rapid growth of knowledge, and sharp strengthening of theory, system, and prognosis dominants in the theory of knowledge. The system of social education includes the preparation of specialists who are capable of deeply understanding the social aspects of interaction between society and people in different fields of social life, in order to professionally solve specific tasks such as the analysis of social processes and decisions of social problems. Professional training for the social field plays an important role in this system. It is particularly necessary for the development of the creative person capable of actively influencing public opinion, political stability and the ongoing development of society. Social education has four functions: the professional, spirituality-moral and cultural functions are focused on the individual while the humanitarian function is focused on the humanitarian development of the entire society.

In the social education system, an individual's mind is not the subject of training, but the individual himself with his intellectual, spiritu-

al, moral, and cultural potential. In this view, M. Heidegger's statement, that education is "a means of the whole person's change in his essence," becomes true. The head of UNESCO, Federiko Mayor, considering the new stages of education and culture development, once noted, "Education in the broad sense can be called a means allowing each ordinary person to become a personality, an active member of the society, an investigator of the truth and a spokesman of this truth"

The individual who is perceiving; interpreting; subjecting to doubt; learning the sense of postulates, dogmas, definitions, versions, and doctrines and, thus, receiving knowledge, is the subject of social education. In this regard, the internalizing of social senses determines the degree of its individual efficiency and is one of the fundamental bases of education. The internal world of the subject, consisting of experience, personal considerations, and developed images, is influenced by the set of texts, theories, subjects of culture, supplemented with various fields of knowledge, and enriched with systematized conceptions about the ways of activity and forms of social practice. The elements of general knowledge received at the early stages of education, as a result of internalizing, become a combination of knowledge and skills accumulated at the later stages with the theory and practice of social education.

Such a conception about the social education system requires acknowledging the relation between culture and education. In the evolutionary development of society, education and culture are two sides of the same process of individual and social development. Defining the content of the culture, modern philosophy recognizes that culture includes a concrete set of sign-symbolic systems and accumulated human experience of life and development of the world in the forms of perception, thinking, experience, and action. Also included are the forms of knowledge, values, means and estimation criteria, specifications, purposes, and senses which help to store and reproduce the experience of spiritual activity in public and personal mentality (L.P. Bueva).

Culture is a key element of the civilized development of any society and is society's organization and driving force of social progress. In this context, culture is a result of social development but, also, the major characteristic of political, social, and economic systems and one of the most essential components of this development. The combina-

tion of these properties and features related to the interaction between society and culture explains the broad and justified use of terms such as *sociocultural system*, *sociocultural activity*, *sociocultural complexes*, etc.

In Plato's time, people agreed with the statement, "Education brings up good people, and good people act nobly." It is difficult to say whether Hegel was right or not when he stated that education makes a person clever, but it does not make one better. Our great fellow-countryman, K.A. Timiryazev, as well as Plato, believed, "Development of the science . . . is even more necessary for moral well-being of people, than for their material prosperity."

Many popular views came into question in the twentieth century with the recognition that time changes one's social type and social properties. For example, an educated person does not always differ according to the qualities necessary for recognition as a "good" person. And, in many cases a first-rate education is used for the achievement of some purposes which are not necessarily considered to be noble. It is a fact that the social changes of the modern society have broken the triad "education-upbringing-culture," which, in turn, has created a niche with cynicism, inspirituality, and hypocrisy.

Only the developing sociohumanitarian education makes it possible to combine all of these aspects together. The process of education is inextricably related to bringing about the spiritual culture of a person; too, assistance for an educated person appears to be associated with the creative desire to develop an intelligent person, moral and capable of achieving his or her full potential in the social field for which education and training are conducted.

The disciplines, which are the classical components of social education (social work, social ecology, social anthropology, social psychology, social law, feminology, social history, etc.), all have an interdisciplinary character. They are not restricted, however, to the accumulated knowledge and subject fields of traditional disciplines. Social education is designed for preparing specialists capable of operating across the social life processes.

Social education includes research, applied theory, moral development, and spiritual development. This is rather natural. Without the use of scientific achievements in the educational process, it is impossible to generate professional qualities; without the integration of knowledge and skills in social practice, it is impossible to expect a graduate to be able to react to rapidly changing situations in society; without