

Development of Social and Intercultural Competence in Students through Peer Assessment

Ekaterina Z. Tomova

Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', Sofia, Bulgaria

E-mail: eztomova@uni-sofia.bg

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8207-1205>

DOI: 10.26907/esd.16.3.18

Submitted: 20 April 2021; Accepted: 25 June 2021

Abstract

This article presents the results from research into the development of social and intercultural competence in student teachers through peer assessment. The purpose of the study is to identify and describe the degree to which peer assessment can influence the development of competencies. Also, to formulate recommendations for the integration of peer assessment in the education of students towards the development of social and intercultural competence. The theoretical analysis is based on a review of the scientific literature on social and intercultural competence and peer assessment, and it is followed by a quantitative and qualitative analysis. Twenty-five students, training to be teachers at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of pedagogy, participated in the study. Each of them wrote an essay on intercultural competence and each of the students reviewed three of their colleagues' essays. The research confirms that providing feedback helps the development of social and intercultural competence in two directions: students form skills for providing constructive feedback and criticism; and they develop their abilities for accepting feedback, reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses, which leads to striving for self-improvement. Another conclusion, based on the analysis is, that by providing detailed instructions prior to peer assessment, by organizing a subsequent discussion and reflection, students would improve their skills in providing feedback, constructive criticism, considering the ideas of others with respect, understanding different perspectives. Hence, the study confirms that peer assessment provides educational opportunities for the development of social and intercultural competence.

Keywords: peer assessment, social competence, intercultural competence, students' training, pedagogical study.

Развитие социальной и межкультурной компетенции у студентов посредством метода взаимного оценивания

Екатерина З. Томова

Софийский университет им. Святого Климента Охридского, София, Болгария

E-mail: eztomova@uni-sofia.bg

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8207-1205>

DOI: 10.26907/esd.16.3.18

Дата поступления: 20 апреля 2021; Дата принятия в печать: 25 июня 2021

Аннотация

В статье представлены результаты исследования по развитию социальной и межкультурной компетенции у студентов педагогических направлений подготовки с помощью метода взаимного оценивания. Цель исследования – определить, как взаимное оценивание влияет на развитие компетенций, разработать рекомендации для интеграции данного метода в обучение студентов. На первом этапе был проведен теоретический анализ на основе обзора научной литературе по проблематике. Затем автором был проведен количественный и ка-

чественный анализ. В исследовании приняли участие 25 студентов педагогического факультета Софийского университета им. Святого Климента Охридского. Участникам необходимо было написать эссе о межкультурной компетенции и оценить три письменные работы своих сокурсников. Результаты исследования подтверждают, что предоставление обратной связи способствует развитию социальной и межкультурной компетенции в двух направлениях: у студентов формируются навыки предоставления обратной связи и конструктивной критики; студенты учатся принимать обратную связь, анализируя свои слабые и сильные стороны, что побуждает к самосовершенствованию. Автор также приходит к выводу, что детальные инструкции до проведения взаимного оценивания, а также последующая дискуссия и рефлексия помогают студентам гораздо легче оценивать работы сверстников и предлагать конструктивную критику. При этом они уважительно воспринимают идеи других людей и принимают разные точки зрения. Результаты исследования подтверждают, что взаимное оценивание способствует развитию социальной и межкультурной компетенции.

Ключевые слова: взаимное оценивание, социальная компетенция, межкультурная компетенция, подготовка студентов, педагогическое исследование.

Introduction

Social and intercultural competence are an increasingly important area in pedagogy. They are thought to be very significant for the growth of children as accomplished individuals, due to the values and qualities that are formed in the process of developing these competencies, such as tolerance, communication, empathy, respect for others, the ability to create and maintain constructive interpersonal relationships. The construction of such a value system is also viewed as a key factor for the students, who as future teachers will participate in educational interactions aimed at the formation and development of competencies in children.

Social and intercultural competence are a part of a set of eight key competencies for lifelong learning (European Union, 2018), which emphasizes their importance in the overall formation of personality. Although not differentiated into a separate group, components of intercultural competence are present in other competencies (Chavdarova-Kostova, 2010). Knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards social and intercultural interactions are interrelated and intersecting. Giurova (2004) claims that social competence is an element in the field of intercultural competence, as it would not be possible to form productive relations with other people, other cultures if a person does not have empathy and communication skills, and the ability to solve conflicts. Furthermore, in her analysis of intercultural education, Chavdarova-Kostova (2010) argues, that interculturality is a value, which represents non-violence and highlights the peaceful ways of solving conflicts.

This prompts the interconnection between social and intercultural competencies. The culture of peace and non-violence, the rejection of prejudices towards the different is achievable if the child develops tolerance and empathy, and other personal qualities, oriented towards the well-being of people, society. Of crucial importance is the understanding of the value of others as individuals, their cultural identity, perceived not as an obstacle or a defect, but as a part of their overall nature, enriching themselves and the people with whom they interact. An element of the essence of interculturality and social competence is the perception of others not as a threat or carrier of negative feelings, but as an opportunity for enrichment of knowledge, feelings, emotions, and viewpoints. The interactions based on reciprocal tolerance and respect present opportunities for the development and improvement of individuals and society as a whole, for cooperation between people, regardless of their differences, oriented towards a better, more humane, more peaceful future.

Both these competencies include characteristics such as respect for the opinion of other people, the ability to perceive other points of view on a subject, to feel and express empathy and compassion, the capability to work in a team, and reflection on strengths and weaknesses. These values and qualities, together with others, are also essential for the process of peer assessment. According to numerous studies, peer assessment is useful for the development of skills for lifelong learning - critical thinking, reflection, providing and receiving feedback, meta-cognitive skills, and more (Ibarra-Saiz et al., 2020; Topping, 1998; Harrison, 2010; Alzaid, 2017; Wride, 2017). Furthermore, successful peer assessment requires the participants to be objective, to assess not on the basis of prejudice (race, gender, religion), but on observable facts and criteria. In this context, it can be suggested that peer assessment could be implemented in higher education for multiple educational purposes, including the development of social and intercultural competence in students.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The present research aims to outline the connection between the development of social and intercultural competence and peer assessment. Its purpose is to examine whether the process of peer assessment could be beneficial to the development of these competencies. Among the main objectives are: to review the scientific literature and research on social competence, intercultural competence, and peer assessment; to study the influence of peer assessment on the development of different skills and attitudes in students; to determinate the key elements of the structure of peer assessment and underline several suggestions, which would favor its successful incorporation in students' training for the development of social and intercultural competence. The study also attempts to continue the discussions related to the competence approach in student training and peer assessment.

Literature review

The dynamic processes in society, the changing needs, demands and interests of adolescents on the one hand, and socio-economic requirements on the other, are a prerequisite for changes in education. In today's world, a variety of values and qualities attract increased interest regarding social, personal, and professional realization. The Recommendation of the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament on a Framework for Key Competencies for lifelong learning was developed (European Union, 2018) in order to successfully prepare young people in the current conditions, and to provide a common basis for comparing school results and achievements at national and international, pan-European level.

The competence approach presents a valuable new paradigm, concentrated not solely on the knowledge, distanced from children's needs and interests, but focused on the learners and their prosperous inclusion in society. This approach integrates knowledge (the cognitive domain) with the affective domain. The process of forming values, attitudes, moral and social norms is embodied in the learning process (Chavdarova-Kostova, 2011). Specifically, the set of key competencies is orientated towards the formation and development of eight competencies, among which are social competence and intercultural competence.

Despite the recently increased significance of the topic of competencies, the term is not new in the scientific literature. According to McClelland (1973), tests for intelligence should be replaced with tests for competence. His argument is based on the fact that each profession requires specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which are important for the work performance, instead of knowledge that is not related to the field. There are various definitions that describe the term competence, and multiple classifications for the different

competencies (Andreev, 1998; Delibaltova, 2003; Merdzhanova, 2004; Chavdarova-Kostova, 2010; Emerling & Boyatzis, 2012; Desev, 2015). The varied definitions generally overlap and introduce particular aspects of the meaning of "competence", primarily referring to skills, knowledge, intelligence, abilities, qualities, experience, effectiveness as elements of the competence. The term is considered predominantly as a complex construct, multi-spectral personality formation, and an integrative personality trait, comprised of the characteristics listed above.

The term "competence" is characterized as the compilation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the Framework for Key Competencies for lifelong learning (European Union, 2018). Social competence is listed as fifth and it is perceived as one with the personal competence and competence to acquire learning skills. Intercultural competence is present in most (if not all) of the other competencies, primarily in regard to competence for cultural awareness and expression, multilingual competence, and social competence. Chavdarova-Kostova (2012b) states that the existence of intercultural competence is a key factor in effective communication, constructive interactions with diverse socio-cultural groups and individuals. In order to achieve such productive interrelations, one should express empathy, tolerance, willingness to cooperate with others, social awareness, and emotional intelligence. Consequently, intercultural competence is immanently connected to social competence, which also consists of the components specified above.

Numerous authors interpret the content of social competence. Cavell (1990) clarifies that the main components of social competence are social adjustment, social performance, and social skills. He describes particular skills, in relation to this competence, distributed in three groups: information coding (communicative) skills, decision-making skills, and performance skills. According to Orpinas (2010), social competence refers to the ability to create and maintain constructive social interactions, to adapt to different situations, to consider the emotions and decisions of other people. The author states that the understanding of social competence differs based on the different social situations, development, and cultural characteristics of each person.

Mizova & Tsvetanska (2013) describe this competence as a multidimensional construct, comprised of interrelated cognitive, affective, motivational-behavioral components aimed at achieving socially acceptable goals. Correlation can be identified between social competence and emotional intelligence, in regard to the various emotions and feelings which determine communication, and which are crucial for productive interactions. Also, the emotional and cognitive domains are interdependent areas of human identity (Gospodinov, 2010), therefore the emotional and rationale often merge during social situations. Orpinas (2010) suggests that there are four main emotional processes, associated with social competence: the awareness of diverse emotions in oneself and others, expressed verbally and nonverbally; the ability for self-regulation and self-control, maintaining equanimity; the capability for communicating with positivity, for recognition of negative emotions and connection on the base of similar interests; and the ability for the perception of the situation from other points of view, for empathy.

Social competence is a developmental construct for maintaining meaningful relationships with others, effectiveness in engaging in social interactions, "the behavioral manifestation of a child's emotional and regulatory competencies while interacting with other people" (Junge et al., 2020, p.2). A number of scientists illustrate the correlation between social competence and intercultural competence. The comprehension of the existence and development of the components of social competence vary, depending on the different contexts, cultural values, group social and moral norms, expectations of the concrete society and individuals (Topping et al., 2000; Orpinas, 2010). Thus, the socially and interculturally competent person understands that there are specifics in each social

context and is able to react accordingly - to express respect for other people's emotions, thoughts, values, and beliefs, to show solidarity, to be able to perceive situations from different perspectives, to solve social problems, and to communicate in a meaningful and constructive way.

Paelman and Verlot (2007) argue that intercultural competence is a set of skills for understanding and appreciation of socio-cultural differences, of the effective communication in a diverse cultural environment. Agatucci (2000) constructs a model for intercultural competence, primarily focusing on knowledge and cogitation about different cultures; experience in cross-cultural interactions; viewpoint and appreciation of oneself own culture and other cultures; intercultural sensitivity and participation in intercultural dialog; comprehension for the human unity and similarities, the ability for appropriate social actions, interactions, cooperation.

Deardorff and Jones (2012) note that the significance of intercultural competence is also increasing in higher education, dealing with the preparedness of young people to address and solve global issues, to live, work and interact in a globalized world. They also note the existence of ongoing debates on the essence, meaning, and components of intercultural competence. A number of studies outline tolerance, appreciation for other cultures, respect for all individuals regardless of cultural differences, ability to communicate effectively in a cross-cultural context as some of the main components of this competence. In this respect, Chavdarova-Kostova (2019) advocates that, with the move towards globalization, a new important aspect emerges, connected to the contemporary processes of convergence of people through technology, education, work, and travel. This leads to the necessity for the development of intercultural competence in children and adults, preparing them for prosperous adaptation in a multicultural society.

An intriguing approach is applied by Kim (2002), who discusses the distinction between intercultural communication competence and cultural communication competence. The components of the latter competence are specific for the different cultures, whereas the content field of intercultural communication competence is thought to be constant for all cross-cultural situations. In intercultural competence in the educational context, the individuality of the student has high value, and among the main purposes are the establishment of safe, creative, positive, empathetic surroundings, the encouragement of students' initiative, support, and acceptance of others, reciprocal tolerance, and solidarity (Vasileva, 2009). Communication in intercultural situations is dependent on multiple factors, including but not limited to the process of achieving understanding, knowledge of social principles and conventions in the use of language, subjective impressions, stereotypes and prejudices, contextual awareness, information gathering, emotion regulation (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

Various scientists have constructed models for the development of intercultural competence (Agatucci, 2000; Bennett, 1999; Bennett, 1986) focusing on overcoming prejudices, understanding differences and various cultures, while also underlining the importance of self-acknowledgment, maintaining a balance between appreciation of a person's own cultural heritage (traditions, values, beliefs, behavior concepts) and respect for other cultures. Thus, a person's world-view consists of the comprehension of diversity as a positive element, as an opportunity for enriching one's own experience, knowledge, and skills, of respect for human dignity and rights, and requisite for cooperation. Another model is the Hofstede model of six dimensions of national cultures - power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/ collectivism, masculinity/femininity, long/short term orientation, and indulgence/restraint (Hofstede, 2011). This provides incredibly useful data, analysis, thoughts, and reflections, which guide researchers to this day in their studies in the areas of culture and interculturality.

This brief review of scientific publications on the subject of social and intercultural competence reveals the ongoing debate concerning the particular definitions and components of these competencies. In general, however, the theses for the main elements contained in the content field of the competencies are unambiguous - social awareness, tolerance and solidarity, respect for others, sympathy and support, cooperation; observance of social values and norms; taking into account one's own needs, opportunities, and interests; problem-solving and conflict resolution, decision making; productive communication and coexistence with other individuals in a society based on constructive interpersonal relationships.

There are numerous educational methods that can be applied in order to form and develop social and intercultural competence. Peer assessment, is a process, during which learners assess each other's work and provide feedback to their colleagues. It could be implemented for achieving the goal of development of social and intercultural competence.

In peer assessment students are involved in procedures of assessing their peers' performance, based on specific criteria (Tigelaar & Tartwijk, 2010). It is a social process in which providing and receiving feedback is essential for the improvement of each learner (Tillema, 2010). Gielen et al. (2011) claim that the two most common goals of peer assessment are as an assessment tool and for enhancing learning outcomes. The author mentions additional aims: development of social control, the formation of skills for self-regulation during lifelong learning, and encouraging the participation of students in the education process (Gielen et al., 2011).

According to Topping (2009), during peer assessment students reflect on the quality and quantity of their peers' work, which can be in the form of writing, verbal presentation, or another kind of a product. Peer assessment can be formative or summative, with the concept of helping students structure their learning, self-reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses, and developing a wide range of skills and abilities. Furthermore, peer learning is a part of socialization; it is a natural process, a fragment of development from the earliest years of a person's life (Boud & Falchikov, 2007). In this respect, peer assessment can contribute to collaborative work and problem-based learning, as the students engage in constructive criticism, exchange of opinions and argumentation, reflection and self-reflection, consideration of specific issues, and decision making.

Spiller (2012) lists several of the benefits which peer assessment provides for students:

- It can be used to help students collaborate in order to identify their omissions in learning and strive for improvement;
- Students engaged in commentary on the work of others can heighten their own capacity for judgment and making intellectual choices;
- Students receiving feedback from their peers can get a wider range of ideas about their work to promote development and improvement;
- Peer evaluation helps to lessen the power imbalance between teachers and students and can enhance the students' status in the learning process;
- The focus of peer feedback can be on process, encouraging students to clarify, review and edit their ideas;
- The processes can help students learn how to receive and give feedback, which is an important part of most work contexts (Spiller, 2012 p. 11-12)

Whereas the beneficial effects of peer assessment vary considerably, there are indications that this tool can influence the development of critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills, communication skills, observational, self-reflecting and regulating skills, abilities for providing constructive feedback, and for receiving such, skills for self-criticism and evaluation, and striving for self-improvement (Tillema,

2010). Being a social process, peer assessment is related to various interpersonal and interactional processes, such as trust between peers, between peers and the educator, objectivity and fairness, interculturality (Tillema, 2010). Alzaid (2017) argues that peer assessment provides students with the opportunity to be more active and to participate to a greater degree in the learning process, to develop their abilities for critical thinking, teamwork, appreciation of others and their comments, and viewpoints.

Hence, the process of peer assessment could present educational opportunities, for developing social and intercultural competence, as both competencies consist of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, orientated towards the adequate assessment of social situations, understanding of other people's actions and intentions, feelings and needs, and compliance with them. This kind of appraisal could also be useful in terms of developing other characteristics of social and intercultural competence. However, certain aspects need to be considered.

While multiple studies are devoted to outlining the benefits of peer assessment, a number of them also trace the limitations of this process. Gielen et al. (2011) specify, that for each set goal of peer assessment there need to be clear criteria, compliant with the concrete aims. Panadero & Alqassab (2019) studied the influence of anonymity on students' performance and perspectives, feedback, grading accuracy, and on the social effects of the appraisal. When the peer assessment is public instead of anonymous and confidential, students often have difficulties with evaluating their friends, since expressing criticism might have an impact on the dynamics of the friendship (Tigelaar & Tartwijk, 2010). Even if the appraisal is confidential, peers may experience anxiety, before they receive their feedback, and humiliation if the feedback is negative and not constructive (Boud & Falchikov, 2005). Spiller concludes, that using marks could have negative repercussions, as students often focus on specific marks rather than on other important aspects of the assessment (Spiller, 2010).

For the process of peer assessment to be considered effective, the evaluation, feedback, commentary, and reflection need to be fair. Students need to be sure that they will receive objective feedback, that it will not be related to their interactions with others (whether well-developed or not), to their differences from others (religion, race, etc.) and that they can trust their peers. It is essential for the evaluation to be fully compliant with the actual results of the work, to delineate the strengths, and to constructively identify weaknesses and suggestions for improvement. Otherwise, peer assessment would not be helpful, but useless and distressing. Thus, guidelines need to be provided, and the assessment criteria should be clear and understandable (Tigelaar & Tartwijk, 2010). The formulation of concrete criteria might increase the honesty and credibility and reduce the eventual bias (Alzaid, 2017). An effective approach would also be for the students to be encouraged, well prepared, and to have the opportunity to practice beforehand, in order to be able to assess their peers efficiently (Boud & Falchikov, 2005).

Taking these characteristics of peer assessment into account, this research was conducted with appropriate precautions, regarding fairness, credibility, objectivity, and more.

Methodology

The research was conducted during a training course in Intercultural education (pedagogy specialty), with twenty-five students in their 4th year of education in Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The training delivered through in the Learning Management System *Moodle*, because of the specific pandemic situation in the country, during the winter semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. The peer assessment was

intended to be formative and was based on adaptation of the model, presented by van den Berg et al., (2006), including essential design features for effective peer assessment in university teaching.

There were two main stages, at which the research was conducted. The first stage consisted of two steps:

During seminars the social and intercultural competencies were discussed, including their content fields, the relation between them, the competence approach in education.

The second step involved writing an essay on the subject "Forming intercultural competence in children - suitable activities."

Stage two of the research was constructed in 4 steps:

After each student wrote their essay, the texts were submitted to Moodle - on a "workshop" activity module, specifically planned for this purpose.

The students then proceeded to assess the essays. Each student reviewed and evaluated three essays, focusing on providing constructive feedback (outlining the strengths of the work and the weaknesses, providing suggestions for improvement, constructive criticism) and objectivity. The following criteria were specified, helping the students accomplish the assignment:

- there is a clear description of a specific activity for the formation of intercultural competence in the essay;
- the roles of the children and the teacher are commented on in the essay, appropriate means, methods, and resources are taken into account and a time frame for the implementation of the activity is presented;
- references for the ideas in the essay are presented and described correctly.

For each of the criteria, students had the option to select the degree, to which it is accomplished, through a scale from "good" to "poor", and to provide a comment accenting on strengths of the essay and elements which could be improved (including suggestions in this direction).

After all of the essays were assessed, the students reviewed the comments on their work. They were encouraged to reflect on the feedback they received and to use it as a motivation for self-improvement, rather than simple criticism. It was stressed, that the idea was for this feedback to be viewed as a contribution and direction for achieving better results.

The final step of stage two of the research was to discuss the process, to reflect on the students' experience, feelings and thoughts during the assignment and after receiving feedback from their colleagues. The main points of the discussion were:

If it was hard to be objective when evaluating someone else's work performance;

If it was difficult to receive feedback, especially if it includes critical observations and suggestions for improvement;

If a person can be objective toward oneself and to what degree

If there were any regrets or dissatisfactions during the process - if someone thought that their evaluation is not fair, or if they thought they gave an unfair assessment.

The process was monitored throughout the peer assessment in order to create a safe environment for the students, with no issues regarding intolerance, disrespect, insulting or tactless actions, and remarks. The students were encouraged to ask questions, to share their opinions, to cooperate and comment with one another, to use their problem-solving skills and critical thinking.

During the examination of the results, a two-stage analysis was carried out. First, the students' essays were analyzed, according to the following criteria: the degree to which students had formed intercultural competence; the level of comprehension of the

components related to the competence; preparedness of the students for the formation of the indicated competence in children. Then, the results from the peer assessment assignment were analyzed, on the basis of the four main components of social competence: communication skills, tolerance, empathy, and cooperation. The extent, to which students had formed skills and attitudes for providing constructive feedback was traced (along with other qualities and values that this ability includes). Further analysis examined if the process of providing, receiving, and reflecting on the feedback (together with the other elements of peer assessment) contained educational opportunities for the development of social and intercultural competence.

The theoretical analysis is based on the studies and theories of numerous authors, including Chavdarova-Kostova (2012a), Spiller (2012), Deardorff & Jones (2012), Hofstede (2011), Boud & Falchikov (2005), and others. The data analysis is based on the competence approach, specifically on the set of eight key competencies (European Union, 2018). The results are presented through Krathwohl's Taxonomy of Affective Learning (Allen & Friedman, 2010). The different levels of the taxonomy represent the different degrees to which students have formed and developed the competencies, based on the criteria.

Results

Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective learning (Krathwohl, 1964) was used to present the results from the study, as the building blocks of affective learning are emotions, feelings, values, attitudes, which are identified, examined, and interiorized/rejected during the experience. With the interiorization (or rejection) of values, affective learning could lead to modifications in the worldview, behavior. Among the values and attitudes that can be formed during the process, are social justice, empathy, integrity, dignity, tolerance towards other people (Allen & Friedman 2010), as well as components associated with social and intercultural competence.

The taxonomy of affective learning consists of five levels - receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, characterization (interiorized values). Receiving is the lowest level of the taxonomy. The levels Receiving and Responding are connected to the students' perception and attitude, the degree to which they are attentive and responsive towards presented concepts, ideas, values. At these levels, students are willing to receive, respond, and react to information, to be active participants in the process, they are aware of the existence of different concepts. The third level (valuing) is associated with students' beliefs and attitudes about moral and social norms, values, virtues. At this level, they form their own ideas towards certain values, adopt them in their behavior, and are able to identify, describe and defend a value. The Organization level refers to the construction of one's own value system, based on the acceptance and interiorization of particular values from the previous level. The organization of the set of values consists of comparing values, resolving conflicts, systematizing different values. At the final level (characterization) a person can be characterized by their value system, their worldview is shaped according to their beliefs, their behavior is consistent with the set of interiorized values (Allen & Friedman 2010).

The results are described in two tables, presenting the number and percentage of students for each of the two stages during the research. Table 1 refers to the results from the essays and the degree to which students have formed intercultural competence, to which they comprehend the different components, and their readiness to form and develop intercultural competence in children.

Table 1. Results from the essays on the topic of intercultural competence

Level:	Formed intercultural competence	Comprehension of the components	Preparedness for forming intercultural competence
Characterization	13 (52%)	7 (28%)	9 (36%)
Organizing	7 (28%)	11 (44%)	6 (24%)
Valuing	2 (8%)	4 (16%)	5 (20%)
Responding	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)
Receiving	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)

Table 1 indicates that two of the students have formed intercultural competence at the Receiving level, based on the criteria. In the current context, this reveals that they are in the phase of being willing to receive information, to identify phenomena, and to ask questions about interculturality. In their essays, these two participants delineate the significance of intercultural competence for children's development, but they do not describe an adequate and thought-through activity. Thus, they are distributed in the column of the table related to preparedness for forming intercultural competence at the Receiving level. One of these students is registered at the Responding level for the criterion "comprehension of the components", along with another student. Participants at this level showed knowledge about intercultural competence and its components; they were able to provide answers on this topic. The activities they constructed can be noted at the same level of Krathwohl's taxonomy, indicating that they are not yet ready to form and develop intercultural competence in children.

At the Valuing level, two of the students showed that they can explain intercultural values, they can form an opinion regarding interculturality, and that they are able to justify their thesis. This level refers to the interiorization of specific values, hence the two participants have a positive attitude towards intercultural competence and their beliefs shape their behavior towards accepting social and moral norms. They, along with two other participants, also comprehend the main components of this competence: in their essays the students underline tolerance, empathy, solidarity, respect for others, and more of the base values and qualities included in the content field of intercultural competence. Five participants are ready to form this competence in children at the Valuing level. The understanding of the concept of interculturality is evident from the texts they presented - the described activities and the specific goals they set, in the direction of including all children, focusing on the positivity of diversity, compliance with children's needs, specifics, age, and individuality.

However, bearing in mind that Valuing is not the last level of the taxonomy, this indicates a need for ongoing work with these students, so they would be able to develop their skills, abilities, and attitudes in this aspect, and so they would organize their value system. Ordering a concrete set of values into a value system refers to the next level of Krathwohl's taxonomy, Organizing. From the data from the columns of the table, it is apparent, that a larger number of students (28%) have formed intercultural competence at the Organizing level where they are able to identify and compare different values and characteristics, to combine and arrange them into their own value system. They developed skills to defend their beliefs, to integrate values and virtues into their attitudes, and therefore modify their behavior according to the social and moral norms in this direction. This can be concluded from participants' essays and the way they describe intercultural competence, how they argue the significance of forming this competence in children.

Eleven of the students (including the participants mentioned above) are able to recognize and comprehend the essence of tolerance, solidarity, and the other universal values, as well as elements of intercultural competence. However, only six of them are ready to facilitate an activity related to the formation of these components at the Organizing level. The conclusion that could be made here, is that these students have not yet graduated, they have future work to do in this context. They did not yet have much practice, and experience, and connection to practice is significant for developing skills, and professionalism. During their practice with children in classrooms, a necessary element of their graduation, the students could gain more experience and could improve their abilities to educate, to form and develop intercultural competence.

The last level of the taxonomy is Characterization by a value or set of values, referring to the existence of a value system in individuals for a sufficient period of time, so that the individual's behavior is consistent and reflects the social and moral norms, and interculturality. The results described in this column of the table demonstrate that 52% of the students have formed intercultural competence to this degree. They have knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the intercultural competence, their behavior is structured in this aspect and it reflects their beliefs on the topics of the fundamental values and virtues. The students are able to revise certain concepts, form theories and ideas, to defend and justify their opinions. At this stage, the participants can solve problems and respond to challenges in interculturality: their world view and way of thinking are based on the interiorized values. It is evident from the data presented in the table, that seven of those students fully comprehend the components of intercultural competence. This is an interesting result, because if the students have formed the competence at the final level, they would also be able to identify and understand its components. But here we can conclude, that even though the thirteen participants have formed intercultural competence, they still need to work towards defining the specific components and dividing them. This could be due to the fact that the elements on this competence are interconnected and have similar characteristics - tolerance and empathy, empathy and solidarity, respect for others, and taking other points of view into account.

Nine of the participants are shown at the Characterization level of the taxonomy. Their work demonstrated their readiness to formulate and facilitate an activity for the formation and development of this competence in children. The activities these students planned are appropriate to the children's age, personality, needs, interests, and abilities. The students followed the principles of education, related to the respect for the children, for their dignity and worth as individuals, outlining the strengths of the children and creating a positive, safe environment for them, and complying with the significance of the education time, and more (Chavdarova-Kostova, 2012b). The students, at that level, could achieve positive influences, connected to intercultural competence and constructive interpersonal relationships, and productive interactions.

It is apparent from the results, that most of the students are at the last two levels of Krathwohl's taxonomy - twenty for the first criterion, eighteen for the second, and fifteen for the third. This indicates, that a large number of the participants have social and intercultural awareness, and could create a successful process of education, orientated towards social and intercultural competence. Nevertheless, this also clarifies the need for prolonged work, not only for the participants, who are at the other levels but for all of the students, in the context of lifelong learning and self-improvement.

The results in table 2 show to the development of social competence in the students. They also indicate the development of intercultural competence, as the components, tolerance and empathy (considered here as one component) are related to both competencies. The data shows the existence and the development of social (and intercultural) competence

during the first and the second step of the second stage of the peer assessment assignment. At this stage, the students comment on their colleagues' work and provide feedback. The results are summarized for each student's assessment for three essays.

Table 2. Results from the peer assessment assignment

Level:	Communicativeness	Tolerance and empathy	Cooperation
Characterization	6 (24%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)
Organizing	10 (40%)	8 (32%)	10 (40%)
Valuing	4 (16%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)
Responding	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)
Receiving	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	4 (16%)

The table illustrates that for each of the first two components of social competence there are three participants, whose feedback and commentary are at the Receiving level in the taxonomy. Four of the students at this level exhibit the cooperation component. These students are willing to perceive information about effective communication, productive interactions, tolerance, and empathy. They are attentive, aware of the existence of the phenomenon of social competence and the concepts in this regard, adequately interpret the information and orient themselves correctly in the issues discussed. These participants listened during the discussions on the topics of the competencies, they asked questions and showed that they are aware of the theories about social competence during the peer assessment. Nevertheless, their feedback is not consistent, they do not outline the strengths and weaknesses of the essays and do not suggest improvements.

Two of the participants demonstrated skills in answering questions and actively participating in the discussions: they showed interest in the topics. The students provided feedback to their peers, which was related to briefly stating the quality of the work, complying with the aforementioned criteria, but they did not provide in-depth comments. The participants' feedback towards their peers' work is tolerant but limited to a degree, characteristic for the Responding level. Three of the students demonstrated cooperation, by commenting with ideas for improvement for the essays of their colleagues. All of the students, at this level in the table, are able to present new ideas, to question previously learned concepts in order to comprehend them in a better way. It was taken into account, that two of the comments regarding the assessed essays provided constructive feedback, but not directly corresponding to the particular activity described in the essay. We concluded that the students who made those comments are able to comprehend the concept of social competence and react in such situations, but not always adequately and correctly. This places them at the second level of the taxonomy.

There are four students at the Valuing level, who demonstrate communicative abilities; they provided more in-depth comments about the essays they assessed. The structure and content of the opinions comply with the standard for academic writing. The comments are well thought out and reasonable, corresponding with the activities described in the texts. The students are able to formulate their messages clearly and specifically, to ask meaningful questions related to the topics discussed, and structure the content in accordance with the norms of formal communication. The feedback from six of the participants can be described as empathetic. It is based on constructive criticism and reflects the strengths of the text. Further indicators for the degree to which the students are tolerant, are their attitudes for respect for their colleagues, and willingness for acquaintance with all points of view. At this level of the taxonomy, only three of the participants exhibited the cooperation component. They provide well-constructed

and justified suggestions for improvements in the essays, which is an essential part of constructive feedback and illustrates the abilities of the students for support and assistance. A conclusion can be made, regarding the number of participants for this component, in comparison with the data for the next level of the taxonomy.

At the Organization level, there are ten students, in the table column related to cooperation. This indicates that a larger number of the participants possess the skills and attitudes for providing constructive feedback, which consists of recommendations for improvement of the essays. These students construct their comments in compliance with the criteria, they formulate intriguing ideas, which could help their colleagues to accomplish better results. At the Organization level, for the component tolerance and empathy, there are eight students in the table and ten for the communicativeness component. The participants at this level justify their opinions with concrete citations from the essays and demonstrate the ability for reading comprehension, perception of ideas of other people and their viewpoints, skills for formulating arguments, and solving problems in social situations. They are active, express their beliefs with confidence, and ask adequate questions, which encourage reflection. It is evident that the students are calm in regard to sharing their opinion and that they respect the opinions of their colleagues. These conclusions are valid for the skills and attitudes of the students, noted at the Characterization level of the taxonomy, with the addition that they could positively influence children in the direction of social competence.

From the data shown in table 2, it is apparent that the number of students at the last level of Krathwohl's taxonomy is smaller than the number for the previous level. An inference for lifelong learning can be made here that the students have yet to work on their social and intercultural skills and attitudes. Both competencies are complex constructs with multiple components and there are continuous discussions among scientists, regarding their formation and development. Thus, developing social and intercultural competence is a process that continues throughout a person's life and the abilities in this context could always be improved. Nevertheless, the comparative analysis of the results indicated in both tables states that most students are distributed in the columns for the highest two levels of the taxonomy.

Further analysis was conducted during the last two steps of the peer assessment, related to reviewing the received feedback and reflection upon the received feedback, the assignment as a whole. The students had time to review the feedback they received. Then, they had the opportunity to share with their colleagues the comments and say if they agree with them, if they find them helpful, or if they do not appreciate them. A discussion took place on the topics of the feedback, students' expectations and the comments they received, the objectivity of peer assessment, and its limitations in that regard. The discussion also included thoughts and reflections, examples, explanations, and arguments on social and intercultural competence and its components, which were presented during the peer assessment. Most of the students (80%) stated that they agree with the provided feedback and that it will be useful for improvements regarding their work. The feedback from these participants was provided primarily by the students who were noted at the Organization and Characterization levels. The students, who did not appreciate their feedback and thought that it could be more objective, more in-depth, and providing a greater number of recommendations and ideas were those assessed primarily by participants in the Receiving and Responding levels.

During the discussion, the students who were at levels of the taxonomy in the table had the opportunity to hear their colleagues' thoughts about the quality of the assessment provided. The students realized that they could improve several aspects of their feedback and that they could work on a few of their social and intercultural abilities. They did

not react in a negative way, rather the opposite. They reflected on their strengths and limitations, and took responsibility for their comments. This indicated that further development in regard to social and intercultural competence is possible. Also, an acceptable conclusion is, that the development of social and intercultural competence during the process of peer assessment (which includes discussion and reflection) is a plausible opportunity.

Discussion

The peer assessment was not anonymous, the students knew who was assessing them and to whom they were giving feedback. It is considered that if such an assignment is not anonymous this could influence the results, as the participants could be affected by their interactions with the others (Tigelaar & Tartwijk, 2010). Students can experience difficulties while commenting on their friends' work, or their negative opinion of a peer could affect their assessment. However, when the assessment is public, students have the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills, their abilities to take responsibility for their actions, their skills for solving problems and making decisions in social situations. Also, in the present study, the participants had the opportunity to build their skills for receiving feedback and constructive criticism, and to learn from it, so as to develop their abilities for objectivity.

The overall analysis of the results indicates that peer assessment provides educational opportunities for the development of a list of qualities, characteristics, values, correlated with social and intercultural competence. We concluded that students can learn to recognize their own strengths and limitations leading to the formation of an adequate self-assessment and ambition for self-improvement. They can learn to identify strengths and limitations in their peers, and how to provide help and support to others in order to encourage them and escalate their progress.

Several recommendations were formulated, based on the results of the present research, concerning the construction, integration, and conduction of peer assessment in regard to the development of social and intercultural competence:

- Personal example. If a personal example is demonstrated, the students are likely to replicate it. The example of behavior, compliant with social and intercultural competence can include the correspondence (formulation of messages and other texts), the overall communication (constructive dialogs, consisting of elements of tolerance, empathy, solidarity), objectivity and encouragement for cooperation among students;

- Planning a discussion, prior to the peer assessment. The emphasis can be on social and moral norms, tolerance between the peers, freedom of expression, attitudes and beliefs, building skills and attitudes orientated towards mutual respect, acceptance and support, adequate interpretation of information, leading to the reduction of misunderstandings and conflicts and the development of skills for peaceful resolving of different problems;

- Provision of detailed and clear instructions for the peer assessment. The instructions can include explanations and examples of how constructive criticism and feedback could be provided and how to review received commentary. Also, at this stage the students can be encouraged to participate, to share their opinions, and justify them;

- Reflection after the feedback is received and reviewed. Reflection is a crucial stage, at which students can take initiative, they can defend their opinions, and better understand the feedback they received. They can reflect on their thoughts and feelings, and therefore can better comprehend the process and the results. During the discussion guiding questions can be asked, which could stimulate participation and motivate the students to be cooperative, to show initiative, reciprocity, and solidarity. This activity can

produce productive dialogs and helpful insights, thus contributing to the development of social and intercultural competence.

Conclusion

Over the last two decades, a number of studies have been carried out with the aim of presenting the necessary knowledge and skills for success and its realization, and the way in which they can be mastered and developed in children. The changes that have taken place over the years mark the need for new approaches to action in education. Technological solutions replace established methods, eliminate professions, and open new ones, the requirements of the labor market are changing dynamically. Various child-oriented strategies are being sought, to help their preparation to become accomplished members of society; strategies that take into account the importance of a number of factors influencing the formation of creative, pro-social, knowledgeable, and capable individuals, thus supporting both the prosperity and the improvement of society, and their own personal realization.

Discussions continue about what exactly are the most important qualities and competencies that are the basis for the improvement of the individual throughout their life. There are many qualities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are considered important for children to form and develop in order to adapt and contribute to society, and to be able to positively influence the processes taking place at the national and global level. It is important for adolescents to be able to solve problems, to think critically, to build useful meta-skills and competencies transferable in different life situations, to show initiative and creativity, to be flexible and adaptable, in a constantly changing reality. Also, it is crucial for children to understand traditional basic values, to coexist and interact positively with others, regardless of their ethnic and cultural identity, and to develop emotional intelligence. Hence, it is irrefutable that the formation and development of social and cultural competence are important. If future teachers are to be able to form these competencies in children, they need to develop social and intercultural competence.

The findings of the study suggest, that peer assessment can be used as a tool for development of social and intercultural competence throughout students' education. The study leads to several interrelated conclusions:

- providing feedback helps the development of social and intercultural competence in two ways: a) students form skills for providing constructive feedback and criticism, and b) students develop their abilities for accepting feedback, reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses, which leads to striving for self-improvement;
- by providing detailed instructions prior to peer assessment, by organizing a discussion and reflection thereafter, students improve their skills for providing feedback and constructive criticism, considering the ideas of others with respect, understanding different perspectives;
- peer assessment provides educational opportunities in the formation and development of social and intercultural competence.

More in-depth research is needed, with larger samples, in order to provide more definitive evidence. Further data collection is required to determine different useful designs of peer assessment assignments for the development of social and intercultural competence.

References

- Agatucci, C. (2000) *Mapping intercultural Developmental Models*. Oregon: Central Oregon Community College

- Allen, K. N., Friedman, & B. D. (2010) Affective Learning: A Taxonomy for Teaching Social Work Values; *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 7(2), 1-12.
- Alzaid, J. M. (2017). The Effect of Peer Assessment on the Evaluation Process of Students. *International Education Studies*, 10(6), 159-173. DOI:10.5539/ies.v10n6p159.
- Andreev, M. L. (1998) *Pedagogical sociology*. Sofia: Narodna prosвета.
- Bennett, C. I. (1999) *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986) A developmental approach to training intercultural sensitivity. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 10(2), 179-196. DOI: 10.1016/0147-1767(86)90005-2.
- Boud, D. & Falchikov, N. (2007) *Rethinking assessment in higher education*. London: Kogan Page.
- Boud, D. & Falchikov, N. (2005) Redesigning assessment for learning beyond higher education. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28, 34-41.
- Cavell, T. A. (1990) Social Adjustment, Social Performance, and Social Skills: A Tri-Component Model of Social Competence. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 19(2), 111-122. DOI: 10.1207/s15374424jccp1902_2.
- Chavdarova-Kostova, S. G. (2010). Contemporary challenges to intercultural education. Sofia: Education.
- Chavdarova-Kostova, S. G. (2011) Competences as a result of the educational process. *Training as a path to education*, 64-71.
- Chavdarova-Kostova, S.G. (2012a). Principles of education. *Pedagogy*, 120-134.
- Chavdarova-Kostova, S. G. (2012b) Ways of forming intercultural competence for work in a multicultural environment. Technological education and sustainable development of the region. Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference Novosibirsk, 180-185.
- Chavdarova-Kostova, S. G. (2019) Inclusion through education and identity manifestations. Proceedings of the international anniversary science conference Scientific and practical aspects of inclusive education, 60-68.
- Deardorff, D., & Jones, E. (2012) Intercultural competence: An emerging focus in international higher education. *The SAGE handbook of international higher education*. Thousand oaks: Sage publications inc.
- Delibaltova, V. K. (2003) To competence as an object of didactic interest. *Pedagogy*, 13(2), 7-13.
- Desev, L. N. (2015) . Synergy, introduction and dictionary. Sofia: Ecoprogress.
- Emmerling, R. & Boyatzis, R. E. (2012) Cross cultural management, emotional and social intelligence competencies: cross cultural implications. *Cross Cultural Management An International Journal*, 19(1), 4-18. DOI: 10.1108/13527601211195592.
- European Union (2018) European reference frame on key competencies for lifelong learning. *Official journal of the European Union*, (189), 7-13.
- Gielen, S., Dochy, F., Onghena, P., Struyven, K. & Smeets, S. (2011) Goals of peer assessment and their associated quality concepts. *Studies in higher education*, 36(6), 719-735. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075071003759037>.
- Giurova, V. (2004). Intercultural competence and play culture in early childhood. *One hundred and twenty years of preschool education*, 122-129.
- Gospodinov, V. (2010) Adolescents. Deviations. Emotional intelligence. Sofia: East-West.
- Harrison, C. (2010). Peer and Self-assessment. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, (3), 231-235.
- Hofstede, G. (2011) Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>.
- Ibarra-Sáiz, M.S., Rodríguez-Gómez, G. & Boud, D. (2020). Developing student competence through peer assessment: the role of feedback, self-regulation and evaluative judgement. *In Higher Education*, (80), 137-156.
- Junge, C., Valkenburg, P., Dekovich, M., & Branje, S. (2020) The building blocks of social competence: Contributions of the Consortium of Individual Development. *Developmental cognitive neuroscience*, 45, 1-11. DOI: 10.1016/j.dcn.2020.100861.
- Kim, M-S. (2002) *Non-western perspectives on human communication: implications for theory and practice*. Sage books. Thousand oaks: Sage publications inc.

- Krathwohl, D. R. (1964) The taxonomy of educational objectives – its use in curriculum building. In C.M. Lindvall (Ed) *Defining Educational Objectives*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. Pp 19-36.
- Merdzhanova, Y. R. (2004) *Professional pedagogy - in tradition and in perspective*. Sofia: UPH "St. Kliment Ohridski".
- Mizova, B. K. & Tsvetanska, S. I. (2013) Research perspectives on the problem of social-communicative competence of pedagogical specialists. *Rhetoric and communications*, 8(4), ISSN:1314-4464.
- McClelland, D. C. (1973) Testing for competence rather than for intelligence. *American Psychologist*, 1-14.
- Orpinas P. (2010) Social competence. *Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 1623-1625. DOI: 10.1002/9780470479216.corpsy0887.
- Paelman, P. & Verlot, M. (2007) *Pedagogy. Diversity and Empowerment Interculturalisation of Schools in Flanders as a Tool for More Democratic Education*. Brusell.
- Panadero, E. & Alqassab, M. (2019) An empirical review of anonymity effects in peer assessment, peer feedback, peer review, peer evaluation and peer grading. *Assessment and evaluation in higher education*. 44(8), 1253-1278. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1600186>.
- Spencer-Oatey, H., & Franklin, P. (2009) *Intercultural interaction: A multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spiller, D. (2012) *Assessment Matters: Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment*. Teaching development. New Zealand: University of Waikato.
- Tigelaar, D.E.H. & van Tartwijk, J. (2010) The Evaluation of Prospective Teachers in Teacher Education. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, (3), 511-517.
- Tillema, H. (2010) Formative Assessment in Teacher Education and Teacher Professional Development. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, (3), 563-571.
- Topping, K. J. (1998). Peer assessment between students in colleges and universities. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(3), 249-276. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543068003249>.
- Topping, K. J. (2009) Peer assessment. *Theory into practice*, 48(1), 20-27. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802577569>.
- Topping, K. J., Bremner, W., & Holmes, E. (2000) *Social competence: The social construction of the concept. The handbook of emotional intelligence: Theory, development, assessment, and application at home, school, and in the workplace*. USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Van den Berg, I., Admiraal, W. & Pilot, A. (2006) Peer assessment in university teaching: evaluating seven course designs. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(1), 19-36. DOI: 10.1080/02602930500262346.
- Vasileva, E. L. (2009) Formation of intercultural competence in the initial stage of education. *Network for intercultural dialogue and education Turkey - Bulgaria*. Sofia: Vision.
- Wride, M. (2017). *Guide to peer assessment*. Dublin: Trinity college.