



EVALUATION OF UKRAINIAN STUDENTS' INTEGRATION AT THE OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA

OPINIONS OF THE ROMANIAN AND UKRAINIAN
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



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I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research sought to understand the challenges and opportunities encountered by Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța. The data were collected through a focus group held during the “Building Bridges” workshop, part of the European Inclusion of Ukrainian Students (EIUS) project, funded by the Erasmus+ program. The focus group comprised a number of 15 Ukrainian students, 31 Romanian students and 26 university teachers.

The research was qualitative, using the focus group to allow for in-depth exploration of topics of interest through open discussion among participants. The data were collected on May 16, 2024, at the Google Room in Campus Building A of the Ovidius University in Constanța, where the workshop facilitated a constructive dialogue between students and teaching staff. The discussions were guided by experienced facilitators, covering topics such as integration challenges, positive experiences, opportunities offered by the academic environment and strategies to improve inclusion.

The participants were selected so as to represent various perspectives: Ukrainian students coming from different specializations and years of study, Romanian students contributing local perspectives, and teaching staff offering an academic and pedagogical point of view on the integration of Ukrainian students.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of themes of interest, while participant observation recorded participants' behaviours and reactions.

The data analysis was carried out using the thematic analysis method. Raw data were coded to identify relevant themes, which were then grouped and adjusted for consistency and relevance. The results were synthesized in a detailed report which presents conclusions and recommendations for enhancing the integration process of Ukrainian students

II. PERSPECTIVE OF ROMANIAN STUDENTS

STRENGTHS

1. Advantages of cultural diversity: How does the presence of Ukrainian students contribute to the enrichment of the academic environment of our university, especially by bringing diverse perspectives to group projects?

The presence of Ukrainian students in the academic environment of the Ovidius University of Constanța contributes significantly to the enrichment of cultural diversity and to bringing varied perspectives within group projects. This is the common conclusion of the majority of Romanian students interviewed, although there are also some contrary opinions.

Cultural diversity and varied perspectives: Many students emphasize that the presence of Ukrainian peers brings important cultural diversity. One student (ID 1) mentions that “The presence of Ukrainian students in academia brings cultural diversity and a new perspective to group projects.” This is supported by other students (ID 2, 3, 25) who note that these varied perspectives enrich the academic dialogue and contribute to the development of a more inclusive environment. For example, ID 2 states that the diversity brought by Ukrainian students “can enrich academic dialogue and bring new ideas and approaches to group projects, due to the different experiences and cultural backgrounds they bring.”

Cultural sensitivity and understanding: Romanian students believe that interaction with Ukrainian colleagues contributes to increasing cultural sensitivity and a better understanding of the international context. ID 1 highlights that “interaction with Ukrainian students can contribute to increased cultural sensitivity and deeper understanding of the international context.” This idea is reinforced by ID 8, which says that “Ukrainian students can share both their culture and perceptions on certain fields, contributing to the development of the university but also to the accommodation of Romanian students with a diverse environment both culturally and socially”.

Innovative approaches and new ideas: The presence of Ukrainian students is seen as a factor that stimulates creativity and innovation. ID 13 states that they “enrich the academic environment by bringing unique cultural perspectives that stimulate more diverse and creative discussions in group projects.” This contribution to innovation is also supported by ID 3, which mentions that Ukrainian students can bring “innovative approaches and different views on the subjects studied”. This leads to a more dynamic and stimulating learning environment.

Social and Cultural Benefits: In addition to academic benefits, the presence of Ukrainian students also brings social and cultural advantages. A student (ID 11) states that interacting with them makes us “learn to be human, to be open to communication and to have different perceptions and concepts of life”. Other students (ID 17, 26) emphasize the importance of knowing new cultures and perspectives, which contributes to broadening the cultural and political-social horizon.

Critical and collaborative perspective: The presence of Ukrainian students also stimulates critical thinking and project collaboration. For example, ID 31 mentions that they “stimulate critical thinking and creativity in group projects, promoting innovative solutions and better intercultural understanding”. This idea is also reflected by ID 23, which observes that their presence “enriches the academic environment through various cultural perspectives, stimulating creativity and collaborative learning”.

Negative opinions and challenges: However, not all students have a positive perception of the presence of Ukrainian students. Some students (ID 6, 12, 19) feel that they do not contribute significantly to the academic environment. For example, ID 6 states that “they don't contribute anything because I don't know English and we can't communicate”. This language barrier can be a major challenge in effective integration and collaboration in group projects.

Overall, the majority of Romanian students at Ovidius University of Constanța perceive the presence of Ukrainian students as a significant advantage for the academic environment. The cultural diversity, varied perspectives, and innovative approaches they bring contribute to the enrichment of the learning experience and the development of a more inclusive and dynamic academic environment. However, there are also challenges related to language barriers and cultural differences, which require attention and solutions to ensure an effective and beneficial integration for all students.

2. Academic cooperation: Do you think that through collaboration with Ukrainian students, academic performance can be improved, integrating different types of knowledge and skills in order to achieve common goals?

Academic collaboration with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța is mostly perceived as having a positive impact on academic performance, by integrating different types of knowledge and skills. Romanian students highlight various benefits of this collaboration, emphasizing the advantages brought by cultural and academic diversity.

Improving academic performance: Most students believe that working with Ukrainian students can improve academic performance. For example, ID 1 states that “collaboration with

Ukrainian students can improve academic performance by integrating different types of knowledge and skills.” This idea is also reflected by ID 2, which mentions that “by working in teams to achieve common goals, students can learn from each other, share perspectives and find innovative solutions to academic or research problems”.

Diversity and varied perspectives: Integrating cultural diversity and varied perspectives is seen as a major advantage. A student (ID 3) states that “collaboration with Ukrainian students can bring different perspectives and approaches to the academic process, which can lead to improved academic performance.” This is a common theme, also mentioned by ID 21, which points out that “cultural diversity is often associated with increased innovation and creativity. Interaction with Ukrainian students can inspire new ideas and different approaches in group projects”.

Improving intercultural competences: Collaboration with students from other cultures helps to develop intercultural competences, essential in a globalized world. ID 21 mentions that “collaboration with students from different cultures helps to develop intercultural skills, essential in a globalized world. These skills include effective communication, empathy and adaptability.” ID 8 also emphasizes the importance of collaborating with people of diverse nationalities, saying that “it is very important to be able to collaborate with different types of people, even diverse nationalities.”

Feedback and efficiency: Another advantage mentioned is the usefulness of diverse feedback. ID 9 believes that “any type of feedback is useful”, and ID 13 emphasizes that “the integration of diverse knowledge and skills facilitates the achievement of common goals in an efficient and innovative way”. These views reflect the benefits of teamwork and effectiveness in achieving academic goals.

Social and professional benefits: Collaboration brings academic advantages, and also social and professional ones. ID 18 states that “we can evolve together from any point of view. Both personally and professionally within the university”. This suggests that interaction with students from other cultures contributes to personal development and broadening professional networks.

Contrary opinions: Although most of the opinions are positive, there are also students who do not see significant benefits in working with Ukrainian students. For example, ID 6 says that they “don’t think” that this collaboration can improve academic performance, and ID 12 mentions that they “don’t” see how this collaboration could contribute. ID 22 adds that “I prefer to assume that Romanian students are competent enough to achieve international academic performance without the help of Ukrainian students”.

Overall, academic collaboration with Ukrainian students is mostly seen positively by Romanian students at the Ovidius University in Constanța. The cultural diversity, varied perspectives and different skills they bring contribute to improving academic performance, developing intercultural competence and stimulating creativity and innovation. However, there are also opinions that emphasize the barriers and challenges of this collaboration, reflecting the complexity of cultural and academic integration.

3. Interdisciplinary opportunities: Given the diversity of perspectives and skills of Ukrainian students, what types of interdisciplinary study projects or themes do you think could be developed together?

The interdisciplinary opportunities offered by the collaboration with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța are varied and valuable, bringing a wide range of perspectives and skills that can stimulate innovative and relevant projects for various fields. Romanian students

identify numerous interdisciplinary themes and projects that could benefit from the diversity and expertise of their Ukrainian colleagues.

Research projects and comparative studies: One of the most frequently mentioned opportunities is interdisciplinary research on different social, economic and cultural aspects. For example, ID 1 suggests projects such as “researching the impact of international conflicts and policies on the environment and local communities” and “comparative analysis of education systems and public policies in Ukraine and the host country.” These projects can provide a deeper understanding of international contexts and how different policies influence communities.

Cultural and Literary Studies: Exploring cultural differences and similarities between Ukraine and Romania is another proposed area. ID 2 mentions comparative cultural studies that “can analyse and compare aspects of culture, literature, art or traditions between Ukraine and other countries,” which would help to better understand cultural diversity and mutual influences. ID 16 suggests joint cultural projects, in which to present the traditions, dances and music of both Romania and Ukraine, in order to promote better mutual knowledge.

Community Development and Sustainability: Community development and sustainability projects are also considered beneficial. ID 1 proposes “community development projects that focus on collaboration between students from different disciplines to address social and economic issues”. ID 21 suggests sustainability and environmental projects such as “natural resource management” and “renewable energy,” which would involve students from environmental sciences, engineering, economics and sociology.

Public health and humanitarian crises: Topics related to public health and crisis management are also relevant. ID 21 proposes an interdisciplinary project in the field of public health to address “health systems in crisis contexts,” bringing together students from medicine, sociology, psychology and political science. This project could benefit from Ukraine's experiences in managing conflicts and humanitarian crises.

Technological innovation and social entrepreneurship: Technological innovation and social entrepreneurship are other areas of interest. ID 10 suggests themes such as “cultural heritage conservation” and “social entrepreneurship,” which could involve students from various fields to develop innovative solutions to social problems. ID 25 mentions technological innovation as ideal for interdisciplinary projects, leveraging the technical and scientific skills of Ukrainian students.

Contemporary Social and Economic Challenges: Projects that address contemporary social and economic issues are also considered valuable. ID 3 suggests projects that “incorporate aspects of Ukrainian culture, history, and language” and interdisciplinary themes that address “contemporary social or economic issues,” thus stimulating discussion and collaboration among students.

Cultural integration and adaptation: Some suggestions focus on the cultural integration and adaptation of Ukrainian students. ID 22 proposes projects on “the integration of Ukrainians in Romania through English and Romanian language study programs,” which would help their complete adaptation in the new academic and cultural environment.

The diversity of perspectives and skills of Ukrainian students opens many opportunities for the development of valuable interdisciplinary projects. These projects can range from conflict impact research and comparative cultural studies to technological innovation and social entrepreneurship. Addressing these topics enriches the academic environment, and contributes to the development of deeper understanding and innovative solutions to complex problems.

WEAKNESSES

4. Language barriers: What problems do you encounter when speaking with Ukrainian students due to language differences? Do you feel that these differences make effective communication difficult?

The language challenges faced by Romanian students in communicating with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța are diverse and affect the effectiveness of academic and social communication. Opinions range from major difficulties in communication to the recognition of opportunities for intercultural learning and development.

Misinterpretations and ambiguities: A significant number of students argue that language differences can lead to misinterpretations of tasks and instructions. For example, ID 1 points out that “cultural and linguistic differences can lead to different interpretations of tasks or instructions, affecting the understanding and outcomes of projects”. ID 2 adds that “literal translations or different interpretations of expressions can lead to confusion or misunderstandings,” highlighting problems related to ambiguity in communication.

Language barrier and adaptability: The language barrier is a major challenge for many students. ID 3 states that “the main problem is language barriers that can affect mutual understanding and the effective transmission of information”. This opinion is also supported by ID 6, which mentions that “communication is weak to none due to the lack of knowledge of an international foreign language or the Romanian language”. However, there are also students who suggest solutions to overcome these barriers. For example, ID 16 states that “if English is spoken it's fine, if not, there is Google Translate, so communication can be done effectively through different communication channels”.

Lack of language skills and the impact on communication: Many students note that the lack of language skills, in both Romanian and English, is a significant obstacle. ID 10 states that “the majority do not know Romanian or English,” which leads to problems of understanding. ID 19 adds that “I know neither Romanian nor English,” emphasizing the difficulty in communication. This is a problem recognized by ID 22, who says that “I don't know the Romanian language at all, and often I barely understand a few words in English”.

Mutual learning and skill development: Despite the challenges, some students see these difficulties as opportunities for learning and development. ID 11 mentions that “the problem is with me, English is not my strong point but, I tend to believe that their existence and communication with them helps me in terms of expressing myself in a language other than Romanian”. ID 24 adds that “they also offer opportunities for learning and developing intercultural communication skills,” highlighting the positive aspects of these interactions.

Solutions and adaptability: Some students suggest solutions to overcome language challenges. For example, ID 4 believes that they should “be given more time and more hours to learn the language very well”. ID 25 points out that the use of English as a common language and “mutual learning efforts can alleviate these problems, gradually improving communication”. These solutions suggest that while there are challenges, there are also effective ways to address them.

Impact of cultural differences on communication: Cultural differences also play an important role in communication challenges. ID 21 highlights that “different communication styles can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in collaboration,” emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity in communication. ID 17 adds that although most Ukrainian students try to speak Romanian correctly, there is a risk of discrimination or avoidance of communication for fear of not being understood.

The linguistic challenges encountered in communicating with Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța are varied and complex. Although language and cultural barriers

can make effective communication and academic collaboration difficult, they also provide opportunities for developing intercultural competence and improving language skills. Proposed solutions, such as language courses and the use of translation technologies, can help overcome these challenges, promoting a more inclusive and diverse academic environment.

5. Cultural misunderstandings: Are you experiencing difficulties due to Ukrainian students not understanding cultural norms and customs? How do you think this lack of knowledge affects their adjustment?

The cultural misunderstandings encountered by Romanian students in the interaction with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța are diverse and can significantly affect the process of adaptation and integration in the academic and social environment. Romanian students' opinions range from acknowledging major difficulties to positive observations about the openness and willingness to adapt of their Ukrainian colleagues.

Impact of cultural misunderstandings on adaptation: Many students mention that lack of understanding of cultural norms and customs can create significant difficulties for the adaptation of Ukrainian students. ID 1 states that “insufficient understanding of cultural norms and customs can create difficulties for the adaptation of Ukrainian students,” affecting social interactions, academic collaboration, and emotional state. This opinion is supported by ID 2, who points out that “misunderstanding local cultural norms and customs can affect the adjustment of Ukrainian students in several ways”, including through confusion, frustration and social isolation.

Social isolation and integration difficulties: Another often mentioned aspect is the risk of social isolation. ID 9 notes that “Ukrainian students can feel marginalized because they don't know the customs of Romanians,” and ID 10 adds that this “affects the way they can integrate easily.” ID 21 mentions that ignorance of local norms and customs can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety and even unintended conflict.

Adapting to different academic styles: Differences in academic styles are also an important factor. ID 15 notes that “they are taught a different academic style, adapting harder,” which can affect their academic performance. ID 21 points out that ignorance of local academic expectations can negatively influence student performance.

Misperceptions and prejudices: Cultural misunderstandings can lead to misperceptions and prejudices. ID 2 states that “lack of knowledge of local cultural norms could lead to misinterpretation of their behaviour or misperception of their intentions,” affecting how they are perceived and treated by others. ID 6 suggests that some Ukrainian students “do not want to adapt to the existing norms and rules and continue in the same way as they are used to in their country,” which can generate tensions and misunderstandings.

Positive aspects and solutions: On the other hand, some students did not experience significant difficulties due to cultural misunderstandings. ID 8 states that “no, I think with time it will become normal for everyone,” and ID 31 mentions that “they are usually open and eager to learn, which makes it easier for them to adapt and integrate.”

Cultural Orientation and Mentoring Programs: To ease adjustment, many students suggest cultural orientation and mentoring programs. ID 1 recommends “cultural orientation, mentoring and creating an inclusive and open environment,” and ID 21 suggests “cultural orientation programs, mentoring sessions and psychological support” to help overcome cultural misunderstandings and promote mutual understanding.

Cultural misunderstandings encountered in communication with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța are quite diverse and complex. Such issues can significantly affect

the adaptation and integration of Ukrainian students, leading to social isolation, communication difficulties and reduced academic performance. However, proposed solutions such as cultural orientation and mentoring programs can help overcome these challenges and create a more inclusive and responsive academic environment. Therefore, it is essential to promote intercultural dialogue and provide adequate support to facilitate integration and capitalize on cultural diversity for the benefit of the entire academic community.

6. Insufficient support resources: What gaps do you see in the support resources available to Ukrainian students at your university? Do you think the help currently provided is sufficient for their needs?

Support resources for Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța are perceived to be insufficient in various aspects, affecting their ability to adapt and integrate effectively in the academic and social environment. The opinions of the Romanian students reflect a wide range of observations regarding the needs for additional support and the potential improvements needed.

Customization and accessibility: A major need noted is the customization and accessibility of support resources. ID 1 mentions that “although there are academic and cultural orientation and support programs, sometimes they do not fully meet the specific needs of Ukrainian students”. The need for personalized support that addresses the individual needs of each student is emphasized.

Cultural integration programs: Many students note the lack of specific cultural integration programs. ID 2 highlights the lack of “specific programs or activities designed to help Ukrainian students integrate into the local academic and cultural community.” This can lead to difficulties adjusting to aspects of university life and feelings of isolation.

Language support: Another important aspect is the limited access to language resources. ID 2 states that “if there are difficulties in obtaining translations or language assistance for Ukrainian students who are not fluent in the local language or English, they may experience difficulties in communicating and accessing academic or administrative information”. ID 7 also mentions “lack of knowledge of the language” and “lack of didactic materials for foreigners” as significant challenges.

Mentoring and advising: The lack of a robust mentoring or advising system is also highlighted. ID 2 notes that “the lack of a robust mentoring or advising system for international students, including Ukrainian ones, could make them feel isolated or have difficulty adapting to academic or personal challenges.” ID 25 suggests that an improvement in dedicated mentoring and language support programs for Ukrainian students is needed.

Psychological support and joint activities: Another important aspect is psychological support. ID 17 proposes “more psychological support from teachers and the organization of joint activities with other students” to improve integration and reduce discrimination. This is also supported by ID 21, which mentions that “inadequate psychological support” can increase stress and anxiety related to adaptation.

Financial resources and scholarships: ID 4 suggests that “scholarships or a separate living budget” should be provided, reflecting the need for adequate financial support. This would help reduce the financial pressure on Ukrainian students and improve their quality of life in the new environment.

Various views on the sufficiency of resources: There are also views that believe that the current resources are sufficient. For example, ID 10 states that “the help provided is sufficient,” and ID 11 believes that the current support is sufficient to make Ukrainian students feel “at home.” However, these opinions are in the minority compared to those who see the need for improvements.

In conclusion, Romanian students at Ovidius University of Constanța notice several gaps in support resources available to Ukrainian students, including in terms of personalization of support, cultural integration programs, language support, mentoring and counselling, as well as psychological and financial support. Although there are opinions that suggest that the current resources are sufficient, the majority of students believe that significant improvements are needed to fully respond to the specific needs of Ukrainian students and to facilitate their effective integration and adaptation in the academic and social environment.

OPPORTUNITIES

7. The possibility of contact with Ukrainian students: What opportunities for personal and academic development does contact with Ukrainian students offer you? (developing intercultural skills and gaining new experiences)

Interaction with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța is considered by Romanian students as offering numerous opportunities for personal and academic development, especially through the development of intercultural skills and the acquisition of new perspectives. The opinions expressed reflect a broad appreciation of the benefits of contact with students from another culture and emphasize various positive aspects of this interaction.

Development of intercultural skills: A major benefit observed is the development of intercultural skills. ID 1 mentions that “interacting with Ukrainian students opens doors to new perspectives and experiences,” helping to develop communication and collaboration skills in a multicultural environment. This is also supported by ID 2, which emphasizes that “interacting with Ukrainian students provides an opportunity to learn about their unique culture, traditions and perspectives,” thus improving intercultural skills such as understanding and appreciating diversity, adaptability and effective intercultural communication.

Mutual learning and exchange of perspectives: Interaction with Ukrainian students facilitates mutual learning and exchange of perspectives. ID 3 states that “contact with Ukrainian students provides valuable opportunities for personal and academic development,” including collaborating on group projects and gaining new perspectives and experiences. ID 21 adds that “the exchange of knowledge and experiences between you and Ukrainian students can be two-way,” allowing students to learn about each other's culture and share from their own culture.

Improving communication skills: The opportunity to interact with students from another culture helps improve communication skills. ID 24 mentions that “interaction with them stimulates the development of intercultural communication skills,” promoting tolerance and understanding. This is also supported by ID 25, which notes that contact with Ukrainian students provides “improvement of communication and collaboration skills”.

Exploring new perspectives and experiences: Many responses emphasize the importance of exploring new perspectives and enriching academic and personal experiences. ID 14 mentions that interacting with Ukrainian students helps to “find out their way of thinking and expressing themselves, their vision and their perspectives”. ID 31 states that “contact with Ukrainian students provides significant opportunities for personal and academic development,” including developing intercultural skills and gaining new perspectives through collaboration in academic projects and discussions.

Empathy and tolerance: Interaction with Ukrainian students contribute to the development of empathy and tolerance. ID 13 points out that “contact with Ukrainian students provides opportunities to develop intercultural skills such as empathy and tolerance,” enriching both personal and academic development.

Critical aspects and lack of opportunities: There are also critical or neutral opinions. For example, ID 12 states that he sees no opportunity for personal or academic development, and ID 20 believes that the interaction is currently offering him nothing. These views reflect the fact that experiences and perceptions can vary significantly between students.

Contact with Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța offers numerous opportunities for personal and academic development, especially through developing intercultural skills, improving communication and collaboration skills, and gaining new perspectives and valuable experiences. Although there are also opinions that do not identify significant benefits, most students recognize the importance and positive impact of this interaction in preparing for the challenges of a globalized and diverse environment.

8. Integrative events: What benefits can you identify from participating in integrative events that promote interaction between Romanian and Ukrainian students? (Creating a friendly atmosphere and building relationships)

Participation in integrative events that promote interaction between Romanian and Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța is considered beneficial for personal and academic development, facilitating the creation of a friendly atmosphere, building interpersonal relationships and promoting cultural understanding. The opinions of Romanian students emphasize various advantages of these events, which contribute to a more enriched and inclusive university experience.

Creating a friendly atmosphere: A major benefit observed is creating a friendly and open atmosphere. ID 1 mentions that participating in integrative events “helps us develop empathy, better understand diversity and enrich our life experience and learning outside the classroom”. This idea is supported by ID 2, which emphasizes that these events “can contribute to creating a friendly and open atmosphere within the university community”.

Building interpersonal relationships and friendships: Many students highlight building interpersonal relationships and friendships as an important advantage of participating in integrative events. ID 2 states that these events “provide opportunities for students to meet and get to know their peers from other countries and cultures,” which can lead to the formation of lasting friendships. ID 14 mentions that these events allow “the creation of beautiful and interesting friendships”.

Mutual learning and cultural exchange: Another essential aspect is mutual learning and cultural exchange. ID 2 emphasizes that through direct interaction with students from other cultures, participants “can learn about different traditions, customs and perspectives, contributing to a better understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity”. ID 24 adds that these events “facilitate cultural exchange and encourage collaboration and mutual learning”.

Development of communication and adaptability skills: Participation in integrative events contributes to the development of communication and adaptability skills. ID 18 mentions that these events stimulate “socialization, confidence that a language other than the mother tongue can be practiced”. Also, ID 27 notes that integrative events contribute to “much more effective communication and adaptation”.

Promoting intercultural tolerance and respect: Another important benefit is promoting intercultural tolerance and respect. ID 21 points out that “participating in events that bring together students from different countries can promote tolerance and mutual respect,” helping to create a more inclusive and friendly university community.

Expanding perspectives and ideas: Integrative events provide opportunities for expanding perspectives and ideas. ID 28 mentions that participating in these events helps to “diversify perspectives and ideas”. These opportunities allow students to explore new ways of thinking and open themselves up to different experiences.

Positive effects on integration and adaptation: Many students emphasize the positive effects on integration and adaptation of Ukrainian students. ID 17 states that participating in integrative events has “only positive effects, making friends, sharing experiences, adapting to the new culture, communication, spending time and getting used to them”.

Participating in integrative events that promote interaction between Romanian and Ukrainian students brings numerous benefits, including creating a friendly atmosphere, building interpersonal relationships and friendships, mutual learning and cultural exchange, developing communication skills and adaptability, promoting intercultural tolerance and respect, and expanding perspectives and ideas. These events contribute significantly to the personal and academic development of students, preparing them for the challenges of a globalized and diverse environment.

9. Developing intercultural skills: What are the benefits of developing intercultural communication skills through interaction with Ukrainian students? (developing communication skills, empathy and tolerance)

The development of intercultural communication skills through interaction with Ukrainian students at Ovidius University in Constanța is considered by Romanian students to have numerous benefits for personal and professional development. These interactions help improve communication, develop empathy and tolerance, and prepare for success in a globalized and diverse society.

Improved communication skills: A major benefit noted is improved communication skills. ID 1 mentions that “interaction with Ukrainian students brings valuable opportunities to develop intercultural communication skills,” helping to adapt to cultural diversity and to communicate effectively in intercultural environments. ID 2 points out that “interacting with Ukrainian students requires navigating language, cultural, and social barriers, which can improve overall communication skills,” including active listening and expressing ideas clearly.

Developing empathy and understanding: Interaction with Ukrainian students facilitates the development of empathy and understanding. ID 1 states that these experiences “help us develop empathy, openness and understanding towards other cultures”. ID 13 adds that “developing intercultural communication skills through interaction with Ukrainian students brings benefits such as improving communication skills, developing empathy and mutual understanding”. This is also supported by ID 21, which emphasizes that this interaction “stimulates empathy and the ability to see the world through the eyes of others”.

Promoting mutual tolerance and respect: Another essential aspect is promoting mutual tolerance and respect. ID 2 mentions that interacting with Ukrainian students “can help overcome stereotypes and prejudices and cultivate a climate of mutual respect and tolerance for cultural and experience diversity.” ID 16 points out that these interactions help to “develop communication skills, empathy and tolerance”.

Improving conflict resolution skills: Cross-cultural interactions can help improve conflict resolution skills. ID 2 states that “managing misunderstandings or conflicts during intercultural interactions can help develop conflict resolution and negotiation skills in a multicultural

environment.” These skills are essential for effective collaboration in various professional and social environments.

Openness to diversity and new perspectives: Many students mention that interaction with Ukrainian students contributes to openness to diversity and new perspectives. ID 17 states that this helps to “open the horizon and accept other cultures,” and ID 25 points out that these interactions “facilitate more harmonious and effective relationships in diverse environments.” ID 24 adds that the development of intercultural communication skills “stimulates language skills and the ability to understand and be understood in a different cultural context”.

English and other language practice: Participating in interactions with Ukrainian students also provides the opportunity to practice English and other languages. ID 10 mentions that it allows “practicing the English language,” and ID 22 emphasizes that it helps to “learn the English/Romanian language.”

Building strong interpersonal relationships: Cross-cultural interactions help in building strong interpersonal relationships. ID 1 states that these experiences “help us collaborate effectively and build strong interpersonal relationships,” preparing us for success in a globalized world. This is also supported by ID 31, which notes that interaction with Ukrainian students “contributes to the development of intercultural communication skills, empathy and tolerance,” stimulating greater openness to diversity and appreciation of different cultural values.

Developing intercultural communication skills through interaction with Ukrainian students brings many benefits, including improving communication skills, developing empathy and understanding, promoting tolerance and mutual respect, improving conflict resolution skills, opening up to diversity and new perspectives, practicing English and other languages, and forming strong interpersonal relationships. These benefits help prepare students for success in a globalized and diverse world, giving them the skills to effectively navigate cross-cultural environments.

THREATS

10. Consequences of Prejudice: How do you think specific prejudices against Ukrainian students might affect the dynamics and acceptance among the student community?

Specific prejudices against Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța can negatively affect the dynamics and acceptance among the student community, generating marginalization, tensions and social exclusion. The opinions of Romanian students reflect concerns regarding the impact of prejudice on interpersonal relationships and the integration of Ukrainian students into academic and social life.

Creating an atmosphere of exclusion and marginalization: Prejudice can lead to the creation of an atmosphere of exclusion within the student community. ID 2 states that they can “lead to the creation of an atmosphere of exclusion in which Ukrainian students feel marginalized or unwanted”. This is supported by ID 13, which states that prejudice can “affect the dynamics and acceptance among the student community by creating an atmosphere of exclusion or discrimination”. This can limit Ukrainian students' social interactions and participation in extracurricular activities, affecting their integration.

Impact on confidence and self-esteem: Prejudice can affect the confidence and self-esteem of Ukrainian students. ID 2 points out that “prejudice can affect the confidence and self-esteem of Ukrainian students, making them feel insecure or underappreciated”. This can lead to a decrease in motivation and academic performance, contributing to a sense of isolation and exclusion.

Discriminatory behaviours and bullying: Prejudice can lead to discriminatory behaviours and bullying. ID 16 mentions that “discriminatory or bullying behaviour based on nationality may

occur,” affecting the psychological health of Ukrainian students. This can create an atmosphere of tension and mistrust in the student community.

Reduced interaction and collaboration: Prejudices can limit interaction and collaboration between students. ID 1 states that “prejudices can create barriers between students and lead to the formation of isolated groups or the marginalization of those outside the majority”. This can negatively affect collaboration on group projects and extracurricular activities.

Social Isolation and Exclusion: Another serious effect of prejudice is the social isolation of Ukrainian students. ID 22 states that “the worst possible effect is the isolation of Ukrainian students from the rest of the community,” which can lead to social problems and difficulties in integration. ID 28 adds that prejudice “can lead to the exclusion or isolation of Ukrainian students from groups or social circles.”

Decreased academic performance: Prejudice can also affect the academic performance of Ukrainian students. ID 2 states that “stress and pressure associated with prejudice can affect the academic performance of Ukrainian students,” reducing their motivation and concentration in the learning process.

Impact on community dynamics and acceptance: Prejudice can negatively affect dynamics and acceptance among the student community. ID 3 mentions that prejudice “can affect the dynamics and acceptance among the university community by creating an atmosphere of exclusion or discrimination”. It is important to promote awareness and combat prejudice by educating and promoting intercultural dialogue to build a more inclusive and respectful environment for all students.

Awareness and combating prejudice: To counter the negative effects of prejudice, it is essential to promote awareness and combat prejudice. ID 21 points out that “anti-prejudice education and the promotion of diversity and inclusion can help create a more open and friendly culture within the university community”. Organizing events and activities that facilitate interaction and collaboration between students from different cultures can also help to improve the dynamics and acceptance among the student community.

Specific prejudices against Ukrainian students can have a significant negative impact on the dynamics and acceptance among the student community. These can lead to exclusion, marginalization, decreased confidence and self-esteem, discriminatory behaviours, reduced interaction and collaboration, social isolation, and decreased academic performance. Combating prejudice through education and promoting diversity and inclusion is essential to creating a more open, friendly and respectful university environment for all students.

11. Effects of social isolation: In what concrete ways can social isolation negatively impact the academic and social experience of Ukrainian students?

The effects of social isolation on Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța are varied and can negatively influence both the academic and social experience. The opinions of Romanian students emphasize numerous negative consequences of social isolation, including decreased motivation, stress and anxiety, difficulties in forming social relationships and the impact on academic performance.

Decreased academic motivation and engagement: A major effect of social isolation is decreased academic motivation and engagement. ID 2 mentions that “social isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness and emotional isolation, which can affect motivation and concentration in academic activities”. This is supported by ID 13, which states that “social isolation can negatively

affect the academic and social experience of Ukrainian students by diminishing participation in social and academic activities.”

Increased risk of stress and anxiety: Social isolation can be associated with an increased risk of stress and anxiety. ID 2 points out that “Ukrainian students may feel they don't have a support network or someone to rely on in difficult times,” which can affect mental health and overall well-being. ID 23 adds that isolation can contribute to “feelings of loneliness, anxiety and stress, negatively affecting their mental health and emotional well-being”.

Impact on social relationships: Social isolation affects Ukrainian students' ability to form and maintain healthy social relationships. ID 6 states that “they will withdraw, they will not integrate into the group and will be marginalized, they will only make friends with Ukrainian students”. This can lead to exclusion from social and academic activities and feelings of loneliness and abandonment, as ID 16 mentions.

Decreased overall university satisfaction: Social isolation can affect students' perceptions of their university experience. ID 2 states that this can “negatively affect Ukrainian students' perception of their university experience, reducing their overall satisfaction and engagement in university life”. ID 24 points out that isolation can diminish engagement in academic and extracurricular activities.

Reduced academic performance: Stress and anxiety associated with social isolation can have a negative impact on academic performance. ID 23 states that isolation can “reduce access to resources and support, as well as by diminishing opportunities for collaboration and interactive learning.” This can contribute to low academic performance and low school success, as ID 17 states.

Self-isolation and depression: Social isolation can lead to self-isolation and depression. ID 10 mentions that isolation can bring about “self-isolation and depression,” significantly affecting students' emotional well-being. ID 18 adds that isolated students “would not integrate and would always feel rejected, would not trust themselves and would not know how to ask for help or offer it”.

Impact on character and behaviour: Social isolation can influence personal and behavioural development. ID 22 states that social isolation can lead to “the possibility of developing antisocial characters on the part of Ukrainian students,” having a negative impact on their behaviour and social relationships. ID 26 adds that isolation can lead to “personal insecurity and non-integration into certain social groups”.

Social isolation can have a profoundly negative impact on Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța, influencing both the academic and social experience. Effects include decreased academic motivation and engagement, stress and anxiety, difficulty forming social relationships, reduced academic performance, self-isolation and depression, and impact on character and behaviour. To counter these effects, it is essential to create an inclusive and friendly university environment that promotes the support and integration of Ukrainian students into the academic and social community.

12. The problems generated by the lack of support: What specific difficulties can result from the lack of adequate support for Ukrainian students, both in adapting to the university environment and in the educational process?

The lack of adequate support for Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța can generate numerous difficulties in adapting to the university environment and in the educational process, significantly affecting their academic and social experience. The opinions of Romanian

students reflect multiple aspects of these difficulties, underlining the importance of adequate linguistic, cultural and emotional support.

Social and emotional isolation: Lack of support can lead to social and emotional isolation, affecting the integration of Ukrainian students into the university community. ID 1 mentions that “without a linguistic and cultural support, they can feel isolated and misunderstood in their new environment”. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and stress, affecting emotional well-being and the ability to integrate into university life and the student community.

Language and cultural difficulties: An essential aspect is the language barrier. ID 2 points out that “Ukrainian students who are not fluent in the local language or English may experience difficulties in communicating and accessing study materials or academic resources,” which may affect their academic performance. ID 3 adds that “the lack of adequate support can lead to difficulties in adapting to the university environment, social isolation and linguistic and cultural barriers”.

Adjusting to the academic system: Ukrainian students may have difficulty adjusting to the academic system without adequate support. ID 2 states that “without adequate support, Ukrainian students may experience difficulties in understanding and navigating the academic system of the university, including understanding academic requirements, registration procedures and other administrative aspects”. This can lead to additional confusion and stress, affecting adjustment and academic success.

Decreased motivation and academic performance: Lack of adequate support can affect the motivation and academic performance of Ukrainian students. ID 13 states that this can lead to “isolation, language difficulties, problems in cultural adaptation, stress and anxiety, as well as limited access to academic resources”. These difficulties can have a negative impact on their educational experience and academic success.

Limited Access to Resources and Support Services: Ukrainian students may have limited access to resources and support services critical to their academic success and overall well-being. ID 23 points out that “lack of access to resources such as tutoring, academic counselling or emotional support services can affect their academic performance and general well-being”.

Risk of dropping out: Lack of adequate support can increase the risk of dropping out. ID 6 states that Ukrainian students “will give up university studies” if they do not receive the necessary support. This can have long-term consequences for their career and personal development.

Social integration problems: Lack of adequate support can generate social integration problems. ID 7 mentions “lack of integration into the community,” and ID 8 emphasizes “problems of non-accommodation and abandonment.” This can negatively affect students' ability to form healthy social relationships and feel part of the university community.

Impact on personal and professional development: Lack of adequate support can negatively influence the personal and professional development of Ukrainian students. ID 18 states that “if there was no adequate support for Ukrainian students, many would probably not want to start a university, which means that they will not even enter the workforce”. This can limit their career and professional development opportunities.

The lack of adequate support for Ukrainian students can generate multiple difficulties in adapting to the university environment and in the educational process, including social and emotional isolation, linguistic and cultural difficulties, problems in navigating the academic system, decreased motivation and academic performance, limited access to resources and services of support, the risk of university dropout, social integration problems and impact on personal and

professional development. It is particularly important to provide them with support to facilitate their integration and success in the academic environment.

III. PERSPECTIVE OF UKRAINIAN STUDENTS

STRENGTHS

1. Common educational goals: What learning objectives do you think you share with Romanian students and what are their advantages for you?

The presence of Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța highlights a series of common educational objectives with their Romanian colleagues, which contribute to the enrichment of the academic experience and the personal and professional development of all students involved. Analysing and interpreting their answers gives us a detailed insight into these goals and the advantages they bring.

Development of linguistic and cultural competences: One of the main objectives of Ukrainian students is the improvement of linguistic and cultural competences, an essential aspect for their integration in the academic and social environment in Romania. For example, one student (ID 1) mentions that improving the Romanian language, culture, critical thinking and communication development are important objectives that he shares with his Romanian colleagues. This is supported by another student (ID 5), who states that dialogue with Romanian students offers him opportunities for personal growth and development. In addition, another response (ID 9) emphasizes the importance of communication and collaboration skills, thus highlighting the benefits of cross-cultural interactions.

These students recognize that linguistic and cultural integration allows them to participate more actively in the academic and social life of the university. By learning the Romanian language and understanding the local culture, they improve their personal skills and contribute to the creation of a more diverse and inclusive learning environment.

Obtaining a degree and a job: For many students, educational goals are centred on obtaining a degree and securing a successful professional future. One student (ID 2) believes that both Romanian and Ukrainian students have similar goals in education, such as obtaining a degree, finding a job suitable for their future training and gaining experience. This view is shared by another student (ID 6), who simplifies the goal of obtaining the degree and appreciates the quality of the university. A third student (ID 8) clearly expresses that, like any student, his goal is to get a degree, find a job, and thereby contribute to the development of society.

These responses emphasize the importance of university education as a means of gaining professional recognition and securing a stable and prosperous future. They reflect the common aspirations of students to have a successful career and make a positive contribution to society.

Professional development and academic excellence: Another set of responses focuses on professional development and academic excellence. One student (ID 3) emphasizes the importance of becoming an expert in his field and learning new things. Another student (ID 4) highlights the need to do one's best during projects and exams, to understand information and to help other people. Another answer (ID 11) mentions the desire to become the best in the chosen profession as an objective.

These students are motivated by a desire to excel academically and professionally, believing that hard work and collaboration with peers are essential to achieving these goals. They emphasize the importance of a proactive attitude and constant dedication in the learning process.

Collaboration and responsibility in learning: A student (ID 7) emphasizes the balance between in-depth theory and practical application, as well as responsibility for learning. He

believes that he shares with his Romanian colleagues the attention given to the theoretical part of the studies, while they share with him the responsibility of using more capacities for practice.

This response highlights the importance of a balanced approach between theoretical notions and practical application, emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibility in the learning process. Interaction with Romanian students contributes to the development of a broader perspective and the necessary skills for academic and professional success.

Individual Perspectives and Personal Experiences: Several responses reflect individual perspectives and unique personal experiences. A student (ID 10) wants to share cultural traditions with his Romanian colleagues, emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity in the university environment. Another student (ID 12) does not think that he shares study goals with Romanian students, while another (ID 13) appreciates the support and kindness of Romanian colleagues, noting that they are very kind and help when needed.

These responses provide a wide range of individual perspectives, highlighting the diversity of Ukrainian students' experiences and perceptions. While some students emphasize cultural collaboration and mutual support, others express their reservations regarding shared goals with Romanian students.

Analysis of responses from Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța reveals a variety of perspectives and educational goals, reflecting the diversity of their experiences and aspirations. In general, Ukrainian students share with their Romanian colleagues the desire to improve their linguistic and cultural skills, obtain a degree and secure a successful professional future. They also emphasize the importance of academic excellence and collaboration in learning.

These shared goals help create a diverse and inclusive educational environment where students from different cultures can learn from each other and support each other in achieving their goals. Interaction with Romanian students is perceived as beneficial for personal and professional development, facilitating integration and adaptation in the academic and social environment in Romania.

2. Contribution of cultural diversity: How do you think cultural diversity enriches your academic experience in a Romanian university?

The presence of students from various cultures at the Ovidius University of Constanța contributes significantly to the enrichment of the academic experience. It offers unique opportunities for learning and personal development through exposure to multiple perspectives and cultural traditions.

Easier access to information and improved language skills: For many students, cultural diversity facilitated access to information and helped improve language skills. A student (ID 1) states that cultural diversity makes access to information easier. Other students (ID 2) emphasize that studying in a multicultural environment allowed them to learn Romanian and improve their English, through interactions with students from different countries. These experiences were considered fun and educational, bringing an extra dimension to the learning process.

Organization of events and exchange of experiences: Cultural diversity favours the organization of various events that contribute to the overall development of students. One student (ID 3) mentions the importance of these events for personal development. Another student (ID 4) also appreciates the beautiful exchange of experiences, customs, traditions and learning styles between different cultures. This cultural interaction enriches university life and promotes a deeper understanding of diversity.

Diverse perception and learning from others: Many students noted that cultural diversity gives them the opportunity to see things from multiple perspectives. A student (ID 5) emphasizes that cultural diversity allows to see things from several sides, which contributes to a better understanding of the subjects studied. Another student (ID 6) simply but suggestively mentions that he learns from others. These responses reflect the benefits of collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and experiences in academia.

Cultural and Historical Experiences: Interaction with students from other cultures provided opportunities to learn about the traditions and history of other peoples. A student (ID 9) appreciates that he learned about the history and culture of Romanians, which contributed to a deeper understanding of local traditions. Another student (ID 10) believes that cultural diversity is important and useful for his knowledge, allowing him to learn other traditions from foreign students. These experiences enrich students' general knowledge and give them a global perspective.

Benefits of varied experiences: Cultural diversity brings both positive experiences and challenges. A student (ID 11) points out that cultural diversity brings many good or less good experiences. This statement reflects the complex reality of multicultural interactions, which can be both beneficial and challenging. Other students (ID 7, 12) believe that cultural diversity enriches the academic experience greatly by providing a broader perspective on subjects and promoting understanding and tolerance among students. One student (ID 13) complements this idea, stating that cultural diversity provides a broader perspective and promotes tolerance and understanding between students.

Indifference to cultural diversity: Not all students feel that cultural diversity has a significant impact on their academic experience. One student (ID 8) mentions that he can't say much about this topic because he doesn't really care, although he admits that it is still an experience.

The cultural diversity at the Ovidius University of Constanța enriches the academic experience of students by facilitating access to information, improving language skills, organizing intercultural events and offering multiple perspectives on the subjects studied. Students benefit from interactions with peers from other cultures, which contributes to their personal and professional development. However, there are also students who do not perceive cultural diversity as having a major impact on their academic experience. Overall, most students appreciate the benefits of a multicultural environment, which promotes understanding, tolerance and collaboration within the university.

3. Importance of relationships and collaboration: How important is it for you to develop friendships with Romanian students and collaborate with them during your university studies?

Relations and collaboration with Romanian students are perceived as essential by the majority of Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța. These interactions facilitate integration into the academic and social environment and contribute significantly to the personal and professional development of students.

Facilitating integration and improving language skills: For many students, developing relationships with Romanian colleagues is essential for improving language skills and facilitating integration into the university community. A student (ID 1) considers these relationships to be very important and productive, contributing significantly to his personal development. Another student (ID 2) emphasizes that friendship with Romanian students helps him improve his Romanian

language, acquire new knowledge and access more opportunities. Also, another answer (ID 9) highlights the importance of learning the Romanian language through interactions with local students.

Support and collaboration in difficult moments: The importance of relations with Romanian students is also highlighted by the support offered in difficult moments. A student (ID 4) believes that integration is based on the understanding of others and the support received in complicated situations, such as answering teachers' questions or in daily activities. This idea is supported by another student (ID 10), who mentions that friendship with Romanian students helps him learn Romanian quickly and benefit from their help and friendship. Thus, collaboration with Romanian students becomes an essential element in adapting to university life and overcoming academic and social challenges.

Personal and cultural development: Many responses emphasize the long-term benefits of friendships and collaborations with Romanian students, highlighting personal and cultural development. A student (ID 11) considers it important to adapt and learn about Romanian culture through these relationships. Another student (ID 12) mentions that it is quite important for him to collaborate and develop friendships with Romanian students, reflecting on the mutual benefits of these interactions. Another answer (ID 13) highlights how communicating with people from different states broadens his horizons and helps him understand various points of view, which makes studying more interesting and useful.

Different perspectives on the importance of relationships: Although most students see relationships with Romanian students as very important, there are exceptions. A student (ID 8) mentions that he has not had contact with any Romanian student since his arrival in Romania, two years ago, and thus does not consider these relationships important. This reflects a different individual experience and shows that in some cases communication barriers or cultural differences can prevent these relationships from developing.

Overall, the majority of Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța believe that developing relationships and collaborating with Romanian students is essential for their integration into the academic and social environment. These relationships facilitate the improvement of language skills, provide support in difficult times and contribute to personal and cultural development. In addition, interactions with Romanian colleagues enrich the academic experience through exposure to diverse perspectives and approaches. However, there are also cases where students fail to develop these relationships, highlighting the need to create more opportunities for intercultural interactions and overcome existing barriers.

WEAKNESSES

4. Language and communication challenges: What challenges do you encounter in everyday communication with Romanian students, due to language differences?

Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța face various linguistic and communication challenges in their daily interactions with their Romanian colleagues. These difficulties range from problems with translation and language comprehension, to barriers to expression and social integration, affecting both academic performance and social experiences.

Difficulties in translation and understanding: A significant number of students mention difficulties in translating and understanding information. For example, one student (ID 1) states that it takes him more time to translate and understand information. Similarly, another student (ID 2) points out that in ordinary situations, such as going to the store or asking a random person, he

experiences communication difficulties, although practice helps to overcome these problems in the long run.

Expressing thoughts and participating in classes: Difficulties in expressing thoughts and participating actively during classes are other challenges mentioned. A student (ID 3) finds it sometimes difficult to respond and express his opinion in class. Another student (ID 4) also faces problems related to his accent, mentioning that he is often ridiculed and finds it difficult to explain his thoughts and jokes in the presence of his Romanian peers.

Correct formulation of thoughts: Another significant aspect is the difficulty of correctly formulating thoughts in Romanian. A student (ID 5) points out that sometimes it is difficult for him to formulate the right thought, which can lead to misunderstandings and frustrations in everyday communication. Another student (ID 9) also mentions that the difference in spoken language makes it difficult to express his ideas and thoughts.

Language barriers and adapting to the speed of speech: Language barriers are perceived as one of the biggest challenges. One student (ID 8) believes that the language barrier is probably the only major challenge. Another student (ID 7) emphasizes the differences in medical abbreviations and the difficulty of adapting to the speaking speed of Romanian colleagues, who are used to speaking fast English on a daily basis.

Social integration and vocabulary issues: Social integration and understanding specific vocabulary are also important challenges. A student (ID 13) mentions that he gets along well with people from Moldova but has a small circle of Romanian friends due to the difficulty of understanding certain words in Romanian. This reflects a common problem where language differences limit the possibilities of socialization and full integration into the student community.

Positive experiences and lack of challenges: In contrast to most responses, a few students do not experience communication difficulties. For example, a student (ID 6) states that he has no problem because he knows the Romanian language. Another student (ID 11) also mentions that he did not encounter any challenges in communicating with Romanian students. These positive experiences underline the importance of knowing the local language for easier integration and effective communication.

The linguistic and communication challenges faced by Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța are varied and complex. Most students face difficulties in translating and understanding information, expressing thoughts, correctly formulating ideas and adapting to the speaking rhythm of their Romanian colleagues. These language barriers affect both academic performance and social integration, limiting opportunities for interaction and collaboration.

However, there are also students who do not encounter significant problems, proving that a good knowledge of the Romanian language can facilitate a more fluid academic experience. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to promote language learning practices and provide ongoing support to international students so that they can better integrate and fully benefit from their university experience in Romania.

5. Cultural misunderstandings: To what extent does not understanding the norms and cultural values specific to Romania affect your adaptation and integration process at the university?

Ukrainian students from the Ovidius University of Constanța approach differently the impact that the misunderstanding of Romanian cultural norms and values has on their adaptation and integration process. Analysis of the responses reveals that, in general, these misunderstandings are not a major obstacle, but there are variations in individual perception and experiences.

Minimal impact of cultural differences: A significant number of students believe that the cultural differences between Romania and Ukraine do not significantly affect their adaptation process. For example, a student (ID 2) states that “the culture and mentality of Romania and Ukraine are not so different, and the different aspects do not create big problems.” Another student (ID 8) agrees, noting that he did not encounter any problems because Romanian cultural rules are similar to those in Ukraine. This opinion is also supported by other students (ID 7, ID 11) who state that cultural differences do not affect them at all.

Easy adaptation and cultural curiosity: Many students have been able to easily adapt to the Romanian culture and see this process as a learning opportunity. One student (ID 3) states that he adapted very well and easily in Romania, and another student (ID 5) emphasizes that he is not affected because he likes to learn more about the local culture. Likewise, another student (ID 10) states that he had no problem of cultural misunderstanding, highlighting that the university environment is welcoming and easy for integration.

Importance of knowing cultural values: Although cultural misunderstandings are not perceived as major, some students recognize the importance of knowing cultural values for effective integration. One student (ID 4) believes that although he is not affected to a great extent, it is important to know and understand the cultural values of the country where he has chosen to study. This idea is supported by another student (ID 9), who mentions that although he is curious and only slightly affected, he finds cultural adaptation important.

Individual experiences and varied perceptions: There are also students who experience some degree of cultural misunderstandings, although they manage to do well in general. A student (ID 13) admits that not understanding the rules and cultural values characteristic of Romania affects his adaptation and integration process, but he does well and feels comfortable in the university environment. This perception suggests that while there are cultural challenges, they are not insurmountable and can be successfully managed.

Overall, Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța do not perceive cultural misunderstandings as a major obstacle in their adaptation and integration process. Most believe that the cultural differences between Romania and Ukraine are minimal and do not significantly affect their university experience. Many of them have been able to adapt easily and see this process as an opportunity to learn and develop.

However, there are also students who recognize the importance of knowing local cultural values and who, although they encounter some difficulties, manage to manage them effectively. These varied perspectives highlight the complexity of the cultural integration process and the importance of ongoing support for international students. Promoting an inclusive learning environment and providing resources to facilitate cultural understanding can significantly contribute to improving the academic and social experience of international students.

6. Support for international students: Do you have access to support programs for international students? What gaps do you see in this area and are there such initiatives available at the UOC?

Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța (OUC) have varied experiences and perceptions regarding access to support programs. Their answers reflect both positive aspects and shortcomings and shortcomings in this area, highlighting the need for improvement and more effective information.

Lack of information and limited access to support programs: A significant number of students mentioned that they are not well informed about the existence of support programs for

international students. A student (ID 1) points out that he would prefer to be informed about these programs directly, as he does not constantly follow the OUC website. Other students (ID 3, ID 4) state that they do not know about such programs or do not have access to them. This lack of information suggests the need for more effective and proactive communication from the university.

Positive perceptions and existing initiatives: On the other hand, some students had positive experiences regarding the support provided by the OUC. One student (ID 2) states that he has not encountered any problems in supporting foreign students. Another student (ID 8) mentions that the department for international students and the secretariat of the faculty of medicine were very helpful in the admission process. However, he notes that the websites are deficient in clear information and that there are confusions in completing the necessary documentation. This experience reflects the positive efforts of the university, but also the need to improve online resources and clarify administrative procedures.

Future expectations and needs: Another student (ID 5) is optimistic and believes that there will be more support initiatives for international students in the future. This response suggests an openness to improving and expanding support programs, which can contribute to a more positive university experience for international students.

Different perspectives and individual experiences: Other students have different perspectives on the support available. One student (ID 6) mentions that there is some kind of support but does not provide specific details. Another student (ID 7) does not know much about these programs, but notices that most of the teachers and event organizers are welcoming to students in the English department. This suggests that while there is some openness and informal support, there is a need for better information and structuring of support programs.

Peer support: One student (ID 10) states that he supports all foreign students and tries to make their experience as pleasant as possible. This reflects the importance of collegial support and the international student community in facilitating integration and adaptation to university life.

Support for international students at the Ovidius University of Constanța is perceived differently by students, ranging from a complete lack of information and access to positive experiences and useful initiatives. Most students emphasize the need for more effective communication and clearer information on available programs. There is also recognition of the university's positive efforts, but also of the need to improve administrative resources and procedures.

Overall, to improve the support offered to international students, the UOC should implement proactive information measures, clarify procedures and expand existing initiatives. Such an approach would significantly contribute to a more inclusive and rewarding university experience for all international students.

OPPORTUNITIES

7. Study opportunities in Romania: What opportunities do you think you will have studying at a university in Romania?

Studying at a Romanian university offers numerous opportunities for international students, according to their experiences and perceptions. These opportunities range from academic and professional benefits to social and cultural advantages, reflecting the diversity and attractiveness of the Romanian educational environment.

European recognition of the degree: One of the major advantages mentioned by students is obtaining a degree recognized at European level. A student (ID 1) simply and concisely emphasizes the advantage of the European diploma. Other students (ID 3, ID 4) appreciate the fact

that the education received in Romania allows them to work anywhere in the world thanks to the international recognition of the degree. Another student (ID 5) emphasizes the recognition of the degree at European level as a key factor for personal and professional development.

Educational and personal development opportunities: Students are aware of the many educational opportunities offered by Romanian universities. A student (ID 2) believes that there are enough educational opportunities in Romania. Other students (ID 4, ID 9) mention the scholarships available, such as the Romanian everywhere scholarship and the Erasmus program, which facilitates academic mobility and exchange. Also, another student (ID 10) highlights the opportunity to learn the Romanian language and interact with other foreign students, which contributes to personal development and enriching the cultural experience.

Cultural and social advantages: In addition to the academic benefits, studying in Romania also offers significant cultural and social advantages. One student (ID 7) mentions cultural diversity and contact with international protocols and sources as important opportunities. Another student (ID 8) appreciates the stability offered by the Romanian educational system, thus avoiding the dangers in the country of origin and benefiting from a safe and stable environment.

Career outlook and jobs: Studying in Romania opens up significant opportunities for students' careers. A student (ID 12) believes that the benefits of strong studies will lead to getting a good job. Another student (ID 13) believes that the major advantage is receiving a better job in the future. These perceptions reflect confidence in the quality of Romanian education and the professional opportunities it offers.

Individual experiences and varying perceptions: Individual experiences vary, but most students agree that studying in Romania offers valuable opportunities. A student (ID 6) appreciates that the diploma obtained in Romania is also recognized in his country, which facilitates his integration into the local labour market. Another student (ID 11) mentions that the study experience in Romania gives him more experience, suggesting that exposure to an international environment contributes to his personal and professional development.

Studying at a Romanian university offers a wide range of opportunities for international students, from international degree recognition and access to scholarships and exchange programs to cultural and social advantages. Most students appreciate the quality of Romanian education and the professional opportunities it offers. Also, the interaction with an international community and the stability of the Romanian educational environment are important factors that contribute to the attractiveness of studies in Romania. These varied perspectives reflect a rich and diverse academic experience that enriches both the personal lives and professional careers of international students.

8. Organizing events for better integration and cultural knowledge: What types of cultural and integration events do you think would help you better integrate and understand Romanian culture?

Ukrainian students at the Ovidius University of Constanța suggest a variety of cultural events and integration activities that would facilitate their adaptation and deeper understanding of Romanian culture. Their answers highlight the importance of practical and interactive experiences that give them the opportunity to connect with the cultural and social aspects of Romanian life.

Cultural exhibitions and activities: Many students emphasize the importance of cultural exhibitions and activities for their integration. One student (ID 1) believes that exhibitions would be useful, and another student (ID 2) mentions that all cultural activities would contribute to his integration into Romanian society. These answers reflect the students' desire to participate in events that allow them to explore Romanian culture in a direct and tangible way.

Excursions and diverse experiences: Excursions and spending time in different places are also seen as effective methods of integration. One student (ID 3) suggests spending time in various places to learn different things in a varied atmosphere. Another student (ID 5) mentions that field trips would be beneficial. Another response (ID 6) proposes the organization of trips to Romania with Romanian and international volunteers, which would facilitate interaction and cultural exchange.

Sports events and competitions: Another important aspect mentioned is the organization of sports events and competitions. A student (ID 4), a graduate of the Lower Danube University of Galați, suggests the organization of sports activities and contest games to help learn Romanian culture and language. This idea emphasizes the role of motor activities in facilitating the integration and promotion of a healthy and active life.

Intercultural and educational activities: Intercultural and educational activities are considered essential for a better understanding of Romanian culture. A student (ID 7) proposes the organization of educational and specific Romanian activities in English, to facilitate the access and participation of international students. Another student (ID 13) suggests events such as traditional festivals, craft workshops and Romanian language courses, which would contribute to better cultural integration and understanding.

Films, music and festivals: A student (ID 9) suggests organizing Romanian film and music series, art exhibitions, traditional festivals or cultural celebrations. These types of events would offer students a incursion into Romanian art and traditions, facilitating cultural understanding through artistic and festive experiences.

History and Romanian language courses: Knowledge of Romanian history and language is considered important by some students for effective integration. A student (ID 10) believes that he should read more about the history of Romania and talk to the locals about it. Another student (ID 13) suggests Romanian language courses as essential for understanding the local culture and facilitating communication.

Individual perspectives and the need for events: In contrast to the majority of responses, one student (ID 11) states that he does not need cultural events to better understand Romanian culture, and another student (ID 12) believes that he does not need such events. These views reflect that cultural integration needs can vary significantly among students, depending on individual experiences and preferences.

The organization of cultural and integration events plays an important role in facilitating the adaptation of international students at the Ovidius University of Constanța. Exhibitions, excursions, sports activities, intercultural and educational events, festivals and language and history courses are all considered beneficial for a deeper understanding of Romanian culture and for effective integration. The implementation of these types of events could significantly contribute to the improvement of the academic and social experience of international students, giving them the opportunity to connect better with the cultural and social environment of Romania.

9. Potential for developing international networks and relationships: How do you think participating in foreign language courses contributes to improving your intercultural communication skills and developing international networks?

Participation in foreign language courses is considered essential by Ukrainian students at Ovidius University of Constanța for improving intercultural communication skills and developing international networks. Their answers underline the multiple benefits of language learning in the global educational and professional context.

The opportunity to participate in foreign language courses: Many students express their enthusiasm for participating in foreign language courses. One student (ID 1) mentions that he would gladly participate in such courses, emphasizing their potential for improving communication skills. Other students (ID 3, ID 4) believe that these courses provide a direct and valuable opportunity to better understand the intercultural context and to adapt more effectively in various social and professional environments.

Communicating with people from different countries: An important aspect emphasized by students is the experience of communicating with people from different countries. A student (ID 2) states that taking language classes provides a great experience, allowing him to communicate with many people from various countries. Another student (ID 6) believes that these courses are very useful for communication and understanding details, contributing to comfort in international interactions.

Improving communication efficiency: Many students emphasize the importance of knowing several languages which significantly contributes to more effective communication. A student (ID 9) mentions that by learning a foreign language, he can communicate more effectively with both international and Romanian colleagues. This idea is supported by another student (ID 8), who believes that good scientists should speak several languages, which increases the effectiveness of communication in an international group.

Integration and adaptation in the international environment: Participation in foreign language courses is seen as a way to better integrate into the international community. A student (ID 11) believes that these courses will help him speak a foreign language better, thus facilitating integration in a company of foreigners. Likewise, another student (ID 12) states that participating in foreign language courses contributes to improving intercultural communication skills and facilitates integration into the university environment.

Personal and professional development: Many students recognize the importance of foreign languages for personal and professional development. A student (ID 5) points out that knowing several languages offers the possibility to communicate freely, which is essential in the context of globalization. Another student (ID 13) believes that participating in foreign language courses will help him in free conversations, thus improving his communication and social interaction skills.

Participation in foreign language courses is considered by international students at Ovidius University of Constanța to be important for improving intercultural communication skills and developing international networks. These courses offer valuable opportunities for understanding and adapting to diverse cultural environments, facilitating social and professional integration. Students appreciate the experience of communicating with people from different countries and recognize the significant benefits of knowing several languages in the context of globalization. Thus, language courses not only enrich the academic experience, but also contribute to the personal and professional development of international students.

THREATS

10. Prejudice-related Concerns: What negative effects do you anticipate that prejudice and stereotypes might have on Ukrainian students in Romanian universities?

Prejudices and stereotypes can have significant negative effects on Ukrainian students in Romanian universities. The students' responses reflect various concerns, ranging from social exclusion and discrimination to superficial and insensitive discussions about the political and social situation in Ukraine.

The possibility of negative consequences: A student (ID 2) recognizes the possibility of negative consequences due to prejudice but emphasizes that these must be addressed. He mentions that he has not personally encountered such problems, suggesting that experiences of prejudice may vary significantly among students. Another student (ID 12) states that prejudices and stereotypes about Ukrainian students could lead to discrimination, highlighting the risk of a persistent negative attitude that can affect students' integration and well-being.

Perception of the aid received: A significant aspect mentioned by a student (ID 3) is the perception of some Romanian students that Ukrainian students benefit from a lot of aid and have an easy situation. This can create resentment and envy, leading to tension and marginalization. These stereotypes can affect interpersonal relationships and academic collaboration, preventing the development of a harmonious learning environment.

Shallow and insensitive talk: Another student (ID 7) highlights the negative impact of shallow and insensitive talk about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He points out that such discussions can be very painful and seem disrespectful, especially when international students do not fully understand the emotional situation and personal context of Ukrainian students. These experiences can create an atmosphere of misunderstanding and distancing, negatively affecting integration and sense of belonging.

Exclusion and marginalization: Prejudice and stereotypes can lead to exclusion and marginalization, according to one student (ID 9). He mentions that such attitudes can make Ukrainian students feel excluded in certain situations. Feeling isolated can negatively affect students' academic performance and emotional well-being, preventing them from taking full advantage of the educational and social opportunities offered by the university.

Lack of personal experience of prejudice: Some students (ID 8, ID 11, ID 13) state that they have not encountered prejudice or negative stereotypes in their university experience. This suggests that not all Ukrainian students experience these problems and that experiences may vary significantly depending on personal and social context. However, recognizing the potential for such problems is essential to preventing and addressing them.

Prejudice and stereotypes can have profound negative effects on Ukrainian students in Romanian universities. These can lead to social exclusion, marginalization, discrimination and interpersonal tensions. In addition, insensitive discussions about the political and social situation in Ukraine can amplify the feeling of misunderstanding and distance.

To prevent these negative effects, it is essential that universities promote an inclusive and respectful learning environment. This can be achieved through cultural awareness programs, psychological support and creating opportunities for open and respectful dialogue. Thus, Ukrainian students can feel better integrated and supported in the academic community, contributing to the development of a harmonious and productive learning environment.

11. Risk of feeling isolated: In what ways do you think social isolation might affect you in your student life, both educationally and socially?

Social isolation is a major concern for international students, including Ukrainian students, who can experience significant negative effects on their academic and social lives. Responses from students at Ovidius University of Constanța highlight the various ways in which isolation can affect motivation, academic performance and overall well-being.

Negative impact on communication skills and motivation: Many students admit that social isolation would negatively affect their communication skills and motivation. One student (ID 2) states that isolation would have a negative impact on his communication skills, which could lead

to difficulties in daily interactions and developing interpersonal relationships. Another student (ID 12) mentions that isolation could decrease motivation and reduce opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships, which would negatively affect student life.

Difficulties in social and academic life: Isolation can create significant difficulties in social and academic life. One student (ID 4) emphasizes the importance of social life for academic and future success, noting that isolation can make things difficult and lead to a desire to withdraw. Another student (ID 5) believes that lack of communication would have a negative impact, emphasizing the importance of social interactions for a well-rounded academic experience.

Loss of motivation and onset of depression: Social isolation can have serious consequences for mental health. One student (ID 6) mentions that isolation would lead to loss of motivation, lack of help and depression. These effects can have a profound impact on academic performance and the general well-being of students, highlighting the need for adequate support to prevent such situations.

The desire to integrate into social groups: Some students experience difficulties in integrating into already formed social groups. One student (ID 7) mentions that he would like to meet more Ukrainians of his age in the area and be invited to student friend groups in his department. He points out that the transfer to third year, where peers already had groups formed, contributed to the feeling of isolation. However, he hopes that learning the Romanian language will improve the situation.

Limited access to resources and academic support: Isolation can limit access to resources and academic support, thereby affecting academic performance. One student (ID 9) mentions that isolation would lead to learning difficulties and limit access to resources and academic support, emphasizing the importance of social interactions for educational success.

Individual experiences and positive perspectives: Not all students experience isolation in a negative way. One student (ID 8) states that he has never really been alone and believes that isolation can create a peaceful atmosphere that helps with learning, cooking or sports. Another student (ID 10) mentions that he does not feel isolated, having teachers who constantly help him. These insights suggest that individual experiences can vary significantly, and that appropriate support can mitigate the effects of isolation.

Social isolation can have significant negative effects on students' academic and social lives, affecting motivation, communication skills, academic performance and overall well-being. Students experience difficulties in social integration and accessing resources and academic support, underscoring the importance of social interactions for a well-rounded university experience. However, appropriate support from teachers and peers can help mitigate these effects and promote better integration into the academic community. It is essential that universities provide support programs and socializing opportunities to prevent isolation and promote student well-being.

12. The impact of cross-cultural misunderstandings: What problems do you think may arise due to cultural differences and misunderstandings between students, and how these might affect the atmosphere within the university?

Cultural differences and misunderstandings between students can generate various problems that affect the atmosphere within the university. The responses of international students at the Ovidius University of Constanța reflect a wide range of concerns and experiences related to the impact of these misunderstandings on academic and social life.

Problems of misunderstanding and hostility: Several students mentioned that cultural misunderstandings can lead to hostility and communication problems. A student (ID 3) points out that misunderstandings can arise because of hostilities and that it is essential to treat everyone with understanding. Another student (ID 6) directly highlights the risk of hostility. These perceptions suggest that unaddressed cultural differences can lead to tension and conflict between students.

Negative impact on the atmosphere: Another student (ID 4) states that problems of misunderstanding will negatively influence the atmosphere within the university. This opinion reflects the risk of cultural tensions degrading interpersonal relationships and creating a less enjoyable and productive learning environment. Another student (ID 9) mentions that cultural misunderstandings can lead to social isolation, tensions and prejudices between students, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues in order to maintain a harmonious university environment.

Adaptation difficulties and stereotypes: A student (ID 7) shares his experience with international and Romanian students, pointing out that although Romania is culturally very close to Ukraine, there are difficulties related to accents and stereotypes about Muslims. It mentions that international students may have difficulty adjusting due to cultural differences and stereotypes. These problems can be overcome by promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Diplomacy and mutual understanding: A student (ID 8) believes that a good person would not be severely affected by a foreigner saying or doing something forbidden in his culture, suggesting that everything can be resolved through diplomacy and mutual understanding. This reflects a positive and constructive approach to cultural misunderstandings, emphasizing the importance of openness and dialogue for conflict resolution.

Individual perspectives and lack of negative experiences: Some students have not encountered problems related to cultural differences or do not consider them to create significant difficulties. One student (ID 2) mentions that he cannot answer because he has not encountered such problems. Another student (ID 11) states that he does not see any problems, and another student (ID 12) does not think that problems could arise due to cultural differences. These insights suggest that individual experiences may vary and that not all students experience significant cultural misunderstandings.

Problems related to eating habits: One student (ID 10) believes that cultural differences could cause problems related to eating habits, such as meals and meat. This highlights the need to address cultural diversity within nutrition programs and to accommodate the dietary preferences and restrictions of international students.

Cultural misunderstandings between students can create a range of problems, from hostility and tensions to social isolation and prejudice. These issues can negatively affect the atmosphere within the university, emphasizing the importance of promoting mutual respect and understanding. Addressing cultural misunderstandings openly and constructively, promoting dialogue and creating an inclusive environment are essential to maintaining a harmonious and productive learning environment. The varied experiences and perspectives of students highlight the complexity of these issues and the need for tailored and flexible solutions.

IV. PERSPECTIVE OF THE TEACHING STAFF

STRENGTHS

1. Enhancing discussions through unique experiences: How do you think the direct experience of students from Ukraine who have lived through the war can contribute to enriching debates and diversifying the perspectives of other students?

The direct experience of war-torn students from Ukraine provides a significant contribution to enriching academic debates and diversifying perspectives within Ovidius University of Constanța. The professors here recognize the multiple ways in which these unique experiences can positively influence the academic atmosphere and foster understanding and empathy among students.

Unique contribution to the understanding of abstract concepts: Ukrainian students, who lived the experience of war firsthand, can turn abstract concepts into tangible realities for their peers. One teacher (ID 1) points out that these experiences personify themes such as war, security and international alliances, making them more relevant and real for all students. This helps create a deeper understanding of the geopolitical context and its impact on everyday life.

Developing empathy and sensitivity: Ukrainian students' traumatic experiences can develop empathy and sensitivity to human suffering. One teacher (ID 2) points out that these unique perspectives can bring human rights, peace and security issues into focus, thus contributing to a richer and more informative dialogue. In addition, these experiences may stimulate other students' desire to support peers who are experiencing personal or social difficulties.

Motivation and rapid maturation: The war experience forced Ukrainian youth to reach maturity much faster, which can serve as motivation for their Romanian colleagues. A teacher (ID 3) believes that partnerships between Romanian and Ukrainian students can bring benefits to both parties, stimulating involvement and motivation in teaching activities.

Diversifying perspectives and promoting empathy: Ukrainian students can bring new and diverse perspectives to academic debates. A teacher (ID 4) states that the desire of these students to continue their studies despite the difficulties in their country can intensify the motivation of their Romanian colleagues to achieve their goals. Another teacher (ID 7) points out that accounts of these difficult situations can make others aware of the horrors of war.

Engaging in truthful and meaningful discussions: Direct interaction with Ukrainian students provides a significant advantage for those who want to debate and learn more authentic information. A teacher (ID 8) mentions that these students can be engaged in discussions, providing truthful and meaningful information that enriches the debates.

Stimulus for solidarity and mutual support: Personal experiences of Ukrainian students can stimulate solidarity and mutual support. One teacher (ID 11) believes that sharing these experiences can develop sensitivity and solidarity among other students, fostering a more cohesive and supportive academic environment.

Personal example of resilience and adaptability: Ukrainian students demonstrate by personal example the importance of resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. One teacher (ID 22) points out that these qualities can inspire and motivate their peers, providing valuable lessons about crisis management and overcoming difficulties.

Impact on attitudes and values: The experiences of Ukrainian students can positively influence the attitudes and values of their Romanian colleagues. A teacher (ID 13) states that discussions with these students can change the perspective of Romanians on the meaning of life and its meaning. Another teacher (ID 15) also believes that these experiences can help students understand the importance of the educational act and unrestricted access to it.

The direct experience of Ukrainian students who have lived through the war brings invaluable value to academic debates and helps to diversify the perspectives of other students.

These authentic and personal experiences develop empathy, sensitivity and solidarity, while providing valuable lessons about resilience and adaptability. Professors at Ovidius University of Constanța recognize the importance of these contributions and emphasize the need to integrate these unique perspectives into the educational process to create a richer and more inclusive academic environment.

2. Resilience and perseverance: What remarkable traits do you see in students who, despite the challenges of relocation, choose to continue their education?

Ukrainian students who have chosen to continue their education in Romania, despite the difficulties related to relocation, demonstrate a number of remarkable traits. The professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța observed these traits, which reflect their resilience and perseverance and contribute to the enrichment of the academic and social environment.

Perseverance and desire for self-improvement: Many teachers note the perseverance and strong desire for self-improvement in Ukrainian students. A teacher (ID 2) points out that these students are not deterred by obstacles and pursue their academic goals with determination, proving that perseverance and a desire for knowledge can overcome any obstacle. Another teacher (ID 9) observes that these students are serious and engaged, managing to integrate and achieve good results despite difficulties.

Tenacity and courage: Tenacity and courage are other outstanding traits noted by teachers. One teacher (ID 4) mentions tenacity and openness as essential characteristics of these students. Another teacher (ID 7) highlights courage, ambition and determination to succeed despite the challenges encountered.

Mental toughness and adaptability: Mental toughness and the ability to quickly adapt to new environments are essential for Ukrainian students. One teacher (ID 10) points out that these students demonstrate remarkable mental resilience, determination and flexibility in the face of change. Another teacher (ID 12) notes the ambition and ability to pursue and achieve precise goals, highlighting their adaptability in the context of new cultures and educational systems.

Willingness to learn and succeed: A strong desire to learn and succeed is a common characteristic of Ukrainian students. A teacher (ID 8) notes the ambition, the desire for change and the fight for a better future. These students are motivated by a strong intellectual curiosity and a desire to expand their knowledge and skills (ID 25).

Empathy and solidarity: The difficult experiences these students went through developed in them a deep empathy and a desire to support other colleagues. One teacher (ID 22) notes that resettlement experiences make these students more empathetic and willing to provide support, helping to create a more supportive and supportive learning environment. This demonstrates their ability to build positive relationships and actively contribute to the academic community.

Seriousness and self-discipline: Seriousness and self-discipline are other outstanding traits. A teacher (ID 11) emphasizes the seriousness and involvement of these students in academic activities. Another teacher (ID 23) highlights well-developed self-discipline and organizational skills that help them manage the multiple challenges of relocation and academic demands.

Determination and will: The determination and will to continue their education despite obstacles is critical to the success of these students. One teacher (ID 20) emphasizes perseverance, will and resistance to stress as key traits. Another teacher (ID 17) mentions determination and survival instinct, highlighting the self-belief that life goes on and one must continue to learn and develop.

Ukrainian students who continue their education in Romania, despite the challenges of resettlement, demonstrate several remarkable traits, including perseverance, tenacity, courage, mental toughness, adaptability, willingness to learn, empathy and self-discipline. These features not only allow them to overcome the difficulties encountered, but also significantly contribute to the enrichment of the academic and social environment within the Ovidius University of Constanța. Teachers recognize and appreciate these qualities, emphasizing their importance in the personal and professional development of students.

3. Influence behaviour models: What impact do you think collaboration with Ukrainian students can have on the development of attitudes of receptivity and tolerance among Romanian teachers?

Collaboration with Ukrainian students can have a significant impact on the development of attitudes of receptivity and tolerance among Romanian teachers. The teachers at Ovidius University of Constanța have observed various ways in which these interactions can positively influence their behaviours and attitudes, promoting a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Increasing receptivity and tolerance: Many teachers point out that interacting with Ukrainian students can open teachers to new cultural perspectives and different ways of thinking. A teacher (ID 2) mentions that this collaboration can contribute to the development of an attitude of respect and appreciation towards cultural and individual diversity. Another teacher (ID 9) observes that working with foreign students helps to discover special qualities and empathize with their dramas and sufferings, which teaches teachers a lesson of tolerance and acceptance.

Promoting empathy and cultural openness: Traumatic experiences of Ukrainian students can foster empathy and cultural openness. One teacher (ID 10) points out that working with these students can promote empathy, acceptance of diversity and improved communication skills. Another teacher (ID 22) states that this interaction helps to combat stereotypes and prejudices, improving intercultural communication and creating a more supportive educational environment.

Adaptation of teaching methods: Collaboration with Ukrainian students can lead to adaptation and improvement of teaching methods. One teacher (ID 12) mentions that these interactions can lead to developing empathy and adapting teaching methods to better meet students' needs. Another teacher (ID 11) suggests that teachers can learn from educational practices in Ukraine, implementing new teaching strategies and methods in Romania.

Positive impact and example for the academic community: Teachers who show responsiveness and tolerance in dealing with Ukrainian students can serve as positive role models for other teachers and students. A teacher (ID 25) points out that their behaviours can influence the attitudes and actions of the entire educational community, reducing prejudices and stereotypes. This positive impact is also supported by other teachers (ID 20, ID 18), who note that direct interactions with Ukrainian students can lead to greater openness and acceptance of cultural differences.

The need to adapt to students' needs: A teacher (ID 4) points out that working with Ukrainian students has led to greater responsiveness to their special needs due to relocation and environmental change. Another teacher (ID 26) states that a good teacher must adapt to the needs of Ukrainian students, demonstrating flexibility and willingness to dialogue.

Reducing prejudices and stereotypes: Direct interaction with Ukrainian students can help reduce prejudices and stereotypes. A teacher (ID 1) points out that working with these students challenges us to find new ways to understand and treat students in relation to their traumatic

background. This process helps to combat negative stereotypes and create a more inclusive educational environment.

Collaboration with Ukrainian students can have a significant impact on the development of attitudes of receptivity and tolerance among Romanian teachers. These interactions foster empathy, cultural openness and adaptation of teaching methods, contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Professors recognize the importance of these collaborations in combating prejudice and stereotypes and in promoting the values of tolerance and acceptance in the academic community.

WEAKNESSES

4. Challenges associated with trauma: What difficulties might arise when working with students who have experienced traumatic events related to war and forced relocation?

Working with students who have experienced traumatic events related to war and forced relocation, teaching staff at the Ovidius University of Constanța may encounter various difficulties. These challenges are related to students' emotional and psychological states, adaptation to a new environment, language barriers and the impact of trauma on academic performance.

Emotional and psychological problems: Students who have experienced traumatic events may experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress (PTSD). One teacher (ID 2) points out that these intense emotional states can affect students' ability to concentrate and actively participate in classes. Another teacher (ID 10) mentions that such problems can lead to difficulty concentrating, decreased academic performance and social isolation.

Adaptation and integration difficulties: Adapting to a new cultural and educational environment can be a major challenge for relocated students. A teacher (ID 7) states that difficulties may arise in the process of adapting and integrating students into the new environment. Another teacher (ID 22) points out that the language barrier and cultural differences can make communication and integration in the new environment difficult.

Impact of trauma on academic performance: Trauma and stress can negatively affect students' learning ability and academic performance. One teacher (ID 9) mentions that the traumas caused by the events of the past and those still taking place in their country can have negative effects on their ability to learn, concentrate and perform tasks. Another teacher (ID 23) notes that students may have difficulty retaining information and keeping up with academic demands.

Behaviour and Emotional Reactions: Traumatized students may have intense emotional reactions and unpredictable behaviours. One teacher (ID 8) points out that depending on the topic, some students may feel visibly emotional and sensitive, making it difficult for them to participate in certain discussions. Another teacher (ID 25) mentions that traumatic experiences can lead to disruptive or difficult behaviours in the classroom, such as social withdrawal, irritability and aggression.

The need for additional support: Students who have experienced traumatic events may require additional support to adjust and continue their studies. One teacher (ID 10) points out that these students may need emotional support and access to counselling services. Another teacher (ID 17) mentions the lack of adequate training for teachers on working with traumatized students, highlighting the need for additional resources and training.

Communication and collaboration: Effective communication and collaboration between faculty and students is critical to meeting these challenges. A teacher (ID 24) notes that difficulties in dialogue and expression can affect relationships between students and teachers. Another teacher

(ID 13) suggests engaging Ukrainian students in social and occupational therapy activities to facilitate cross-cultural experiences and reduce anxiety.

Working with students who have experienced traumatic events related to war and forced relocation, the teaching staff at the Ovidius University of Constanța face various difficulties, including emotional and psychological problems, difficulties in adaptation and integration, the impact of trauma on academic performance and the need for support additional. It is essential that teachers develop empathy and provide appropriate support to help these students overcome challenges and continue their education in an inclusive and supportive environment.

5. Impact of language differences: To what extent do you think language differences between you and students can affect the teaching and learning process?

Language differences between teachers and students can have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process. Professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța observed various challenges and opportunities associated with these differences, highlighting the importance of flexible approaches and adequate support to ensure an effective educational process.

Barriers in communication and mutual understanding: One of the main aspects highlighted by teachers is the difficulty in communication and mutual understanding. A teacher (ID 2) argues that language differences can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in communication, affecting students' ability to actively participate in discussions. Another teacher (ID 22) states that these differences can create barriers to communication and understanding, which can lead to low academic performance and frustration.

Impact on academic performance: Language differences can negatively affect students' academic performance. A teacher (ID 10) notes that the language barrier can slow down the pace of lessons, generate confusion and misunderstandings and reduce the active involvement of students. Another teacher (ID 23) mentions that students who are not fluent in the language of instruction may have difficulty understanding lessons and instructions, which may lead to gaps in knowledge and poorer academic performance.

Adaptation and use of additional resources: To overcome these challenges, teachers emphasize the need to adapt and use additional resources. A teacher (ID 3) states that there are many translation tools that can eliminate linguistic discordance and that it is the responsibility of teachers to familiarize themselves with these tools. Another teacher (ID 8) suggests providing course materials and supports in English for students who do not know Romanian.

Flexibility and creating a supportive environment: Teachers emphasize the importance of creating an environment where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas, regardless of the language used. A teacher (ID 6) mentions that for him there are no such obstacles, because the purpose of his courses is to teach students the Romanian language. Another teacher (ID 2) emphasizes that teachers should adopt a flexible approach to ensure an effective teaching and learning process for all students.

Importance of knowledge of languages of international circulation: Knowledge of languages of international circulation is essential to facilitate the teaching and learning process. A teacher (ID 15) states that if students do not know an international language, the teaching process could be greatly affected. Another teacher (ID 16) emphasizes the need for a European circulation language to ensure effective communication.

Technology as a solution: Technology offers many solutions to overcome language barriers. A teacher (ID 20) notes that technology offers many solutions to facilitate communication and learning, thus reducing the negative impact of language differences. Using translation tools

and online resources can help improve communication and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Language differences between teachers and students can have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process. These differences can create barriers to communication, affect academic performance, and reduce active student engagement. To overcome these challenges, professors at Ovidius University of Constanța emphasize the importance of using additional resources, adopting a flexible approach and creating a supportive environment. Knowledge of international languages and the use of technology can also help reduce the negative impact of language differences and ensure an effective and inclusive educational process.

6. Limited effectiveness due to lack of support: How the absence of adequate psychological and social support resources influences teaching effectiveness in relation to students who require special attention?

The absence of adequate psychological and social support resources can significantly influence teaching effectiveness, especially for students who require special attention. The teachers at the Ovidius University of Constanța observed various negative effects on the educational process, emphasizing the importance of adequate support to ensure an effective and supportive learning environment.

Impact on students' motivation and availability: A teacher (ID 1) mentions that students who do not benefit from social and psychological support may be unavailable to participate, learn and adapt, thus fundamentally influencing the effectiveness of the teaching act. Lack of this support can make students feel isolated and misunderstood, affecting their ability to focus and actively engage in the educational process (ID 10).

The importance of the presence of a psychologist and counselling programs: The presence of a psychologist and counselling programs is essential to provide emotional support and help students manage emotions and difficulties (ID 2). A teacher (ID 13) emphasizes the need for psychological and vocational counselling services to facilitate access to the labour market and knowledge of legislation. The absence of this support can lead to lower academic performance and increased stress for both students and teachers (ID 10).

Emotional problems and the impact on academic performance: Students who have experienced trauma or personal difficulties may experience high levels of stress and anxiety, negatively affecting their ability to concentrate and learn (ID 25). A teacher (ID 9) observes that students with a disturbed emotional background can present difficulties in the learning process, which can lead to unsatisfactory results. These unresolved emotional issues can lead to disruptive behaviours in the classroom, thus affecting the learning atmosphere and teaching effectiveness (ID 25).

Reluctance and refusal to communicate: Lack of psychological support can lead to reluctance and refusal to communicate on the part of students. A teacher (ID 12) mentions that Ukrainian students can show some reluctance and sometimes refusal to be part of a team. This can hinder effective integration and collaboration within study groups.

Teacher overload and burnout: Teachers can experience burnout when trying to support students with special needs without adequate resources. One teacher (ID 25) points out that the added stress of managing students' emotional and social problems in addition to regular teaching responsibilities can lead to burnout and reduced teaching effectiveness. This can negatively affect teachers' ability to provide effective support and maintain a quality educational environment.

The need for a psychological and social support centre: A teacher (ID 8) believes that every higher education institution should have a centre that provides psychological and social support to all who are part of the academic community. This would significantly reduce risks and improve teaching efficiency, ensuring a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Another teacher (ID 26) suggests that the university should hire a specialist psychologist to support students who need special attention.

The absence of adequate psychological and social support resources negatively influences teaching effectiveness, especially for students who require special attention. Lack of this support can lead to decreased academic performance, increased stress, integration difficulties and disruptive behaviours. Professors from the Ovidius University of Constanța emphasize the importance of the presence of a psychologist and counselling programs, as well as the need to create a psychological and social support centre to ensure an effective and supportive educational environment.

OPPORTUNITIES

7. Enriching educational experiences: What teaching methods can teachers use to enrich educational experiences for both students and teachers? What are the best ways to use the diversity of experiences and perspectives of Ukrainian students to create interesting and varied academic courses?

Enriching educational experiences for both students and teachers requires an innovative and inclusive approach. The professors from the Ovidius University of Constanța offered various perspectives and methods that can contribute to a more dynamic and effective learning process.

Teamwork methods and projects: A teacher (ID 1) suggests using teamwork methods and projects based on mixed teams of Romanian and Ukrainian students. Adapting seminar topics to include the unique perspectives of Ukrainian students can enrich learning experiences by integrating their cultural and historical background. Another teacher (ID 2) recommends organizing group projects that encourage mutual learning and the development of social skills.

Information Technologies and Communication: Technology plays an essential role in modernizing the educational process. A teacher (ID 3) emphasizes the importance of knowing the communication methods preferred by young people and directing them to the didactic act. The use of online means and digital tools, as well as practical applications, are recommended by another teacher (ID 8) to make the learning process more interactive and accessible.

Interactive methods and collaborative learning: Interactive teaching methods, such as case studies, role-plays and workshops, are essential for stimulating active student participation. One teacher (ID 7) suggests interactive teaching that engages students' prior knowledge, which they develop in the learning process. Another teacher (ID 10) recommends using interactive methods such as debates and structured discussions to encourage critical thinking and develop communication skills.

Integrating cultural diversity: The celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity represents an effective method of enhancing the quality of educational experiences. A teacher (ID 2) proposes organizing special events, presentations and projects that explore different cultures and languages. Such initiatives serve to advance both intercultural understanding and students' social skills.

Project Based Learning (PBL): Project Based Learning (PBL) is an effective method to engage students in the learning process by solving complex and relevant problems. One teacher (ID 25) suggests using PBL to reflect real issues in students' communities, such as the impact of armed conflict on communities or reconstruction and resilience strategies.

Constructive Feedback and Continuous Assessment: Constantly providing constructive feedback is essential to fostering active student participation. A teacher (ID 9) mentions that educational activities involving constructive feedback can encourage the exchange of ideas and the acceptance of different points of view, creating stronger social bonds between students.

Special guests and hands-on experiences: Inviting experts or students with relevant experiences to talk about their perspectives can bring a new dimension to the learning process. One teacher (ID 10) recommends involving special guests to enrich discussions and provide concrete and inspirational examples.

The professors at Ovidius University of Constanța put forward a range of proposals with the objective of enhancing the educational experiences of both students and teachers. Such methods include the implementation of teamwork, the utilisation of information and communication technologies, the incorporation of interactive teaching approaches, the integration of cultural diversity, project-based learning and the consistent provision of constructive feedback. These best practice methods serve to enhance the quality of the learning process, whilst simultaneously fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment which allows for the full capitalisation of the diversity and unique perspectives of all students.

8. Creating an atmosphere of openness and acceptance: How can teachers foster an atmosphere of openness, acceptance and understanding for refugee students from Ukraine in their classes? What tools and support resources might be needed for teachers to help them create a friendly and supportive environment for Ukrainian students?

The professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța propose various strategies to promote an atmosphere of openness, acceptance and understanding for refugee students from Ukraine. These strategies focus on creating an inclusive learning environment, adapting teaching methods and providing appropriate support.

Building an open and supportive environment: A teacher (ID 1) emphasizes the importance of having psychologists or social workers responsible for the integration of Ukrainian students. These specialists could inform teachers about students' traumas or difficult situations, thus facilitating a more tactful and understanding approach. Another teacher (ID 4) suggests the need for a structure that provides psychological counseling to both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian students.

Language learning: Effective communication is essential for successful relationships. A teacher (ID 1) believes that learning English and Romanian can help create a friendlier environment. This is also supported by another teacher (ID 11), who recommends the use of e-learning platforms and translation applications to overcome language barriers.

Promoting cultural diversity and open dialogue: A teacher (ID 2) suggests organizing special events, presentations and projects that explore different cultures and languages. This can encourage students to share their personal experiences and actively participate in discussions. Another teacher (ID 23) mentions that teachers should be available and responsive to the needs and concerns of refugee students, thus promoting a climate of trust and mutual respect.

Group activities and collaboration: Group activities and teamwork can facilitate the integration of Ukrainian students. A teacher (ID 3) recommends the organization of contests and competitions in which Romanian and Ukrainian students team up. Another teacher (ID 6) emphasizes the importance of working in mixed teams and integrating Ukrainian cultural aspects into teaching activities.

Flexibility and adaptation: Teachers must be flexible and adapt teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students. A teacher (ID 8) suggests introducing feedback and energizer moments during classes to maintain a dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Another teacher (ID 11) mentions the importance of using multimedia resources and narrative methods (storytelling) to create an attractive and inclusive learning environment.

Resources and support tools: Resources and support tools are essential to facilitate the integration and success of refugee students. A teacher (ID 25) suggests using the following resources:

- *E-learning platforms:* Access to online educational resources and language support.
- *Translation applications:* Tools to help overcome the language barrier and improve language skills.
- *Adapted teaching materials:* Provision of teaching materials in the Ukrainian language to facilitate students' understanding and active participation.
- *Support groups:* Creating discussion groups and collaborative activities to provide an environment where students can share their experiences and find mutual support.

Professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța propose various strategies and resources to create an atmosphere of openness, acceptance and understanding for refugee students from Ukraine. These include building a supportive environment, learning foreign languages, promoting cultural diversity, group activities, flexibility and using appropriate resources. Implementing these strategies can significantly contribute to the integration and academic success of refugee students, thereby creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

9. Strategies for Cultivating Empathy: What training initiatives or workshops could be implemented to prepare teachers to recognize and respond appropriately to the specific needs of Ukrainian students? How could teachers more effectively support the expression of these students' feelings and needs?

Teaching staff at Ovidius University of Constanța propose various training initiatives and workshops to help teachers recognize and respond appropriately to the specific needs of Ukrainian students. These initiatives focus on the development of empathy, cultural awareness and trauma management, as well as the use of adaptive teaching methods.

Cultural awareness and diversity workshops: To increase awareness and understanding of cultural diversity, teachers suggest organizing cultural awareness workshops. One teacher (ID 23) mentions that these workshops can provide information about the culture, history and social context of Ukraine, helping teachers to better understand the background of Ukrainian students and avoid stereotyping. Workshops can also include practical activities such as case studies and group discussions to facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices.

Training in trauma recognition and management: Trauma caused by war and forced relocation requires a specialized approach. A teacher (ID 10) suggests organizing courses on trauma management that include techniques for recognizing and dealing with trauma. These courses can equip teachers with essential skills to support traumatized students, such as active listening techniques and intervention strategies.

Training in empathic communication techniques: To improve empathic communication skills, teachers offer specialized training. A teacher (ID 11) suggests role-play exercises and constructive feedback sessions to develop active listening and empathic communication skills. These activities can help teachers build trusting relationships with students and create a supportive learning environment.

Organizing cultural events and activities: A teacher (ID 1) recommends organizing meetings where Ukrainian students can share their experiences and receive questions from peers. Also, culturally themed evenings, including traditional food, music and dance, can help create an atmosphere of openness and acceptance. Such events can contribute to sensitizing all students to cultural diversity and promoting a climate of tolerance.

Collaboration with organizations and communities: To better understand the specific needs of Ukrainian students, teachers can collaborate with local organizations and Ukrainian communities. One teacher (ID 2) suggests collaborating with organizations that provide support to refugees, as well as other educational institutions that have experience working with refugee students. This may include participating in best practice exchanges and inviting experts to share their experiences.

Psychological and social support: Lack of adequate psychological and social support resources can significantly affect teaching effectiveness. A teacher (ID 9) emphasizes the importance of providing psychological and social support for Ukrainian students, who may need counselling to overcome their trauma and emotional difficulties. Creating support groups and providing adequate resources can help establish the emotional balance necessary for academic success.

Collaborative learning activities and social inclusion: Collaborative learning and group activities can facilitate the integration of Ukrainian students and promote empathy in the academic community. One teacher (ID 22) suggests promoting group activities and collaborative projects to foster interaction and understanding among students. These activities may include joint projects, structured discussions and brainstorming sessions on topics relevant to all students.

Professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța propose various initiatives and strategies to prepare teachers to recognize and adequately respond to the specific needs of Ukrainian students. These include cultural awareness workshops, training in trauma recognition and management, training in empathic communication techniques, organizing cultural events, collaborating with organizations and providing psychological and social support. The implementation of these initiatives can significantly contribute to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment that meets the needs of all students, including refugees from Ukraine.

THREATS

10. The possibility of intercultural conflicts: Do you think that cultural differences and distinct life experiences can lead to risks of conflicts or tensions between Ukrainian and Romanian students?

The professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța have different opinions regarding the possibility of intercultural conflicts between Ukrainian and Romanian students. These range from denying the risk of conflict to acknowledging possible tensions and proposing solutions to manage them.

There is no significant risk of conflict: Many teachers (ID 1, ID 4, ID 14, ID 15, ID 16, ID 20, ID 21) do not consider that cultural differences could lead to significant conflicts or tensions. They argue that the empathy and understanding shown by Romanian students is enough to prevent such situations. A teacher (ID 1) mentions that tense situations can also exist among Romanian students, but rarely involve foreign students, suggesting that the general atmosphere is one of acceptance.

The possibility of conflicts and the need to manage them: Other teachers (ID 2, ID 5, ID 7, ID 9, ID 10, ID 12, ID 18, ID 19, ID 22, ID 23, ID 24, ID 25) recognize the risks of occurrence of tensions or conflicts due to cultural differences and distinct life experiences. They emphasize the importance of intercultural education and the promotion of open dialogue to prevent and manage these risks.

Intercultural education and open dialogue: Teachers who recognize the risk of conflicts (ID 2, ID 3, ID 10, ID 22, ID 23) emphasize the need for intercultural education and open dialogue to reduce prejudices and stereotypes. A teacher (ID 2) suggests that prejudices and stereotypes can affect relations between students, but education and openness to mutual understanding can help reduce the risks of conflicts and create a harmonious academic environment.

Psychological and social support: To prevent intercultural conflicts, some teachers (ID 6, ID 9, ID 12, ID 13, ID 25) emphasize the importance of providing psychological and social support. They suggest involving mediators or psychologists and conducting cultural diversity awareness activities. One teacher (ID 9) mentions that supporting Ukrainian students to overcome possible language barriers can help them feel included and accepted.

Joint and collaborative activities: To promote mutual understanding and respect, teachers suggest organizing joint and collaborative activities (ID 3, ID 8, ID 13, ID 20, ID 22, ID 23, ID 24). One teacher (ID 3) proposes the organization of contests and competitions in which Romanian and Ukrainian students' team up, and another (ID 8) recommends the inclusion of extracurricular activities that promote socialization and cultural exchange.

Professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța generally acknowledge that there are potential risks of intercultural conflicts but emphasize the importance of proactively managing these risks. Through intercultural education, psychological and social support, the promotion of

open dialogue and the organization of joint activities, a harmonious and inclusive academic environment can be created, which capitalizes on diversity and prevents the emergence of tensions.

11. The challenges of the language barrier: What are the main difficulties you anticipate in the teaching and communication relationship between Romanian teachers and Ukrainian students, considering the language barriers? How might these obstacles affect the learning and teaching process?

The professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța identify various difficulties associated with the language barrier in the teaching and communication relationship with Ukrainian students. These difficulties range from problems of communication and understanding to the impact on the quality of teaching and the learning process.

The main difficulties anticipated

Ineffective communication and misunderstandings: Teachers (ID 2, ID 7, ID 9, ID 10, ID 22) point out that language barriers can lead to difficulties in direct communication between teachers and students. Misunderstandings can occur when teachers do not fully understand students' questions or needs, and students cannot express their thoughts clearly, thus affecting the quality of teaching.

Fragmented learning and loss of essential information: Ukrainian students may have difficulty understanding teaching material and teachers' explanations if they do not master the language of instruction (ID 25). This can lead to fragmented learning and the loss of essential information.

Reduced class participation and frustration: Language barriers may cause students to avoid actively participating in class discussions or asking questions (ID 2, ID 10). This can limit opportunities for active and collaborative learning, increasing frustration for both students and teachers (ID 8, ID 12).

Difficult assessment and inadequate feedback: Assessments and tests can be more difficult for students who do not master the language of instruction, which can lead to inequitable results (ID 25). Teachers may have difficulty providing constructive and clear feedback (ID 11).

Social isolation and low integration: Language barriers can affect social relations between students and teachers, as well as between students, leading to social isolation of Ukrainian students and difficulties in their integration into the school community (ID 10, ID 24).

Methods of overcoming obstacles

Use of languages of international circulation: Teaching in English can reduce obstacles, as students can receive bibliography and projects in this language (ID 1, ID 4, ID 6, ID 16).

Translation software and communication technologies: Using high-fidelity translation software to preserve the integrity of delivered courses (ID 3). The technology of 2024 allows overcoming language barriers (ID 20).

Psychological and cultural support: Creating an open and supportive cultural environment that facilitates social integration and overcoming communication barriers (ID 6, ID 21).

Language courses and financial incentives: Organization of Romanian language courses and financial incentives for teachers who want to learn the Ukrainian language (ID 8).

Collaborative and social activities: Involvement of Romanian students in social activities together with Ukrainian students to facilitate integration and overcome language barriers (ID 13).

Language barriers represent a significant obstacle in the teaching and communication relationship between Romanian teachers and Ukrainian students. These can negatively affect the quality of teaching and the learning process but can be effectively managed using international

languages, translation technologies, psychological and cultural support, language courses and collaborative activities. Adaptation and openness to various methods and tools can help create an inclusive and effective educational environment.

12. Impact of lack of resources and support: What problems do you think could result from insufficient resources and support for Ukrainian students, both in terms of their academic success and educational experience? What impact do you think these issues might have?

The professors at the Ovidius University of Constanța identify numerous problems and negative consequences of insufficient resources and support for Ukrainian students. These problems range from academic and emotional difficulties to risks of dropping out and impact on the entire academic environment.

The main problems anticipated

Lack of motivation and risk of dropping out: Teachers (ID 1, ID 4, ID 6, ID 10, ID 11) mention that the lack of adequate resources and support can lead to a lack of motivation among Ukrainian students, which can lead to dropping out school. This lack of motivation can be associated with apathy, stress and even addictions.

Emotional and psychological problems: Teachers (ID 2, ID 9, ID 12, ID 23) point out that insufficient resources and psychological support can affect students' mental health, leading to anxiety, depression and other unresolved emotional problems. This can negatively impact both academic success and the educational experience.

Social isolation and poor integration: Lack of social and cultural support can lead to isolation and marginalization of Ukrainian students (ID 2, ID 7, ID 8, ID 9, ID 22). This can negatively affect emotional well-being and create a sense of alienation, reducing students' motivation and engagement in academic and social activities.

Low academic performance and difficulties in adaptation: Lack of educational resources and adequate support can lead to low academic performance and difficulties in adapting to the new educational environment (ID 10, ID 11, ID 25). Students may have trouble understanding course material and keeping up with academic demands.

Impact on the entire academic environment: Inadequate resources and support can negatively affect the entire academic environment (ID 9, ID 10, ID 22, ID 25). This can create tensions and misunderstandings caused by cultural differences, reduce cohesion and collaboration between students and teachers, and affect the quality of education provided.

Methods of approaching problems

Creating an inclusive and supportive environment: Teachers and institutions must create an inclusive and supportive environment that facilitates the social and cultural integration of Ukrainian students. This may include organizing cultural events, psychological support sessions and group activities (ID 2, ID 7, ID 8).

Financial support and educational resources: It is necessary to ensure financial support for students, access to additional educational resources and language support to facilitate adaptation to the new educational and cultural system (ID 8, ID 25).

Psychological counselling and mentoring programs: Institutions should offer psychological counselling and mentoring programs to help students manage emotional and psychological problems and to provide them with the necessary support in the process of adaptation and integration (ID 2, ID 9, ID 12).

Involvement of the academic community: The entire academic community must make efforts to facilitate the integration of Ukrainian students, through extracurricular activities, volunteering and collaboration in group projects (ID 13, ID 24).

Inadequate resources and support for Ukrainian students can have significant consequences for their academic success and educational experience. These problems can lead to poor academic performance, social isolation, emotional problems and risk of dropping out of school. It is essential that academic institutions implement appropriate measures to provide the necessary support and create an inclusive and supportive environment that facilitates the integration and success of Ukrainian students.

V. SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
✓ Cultural diversity: Ukrainian students contribute to enriching the academic environment with diverse perspectives, stimulating dialogue, cultural sensitivity and critical thinking. Interdisciplinary collaboration and diversity approach innovative projects and research, developing essential intercultural competences. ✓ Academic cooperation: Integrating diverse knowledge stimulates innovation and creativity, improving academic performance and expanding professional networks. Varied feedback and collaborative skills are essential for personal and professional development. ✓ Resilience and perseverance: Ukrainian students set an example of tenacity and adaptability, positively influencing peers and promoting empathy, seriousness and self-discipline.	✓ Language challenges: The language barrier affects communication and collaboration, leading to misinterpretations and difficulties in expressing thoughts. Adapting to academic styles and speed of speech can be difficult. ✓ Cultural misunderstandings: Lack of understanding of cultural norms can create adjustment difficulties and social isolation. Adapting to different academic styles and cultural biases are significant obstacles. ✓ Insufficient support resources: The need for personalized support, cultural integration programs and adequate language support is essential. The lack of a robust mentoring and advising system affects integration and academic performance.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
✓ Developing intercultural skills: Contact with Ukrainian students helps develop intercultural communication skills and empathy, promoting tolerance and mutual respect. Integrative events and exchange of experiences stimulate mutual learning. ✓ Cultural events: Intercultural and educational activities contribute to integration and personal development. History and Romanian language courses, along with sports and cultural activities, facilitate adaptation.	✓ Prejudice and exclusion: Prejudice can lead to marginalization, decreased confidence and discriminatory behaviour, negatively affecting academic performance and social integration. ✓ Social isolation: Social isolation reduces motivation, increasing the risk of stress, anxiety and depression. Difficulties forming social relationships and limited access to resources affect academic success.

✓ Professional recognition: The European-recognized diploma offers professional and personal development opportunities. Participating in foreign language courses and communicating with people from different countries improves communication efficiency and integration into the international community.	✓ Lack of adequate support: Lack of personalized support and essential resources increases the risk of dropout and impacts personal and professional development. Emotional and psychological problems require psychological support and proper counselling.
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PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT. IMPLEMENTATION STAGES

Stage 1: Pre-registration and initial orientation

At this stage, Ovidius University of Constanța might offer intensive Romanian and English language courses 3 months before the start of the semester. These courses can be structured in modules and include interactive sessions, practical exercises and periodic assessments to measure progress. Online courses can be supported by interactive platforms that allow real-time feedback and content adjustment based on student needs.

Cultural and academic orientation programs might be held in the first week after arrival, with the direct involvement of Romanian students and university staff. Guided tours would include visits to essential facilities (library, recreation centres, classrooms) and points of interest in the city (museums, theatres, parks). Orientation sessions could cover varied topics, from the academic structure of the university to cultural norms and values.

1. Intensive Romanian and English classes:

- **Description:** Holding intensive Romanian and English language courses for Ukrainian students 3 months before the start of the semester. These classes would be compulsory and be held both in-person and online, to cover different needs and availabilities.

- **Implementation:** Employing staff specialised in teaching foreign languages and usage of online platforms (e.g., Moodle, Duolingo) for supplementary language support.

- **Expected results:** Improvement of basic language skills, facilitating communication and active participation in classes.

2. Cultural and academic orientation programmes:

- **Description:** Cultural and academic orientation sessions held during the first week of arrival. These sessions might include presentations about Romanian culture and customs, guided tours of the campus and the city of Constanța, as well as information about the university's academic structure and resources.

- **Implementation:** Collaborating with local cultural organizations, teachers and student volunteers can organize and run sessions.

- **Expected results:** Familiarizing students with the university and cultural environment, will reduce culture shock and facilitating initial adaptation.

Stage 2: Integration in the academic community

Mentoring and personalized advice is essential for effective integration. Each Ukrainian student can be paired with a Romanian mentor, chosen based on academic and personal

compatibility. Mentoring could include weekly meetings, group activities and individual sessions to discuss academic progress, challenges encountered and possible solutions.

Intercultural workshops and team building activities could be organized monthly, including topics such as cultural conflict management, effective communication and collaboration in diverse teams. These activities might be led by cultural diversity experts and structured into interactive sessions that encourage active participation and experiential learning.

1. Personalised mentoring and counselling:

- **Description:** Implementation of a mentoring program in which Romanian student volunteers are assigned to provide support and guidance to Ukrainian colleagues. Mentoring can include regular meetings to discuss challenges and provide personalized support.

- **Implementation:** Selection and training of volunteer mentors, establishing a schedule of regular meetings and effective communication channels (e.g., groups on social media platforms).

- **Expected results:** Creating a supportive environment, facilitating social and academic integration, reducing feelings of isolation.

2. Intercultural workshops and team building activities:

- **Description:** Holding intercultural workshops and team-building activities with an aim to promote mutual respect and understanding of cultural diversity. They can include interactive discussions, roleplay and collaborative activities.

- **Implementation:** Collaborating with experts in cultural diversity, planning and carrying out activities in a relaxed and open environment.

- **Expected results:** Improvement of intercultural skills, consolidated interactions amongst students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Stage 3: Continuous support and academic development

Psychological counselling services might be permanently available with easy access for students. Counsellors can hold individual and group sessions to provide emotional and psychological support. Support groups can be organized around common interests and specific challenges, providing a safe space for discussion and sharing of experiences.

The academic tutoring program could include weekly meetings between assigned tutors and Ukrainian students. Tutors can provide support in preparing for exams, managing academic tasks and using educational resources effectively. Access to educational resources can be facilitated through online platforms and digital libraries, ensuring the availability of the necessary study materials.

1. Psychological counselling services and support groups:

- **Description:** Providing access to specialized psychological counselling services and organizing support groups for Ukrainian students. Support groups can allow students to share their experiences and receive emotional support.

- **Implementation:** Employing psychological counsellors with experience in working with international students, organizing regular support group meetings.

- **Expected results:** Reduction of stress and anxiety, increase in emotional and psychological well-being of students.

2. Academic tutoring and access to educational resources:

- **Description:** Creation of an academic tutoring program where high performing students provide support to fellow Ukrainians. Ease of access to additional educational resources such as digital libraries, study materials and laboratories.

- **Implementation:** Selection of academic tutors, setting a schedule of weekly meetings, use of online platforms to access educational resources.

- **Expected results:** Improving academic performance, facilitating access to knowledge and resources necessary for academic success.

Stage 4: Evaluation and continuous improvement

Monitoring student progress can involve the use of quarterly surveys, semi-annual interviews and group meetings to gather feedback. The data collected would be analysed to identify trends and recurring issues. The implementation team would hold monthly meetings to discuss necessary adjustments and develop new initiatives based on feedback received.

Adaptation and expansion of the program can be based on the results of continuous evaluation. New initiatives might include, for example, the introduction of optional personal development courses, integration-oriented extracurricular activities and collaboration with other universities to share best practices and resources. Collaboration with local and international organizations might be intensified to ensure comprehensive and diversified support.

1. Progress monitoring and continuous feedback:

- **Description:** Establishing a system for monitoring the progress of Ukrainian students and collecting regular feedback from them to assess the effectiveness of the integration program. Using surveys, interviews and focus group meetings to obtain detailed information.

- **Implementation:** Designation of a team responsible for monitoring and evaluation, creation of feedback tools and analysis of collected data.

- **Expected results:** Identifying strengths and aspects that require improvement, adjusting the integration program based on the feedback received.

2. Adaptation and extension of the program:

- **Description:** Based on monitoring results and feedback, adapting the program to meet identified needs and expanding it to include new initiatives and resources. Constant assessment of context and adjustment of available resources.

- **Implementation:** Organizing regular meetings with the implementation team to review and adjust the plan, collaborating with other universities and organizations to incorporate best practices.

- **Expected results:** Continuous improvement of the integration program, adaptability to changes and emerging needs of students.

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