Abstract: The purpose of the paper is to investigate the relation between the cultural capital and individual's cultural competence in the contemporary information society. General education process plays a crucial role in developing this relation however the importance of the cultural capital is practically underrated. The cultural capital and its accessibility is the most influential factor in the development of the cultural competence. Following the purpose the paper analyses two characterizing aspects of the information society, which also could be stated as two problems. First problem concerns the aspect, how the modern information resources influence the individual's understanding of the importance of the cultural capital in the contemporary society. Second problem looks at the aspect – is the development of the cultural competence topical for the education and contemporary information society in general. The answers to the both problems are determined by and found in the conformity of the education process to the requirements of the contemporary society.

Keywords: lifelong education, cultural competence, cultural capital, information society.

Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century can definitely be described as a new age of electronic information, which consequently requires cardinal structural changes not only in society but also from the authorities and institutions (in this case - educational institutions). The task to fulfil the EU strategic planning educational targets and guiding principles (e.g. The Lisbon Special European Council: Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge, 2000; The Bologna Process – Towards the European Higher Education Area, 1999 – and continuously every two years: 2001 in Prague; 2003 in Berlin; 2005 in Bergen; 2007 in London; 2009 in Leuven; 2010 in Budapest and Vienna and 2012 in Bucharest; EU's overarching programme Strategic framework for education and training 2001 – 2010 and its follow-up from 2011 to 2020 – ET 2020) has triggered a succession of problems for the current education system in Latvia. The latest strategic framework defines four strategic targets:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training (Strategic framework... , 2009).

These targets clearly show that education is at the crossroads now. Two roads are clearly visible – a shorter and a longer one. The short road can ensure the professional development opportunities (see first and second strategic target). This road emphasises the advantages of the information resources, ensures the development of skills, which are demanded in the job market and brings in the foreground the demand for a specialist with narrow and specific knowledge. The other road is considerably longer. In order to follow that road, one should accomplish wide spectrum of interdisciplinary studies, mainly humanitarian professional or academic programs. The need for this road is determined by the new age and by everyday life, where everyone should be proficient in almost every science field. Globalisation, integration and social conditions create necessity to be tolerant, broadminded, helpful, socially stable and well prepared for a self-dependent living in a continuously changing environment. This road ensures individual's social development capabilities (third strategic target). The role of the teacher is changing along with the new requirements. Followers of the first road need a leader – gatekeeper, who would ensure effective training, but the followers of the second road need an anthropologist, psychologist and social worker, who would enable the education process. To find a way, how to combine these distinct roles is a task of the contemporary training and education institutions. Theoretically such task might be implemented via the third road, which should ensure the
personal development capabilities of an individual (fourth strategic target). That would be a road of synthesis and integration. It would ensure focused actualisation of the cultural capital according to the requirements of the information society and it would be the most favourable environment for development of the cultural competence. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to mark the direction of the third road and to emphasize the importance and interconnection of the cultural capital and the cultural competence of an individual in the development process from the 20th century end information society towards the 21st century's knowledge society.

The keynote for the need of such new road is not only defined by the previously mentioned EU documents, but also other topical recommendations, which systematically forecast high achievements in short terms. For example, two of the five, Latvian National Commission's for UNESCO priorities 2009-2013 are:

- development of cultural self-confidence, comprehension of the value of knowledge and of favourable cultural environment for the society;
- development of accessible and qualitative information environment, fostering of an active knowledge society in Latvia (UNESCO, 2009, 32).

These priorities confirm the topicality of this research.

**Methodology**

In order to particularize the context of the main concepts, used in this paper, it is necessary to perform a correlation analysis of their interpretations and contents. One of the concepts, which is very important for this subject is culture. The content of this concept is very broad and the capacity of it nowadays is often misunderstood or biased. For example, in the previously quoted EU commission strategic framework's document, the concept – culture, is used only several times and only in a social context: cultural dialogue, intercultural competence (Padomes secinājumi..., 2009). Therefore, when defining the concept of culture in its substance, it is important not only to emphasise the theoretical or historical contents, but also to mention its determinant of existence, which is critical for the understanding of any concept, and the field of its operation and influence, which is the basis for the topicality of any concept. In order to define the concept of culture for this paper, there were reviewed various definitions, but the basic frame was the definition of Sir E.B. Tylor (Kroeber, Kluckhohn, 1963, 131). Consequently, the culture in this paper is defined as follows:

Culture is comprised not of only the values, traditions and ideas, created as a result of human action, including their acquisition, conservation and protection, but also the capability to apply personal assessment (inclusion in the individual value scale) and capability to purposefully utilise it. Further, there is enabled the enhancement, as in a purposeful utilisation of culture, the individual becomes a creative user of cultural values, which consequently fosters motivation – i.e. continuation. Thus, by aspiring towards the ideal, the individual becomes a transformer of the world and materialises his level of culture. In these activities one can find the substance of life. Dynamically it cannot be anymore called simply – culture – it requires specification and personalisation. Consequently, a further substance analytics of the correlative concepts is necessary.

From 2007 to 2011 the author of this paper was working on the doctoral dissertation, the main objective of which was to analyse the development of cultural competence in high school in relation to the importance of learning the history of culture and culturology. After performing a research of scientific literature of a wide scope and applying various definitions of culture (the concluded definition was mentioned in the previous paragraph), the cultural competence in the dissertation and later publications was defined as follows:

Cultural competence is individual's intellectual property of a lifelong value, it is a dynamically progressing process of acquiring, understanding, utilising and creating cultural values. During this process:

- an individual acquires analytical, positive knowledge and concerned insight about the cultural heritage and about the importance and types of formations of the contemporary phenomenon (knowledge);
- an individual obtains a necessity and skills to utilize, evaluate and create cultural values, thus developing ever new skills (skills);
• an individual develops a capability to evaluate the contexts and acquires a motivated, self-evaluating desire to perform in a creative and active manner, corresponding with the contemporary events (attitudes), (Avotiņa, 2011).

The third concept, which is requisite to realise the objective of this paper, has been created by French anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930 – 2002) – cultural capital and the three basic forms of it - embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital and institutionalized cultural capital. In his theoretical judgments Bourdieu develops various concepts of capital, but those are not based on the historically most important feature of capital – economical value, which is determined by market, by the potential of sale, purchase, heritage or transfer. Bourdieu concentrates on virtual value added, he discusses such capitals – as language capital, symbol capital; he discusses three forms of capital: economic, cultural and social (Bourdieu, 1986). For this paper the applicable concept is that of the cultural capital, which under certain circumstances can be converted into economic capital, but also can be converted into social capital via an institutionalised education qualification. The first form of the cultural capital – embodied cultural capital – is characterized by consciously acquired and passively inherited features, which become lifetime habits, traditions and needs – for example, language application, communication, self-expression, which directly cannot be converted into economic capital. Thus, from the market value point of view, the embodied cultural capital does not have high value. The second form of the cultural capital is the objectified cultural capital. It can be possessed, it can be purchased and sold and its economic value can be determined rather accurately. Examples are works of art, books, instruments, etc. However, a critical feature of this capital form in the context of this paper is that consumption of it requires knowledge and capability to understand and appreciate it. Only under this prerequisite the objectified cultural capital obtains qualitative purpose of utilisation and can be adequately economically evaluated (e.g. the economic value of a bronze statue will not be determined by its weight and bronze price). The third form of the cultural capital - institutionalized cultural capital has direct relation to the contemporary educational structure. The value of this capital form is determined by diplomas and qualifications of educational institutions, their accreditation determines the economic value.

All above described concepts are summarised in one table, which emphasizes the correlation of the three concepts: culture, cultural competence and cultural capital.

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<td>Ideas – former and emerging:</td>
<td>Dynamically progressing process of learning, understanding, applying and creating of cultural values:</td>
<td>Spiritual heights of the human action as a capital:</td>
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<td>- spiritual and material values generated as a result of human activities;</td>
<td>- during the process there is developing analytical, positive knowledge and interested understanding of the cultural heritage and about the originating and the meaning and of the contemporary cultural phenomena (knowledge);</td>
<td>- institutionalized state of the cultural capital (academically sanctioned, formally independent of the person of its bearer, directly related to labour market);</td>
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<td>- inherited and lifetime significant traditions;</td>
<td>- during the process there is developing a need and skill to use, evaluate and create cultural values, thus cultivating new skills all the time (skills);</td>
<td>- embodied state of the cultural capital (passively inherited, but naturally dynamic, progressing and subjectively volatile);</td>
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<tr>
<td>- content of human life, including attitudes, meanings, beliefs, feelings, values, objectives, intentions, interests, knowledge, faith, relationships, connotations.</td>
<td>- during the process there evolves an ability to evaluate the context and a motivated, self-evaluative willingness to act creatively and actively in line with the contemporary events (attitudes).</td>
<td>- objectified state of the cultural capital, the realization of this capital state is only possible, when possessing certain cultural capital of the embodied state (relates to the economic capital in the most direct way).</td>
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The Table 1 depicts the interconnections of three concepts: the culture, the cultural competence and the cultural capital, which create a transversal net of the paper’s ideas. Every description of a detail, idea, concept and action has its own special meaning. The form of the table reveals also other connections. Thus, by examining the concepts of the culture and the cultural competence horizontally, one can conclude that:

- culture consists of the spiritual and material values, which are created as a result of the human activities and by using them there is evolving analytical, positive knowledge and an interested understanding, which can be converted in the cultural capital in its institutionalized state;
- culture consists of inherited and in life significant traditions, by nourishing them there evolves the need and skills to use, evaluate and create them; by developing new skills all the time, they become cultural capital in its embodied state, which is dynamic, progressive and subjectively volatile;
- culture are the content of the human life, it includes attitudes, meanings, beliefs, feelings, values, objectives, interests, faith, relationships, connotations; it develops the ability to evaluate the context and it initiates motivated, self-evaluating willingness to act creatively and actively, and when the economic capital can materialize as a spiritual value.

Results and discussion

This framework provides grounds for further statements about the cultural capital as a crucial structural component in the lifelong education process in the information society. It is important to mention that although knowledge is still regarded as an important indicator, the actual usage potential of it is diminishing, in the labour market it is not adequately appreciated and there have been considerable changes in knowledge demand in various education levels. Analytical and insight oriented knowledge is not only difficult to acquire, but also difficult to measure institutionally or to prove the quality of different standpoints. Increasingly one questions the actual possibilities to use the learned information and accordingly the need to learn it. Mass media ensure ever better and faster finding of every information bit.

Next aspect is related to the skills. According to the traditional perception, an individual acquires all skills already in the school. In today world one encounters situation, where there is missing the basis – both material and moral – for the lifelong skill development. Skills are rarely evaluated in the higher educational levels the development is left for the free choice of the individual. The contemporary mass media is providing satisfactory (though not always proven and trustworthy) information about everything, what would be needed. Therefore, an individual in any case is able to find information about what and how should things be done and thus may conclude that learning of varied skills is not necessary any more.
And, at last – the mass media, which includes social networks, fully provides standardized conceptions about the possible attitude, general meaning, opinions, desirable feelings, special values, crucial objectives, popular interests, etc. Schools, the official educational institutions, are not capable to influence here. Classic values are replaced by illusions of contemporary, popular values, created by mass media.

There are several important problems, which would require a debate:

- How to ensure a purposeful application of the contemporary information resources in the educational process in Latvia
- What prerequisites are necessary to ensure wide and free access of contemporary information environment, thus fostering the information society's growth towards the knowledge society?
- How to facilitate the influence of contemporary information resources on individual's comprehension of cultural capital's importance in personal life and contemporary society as a whole?
- Is it feasible to expect a development of cultural self-confidence, comprehension of knowledge value and cultural environment, which is favourable for the society (UNESCO, 2009, 32), if there does not exist a purposeful development of cultural competence during all lifelong education phases?

**Conclusions**

Development possibilities of cultural competencies in contemporary information society are anticipated in the theoretical methodology as well as in the conceptual EUC and UNESCO documents. According to the last it is expected to reach the strategic targets already by 2020.

Certainly, also in the future the school education will be crucial for individual development. The main objective of studies, of course, also in the future will be high marks of performance, however, there is a need to find ways, how to evaluate the added value – the ratio of creativity, which is based on the stability of human general spiritual values and by which an educated, culturally competent individual is characterized. The result of the process can only be evaluated by means of thorough, qualitative analytics, it is difficult to mark it and its evaluation is not included in the supplement of the secondary education diploma.

On the other hand, the education normative documents include exactly these individual qualities as one of the objectives. This means that unless the system is changed in its substance, it cannot be expected that the main players of the labour market will unanimously trust the institutionalized state of the cultural capital (diplomas and qualifications).

Beside teacher's responsibility about the theoretical contents of the studies and the methodology of studies, an important aspect is also students' responsibility. It has been recognized that for studies significantly important is the unity of knowledge, skills and attitudes, where each component is influenced by another and together an integrated result is achieved. Teachers in their practical pedagogical work should be able to offer to the students:

- wide spectrum of activities in various synthesized scientific disciplines, so that studies would be objectively attractive and contemporary;
- opportunity for the student to differentiate and develop own interests, and providing choice of various grades of difficulty, according to the students' self-evaluation;
- tasks for regular, creative and multi-faceted projects, which would foster an active development of skills.

Such approach would increase the cultural capital in its embodied state, it would provide opportunities to improve and activate the individual unique value of it. Overall, it would facilitate students' motivation and willingness to become part of world culture processes in overall, thus participating in lifelong education processes, and by this raising the individual value of the cultural capital. As a result it would become easier to implement the objectives, stated in the education normative documents and to observe the dynamics of the cultural competence development. That, in turn, would ensure objectively more adequate and subjectively higher evaluation of cultural capital in its objectified state.
The awareness and realization of all three states of the cultural capital in lifelong learning process would in overall increase the cultural competence of the information (knowledge) society.

Bibliography


