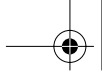


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Exploratory study of changing ethnic stereotypes of the Ukrainian teacher candidates towards peaceful attitudes

Tetyana Koshmanova^{a*} and Nadia Hapon^b

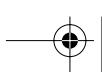
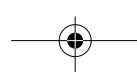
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The study focuses on exploring the method of changing pre-service teachers' stereotypes about different ethnicities. The purpose of the study is to test, or try out, an approach for changing beliefs and attitudes of teacher candidates towards peacebuilding, democracy, humanism, and accepting others. The procedure for this study involved investigating teacher candidates' attitudes or ethnic stereotypes about different nations bordering Ukraine and about themselves as well, conducting attitudes/stereotypes' intervention towards the formation of teachers' peaceful attitudes, and analyzing the consequences of this intervention. The article specifically analyses the research experience for teacher candidates as they reflected on their multi-ethnic practices. It also utilizes the research findings to inform the field of teacher education for peace.

Introduction

The transition of the former Soviet republics of the Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Caucasus took a tortuous road. The gulf is wide between the initial hopes for change and the current state of reforms, the formation of regional systems and the rivalries amongst regional states, the expectations of international donors and local realities. Transition was an imagined journey from totalitarian regimes and a planned economic system to pluralism, democracy and market economy. Yet the realities of historic development are such that instead of a smooth guided journey the countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Caucasus are taking difficult and diverse paths with the points of destination still distant and debated.

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Ukraine, one of the largest post-Soviet countries with a population of 48 million people, is an example of the situation we face today in Eastern Europe in terms of the transition from post-communist regimes to civil societies. Following the recent presidential elections of November 21, 2004, massive falsifications were exposed, causing great social crisis. The outrage of the Ukrainian people indicated a democratic awakening as they strove for human rights and the end of the authoritarian regime. The Ukrainians sent an encouraging message to the world showing that they are much more ready to integrate into the European community than the former regime. Analogical events took place earlier in Slovakia in 1998, Serbia in 2000 and Georgia in 2003. Though still being far from a genuine understanding of democracy, the Ukrainian Orange Revolution is bringing the 'orange' mentality to many nations in former communist countries, especially to Russians. For the world, any democratic outcome in the former Soviet Union is a step forward.

However, along with the new democratic mood, the Orange Revolution brought great political instability into the region, revealing deep ethnic, religious, economic and political divisions, and eventually split the Ukrainian nation into two opposing parts—east and west, with the agrarian west that is ardently nationalist, predominantly Catholic and anti-Russian, and the industrial east which is predominantly oriented toward Russia in speech and religion (Kuzio, 2004).

An especially strong factor of the country's division turned out to be western Ukrainian ethnocentrism that converted a nationalist ideology into an educational reform of molding a new Ukrainian-speaking nation from a heterogeneous population (Kuznetsov, 1994). By targeting education for reform, political leaders capitalized on the potential of schools to instill ethnocentric values and articulate norms and traditions of the Ukrainian culture to protect the cultural heritage of the nation and its right to self-determination. Disturbingly, some of the state-sanctioned efforts to impart a collective Ukrainian identity have evolved into a common belief about the uniqueness of the Ukrainian national mentality, human traits and soul, along with an unquestionable superiority over other cultures (Verbitskaya, 2003).

This effort to create a new Ukrainian citizen has fostered the aggressive assimilation of people of other national and cultural identities who have inhabited the country for centuries along with the 'pure' Ukrainians (Batt, 1998; Azari, 2002). By its mechanisms, linguistic Ukrainization is reminiscent of the former Soviet Union's efforts of peoples' Russification and creation of an ideal new kind of human being—*homo sovetikus*. This assimilationist policy and low level of democratic culture created many challenges to the goal of solidifying peace in the Ukrainian post-communist setting; it generated bloody religious conflicts between the Ukrainian Greek Catholics and Ukrainian/Russian Orthodox, and created ethnic, political and social intolerance and instability among multicultural populations. As Tolochko (2001) writes:

There are forces in Ukraine that feed inter-ethnic conflicts. The laws against chauvinism that were adopted in the country are almost not used in the courts, and government agencies that are responsible for controlling the fulfilment of these laws are too tolerant of the chauvinists (p. 3).

As teacher educators, we are also faced with the sense that many teachers have harmful beliefs for the world they are going to live in, and there is a growing recognition that other educators seem to think this way (Sukhomlyns'ka, 2004).

Today most Ukrainians want to live in a peaceful Europe and to part with the authoritarian Soviet past. To bring Ukraine into such a community, many of them are beginning to understand that democratic consolidation and multiculturalism is a precondition, while reversion to nationalism and autocracy would doom them to a pariah status like Belarus, the last full-blown dictatorship in Europe. Since the Orange Revolution is clearly moving Ukraine in a more European direction, changing students' intolerant beliefs and attitudes about other ethnicities is crucial. Accepting core democratic values, such as caring for others, kindness, fairness, equity are vital elements for the civic development of most post-conflict societies of Eastern Europe, as well as for peace and stability in the region.

This need becomes even more strengthened by the recent acceptance of Ukraine into the Bologna Process in Bergen, on 19–20 May 2005, aimed at the creation of a common educational area in Europe by 2010 (Nyborg, 2005). This generated educator on-going debate on improving the attraction of its higher education in relation to Europe, in which the civil society values play an important role. To contribute to the creation of this peaceful public sphere, Ukrainians have to develop 'a shared *peace vision* of Europe' (Wintersteiner, 2004, p. 91) and elaborate its strategies based on global standards, which is also a major challenge for peace education in this country.

Theoretical background

According to social psychology, stereotypes are simplified 'pictures in our heads' (Lippmann, 1922, p. 3), of the people and events in the world, or 'general interpretation of pictures of the world' (Meyers, 2000, p. 482[AQ1]). They may be true and false, and lead to person's restrictive, unilateral visions. Positive stereotypes may even be desirable. Because of stereotypes, an instructor may predict a student's behavior or make a quick decision based on them. Some researchers identify a stereotype as 'a standard basing on which a person evaluates others or any moment of reality' (Rean & Kolominsky, 1999, p. 323). However, usually it is considered to be negative as it restricts an instructor in approaching adequate perceptions of reality and its objective analysis. Stereotypes are often general and (in most cases) false and have a great power over an instructor. Psychologists say that 'all stereotypes are standards occurring during the condition of the limited information, which urges a person to judge a phenomenon in accordance with his/her first impression' (Rean & Kolominsky, 1999, p. 338). So, for a teacher, stereotypes play a negative role if they are not recognized and acknowledged, but followed strictly without deep analysis of the process of students' development, learning and diversity.

Stereotypes are too steady to be changed quickly. Since pre-service teachers' stereotypes can be overcome through the process of developing their professional thinking, it is advisable to eliminate the cognitive sources and outcomes of their stereotypes (Petrenko, 1983). The initial step to achieve this goal is to learn and

AQ1

analyze whether teacher candidates' stereotypes about different ethnicities exist in the particular group of students—participants of our study.

5 **Research on education for peace**

Being a multidisciplinary field, education for peace takes a holistic approach as a coherent philosophy of education that is compatible with the progressive ideas descending from the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey and Paolo Freire (Synott, 2005). Though peace education is not associated with beliefs of any particular philosopher, this humanistic tradition established the philosophical origins of the western cultural and educational heritage promoting teaching for non-violence, peaceful societies and common good.

Over the past three decades, various theories about peace education emerged as peace activists attempted to deal with different forms of violence in a global dimension. Today peace education takes various shapes—international, human rights, development, environmental and conflict resolution education—as educators try to address different forms of violence in different social contexts (Harris, 2004). In the schools, education for peace also includes such programs as diversity education, peace and justice education, civic and democratic education, and violence-prevention education. It is often defined as the spreading of knowledge needed to attain and preserve peace, cooperation and solidarity in order to reduce violence, ethnocentrism and injustice (Galtung, 1990).

Researchers responded to increases of global intercultural conflicts, some of which had become extreme social situations (Koshmanova, Hapon & Carter, in press). They define cultural contexts, values and beliefs as underpinning factors that promote such situations (Koshmanova, 2003). Culture reflects and molds attitudes, becomes a medium through which values and behavioral patterns grow; it gets reflected in language and is passed on from one age group to another. Well established in cultural beliefs, deeply rooted stereotypes and behavioral patterns guide people's choices, leading to violence.

To make a transition from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, non-violent conflict resolution is an essential skill teachers must learn and teach to their students (Hutchinson, 1996). The processes of conflict transformation involve development of intercultural acceptance and acknowledgment of cultural commonalities through active listening, reflection, discussion and learning. It is crucial to recognize the conflicts as an inevitable part of life because they can become extreme situations in school if they are ignored (Carter, 2002). In teacher education, instruction for peace includes making peaceful contexts, supportive learning communities, and using methods of changing students' dispositions that embrace their diversity and view conflict from multiple perspectives before or in social crises (Salomon & Nevo, 2002).

Developing student capacities for building peace can be successfully accomplished through social education, especially through behavioral patterning and understanding of social situations (Carter, 2004). Behavioral patterning includes teachers modeling these behaviors through thinking aloud and sharing ideas about the conflicts they

AQ2



address with students; while examining social crises and analyzing contextual influences includes students' comprehensive problem-solving that addresses the needs of all who are or were involved in a social conflict (Carter, 2004).

AQ3 Relevant to the field of teacher education, there is a pedagogical value in using narrative analysis and discussion. Reflections and narratives are valuable methods that develop student plural visions and thinking (Hoover, 1994). As a social construct, this method displays social learning, which illustrates the content of the studied event. When changes in sociocultural circumstances lead to the formation of different narratives about a studied phenomenon, transformative learning can occur through analysis of narrative data (Koshmanova, Carter & Hapon, 2003). According to the constructivist learning theory, transformative learning represents an active process of constructing meaning rather than a passive process of absorbing information (Vygotsky, 1987). In other words, meanings are not put into learners; rather they construct their own meanings in response to new information and experiences (Garmon, 1997), which makes students' active engagement into dialogues and discussions among themselves and with researchers into transformative learning. Therefore this strategy aimed at 'education that enhances the understanding of processes which promote peace' (Spence & Makuwira, 2005, p. 29) becomes a fundamental issue that researchers and educators involved in peace studies need to be aware of.

AQ2 Transformative learning is particularly effective in divided and post-conflict societies, especially in those with a young democracy and a legacy of ethnopolitical conflict. Among peace education strategies that are practiced, for example in Ukraine, one qualitative study suggests the effectiveness of participatory approaches to teacher preparation, such as academic service learning, modeling a democratic classroom, and developing students' critical thinking and caring (Koshmanova & Holm, in press). Another research conducted in the Dominican Republic explores the effectiveness of a human rights course based on critical inquiry and discussion; the study reports its positive impact on student identity, self-confidence and solidarity with victims of human rights abuses (Bajaj, 2004). The analysis of data from a South African study on reduction of aggressive behavior at pre-school level also showed the positive impact of a peace education program that included transformative strategies of celebrating difference, raising self-esteem, getting along with others, effective communication, conflict management, caring for the environment and discussions on the essence of peace (Maxwell, Enslin & Maxwell, 2004).

Of equal importance for the field of peace education are transformative and participatory research approaches. According to Spence and Makuwira (2005), these methods are commensurate with an ideological and practical commitment to peace because they are process-oriented and distinctively consider the beliefs of the researcher, as well as impacts that this research may have upon the research community. The study promotes the idea of partnership between researchers and participants in order to ensure that activities contribute to constructive social transformation. Galtung (1996) and Levin (1999) suggest that peace research should be seen as integrally related to peace action because the researcher and the

participants are involved in a collective effort in which new knowledge is built, with benefits going to both sides.

Summarizing, studies indicate that through participatory and transformative learning and research, as well as through analysis of written and oral discourse in the conditions of supportive environment of participants and researchers, students can develop reflection and analytic skills, recognize their beliefs and stereotypes. Recognizing the value of narrative to examine concepts and identity bases of understanding, which Connelly and Clandinin (1999) identify through stories, we considered those factors in students listening to the stimulus material, answering open-ended questions and further conducting authentic discussions.

The goal and procedures

The purpose of the study is to test, or try out, an approach for changing beliefs and attitudes of teacher candidates towards peace, democracy, humanism and accepting others. The procedure for this study involved several steps:

- (1) Investigating teacher candidates' attitudes or ethnic stereotypes towards different nations bordering Ukraine.
- (2) Conducting attitudes/stereotypes intervention aimed at the formation of teachers' peaceful attitudes.
- (3) Analyzing the consequences of the intervention.

Step 1: investigating teacher candidates' attitudes or ethnic stereotypes towards different nations bordering Ukraine

During the first stage of our research, we did a psychological analysis of ethnic stereotypes using a psycho-semantic method, elaborated by Proto and Keehn (1957) and modified by Ageyev (1990). It allowed us not only to study the content of stereotypes, but also to do the quantitative analysis of how the Ukrainian students view other peoples.

We have chosen the psycho-semantic method for a number of reasons. Studies show that stimulus material of the semantic differential allows for research on a large selection of participants (Pronto & Keehn, 1957; Ageyev, 1990). Usually participants who have difficulties in selecting necessary words while describing concepts produce more adequate evaluations grounded in the semantic differential method (Ktsoyeva, 1986).

While composing stimulus material, we used the research experience of V. F. Petrenko (1983) and Ageyev (1990). Like Ageyev (1990), when developing a scale upon which students would characterize the level of certain character qualities, instead of using adjectives to label other ethnicities, we used adverbs to describe peoples' actions. We did this to avoid implanting social stereotypes into students' minds and also to avoid using offensive language and assigning labels. We included the following people groups: Ukrainians, Russians, Byelorussians, Polish, Slovaks,

Hungarians, Romanians and Moldavians. This choice was defined by our desire to study the stereotypes of the nations most visited by students and also because these population groups inhabit Ukraine.

Method

Participants. Volunteers (N= 102), 35 females and 67 males, ranging in age from 18 to 21 years, with a mean age of 19.5 years, were drawn from introductory teacher education courses at a large Ukrainian national university. Participants received extra credit for their participation.

Procedures and instruments. The participants were instructed to evaluate the specified nations individually, without comparing them one to another. They rated them on a scale of 1 to 8, with 1 meaning the highest intensity of the quality and 8 being the lowest intensity.

Since the procedure of the factor analysis supposes free factorization based on any given number of factors (Ageyev, 1990), for our research we selected several measurements of meanings from the ten typically defined by the researchers who use the psycho-semantic method (similarity; power; stability; evaluation; comfort; alertness; activeness; safety; temperament; complexity (Osgood *et al.*, 1967; Petrenko, 1983; Ageyev, 1990).

From the list of these typical factors, we modified the following five factors for our study:

- (1) *Similarity*: by the factor of similarity, we mean closeness in customs and traditions to Ukrainians.
- (2) *Affability*: by this factor we mean amiability, openness and friendliness of a nation. Affability includes communication and relationships among people, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with certain ways of interaction.
- (3) *Activeness*: the factor of activeness denotes people's psychological readiness to defend their rights in social and cultural life, in their political initiatives.
- (4) *Temperament*: by this factor, we mean emotional reactions of people, their aggressiveness, optimism or pessimism, or their level of enthusiasm for life.
- (5) *Complexity*: by the factor of complexity we mean human predictability or capriciousness, a level of supposed and predictable behavior.

Findings from Step 1

The study allowed us to conduct a comparative analysis of ethnic stereotypes. The findings are shown in Table 1, which reflects the evaluation of students' perceptions of peoples used in the study. Though students were not asked to assign each nation a unique ranking, they did so unanimously. A more detailed interpretation of the obtained data about the individual factors gives the following additional information.

Table 1. Ranking of studied objects on the basis of summative factor indicators

Ranking place	Factors				
	Similarity	Affability	Activeness	Temperament	Complexity
1	Ukrainians	Ukrainians	Russians	Moldavians	Hungarians
2	Russians	Poles	Poles	Hungarians	Moldavians
3	Byelorussians	Hungarians	Ukrainians	Romanians	Romanians
4	Poles	Russians	Hungarians	Russians	Slovaks
5	Slovaks	Slovaks	Romanians	Ukrainians	Poles
6	Hungarians	Romanians	Slovaks	Poles	Russians
7	Romanians	Byelorussians	Moldavians	Slovaks	Byelorussians
8	Moldavians	Moldavians	Byelorussians	Byelorussians	Ukrainians

15

Similarity

For *Similarity*, the participants viewed Ukrainians, Russians and Byelorussians as the most similar to themselves; their perceptions of Polish and Slovaks appeared somewhat similar to themselves also. Romanians and Hungarians were less similar to Ukrainians. We assume that historical, ethical and political relations were the main determinants for the participants' decision-making.

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Affability

The factor analysis showed that Ukrainians, Poles and Hungarians were perceived by the Ukrainian students as the most affable. Russians and Slovaks were given neutral ratings within the factor, while Moldavians, Romanians and Byelorussians were understood as non-harmonious, non-amiabile nations.

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Activeness

By their activeness, Russians were ranked the first, followed by the Polish people and Ukrainians. However, there was not enough agreement found among student perceptions of Hungarians and Romanians, and the decreased ranking was observed in student perceptions of Slovaks, Moldavians and Byelorussians.

40

Temperament

The most hot-tempered turned out to be Moldavians, followed by Hungarians and Romanians. Based on this factor, Russians and Ukrainians were perceived as more neutral. The mildest-tempered appeared to be Byelorussians, Slovaks and Poles.

Table 2. Portraits of the studied nations according to the ranked factors

Nations	Ranking places according to the factors				
	Similarity	Affability	Activeness	Temperament	Complexity
Ukrainians	1	1	3	5	8
Russians	2	4	1	4	6
Byelorussians	3	7	8	8	7
Poles	4	2	2	6	5
Slovaks	5	5	6	7	4
Hungarians	6	3	4	2	1
Romanians	7	6	5	3	3
Moldavians	8	8	7	1	2

Complexity

According to student perceptions, the most capricious in their individual and social behavior turned out to be Hungarians, Moldavians and Romanians. The medium complex, or more predictable and understandable, were Slovaks and Poles. Ukrainians, Russians and Byelorussians were the least complex, or in other words, most predictable and simple.

Conducted research allowed us to define stereotypical portraits of the studied nations. An integrated image of every people or nation, ranked by the factors, is shown in Table 2. It represents the eight-dimensional character analysis of each nation. For example, the participants perceived Russians as the most active and close, moderately amiable, medium-tempered, and rather non-complex. Table 2 provides models or stereotypical portraits of other nations on the basis of provided factors, where any first-ranking place also denotes the maximum intensity of any defined factor (*Similarity, Affability, Activeness, Temperament, Complexity*), while any eighth-ranking place means minimum intensity of any defined factor.

The study found that, as suggested, the students possessed stereotypes of different levels of intensity, regarding both themselves and members of other nations. Results indicate that Ukrainian students showed stereotypes by all the factors.

The worst stereotypes were demonstrated in the students' perceptions of Moldavians (by the factors of *Similarity, Activeness* and *Affability*), of Romanians (by the factors of *Similarity* and *Affability*), of Byelorussians (by the factors of *Affability, Activeness, Temperament* and *Complexity*), and Hungarians (by the factor of *Complexity*).

The research showed that the Ukrainian participants considered themselves most similar, affable, and relatively active, the least complex, and the most understandable. For example, among the typical oral statements the students shared with the researchers during short discussions, were the following:

We are good, kind and industrious people. I don't believe anybody will have any trouble understanding and liking us.

We, Ukrainians, are very lyrical and spiritual. And our women are very beautiful.

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I enjoy talking to Ukrainians, especially from the West.

We, Ukrainians, are a monolith nation.

In evaluating the other nations, the participants perceived them as better or worse, for example, more affable, more active, or less affable, less active:

Russians are more aggressive than Ukrainians. They always started wars ... We are much more peaceful than they are.

We are less active than Russians.

I do not feel comfortable with Poles and Russians; they are too complex to understand.

During the research, we noticed some gender peculiarities. Four (out of 34) female students approached us and said that it was difficult for them to evaluate the nations on the basis of such a differentiated system, that it would be much easier for them to evaluate the peoples according to an antonymous system, i.e. similar/non-similar. In addition to those students, eight females were choosing more polar judgments in their evaluations of peoples. For example, Ukrainians, Russians, Byelorussians and Poles occupied the first- and second-ranking places, while Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians and Moldavians were given the seventh- and eighth-ranking places. It is possible to say that these female students were avoiding moderate judgments. Explaining this peculiarity is not simple, but we assume that women tend to stereotype more than males. Another three female teacher candidates refused to rank the nations because they perceived the suggested factors as non-sufficient. This led us to supposition that women participants turned out to be more sensitive towards the system of ranking in comparison with male participants.

Step 2: conducting attitudes/stereotypes intervention

Addressing the second research question, we conducted an intervention to test the method of instilling in students more peaceful and democratic values. To do so, we did a psychological analysis of students' peaceful attitudes towards others and the world around them. This allowed us not only to assess the level of the teacher candidates' unfulfilled peaceful potential, but also to address the development of their peaceful attitudes, and to some extent to change prospective teachers' views about other people towards peace and reconciliation. Research question two was solved in three stages. During the first stage, students were asked to listen to the stimulus material. The next stage consisted of their filling in a questionnaire that contained questions indirectly linked with the stimulus material. We studied the obtained data for one week. During the third stage the participants discussed the concepts reflected in the stimulus material.

Method

The method was grounded in the test of assessing an individual's unfulfilled *moral potential*, elaborated by the researchers of St Petersburg Cultural-Historical School of

Psychological Testing (Kudryashov, 1992, 2002). Having modified this method according to the specifics of a teaching profession with the goal of forming students' peaceful attitudes, we further developed a questionnaire to assess students' *peaceful values*. We did this for a number of reasons. First, we consider the concept of *moral potential* to be insufficient for our goals because *morality* may be subject to different interpretations amongst individuals and cultural groups. Second, Kudryashov (2002) understands *morality* more as global philosophy of life, based on specific Christian moral values typical of the Russian people. We defined *peaceful values* (happiness, justice, goodness, caring for others, accountability) as core virtues important to all humans. We believe that in schools and community settings the concepts analyzed in the text may impart to the prospective teachers 'the values of planetary stewardship, global citizenship and human relations' (Harris, 2004, p. 5) which are crucial to peace, civic or democratic education in any country of the world. And third, these concepts specifically strengthen the values of multiculturalism, allowing individuals to find their roles in the sociocultural realities of a post-totalitarian society.

The first stage of intervention aimed at the formation of prospective teachers' peaceful attitudes: listening to the stimulus material. The concept was grounded in the legend called *The Legend of the Will of King David to King Solomon* that was translated into psychological language by Kudryashov (1992). The copies of the story were given out to the participants, and the researchers read aloud the following text to them:

When the time came for King David to die, he called his son, soon to be King Solomon, and told him a legend about happiness, justice, wisdom and goodness. 'To become just,' David told Solomon, 'man has to look at the world through his non-existence: *The world exists, and I do not*'. To be wise, man has to seek wisdom not in the world, but in himself: *The world does not exist, but only I exist*.' Man is good when he wants to live in harmony with the world: *The world exists, and I exist, but I do not wish to go against it, but to dissolve into it*. A truly happy man is one that has the whole world inside him and therefore he cannot lack anything: *The world exists, and I exist, but the world is dissolved in me*. David continued, 'So that the formulas of justice, wisdom, goodness, and happiness don't contradict each other and to defeat fear, people have to be taught at once what happiness, wisdom, justice, and goodness mean, as well as unhappiness, stupidity, injustice, and evil.' 'Different people fear different things,' explained King David. 'All fears come down to two types: when people are happy they fear death, when people are unhappy, they fear immortality. Therefore, the truly fearless is one who knows the price of happiness and of grief, and because of that one is not afraid of death and of immortality,' concluded King David. ... King Solomon passed away a long time ago, but the people remember him. He was said to be happy, wise, good, and just. But he reached this only because he rose above all these good things: he was fearless (Kudryashov, 1992, pp. 274–277).

Tools

To evaluate students' peaceful attitudes, we elaborated a quantitative indicator or the *coefficient of peaceful potential* (CPP) that defined the borders of *low*, *medium* and *high* level. We decided that if CPP is lower than 40 statistical units (%), it corresponds to non-adequate or *low* level of PP development; if between 40 to 60 statistical units (%), it corresponds to a *medium* level of PP development in the participants, and if 60

statistical units (%), it corresponds to a *high* level of PP development in the participants. However, the CPP does not reflect the already achieved level of personal democratic development for peace, but the existence of the participants' intellectual energy towards the formation of their peaceful attitudes: their personal openness towards democracy, goodness, justice, harmony, etc.

Parameters

We decoded the test indicators according to the following parameters based on the text we used:

- The parameter of *Happiness* we defined as 'a way to dissolve the world in oneself', or a person's ability to accept the world, and to feel the presence of the world within him/herself.
- By the parameter of *Goodness*, we denoted a person's 'ability to feel him/herself as a part of the world', to value this world, not to break its harmony, and feel his/her unity in it.
- By the parameter of *Wisdom*, we meant a person's ability to detach him or herself from the world, their ability to look at the same thing from different sides.
- The parameter of *Justice* we defined as person's ability to attain distance from his or her own self, to look at something from the eyes of others.
- By the parameter of *Fearlessness*, we meant one's ability to appreciate the harmony and equal value of this story's truths of goodness, wisdom, happiness and justice, which emphasized peaceful virtues of a person.

Questionnaire and test procedures

Every question of the questionnaire was indirectly linked with one or another fragment of the story. The questions were formulated as affirmative statements from the legend about goodness, justice, etc., the value of which didn't overcome the value of the concept. The questions of the test were based on the defined five parameters: *Happiness*, *Goodness*, *Wisdom*, *Justice* and *Fearlessness*. From the 25 questions, five questions were based on each of the five parameters.

The second stage of intervention: filling in the questionnaire. Students began the second stage after a ten-minute break that followed the first stage. The participants were given out the individual copies of the questionnaire on learning peaceful potential, with 25 questions each, which they filled out during the course of an hour. Each 'agree' answer equaled 3 points; 'disagree' equaled 2 points; and 'do not have any opinion' equaled 1 point. Before beginning work on the questionnaire, the participants were read the following instruction:

Imagine that somebody characterized you with the given descriptions. Depending on how well the characteristic describes you, underline the corresponding response: 'agree' (if you agree); or 'disagree' (if you disagree); or 'no opinion' (if you do not have any opinion).

The structure of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of five statements for each of the five parameters. Below is the list of examples of statements:

- ‘You are happy because you have the whole world within yourself.’
- ‘You think that unhappiness appears because humans are always lacking something.’ 5
- ‘If you cannot feel good now, then you will never feel good.’
- ‘You are good if you don’t want rise above the world.’
- ‘You think that people’s shortcomings are as natural as their advantages, and that’s why you treat them tolerantly.’ 10
- ‘You think that is impossible to exhaust the endless ocean of the unknown.’
- ‘As a rule, you make your decisions, considering the interests of others.’
- ‘You think that injustice appears because you treat the world with your likings and aversions.’
- ‘A person who overcomes his/her vices (stupidity, evil, unhappiness), is fearless.’ 15

Findings from Step 2

The research we conducted allowed us to define quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is represented by a diagram of the students’ unfulfilled peaceful potential (see Figure 1). The diagram shows that the mean development of the peaceful virtues was 55.4% (as shown in grey), which shows that students need to improve by 43.6% (as shown in white) if they are to reach their full peaceful potential. The diagram also shows the development of each of the individual parameters.

- (1) According to the parameter *Happiness*, students’ average constituted 83.7%, which was the highest average among all the parameters. 25
- (2) The average of the results according to the *Goodness* parameter made up 52.3%, which attests to students’ medium level of development according to this parameter.
- (3) The average of the results for the parameter of *Wisdom* made up 36.4%, which demonstrated that the participants needed much improvement in this area. 30
- (4) The average of the results for the parameter of *Justice* made up 52.6%, denoting an average need for peaceful improvement.
- (5) The average for the parameter of *Fearlessness* formed 42.0%, which shows students’ medium level of peaceful attitudes. 35

Figure 1 shows that the prevailing majority of students are characterized by their orientation towards *Happiness* (83.7%). We can suppose that such a figure is the result of the participants’ youthfulness and understanding of life as pleasure, fun and joyfulness. 40

Step 3: analyzing the consequences of the intervention

Since the level of development in all five parameters was not evenly distributed throughout the diagram, it was logical to conduct a third stage of the study. After

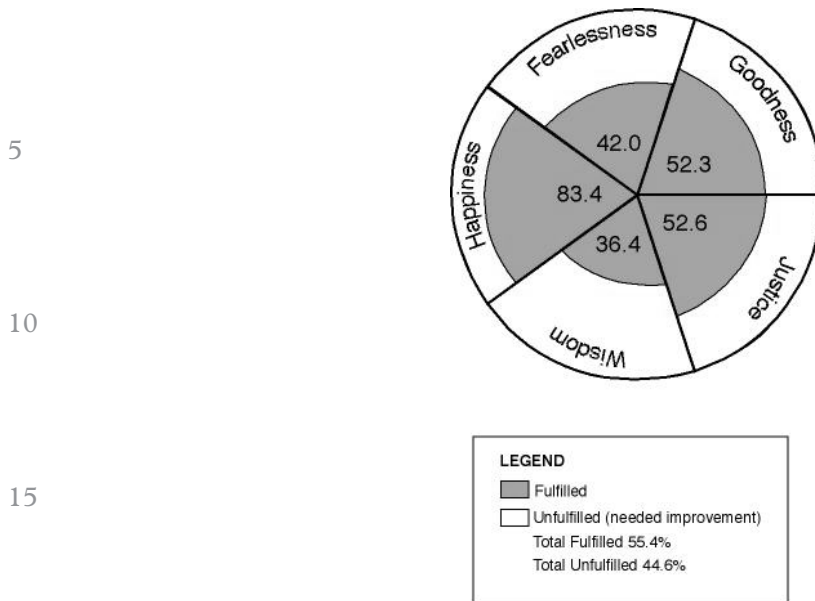


Figure 1. Fulfilled/unfulfilled peaceful potential of pre-service teachers

three weeks, we organized a reflective discussion and asked questions such as ‘What does it mean to be happy?’ In answering this question, some students considered the notion of happiness through the prism of cognitive criteria. They answered that ‘Happiness comes when you are understood, and people will be there to support you in difficult situations.’

There were other positions of understanding happiness, connected with personal, emotional, materialistic and hedonistic characteristics: ‘I feel happy when I receive expensive gifts.’ Others understood happiness through the prism of interpersonal interaction: ‘Happiness is when you make another person happy.’ As the majority of students shared this ideology and because we believed it to be essential for peaceful development, we supported this line of conversation.

Discussion

Reflecting on the findings of Step 1, we believe that the issue of stereotypes needs special analysis. We suppose that students’ perceptions of other people were possibly influenced by the social, political, and cultural-historical events from the past. As throughout history western Ukraine was a part of Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, all the parameters (*Similarity, Activeness, Affability, Temperament and Complexity*), reflect a high degree of international and inter-ethnic relationships between the nations and Ukraine.

However, not all the stereotypes upon which the perceptions of other people are built can be easily explained on the basis of social, historical and cultural events



because of the complex, multilevel and ambiguous nature of their formation. Thus the origin of Ukrainian stereotypes is a topic to be explored through further studies.

Concluding our discussion of the obtained findings from Step 1, we came to the following assumptions. Research showed that teacher candidates have ethnic stereotypes not only about their neighboring nations, but also about themselves. Participants perceived their people with a certain degree of positive simplifications, as close, similar, understandable, and the least complex, while they characterized the other nations with negative simplicity, as complex and non-understandable.

The results of the study during Steps 2 and 3 showed that the most developed areas of peaceful virtues were students' orientations towards *Goodness* (more than 52% of students) and *Justice* (52.6%). These results demonstrate the participants' average peaceful development and their need for improvement.

During the discussion we conducted, the students connected these parameters (*Goodness*, *Justice*, etc.) with the issues of peace and democracy. For example, such statements were rather typical:

Everybody hopes for goodness, especially those who live in places of conflict.

We need more civil initiatives to change the world for the better.

It is necessary to create a society of international friendship, in which people would be kinder to each other.

During the discussion about the parameters of *Wisdom* and *Fearlessness*, it was important for us to consider these qualities in the context of personal traits that are oriented towards others. In this regard, we consider the following student's opinion to be very insightful:

It's not interesting to be smart for yourself. Man's brain has to improve his life and those who surround him.

On the other hand, there was an interesting comment on *Fearlessness*:

One shouldn't be afraid of cosmic disasters, but should be afraid of a man with weapons in his arms instead.

These questions caused students' reflection and a long discussion which lasted for two hours. The idea of this discussion was to break student assumptions about the concept that happiness and good can only be related to individuals. It was important for us to transfer students' personal self-orientations into their intrapersonal orientations that understand happiness as it relates to unity with others.

Limitations of the study

The study had certain limitations that should be mentioned. One limitation was methodological in that the evaluation relied on self-reports of student attitudes, which are not always the best indicators of actual behavior, but more indicators of student visions of their ideal selves. Second, the study was conducted with the students who were in fact a more accelerated class and more apt to absorb any

theoretical material more rapidly than the average students from less competitive content area majors.

5 **Conclusions and implications for teacher education**

The exploratory study of changing students' ethnic stereotypes into peaceful attitudes allowed us to come to some encouraging conclusions about the effectiveness of the method suggested. Participating in the three research steps conducted by the instructors, students reflected, discussed and eventually started to change their negative or ambivalent attitudes towards other nations. Moreover, they became more open to other peoples, and wanted to get more involved in international cooperation and participate in activities with other ethnicities within Ukraine. Thinking about other nations, students became more aware of the diverse population inhabiting Ukraine, and formed more sensitive and compassionate attitudes towards them not only during discussion and personal reflection in the dormitory, but also in other settings, in which students were involved during their studies in the teacher education program (for example, two students initiated their field practice in schools for minorities). Among the statements students made about the Ukrainian nation, a rather typical point of view was the following one expressed by one student during his field practice in one of the university cluster schools:

I even didn't know that there are some ethnic differences among the Ukrainians, some different customs and traditions, and that some of the 'Ukrainians' are not Ukrainians at all. Working in schools for minorities, I got convinced that students better open to each other while telling about their ethnic culture and the like. It was so interesting ...

Despite being rigid during Step 1, students' beliefs about other nations eventually started to change and develop in a more democratic and peaceful direction. We also believe that adequate classroom discussion can facilitate learning when students have the opportunity to reflect on the topic afterwards. Learning through reflection and discussion should be more than sharing perceptions of a situation. Compassionate communication helps the participants develop necessary dispositions about accepting others, and core democratic values as well.

We believe that the teacher candidates' perceptions of other nations observed during Step 1 were influenced by student stereotypes about their own people. The participants defined the Ukrainian people as very close, amiable, simple, rather active, but not 'tempered'—optimistic, while they defined others as complex, not similar and not understandable. Learning to accept and understand others is the foundation that peace educators promote for building stronger communities (Carter, 2002). We believe that teacher educators should develop students' awareness of each other as diverse individuals because if educators can influence the thoughts of teacher candidates, they can influence their actions. This can be seen as a transforming process that is closely related to the peace-building process (Spink, 2005).

The data obtained from Step 1 showed the necessity of the development of student critical thinking aimed at changing their social perceptions and improving their

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communication with other nations, as well as their democratic attitudes. Teacher educators should develop reflective exercises on student stereotypes about themselves and others. However, these exercises should not only develop students' knowledge, but adequate experiences as well.

The data obtained during Steps 1 and 2 showed the necessity for further work of teacher educators in the direction of democratic and peace education. The study pointed to the significance of axiology, the necessity of student values development, oriented towards social policies and democratic practices. The medium level of fulfilled peaceful potential reflected in Figure 3 showed that teachers should pay more attention to the development of students' democratic qualities, which are crucial for peaceful co-existence of all the nations in the world (kindness, justice, happiness, goodness).

The study also defined the parameters of peaceful development of a personality: one's openness towards goodness, justice, harmony, etc. However, to celebrate diversity and plurality in our era of globalization, prospective teachers need not only more conversation about the values of democracy, tolerance and human rights, but also bigger multi-ethnic, participatory social involvement.

The research we conducted, especially during its reflection stage, allowed the instructors to actually test the method of formation of students' peaceful attitudes towards other nations and to emphasize teacher candidates' intrapersonal understandings of planetary thinking values. The methodology of the study was an action research by its nature; it helped students in forming their peace-building initiatives, like their suggestions about creating student societies of international friendships and further follow-up activities in dorms and communities. Students' interests, as well as their generally positive response towards democratic, peaceful initiatives, indicated the necessity of teacher educators' work towards deepening ethical aspects of students' professional knowledge, with special emphasis on the formation of students' peaceful attitudes in a post-bellum learning environment.

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