MODELLING A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The strive for high quality of Russian higher education, puts an emphasis on seeking the ways to improve it in the line with the topical Global educational agenda. In the context of this study provision of high quality education is defined as managing students experience in and out of the classroom as an integrative whole which is indispensable for maximising educational outcomes. Though Russian universities have a steady intake of international students on mobility programmes, there are not enough studies modelling the application of these dimensions in Russian academic setting. The current study seeks for the pathways to overcome this gap.

Aim. The article is targeted to rethink the strategy of managing high quality education for international students and to work out and test an integrated model for the educational quality enhancement regarding two critical dimensions of their university training in curricular-related and co-curricular areas.

Methodology and research methods. Mixed research methods were utilised. Individual interviews and a survey with close-ended and open-ended items were used to find out challenging issues impeding the development of high quality education offered in curricular and co-curricular related dimensions. Classroom observation, peer experts opinions and content analysis of the courses taught and their outcomes evaluation were applied at the University of Tyumen, being 5-100 project participant, to indicate the components, pedagogical toolkit and competencies for high educational quality of international students.

Results and scientific novelty. The developed integrated model for high educational quality provision included the main interrelated curricular and co-curricular components of quality enhancement. They involved the designed up-to-date academic Russian course; teacher-student interactive support, socio-cultural and intellectual engagement such as "buddy" scheme student-to-student support, discussion workshops on intercultural awareness of students and teaching staff. Teaching methods of reflection, critical analysis, confirmatory feedback, communities, project-based and action oriented learning, group discussions, language tandems were proposed. Major competencies for international students' curricular-based and co-curricular educational quality were suggested: critical reading and reflection, academic writing, negotiating, argumentation, logical cohesion, intercultural and cross-cultural awareness, conflict avoidance, tolerance to ambiguity.

Practical significance. The integrated model can be applied for roadmapping the action plan of international policy at any university in Russia to provide high quality education for international students.

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МОДЕЛИРОВАНИЕ ПРОЦЕССА ПОВЫШЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ ДЛЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ СТУДЕНТОВ

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Аннотация. Введение. Глобальная образовательная повестка диктует необходимость улучшения качества российского высшего образования. В контексте данного исследования работа над качеством образования определяется как стратегия интегративного управления опытом иностранных студентов в учебно-академической и внеучебной деятельности для обеспечения максимизации образовательных результатов. Несмотря на то, что российские университеты имеют стабильную входящую мобильность иностранных студентов, научных исследований, моделирующих интегративное взаимодействие этих основных составляющих образования, недостаточно. В данной статье исследуются пути преодоления этого разрыва.

Цель статьи. Разработка и тестирование интегративной модели повышения качества образования иностранных студентов в учебно-академической и внеучебной областях, а также переосмысление стратегии управления этим процессом.

Методология и методы исследования. В статье использованы смешанные методы исследования: индивидуальные интервью и опрос закрытого и открытого типов. Методы наблюдения за учебно-академической и внеучебной деятельностью иностранных студентов, экспертные оценки содержания преподаваемых курсов и их результатов применялись в Тюменском государственном университете проекта 5–100 для определения компонентов, педагогического инструментария и компетенций, значимых для высокого качества предлагаемого образования.

Результаты и научная новизна. В состав разработанной интегративной модели высокого качества образования включены взаимосвязанные учебно-академические и внеучебные компоненты. Рассмотрен широкий

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спектр педагогических инструментов, таких как: обязательный курс академического русского языка, интерактивная поддержка студентов преподавателем, социокультурная и интеллектуальная вовлеченность студентов, интерактивная поддержка иностранного студента студентом принимающего университета (по типу «друг»), дискуссионные мастерские для студентов и преподавателей. Предложены методы обучения рефлексии, критическому анализу текстов, использования подтверждающей обратной связи, сообществ, проектного и ориентированного на действие обучения, групповых дискуссий, языковых тандемов. Выявлены основные компетенции для повышения качества образования на основе учебных программ и внеучебной деятельности иностранных студентов: критическое чтение и рефлексия, академическое письмо, ведение переговоров, аргументирование, логическая связность, межкультурная и кросс-культурная компетенция для бесконфликтного общения и толерантности к неоднозначности.

Практическая значимость. Интегративная модель может быть использована в других российских вузах для разработки дорожной карты повышения качества образования иностранных студентов и ее применения в политике интернационализации вуза.

Ключевые слова: высокое качество образования, иностранные студенты, модель повышения качества образования, межкультурная и кросс-культурная коммуникативная компетенция.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest to educational quality improvement for international students at Russian universities. This phenomenon is looked at as a part of educational development in the line with Global agenda leading to a better efficacy and promotion of Russian education abroad. At the same time, educating international students in Russian academia is a big challenge that puts to the forefront the search for applicable tools to enhance their adjustment and development [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. In the context of this study providing of high quality education is defined as managing international students experience in and out of the classroom for their academic enhancement. Administrative services such as Visa, accommodation and career services related to hosting international students are beyond the scope of the study.

Though challenging, the value of diversity expands the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual horizons of the Russian universities with international students' intake. For instance, the Russian National Project "Education" (Na-

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cional'nyy proyekt "Obrazovanie", 2019-2024)[1] is targeted at the considerable increase of international students in Russian Universities. Also, the Russian universities that joined the national project of academic excellence top-500, are determined to intensively increase their international standing. As it is stated in the documents on Russian Academic Excellence project 5-100, "the system of higher professional education now faces an arduous task: how to keep up with the current pace of international development and to maximise global competitiveness"[2]. In 2013 the University of Tyumen (UTMN) was selected to join this Project and put an emphasis on the enhancement of educational quality, including international students education.

In this sense the claim at the recent EAIE forum "Universities must network or face closure"[3] looks as a justification that international dimension is a must. As international students come from different countries with different identities and cultural codes it seems logical that intercultural communication in academic settings is the appropriate tool to enhance their overall performance. We adopt the understanding of Intercultural communication as awareness and ability to understand views, values, norms and behaviors of people from other cultures, to overcome conflicts within diversity and to develop meaningful communication [6, 7, 8]. In academic context intercultural communication takes some transformations which are manifested through academic habitus - values, norms, behavior and organisational patterns accepted by the University community.

In this research we understand high quality education as the ability to successfully perform, achieve, and demonstrate scholastic activities and advance in academic setting E [9]. Hence, this research directions deal with the following questions: How far are Russian Universities ready to provide high quality education for international students? What are the challenges? What has to be improved?

The data analysis shows that the international students mobility in Russia is growing and its projected number is supposed to double and to rank up to 435 000 by 2024[4]. Some research revealed that international students, studying in a foreign country and targeting at their academic growth and development, come across multiple challenges in doing their academic courses or academic degrees [10, 11, 12]. Russian universities come across some similar issues. The studies in the area of interest made it possible to indicate that major challenges for high quality achievements of international students in the universities across the world mostly concern two major components of academic challenges: academic, curricular-related (in-class) component including Russian language and socio-cultural (out of class) component.

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[1] Passport of the national project "Education". Available from: file:///C:/Users/1/Desktop/НАЦ%20ПРОЕКТ%20И%20ПРОГРАММА/ПАСПОРТ%20НАЦ%20ПРОЕКТА.pdf . (In Russ.)

[2] Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100. URL: https://www.5top100.ru/en/about/more-about/ (accessed: 18.05.2020)

[3] EAIE (European Association for International Education). Helsinki. Conference Companion. 24-27 September. 2019.

[4] TASS. Moscow, January 20. https://nauka.tass.ru/nauka/7562175 (accessed: 18.05.2020) (In Russ.)

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This study is aimed to rethink the strategy of high quality education for international students, and to work out and test an integrated model to achieve this goal regarding two critical dimensions of their university training in curricular and co-curricular areas. To achieve this goal it is necessary to create specially adjusted curricular-based courses and co-curricular activities to form globally accepted competencies based on advanced teaching, cutting- edge contents, international communication tools, techniques and pedagogies.

2. Literature Review

Literature review was undertaken to explore the existing ways to provide high quality education for international students. It was found out that there are some research works related to this issue. Most of them deal with international students adjustment and adaptation in hosting universities as a part of their learning advancement and goes far beyond it as the striving for successful academic outcomes in a university setting. In prior literature [13, 14, 15, 16, 17] regarding international students adjustment, and striving for success in academic environment the research and experience mostly concentrated on cultural and psychological issues of their adaptation to a foreign setting. Also, much attention has been given to the cultural disadvantages of international students, acculturation stress, support and coping at universities as a part of their adjustment to the new academic environment.

International research venues also have given much attention to the educational quality improvement for international students within academic mobility. For instance, the cutting-edge issues of major concern for international students were discussed at the EAIE Conference in Helsinky, 2019[5]. It was particularly emphasised that the concept of modern education is changing and reimagining of education across continents is in demand. Moreover, it was justified that that international students adjustment and performance issues at the Universities outside of their country should be within the focus for research and experience exchange to find better ways to ensure their success which is so far "destination unknown. It was claimed to maximise international students' academic excellence outcomes in fine-tuning of negotiation, argumentation and critical thinking skills; successful language policy; empowering faculty (teachers) and administrative staff, developing pedagogies and academic support[6].

The latest literature in this field testifies that for international students the level of language proficiency and social skills are the pivotal areas for academic success [18, 19, 20]. For example, in the article by Park it was argued that lexical bundles and formulaic language functions, organisation of ideas in writing and interpretation of meaning in a text are the crucial issues for academic adjustment of international students [18]. In some works a set of strategies was

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[5] EAIE (European Association for International Education). Helsinki. Conference Companion. 24-27 September. 2019.

[6] Там же.

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suggested to design a special language course within a mandatory curriculum because "in order to support international students it is necessary to develop language and learning skills, to plan resourcing and delivery of English for academic purposes [21].

3. Materials and Methods

Mixed methods were utilised in the research. The 2018/2019 cohort of 25 Masters' Degree students doing Law and and Public Administration were invited to take part in a survey conducted by the UTMN Centre of international Education managers and the lecturers who were carrying out this research. These students came to the UTMN on mobility programs from 14 countries: France, Venezuela, Serbia, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Mali, Palestine, Yemen, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Netherlands, Slovakia.The aim of the survey was to ask students to reflect on the importance of the academic, curricular-related and socio-cultural, co-curricular questions significant for the quality of their education at the UTMN. The survey consisted of 12 questions, including 10 closed-ended and 2 open-ended questions that motivated international students to express their opinion and make their own suggestions about the improvement of the quality of their education at the university.

Also, the content analysis method of written assignments by international students was used for the selection of survey items.

Besides, the empirical materials for the model input were obtained from 25 international Masters' Degree students coming from the other UTMN Institutes through individual interviews revealing the challenges they were facing at the university and their idea to improve their academic advancement.

The choice of the items for the survey and individual interviews were informed by different qualitative methods trough classroom and co-curriculum observations of student's performance.

10 international professors from the USA, Great Britain, Finland, Slovakia, working at UTMN, were engaged as peer reviewers to assess the quality of teaching and learning for international students' quality enhancement.

4. Results and discussion

The purpose of this study was to work out strategies and the model for provision of high quality of education focussing on the interrelation of curricular-based (academic) and co-curricular (socio-cultural) dimensions of their performance in a university.

This section presents the findings accompanied with the authors' discussion and reflections. These insights are informed by the individual interviews, the survey, observation of classroom teaching and out-of class activities conducted with international students studying at the UTMN. The section also shows the calculated indicators of students learning outcomes in their curricular and co-curricular activities shown in the diagrams (see 4.4. Summary of findings).

This section is divided into five sub-sections according to the model components outlined in Fig. 1. The final section summarises the findings.

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4.1. Empirical data analysis

Analysis and reflections of recent literature in the field as well as the survey and interviews results and existing practices of teaching international students at Russian universities have led us to rethinking of the concept of high quality education provision. They are categorised in two main dimensions [22]: curricular- based and co-curricular. Therefore, we suggest approaching it via creating and utilising a single integrated and co-dependent system. Research and critical analysis of literature sources on these two dimensions made it possible to detail their constituents significant for high educational quality provision.

Analysis of the survey responses regarding curricular and co-curricular related items showed that 8 items of the survey out of 10 were graded as "Very important".

In the first dimension, curricular-related academic area, the students included the following items as the most relevant ones for their academic success: a good variety of curricula and courses offered and up-to-date competencies, academic Russian course, organised interaction with teachers regarding support and feedback, well-trained teachers with international experience, diversity of teaching methods, availability of online sources from World databases. The second dimension, covering co-curricular, socio-cultural items, revealed international students' needs in the following elements relevant to enhance the quality of their education: students support in understanding UTMN "habitus" (norms, rules, values and academic behaviours), regular involvement into academic -related co-curricular events, interaction and support of a Russian student to adjust to a new university setting.

The information obtained from the international students individual interviews also justified the choice of meaningful components for the overall academic quality improvement which were informed by the conducted survey. The interviews with the participants indicated that they had some issues within the university setting to be detailed. The first issue dealt with the problems of general level of curricular-based courses offered to international students.

The quality of the education in some areas is a bit lower as compared to the education that international students receive in other European countries (Netherlands, Slovakia) and the assignments are much easier. There should be a variety of up-to-date programs and courses (Alexander).

The second problem specified how crucial the level of Academic Russian was for the students' academic development.

The question of Russian for academic purposes is the main cultural shock that can impede studies in a foreign country, if you do not master it. It was challenging to understand academic terminology usage and definitions and vocabulary, to write research papers and texts and to do a lot of readings (Julie).

Some international students encountered with the lack of proper teacher-student communication and support and needed the teaching staff to know how to deal with international students.

We lacked proper interaction with teachers for explanation and support. Teachers should be able to speak English and have international experience to clarify things in the class" (Ahmed).

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Some international students needed sufficient co-curricular activities for their academic adjustment and development, such as student-to-student communication and socio-cultural activities.

The people are different in the way they approach issues and how international students are viewed. We need to learn more about the cultural norms and rules of appropriate behavior. I suggest more scrutiny on the local centers for international students which organises extra-curricular work and engages students to be a part of it (Kendie).

Besides, critical evaluation of the teaching methods and students' skills by international colleagues were utilised to design academic, curricular and co-curricular components of the Model. For instance, they pointed out the importance of teaching which uses a variety of methods and formats that cultivates students' curiosity and intellectual growth. Peer reviewers also specified that students' intellectual growth should be developed through critical reading, thinking and reflection, formal graded academic writing and oral speech and communication to develop extemporaneous speech (talking without notes).

Research and critical analysis of literature sources on these two dimensions made it possible to detail their constituents which are significant for high educational quality provision.

Academic, curricular-based dimension deals with curricular-related courses conducted in a classroom. As practically all the courses in a Russian university are delivered in Russian, the university should offer the course developing the competencies in Academic Russian, which are indispensable for international students' progress with all the courses they study. Observations of international students' performance in their classrooms showed that they were mostly struggling with such items of Academic Russian as the use of Russian terminology and diction in academic contexts, critical reading and reflection, written speech composition and discourse, text cohesion, interpretations of meaning and extemporaneous speech. But the biggest challenge for international students is that there is no mandatory special Academic Russian course in a taught curriculum. Other academic, curricular-related competencies are developed via major courses in the field of training students as future professionals: negotiation, argumentation and arguing based on texts and visual sources.

Socio-cultural dimension is characterised by co-curricular, informal activities which are held in out of class setting and reinforce curricular-based academic skills. Co-curricular activities for international students mainly focus on the activities based on intercultural communication competencies development of teaching staff and students focusing on interpretation of culturally specific meaning and behaviours. The latter ones disclose norms, values, academic rules and habitus via out of class intellectual and civic activities and facilitate overall educational quality of international students. Support and communication are indispensable for hosting international students and accelerate their academic progress [14, 22]. As a part of international students support co-curricular activities included discussion workshops on cultural and cross-cultural issues, "buddy" scheme student-to-student communication where the emphasis was

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put on social and intellectual engagement to take part in contests and conferences, field visits related to the area of studies, country-themed social events. The use of different methods and techniques such as group discussions, language tandems, project-based and action oriented learning are used to develop students' competencies. Intercultural communication competency is targeted at cross-cultural awareness, conflict avoidance, and tolerance to ambiguity, argumentation and negotiation. Intellectual, social and civic activities developing international, global and intercultural perspectives are widely supported as a complement to formal education [23]. The data obtained from all the above sources served as a ground for the development of the integrated model of high quality education for international students. To create this model we utilised the method of pedagogical modelling [24]. The strategy for international students' educational quality enhancement proposes parallel, but not lineal operation of curricular and co-curricular dimensions. It is indicated in the model via two square boxes with the multiple arrows pointing to other directions. The arrows show the interdependent correlation between the dimensions characterising high educational quality constituents (see Fig. 1).
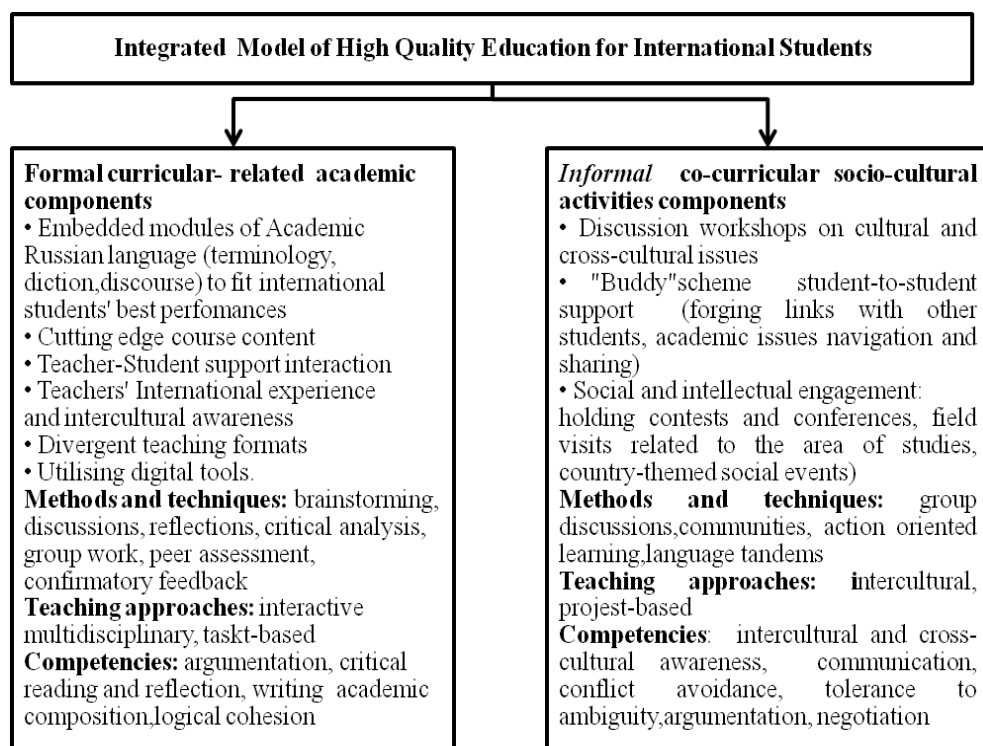

Fig. 1. Integrated model of high quality education for international students

Рис. 1. Интегративная модель высококачественного образования иностранных студентов

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We postulated that both dimensions are important, but socio-cultural dimension should be the springing board to adjust international students to a university setting.

4.2. The sample of co-curricular component implementation

Intercultural communication competency includes knowledge, skills and behaviours/attitudes, in intercultural context [7, 8, 25, 26, 27]. Respectively, the main outcomes of intercultural competency dealt with intercultural and cross-cultural awareness in communication, conflict avoidance and tolerance to ambiguity.

The set of intercultural communication workshops' was delivered by the UTMN Centre for International Education jointly with teaching staff from foreign languages department. The formats used included discussion workshops on cultural and cross-cultural issues, team work, communities (common interests groups). Discussion workshops were conducted on a regular monthly basis and were targeted at sharing experience between international students and teachers about challenging cross-cultural situations to work out together a common decision about how to overcome them.

We detailed the cognitive part of intercultural communication as follows.

An intercultural student should know: differences and commonalities in cultural backgrounds concerning values, norms, attitudes, behaviours and to work out appropriate communication styles to identify areas of potential conflict and avoid them for the purpose of effective communication. Intercultural communication skills include the ability to use: a variety of patterns of cross-cultural interaction and behaviors, a range of discourse and language techniques to fill in gaps in understanding, reasoning in negotiating of intercultural issues, accurate judgements on intercultural actions and summarise them.

A set of special pedagogical tools in the format of trainings was developed to form these intercultural competencies.

Knowledge trainings included mutual discourse analysis ("buddy" student-to-student): decoding of the meaning of culturally acceptable behaviors. Skills development dealt with: reflective hands-on training in effective language communication strategies, reconciling contradictory situations, unpacking and negotiating mutual action plans in cross-cultural contexts. Behavioural trainings concerned with attributing meaning to the actions and their interpreting, observation and commenting upon behavioural patterns.

At the Discussion workshops international students were familiarised with some typical behavioral examples occurring to international students and were alerted to the pattern of cultural variables existing in different cultural models (indirect and direct cultures) and typical behaviours that may be correct or lead to potentially conflict situations [8]. This cultural proximity of international students with the culture of a hosting country has an impact on their communication, interpretation of meaning and behavior. For instance, Russia belongs to the direct culture model and the Latin American countries also refer to the indirect culture model. On the opposite, Middle East countries

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belong to the indirect culture models that might lead to cultural codes misunderstanding. So, a particular emphasis was made on cultural variables for tolerance to ambiguity, proper decoding of meaning, conflict avoidance and understanding of norm, behavior and the "habitus" of Russian academia. The intercultural session at Discussion workshops were particularly useful for the students coming from different culture models and added up to their overall progress.

The samples of verbal behaviours to cope with sensitive areas and conflicts were indicated through cultural variables and implicit meaning of verbal action was decoded and explained (see Table 1). It was shown that cultural differences correlate with different behaviours and they may have different degree of misunderstanding (in the table they are marked with different symbols). The example of cultural variables illustrates how to predict potential areas of misunderstanding and prevent them from occurring.

Table 1.

Cross-cultural behaviour variables

Таблица 1.

Кросс-культурные переменные

Samples	ICM	DCM	DoM
1. Desire to share personal problems with colleagues	-	+	!
2. Criticism not of people, but their actions	+	-	!
3. High value of personal relationships (caring for others, mutual help)	·	+	V
4. Direct manner of commenting on demerits	-	+	!
5. Control of extreme emotions in everyday and academic situations	+	-	!
6. At work, one is expected to focus on working without distractions	+	·	V
7. Focus on success, mobility, recognition, competitiveness	+	·	!
8. Tendency to procrastinate work tasks	-	·	V
9. Regular execution of work exactly on time, no emergency	+	·	!
10. Nin-interference in the personal space of other people	+	·	!

Legend: ICM (Indirect culture module); DCM (Direct culture model); "-"weak, "•"medium, "+" a strong degree of the trait; DoM (degree of misunderstanding): "V" average degree of misunderstanding; "!" Is a zone of high degree of misunderstanding.

The awareness of cultural similarities and differences fostered international students to use the appropriate behavior and corresponding communicative skills and strategies with other students, teachers and university staff.

A significant number of international students, studying at the University, were brought together to be engaged into these sessions. Then, the roadmap

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was composed jointly between teaching departments and the UTMN Centre for International Education to relate academic needs to co-curricular dimension. As a result, the students pointed out that their attitudes to the others became less stereotyped and ethnocentrical and they were capable to negotiate and be agentive to positive social change. It justified the statement by Gudykunst, that such people are open to embracing different cultural and group-based characteristics, seeking and finding creative ways to reconcile seemingly contradictory elements of groups of people and cultures and transform them into complementary parts of an integrated whole [27].

Co-curricular socio-cultural events were carried out via a broad range of activities which related to argumentation, negotiation and extemporaneous competencies development. These competencies were developed both through academic dimension at contact hours in International Law (delivered in Russian and English) and through co-curricular participation in the activities of civic, intellectual and communicative nature: Model United Nations (simulation), international Jessup Moot Court competition, Stanford US Russia Forum, environmental initiatives of global concern Steps for safe environment. For instance, via Model UN and Moot court conducted both in Russian and English, international students developed their skills in effective communication, negotiation, argumentation, multilateral collaboration through teamwork, debating, conflict resolution and reaching a consensus. Also, in these contests a broad range of intercultural communication competencies were utilised: intercultural and cross-cultural awareness, conflict avoidance and tolerance for ambiguity, decoding cultural meaning in contexts. Preparation of international students for these contests was carried out via such methods as "buddy scheme" student-to-student communication, learning communities, intercultural workshops, language tandems.

4.3. Academic Russian course sample

Academic Russian language course replaced a mandatory curricular based course of Academic Writing for the law and public administration Master's degree students at UTMN. The course duration was 4 ECTS (52 hours) and it was entirely meant for writing skills. We have designed the content of this course to make it more adjustable for the need of international students. As a result we changed its title for Academic Russian and developed 3 modules as a part of this course: Module 1 – Academic terminology and diction (10 hours); Module 2 – Writing composition (20 hours); Module 3 – Critical reading and reflection (22 hours).

The concept of the course was to assist the students to understand technical terms – terminology and diction, to compose written texts for academic purposes and to do critical analysis of facts, evidence and interpretation of textual information.

Module 1 concentrated on academic terminology meaning and definitions, practicing and activation formulaic language. The Russian texts of research papers, abstracts, critical reviews, summaries, paper drafts and outlines were used to show their functioning for academic purposes. To support the students,

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the teachers offered them online consultations and confirmatory feedback to overcome fallacies.

The aim of module 2 was strengthening students writing and oral academic communication skills and encouraging critical reflection (thinking) as an ability "to interpret and produce argument more effectively [28]. The module started with the steps for drafting and writing a paper. The students were asked to prepare a draft for a paper. For that they had to brainstorm, develop the research topic (statement), outline a roadmap with hierarchical ideas, argument and evidence.

Brainstorming was a starting point to exercise letting ideas flow freely and thinking about any and all possibilities students might consider. The method of interaction through disciplinary writing was used. The set of leading questions was asked: What will be the topic of your paper? What will you argue? What has been researched? Then the students researched and developed their argument and gathered all the facts that were relevant to the research topic. Organised note-taking also was an essential part of the module for facts evidence, quotations of sources and creation of bibliography. Writing the introduction at this stage helped to focus students' paper and to give them a direction in which to start. At the end of this stage the students were able to develop a statement – a sentence that expresses the main idea or goal of their paper. Then a roadmap with hierarchical ideas and arguments was drafted.

Then, with the roadmap complete, the students were writing a draft taking all the information that they have researched and transforming it into the sentences and paragraphs that will constitute their papers. Once they have written their first draft, the diction, terms and grammar were discussed and recommended. Introduction and conclusion were examined to correspond to each other. Then the students had to spot mistakes or logical inconsistencies in their papers, checked the sources and citation.

The aim of module 3 was to teach students to be able to critically read, reflect and find out the topical information, evidence, and interpretation. International students had many reading tasks in all curricular-based disciplines so critical reading competency was an indicator of their effective analysis and argument [29]. We used an interdisciplinary approach, a regular confirmatory feedback and cutting-edge text contexts. The teachers were trained to deal with international students and had some international teaching experience. When reciting the texts and expressing their opinion the students applied negotiation and argumentation skills.

As a lead-in the students were alerted to the following questions: Do you understand everything you read? Do you believe everything you read? Do you think having a solid understanding of the structure of texts and keywords can help you comprehend and analyse any reading material? Is it necessary to read all the materials you come across that are related to your topic?

Then the students were introduced to the SQ3R (Survey, question, read, recite review) strategy widely used in the universities across the world to help readers absorb as much information as possible and understand where each piece of information fits into the whole. This process consisted of several steps.

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During step 1, to Survey, the students were asked to gather the information necessary to focus on the text survey. They were instructed to read the title (which helps their brain to focus on the topic) and to read the introduction or summary which provides an overview of the author's most important points). After that the students were instructed to read each heading (this helps the students to create a framework for the article/chapter/paper in their mind before they begin to read which provides a structure for the thoughts and details to come).

Step 2, to Question, helps the students to engage and concentrate on a general idea about the scope of the writing, then to start thinking and asking questions about what they will find. The students were asked to think of each section and what questions they may pose to it; and to pay attention to how this section relates to the whole text.

Step 3, to Read, helps international students to fill in the information around the mental outline they have been building. The students were fostered to read one section at a time and to think about the questions you may ask. The teacher recommended not to get distracted by the details because the ideas the author wants to get across are more important than the examples that support them.

Step 4, to Recite, trains the mind to concentrate and learn as it reads. The students were tasked to recite by repeating the key ideas of the text without looking. If they couldn't recall all the answers they were asked to re-read the section or the part that is to do with that question.

Step 5, to Review, asks the students to refine their mental outline of the material they read. This step provides another opportunity for repetition of the material and therefore would enhance their recall of information. For reciting the students were asked to use the whole text and if they forget some of the main ideas, to go back to the text to remember.

The international students were taught that the strategy to explore basic information in any text deals with the topic (What is it about?); scope (What is the range of ideas that are discussed?); purpose (Why did the author write this?); main idea (Can you summarise the author's entire argument in one sentence?). All these critical reading strategies are critical for high quality education.

Also, the second section of each class was discussion-based, revolving around the writing prompt on the themes that the students had completed before attending the class. Usually, the challenging issues of the world agenda or the themes in their future professional area were selected for discussion in the format of negotiating and argumentation.

For negotiation competency development the following guidelines were given to the students: follow symmetrical responses*;* do not monopolise the conversation; use active listening and diplomatic language; use argumentation and evidence; try to suggest win-win outcome.

Argumentation competency helps to make a statement, justify it with facts and other evidence including visuals. The guidelines used to develop argumentation were as follows: do not use just your own opinion, justify it with facts, use appropriate diction and functions, use logical cohesion of facts

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and argumentation. For instance, argumentation competency was linked up to such an element of the Model as extemporaneous oral speech which we define as an ability to talk without using notes or outlines and to be able to extend logical cohesion for presenting oneself and the audience engagement via questions.

Our reflections led us to the question about teachers support and contribution. International students used multiple types of teaching support via corporate emails, social messengers (WhatsApp, VKontakte) and online consultations at digital platforms (Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams). Teaching staff consulted international students during their office hours and had a regular feedback with the students.

In the end of the course Academic Russian the assignment for testing international students academic competencies to write a research paper were tested. A single assignment was given for testing within the course of International law requiring implementation of all three competencies of academic writing, critical reading and reflection, extemporaneous speech. The topic was "International student carbon footprint challenge", and was within a scope of civic and global significance. The students were required to read no less than 10 sources using critical reading, note-taking and drafting and then to present it orally without using notes as extemporaneous speech. Students were tasked with three significant writing assignments designed for professional and academic application of the Russian language. Those included: Writing skills terminology and diction usage in the flow of argumentative written assignments such as: research papers, an annotated bibliography (a topic of their choosing) abstracts, extended writing from notes. Students were also required to write short weekly responses related to a discussion topic of the themed article from recent academic literature or other materials – films, lectures, on legal and managerial issues (lectures, articles). They were instructed to read broadly on the topic and single out the topic ideas, range of ideas and fact and argumentations.
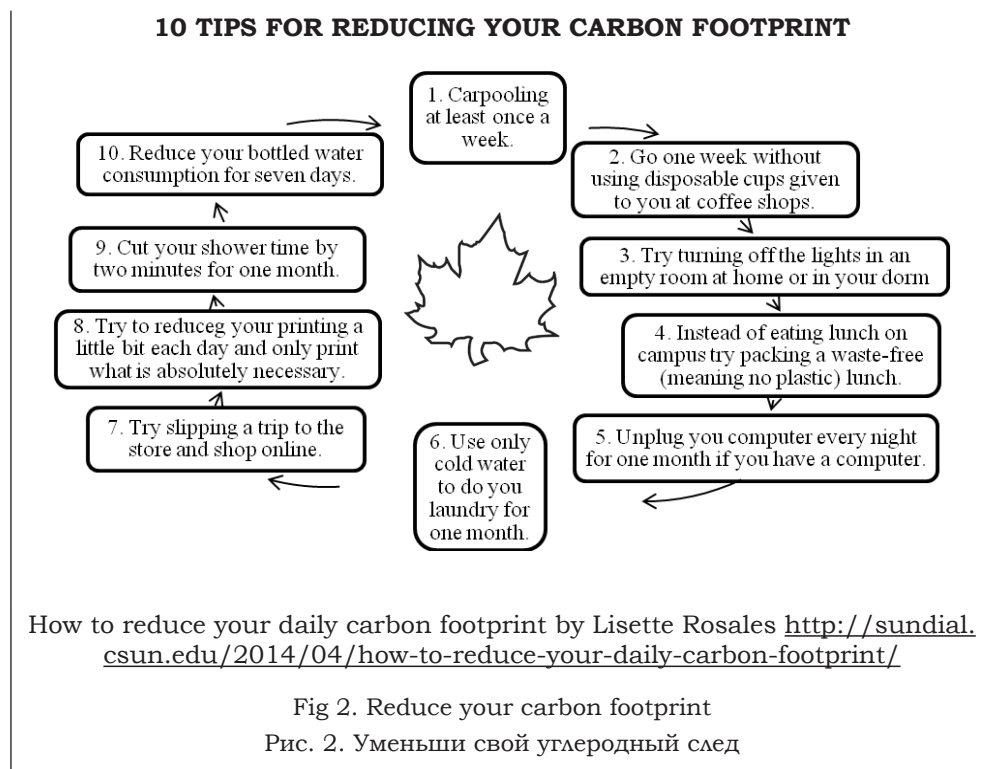
As the topic fitted the global agenda and evoked interest of international students it gave them an opportunity to implement their awareness and attitude to the environmental issues, environmental law and human rights.

After that they got the task to calculate what consequences some kinds of carbon footprint might have and to work out the possible ways to prevent it. The target was to prepare a written summary in the format of a Poster "My carbon footprint" in accordance with academic written speech norms. Preliminary discussions, argumentation and negotiation with the teacher about the constituents and the meaningful design of the Poster contents were used. The message that the student had to render was that the carbon footprint cannot be solved without massive participation of the general public in all the countries. The handy tips to reduce pollution and to improve environmental safety were worked out and summarised individually by each student.

The Posters done by the students were exposed in a classroom and served as means for discussion the main points and ideas. Further on, these Posters

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were presented at the social, civic and intellectual co-curricular activities such as the conference and visits to secondary schools to promote an example of environmental awareness to schoolchildren (see Fig. 2. Reduce your carbon footprint). This topic of environmental concern was also the incorporation of Global citizenship education [30, 31, 32, 33] dealing with the issues of Global competency.

A carbon footprint is historically defined as A carbon footprint measures, the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by a person, organisation, event or product		
MY CARBON FOOTPRINT **Foundation my climate** **The climate protection Partnership** https://co2.myclimate.org/en/offset_further_emissions Calculate every action taken. International. 6 calculators: Flight, Car, Household, Corporate, Event, Cruise Result: it's easy to calculate every aspect – from single event to annual activities.	16.98 tones	Becoming carbon neutral is only the beginning. The climate problem will not be solved by one company reducing its emissions to zero, and it won't be solved by one government acting alone.
International Student Carbon Footprint Challenge http://web.stanford.edu/group/inquiry2insight/cgi-bin/i2sea-rlb/i2s.php?page=iscfc# International calculator to calculate your personal footprint, and find out what you can do to reduce your impact. Detailed calculation for a single person. Result: calculates a person carbon footprint, compares with other results and helps to decide how to reduce it.	36.74 tones	The climate problem will not be solved without mass participation of the general public in the countries around the globe. (Rupert Murdoch's speech on carbon neutrality http://www.theaustralian.com.au)
The Nature Conservancy http://www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/ Step by step calculation for a person or household. Detailed explanation of every choice one makes. Result: calculates a person or household carbon footprint	58 tones	

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10 TIPS FOR REDUCING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

1. Carpooling at least once a week.

2. Go one week without using disposable cups given to you at coffee shops.

10. Reduce your bottled water consumption for seven days.

9. Cut your shower time by two minutes for one month.

3. Try turning off the lights in an empty room at home or in your dorm

8. Try to reduceg your printing a little bit each day and only print what is absolutely necessary.

4. Instead of eating lunch on campus try packing a waste-free (meaning no plastic) lunch.

7. Try slipping a trip to the store and shop online.

6. Use only cold water to do you laundry for one month.

5. Unplug you computer every night for one month if you have a computer.

How to reduce your daily carbon footprint by Lisette Rosales http://sundial.csun.edu/2014/04/how-to-reduce-your-daily-carbon-footprint/

Fig 2. Reduce your carbon footprint

Рис. 2. Уменьши свой углеродный след

Also, during international students' preparation of this task they discussed it with the teachers who checked their notes, drafts and arguments.

4.4. Summary of findings

The following grade breakdown for all tested curricular- related competencies was utilised: 0-59% – satisfactory; 60-75% – good; 76-90% – very good; 90-100% – excellent or very good. The results were measured out of 100% for each competency. The calculation of percentage was done on arithmetic mean by adding up the percentage results of all students and further division of that into the number of tested international students. The students were graded on a 100% scale in each item.

The results showed the big increase of students' outcomes in academic competencies, correspondingly 75% in Critical reading and Negotiating and 70% in Extemporaneous speech (see Fig. 3 Curricular -related competencies indicators).

The measurement of the use of academic terminology and diction in the text of the assignment was 80%; drafting and note-taking 76%; argumentation, evidence, cohesion – 70%, which corresponded to the evaluation from good to excellent (see Fig. 4).

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To measure co-curricular competencies the participants were asked to rate them in percentage regarding cultural awareness, skills to negotiate, argue and engagement into socio-cultural civic and intellectual activities. The percentage numbers indicating these competencies showed the big increase of students' outcomes: in intercultural communication competencies it ranked up to 90%, in negotiating and arguing up to 78% and in social, civic and intellectual communication competency - up to 40% (see Fig. 5). The low percentage of this competency is explained by the fact that not all international students were engaged, mostly concentrating of academic skills. Regarding methodological limitations, the current research utilised relatively small sample of students and courses, used the data of local University and lacked randomisation. Nevertheless, the international students' progress was evident through quantitative data.
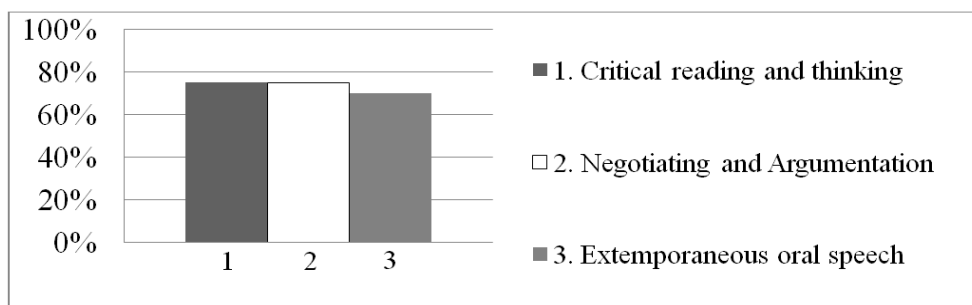

Fig 3. Curricular-related competencies indicators
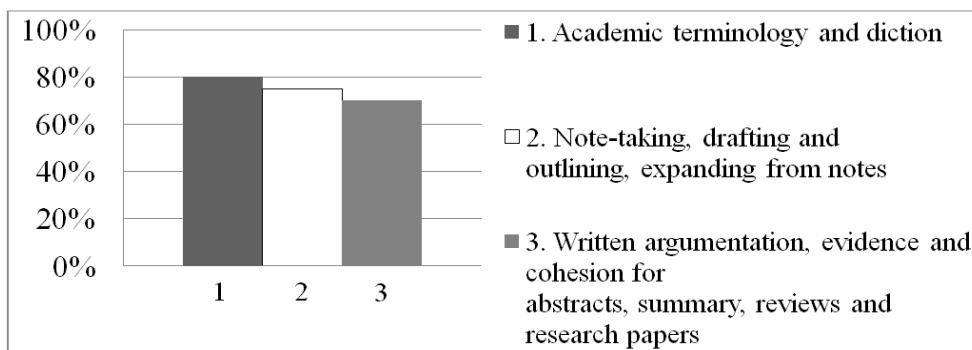
Рис. 3. Индикаторы академических компетенций

Fig. 4. Academic Russian competencies indicators

Рис. 4. Индикаторы компетенций академического русского языка

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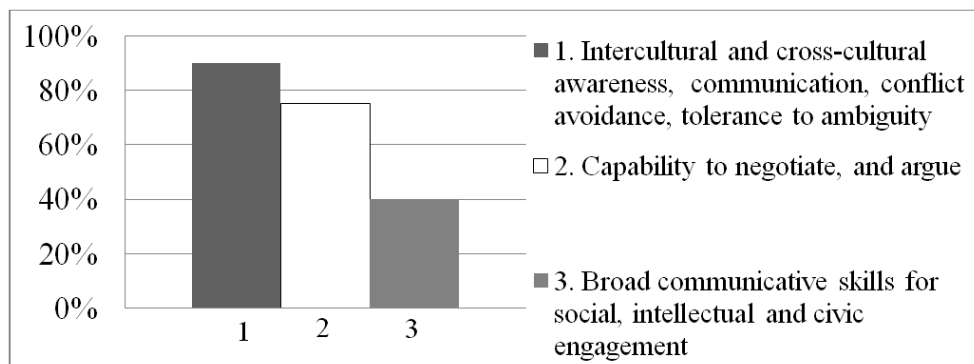
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Fig. 5. Co-curricular-related competencies indicators

Рис. 5. Индикаторы внеучебных компетенций

Feedback from students showed that they were highly positive on the improvement of their academic competencies. They pointed out that permanent support and tracking of their progress accompanied by the teachers' confirmatory feedback have increased their confidence, motivation and pro-activity at classes.

Co-curricular activities engagement contributed a lot to the overall high educational quality of international students with different cultural backgrounds. For the current research international students were asked to evaluate how their involvement into co-curricular activities influenced their competencies to be interculturally-friendly. The feedback showed that international students dramatically improved their abilities to understand others and they felt much at ease to negotiate challenging situations in and out university setting. Also, the "buddy" scheme and language tandems as well as co-curricular methods for interaction, regular feedback at communicative workshops, engagement in civic and intellectual events contributed to their well-being, confidence, sense of involvement and educational development.

5. Conclusion

The article started out with the idea of exploring the ways for international students' educational quality enhancement in a University setting.

An integrative model was developed meant for educational quality increase with two major correlating dimensions of academic, curricular-based and co-curricular, socio cultural dimensions. Respective pedagogies to develop a range of topical competencies were proposed for the maximised advancement of international students.

The tested model justified its viability for international students' educational quality increase and learning satisfaction. This model might be applicable outside of local University at other Russian universities hosting international students.

The suggested Academic Russian course design and content can be further developed and transformed into separate elective courses to develop inter-

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national students' awareness of Academic Russian according to their needs. The samples of this course contents and teaching materials on writing, critical reading and reflection, extemporaneous oral skills may be used at other universities where international students face language issues.

The socio-cultural dimension of broad out-of-class co-curricular activities such as intercultural and cross-cultural communication discussion workshops, "buddy" student-to-student communication, interest-based communities, language tandems and engagement into intellectual contesting may serve as a ground for implementation and further development.

This study adds to the literature on the provision of high quality of education for international students in a foreign University environment by spotting challenging issues and proposing the pedagogies to overcome these shortcomings.

Intercultural and cross-cultural communication workshop training sessions for students, teaching and administrative staff and regular interaction and confirmatory feedback for students' support proved to be an effective tool for flexibility to overcome challenges with international students.

The authors contend that it is critical to create a roadmap coordinating the action plan and strategies with international students between university administration, international office and Institutes (colleges). That will enable to transform the University landscape to meet the demands of global competitiveness to increase the quality of education for international students.

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