THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBRARY STUDIES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES WITH THE EXPANSION OF THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE SPHERE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE BY STUDYING LOCAL CULTURAL POLICIES

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Abstract

In today’s globalized Europe, there are increasingly intensified processes of cultural intercourse, the role of the national cultural heritage is increasingly mentioned in the preservation of national identity and the development of national self-consciousness. Historically, religion has had a significant impact on cultural diversity, and it is not by accident that religious temples are studied not only as ritual temples, but also as cultural monuments.

Every nation is carefully preparing specialists to care for, protect and promote its cultural heritage. Bulgaria’s cultural heritage in its diversity is the subject of several specialties at the University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT). In ULSIT, studying Cultural Heritage is in the context of humanities and the main aim is to master the methodology of scientific knowledge in the field of cultural heritage. Students aim to build a complex of knowledge, habits and skills to use the fundamental foundations of history, archeology, architecture, fine arts, etc. that deepen their professional training.

The learning process in ULSIT in the field of cultural heritage is characterized by diverse and innovative forms and methods. Lectures and seminars are used, problem solving (the case-study method), preparation and defense of creative tasks, author’s presentations of research results. Auditorial education technologies in this field are expanded and enriched by field research of different cultural sites either in the form of teaching practice or as part of the work on various scientific projects in which students take an active part. In these forms of practical training real knowledge and skills are acquired in registering and researching specific cultural monuments. Such results have been achieved in the realization of a project ДН15/4 - BSF 11.12.2017

The project title is “Creating a Model for Safeguarding, Socialization and Promoting of Orthodox Christian Monuments in Bulgaria”. The character of the research involves interviewing, meeting and talking with representatives of local authorities, priests and citizens, the subject being the state and future of Christian monuments on the territory of different regions of Bulgaria. The results of students’ interviews and talks with the local population, representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the local authorities have highlighted the different specific policies and actions regarding the safeguarding of the religious heritage. The direct personal participation, observations and analyzes of the collected empirical material create a rich experience that students apply in the educational process and in their research activities. Effective implementation of such educational technologies is reflected in the various student scientific papers, presentations and diploma theses. The variety of registered activities for the preservation of Christian temples at the local level and the idea for young people to develop ideas for different cultural heritage conservation activities also create prerequisites for their popularization and application in respect of the preservation of other cultural monuments.

Keywords: cultural heritage, university education, religious monuments.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today’s globalized Europe, there are increasingly intensified processes of cultural intercourse, the role of the national cultural heritage is increasingly mentioned in the preservation of national identity and the development of national self-consciousness. Historically, religion has had a significant impact on cultural diversity, and it is not by accident that religious temples are studied not only as ritual temples, but also as cultural monuments.

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2 METHODOLOGY

The learning process in ULSIT in the field of cultural heritage is characterized by diverse and innovative forms and methods. Lectures and seminars are used, problem solving (the case-study method), preparation and defense of creative tasks, author’s presentations of research results. Auditory education technologies in this field are expanded and enriched by field research of different cultural sites either in the form of teaching practice or as part of the work on various scientific projects in which students take an active part. In these forms of practical training real knowledge and skills are acquired in registering and researching specific cultural monuments.

In addition to lectures, which are an integral part of ULSIT’s curriculum, students take practices that are not just educational. Prominent students are included in the work teams of various scientific projects from different fields of scientific knowledge relevant to the specialties at ULSIT. Their participation includes real field work, research and analysis of empirical material and building skills to present the results to the scientific community.

ULSIT conducts an innovative policy on students’ growth by enabling them to showcase their success in research on special scientific forums. The most important for students is the annual scientific conference of the Student Scientific Society. This is a forum where our students have the opportunity to present their first scientific achievements in various scientific fields, including the field of cultural heritage. The Student Scientific Society has existed within the university for almost twenty years and has played a very important role in guiding students to scientific work. Their works are published annually in special volumes and are available on paper as well as electronically. Within the 2018 conference, the student Vassilka Karaivanova, a member of the project team ID 15/4, presented her paper on the project topic, which was included in the proceedings. In May 2019 the 15th Anniversary Students’ Scientific Conference will be held entitled “Information – Institutions – Education – Research”, where students will demonstrate once more their scientific growth.

Each year on the 1st November, the Day of the Leaders of the Bulgarian Revival, there is a scientific conference with international participation entitled: “The Knowledge Society and 21st Century Humanism”. This year marks the 23rd edition of the conference. Traditionally, the conference is attended by scientists and researchers from Bulgaria, The Russian Federation, Serbia, Germany and England, which makes this forum important among the scientific community.

It is therefore of particular importance that in this large-scale conference students and PhD students acquaint leading scientific authorities with the results of their research and analysis in a special panel. Such inclusion of young researchers in the scientific events of the University is innovative and productive.

In order for students’ work to have such a high scientific value, a tribute should be paid to the professors whose leadership trains and develops the research habits of young people. The core of the faculty is proven by scientists not only at national but also international level. Specifically, in the field of cultural heritage, they conduct independent and collective research in the field of intangible and tangible cultural heritage, religion, Christian monuments, ancient historical heritage, etc.[1]. Various scientific projects have been implemented at ULSIT and its respective scientific field, such as: “Thrace – a Crossroads of Civilizations”, “An Innovative Model for Research and Socialization of Strandja Literary and Documental Cultural Heritage”, “Creating a Model for Safeguarding, Socialization and Promoting of Orthodox Christian Monuments in Bulgaria”, Models for the Socialization of Cultural and Historical Heritage in the Smart City”, “A Model for Creating Information Environment for Stimulating the Scientific Research in the Field of Cultural and Historical Heritage”, etc. Apart from acclaimed scientists, PhD students and students actively work and accumulate knowledge and experience in the research of cultural heritage in its diversity in teams of similar projects, which leads to the continuity of researchers in the future.

3 RESULTS

Our observations as part of the team of project ДН15/4 “Creating a Model for Safeguarding, Socialization and Promoting of Orthodox Christian Monuments in Bulgaria” have shown that the
research and study of cultural heritage involves different forms and methods of development and enrichment of the research experience. Their selection depends on the specifics of the particular subject. The subject matter of our project, for example, involves interviewing, meeting and talking with representatives of the local authorities, regional scientific institutions, representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and ordinary citizens, focusing the interest on the Christian monuments on the territory of Bulgaria. As a result of the interviews, talks and conversations conducted by lecturers and students, various specific policies and actions on the protection of religious heritage were highlighted. It turned out that the activity of the local population and the local authorities is most often the reason for carrying out the various activities and policies for the Orthodox temples, and hence for the cultural heritage as a whole. The donation actions, the personal voluntary work and money, the unselfish help are the basis for a variety of actions on the safeguarding and socialization of religious cultural heritage. On the other hand, the project’s work has enriched the research team’s experience in studying cultural heritage. The activities and results of the research presented on the web and in various scientific forums have led to enriching the forms and methods of studying each particular scientific issue.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The direct personal participation, observations and analyzes of the collected empirical material create a rich experience that students apply in the educational process and in their research activities. Effective implementation of such educational technologies is reflected in the various student scientific papers, presentations and diploma theses. The variety of registered activities for the preservation of Christian temples at the local level and the idea for young people to develop ideas for different cultural heritage conservation activities also create prerequisites for their popularization and application in respect of the preservation of other cultural monuments.

ULSIT’s experience in expanding university education in the field of cultural heritage is rich in form and content. It includes not only theoretical training and practical application of knowledge, but also opportunities to present the scientific achievements at various scientific forums, which makes students’ work meaningful and promising.

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REFERENCES


