

Citizenship Education in Ukraine: Teaching The Teachers

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Paper presented at the 48th Annual Conference of the Comparative and International
Education Society, (March 11, 2004).

Salt Lake City, Utah

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Abstract

(Purpose) This paper is intended to contribute to the general literature on international teacher exchange in citizenship education. **(Methodology)** The author reports on the content and evaluation of two parts of a year long citizenship education exchange program. The first part reviews the development, implementation, and assessment of a teacher exchange program on citizenship education held at Eastern Kentucky University for seven East Ukrainian teachers. The second part reviews and evaluates a Citizenship Education Summer Institute which the participants presented to their fellow teachers in Ukraine. **(Results)** Each of the activities and programs in the citizenship education seminar were evaluated by participants, mentors, and host families respectively. Data on the effectiveness of program activities, processes, and events were collected from responses to Likert scale surveys and anecdotal comments. The results are provided in attachments. The Ukrainians were generally positive about their learning experiences in the United States. Their Ukrainian colleagues found the content of what they learned in the Summer Institute very useful. **(Conclusions)** International teacher exchanges provide opportunities for relevant reciprocal teacher professional development, and the adaptation of “best practices” from lessons learned. **(Recommendations)** Continued funding of international teacher exchanges on citizenship education is needed because they mutually benefit teachers and students from both sides. **(Additional data)** (Contains 3 figures.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to report on a “Citizenship Education Internship” for East Ukrainian teachers held in the United States, and a corresponding “Democratic School Summer Institute” later held in Ukraine by the participants for Ukrainian teachers. The report presents a paradigm for international teacher cooperation and contributes to the literature on international teacher-exchanges.

Keene (2003) articulated a new form of world ideology which he called a “cosmocracy.” This is a neologism (from Kosmos, world order, universal place or space, and Krato, to rule or grasp.) He described a global civil society, a vast sprawling non-governmental constellation of many institutionalized structures, associations and networks within which individual and group actors are interrelated and functionally interdependent.¹ The post-communist revolution which began in 1989 in the former Soviet Union consisted of challenges, compromises, and changes. Various communist institutions, regulations, and organizations which formed the core of communism had to be dismantled. A new level of citizen involvement and participation in influencing government policy emerged. Citizenship education, a process which has garnered wide following in a world thirsty for democratic change is now a feature in the political landscape of Ukraine.

Citizenship education is an amorphous term. It is multidisciplinary, and can lend itself to different interpretations in different political systems and countries. The Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2003) postulated that “citizenship education facilitates the promotion of a shared vision in democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate, and engage actively in civic and political life. They take responsibility for building communities, contributing their diverse talents and energies to solve local and national problems, and deliberating about public issues, influencing public policy, voting, and pursuing the common good.”²

Good citizenship involves the inculcation and practice of civic values. “Values and valuing are integral elements of knowing, and are important in social activity.

Through social activity we internalize and become transmitters of norms in our society. We also receive feedback on how others perceive our judgments and decisions, and given this information, we shape and reshape our values. Valuing and values are learned; because of that, they may be taught. Students may be taught how to express their values and feelings ... they may be taught how to analyze and assign value to known or anticipated consequences. They may also be taught some principles by which they can assign value more successfully and more responsibly.”³ Citizenship Education

Before Perestroika, citizenship was about being a good communist party member or outwardly following the ideology of the state under Communism. Edmund King stated that “What was unique in communist education was the total control of the intellectual, technological, and (as far as possible) aesthetic and moral life” of the citizen. He further indicated that the slogan for education in the former communist world and in Czechoslovakia was “building up of a communist man (person) in a communist world.” When communism collapsed, it was difficult to develop a sensible slogan. One could not use “the development of the person in a state of transition to democracy.” The communist person had to look around to see whether and to what extent he or she was being monitored and maneuvered to tow the party line. This attitude was also prevalent in schools because teachers worried about colleagues or pupils turning them over to communist authorities for teaching anti - communist, or non - communist content.

The change to democratization in these states ushered in some challenges for citizens and teachers. How does one begin to practice “academic freedom” in the classroom when all one had known was the teaching of “politically correct communist ideology?” Where does one begin, and what are the challenges for modeling this newly won freedom in the classroom? Can learning about citizenship education in the United States translate to teaching about citizenship in Ukraine?

Teacher professional development in citizenship education in the former republics of the Soviet Union has taken front page in the educational landscape of these countries. I reflect on and interpret some narratives which dotted the experience of the Ukrainian educators at Eastern Kentucky University, such as schools, homestays, excursions, and social engagements. The contexts in this discussion is anchored include a background to Ukrainian history, and education. Secondly, I will describe the program which the

Ukrainian educators attended in the United States. Next, I will describe the content of the summer Institute for citizenship education which the Ukrainians offered to their fellow educators. The last portion will include my observations and conclusions as coordinator and consultant of this program.

Background to History and Education in Ukraine

Formal educational systems or schools operate within a cultural context Gutek (2006). Cultural contexts also include an array of sub-contexts such as historical, religious, philosophical, aesthetic, and ideological. The development of public education in Ukraine dates back several centuries to Kyivan Rus. Schools were established at the end of the 10th century in Kyiv and they grew in number during the 11th and 12th centuries. Cyril and Methodius are reputed to have developed the Slavonic Alphabet in the 11th century. Ukraine's first higher education establishment otherwise named the academy was the Khiv-Mohyla Collegium established in 1632. Lviv University established in 1661 is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Ukraine. Subtelny (1994) wrote about "The Great Revolt", an uprising in 1648 as one of the most cataclysmic events in Ukrainian history. He wrote that the magnitude, intensity, and impact in early, modern European history are unsurpassed. This was a situation in which common people refused to work as Serfs and began to assert their self-governance and freedom.

The Ukrainian uprising during that time in Europe was highly organized. Bohdan Kmelnysky became the acknowledged military and political leader in the great Ukrainian uprising of 1648. There was a great slaughter of (Zlachta) Poles, royal officials or Jews, many of whom were leaseholders. An insurgency of Cossack, peasants, hetmen, and other local leaders staged mini-rebellions. Wealthy Poles under the leadership of Wisniowiecki and his well-trained army of 6,000 retaliated by killing thousands of Ukrainian men, women, and children. However, this counter-attack only strengthened the resolve of the Ukrainian alliance to fight back under Khemelnysky, whom they regarded as a liberator, father figure, and leader. He awaked them from "a centuries-long miasma of passivity and hopelessness and propelled them toward national and socioeconomic emancipation."⁴

Subtelny provided another context for Ukrainian uniqueness when he gave a lecture titled "Evaluating independence: Ukraine Since 1991" in which he compared

Ukraine in transition to jumping from one slowly moving train to another one that is moving faster. He asserted that issues about Russia and Ukraine had been interrelated in myriad ways for centuries. In 1991 the Ukrainian people voted 90 per cent for independence even when some of their leaders were hesitant. However, the Nomenclatura, the old communist elite perhaps in self-serving ways provided the leadership to do this. This group was opportunistic and did not care about the welfare of the common masses. They resulted to deal-making and corruption and the self preservation of their group. The events of 2005 called the Orange Revolution catapulted Ukraine to the international scene. Hundreds of thousands of people of all ages demonstrated in the center of Kyiv against the rigging and irregularities of presidential elections and refused to go home until their demands were met. Their persistence led to new internationally monitored elections and the election of Yuvshenko as the new president.

The Ukrainian educational system consists of about 48,000 institutions with a total population of over 15 million students. The total teaching force is about 2 million. The educational hierarchy consists of preschool, general secondary school, out of school education, and professional, technical and higher education. The Ukrainian constitution provides some guarantees to accessible free of charge preschool, and general secondary, professional, technical and higher education. Stipends are provided for students. The Cabinet of Ministers adopted a program of “Education” or “Ostiva” in November 1993, which restructured the educational system from pre-school to post-graduate education that will decentralize and democratize the administration of education. One of the themes of this restructuring was the development of the human personality which may be translated to mean more independence and creativity in administering the schools.

Literacy rates in Ukraine in 1900 were 24 percent for citizens aged 9 – 49. A generation later illiteracy was eradicated. Today, students become literate by attending formal schools, lyceums, grammar schools, and specialized schools. The formal school cycle begins at age six or seven and lasts for eleven years, four in the primary grades and five in the secondary schools. An additional two years are completed at the general education or specialized schools where students learn “labor lessons and the

fundamentals of popular professions. The rapid expansion of education in Ukraine has created a problem of inadequate supply of classrooms. This has resulted in schooling in shifts. Between 1990 and 1995 it was estimated that about 49,000 students attended late shift schools.

“There are approximately 500 thousand teachers and specialists in Ukraine. Teachers are trained at the universities, pedagogical institutes and pedagogical specialized schools. The pedagogical practice is compulsory. All candidates for teaching positions must pass the state examinations after completing their education. The under funding of teacher education creates negative status and an unattractive image for these professionals. For example, in 1995, general education schools in Ukraine lost 46 thousand teachers who moved to jobs with higher social status and financial benefits.”⁵

Six Present problems and future solutions

Ukraine has dependency for energy, capital and trade on other countries.⁶ Ukraine has had a long association and cooperation with Russia and is dependent on Russia for Gas, and Oil. Ukrainian farmers do a viable trade with Russia. The friendship treaty signed between the two countries in 1997 indicates that Ukraine and Russia need each other and should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The second issue relates to the Crimea. This peninsular extending from South Ukraine to the Black Sea is showing signs that it wants autonomy. Ukrainians fear that if autonomy is achieved, the region will become a part of Russia. The Russians still have the powerful Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea is still a bone of contention between Russia and Ukraine. Both are claiming ownership. Ukraine fears that Russia will use the fleet to take over the entire region if it gains legal ownership to it.

The other issue is national security. Ukraine views membership in NATO is an assertion of independence from Russia. Yuschenko has indicated that he wants good relations with Russia, but the Ukraine under his government will declare an intention of joining the European Union. Crime and corruption appear to be endemic in Ukraine. The severity of the situation can be highlighted in the fact that Ukraine executed more people in 1996 -167 than in any other country except China. The sale of public agencies to former communist officials for cheap is one of the issues which the present

Yuchenko government has declared to investigate. The national health of Ukraine appears to be considerably better than that of its neighbors including Russia. However, there are reported shortages in medical supplies. About 40 percent of hospitals reportedly reuse hypodermic needles and have no hot water. The environment is another issue. The ongoing legacy of Chernobyl is grim. However, the country's major rivers, the Don and the Dnipro are full of sewage and industrial waste, spreading pollutants throughout the countryside.

The Internship Program.

The Partners in Education Program (PiE) is a civics education training and exchange program for US and Eurasian teachers, school administrators and teacher trainers. It is administered by The American Councils for International Education ACTR/ACCELS and funded by the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Partners in Education Program was funded by the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Eurasians spend six weeks in the United States studying among other things, American Government, and the teaching of Civics in American schools. My university hosted seven East Ukrainian teachers in a Citizenship Education Seminar for five weeks in 2003. The seminar was conducted according to guidelines provided by the American Councils for International Education. The first segment of the program included mentoring, home stays, and professional development workshops.

Mentoring

All mentors participated in an "Orientation for Mentors" presented by the Project Director. Participants were paired with mentors in middle and high schools in Madison County Kentucky. They shadowed their mentors two days a week in the respective schools, observing, co-teaching, and giving presentations about Ukraine to students. Participants visited other classrooms, engaged in extracurricular activities, and ate lunch with faculty and students. Mentors assisted the participants in the preparation of their projects to be presented in Washington D.C. The Ukrainian and United States teachers responded to a Likert type survey of their experiences during the mentoring. They also gave anecdotal comments on their experiences.

The East Ukrainians were generally positive about the school experiences with their mentors and the schools. They asked a lot of questions of their mentors and participated in co-teaching of some subjects. They fielded questions from school pupils. There was one teacher who had limited English and whose mentor could have been warmer or more enthusiastic. We solved this problem by pairing this intern with another who was proficient in English. They observed in classrooms together and worked in assignments together.

Home - stays

Families participating in the home stays were recruited from the local community. They completed application forms, and were visited by the program director, before final selections were made. In one case, the program director suggested improvements in accommodations and paid a second visit. Each host family was required to attend a "host family orientation" conducted by the project director.

Host families were responsible for providing food, transportation, and accommodations. The guests indicated satisfaction with the accommodations and services provided by their host families. There was a mutual bonding between guests and host families. Guests enjoyed participating in activities such as shopping, visiting historic and natural attractions, attending events with their families, and attending weekend parties. Some of the guests cooked variant of Ukrainian meals which they shared with their hosts. The Ukrainian guests were appreciative of the opportunity to live with American families and to participate in normal family activities. Friendships were cultivated and mutual admiration and respect were generated.

Professional Development Workshops

Professional development workshops in citizenship education were presented by Eastern Kentucky University faculty in the departments of government, education, environmental health sciences, and the English Language Institute. One workshop from a non academic department was presented by AmeriCorps Student Services Consortium Center. Professional development consultations were also provided by Eastern Kentucky University Library Staff, and personnel of the university computer services department. The workshop presenters were requested to make their presentations interactive and to allow for discussions with their Ukrainian audience. The Ukrainians asked a lot of

questions and exchanged ideas about Ukrainian government and politics with their American faculty. On the whole they preferred presentations that demonstrated the concepts to those that were just historical or factual. For example, the Mock Court Trial was popular.

The Summer Institute in Ukraine

The summer institute in Ukraine was organized by the participants of the citizenship education internship program. They organized the institute with the intention of sharing their knowledge and experiences gained in the United States. They selected the theme of “the democratic school in Ukraine.” Although Ukraine has moved in the direction of restructuring the school system to reflect democratization and change, many of the old school administrators are still at the top. They have either chosen to continue an autocratic administration style, or, the teachers and parents have not learned how to take hold of the empowerment that democratization and transition to democracy brought them. It is clear to this writer, that many teachers wanted more power to participate in school governance and to extend some freedoms to students to form their own student councils and to assert their voice through participation in the school newspaper.

The topics covered in the summer institute included adaptations of workshops they had attended in the United States. There was a high emphasis on the use of critical thinking in the classroom. It appeared as if East Ukrainian teachers wanted their students to be more active in learning, to question more and to reflect on the relevance of material or information received to their lives.

The participants in the summer institute were clearly not prepared to blindly accept concepts or ideas presented without discussions and sometimes animated debates. This attitude was previously displayed by participants in the citizenship education internship in the United States. During this internship, the East Ukrainians asked many questions, and were not hesitant to express disagreement or different points of view among themselves or with American university and school faculty. Topics of the Summer Institute are listed in Figure 3.

General Conclusions

Each of the activities and programs in the citizenship education seminar were evaluated by participants, mentors, and host families respectively. Feedback about individual program activities and events were derived from responses to Likert scale surveys and anecdotal comments. The results are provided in attachments. What did the participants rate highly? The content material given in the professional development workshops were rated in a range of 80 to 100 percent as very valuable to the Ukrainian teachers. The workshops consisted of three segments – lecture, discussion, application or relevance to Ukraine. References and website addresses were also provided by workshop lecturers.

Each participant reported a positive experience with their host family. The mentoring experience was more positive for some, but not for others. Some of the participants were able to visit classrooms other than those of their mentors. This helped to expand the range of experiences with teaching strategies. A few of the participants felt that they should have been placed in high schools rather than middle schools. One participant – a university lecturer made several attempts to be relieved of her responsibility to be in school with her mentor teacher. This participant refused to go to school at the last week and chose to attend lectures by university professors in subject areas unrelated to civic or citizenship education.

Dislikes

Some detested the rigor of attending lectures and discussions. A few came with the idea that the seminar will be mostly fun and games. Some made several attempts to create their own individual schedules. One in particular believed that the program director was too hard. Some of the participants did not like the menu and the food in some restaurants.

Postscript

Exchange programs such as these require participants to learn as much as possible about the subject matter or content knowledge pertaining to the theme of the seminar. The notion of citizenship includes some content. Citizens in western countries such as the

United States hold on to some ideas written in their constitutions such as the amendments and the Bill of Rights. However, the participants do not just want to get civics lessons they also want to see how democracy is practiced for example, in the Judicial system, in voting at elections, in the counting of the election results and the certification of the results by an independent electoral body. They relished the visits to the Capitol in Washington, DC, the National Archives, and the historical interpretations given by congressional interns and National Archives librarians.

Some participants were very sensitive about status. Teachers who were assigned to a teacher mentor in a middle school for example were displeased because they perceived this as non-acknowledgement of their status, particularly if they were teachers at higher educational institutions in their country. There were also areas in the exchange that program that sought to acquaint participants with “How Americans Live.” The big houses, big kitchens, big car garages, the modern cars, the electronic gadgets in all the houses were a big show-piece for the participants. They were very impressed and some publicly saw the acquisition of such material amulets as goals of their lives. The irony is that no one enquired about the mechanism of a mortgage, or credit card payment in the acquisition of present day consumption.

Figure 1. Topics for Citizenship Education Workshop in the United States

Professional Development workshops were provided on topics such as the following:

- Public Opinion and ideology
- United States Constitutional History Checks and Balances
- Teaching the Exceptionally and Culturally Different
- Teaching English As a Second Language
- Kentucky Education Reform Then and Now
- Accountability of Principals in a Democratic School
- Democratic School Governance in Kentucky
- United States Court System and Mock Trial
- Public Policy
- Mass Media and American Politics
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
- Citizenship Participation in Environmental Policy
- The American Bureaucracy
- Ameri-Corps National Volunteer Program.

Source: Hinton, Samuel (2004). Planning Document, Citizenship Education Internship for East Ukrainian Teachers. Richmond, Kentucky.

Figure 2. Educational and Cultural Field trip Activities

Educational and Cultural Field Trips

Educational and cultural field trips arranged for the visitors included:

- accompanying faculty and staff to the voting booth on election day
 - observing Americans actually voting
 - attending an election night returns dinner
 - following election results reported on television
 - attending a Mock Trial by students in the department of government
 - visiting the state Capitol on Frankfort
 - attending educational committee meetings in the legislature
 - having lunch with three State legislators from Madison County Kentucky.
 - visiting the Keeneland Horse Racing Track
 - attending the Kentucky Artists and Craftsmen Guild's Fair
 - visiting the Kyiv-Cincinnati sister city project in Cincinnati, Ohio
 - visiting the Cincinnati Museum of Arts
 - attending a Ballet performance,
 - listening to presentation for the group "Kids Voting"
 - listening to a presentation by the League of Women's Voters
 - visiting with the Mayor of Richmond, Kentucky
 - visit with state legislators in State Capital, Frankfort
 - award of Honorary State Colonel by Governor of Kentucky
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Source: Hinton, Samuel (2004). Educational and Cultural Field Trips. Planning Document. Citizenship Education Internship For East Ukrainian Teachers. Richmond, Kentucky.

Figure 3. Selected Topics for Summer Institute in Citizenship Education. Horlivka, Ukraine.

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- Creating a democratic atmosphere in the group
 - Portfolio as a tool of students' critical thinking development and teachers' professional growth.
 - Critical thinking as a way of decision making strategy
 - Critical thinking knowledge: problems and perspectives of educational reform
 - Power Point" computer training for participants
 - Using interactive technologies for democracy in Education
 - Presentation of Ukrainian Association of civics and history teachers
 - School Justice – knowledge and skills" "Pre-court activity
 - School court – Mock trial
 - Four Citizens of Integrity
 - Diversity and tolerance
 - My Community
 - Defining leadership
 - From students' to teachers' self-government
 - Project Technologies
 - Leading is action
 - Peace Corps in Ukraine
 - A critical thinking model for all classrooms
 - The development and use of critical thinking skills, history and country studies
 - Democratization and Humanization of Management in Education
 - Cooperative learning
 - Children's rights and free expression.
 - Civic education for young journalists using internet resources
 - Student Council Constitution
 - Why vote? How to choose a candidate?"
 - “Voter education advocacy program”
 - “Elections laws-changes and additions”
 - “Violations and irregularities during elections”
 - Follow up activities planning
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Source: Hinton, Samuel (2004). Selected Topics For Citizenship Education Summer Institute For East Ukrainian Teachers. Planning Document. Horlivka, Ukraine.

¹ Keene, John (2003). *Global Civil Society*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

² See Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2003). *The Civic Mission of Schools*.

³ Casteel, Doyle, E and Stahl, Robert, J (1975). *Value Clarification in the Classroom: A Primer*. Goodyear Publishing Company, Santa Monica, California.

⁴ Subtelny, Orest (1994). *Ukraine: A History*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

⁵ Source: <http://ukraineinfo.us/culture/science&education.html> 9/19/03

⁶ Otfinoski, Steven (1999). *Nations In Transition: Ukraine*. Facts on File Inc. New York.