

## **EDUCATION DURING TIMES OF UNREST: HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICE**

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It is undeniable that now Ukraine is struggling through serious hardships in political, economical and general civil situation. Whatever is the official name for the armed conflict in the East of our country – ‘anti-terroristic operation’ or ‘war’ – it strongly and negatively influences all spheres of lives and activities of Ukrainian people.

The impact is obvious in the educational domain: universities and institutes of the Crimean Peninsula can be practically considered ‘casualties’, while Donetsk National University had to be evacuated to Vinnytsia ‘in order to preserve the life and health of citizens of Ukraine’ [2], and several higher educational institutions of Luhansk were moved and spread throughout the region’s smaller towns, which surely prevents them from operating properly. Vast number of students and members of teaching staff were obliged to look not only for a new home, but also for a new ‘alma mater’.

The current situation requires urgent measures to be taken as for the normalisation of the educational process in Ukraine. It is necessary to maintain the link between students and teachers to keep up with continuous and cohesive studying. At the times of unrest people can be drawn apart involuntary and loose contact with one another, for presence in buildings under attack or travelling in-between different regions can become problematic and life-threatening.

For instance, during World War I and II, when Internet was still unheard of, the University of London managed to enable its students to continue their studies and pass exams while in the army or even ‘behind the wire’. Having had a beneficial experience during World War I with Ruhleben Camp in Germany (where John D. Rockefeller organized a special hall for recreation and study), the University of London so-called External System was quickly put into operation in 1939, and “exam papers were sent out to some 17,600 candidates in 88 camps ... from April 1942 to June 1945 10,104 candidates took exams” [3].

Nowadays, at the age of rapid development of communications, teachers and students can certainly make use of the Internet. The National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” took its own preventive measures in case of the supposed heating cut-off and the subsequent need to turn to distance education in order not to interrupt the learning process. By the beginning of January, 2015, the employees of the Technical English Language Department #1 have created an Internet resource based on a Moodle platform which contains all the necessary tasks and instructions for all the years of study at five KPI faculties: lessons are supplied for the first two months of the second term [4].

The changes in the educational system are to be implemented not only with university dislocations or methods of student-teacher communication, but within the topics and aspect of a learning programme as well. Speaking about linguistical

practices, it is common to organise specialised war-time institutes and courses. For example, Nikolia Biasi, a Soviet general and a speaker of 14 languages, founded his Principal of the Institute of Military Interpreters in 1940, which had trained about 4,000 specialists up to 1945 [1]. During the German language courses, attention was given to techniques of deciphering documents, interrogation, pronunciation and German cultural environment, military slang, etc.

Such practices are hardly applicable in Ukraine nowadays, for there is no direct foreign language opponent, moreover, most Ukrainians are able to speak both Ukrainian and Russian, hence, there is almost no need for specialised linguistical training – in case of spy activity between the adversarial parties. Therefore, our basic programme and textbooks may stay the same, while changes in topics for home-reading or discussion groups can be applied.

After the American tragedy of September 11, 2001, the course towards the Democratic Education in Times of Conflict in the USA was adopted by the government [5]. This includes engaging topics in the fields of peace and multicultural education. The former is centered upon understanding and acquiring skills of harmonious behavior with oneself and the others, while the latter deals with teaching how to accept national, ethnical and cultural differences. The materials and teaching methods on both types of education are researched by numerous specialists in the field: Banks and Banks, Tharp, Covert, McLaughlin & McLeod, and the results of their investigations are free and accessible online.

Hopefully, by wisely applying all the above-mentioned approaches and methods during the educational process, the teaching staff throughout Ukraine could make learning as easy, profitable and applicable as possible. Attention should be turned towards peace-making and conflict-solving topics, while extra care should be taken in mentioning burning social topics.

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