

# ПСИХОЛОГИЯ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

UDC 159.9

## TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SHORT-TERM INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ART THERAPY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Tatiana A. Vaulina<sup>1</sup>, Barbara Parker-Bell<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tomsk State University (Tomsk, Russia)

<sup>2</sup>Marywood University (Scranton, PA, USA)

*The study was sponsored by the RFH as part of a research project № 14-06-00712  
«Cross-cultural study of the level of development of mathematical creativity of students studying  
in different universities and subject areas»*

**Summary.** The paper reveals the importance of the development of international education programs in the context of globalization and internationalization of modern universities. The authors share their experience of developing and implementing a short-term art therapy and counseling program in the summer of 2014. The short-term art therapy program described in this paper is discussed from educational and cultural perspectives. Additionally, the authors summarize feedback and recommendations of the teachers who were involved in the work with students. Based on the authors' perceptions and teacher feedback, advantages and disadvantages of the program structures are addressed. Finally, the development of this particular short-term education program is discussed as the initial stage in plans for the development of joint degree educational program in art therapy for Russian students. The results discussed in the paper could be beneficial for teachers as well as students who wish to engage in international higher education efforts.

**Keywords:** art therapy; international education; psychology; short-term and long-term education programs.

### Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to explore teachers' perspectives on the development and implementation of a short-term international educational program in the field of art therapy and psychology. While some literature is available to educators outlining the processes of creating short-term educational programs in different academic fields and geographic areas, there is limited literature on teachers' perspectives of their roles in leading and teaching such programs with international students. Thus, the paper

provides insights from the program coordinators and instructors of one successful summer program. This program, held in 2014, involved the participation of a group of Russian students in a USA based 3-week non-credit academic and cultural program. Learning opportunities emphasized the academic content of art therapy and psychology and varied cultural experiences. The authors will highlight the structures of the program that supported learning and will describe the role that cultural experiences had in supporting student development and cultural awareness. This article will hold benefit for those who are considering planning, coordinator, teaching, facilitating or participating in short-term international academic programs.

**Internationalization.** Internationalization and globalization processes influence all areas of people's activities in economic, political, and educational realms. Among these areas, education can be considered to be one of the most sensitive areas influenced by the changes happening in the world related to globalization. In modern education, globalization can be said to bring the educational systems of different countries closer to each other, triggering the significant changes of teaching and learning processes [1, 2]. International universities are becoming more open to collaboration with each other by means of building and implementing joint research, and by conducting short-term and long-term educational projects and programs. Therefore, in the context of international collaboration, professors and students learn to work across the globe, speak different languages, and come to understand the different cultural contexts within the definite subject areas. Stahl and Brannen mention "You have to get prepared to deal with teams who are multicultural, to work with people who do not all think the same way as you do" [3, p. 495].

**International Education in Art Therapy.** Although art therapy is considered to be a relatively young discipline that initially appeared in the middle of the 20th century in the USA and Great Britain, it is becoming more and more international, overcoming state boundaries. Thus, the definition of art therapy must be discussed from different perspectives, both cultural and educational. Each country brings its own cultural and professional components to the practices of art and art therapy. Stoll (2005) mentions that, "there is no universal definition of art therapy" [4, p. 174]. Karkou, Martinsone, Nazarova, Vaverniece say, "...a number of different terms are used to refer to aspects of art therapy such as: art psychology, art pedagogy, creative self-expression, creative rehabilitation, special arts, and arts technologies. The use of different titles and their respective differences in emphasis and applications raise a number of issues. Firstly, the degree to which they do indeed fall with the field of art therapy or not, and secondly, whether they support or hinder the development of art therapy" [5, p. 89].

In Russia, art therapy officially appears in the end of the 20th century with the introduction of art therapy to Russian psychologists in the Europe-

an part of Russia. In 1993, US cross-cultural consultants presented art therapy in Saint Petersburg. These consultants organized art therapy seminars and trainings for Russian psychologists. In 1998 in Saint Petersburg, an art therapy association formed and a first conference was held with British art therapists as guest speakers [4, p.185]. More can be read about the history of the development of art therapy in Russia in a summary composed by the European Consortium of Art Therapy Education [6].

The first steps of introducing art therapy to higher education started at Saint Petersburg State Academy of Post graduate Educational Training. This school became a member of the European Consortium of universities in Art Therapy Education [6]. ECArTE was founded in 1991 and currently comprises 32 member institutions from 14 European countries. “The primary purpose of the ECArTE is to represent and encourage the development of the arts therapies at a European level, in particular courses offering nationally validated and professionally recognized education for arts therapists” [6, p.3]. The Directory of the European Education and Training Programs says that “it is working towards establishing mutual recognition and compatibility in educational and vocational training for arts therapists within the European Community. The Consortium encourages the use of the European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as a vehicle for developing and maintaining shared standards” [6, p. 3].

According to a resolution passed by the Russian Art Therapy Association on May 16, 2009, art therapy is defined as “a system of psychological and mental-physical interventions based on clients’ (patients’) involvement in artistic expression and establishing therapeutic relationships. It can be used with therapeutic, preventive and rehabilitation goals with people having mental or physical disorders or those with psychosocial limitations” [6, p. 90].

A lot of work is still needed to introduce art therapy to higher education programs in Russia. When establishing art therapy education in countries that have not formalized the art therapy profession or art therapy education, educators need to follow existing educational standards within the country but also bring important knowledge and experience to the development of a new field. Potash, et al. mention that “A challenge to the global education of art therapists is to define standards to determine minimally expected content areas of knowledge. In addition to the standards, there is a need to create a curriculum that functions within these standards, but that is culturally applicable and relevant” [7, p. 144]. Potash et al. also address the training programs around the world. They say that educators “have a common need to respond to the challenge of how to provide knowledge in a way that is accessible, adheres to professional standards and promotes the field. Given that there is a profession called art therapy, practitioners need to be sensitive to what it means to call themselves art therapists or to call their practice art therapy” [7, p. 143].

There are few examples of international programs built in the field of art therapy in Russia. Art therapy content is provided either by the psychology disciplines or as an elective course. One of the examples of existing art therapy educational programs in Russia is an intensive two-year educational program of Art Therapy in Education, Medicine and the Social Sphere, offered by Saint Petersburg State Academy of Post graduate Pedagogical Training. The program includes courses in psychology, methodology, visual arts, art therapy in different settings, ethics, individual and group work and supervision. The existence of this program and its popularity demonstrate that the interest to art therapy is growing intensively in Russia.

There are several factors that influences such interest including: rapid growth of the modern world, the use of media and digital technologies increasing the speed of processing information, the need for people to make decisions and to shoulder numerous responsibilities, so that people live in a climate of permanent stress (shortage of time, financial resources, conflicts in communication at work and families, etc.) Therefore, there is an increased need for psychological help. Karkou, Martinsone, Nazarova, and Vaverniece mention that "With the collapse of the Soviet Union and of communism, it is expected that Russia as well as Latvia will 'catch up' with both global ways in which professional developments in the West is seen as well as with the social problems, fragmentation and alienation that are characteristic of the more western societies within the age of postmodernism" [5, p. 93]. Therefore, there will be more need for psychological services to address personal concerns and more need for creative psychological interventions such as art therapy interventions. Art therapy (and art therapy techniques utilized by psychologists) will provide new opportunities for clients to express their concerns in a safe environment and to receive psychological help in a safe manor. Consequently, a desire to address contemporary professional and social concerns became the initial impetus for the two universities to develop projects in the field of art therapy and psychology.

**History of Collaboration.** Since 2009, faculty members from Marywood University and Tomsk State University have worked together to create opportunities for student exchanges related to culture, art therapy, psychology, and counseling. Activities have included a SKYPE exchange between graduate art therapy students at Marywood and Tomsk State University, a formal teleconferences, visits of Russian psychology students and faculty members to Marywood to engage in university classes, research, and experience of culture, and visits of a Marywood University art therapy faculty member to Tomsk. During the university visits, larger plans for collaboration between the two universities occurred. Most recently, collaborative goals such as research, joint degree programs, and a 3-week summer program for Russian students at Marywood University were proposed. The first

of the three concepts to be developed was the summer program. In summer 2014, 14 students from Siberia and 2 faculty members from Tomsk State University came to Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA to learn about art, art therapy, counseling, and culture of the USA. For the purposes of this article, the plans, goals, and outcomes of this summer program will be outlined.

**Summer Program Development.** With the support of both universities Tomsk State and Marywood University psychology and art therapy faculty members began to plan the program in October 2013. It was determined that the academic content would relate to introductory art therapy concepts and experiences, counseling interview techniques, and art therapy approaches used with special populations. In addition, students would engage in studio art classes, recreational activities, and travel to local and regional locations. Students were to be provided with opportunities to explore university resources such as the library and databases to assist them in finding literature (in English) related to their own academic research interests.

Russian student eligibility for program participation included high level English comprehension and communication skills sufficient to manage courses taught solely in English. To recruit participants Tomsk State University distributed an announcement of the program and invited students from the region to apply. Next, prospective participants were interviewed by Tomsk State psychology faculty to determine preparation and suitability for the program. Finally, Tomsk State University faculty members supported qualified students in managing the VISA process. Tomsk State University subsidized the cost of the academic program for successful Tomsk State University students. Of the 14 students qualified, the majority were students from Tomsk State University. Students' levels of study ranged from undergraduate to doctoral in the academic areas of psychology, human resources, language, and architecture. It is important to note that most students were not familiar with one another before they attended the program.

**Program Implementation.** During the program, participating students and supervising faculty resided at a Marywood University Dormitory, on the Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania campus. The dormitory was a small building consisting of approximately 8 bedrooms and bathrooms to accommodate 2–4 students or faculty members. The dorm also contained a few study spaces, a central living / recreation room and a kitchen. The Russian students and faculty were the only residents during this time. This exclusively Russian living environment created a setting that stimulated community building and group cohesion.

Group cohesion was also cultivated by the program leaders. For example, prior to the start of the academic program art therapy methods were utilized to support student and faculty member introductions and communication about their hopes and fears about the study abroad activities. In the

next stage, students were also oriented to the program schedule and the Marywood University campus. As will be discussed later, the placement of participants in a one “family-styled” living setting greatly influenced program outcomes. Time was allotted for adjustment to the time zone and American recreational activities before the first week of study.

Students were provided with the overall program schedule and any changes to the schedule were communicated to faculty and students as the occurred. Overall, the three study weeks were structured similarly. Each week consisted of three and 1/2 days of formal academic coursework, 1,5 days for local activities and 3 evenings of 2 hour art course instruction (printmaking) and time in the University library. The first academic week provided lecture and art experiences that demonstrated art therapy techniques and generated interaction, reflection, and verbal and written communication in English. The second week of academic work, focused on counseling techniques and interviewing methods. Students were observed and provided feedback by the instructor as they practiced experienced interview processes. In the final week, students were exposed to specialty areas in art therapy such as expressive therapies techniques, approaches to victims of traumatic events, and assessment and treatment of clients in medical settings. Weekends included day trips to places such as Philadelphia, New York City, and Sandy Hook, New Jersey. During these local and regional trips, participants had more opportunities to mix with other Marywood students and local residents. Primarily, due to the limited presence of college students on the campus, the Russian participants had less interaction with students on campus than in previous programs. This situation promoted group cohesion, but reduced additional opportunities to practice English skills and to experience cross-cultural interaction.

As stated previously, student ability to comprehend and communicate in English was essential for students to benefit from the program. All instruction was in English, as most Marywood University instructors did not have Russian language skills. As a whole, students' English communication skills were good, but confidence in speaking the language varied among the Russian students. It was notable that more fluent students assisted other students who were less proficient with communication. Students also referred to language applications on their phones to assist with translation. As the group navigated through intensive classes in English and helped each other with English vocabulary, an interdependence developed among the students and reinforced group cohesion.

To promote advanced English comprehension, students were encouraged to practice their English by obtaining and reading articles related to their academic research topics. Students were also provided an opportunity to interview professionals and professors in related academic areas not al-

ready represented in the program. Utilizing library resources, students learned to utilize the English language data bases, to select and use key terms for searches, and to read academic abstracts and articles related to their major learning focus. Given that the majority of students were psychology students, only a few students completed interviews with other campus professionals. For example, the architecture student met with an architecture faculty member on a few occasions, and one human resources student interviewed Marywood University's Assistant Director of Human Resources. Students and professionals appreciated the exchanges and saw them a means to sharing professional practice information and to promoting cultural exchange.

### **Evaluation**

To evaluate the students and program, participating Marywood University instructors were asked to complete a formal evaluation of student preparation and program structure. Teachers were asked to assess English skills of the group as a whole and how the level of English skills influenced learning. In addition, teachers were asked to assess student preparation for content learning and to provide suggestions to assist student preparation. Six instructors completed the evaluations and these evaluations were reviewed by the Marywood University and Tomsk State University Program Coordinators.

Largely, Marywood instructors' perceptions of the Russian students' English skills were very positive. Yet, teachers noted that the work of translation during long days of instruction seemed to be exhausting for the students, and that by the end of the instruction periods students, had more difficulty attending to instructional content. During art therapy coursework, instructors noted that participation in art experiences provided some relief from listening and speaking English and extended student engagement and understanding of course content. Additionally, the counseling instructor observed that students that had better English skills and comfort with communication appeared better able to grasp and utilize the interview concepts. The art/printmaking instructor reported that the Russian students appreciated the hands-on components of learning new art processes, but acknowledged that they also voiced need to have more opportunities for physical activities to offset the work of long days of instruction. Because classes consisted of Russian students only, students frequently reverted to Russian speaking with peers when interaction with the instructor was not required. This appeared to provide the students with comfort and connection, but perhaps did not challenge them to extend their English skills. In a program evaluation sent to Russian student participants, students concurred that they might have spo-

ken more English if their courses and social spheres were more integrated with English speaking students. More information on student views of the program will be discussed in a future article.

**Impact of Cultural Experiences.** While practicing English skills and learning academic content in the academic environment were essential student tasks during the program, cultural and travel experiences were also an important aspect of student learning. Students learned how to negotiate everyday environments such as grocery stores, retail shopping centers, and restaurants. In addition, students were able to explore major US cities such as New York City and Philadelphia. In New York City, students had opportunities to take in major icons of US culture such as the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, Ground Zero, and Wall Street. In Philadelphia, students were able to explore the US Constitution Center, which highlights the process and outcomes of the USA's establishment as an independent nation and its governmental processes. Students were also able to see Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, and homes of US founders located in Philadelphia. Students stated that these experiences helped shift and deepen their understanding of US culture and history.

On other occasions, students were able to experience some of the varied landscapes of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the US, including the New Jersey Shore of the Atlantic Ocean and farm country in Central Pennsylvania. Many students had their first view and swim in an ocean during the program. In Central Pennsylvania, participants visited a traditional US amusement park and dined at a family home. Through their travels, students were able to see the different lifestyles Americans may lead in large metropolitan cities (New York City, Philadelphia), in smaller cities (Scranton, Pennsylvania) and coastal towns (Sandy Hook, New Jersey) and homesteads and farms in rural locations. After significant travel, students had a more well-rounded view of the United States' landscapes and lifestyles.

Instructors observed that student participation in group travel and recreational activities appeared to unite the students as a group of friends who, with wide eyes, experienced foreign things together. In this way, students were able to feel secure and safe as a small Russian contingent in a strange land. Yet, it was significant that students were not alone in their explorations. Program coordinators were consistently present to lead and facilitate home-based activities, regional tours, and culture trips. The presence of Russian and American program coordinators appeared to enhance student comfort and perceptions of safety, and diminished student experiences of "culture shock".

**Further Evaluation.** It is important to note that the Russian Summer Program was a non-credit program which served to enhance Siberian students' educational experiences versus assisting them in fulfilling degree re-



quirements. Consequently, teacher evaluation of student performance and comprehension of content was judged based on observation of class participation as opposed to oral or written examination. In the future, it may be helpful to design and implement some formal assessments of student learning, to promote and enhance quality instruction. As collaborative programs continue to develop, Marywood University and Tomsk State University faculty members will refine program goals and objectives and will work towards planning courses and programs that are intended for college credit and joint degrees in art therapy and psychology.

**Recommendations and Plans.** The program coordinators reviewed the program structure, and reflected upon instructor comments and student participant feedback extensively. After considering the strengths and weaknesses of the program, the program coordinators recommend retaining a good balance of academic and cultural travel learning activities. In the future, more effort will be made in breaking up each academic day with exercise so that students may refresh for ongoing translation efforts. To enhance Russian student English practice, it may be beneficial to match Russian students with Marywood University students during their stay, so that they may connect and interact during non-structured and recreational times of the program, or to find more means to integrate Russian students into existing Marywood classes with US students. Finally, development of outcome measures for student content learning will help provide data to plan educational programming in art therapy and psychology.

In the future, the Marywood University and Tomsk State University faculty members will continue to collaborate in developing joint educational opportunities for both Marywood University, and Siberian students. Teacher exchanges and art therapy course work made available to Russian students at Tomsk State University or Marywood University, will promote the continued development of psychology and art therapy in the Russian Federation.

### *References*

1. *Вавлина Т.А., Зуева Д.Е.* Проблема развития креативности в мировом образовательном пространстве [The problem of creativity development in modern world education] // Вестник ТГУ. 2011. № 351. С. 121–123.
2. *Вавлина Т.А.* Возможности арт-терапии в развитии инновационной активности студентов [The possibilities to use art therapy for the development of innovative activity of students] // Психология обучения. 2010. № 9. С. 121–128.
3. *Stahl G.K., Brannen M.Y.* Building Cross-cultural leadership competence: An Interview with Carlos Ghosn // Academy of Management Learning & Education. 2013. Vol. 12, № 3. P. 494–502.
4. *Stoll B.* Growing pains: the international development of art therapy // The Arts in Psychotherapy. 2005. Vol. 32, № 3. P. 171–191.

5. Karkou V.K., Martinsone N., Nazarova I. Vaverniece Art therapy in the postmodern world: Findings from a comparative study across the UK, Russia and Latvia // *The Arts in Psychotherapy*. 2011. Vol. 38. P. 86–95.
6. *Directory of European Education and Training Programmes (ECArTE)*. 2013. [www.ecarte.info](http://www.ecarte.info)
7. Potash J.S., Bardot H., Rainbow T.H. Ho Conceptualizing international art therapy education standards // *The Arts in Psychotherapy*. 2012. Vol. 39. P. 143–150.

**Vaulina Tatiana A.**, Associate Professor of Psychology Department of Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia.

E-mail: [tatvaulina@gmail.com](mailto:tatvaulina@gmail.com)

**Barbara Parker-Bell**, Associate Professor, Department of Visual Arts, Marywood University, Scranton, PA, USA.

E-mail: [parkerbell@maryu.marywood.edu](mailto:parkerbell@maryu.marywood.edu)

### References

1. Vaulina T.A., Zueva D.E. The problem of creativity development in modern world education system. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta – Tomsk State University Journal*, 2011, no. 351, pp. 121-123. (In Russian).
2. Vaulina T.A. Vozmozhnosti art-terapii v razvitii innovatsionnoy aktivnosti studentov [The possibilities to use art therapy for the development of innovative activity of students]. *Psikhologiya obucheniya*, 2010, no. 9, pp. 121-128.
3. Stahl G.K., Brannen M.Y. Building Cross-cultural leadership competence: An Interview with Carlos Ghosn. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 2013. vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 494-502. DOI: 10.5465/amle.2012.0246
4. Stoll B. Growing pains: the international development of art therapy. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 2005, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 171-191. DOI: 10.1016/j.aip.2005.03.003
5. Karkou V.K., Martinsone N., Nazarova I. Vaverniece Art therapy in the postmodern world: Findings from a comparative study across the UK, Russia and Latvia. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 2011, vol. 38, pp. 86-95. DOI: 10.1016/j.aip.2010.12.005
6. *Directory of European Education and Training Programmes (ECArTE)*, 2013. Available at: [www.ecarte.info](http://www.ecarte.info).
7. Potash J.S., Bardot H., Ho R.T.H. Conceptualizing international art therapy education standards. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 2012, vol. 39, pp. 143-150. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2012.03.003>