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Kateryna Sharuda

*Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
(Kyiv, Ukraine)*

Kseniia Kugai

*Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
(Kyiv, Ukraine)*

COMMON AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF UKRAINE AND EU COUNTRIES

Ukraine is currently undergoing significant changes to its education system as it integrates into the European educational space. It is not just a policy change, but a new way of teaching that goes against the old ways of the Ukrainian schools and universities. The government has run Ukrainian schools for a long time, focusing on teaching the same things to everyone and ensuring they do well together. European Union (EU) countries have different ways of teaching and learning. They follow the Bologna Process, which means they allow students to move between schools, give schools greater autonomy, and focus on what students want and need. The convergence of these two systems has become a central theme in contemporary pedagogical discourse. Ukraine wants to follow the same rules for higher education as other European countries, while also preserving its own culture and high-quality education. It is not easy because the rules differ from those in Ukraine now.

The work aims to analyze the similarities and differences between the Ukrainian and European Union education systems in the context of Ukraine's integration into the European Higher Education Area and ongoing educational reforms.

First, the primary unifying factor between Ukraine and the EU is the commitment to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Both areas think that having effective

ways to assess and improve the quality of education is very important for developing effective policies. According to some studies, Ukraine and France differ in how they reform their education systems. Ukraine changes by adopting the best practices from other countries and following rules that ensure its degrees are accepted by other countries (Durdas, 2021). One important thing all European countries have in common is that they care about different kinds of education. These kinds of education are called formal, non-formal, and informal education. It means we need to ensure people can keep learning and improving their skills throughout their lives, especially in today's knowledge-based societies. The systems use a skill-based approach, focusing on the skills people need to work and live well, rather than just on knowing facts (Durdas, 2021). Additionally, both approaches emphasize the importance of making education accessible to everyone and using digital tools to make learning more adaptable, especially after the pandemic.

Secondly, despite integration, distinctions remain, particularly in governance, assessment methods, and pedagogical traditions. Ukraine historically maintained a more centralized governance structure. However, it is currently shifting towards decentralization and school autonomy through the “New Ukrainian School” reform (2). In terms of evaluation, while EU countries often focus on continuous formative assessment and qualitative feedback, Ukraine traditionally utilized a more rigid numerical scale. However, recent reforms are narrowing this gap by focusing more on individual progress (Durdas, 2021).

A unique, distinctive feature of current Ukrainian education is its forced adaptation to wartime challenges. It includes a heavy focus on physical safety (construction of shelters), hybrid learning models, and psychological support for students and teachers – challenges that are less prevalent in the stable educational environments of most EU member states (2). Additionally, European systems are characterized by a highly diversified “third level” of education (splitting university and non-university vocational

sectors), while Ukraine is still in the process of clearly differentiating these sectors to better align with labor market needs (Сисоєва, Кристопчук, 2012). Recent data also highlights a “theory-practice” gap. While EU teacher training averages a 50/50 split between theory and practicum, Ukrainian models still lean heavily toward theoretical instruction, often lacking the robust mentorship systems found in countries like Finland or Germany (2).

Conclusion. While Ukraine and EU countries share a common goal of creating a competitive and inclusive European Education Area, Ukraine’s path is characterized by a unique blend of rapid pro-European reforms and the need to maintain educational continuity under crisis conditions. The successful integration of these traditions depends on Ukraine’s ability to balance European standards with its own historical strengths in fundamental science and humanities.

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Kateryna Shykhnenko

*Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
(Kyiv, Ukraine)*

INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIES: INTEGRATING LANGUAGE TRAINING AND RESEARCH AS A PATH TO COMPETITIVENESS

Universities in the 21st century operate within a globalised educational landscape, where research activity has become a decisive factor in competitiveness. In the context of educational internationalisation, English occupies a central role as both a medium of