DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND THE VALUES OF DEMOCRACY: BUILDING TEACHERS' COMPETENCES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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The INTER Network intends to create a learning community where teaching and learning are conceived as an active and cooperative process, that inevitably occurs within a social context. It is a process that moves people (also teachers) beyond the factors of conditioning themselves as human persons and professionals. Learning does not take place in a vacuum, it occurs in a specific and dynamic social context and it occurs with others, thanks to others. We also think that we learn mostly by experience and when we establish links between theory and practice. The cooperation with others is a priority to clarify concepts or procedures, and to learn from others' expertise.

This CD contents some of the contributions presented at the International Conference “Diversity, Inclusion and the Values of Democracy: Building Teachers’ Competences for Intercultural Education” which took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia) between the 28th and the 30th of September of 2009. The overall conference was organized by the INTER Network together with the Educational Research Institute in Ljubljana.

The different contributions included in this publication respond to some of the main dimensions addressed by the Network: Theoretical foundations on Intercultural Education, Teacher Training, and School Practices. The texts respond also to the general topic of the conference, referred to intercultural competences and inclusion. Considering this, the contributions have been organized in six sections:

I. Conceptual aspects
II. Intercultural competences
III. Research projects on diversity and school practice
IV. Diversity and inclusion in school practice: programmes and experiences
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VI. Posters

This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
I. CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION?

Results of an analysis on what INTER Network member think IE is and should be put in practice

Patricia Mata ¹
Margarita Del Olmo ²

Working as part of an EU funded network of people interested in Intercultural education, the authors proposed to analyze what members mean by IE: what it is in theory and how it should be put in practice. To share the results of our analysis we have put the focus on our agreements and disagreements regarding the four dimensions we have used to gather partners’ ideas through a questionnaire: a) theoretical foundations, b) teacher training, c) school practices, and d) resources and communication. In the end, we will provide our own discussion on these ideas and some proposals to keep on working on what has proved to be a fruitful discussion.

Key words: Intercultural Education, Theory, School Practice, Network

INTRODUCTION

Working as part of an EU funded network of people interested in Intercultural education, the authors proposed to analyze what members mean by IE: what it is in theory and how it should be put in practice. The INTER Network (http://internetwork.up.pt) is a group of 23 different institutions (universities, research centers, schools, different associations, consulting companies, a centre of resources under the Spanish Ministry of Education, etc.) from 12 countries. Our purpose is to improve quality in Education and contribute to innovation in schools by assisting them in adopting and implementing an intercultural approach.

The original INTER Network proposal deals with four different dimensions on Intercultural Education that constitute the structure of our common work:

a) theoretical foundations
b) teacher training
c) school practices
d) resources and communication.

In order to find out what Intercultural Education means to the different partners and also to benefit from each other’s ideas, we thought that a questionnaire could be a useful tool to gather opinions from such a wide and scattered group in a short time. We dealt with the complexity of the answers from a two-fold perspective. On the one hand we wanted to point out our common ideas, what we already shared, what we already agreed on. On the other hand we have also identified our disagreements as material for further discussion and enrichment.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The first dimension of the analysis concerns the theoretical assumptions on what Intercultural Education is. To gather information about partners’ ideas, we asked them the following questions:

What do you think Intercultural Education is?
Is it different from how it is used in your context?
Please, give us five meaningful theoretical references and tell us why you choose them

Our first conclusion is that, generally speaking, we agree more on theory than in what has to do with practice. With this we mean that OUR THEORETICAL IDEAS ON WHAT INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IS have more in common than what we think about how its practice should be.

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Most of us agreed that Intercultural Education has to do first of all with culture in general, or cultures in particular, and some of us even identify it with cultural awareness. We have some examples from partners’ own words about what intercultural education is.

The other two ideas related to Intercultural Education, which partners agreed on more are equity and inclusion.

On a third level partners have stressed the ideas of collaboration, participation, exchange, and relation, which we consider slightly different ways of expressing the same idea.

Finally, we would like to point out three ideas that partners identify with Intercultural Education that are also related to each other: learning, understanding, and questioning.

Reflecting on some of the concepts shared by partners, it seems as if we were speaking about three different dimensions that are part of the definition of Intercultural Education.

The first dimension is related to the “aims” of intercultural education; here we have concepts such as equity, inclusion, mutual understanding, respect, citizenship and growth. And we also find the concept of Europeanism/European identity.

The second dimension refers to the “means”, strategies or processes to implement an intercultural approach in education. Here we are speaking about learning, understanding, questioning; and the group of “relation” terms: communication, relationship, exchange, and participation, cooperation, collaboration. And the concept of assimilation also appears here.

The third dimension of concepts makes explicit which are the “materials”, the tools to build an intercultural society. The concepts we can include here are: curiosity, critical awareness, cultural relativism (and we have to explain what we mean and discuss on it), consciousness and experiences. And we should include here the concepts of differences, cultural diversity and minorities as well.

Regarding the second question of the first dimension, when we asked WHETHER THESE IDEAS ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION ARE PUT INTO PRACTICE in our own contexts, answers were divided between those of us who plainly said no, and those who thought that they are. But it is important to notice that people who said “yes” specified very close and specific contexts, such us, the Inter Network itself or some other project they are involved in, or their own classroom or some university courses. On the other hand, those who answer “no”, many times explain that, in their contexts, Intercultural Education is identified only with minorities and immigrant students, and associated with the idea of deficit and compensation. Thus, in spite of the opposite answers (some said plainly yes, some others plainly no) we see here a general agreement shared by almost all partners, and this is the idea that Intercultural Education is put into practice only in small contexts very close to the members of the INTER Network.

The third question of this first dimension asked for SIGNIFICANT REFERENCES ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION.

Some references have been introduced by partners, others are simply mentioned. So we have organized them into three categories: “commented references”, “web sites” and “other references”. We are not going to list them here, there are available in the final Report of the State of Innovation in the website of the INTER Network (http://internetwork.up.pt/).

TEACHER TRAINING

The second Dimension of the analysis concerns Teacher Training. We wanted to know what the members of the Network thought about teacher training in intercultural Education. We were interested in partners’ opinions on the issue but also their perception about their contexts, and the gaps they identify between what they think it should be and what they thought it is. Besides these gaps we were interested in their ideas on how these gaps could be overcome. We asked the following questions

What kind of competences, skills, attitudes, etc., do you think an intercultural teacher should have? How do you think a teacher could be trained on these?
Tell us about Teacher Training programs / initiatives you are aware of to train a teacher in IE. What opinion do you [have] about them? In your opinion, which are the needs/gaps in this area? Do you have any other suggestions, comments on how to improve teacher training on IE?

The first question referred to **INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES REQUIRED FOR TEACHERS**. Partners identified ideas about Intercultural Education mostly with the addressing of **differences** (either in a positive way, as a possibility, or in a negative way, or as something that needs to be solved), and also with the building bridges –or common values- among them, stressing the need to live, participate and collaborate.

But most partners have stressed **Flexibility, Communication** and **Critical thinking** as the most important competences, skills and attitudes for intercultural teachers; and only after these **Awareness of differences** become important, together with **Equity, Awareness of own prejudices and stereotypes** and **Empathy**. Some of us have also claimed the importance of **Respect, Participation**, and the need **To Teach about other cultures**. With less agreement we have quoted **Openness to change, Curiosity, Diversity, Inclusion**, and **Collaborative work**. Finally, the ideas of **Openness to the environment, to become a role model, to develop common values**, and **Cultural relativism** have also reached agreement to a certain point.

We see that most of these categories entail ideas that could be understood as different or complementary angles of the same core, which is represented more by the ability to adjust oneself to different environments and contexts and critical awareness of the self than by stressing the idea of difference or even diversity. In this way what we claim about intercultural teachers has to do more with diversity of any student than with students of “other cultures”, that is to say that the cultural differences we identified in the first dimension with Intercultural Education, are less important as teacher competences than a general ability to reflect and change with the social environment.

We share most of the ideas, and even when we do not, we are stressing different angles of a complex ideal teacher who should be flexible, use critical thinking, have good skills to communicate, be inspired by the idea of equity, being aware of the limitations of prejudices and stereotypes, to use empathy as a tool and to be able to manage differences. S/he should show respect for students, promote participation and be able to teach and learn about other cultures, be open to change, be curious, develop cooperative work, value diversity and be oriented to inclusion, use cultural relativism as a tool, but should also be able to build common values, become a role model and be open to the environment.

Our second question on Teacher Training Dimension asked partners about **TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS OR INITIATIVES IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION** they were aware of, and also about their opinion on them. This question was not answered in all the questionnaires. Those who did answer could be easily divided into a group of affirmative answers, and those who answer “no” explained that even though some programs or initiatives are called Intercultural education courses, they do no follow this perspective in their opinion.

To the third question on Teacher Training focused on **NEEDS OR GAPS** that partners perceive regarding the implementation of Intercultural Education everybody answered yes, and they offered different ideas and suggestions.

The most generalized claim in the answers to the questionnaires is the gap between theory and practice, and the need to start introducing the intercultural approach in the curriculum. Many partners claim also that **more training in practice** is needed, what others emphasize as more practical knowledge, and also that a **better communication among social actors** (policy designers, parents, head teachers, teachers and other school staff, other workers, and students) is crucial.

The final question for this Dimension on Teacher Training was to ask for **FURTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS** in Intercultural Education. Most of the answers claim further and better teacher training, emphasizing the need to fa-
cilitate (with ideas, exchange, materials, critical thinking, theory reflection, an extra teacher in the classroom, involvement of the whole school, more time for teachers, a more stable career for teachers, etc.) the transformation of the current school into an Intercultural education center. There were also more specific ideas that are available at the website of the INTER Network [http://internetwork.up.pt].

SCHOOL PRACTICES

The third dimension of our analysis concerns School Practice. We were interested in gathering opinions regarding the practice of Intercultural Education, and again we tried to get partners’ reflections on gaps they perceived between their ideas in theory and the practice in the schools of their environment. We asked the following questions:

Please, tell us about school practices and activities you are aware of (by experience or reference) which follow your IE perspective.

Do you see any gaps between theory and practice, and between Teacher Training and school practice? Please, tell us about these gaps and give us proposals you think could reduce these gaps.

The answers to the first question of this dimension show a major disagreement, very easy to be perceived, at least at first glance: there are some partners who see their ideas on Intercultural Education put into practice in their environments, and give some or even many examples of this, and there are other partners who clearly do not. But let us take a closer look.

There are more answers saying that yes, Intercultural Education is being used than those who said no. Some are more or less in between. Among those who answered yes, many quoted their own practices. There are only few clear “yes”, but they have no problems in giving examples (some of them provide the same or similar examples), and neither do they in justifying why they thought these are environments where Intercultural Education is put into practice.

It is interesting to notice here that some practices were offered as examples of Intercultural Education by some partners, and the same practices are offered by other partners in just the opposite way: as practices that from the perspective of the person answering the questionnaire lack an Intercultural approach. The most significant are: Compensatory programs, Linking Classrooms in the Community of Madrid, and Intercultural events. We can explain these contradictory answers in two ways: a) they emphasize different aspects of the same practice (i.e. in Linking Classrooms some point out to the variety of students while others stress the fact that these students are being taught apart from the rest of the school), and b) the persons who answered have different ideas on what Intercultural Education is, some seem to link Intercultural Education with “different cultures”, whilst others identify it with inclusion of all students at the same time. This contradiction could be easily traced down to the first dimension of the questionnaire where a major disagreement appeared among those who closely link Intercultural Education with “cultural differences”, “others”, “minorities”, “ethnicity” and even “culture”, and other partners who criticize this identification and claim for a wider sense of the intercultural approach, as an educational perspective for ALL students (since we are all diverse) and not for specific groups labeled as “different”.

Regarding GAPS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE, AND TEACHER TRAINING AND SCHOOL PRACTICE. Here we all agreed that there was one, and suggestions from partners to fill in this gap are shown in the website of the project [http://internetwork.up.pt].

RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATION

In the last dimension of the questionnaire, we intended to know about Resources and Communication. The questions we included were the following:

Resources you are aware of following an Intercultural perspective

How do you think communication among members of a school community should be from an Intercultural approach?

Gaps you see from this perspective
To the first question of this dimension, partners answered in two different ways. Some of them (five questionnaires) understand “resources” mainly as human resources and strategies. But most responses identify them with “material resources”: books and articles, audiovisual materials and web sites. Again, all are listed at the website of the project [http://internetwork.up.pt].

The second question of this dimension tried to find out HOW COMMUNICATION AMONG EDUCATIONAL AGENTS SHOULD BE: school-family-community, and asked for meaningful examples.

The concepts that partners link to intercultural communication in this context are [collaboration, horizontality, reciprocity, respect, coordination, proximity and commonality]. Some of the answers put again the focus on differences, and there are two responses that outlined the difficulties on communication, especially between school and parents. The meaningful examples of intercultural communication provided by partners are linked to the ideas of open schools and learning communities.

Regarding the third question, NEEDS AND GAPS REGARDING RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATION identified by partners are available at the website of the project [http://internetwork.up.pt].

CONCLUSIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND PROPOSALS

Regarding partners’ answers on what Intercultural Education is, we found out that the most repeated concepts were Culture and Difference. But both were used with very different meanings, even opposite, if we consider our interpretation of the context where these words appear.

Roughly speaking, we can divide answers into two groups. One of them seems to reflect a static vision of culture that leads us to conceive it in an essentialist manner, as a kind of cluster inside which we can classify people according to some features (differences), assuming that everybody within the same cluster or group shares the same way of thinking, behaving and living. In this sense, culture is conceived as an object, instead of considering it as an operational concept that refers to a process. Consequently, culture is seen as something closed, fixed, that we can teach or learn about. However, some other partners show a concern about this way to think cultures, and pointed out the need to consider culture in a dynamic, non essentialist way.

In the same way, many partners stressed that Intercultural Education has to do with differences. Even though none of the partners focused on this idea as the most important, many used it as a concept in the shadow when speaking about any of the above mentioned. The discourses showed that when partners were speaking about culture, equity and inclusion, collaboration, exchange, participation and relation, and even learning, understanding and questioning, they were thinking about differences.

From our point of view, answers show two ways of thinking about differences. Some partners refer to differences in a way that allows us to easily think that all our differences are included (for example, when “different backgrounds”, “different ways”, etc., are mentioned). But there is another way to refer to differences (for example, “to accept differences”) which assumes that some people are different and some others are not; that means that only a group of people is defined on the basis of their differences, and that these differences pose a challenge to the rest of us that should be answered in some way.

We think that culture and difference are the actual key concepts underlying our assumptions on Intercultural Education, and more discussion is needed in order to clarify how we conceive them, as they determine our understanding of the intercultural approach and its implications for changing educational ideas and practices.

Other concepts to be discussed are Europeanism, as part of the aims of intercultural education; assimilation, as a process to build an intercultural society; and finally minorities as material to work from an intercultural approach.

Regarding Europeanism, or the building of an European identity, we consider this as a very narrow approach to the intercultural issues. Although we are working in a project of European scope, in our opinion the intercultural education approach goes beyond frontiers and closed identities.

On the other hand, assimilation would be a wrong approach from an intercultural perspective: it leads to the invisibility of diversity. This concept usually appears linked to minorities, another controversial concept if we consider it as a material to work on intercultural education.

Together with the assumptions about culture and difference, we have identified other two relevant matters for discussion among partners regarding teacher training.

In the first place, some partners think that intercultural competences cannot be taught nor learned. It seems to mean that not everybody can become an intercultural teacher: only teachers with a specific way of thinking (some kind of social ideals or “ideology”) or possessing a special character could be able to do it.

On the second hand, and referring to teacher training needs, while a group of partners point out the need for reflection and analysis of their own ideas and practices, some others asked for a more practical training, focused on tools and strategies that teachers can easily apply to school practice, a kind of “recipes” for multicultural school environments.

Regarding School practices, it is interesting to notice that some were offered as examples of Intercultural Education by some partners, and the same practices are offered by other partners in just the opposite way, as practices that from the perspective of the person answering the questionnaire lack an Intercultural approach. The most significant are Compensatory programs, Linking Classrooms in the Community of Madrid, and Intercultural events. We can explain these contradictory answers in two ways: a) they emphasize different aspects of the same practice (i.e. in Linking Classrooms some point out to the variety of students while others stressed the fact that these students are being taught apart form the rest of the school), and b) the persons who answered have different ideas on what Intercultural Education is, some seem to link Intercultural Education with “different cultures”, while others identify it with inclusion of all students at the same time. This contradiction could be easily traced down to the first dimension of the questionnaire where a major disagreement appeared among those who closely link Intercultural Education with “cultural differences”, “others”, “minorities”, “ethnicity” and even “culture”, and other partners who criticize this identification and claim for a wider sense of the intercultural approach, as an educational perspective for ALL students (since we are all diverse) and not for specific groups labeled as “different”. This second sense has more to do with the concepts of “inclusion”, “participation”, “shared values”.

Finally, in the dimension of resources and communication, we would like to point out to the fact that two of the responses focused on the difficulties and limitations of the family-school relationships. One of the answers blames the families for their lack of involvement, while the other blames the teachers who are interested in maintaining families away from school. This is so because sometimes teachers believe that families are opposed to some innovative methods related to the Intercultural approach, and some other times because they think plainly that families must not interfere in school.

As a result of the process of analysis of the questionnaires, and having in mind the agreements and disagreements, our proposal is to use them to delve deeper and to make more complex the concept of Intercultural Education and its relationships with teacher training, school practices and resources. To do so, we think further discussion on the following questions could be a starting point, not only among partners but also among the community at large:

- We agree more on theoretical ideas than in what we consider an intercultural practice. How can we overcome this gap?
- Some people relate intercultural education with the building of Europe. In which sense do you think both ideas can be related?
- Regarding the concept of difference. Do you think that intercultural education has to do with differences? In what sense?
- Many partners think that intercultural competences cannot be taught and/or learned. Do you agree? Why? And, which do you think are the implications of both positions in the selection of teachers?
- Some of the identified teacher training needs on intercultural education focus on practical knowledge and tools to be easily implemented, others insist on research and reflection. Which aspects do you think should have more weight in the teacher’s curriculum?
MULTICULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Agostino Portera

The present time of globalisation, new economy and living in a multicultural society, records a period of crisis mainly in educational institutions. Especially school and family seems to be unable to cope with risks and opportunities concerning such revolutionary changes. The present contribution will analyse the possible educational answers. The main issue will be to supply an epistemological and semantic account of the concept “intercultural education” and the main distinction with the terms multicultural and transculturale education. Starting with a historic overview of meeting-clashes of peoples with different linguistic, religious, cultural or ethnic features, the focus will be the review of theoretical elaborations and practical experiences, above all in European context and in educational field. After providing a general outline of its historical development, the main contents, methods and objectives, as well as its limits, I will try to support the thesis that education, in its intercultural, and not multi- or trans-cultural sense, is currently the most appropriate answer to globalisation and interdependence.

Key words: Migration, Multicultural Education, Intercultural Education

MIGRATION, MEETING OR CLASHES OF DIFFERENT PEOPLES AND CULTURES

When we consider the most appropriate education policy for the third millennium, in a season of constantly increasing real (immigrants, refugees, displaced people, illegal aliens, tourists, scientific researchers, industrialists) and virtual (television, cinema, Internet) mobility, we should not forget that emigration is a very old phenomenon. In the history of humankind, the most likely scenario is a permanent network of cultural, and also genetic, exchanges between different peoples. According to recent studies of palaeontology, archaeology, historic, genetic and linguistics (Lewontin, 1984; Cavalli Sforza, 1993), the common origin of all human beings can be traced to an area between north-eastern Africa and the Middle East rivedere. First and foremost, we should therefore erase a false premise (and a scientific mistake), that is, the existence of several races (often based on different skin colours or features): the only race on Earth is the human race.

If it is true that all human beings are all related (they share common origins and compatible DNA, they speak different languages, but with similar roots), it is also true that they are all different: in the course of history people have developed different somatic features and cultural standards. The origins of life and human existence is founded on difference. But the main problems seem to be originating from these differences.

Although migration is a dateless phenomenon, yet the question of peaceful coexistence remains until today unresolved. The word “foreign” is commonly associated with negative or even threatening aspects. A historic overview of meeting or clashes of peoples and cultures with different linguistic, religious, cultural or ethnic characteristics is not exactly reassuring.

1. The most notorious example has been the ruthless suppression of the numerically, militarily or economically weak: a foreign person (or the otherness) pose a serious threat to the own identity or existence, and therefore violence or weapons are employed to kill people with different ideas or somatic features (the most recent examples are the fratricidal wars in the former Yugoslavia, in Cecenia or in Uganda). In educational field, since violence can not be use, the common form is to take away people with “differences”.

2. Another widespread method is assimilation: a foreign national, who is commonly viewed as “primitive”, “backward”, “uneducated”, “barbarian”, will not be “eliminated”, but rather absorbed into the own culture, and therefore the person must learn our language, customs, traditions, religion, and thought modality of the dominant group. The situation of pre-Columbian populations or pre-colonial Africa should suffice to prove this point.

3. The method of segregation or ghetto was also largely employed: people with different ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural features, are segregated and thus they become “harmless” to the dominant group.

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They are allowed to live as they please, but only if they are kept confined to their peers and do not attempt to have contacts with the others (which often, but not always, means the majority). The fate of Jewish people during Nazism in Germany, of Aborigines in Australia or black people in South Africa during Apartheid are pregnant example.

4. A little known model is fusion (or the so-called melting pot): on the basis of a democratic principle, all cultural differences were combined to form a single culture, which ought to have been valid for all citizens. This highly utopian goal, /model mainly applied in the United States actually turned out to be an unsuccessful, a “salad bowl”, where each person keep his characteristics, even in self-segregation (see Little Italy, China town areas).

5. Universalism can also be defined as a pattern. On the basis of Kant’s philosophical principles on universal values, or the objectives of the French Revolution (liberté, égalité, fraternité), are emphasized aspects that are common to all human beings, while all differences are omitted or neglected. Decision in Communist countries like Russia or China are significant examples.

6. Finally, peaceful coexistence or multiculturalism, urged by UN and UNESCO recommendations, has been the most successful method to date: human beings with ethnic, cultural and religious differences decide to live together in mutual respect and understanding. The best example in Europe comes from Switzerland; in Italy from South Tyrol.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN EUROPE

With respect to the development and pattern of intercultural education, most European countries where there is immigration (such as England, France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands) show a similar line of development (see also, Portera 2008). In the period after the economic miracle of the 50s, teachers and politicians focused their attention on overcoming linguistic problems in schools. On the one hand developmental measures for learning the host countries’ languages were put in place; on the other hand a great deal of emphasis was also placed on giving children the opportunity to ‘preserve’ their language and culture of origin, so that a return to their native country would be possible at any time. Also during this time, numerous projects were created which on the whole could be named ‘multicultural’: the main aim was getting to know about commonalities and differences on a linguistic, religious and cultural level. In the 70s some countries even saw the creation of new subjects due to the growing numbers of foreign children in schools, such as for instance the ‘Ausländerpädagogik’ (‘pedagogy for teaching foreigners’) or the ‘pédagogie d’accueil’ (‘pedagogy of reception’) in France, whose goal was the realisation of specific, separate measures of intervention for foreign children. Over time however, this concept has been increasingly criticised, as the risks of a ‘compensatory’ and ‘assimilatory’ pedagogy became increasingly visible. It was only in the 80s that theoretical considerations and practical intervention strategies with respect to intercultural pedagogy slowly began to form (Allemann-Ghionda, 1999: 207–61, Portera, 2003a: 6–26).

On behalf of the European institutions, the Council of Europe has, since the 70s, adopted the strategy of multiculturalism. In 1970 the conference of ministers passed the first resolution (no. 35), which related to the entry age of children of migrant workers into schools in the member states. In it, a so-called ‘double track strategy’ was established to promote both the integration of these children within the host country schools and also to maintain the cultural and linguistic links to the country of origin, so as to facilitate possible school reintegration. Also within a framework of further conferences (in 1973 in Bern, 1974 in Strasbourg, 1975 in Stockholm, 1976 in Oslo), the ‘problems’ of the education of migrant workers were made a focal point, as was the possibility of maintaining their links with the language and country of origin. Stimulated by the ‘Council of Cultural Cooperation’ (CDCC), between 1977 and 1983 a working group was set up under the direction of L. Porcher and M. Rey, whose aim was to consider teacher education in Europe in terms of methods and strategies. This framework was underpinned by a recognition of the necessity for intercultural education. Thereafter in 1983 at a conference in Dublin, European ministers for education unanimously passed a resolution on the schooling of migrant children, in which the importance of the
The intercultural dimension of education was underlined. In the following year, a recommendation for teacher education was issued, based on intercultural communication. Since the mid-80s the Council of Europe has begun to promote numerous projects for education which is no longer seen as multi- or transcultural but as ‘intercultural’ (see Rey, 1986).

Today, the concepts of ‘intercultural education’ and ‘intercultural pedagogy’ are regarded as the most fitting answer to the new situation of globalisation with the increasing coming together of different languages, religions, cultural behaviours and ways of thinking. The change in the pedagogical paradigm can be seen as revolutionary since it has allowed educational strategies to be replaced which previously had a compensatory character, such as ‘Ausländerpädagogik’ (‘foreigner pedagogy’) where migration and growing up in a multicultural space were seen from only one perspective, namely as risk factors. The repercussions of these risk factors could, without competent pedagogic interventions, lead to physical, psychological or psychosomatic disturbances. For the first time, within the member states of the European Union the education of children of foreign origin could be undertaken with some consideration of the dynamic character of individual cultures and their respective identities. For the first time in the history of pedagogy, children of foreigners were no longer regarded as ‘problem’ or ‘risk’ children but as a resource. Officially, the possibility of enrichment and of personal and social growth was recognised, which stems from the coming together of people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Historically, Italy belongs to the migrant-source countries, and the problem of immigration only gained importance at the end of the 70s. For this reason teachers could benefit from the experiences of other countries where strategies of intercultural pedagogy are used. The spread and the legal establishment of intercultural pedagogy (also in school laws and decrees) can thus be seen as one of the strongest in Europe (Economi, 1994; Hiang-Chu & Checchin, 1996; Portera, 1997; Portera, 1998; Portera, 2003b).

CONCEPTUAL AND SEMANTIC CLARIFICATION

While in Europe the concepts of intercultural education and pedagogy have been used frequently and can be found in many European documents, numerous books or school laws, there has at the same time been a continuing failure to provide a clear semantic definition or distinct epistemological foundation. Among teachers and those responsible for school politics, very often the basic principles of intercultural education are misunderstood or are scarcely known or heeded. In view of this situation it seems both appropriate and necessary (based on research and literature) to provide a short semantic clarification of the concept of ‘intercultural education’ as well as a more specific definition of ‘trans- and multicultural education’ (see Portera, 2003a, 2004).

The concept of ‘transcultural education’ refers to something that pervades culture (as in the fields of cross-cultural psychology or transcultural psychiatry). In this sense educational strategies would aim at the development of common universal elements: values such as respect, peace, justice, environmental protection, human dignity, autonomy, etc. Although this principle has many merits, on closer inspection some limitations and mistakes are clearly visible as well. A view of the world is depicted here which is unrealistically supposed to be unitary, while in reality it is very heterogeneous and fragmentary (the danger here being to overlook the particular social and cultural membership of each person). Furthermore this movement (of transcultural education), which is very strongly rooted in Europe, could also turn out to be a new and further form of cultural imperialism, by means of which Europe or the Western world could try (covertly) to enforce their own value systems via economical or cultural power onto the rest of the world. Even though such a structuralist framework is favoured by many educationalists and foregrounds many basic values common to all cultures, another possible danger is that of stasis. Those movements and processes of change which take place in single societies would not be taken into consideration, thus fostering the risk of labelling and generalising everything uncritically as ‘human’ without appropriately respecting actual cultural differences. One consequence could be a promotion of an ‘a-cultural’ pedagogy or even a pedagogy of assimilation of minorities.

Instead of this, multi- or pluricultural education would be appropriate for juxtaposed cultures. Educational intervention, defined as multiculturalism, multicultural education or multicultural pedagogy, works from the de facto
situation of the presence of two or more cultures, and aims at the recognition of commonalities and differences. Working from this principle, there should be positive recognition that being different or being ‘other’ is respected and that someone from another country is given the same rights as the local person. The aim is peaceful co-existence. The main risks are then the tendency to see other cultures as static and rigid, as well as the danger of stratification, that is, the hierarchisation of single persons or ethnic groups. As far as educational interventions are concerned, there is a danger of limiting oneself in practice to exotic or folkloristic presentations and of groups. As far as educational interventions are concerned, there is a danger of limiting oneself in practice to exotic or folkloristic presentations and of forcing people increasingly into assumed cultures of origin. Thinking and behavioural patterns could be attributed to migrant children which even in their own villages or cities of origin no longer exist.

The principle of intercultural pedagogy represents a truly Copernican revolution. Concepts like identity and culture are not interpreted any more as static, but as dynamic. Otherness or strangeness, are not seen just as a danger or risk in terms of conspicuous behaviour or illness, but also as a possibility for enrichment and for personal and social growth. The meeting with the ‘other’, with an individual of different cultural origin, is seen as a challenge and as a possibility of confrontation and reflection in the realms of values, rules and behavioural standards. Epistemologically, the intercultural principle can find its place between universalism and relativism. At the same time however it can subsume both in a new synthesis. In other words, the intercultural principle can incorporate all the positive aspects of transcultural and intercultural pedagogy, but at the same time include all the above named dangers, to bring about awareness of them. While pluri- or multicultural refers to phenomena of a descriptive nature (society is multicultural or pluricultural), and pedagogic strategies refer to living together, in a more or less peaceful manner, the one beside the other, the prefix ‘inter’ describes the relationship, the interaction, the exchange between two or more persons (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1990). Societies can be defined as multicultural in the sense that the presence of people with different norms, values, religions and ways of thinking is acknowledged. An educational intervention however is intercultural: differences are brought into contact and bring about interaction (Camilleri, 1985).

REFERENCES

ALTERITY AS A KEY THEORY
FOR UNDERSTANDING AND OPTIMIZING SCHOOL INCLUSION

Johanna Sagner-Tapia

This article deals with the dialectics of diversity and school inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Students with SEN and/or disabilities have often had difficulties assimilating into standard school environments. The social theory of alterity examines this particular phenomenon. The analysis focuses on the relation between students with SEN and/or disabilities and their teachers and classmates. I will present the importance of alterity in understanding certain processes in the formation of and prejudices towards and interpretations of the Other.

As Todorov explains, the inclusion analyzes disability and presents it as otherness. This study proposes using a deconstructing model to comprehend how alterity is forged and presents how the definition of one’s own identity is determined by the presence or absence of the Other. It also describes how the attitudes and interpretation towards the Me and the Other are formed. The implication of this theory is important as the students fail to be included or the inclusion is only temporary, weak and therefore doesn’t last in many cases because of the attitudes, interpretation and values held towards the Other, in this case, the person with SEN and/or with a disability.

I propose analyzing the influence of teachers’ interpretations and attitudes as an axis for the success of inclusion. This analysis will make it possible to establish desirable alterity relations that better express what is being sought with inclusion and intercultural pedagogy. By understanding the way that certain misconceptions, prejudices and attitudes arise, researchers will be in an improved position to optimize the dialogue between teachers and children within inclusion. The proposal to use alterity within inclusion has not been made before, therefore it makes for an innovative and interesting way to reconsider diversity and the relation between the Me and the Other in schools.

Key words: alterity, inclusion, attitudes, diversity and SEN.

INTRODUCTION

It can be said that a great deal of inclusions’ theory is built around Baroness Warnock’s 1978 report. Through her report she began to talk about children’s special educational needs (SEN) (Cigman, 2007). This concept brought about two important changes. Firstly, it contradicted the assumption of homogenous pupils in a regular classroom; and secondly, it rejected the idea that there are uneducable children: instead suggesting that all children are able to be taught and to learn, but that some pupils have ordinary needs and some not. This enlightened reasoning started a new understanding of special needs and began a discussion about the role the regular school would have to assume in the future.

Inclusion questions that benefit teaching diversity in the classroom and in the regular classroom. Even though diversity (according to the inclusion theory) does not aim at any particular group, it mainly addresses children with disabilities, since these children have to leave their special schools in order to be included. Therefore, I want to concentrate on children with SEN and/or disabilities with school inclusion - where living together with the otherness takes place - as the scenario.

Much of the criticism regarding inclusion centers on the bullying and exclusion children with SEN and/or disabilities who attend regular schools with inclusion programs suffer. Warnock’s criticisms about inclusion pointed out this problem and aroused a great debate about inclusion and exclusion (see Cigman, 2007).

The problem that living with the Other presents is the relation we build around the diversity, what diversity means to us, how we get along with it and what kind of relation we forge with people that are different from us. Todorov’s (1987) alterity theory addresses these issues and proposes a method of dialogue that creates a “common life”, a life where we and the Others come to a mutual understanding, attain a common knowledge and reevaluation, and stimulate an approach that respects each other’s identities while building a mutual one.

I propose that analyzing the school members’ relation to the otherness - alterity - in the form of an inclusive dialogue is a starting point from which to build upon Todorov’s (1987) encounter in form of an inclusive dialogue.
This dialogue will allow us to recognize the needs, identities, fears and attitudes towards learning together. As a result of this process, schools will be able to design an inclusive pedagogy based on their own starting point while considering their own needs, strengths and limitations.

ASPECTS OF DIVERSITY

Over the last few years, diversity has turned into an important topic mainly because today most societies are intercultural, which has lead to the development of an approach to and an understanding and validation of diversity. This transformation, through politics such as social integration, school inclusion, and political correctness, aims at solving questions surrounding diversity and how to live in an intercultural context while seeking to promote a tolerant, respectful, inclusive common life (Schnell & Sander, 2004).

In this context, inclusive schools are an example of what macro system societies are looking for. The theory of inclusion expresses the belief in a common school in spite of the differences and similarities of its students. One of the common school’s goals is that all children have access to a quality education and learn to respect themselves and the others; inclusion is “about fitting schools to meet the needs of all their pupils” (Meijer, Pijl & Hegarty, 1997, p. 2).

To prevent exclusion though, it is important to understand what causes exclusion: bullying and excluding attitudes against children with SEN. Even when all societies agreed on the necessity of backing and supporting inclusion for the sake of a respectful, tolerant and understanding common life, exclusion continued to occur. Bullying happened between pupils in inclusive schools where they were supposed to learn to live together. Deconstructing alterity might help to construct an inclusive relation to the otherness in the way we hope. Dyson & Millward (1997, p. 64) think that inclusion’s success among school members is determined by the following factors: “The way that educational issues are understood and responded to within schools is heavily determined by their attitudes, beliefs and values”.

Increasing contact with the otherness in most modern social contexts has brought about a great number of paradigms, positive and negative, toward diversity. At its basic level, the relation to the Other – alterity– primarily seeks to maintain its own identity, and then compares itself with the Other mainly in a superior-inferior dialectic. Rousseau calls these human reactions “amour de soi” and “amour-propre” (1755, p. 368) and explains that if it was not for the social idea of concern (“l'idée de la consideration”), people would not try to find a way to live together and otherwise, would put their “amour de soi” and “amour-proper” aside (1755, p. 188). Hence, the tension between accepting and rejecting the Other is part of being a social being.

Therefore, in today’s modern society, two important analysis points arise: 1) the search for a new valuation of diversity and 2) the interest in a positive approach between “Us” and the “Others”, which means the preservation of each other’s identity and the creation of a common understanding. Alterity, from Todorov’s perspective (1987 & 1989), proposes a way to achieve both of these aims. Since living in intercultural societies has become more frequent and natural, the issue over common life or alterity has become more relevant then ever, reflecting over the valuation we give to the Others and the kind of alterity we choose, (un)consciously determines the life in common that is going to manifest within a group.

The systematic way in which Todorov deconstructs alterity allows us to analyze different social contexts and comprehend how a certain alterity –relation to one another– is built. Considering just how complex social relations are, this methodology is a great help in studying the relations as they are build and then proposing a pattern to achieve changes in attitudes and social representations. Todorov’s methodology (1987) for studying alterity is useful when it comes to understanding what makes children bully and/or exclude classmates with SEN and/or disabilities. With this methodology, we might comprehend if this way of dealing with diversity is based on values, knowing the Other or is a means of approaching the Other. In addition, using this alterity analysis methodology, we can consider the alterity the school members want to achieve and the problems they have to confront to accomplish inclusion.

School inclusion is an attempt to promote a common life, values that are also relevant in society in general and specifically when learning. However, it is not the fact that different kinds of people come together in the same place or their encounters that achieves inclusion. Instead it is the conscious willingness to make the alterity we have towards children with SEN and/or
disabilities (and theirs toward us) more inclusive. Perhaps this conscious willingness is what Rousseau called concern, which determines alterity’s nature between “Us” and “Them”. Numerous accounts in which children experienced bullying or exclusion in inclusive schools reflect the two kinds of love (amour) that Rousseau wrote about. The following example from a young, autistic man illustrates the bullying he suffered in an inclusive school: “I was often the victim of bullying and on one occasion one kid slashed the back of my hand with an art and craft knife. (...) all the other students saw this as a playground spectacle (...) If only that cut could have revealed something about me to them, so that they could begin to understand why I was different.” (Cigman 2007, p. XXVI). This episode shows the necessity of an alterity that understands the otherness.

A fundamental research question is what moves students, teachers, parents, and students with SEN and/or disabilities to build an alterity that is not at all inclusive. Uncovering the beliefs, fears, knowledge, values we have regarding others would reveal why exclusion still happens and help to understand and consider inclusion as a process (Cigman 2007). Changing alterity is a process as well, and therefore, alterity could be inclusion.

CONSTRUCTING ALTERITY

As previously stated, alterity does not itself imply the quality or kind of relation that exists between Us and the Other; it is the relation we have with one another and, according to Todorov (1987, chaper 4), it is a summation of axes (or levels). These are:

Praxiology: what we actually do to encounter the Other or what do we do when encountering the Other.

Axiology: what value we assign the Other, how do we valuate the Other; this can but does not necessarily have to be expressed in binaries (good-bad; superior-inferior, etc.).

Epistemology: what we actually know (or do not know) about the Other.

These axes can be combined in all possible ways to shape a more specific alterity relation. Todorov proposes what in his opinion may be a constructive alterity, an alterity that would promote life in common or as Todorov’s (1995, p.10) calls it, “la vie commune”: “Si l’on prend connaissance des grands courants de la pensée philosophique européenne concernant la définition de ce qui est humain, une conclusion curieuse se dégage: la dimension sociale, le fait de la vie en commun, n’est généralement pas conçue comme étant nécessaire à l’homme” (1995, p. 15). In this alterity, there is no need to comprehend inclusion as a negation of each individuality. Furthermore, the intention of maintaining and building a common life (that is, considering each other’s identity and needs), requires dialogue between Us and the Others. This dialogue should represent a connection in comprehending the Others’ identity and reconstructing each other’s identity for the life we will lead together. But to engage in a dialogue, there should be a notion of what we think, how we value and what we know about each other and about ourselves.

Still, what does it mean for us to accept the difference between us and the Others? Recognizing someone as different as compared to oneself initially implies an epistemological act: to discriminate – as a synonym for “to distinguish”. But, if that were the only step, exclusion and inclusion would not be problematic, if discriminating did not have another connotation it would not be necessary to clarify the intended meaning. The act of distinguishing (at the epistemological level) commonly coexists with the act of assigning a value to the Other (the axiological axis).

Through this simple dichotomy some characteristics gain a moral value. For example, it is “good” to be able to learn without difficulties and it is “bad” to have SEN. The moral value does not come randomly; mostly it gains importance depending on the relevance this characteristic has received within the society that these people live. “Given the social and occupational requisites for survival in early societies, some groups that we so assiduously label and classify today were not even recognized (...). Before the advent of widespread literacy, (...) mildly intellectually disabled people (...) would simply have merged into the general populace” (Winzer 1993, p. 12).

Once a characteristic has been given a moral value, it is just a matter of time until praxiology is chosen for the social relation that is going to be forged in the future with people who have that particular stigma.
How should inclusion work if it aims at acknowledging every child as equal but different as well? Accepting the differences means that one will confront one’s beliefs, attitudes, fears, desires towards the Other. It is also important to understand that inclusion is a process that can improve when the educational actors – teachers, students and parents – are willing to meet the needs of every child. On the other hand, accepting the Other’s sameness would be a negation of the Other’s identity and that would not help to achieve an inclusive alterity (even though it at first might appear that not seeing the Other’s diversity would be an acceptance of him/her). One must also consider that choosing segregation is also valid as a way of recognizing the Other’s identity and needs.

Acknowledging children with SEN and/or some other disability, implies a discriminating (discriminating in the sense of “distingguishing”) act at the epistemological level, but it should not mean that their difference has to have a negative value. Moreover, this acknowledgment is the first step in recognizing the Other’s identity. This process though, is not a task that those with no SEN and/or disability have to fulfill; it should be carried out by both parts (that is, children with and children without SEN and/or some disability), as it is needed for dialogue. This mutual knowledge of each other has to be seen as a common learning exercise, a valuation and encounter where pupils with and without SEN and/or disabilities find a point of agreement regarding their identities and their needs; where they can begin to reconstruct mutual identities and needs. This step is what Todorov calls a “dialogue” (1993), the moment when We and the Others acknowledge each other’s identities, the moment when both Parties are willing to formulate a new common identity.

School has to teach the values of inclusion and diversity, promote mutual knowledge and guide students towards a common life. This does not mean that only one side has to adapt itself so inclusion may be achieved; it means that every party that is involved in this process should take a step forward into inclusion.

CONCLUSION

Establishing alterity’s starting point in inclusive school members would be possible by analyzing the school’s alterity towards inclusion and disability. That is: the same process that identified the beliefs, values, knowledge and approaches school members share towards people with SEN and/or disabilities is valid for children with SEN and/or disabilities and their families regarding the inclusive school’s teachers and classmates and their families.

This analysis would also permit identifying those attitudes, social representations and experiences that might strengthen or discourage the inclusion process. This mapping can be used as a self-reflection within schools allowing students and teachers to confront their own difficulties and strengths regarding inclusive learning. Every school could potentially find better ways to delve into the inclusion process as well as discover that maybe not every student with SEN and/or disabilities feels comfortable in an inclusive school (Low 2007 and Moore 2007). One of inclusion’s problems lies in the belief that the school must be a school for all instead of that it could be a school for all. When we understand inclusion as a construction from a more inclusive alterity, we also have to consider that this is likewise, a process not everyone is quite ready for, that this dialogue process might take time; but also that as a process, it should be supported and stimulated, never rushed. We have to learn living together just as we have to learn if living together means the same for everyone.

I think that the study of alterity processes will be a good instrument to stimulate a reflection over inclusion and diversity, to realize that many prejudices or excluding attitudes are not even conscious, and that these prejudices and excluding attitudes can be changed through alterity. This proposal is not a fast solution for schools where bullying exists, but I do believe that reflecting at a profound level on One’s alterity could bring positive changes to the school, in the school members’ attitudes and the relation to the Other; and might help a school determine whether it is capable of succeeding at the task of integrating.

Finally, I think that teachers who are more conscious about alterity could reinforce the changes I mentioned before in a more effective way, so that inclusion can be a topic taught in class.
REFERENCES


II. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES
Multiculturalism is still a «problem» when we find ourselves in the area of «interculturalism» where many interactions are in a play in the area of social and cultural diversity. Identity, traditions, customs, symbols, religion and ... not least the different languages are defining the space of encounters that is the social space of multiculturalism. Theoretically conceived coexistence of cultures and projections of policies of diversity collide with the question of transmission of the above mentioned concepts in the realm of the everyday lives of people. Education and training are of course crucial as it is well demonstrated in a series of documents of such international organizations as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and several non-governmental organizations. The study LACE (Languages and Cultures in Europe), which was carried out in 2007 for the European Commission's Directorate for multilingualism, we started from the perception that education can fulfil at least a part of the expectations, if it focuses concretely on the development of abilities, skills and, above all, intercultural competences of pupils. It probably does not need to be argued extensively that teaching a foreign language is one of the most important levers for the creation of these skills. In a survey of the first foreign language teaching in 13 European countries at the level of compulsory education (ISCED levels 1 and 2) we found that all possibilities are in general not enough exploited, and that a developing of intercultural skills in curriculum and in intercurricular links is surprisingly only embryonic.

Key words: interculturalism, competence, education, foreign language

A complex notion of multiculturalism marks social spaces as we could say with Bourdeieu (Bourdieu, 1997), in which unavoidably intercultural connections happen. Broadly, we can state that a scientific conceptualisation of the notion, as well as many empirical studies of the phenomena in the realm of multiculturalism, progressed a lot from the first “naive” attempts to define the notion. Literature, published in the last few decades is abundant. For example, quite recent SAGE Handbook (Joy, Mesha, Gordon, 2008) addresses multiculturalism and children by studying traditional agents of socialization as well as contemporary media influences. Contributors to the book try to find out how socialisation practices and media content construct and teach us about diverse cultures. Another compendium (Zieberts, H.-G., Kay, W. K., 2009) puts a stress on religion as an agency of socialisation in the multicultural world as it is visible in Europe. On the other hand, there were also some attempts of repudiating the concept and shed – to put it mildly – different light on the phenomena of multiculturalism itself as a presumably “leftist” or even “Marxist” construction (Schmidt, 1997). Without citing further references, one can remember many public activities of NGOs and some intergovernmental organisations, which one way or the other reacted, commented, devised plans of action, etc. to address various contexts of multiculturalism. Such organisations often devise legal, social and political solutions for many problems, which happen to be perceived as having their roots in an expansion of multiculturalism. Therefore, multiculturalism seems still to be a “problem,” when we find ourselves in the area of “interculturalism,” where many interactions are in a play in the sphere of social and cultural diversity. Identity, traditions, customs, symbols, religion and, last but really not least, different languages are defining the space of encounters, which is the social space of multiculturalism. Education and training as agencies of linking actors in this space are of course crucial, as it is well demonstrated in a series of documents of such international organizations as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and several NGOs.

CONCEPTS AND PRAXIS

The complexities, mentioned above, are of course reflected in many theoretical and/or pragmatic philosophical contributions. They may well serve the purpose of formulating concepts for usage in structuring social practice, which tackles cultural diversity. According to Gadamer, as Roy and Starosta comment, human activities cannot be discerned without taking into ac-
count their impacts upon each other. Therefore a research of intercultural communication on the bases of Gadamer’s notion of praxis should generate more than just knowledge. It should rely on the moral ground as well. (Roy, Starosta. 2001: 13) Of course, we know that any theoretical construction of coexistence of cultures and any projections of politics of difference (and diversity) encounter many obstacles, when an answer to a question how to implement the concepts in a sphere of daily life of people must be given. As much as there is a lot of evidence on many disappointing effects, there is still no better suited activity for the purpose than education; in any case much better than repression and persecution.

On some fundamental level (philosophical or other in human sciences) the importance of education and/or training can be defined in the framework of the notion of Bildung, whose signification Gadamer linked to the notion of praxis. “The concept of self-formation, education or cultivation (Bildung), which became supremely important at the time, was perhaps the greatest idea of the eighteenth century.” (Gadamer, 1975: 8) This clearly means that in Gadamer’s view one cannot conceive in the realm of praxis any correlation of Bildung in the social reality without education. Further on, Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory puts forward a view on humanity as being founded on language as the ontological basis. The above cited authors (Roy, Starosta. 2001: 9) also claim that for Gadamer language represents much more than just means to attain an aim, since the language defines who a person is and what he or she about to become. What follows from this, it is the obvious link between the determination of very being of humans by language and the activity of education, which most certainly decisively affects cultural relationships. Therefore, this link also represents a constitutive aspect in the field of interculturalism.

Undoubtedly, we could elaborate further from these starting points some wider theory on the phenomenon of interculturalism. However, I don’t follow such an ambitious aim in this presentation. I shall actually present contours of an international research under the title LACE (Languages and Cultures in Europe), which was built on these and some more closely defined theories with an objective to deliver some evidence to form a basis for devising appropriate policies in the European multilingual space. Especially foreign language instruction (of course, presupposing also learning about a mother tongue) is, even in a most elementary form, unavoidably an education in interculturalism, considering the circumstances of growing intercultural interactions in the framework of globalising tendencies. Taking into account this fact and building upon it so that elements of interculturalism are interlaced with a curriculum – in its methods as well as in its contents – we are on the way to construct the intercultural education. Of course, teachers should be properly educated for the task. They should acquire knowledge on multi- and inter-culturalism and they should be informed about the state of the art teaching methods as well as they should have at their disposal an array of didactic means. Such needs and aims are visible in a number of documents of such international organisations as Council of Europe and UNESCO, and one should not forget NGOs in the field of education too.

LACE STUDY


What follows in this section of this paper summarises only some aspects of the study. To enhance readability, these summarisations are given without specific quoting of the Report, which anyone can consult in detail on-line on the above mentioned internet site.

The primary specific objective of the study was to identify and assess the nature, scope and extent of intercultural competence currently developed in foreign language education at each of the main stages of compulsory education (understood here as ISCED 1 and ISCED 2) in selected countries of the European Union [Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, UK (England)] and the European Economic Area (Norway). To generate the review, a sophisticated analysis tool was developed to assess the provisions and objectives prescribed by the curricula under review. The analysis tool was applied to the original
documents (not translations) by local experts working in the countries investigated. The data collected was evaluated by the Steering Committee. A review created a picture across the countries investigated and also allowed a certain degree of careful comparison. The tool analysed the curricular objectives (and didactic and methodological approaches) according to three conceptualisations or models of intercultural competence or, more precisely, models of the sub-competence.

These three conceptualisations comprised theories by Michael Byram, Chen and Starosta as well as the document of Council of Europe COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK concerning foreign language teaching. These three conceptualisations provided slightly different focuses of analysis. Since the main features of the “models” of intercultural competence are broadly quite similar, we are here giving an outline of only one (Byram’s model) to illustrate what the country experts had to look for in their curricula. The analysis tool also collated data referring to didactic and methodological approaches.

**BYRAML’S INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES**

1. **Linguistic Competence**
   - the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language

2. **Sociolinguistic Competence**
   - the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor

3. **Discourse Competence**
   - the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes

4. Intercultural Competence, comprising

4.1 Knowledge (Savoirs)
   - knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general process of societal and individual interaction

4.2 Discovery & Interaction (Savoir apprendre)
   - the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction

4.3 Attitudes (Savoir être)
   - curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own

4.4 Interpreting & Relating (Savoir comprendre)
   - the ability to interpret a document or events from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own

4.5 Critical Awareness (Savoir s’engager)
   - the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries

Analysis of national curricula with the tool basically provided findings, which were then processed by the steering committee of the project.

**FINDINGS: RELEVANCE OF CURRENT CURRICULA**

- There is some but not complete overlap with the elements of the three models of intercultural competence underlying the curricula reviewed in this study. The curricula demonstrate a tendency to emphasise linguistic competence and communication skills at the expense of intercultural competence.
- The curriculum review undertaken with the analysis tool makes
clear that when intercultural competence is a focus of the curricula it tends to concern knowledge and attitudes rather than behaviour.

• It can be said that in many cases the curricula are only partially relevant to the optimum

• Effectiveness of current curricula: Intercultural competence objectives may be described in the curricula in such general terms that it is difficult for teachers to imagine what they may mean and, more significantly, how these objectives can be put into practice in the language classroom. Greater clarity and detail are necessary in the formulation of objectives in the area of intercultural competence development.

APPROACHES ACTUALLY USED IN THE CLASSROOM

To gain further data an online survey was conducted of 213 foreign language teachers in primary and lower secondary education. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected, which were evaluated by the Steering Committee. Experiences of teachers developing intercultural competence in foreign language education were also researched through telephone interviews, which were conducted in Danish, English, Flemish, French, and German with 78 teachers. 34 of them are teaching in primary and 54 of them in lower secondary education.

Final output was achieved by an assessment by the Steering Committee of all the data collected. On the basis of all findings the research team – apart from specific national reports and other information and explanations – also produced Recommendations for two relevant levels of policy making in education systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

The research team concludes from the study’s findings that, as a matter of principle, the teaching of foreign languages can be enhanced by the proper promotion of intercultural competence alongside linguistic skills. To pursue this aim, certain steps can best be taken at the European level. They concern the areas of strategy on the one hand and mobility, professional development and teaching resources on the other. The following summarises the recommendations made by the authors of the study at this level:

• make intercultural competence development alongside foreign language learning a key feature of a new framework strategy for multilingualism;

• support intercultural competence development in language learning as a means of enhancing, also in lower secondary education, practical business-related skills for relationships both within the EU and with extra-European cultures, in pursuit of the aims of the Lisbon Agenda;

• focus on intercultural competence development alongside linguistic skills as a priority, where appropriate, in the next general call for proposals under the Life Long Learning programme;

• establish and fund an international, multi-disciplinary group of experts to establish a framework of performance indicators which describe attainment levels of intercultural competence and to develop methods of assessing intercultural competence in the language classroom;

• support awareness-raising in the area of intercultural competence for officials, educational policymakers and decision-makers, foreign-language educators and other key multipliers at the European and national level: this would assist in creating an underlying and proper appreciation of the nature of intercultural competence, how it can be developed and how it complements European language policy;

• support research into the nature of intercultural competence and into approaches to developing and assessing it in school settings, specifically foreign language learning;

• increase funding for international teacher mobility, teacher exchanges, school partnerships, school exchanges and visits, and simplified procedures;

• support (1) the development and operation of an EU-wide face-to-face and virtual network of experts and practitioners in the teaching of intercultural competence in the context of foreign language learning, and (2) the development and operation of an EU-wide multilingual, Internet-based intercultural competence development resource bank.
Other steps can best be taken at the Member State level. These cover the areas of strategy and administration, initial teacher education, professional development of teachers, curriculum design (including assessment) and teaching and learning resources. The following summarises the recommendations made by the authors of the study:

- fund research into intercultural competence linked to foreign language learning;
- promote understanding, among foreign-language educators, curriculum designers and other key multipliers, of the nature of intercultural competence and its development;
- promote and fund teacher and pupil mobility measures;
- improve initial teacher education to give greater emphasis to intercultural competence and its development;
- promote and fund professional development courses and in-service training for foreign language teachers;
- improve the design of foreign language curricula to include clearer and more detailed specification of objectives, descriptions of didactic and methodological approaches and methods of assessment;
- Support the development and provision of teaching and learning resources for language teachers; support and fund professional development for those developing such materials.

**CONCLUSION**

The following concluding comments are sole responsibility of the author of this paper and not of the whole LACE project team. The findings of LACE project – no matter how relatively modest it was especially in its empirical component due to limited budget – draw attention to a discrepancy between declarations on international level and “real life” on micro levels. As we all know, the educational goals concerning a formation of intercultural competence are more than desirable on the international level. However, in view of what was generally found out about the first foreign language curriculum in the countries involved in the project, some goals are included in the foreign language curriculum, but the situation is bleaker on the level of inter-curricular contents. Of course, a detailed assessment of the results in each particular country shows significant differences between countries, but the main aim of the project was not any ranking of countries. The recommendations, therefore, constitute a ground for comparisons and further reflection on possible improvements. Results of the LACE project, which we presented here in a rather condensed way, point towards attainable effects in the development of intercultural competence in practice of foreign language teaching.

There cannot be doubt about it, that foreign language teaching represents probably the most important part of a formation of intercultural competence of pupils. Such a view isn’t, of course, any original discovery of the LACE project, but it represents also knowledge of those social sciences and humanities, which deal with reproduction of cultures. On the other hand, it wouldn’t be enough to rely only on foreign language teaching in education for the purpose of deepening tolerance and mutual understanding between cultures in already more or less multicultural European societies. Both on the European level and on national levels the notion of intercultural competence requires further refining, especially in the educational context. As it also follows from answers of teachers on-line and in telephone interviews, it is strategically important, to include knowledge and understanding of intercultural competence in teacher education colleges as well as in in-service teacher education. An increasing amount of scientifically founded knowledge requires an appropriate “translation” for the needs of educational discourse.

It is quite a bit worrying that in most countries one can find traces of ethnocentrism in the curriculum. As, for instance, in the Slovenian case, the situation is critical especially in view of inter-curricular contents, since a bulk of other curricula – except to an extent the citizen education – put a stress on a development of the national identity without even mentioning the intercultural aspect. It goes without saying that intercultural competence (or
whatever in the same sense) is absent from these curricula. In Slovenia and elsewhere politics can be blamed for this. This means that in most countries governments’ ministries don’t pay enough attention to European standards and trends. However, one must admit that the European politics in this field is still a work in progress. At the same time many political parties, both in “new” and “traditional” democracies, confronting populism and propagation of fear of foreigners and cultural minorities, do not really feel like promoting any decisions to strengthen interculturalism. Of course, this is another topic, which requires a strong involvement of social studies and humanities. As we know, many teachers of citizenship education and related “sensitive” syllabus (like history, geography, etc.) feel some tension in the classroom due to such political atmosphere. We can only hope that many benefits and advantages, which better developed interculturalism would certainly contribute to the social and economic development, are becoming more and more visible. And there is increasing evidence that intercultural competence enables individuals’ fuller and more creative life in the European multicultural communities.

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This paper proposes a reflection on promoting intercultural competences within lifelong learning in our current, ever-changing society and, in particular, in the widening context of the European Union. Starting from the experience gained within a European Intensive Programme aimed at developing intercultural competences in three professional fields – Education, Social Work and Health Care – the paper is particularly focused on some innovative learning strategies implemented during this pilot experience. Among these were enhancing social skills (assumed as transversal skills to professions), in particular by bridging formal and informal learning; encouraging reflection as a privileged tool for reworking experience, activating transformative processes in learning and increasing cultural awareness; creating educational situations based on mobility and focused on direct experience of difference, so that these situations themselves become occasions for enlarging and diversifying one’s own social capital as a presupposition for developing a more flexible mindset and intercultural sensitivity.

**Keywords:** intercultural competences; reflexivity; transformative learning; formal/informal learning; bridging social capital

Building intercultural competences as a key element in personal and professional fulfillment is the main goal of an educational system that aims at being trans-national and that fits the complexity and cultural discontinuity that characterize the present times. Rapid shifting of European Union borders and, consequently, the need to fit the needs of ever more different national political and educational systems pose a new challenge to Europe: to tune the emerging *disjunctural* ethnoscapes and the new cultural-settings which operate in a context that has become increasingly trans-national.

**INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Intercultural competence has been conceived as a key competence, transversal to most professional contexts, developed by implementing abilities in contextualising and managing encounters with others. A good definition of intercultural competence is the *culturally-aware* mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, enabling individuals to cope with unfamiliar and ever changing problems arising from encounters with people socialized in a different culture, in order to find new and shared solutions (Bednarz – Onorati, 2010; Onorati 2010: 210).
According to a holistic understanding of human learning (Illeris, 2005; Jarvis 2009), intercultural competence has to be conceived of as a complex process, nurtured by experiences, emotions and critical reflections. Consequently, it can be adequately developed only within a multidisciplinary framework in which the three dimensions – cognitive, psychological and social – always present and interlacing with each other in any learning experience of human life, are taken into account and constantly promoted in learning activities. Just as happens in life, intercultural dynamics and relations are “situated” processes, and in order to learn to manage them in an appropriate and competent way (what we called “intercultural competency”, see also Lave and Wenger, 1991), knowledge (content), incentive (psychological, emotional) and interactive (relational and social) dimensions of learning should be involved and valued simultaneously in an educational perspective.

Even if learning typologies and methodologies can vary according to the context and the individual learning styles, educational pathways aimed at enhancing intercultural awareness and skills should always move from lived experiences, thus enabling reflection, helping individuals in questioning their mental frames and behaviors, fostering rational elaboration of emotions and fixing of learning achievements.

Building intercultural competences represents a challenge in any educational setting, as higher education uses to draw on cumulative and assimilative learning approaches. As far as intercultural competency is based on our capability to manage human relationships effectively, recognizing the mutual influence of cultural/mental frames, and of social representations, in defining the way in which we cope with diversity, it implies the activation of accommodative, and above all, transformative learning processes. Intercultural encounters provoke our interpretative schemes, requiring us to adopt new perspectives, by being open to new concepts and ideas in our mental frames.

Being interculturally competent means being able to relate to and communicate with people from different cultural environments, presuming social representations and schemes far apart from ours. This implies both accommodative learning, requiring deconstruction and reconstruction of habitual mental frames in order to open the doors to diversity, and transformative learning, necessary when events and encounters question not only habitual strategies or beliefs, but even values. A triple learning loop (deutero learning process), including a profound reflection on our mental and learning schemes, is one of the main chores of intercultural education, particularly implemented in the ICIC Intensive Programme, from which we draw a conclusion. In other words, building intercultural competence is a process highly dependent on actual experiences, mental openness and reflection, starting from relevant and unexpected challenges deriving from our interaction with others. It depends on what we are able to “do” with our experiences, critically reflecting on them, on the basis of knowledge and theoretical schemes revealing to us the nature and meaning of intercultural encounters and their dynamics. By valuing cognitive dissonances of disjuncture (Jarvis, 2006) produced by the conflict between beliefs and actual events, between espoused and practiced values, reflective practice allows the development of awareness of the cultural filters that affect our representation of reality.

Recognizing the specificity of an intercultural encounter through reflection, gaining awareness of the underpinning dynamics and finding a way to cope with the situation are milestones in the transformative learning pathway leading to intercultural competency. Educational settings have to be planned; they shift from traditional academic paths, centered on deductive learning processes, as well as on normative contents and knowledge, towards more inductive approaches, based on inferential processes of rule construction which are at the basis of complex competence building processes.

Learners’ commitment and motivation have a central function in enabling meaningful learning, as well as only reflection enables experiential learning. Firstly, learners are asked to play an active role and therefore incentive dimensions (sense making) have to be put at the center of the learning process. Commitment and motivation ought to be pursued by accommodative efforts, involving personal biographies, in order to facilitate the acquisition of relevant new knowledge. Curiosity, reflection, as well as social capital and mental openness are fundamental triggers of learning, and they should be carefully supported by didactical choices. On the other hand, focusing on
actual experiences doesn’t mean renouncing theoretical inputs and learning structures. Experience doesn’t automatically produce knowledge, or at least consistent knowledge: only reflection - consisting in looking back, thinking about what happened, producing a “narrative” of it at first - may give rise to learning. Such a process requires detection of salient events properly found in recent and distant memories, that can be only valued through reflection (Jedlowsky, 2005). Reflection enriches intercultural education developed in the framework of a formal learning pathway with fundamental inputs deriving from informal learning mechanisms, fed by individual and collective (social) experiences and encounters.

**REFLECTIVE PRACTICES AND TOOLS**

In an academic environment, experiential learning can be properly enhanced using appropriate didactical structures and tools. Theoretical inputs can, for instance, be effectively merged and accommodated with existing knowledge and schemes using concept maps; a teaching strategy aiming at facilitating cognitive actions such as scaffolding, sense-making, synthesizing, schematizing, by linking different domains of knowledge and evaluating them in order to develop meaningful learning. Starting from Ausubel’s concept of assimilation, concept maps can be used in the perspective of transformative learning, developing active and creative skills to link known and unknown topics and to construct knowledge via management of information and its representation. Being both a visual representation and a social experience, as well as a cultural medium and a shared transcultural language, concept maps are elective tools of intercultural learning, particularly capable of developing a stage of mindset that Bennett calls “integration”. They promote reflection and contribute to enhancing collaborative methodology especially in distance learning, thus becoming basic didactical devices of an intensive programme on an international level.

Immersing ourselves in actual experiences, living conflicts emerging from the clash of differences, proves to be a key source for the learning process. Experiential learning is not something which occurs automatically. It can produce different outcomes, from poor ones, close to non-learning, defined by the mere accumulation of facts, figures and events in our biographies, to non-reflective learning, reinforcing individuals to some extent but leaving them fundamentally unchanged, to reflective learning, characterized by our capability to integrate and adapt inputs derived from experiences, in an effective way in our mental and cognitive schemes. Experiential learning implies reflection on experiences, and a certain capability to verbalise facts, question behaviours, critically analysing espoused and practised values in a critical way. Reflection on biographies and life events is a fundamental asset that should be constantly valued within educational paths, especially those concerned with intercultural competences, so as to open minds and promote encounters with diverse identities. Biographical reflection favours mental coherence, especially in those unsafe and uncertain contexts where such coherence is soundly questioned, and activates processes of accommodative and transformative learning.

Reflection is not an easy task to accomplish, above all in traditional academic settings. Apart from any discussion concerning the complex nature of reflection, our experience shows how difficult, but effective, a reflective task can be in developing intercultural sensitivity, and thus intercultural competency. Reflective attitudes, strongly influenced by the different individual reflective “capabilities” which rely on the different educational and social backgrounds (more or less supportive) which characterize each country, have to be promoted and nurtured by proper means in learning processes. Learning Diaries and Journals provide learners with relevant help in consolidating achievements deriving from experience and reflection. Diaries respect individual learning styles and timing, enabling reflection that normally departs from rigid and fully structured sequential processes. The ICIC learning experience highlights the importance of Diaries and other activators in fostering reflection. In the perspective of a structured accompaniment, aiming at facilitating competence building processes, reflective practice activated by debriefing sessions and tutoring also play an important role, especially in managing the problematic group dynamics of the complex social/relational dimension created by the course. Moreover, challenging questions and dilemmas also prove to be activators of effective memorization. Moving between individual and social dimensions, reflective
strategies and tools, such as diaries, debriefing sessions, tutoring, and the unique opportunity of experiencing intercultural dynamics in group activities, pave the way to meaningful learning and enhance the lifelong learning attitudes of the students.

SOCIALITY AS A SOURCE FOR LEARNING

Sociality works as a raw material for empowerment in learning and self-production within intercultural education. With the word sociality we mean students’ social capital; that is the background of informal sociality which, according to its characteristics (frequency and density of intercultural relationship acquired in the past), may open or lock the order of reciprocity and trust in interpersonal relationships (Putnam, 2000), thus facilitating or hampering the adoption of a “bridging” approach to the challenges posed by intercultural situations.

Sociality as background social capital is particularly valued by this kind of educational intensive programme promoted by the EU, and based on mobility abroad and intensive contact education. In fact, by gathering students from different European Countries, any intensive programme and the ICIC in particular, creates a multi-ethnic, multi-professional and multicultural learning situation. The learning context becomes therefore a problematic field of interaction in Goffmann’s meaning of the word, by regarding students critical mode of interaction within the international course in terms of “subjective cultures” at stake, in which practical habits and common sense are questioned by a problematic situation that may even cause misunderstanding leading to miscommunication. The learning situation created by the course takes the shape of a “situational social occasion”; in which the grouping of individuals and their interpersonal interaction is strictly dependent on the social structure and the communicative conditions prevailing in it (Goffman, 1971: 19-24). The peculiarity of this situation is that the usual practical reasonings of common sense and the related order of interaction with its bonding moral standards, are completely undermined. In that situation all participants, even the autochthonous ones, are “strangers” as the basic assumptions underlying “thinking-as-usual” cease, and

the cultural pattern no longer functions as a system of tested recipes at hand (Schütz, 1976: 95-96).

The effects of estrangement may become disjunctural occasions for new learning, which affect students’ achievements as, in Bennett’s perspective (1993 and 2002), the different reactions they provoke in the participants account for different stages of their inter/cultural sensitivity, that prove in turn, to be differentiated according to their social capitals and their personal experiences of difference. The nature of background experiences, that is “bonding” or “bridging” social capital, proves to play a role in the different stages of intercultural sensitivity achieved by students throughout the learning pathway (Onorati, 2010: 214)

As pointed out by Hellievel and Putnam, (2007) there is a close relationship between education and social capital, insomuch as education increases tolerance and social trust, and thereby it can be a powerful lever in the development of a diversified sociality. In turn, the nature of social capital, owing to its informal and diversified components, influences successful education (Putnam, 2004: 357-369). This means that “bridging” social capital, which creates ties which pass through different social layers and enables individuals to network within heterogeneous groups and to connect and become cooperative with people from a different life background (Putnam, 2004: 20-22), is positively correlated to education, especially to lifelong education focused on adults’ transversal competences and useful in professions.

Even though the ties created by bridging social capital are fragile, they are more outgroup-oriented and more likely to foster social inclusion, as well as cultural and scientific innovation, as they “are exactly the sort of ties that lead to complex role sets and the need for cognitive flexibility” (Granovetter, 1983: 204).

As also clearly emerged from the ICIC experience, a learning programme based on mobility abroad, the weak but diversified ties of participants’ bridging background (previous experiences abroad, networks including foreign people, etc.…. ) proved to be particularly valuable in developing intercultural competences as they make students more interculturally sensitive and open to unfamiliar factors of disjuncture. As a result of a cluster
analysis we conducted on students’ feedback, social background acted as a clustering factor of their learning achievements mainly considered in terms of evaluative skills. In particular, the 4 emerging clusters differ according to the following aspects: previous experiences of sociality abroad, different disposition to issues concerned with managing non-familiar situations, different degree of tolerance of ambiguity, with different effects on the whole evaluation of the Programme and satisfaction. ICIC students showed enhanced reflective skills and a higher identity flexibility in terms of curiosity, openness to disjunction and capability of integration of new and unexpected elements of knowledge coming from daily experience of difference. This was especially evident in work where groups were mixed up; a didactical strategy aimed at fostering constructive marginality, perceived as a positive challenge by students with an initial bridging social capital. In fact all learning activities were conducted in small groups that changed every time a new activity started. Working in small, ever-changing groups is a good strategy for developing intercultural competences, as it compels individuals to continuously renegotiate their roles and finally to remain in a marginal position in peer group interaction. Communication difficulties and cultural shock arising from the mixing up of students was felt as a frustrating situation by more anxious students, at their first experience of difference, and an occasion for empowerment by less anxious one, more used to confronting multicultural situations. In the end, this condition, that tests social skills to the maximum, becomes a competence in itself that allows participants to enhance their role flexibility. Acknowledging the learning potential of such mixing accounts for a mindset capable of a relational and contextualized knowledge.

Curiosity, adaptation, reflexivity enhanced by the nature of social capital may be assumed as fundamental triggers of learning, that make learners more active, participative and capable of more reflexive and less emotional evaluations and reactions to the feeling of estrangement inevitably caused by the problematic interaction created by the Intensive programme.

**VALUING INFORMAL LEARNING IN A FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SETTING**

According to the received feedback, we can say that achievements that may be gained during intercultural learning vary according to participants’ social capitals and previous personal experiences of difference.

In fact, along with mobility, one of the innovative factors implemented by the ICIC learning pathway that may represent a pivotal element of intercultural education, is the unprecedented combination of formal and informal learning, assumed to be a crucial condition for successful lifelong learning. In fact, the ICIC, like any Intensive Programme, consists of a formal educational pathway, embedded in a setting that informally produces its object of study, that is a multicultural situation in which living together and sharing processes among people of different nationalities are the conditions for achieving well-defined educational goals, something that compels the participants to activate intercultural dynamics.

Any Intensive Programme, and ICIC in particular, as being an intensive educational face-to-face educational pathway shared by institutions belonging to different Countries, creates a multi-ethnic, multi-professional and multicultural context that works, as already remarked on before, as a problematic field of interaction. In fact, the international learning context transforms students’ critical mode of interaction within the course into what we can name as “subjective cultures”; that is “the cultural group’s characteristic ways of perceiving its social environment” (Triandis, 1972: 3) that affect the mobilization of resources necessary for the development of skills and competences.

The informal situation of intensive proximity and socialization, such as the one created by an Intensive Programme, may bring to light unsuspected forms of diffused racism (“infra-racism”, see Wiewiorka, 1991) as practical habits and common sense are questioned by a problematic situation of misunderstanding leading to miscommunication. The effects of estrangement are regarded as disjunctural occasions for new learning, which in Bennett’s perspective, account for different intercultural stages of the participants’ sensitivity (Bennett 1993 and 2003), that, as we have just remarked, prove
in turn to be differentiated according to their social capitals and their personal experiences of difference.

Bridging formal and informal learning means integrating theoretical inputs in action. Models and theories provide lenses that may frame experiences. Valuing reflection and conceptual frames, experiences, in the form of salient events, can be reworked, improved and transferred to different contexts. If considered in the perspective of emphasizing the social nature of learning by developing an educational model based on mobility, full immersion and direct experience of difference, such a combination between formal and informal learning may work as an effective trigger for developing transformative skills to cope with unfamiliar elements, and finally as an unprecedented occasion for encouraging bridging sociality.

CONCLUSIONS

The experience gained within the ICIC Intensive Programme is a powerful example of an innovative approach to continuous education, especially in the field of intercultural competences. In fact the learning experience presented in this paper starts from a holistic understanding of competency, according to which human relationships at the centre of learning process and, consequently, social context and culture (values) are treated and valued as integral parts of this process, as well as relational skills are approached as key components of any professional competency.

The innovative elements at the basis of the educational framework within which we conceived building intercultural competences are amply discussed in the book Building Intercultural Competences edited by Onorati and Bednarz (2010) and can be summarized as follows:

1. valuing experiential knowledge through methodologies that combine formal (LLP European Programs of mobility), non-formal (simulation, role plays, ethnographic field work) and informal learning (socialization, full immersion, mobility);

2. promoting transformative learning; that is active and creative skills able to link known and unknown elements drawn from experience and to construct new knowledge;

3. encouraging reflexivity as a meta-cognitive ability to reframe experience into a modeling, conceptual understanding that makes new knowledge gained from experience transferable to other contexts;

4. tuning between higher educational approaches (university/vocational education), between curricula, methodologies, cultures, social and personal backgrounds

5. fostering an educational model that enhances individuals’ social capitals by working itself as an occasion for a bridging kind of sociality.

These points are crucial in the development an educational model able to value the social axis of education and promote educational models that themselves become occasions for enhancing a bridging sociality, which is the cipher of our times.

ICIC learning experience is an attempt to reply to the European challenge by starting a process of gap-filling and fine-tuning between the different educational systems in different countries, in order to pave the way to a European, trans-national model of education, relying on a set of life skills necessary for different professions, especially those centred on the person, thus making learning not only life long, but also “life wide” (Jarvis: 2007), as demanded by our ever-changing society.
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IN THE NAME OF CULTURE, BUT DON’T FORGET THE INDIVIDUAL!

On intercultural dialogue and human rights

Nina Vodopivec

As a social anthropologist and an activist in an NGO for human rights in Slovenia, I will in my paper deal with ideas, notions and understanding of intercultural, human rights, diversity, development and democracy addressed by social anthropology, and simultaneously present the program of intercultural and development education at Humanitas – Society for Human Rights and Supportive Actions.

Intercultural communication/dialogue is about diversity. It aims to acknowledge differences and recognize similarities, identify and deconstruct stereotypes and question boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, i.e. majorities and minorities. Self-reflection upon our own attitudes to the people we perceive as different is an important part of the process. Intercultural dialogue promotes the fight for human rights and against various forms of social exclusion, thus it is very important to reconsider who takes part in it and who is left out.

The idea of the workshops is not only to introduce new topics and learn about various ways of life, but also rethink or scrutinize our views and attitudes towards differences. At Humanitas, we present intercultural communication within global education, thus intercultural dialogue is addressed globally and not limited to EU borders. I will explain here how we define and understand ‘intercultural’ within global education, and in particular point out what I consider important and why.

DEFINING “INTERCULTURAL”

‘Intercultural’ is to acknowledge differences and recognize similarities between people, to identify and deconstruct stereotypes and question boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, i.e. majorities and minorities. A very
important part of the process is self-reflection, reflection on our own views and attitudes towards individuals whom we perceive as different. Due to the fact that intercultural dialogue promotes the fight for human rights as well as against various forms of social exclusion, it is very important to reconsider who takes part in it and who is left out.

First, we have mentioned diversity and how important it is to acknowledge and enable individuals their rights to express (their) differences. As we grow up in different socio-political environments, different symbolic systems and worlds of valuations, our understandings cannot be universal. Not every thing works the way we believe here and now.

There are several topics to consider when speaking about cultural differences in the field of dance, music, culinary, jokes, riddles, literature, norms, values, ways of communication (verbal and non-verbal) etc. Yet, there are also other differences, not so obvious, not so apparent, at least not at first sight. Whether being aware of it or not, in everyday life we may quickly end up imposing our own interpretations, values and attitudes on others. This in particular happens with things we perceive as “natural”. While growing up we internalize social ideas about what is ‘natural’, ‘normal’ and ‘correct’. What seems self-evident and natural to me is not natural to a Breton from France or a person from a mountain village in Guatemala, or even to someone born in 1920 living in another part of Slovenia. Namely, we have to consider generational and regional differences too. Intercultural dialogue is not only about establishing communication between individuals from different countries, nations or religions, but it is also about different generations, gender or social positions, etc. Rethinking ‘the obvious’, ‘normal’, ‘correct’ manners and attitudes is of particular significance when we try to understand differences and make sense of who we are.

I consider self-reflection one of the most important aspects of intercultural dialogue as well as a key factor that prevents confusing ‘intercultural’ and ‘multicultural’ which is often the case. The difference between both terms is not only an issue of cosmetic makeover.

There is a very relevant difference between the two: whilst ‘multicultural’ emphasizes the coexistence of different cultures but does not include connections between them (meaning people living together but not interacting), ‘intercultural dialogue’ pays particular attention to these relations. The very words ‘inter and ‘dialogue’ denote mutual relations.

Multinational cooperation is definitely not an example of intercultural dialogue despite there being people from different countries working together: for example from Germany, China, the Philippines or Slovenia. The main interest of multinational cooperation is profit. Numerous NGOs, activists and researchers revealed inhuman working conditions and relations in some of these co-operations, highlighting exploitation of workers, as well as natural resources and the local population. The idea of intercultural dialogue should focus our attention right on these very problems, open up another perspective, reveal power relations, exploitation, individuals’ positions, and people’s stories hidden behind fancy logos and brands. By referring to ideas of intercultural dialogue we should, in our workshops or classes, reveal these multiple voices, this polyphony, which usually remains hidden behind the one, most powerful and dominant voice. The mere presence of individuals from different countries does not create intercultural dialogue. Such dialogue still has to be established.

By addressing ‘inter’ or ‘multicultural’, we refer to different understandings of culture. In the case of a multinational company – including Chinese, Slovene, Ukrainian, etc. – we think of cultures as enclosed homogenous entities. But focusing on interrelations, intercultural presents a different understanding of culture and enables us to see how our cultures are shaped in interaction; not in isolation but in contacts with each other. Namely, in contacts and relations with others we not only learn about ‘who the others are’ but also ‘who we are’. The knowledge of who we are is not inscribed in our genes, but constructed through contacts with each other.

Once a teacher asked me whether I find it important for a child first to learn about their own culture (local and national) and then about others. Even though I agree with a learning principle based on what is familiar and already well known to a child, I stand for the idea that learning about ‘us’ is not (or it should not be) excluded but intertwined with learning about ‘others’.
CULTURE

Culture is often treated as something obvious. Yet, it is not so simple. Generations of anthropologists tried to explain and define culture as a way of life, modes of thinking, etc., and the concept constantly changed. The popular belief is that a group is defined by a distinctive culture and that cultures are discrete, clearly defined and internally homogenous entities featuring fixed meanings and values. This view – which for some time has also been echoed in anthropology – is called essentialist. Here I don't try to state my own definition, however, I point out the importance of not treating culture as homogenous, static and fixed.

We are all too much involved in thinking of cultures (geographically) in term of borders on maps. Within such contexts, slogans such as ‘bridging cultures’ are issued to promote intercultural dialogue. These slogans have a clear mission: a bridge is supposed to connect two worlds as if they were separated: “you are French and I am Slovene”, as the world was a mosaic of separate and distinct billiard balls (Wolf, 1982, p. 6), cultural units, which are in our minds most often represented by nation states. In addition, the notion of ‘bridging cultures’ makes us think that dialogue is supposed to emerge between cultures. We should reconsider whether cultures really communicate with each other just by themselves. Dialogue or communication does not emerge between cultures but between people. Culture is not a thing with an objective material existence, warned anthropologist Unni Wikan. It’s an idea that can be filled with various kinds of content (Wikan, 1999, p. 57). It does not exist per se.

Anthropologists have revealed that apparent coherence of a culture is something made up rather than found (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 2). Such critiques have implied that culture must be seen as less unitary, more fragmented and partial, and especially fluid and changing.

Speaking of culture has strong political implications (positive and negative). In particular the case within the previously described essentialist perception of culture that was above all promoted by multiculturalism.

Multicultural is all about diversity, a richness to be celebrated although only as a mosaic of separate and distinct cultural units (Cowan, Dembour & Wilson, 2001, p. 3). Multiculturalism was in particular popular in the 60s and 70s within social movements. These views were significant for the promotion of political rights of certain groups, for example black activists or indigenous groups criticizing the melting pot idea and celebrating differences in the USA. Cultural claims can be used to ground and justify different kinds of claims: to land (for ex. indigenous or minority rights), environmental protection, political autonomy, etc.

In this paper I will not discuss multiculturalism and civil rights movements any further. Yet, I would like to share my concern when such an (essentialist) understanding and usage of culture enters the debate of intercultural dialogue, when such an understanding is used under the guise of ‘intercultural dialogue’.

IN THE NAME OF CULTURE

The issue in question here is: what do we actually do in the name of culture? During the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) everybody talked pleasantly about ‘respect of other cultures’ (by this most frequently cultural heritage and folklore were considered). TV screens and newspapers were full of smiling faces; various artists from European states playing together or dancing to perform intercultural dialogue, or politicians shaking hands. Not many pointed out the inhuman treatment migrants experienced in the very same cities those political meetings were held in, or refugees in camps, unpaid and invisible workers who were living in inhuman conditions in major European cities.

Yet, the way I see it, and the way I promote ideas of intercultural dialogue among children, teenagers and teachers, intercultural dialogue should be far more from art performances, discussing political meetings or even learning about Austrian folklore and Hungarian cultural heritage. It should be critical and reflective: it should teach us to become critical and reflective readers and speakers, to recognize and discuss hidden and marginalized perspectives of individuals who usually remain left out (excluded) from the dominant view and the mainstream story.

Culture is loose on the streets (Wikan, 1999, p. 57; citing Paul Bohannan), it has become politicized; culture has entered the public arena. The term is
used to promote all kinds of interests. In this sense intercultural dialogue can also serve political interests: to promote national interests or strengthen national partnerships within EU.

In her book Generous Betrayal (2002), the anthropologist Unni Wikan revealed how cultural claims are used in Norwegian courts. She argued that such claims can violate rights of vulnerable individuals, in particular girls, boys or adult women. Wikan presented several stories of a modern form of sacrifice, which is performed on the altar of culture (p. 24). She told about cases where Muslim culture was (ab)used to legitimize the rape of a 14 year old girl or deportations and forced marriages of Muslim girls born and living in Norway. Wikan revealed that considering culture in fixed and absolute terms is not only dangerous but it also disguises the complexity of human existence; we are all both children of »our culture« and individuals.

Another issue deriving from such an enclosed and homogenous portrait of culture is thinking in terms of culture representatives. In newspapers we often read how Roma beat a person. What does that mean? That all Roma were involved in the conflict? Let’s put aside the sensationalistic way of media reporting; namely, similar examples may often be found in everyday lives. Guilt should be attributed to an individual and not to a group. Collectivization and naturalization of guilt is dangerous; we actively commit violence and abuse human rights in the name of culture.

Such categorizations are often followed by associations which start invading our mind the minute we hear someone’s name (for example Fatima or Mohamed) or see someone with a different color of skin than ours. Even if that person might live in the same town and may resemble us much more, than someone of the same skin color from another part of own country.

Two years ago during my visit to a photographer, a seven-year old girl pointed at a covered woman on the picture and said: “Look, mummy, a terrorist”. I was shocked by her very determined statement. The same year my colleague showed me a picture of a stereotypical image of an Arab drawn by children from a grammar school at one of our workshops: there was a man with a turban sitting on the floor with his legs crossed, holding a bomb in each hand and covered with guns and ammunition. When portraying a stereotypical

Arab 4 years before this incident, at one of the workshops children of the same age put a comment on a poster saying that ‘in movies Arabs most often played the roles of terrorists’. At that time, children mainly referred to movies, but this later turned into reality: Arabs became terrorists.

STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES

Stereotypes and prejudices mirror mainstream (predominant) ideas, images and representations in society; they are social constructions and not a result of individual imagination. Prejudices – much the same as micro-ideologies of everyday life – may develop a destructive force. Via political aims – or more implicitly via the media – we become imbued by negative images or allusions, accompanied by fear and anger, such as is the discourse on ‘war against terror’ (after 9.11. 2001). For example: when I was waiting at the airport in the States, I suddenly caught myself having a strange and anxious feeling. I was waiting together with several traditionally dressed Muslims. Stereotypes and prejudices are slippery and accompanied by emotions. Emotions may culminate in discriminative behavior, conflicts or even violence. Such emotions are not developed on the basis of personal experience but socially dominant negative images and judgments, and they often remain completely non-reflected. Reactions emerging out of fear, anger or anxiety may provoke aggressive actions. It is therefore important to discuss these issues, identify prejudices, recognize emotional triggers behind them and learn to acknowledge a difference, as well as a relation between emotional and cognitive reactions (towards the otherness).

Stereotypes and prejudices can be expressed in different ways – loudly, publicly or in silence. Contemporary prejudices are expressed in a different way than in the past when the expression was more direct. At present the result is often avoidance not based on explicit and direct refusal but on passive rejections. Feelings accompanying prejudices are suppressed, therefore cold indifference and silent disdain for differences increasingly prevails. Dominant social prejudices can be used as an excuse to legitimize specific hierarchies and power relations by making the difference natural and legitimate. Every prejudice and stereotype is connected to a social
and self-image of a group: an image of a woman as passive and emotional, served men to build upon an image of a strong, rational, disciplined and organized subject (Ule, 2006, p. 32).

Stereotypes, prejudices and one-sided singular ‘truths’ are reflected and identified by intercultural communication (with a non essentialist perception of culture). Intercultural communication points toward various perspectives while deconstructing one dominant, mainstream story. It argues for topics not represented in schools and textbooks, or hidden and marginalized in the media, the public and in people’s lives (migrants, trafficking of women, child labor, global economy, the so called ‘other’ people). Nevertheless, the idea is not only to include new topics, but also highlight the problems behind dominant views and perspectives. In addition to what we should present, the major issue is how to present it.

**INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE WITHIN GLOBAL EDUCATION**

Considering intercultural dialogue within global education is relevant because it opens up perspectives and points to the world outside the EU, it draws attention to global interdependencies, emphasizing relationships linking various factors; such as climate change and its impact on climate/environmental world refugees, and the consequent evolution of social exclusions or violations of human rights.

By highlighting the problems of child labor in Africa we raise awareness about violation of children’s rights. We reveal stories that are literally inscribed in our clothes. We may think that child labor, labor exploitation, world hunger and poverty, etc. are problems very far away from us. But this is not true.

Every day, from the moment we get up, and get dressed in clothes that were globally produced, or drink a cup of coffee, we take part in reproducing global unbalance. It is important to reflect these issues. Nevertheless, this can also lead to stereotyping; as in the case of child labor in Africa, to constructing the image of ‘a poor Africa’ – passively waiting for ‘Aid’. And here we come again to the point of how significant it is to rethink the presentation itself, the way we see and present a problem, a society or culture.

One of these problematic examples is street posters we can find in almost every European city; African children staring with their eyes wide open and imploiring us to do something. It is only a matter of minutes – just dialing the number would bring a smile to their faces. My intention is not to criticize the strategies that humanitarian organizations use for promotion of their actions or to raise awareness. But I would like to draw attention to the implications that such ads may convey. In this case we deal with stereotypes (and also prejudices) about Africa: it is a land of hunger, poverty, disease and apathy.

During the time when Slovenian politics tried to become more intensely involved in the Darfur crisis, a researcher and an activist writing about the power and engagement of a local NGO in Ghana couldn’t get her article published. Publishers claimed that the story was too positive and optimistic; not the image of Africa that was supposed to be presented to the public at that time.

We thus have to consider power relations of such discourses, representations, and the implications they have on all of us. Once again, the question is not only what we want to say, but also how we say it.

**DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES**

Cultural difference is essential to intercultural dialogue: it has constituted itself on this difference, treating it as the most decisive factor. But, are we really marked only by differences and distinctions? There are many parallels between societies, groups and cultures and it is important to acknowledge them. On the other hand, by talking only in terms of differences, we additionally make other people more distinct which may not only lead to discrimination but also exoticism. It is important to pay attention to similarities and emphasize connections between societies. And I think that in the discourse of intercultural dialogue we too often forget that and we actively take part in (re)producing differences and boundaries between people.

By recognizing the similarities between children in an African city and a boy of the same age in Slovenia, a Muslim woman from Sarajevo and another woman, we can learn to understand cultural differences in a (more) critical way and not as all embracing and overall criteria. When I point out thinking outside the terms of typical representatives of a certain group or community, I also address the potential dangerous consequences these discourses can
result in. It is only after recognizing what connects us that we should pay attention to specific living contexts and the actual problems that people face; warning of multi-perspectives and dangers of ethno/egocentric views. And we should be careful that in the name of cultural sensitivity we don’t forget people - the actual individuals that we openly fight for.

The way I consider and treat intercultural dialogue is based on my critical reflection of my own work. As I mentioned in the beginning; I speak as a social anthropologist and an NGO activist for human rights. This relation between the two standpoints (that should not be read in opposition): an analytical anthropological perspective (“critical thinking”) and “doing in practice” (as an NGO worker), is a tense one. Looking back at our first workshop that I co-shaped with my colleagues, we could see that in many ways, as we were so eager to stress the significance of understanding difference, we ourselves (re)produced many boundaries, as well as strengthened some stereotypes. By saying this I would like to point out that constant reflection and rereading of what we do can help us to improve our understanding of intercultural dialogue.

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III. RESEARCH PROJECTS ON DIVERSITY AND SCHOOL PRACTICE
CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

A repertory of good practices in compulsory education schools (in Spain)

Teresa Aguado Odina
Inés Gil Jaurena

The paper presents the main assumptions, objectives and results of the research Project “Cultural diversity and school effectiveness. A repertory of good practices in compulsory education schools (in Spain)”, developed during 2007-2009. The first assumption of this project has been to consider that education, especially compulsory education, must address students’ cultural differences, because of axiological reasons derived from the principles assumed by societies which defend rights like equality, equity and social participation. It is also the guarantee that permits people reach essential educational objectives, like the construction of cultural identity or the equality of opportunities in the access to social and educational goods and resources.

The goal of the project is to contribute to enhance education in schools at the compulsory level, by means of the elaboration and dissemination of an inventory of “good practices” carried out in Spanish schools at the compulsory education level, which have demonstrated their effectiveness in the achievement of high performance levels of culturally diverse students. It is assumed that an effective school is that which ensures that all students attain good results and achievements, no matter the expectations regarding initial performance and social, economic and cultural background. With this goal in mind, our aim has been to revisit the concept of “good school practices” and the notion of student performance and achievement at school. Informed by this initial revision, we will identify and exemplify those school practices that have demonstrated this effectiveness in contributing to the attainment of high school achievements by students, regardless of their cultural background. Ultimately, we will compile, describe and disseminate these practices through an inventory to be used by teachers and educational authorities.

Keywords: cultural diversity; school effectiveness; compulsory education; good practice, Spanish context

CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

The research that we present in this paper is being developed in Spain between January 2007 and December 2009. Coordinated by the INTER Research Group, directed by Teresa Aguado and based at UNED (Madrid), the following institutions have participated in the research project: University of Granada, University of Pais Vasco, University of Huelva, Teacher’s Center of Vigo (Galicia), and Rosa Chacel public school (Villalba, Madrid).

The project has been funded by the Ministry of Education and Science in Spain, and it is titled Cultural diversity and school effectiveness. A repertory of good practices in compulsory education schools in Spain.

In the following paragraphs we will present the basic assumptions of the project, its goal and objectives, the process that has been developed and some preliminary results. Finally, some conclusions and future possible projects are presented.

ASSUMPTIONS

The first assumption of this project has been to consider that education, especially compulsory education, must address students’ cultural differences and diversity, because of axiological reasons derived from the principles assumed by societies which defend rights like equality, equity and social participation.

Education is also the guarantee that permits people reach essential educational objectives, like the construction of cultural identity or the equality of opportunities in the access to social and educational goods and resources.

Within this frame, we have considered that an effective school is that which ensures that all students attain good results and achievements, no matter the expectations regarding initial performance and social, economic and cultural background.

MAIN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project is to contribute to enhance education in schools at the compulsory level, by means of the elaboration and dissemination of an inventory of “good practices” carried out in Spanish schools at the com-
pulsory education level which have demonstrated their effectiveness in the achievement of high performance levels of culturally diverse students.

With this goal in mind, our objectives have been the following:

To revisit the concept of “good school practices” and the notion of student performance and achievement at school.

To identify and exemplify those school practices that have demonstrated this effectiveness in contributing to the attainment of high school achievements by students, regardless of their cultural background.

To compile, describe and disseminate these practices through an inventory to be used by teachers and educational authorities.

RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process, which has been undergone during 36 months, has included different research methodologies and techniques, as stated in the following table 1 referred to each of the objectives already presented:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>METHODOLOGY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To revisit the concept of “good school practices” and the notion of student performance and achievement at school</td>
<td>Theoretical review, Delphi panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify and exemplify those school practices that have demonstrated this effectiveness</td>
<td>Location, selection and narration of practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compile, describe and disseminate these practices through an inventory</td>
<td>Compilation, Dissemination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Research objectives and methodologies

The first stage of the project (devoted to the first objective) has been focused in the theoretical review and Delphi panel, which have helped to revisit and define the concepts of “good school practice” and “students’ performance and achievement at school”, analysed under the theoretical frames of cultural diversity and education (intercultural education) and school effectiveness and improvement movement. Delphi methodology was used to get insight on experts ideas and opinions about those key concepts.

In the second stage (second objective), informed by this initial revision (theoretical review and experts agreements on the main concepts of the project), we worked on identifying and exemplifying those school practices that have demonstrated their effectiveness in contributing to the attainment of high school achievements by students, regardless of their cultural background. The second stage has been dedicated to,

in first place, the location and selection of practices in different schools in Spain
in second place, the data collection, developed through observation of practices and interviews to educational agents (teachers, head-teachers, etc.)
finally, the description and narration of school practices

The third stage of the project, in which we are involved at the time this conference is celebrated (end of september 2009), is centred in compiling describing and narrating these practices, which will be disseminated through an inventory to be used by teachers and teacher trainers. The different narrations will have textual and audiovisual format, depending on the specific practices which are being described.

Referring to methodology, the research process can be divided in two different parts: the Delphi panel to collect information on experts opinions, and the field work at the schools to describe the practices.

a) The Delphi panel consisted on a consultation to experts in education (teachers, academics, parents, students, etc. – 65 on the first round and 40 on the second), in order to identify the agreements and disagreements about what school achievement means an how “good practices” can be defined and developed. The consultation was made through a two round ques-
tionnaire, an open one used on the first round, and a more structured one used on the second round, which helped to identify the consensus and disagreements about the addressed topics. The objectives of the Delphi panel were, besides this conceptual clarification, to obtain useful guidelines for the second stage of the research project, that is, the selection and description of the “good practices”.

b) The field work at schools was developed following different path lines. At the beginning of the project, it was expected to undertake a quite structured observation process of data collection, by the means of an observation scale and semi structured interviews; but while the theoretical review and the Delphi panel were going on, this methodological proposal was reviewed, and the reflection led us to develop an opener data collection process, depending on the specific practice that was been described and also on the methodological expertise of the researchers. Thus, the field work follows an ethnographic methodology in some cases (participant observation, in deep interview, etc.), a life story in other cases, a descriptive narration based on non-participant observation and documents review, etc.

At this stage of the research project, the narrations are being completed, and the final compilation of the practices is expected to be finished by April 2010.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As happened when referring to methodological aspects, the data interpretation is divided in two kind of results: on one hand the Delphi panel results, and on the other hand the narration of practices as a result on itself. The main result of the project will be the inventory of narrations of practice; as the project is in its last stage, those results are not available yet; thus, we present some of the partial results obtained during the first stage of the project, which was focused on a conceptual clarification of two terms: students’ performance or educational achievement, on one hand, and school “good practice”, on the other.

The Delphi consultation to experts was a main methodology in the project; is was based on a questionnaire delivered to different kind of experts (teachers, parents, students, academics, etc.), who gave their opinion about the main concepts of the research in two rounds: the first one for getting a first opinion, and the second one to try to reach a consensus derived from the first round of answers. The consultation took some months, and the Delphi panel made explicit some interesting agreements and disagreements among experts, which are summarized in the following paragraphs.

EXPERTS’ VISION ABOUT EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

The Delphi panel shows that educational achievement:

- Refers to goals and objectives previously defined and planned (75% consensus). They refer mainly to students, they are defined by teachers and by the educational community and refer both to process and products of learning.
- They can refer to valuable results even if they were not planned (60% consensus)
- They have to be universally planned for all, and reached by all the students (50% consensus): there is no room for school failure

EXPERTS’ VISION ABOUT “GOOD PRACTICE”

Regarding this concept, experts were asked about the meaning of the term in school settings, and about the elements that contribute to the development of a good practice and those that make it difficult. About a “good practice” experts say that:

- It is singular, contextualized and transferable to other educational settings (73% consensus).
- It is a practice that has been defined as “good” by the educational community in a systematic way (75% consensus). Its reference are social questions and values, from which educational process is designed.
- It generates good results in the students (95% consensus)
- Equity, respect and social justice are basic requirements for the development of good practices (95% consensus)

Experts say that the elements that contribute to the development of a good practice are:
Committed teachers, optimistic, autonomous, responsible, empathic (70%)
Leadership and stability in the school direction/government (48%)
Participation of the school in improvement and innovation plans (45%)
Participation of families in the school life (40%)
Coordination among teachers (38%)

On the contrary, experts say that the elements that difficult the development of a good practice are:

Distrust and competitiveness among teachers (90%).
Homogenization: “every one has to do the same at the same time” (40%)
High ratio teacher/students (33%)
Distance between what schools teach and what happens outside (33%)
Diversity as problem or deficit approach (33%)

NARRATION OF “GOOD PRACTICES”

With these results in mind (and framed by the theoretical approaches and assumptions of the project), the research team, composed by academics from four Spanish universities, lead the process of identification, observation, and narration of what could be considered as “good practices”.

For that purpose, the phase of location of practices was undertaken by consulting experts and colleagues, educational journals, Centres for Teachers Support, etc. in order to identify those practices which could fulfil the characteristics of contributing to educational achievement for all the students based on a frame of equity.

As stated before, the process of getting information to describe the different practices varied in each case, so at this moment we are finishing narrations that are differently told and written, depending on the case and on the researcher’s style. The project has promoted these different ways of narration instead of establishing a more rigid format of describing the information. Thus, in the final inventory of practices we will find descriptions, interview extracts, life stories, ethnographic narrations, diaries, audiovisual content, etc.

The result of this compilation process will be a repertory of different practices narrated in different ways, but, in spite of the format, all the narrations will have two elements in common:

- the contextualization of the practice: they will refer to the context where they are developed, describing the conditions under which they take place, in an intent to translate the circumstances that surround each of the experiences and help to understand them.
- the reference to the educational achievements and performance they contribute to (as identified by means of the Delphi panel and the theoretical review), which has been one of the central elements of the project and one of the criteria considered when selecting the practices: their contribution to the fulfilment of educational objectives.

CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE TO EDUCATION

The compilation of different practices which are positively valued from an intercultural approach, has been considered of great interest and relevance, specially for teacher training purposes.

It is expected that the final compilation will be used in teacher training at the institutions the researchers belong to (both in undergraduate and postgraduate courses), as well as through its dissemination in the research group website and in a publication that will reach different Teachers Resource Centres across Spain.

The interchange of experiences among teachers is considered a very powerful means for professional development and educational innovation, so this research project was aimed from the beginning to contributing to this exchange network. Among remaining questions, we formulate the following:

Where are the practices?
Why in those specific schools?
Why this information is relevant for the research project and the school practice?
How to use this information?

These questions remain present in our research, and we encourage the readers to also reflect about them.
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The project “Avoiding exclusion by reinforcing prevention – Promotion of mental health in early childhood institutions (ECI) in deprived areas”, financed by the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF 2008 – 2010) takes a holistic and multidimensional approach by including professionals, children, parents and networks of early childhood institutions. The project is based on the intervention programme “Empowering Children!” (ZFKJ 2005 – 2007) and addresses ECI situated in areas with a high grade of diversity (e.g. high percentage of families with migrational background, high poverty rates, etc.) in order to empower these institutions to develop themselves towards target-group-oriented centres for resilience promotion, aiming at the improvement of participation and educational opportunities for children who are growing in adverse conditions or disadvantaged communities. The first part of this article (“Introduction”) gives a short review of the recent technical discussions upon a) the impact of social disadvantage regarding the development of children, b) the paradigm shift in research and practice, c) the promotion of resilience and mental wellbeing in ECI and d) the quality criteria regarding prevention programmes.

In the second part (“Resilience in practice”) the intervention programme with its evaluation design is being presented. By outlining the project’s “children’s course” it shall be demonstrated, how operationalised elements of resilience can successfully be fostered and how better inclusion can be achieved by instructing the preschool teachers in a consistent strengths-oriented view towards the child and its family.

The third part (“Conclusions”) will point out first project results and conclusions for a sustainable promotion of resilience in the diverse setting of early childhood education and care.

Key words: resilience, prevention, strengths-oriented view, praxis-oriented research

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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The promotion of resilience, i.e. the capacity to cope with strains, takes an important role in early childhood education. The implementation of prevention programmes to foster mental health and wellbeing especially among young children is even more important in deprived areas as those are characterised for example by high unemployment and poverty rates, a high grade of diversity, bad public infrastructures and so on. For young children growing in such adverse conditions, it is most important to acquire as soon as possible skills to cope positively with these strains.

Research has shown that the socio-economic status of families has an alarmingly high impact on school readiness and school achievement, due to differences in speech development, social skills, self-regulation-abilities, motivation, cognitive development and self-efficacy-experiences (e.g. Smith et al. 1997, Pagani et al. 1997, Duncan & Brooks-Gunn 1997, Walker et al. 1994). As the PISA study showed, this fact is especially right for Germany (see Baumert et al. 2003). Especially children with a lower socio-economic status and with an accumulation of other risk factors have distinctive worse educational chances and are less successful in school (BMBF 1998, Laucht, Esser & Schmidt in Opp et al. 1999, OECD 2001, 2004, Conger et al. 1997, Patterson et al. 1990, McDonald & Moberg 2000).

Summarizing those research results, following risk factors for children’s mental, cognitive, social, physical and behavioural development can be identified:

- poverty of the family
- lower educational level of the parents
- mental disorders of parents (including drug abuse)
- living in a non-working household or long periods of unemployment
- teenage mothers and/or “one parent families”
- combination of poverty and migration background

The early exposure to an accumulation of these risk factors increases the probability to develop mental health problems or disorders in later life. In all countries, there are areas with an accumulation of these risk factors. Living in such a
risk environment means to be at risk of social exclusion and inequality in educational opportunities (see e.g. Stebe & Raymond 2002). It is the balance of risk and protective factors which decides if a child’s development is at risk.

PARADIGM SHIFT IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE: FROM DIFFICULTIES TOWARDS STRENGTHS

During the past 15 years, a paradigm shift took place regarding the development of behaviour disorders and mental illness. Research in public health sciences, clinical and developmental psychology is exploring protective factors in people’s lives rather than focusing exclusively on the risk factors. This means a change from a deficiency orientated and problem centred view towards the analysis of strengths and protective factors such as social resources (e.g. Bender et al. 1996, Hughes et al. 1997, Werner 2000, Luthar & Cicchetti 2000, Schoon & Byrner 2003, Remschmidt et al. 2007).

Research on protective factors and resilience identified several factors which strengthen the internal and external resources of children and which are promoting their abilities to cope successfully with crisis (e.g. Petermann et al. 2004, Lösel & Bender 2007, Walsh 2003, Masten 2001, Newman 2004). The following listings upon protective factors show great analogy to the concept of Salutogenesis by Antonovsky (1997):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTECTIVE FACTORS</th>
<th>ON THE PERSONAL LEVEL</th>
<th>ON THE SOCIAL LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• good self esteem and a sense of self-efficacy</td>
<td>• the good relationship to (minimum) one adult person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• social skills</td>
<td>• social contact in peer groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• problem-solving abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• ability for emotional regulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• good and realistic perception of self and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• stress coping/management abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• internal locus of control, realistic attribution style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• to find a positive meaning in one’s life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• average intelligence</td>
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</table>

Many references state that positive self esteem, self protecting/self-enhancing skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills, “general social skills (complimenting, conversational skills, and skills for forming new friendships)” (Botvin & Griffin 2003, p. 656), and abilities in social conflict solving are important factors to prevent mental disorders. These competencies are closely connected with the “life skill”-concept (WHO 1994; Botvin & Griffin 2003; Aßhauer et al. 1999); they are developed at an early stage in childhood and are susceptible to be promoted and trained systematically (e.g. Remschmidt et al. 2007; Perry, Kaufmann & Knitzer 2007, Botvin & Griffin 2003).

THE IMPORTANCE OF ECI IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

Early childhood institutions are very important educational institutions which have great influence on children’s (cognitive, social and emotional) development as they are central institutions for socialisation (e.g. Kasüssche & Fröhlich-Gildhoff 2008, Fthenakis 2003, Arnold 2000, Sylva et al. 2003). They are reaching both the young children and – in modern services like the early excellence centres in the UK – their parents in a systematic way.

This kind of setting offers best opportunities to implement programmes for the promotion of children’s mental health and support the development of life skills and resilience. Usually, these institutions are embedded in the (social) environments of the family and they are able to identify the needs of the children and their families. The early childhood teachers could have an important influence not only on children’s development but also on families, supporting for example parental skills (e.g. Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al. 2008a).

Professionals must be trained for these (new) tasks and they need user-friendly tools (handbooks/manuals, process descriptions etc.) to act systematically. A prevention programme has to use existing professional resources in the institutions and across sectors.

Research shows, that prevention – especially when promoting the broad range of life skills (WHO 1994) and resilience - can mitigate the negative ef-

The concept of resilience is useful for achieving this goal. Resilience means that children and young persons develop well, also in adverse situations or difficult circumstances. Resilient persons are able to cope with difficult situations, multiple stress factors and developmental tasks (e.g. Werner 2000, Opp & Fingerle 2007, Wyman et al. 2003). The acquisition of resilience is independent of a person’s social and/or cultural background, though the training of resilience skills has to be approached differently and according to the different conditions.

Nevertheless, there is a lack of systematic, standardised programmes promoting healthy development and preventing social exclusion under the paradigm of resilience and on an international level.

QUALITY CRITERIA FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

There are some positive experiences with the implementation of prevention programmes in whole school settings (Greenberg et al 2000; Seif El Din 2007). They are more effective, when they target not only the child but also the parents, teachers and the wider context and facilitate consistency and communication between those different contexts (e.g. Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al 2007, Eddy et al. 2000, Webster-Stratton 1992, Dumka 2003, p 482). Moreover “effective practice has included approaches that combine traditional health education with more comprehensive, whole school approaches that create a supportive physical, social and learning environment and bring together the combined resources of parents, local communities and organisations” (Jané-Llopis & Braddick 2008, p 15); examples for such integrated programmes are found in the “European Network of Schools for Health – SHE”.

But there are no corresponding examples on international level for the early childhood institutions. As the positive effects of preventive programmes are empirically confirmed for the setting “school”, good (or even better) results may also be expected for early childhood settings, as the early years of children are most susceptible for preventive actions (e.g. Belfer et al. 2007). The results of the evaluation studies on programmes targeting older children are also important quality features when developing prevention programmes for preschool level:

- the programme has to reach children, parents, professionals (teachers) and their environments (multi-modal, cross-sectoral, systemic and ecological perspectives)
- a long term programme is more successful than a short programme or an (isolated) training
- the programme must be set up systematically and must base on a clear concept (e.g. Dumka 2003)
- the gaps and communication problems between different systems, esp. the educational system, the health system and the youth welfare system (see e.g. Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al. 2008b; Jané-Llopis & Braddick 2008; Department for Education and Skills 2003) must be tackled by good and systematic cooperation (e.g. Perry, Kaufmann & Knitzer 2007).

One systematic programme, integrating the new paradigm of strengths-orientation by the promotion of resilience abilities is the German programme “Kindergarten!” (“Empowering Children!”, Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al. 2007, 2008c).

By now, about 500 preschool teachers throughout Germany attended the vocational training programme “Kindergarten!”. Currently, the programme is being extended to ECI in deprived areas at three different locations in Germany, and will reach about 430 children and 100 preschool teachers.

RESILIENCE IN PRACTICE

THE PROGRAMME “EMPOWERING CHILDREN!”

The programme consists of four levels:

- work with the ECI: conceptual work, transfer of the concept to the daily routine, reflection rounds, round tables, case conferences, further trainings, ...
- work with children: children’s course, suggestions for individual support, elaboration of a “strengths profile” for each child, conceptualizing offers for special target groups, ...
- work with parents: individual counselling, parental courses, written information, ...
- networking activities: supporting sustainable cooperation between ECI and counselling centres, social work, schools or other institutions in the environment

The project’s aim is to strengthen the ECIs in central skills like work with families and networks under the perspective of resilience. The concept of the project is designed in a manner that the early childhood teachers/the ECI at the end of the project will be empowered to integrate an ample preventive programme into their attitude and every day work in order to help children and their families to develop their resilience capacities.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT’S EVALUATION

The programme is also being evaluated. The evaluation is divided into outcome and process evaluation by qualitative and quantitative methods.

The outcome evaluation on the children’s level consists of three sets of data collection (pre, intermediate and post). The children take part in standardised tests to measure their self concept, cognitive development and specific skills at the beginning and at the end of the programme (N = 424). Children in their last year of kindergarten were tested again before starting primary school (N = 163). Simultaneously, the educators and parents assess the developmental stage of each child by standardised questionnaires.

Process evaluation is happening continuously by documentation and reflection as well as qualitative interviews with parents, early childhood teachers and stakeholders. In order to supplement and verify the named data, information about structural facts and cooperation aspects within the team were collected by standardised tests.

THE “CHILDREN’S COURSE” AS AN EXAMPLE HOW TO OPERATIONALISE THE PROMOTION OF RESILIENCE IN THE PEDAGOGICAL WORK WITH CHILDREN

First of all, there are several possibilities to strengthen children’s resiliency. Offering just a children’s course without integrating this professional attitude to the institution’s conception, every day life and the general professional orientation of the early childhood teachers, it is unlikely to impact the development of children’s resilience capacities in a sustainable way. Nevertheless, the “children’s course” shows options how to strengthen the resilience of children and it can be considered as a first step towards a systematic strengths-facilitating pedagogical surrounding. Thus, the “children’s course” just exemplifies methods for the promotion of resilience; methods which will remain without effect if not being linked to the children’s further environments.

The children’s course addresses children at the age from 4 to 6 years and comprises 20 units which are effected twice a week. Within the named project, it is guided by one or two preschool teachers who were previously instructed in the according methods and attitudes. Moreover, two hand puppets are being used to introduce to the several units.

Following figure shows the contents of the children’s course on the basis of the six operationalised resilience factors, which are:

- self perception (good and realistic perception of self and others)
- sense of self-efficacy (belief to cope with claims)
- self-monitoring (regulation of emotions and arousal)
- problem solving abilities (strategies to analyze and solve problems)
- social competencies (self-assertion, solving conflicts, asking for support)
- stress-coping abilities (knowing methods for dealing with stressful situations)

FIRST RESULTS ON PROCESS LEVEL

As the project is still running until autumn 2010, no facts and figures can be presented at this stage. Nevertheless, there are already some results on the process level to be reported:
Early childhood teachers in deprived areas need further trainings than in areas with well-off families. Often, they are not only working as an educator with the children and parents but also as a “case-manager”. This aspect does not only affect the need for a bigger variety of professional knowledge on early childhood matters; it also does affect their personal health and resilience capacities. The educator’s resilience and health has to be focussed and supported more systematically. Thus, external supervision and support by further networks is getting more and more important in the field of early childhood education. Furthermore, the networks in disadvantaged communities are to be strengthened even more systematically; for example by bringing experts into the ECI and thus creating a low threshold setting for families with simultaneous relief for the early childhood teachers.

Table: Resilience Factors and Related Questions and Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resilience Factors</th>
<th>Related Questions (Examples)</th>
<th>Contents (Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self perception and perception of others</td>
<td>How do I/others feel? How do feelings look like? How are they named?</td>
<td>me and my body, my senses, the “Soul Bird” (Snunit &amp; Golomb 1991), my and other children’s feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self regulation</td>
<td>How can I control my emotions? How can I calm down to think clearly?</td>
<td>how to get in contact with other children, the “traffic lights principle” (what to do next?), “emotion and motion” (acting, singing, moving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self efficacy</td>
<td>Are my actions efficient? Do they make sense? What can I be proud of?</td>
<td>self efficacy exercises, self efficacy tales, the stone of courage, the little book of strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social competences</td>
<td>How can I get support? How can I hold the distance? How can I interact with others?</td>
<td>cooperation games, tales, empathy exercises, interactive games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with stress</td>
<td>What does stress mean exactly? How can I feel if I am stressed? How can I relax/recover?</td>
<td>stress and related feelings, reducing stress by physical or relaxation exercises (e.g. imagination)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Which strengths do I have to reach a goal? How can I find a solution? Who could help me?</td>
<td>searching a “treasure”, preparing a fruit salad, planning an excursion or any other every day task that children solve together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(see Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al 2007; 2008a p 69)

Conclusions/Changes to the Programme

The early childhood institutions have the opportunity to reach the parents in a successful way, to contact and to motivate them to cooperate. Parents can be addressed while bringing and picking their children up. A high degree of transparency of the action has a positive effect on the motivation. Moreover, “short paths” are given by the close cooperation between the early childhood institutions and the educational guidance institutions.

A change of the perspective towards the strengths of the children has the effect that both educators and parents have a more positive perception of the child and of the own skills. This leads to more relaxation and other courses of action within the pedagogical work and increases the confidence on both sides.

Recommendations

On the basis of the current research and the experiences within the project, following recommendations can be summarized:

- well evaluated preventive programmes are to be implemented systematically (at the best regularized by an Act on Prevention)
- cross-sectoral networks for early detection/diagnosis are to be built up
- access to preventive actions is to be granted especially to high-risk groups by the realization of a low-threshold setting approach.
REFERENCES


Building Understanding for Equality and Cultural Identity

Experiences from Dialogues with Teachers and Students in the Intercultural Classroom

Jorun Buli-Holmberg

This research paper brought out the intercultural classroom experiences of teachers and students on equality and cultural identity. The increasing cultural diversity in schools of Norway warrants cultural competence from teachers to cater to the needs of the multicultural students. Developing an inclusive society where everyone is recognized by each other as equal persons means that teachers need knowledge of self-worth and equality. The present aimed to on dialogues between teachers and students. Dialogues are based on a number of issues related to; a) Self-efficacy and self-understanding. It involves the understanding their inner strengths and weakness related to their cultural identity development. Here, the emphasis is placed to appreciate them selves and be responsible for their actions. b) Empathy and understanding of others cultural diversity. This highlights the recognition of others, appreciation and understanding of others and equality to challenge unfair discrimination. The methodology used is an action study and conducted dialogues with teachers. There where 10 teachers and 20 students in one school participating in two workshops, one for the teachers and one for the students. The study result showed that the teachers knew the concept of self value and empathy they did not actively practiced this in their teaching. The teachers challenge was to put their theory into practice. It was found that teachers had a basic understanding of concepts, but they had difficulty in distinguishing the concepts, self-value and equality. They understood the importance of this was an important part of their job in teaching, but expressed that to some extent had the opportunity to activate this in the daily teaching situation. It was more sporadic efforts by the needs that arose in class, such as bullying. Students were aware of and expressed their own needs, strengths and weakness may be more than the other students needs. They said that the teachers seldom focused on this topic in their teaching.

Key Words: Intercultural Education, Self-value, empathy and Cultural Diversity

In this paper an Intercultural Education Program and the results from research related to this program will be described. The increasing diversity of the student in the inclusive schools in Norway calls for increased cultural competence on behalf of educators to effectively teach students. The concept of culture is no longer appropriate for describing present-day cultural diversity. Indeed, cultures can no longer be understood as independent entities, but need to be contextualized in terms of social, political, and communication-based realities. When contemplating cultural pluralism, it is the variety of cultural fragments that are significant rather than the cultures in their entirety. It is the complexity of interethnic/interracial relations and cross-cultural exchange that have made the concept of culture less relevant. It also recognizes that cultural traces are more important than cultural structures. Individuals select cultural information according to their interests and the vicissitudes of the situation.

Culture, like language, is a place of expression and interaction between oneself and the other. Owing to its dynamic quality, the notion of cultural-identity is more suitable for describing these dynamics, whereas the concept of culture is marked too much by a descriptive, objectifying and categorizing approach. To teach and learn from an Intercultural Education Perspective is to build the understanding for diversity (Irvine 1992). Focusing on the intercultural education is to switch from a homogeneous perspective to a diversity perspective in the process of learning which acknowledges and works out of individual variation. When teachers focus on diversity it will encourage abandoning the idea of the model student (Gay 2002). If students are not pressed to fit in homogeneity, some stress is going to be removed from the student and in this way it will be easier to recognize individual merit in an individual way. That means that teachers and students should learn to negotiate the norms and values that we share as a group and which will let us set up and reach our goals. This will create room to work on a positive self-image, improving each student’s abilities and capabilities and let them benefit from her or his classmates avoiding the general pictures of success and failure. In intercultural classroom the teacher’s task is to guide and facilitate students’ learning towards cultural differences. The teacher role is to provide instruction with framework of cultural diversity to contribute a learning community (Wenger, 1998). The general aim of in-
tercultural education is to promote the diverse teacher initiatives in school practices as an approach to deal with cultural differences at school in terms of theoretical foundations and practical implications.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To promote intercultural education in a school for all there is a need for developing a fundamental understanding of human dignity and equality. Therefore teachers focus on self value and empathy will be a central dimension in their teaching. These concepts is based on psychological theories that emphasize these aspects as important for personality development, but also sociological theories that focus on the interaction with people is natural and key environmental conditions that support the personality development (Buli-Holmberg & Ekeberg, 2009). To develop an inclusive society where everyone is recognized by each other as equal persons means that teachers need knowledge of self worth and equality, but also skills to include these dimensions in the daily teaching situation in class. Awareness of “who” you are impacts “how” we behave. “How” one learns and teaches is reliant on awareness of “what” one thinks and feels which forms belief and value systems (Buli-Holmberg, Schiering and Bogner 2008). Thinking and feeling are a natural process for everyone and influences everyday happenings. Therefore it is important that the teacher focus on how students develop thinking and what can be provided to open the mind to cognitive development that promotes positive attitudes to themselves and others. Individual’s thinking and feelings are continually co-joined and impact each other in a reciprocal fashion and there are common social and societal realities that encompass and transcend one’s culture. These are basic issues to address in Intercultural Educational Guidance. Self- efficacy and empathy is important factors in personal development that also influences how we live together the intercultural community in schools.

Self-efficacy determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people’s beliefs about their capabilities that influence and affect their lives (Bandura 1994, 1999). A strong sense of self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. They attribute failure to insufficient effort knowledge and skills which are acquirable. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments and reduces stress.

Empathy is the capability to share and understand another’s emotions and feelings. Empathy is a platform for effective understanding, communication and relationships. Empathy is essential to develop solutions and avoiding or diffusing conflict. Self-development refers in one way or another to the importance of empathy - really understanding the other person’s position and feelings. Being able to ‘step back’, and achieve a detachment from our own emotions, is essential for effective, constructive relationships. To show empathy is to identify with another’s feelings. It is to emotionally put yourself in the place of another. An emotion is a mental and physiological state associated with a wide variety of feelings, thoughts, and behavior. Emotions are subjective experiences, often associated with temperament, personality and dispositions (Saarni 1999). A related distinction is between the emotion and the results of the emotion, principally behaviors and emotional expressions.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is to be successful requires the effective awareness, control and management of one’s own emotions, and those of other people (Goleman 1997). He embraces two aspects of emotional intelligence:

- Understanding yourself
- Understanding others

Goleman identified the five ‘domains’ of Emotional intelligence as:
1. Knowing your emotions.
3. Motivating your self.
4. Recognising and understanding other people’s emotions.
5. Managing relationships, managing the emotions of others.
By developing our Emotional Intelligence in these areas and the five domains we can become more successful at what we do, and help others to be more successful too. The process and outcomes of Emotional Intelligence development also contain many elements known to reduce stress for individuals and systems, by decreasing conflict, improving relationships and understanding, and increasing stability, continuity and harmony.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The purpose of the Intercultural Education Program is to develop intercultural educational settings that focus on human dignity, and facilitate the development of individual students’ self-esteem and empathy for others. The target audience is the teachers and students in primary school.

The program is based on dialogues between teachers and students. Dialogues are based on a number of issues related to; a) Self-efficacy and self-understanding. It involves the understanding their inner strengths and weakness related to their cultural identity development. Here, the emphasis is placed to appreciate them selves and be responsible for their actions b) Empathy and understanding of others cultural diversity. This highlights the recognition of others, appreciation and understanding of others and equality to challenge unfair discrimination.

In an intercultural classroom the teacher provides instruction with framework of cultural diversity and looks each student as a potential contributor of the learning community. The goal of the Intercultural program was to make teachers and students aware of their differences and importance of equality and to promote awareness on different cultural ethics. The teachers should be helped to be aware of the intercultural practice they have today with a focus on curriculum. The students should also be helped to be aware of how they see themselves and others, and how they have to react to the others positive and negative reactions.

The Intercultural Program is based on the following principles:

- Development of increased awareness of self-efficacy and cultural identity. Here the intention is to build up students to be aware of who they are, what they want to be and feel what they are. They should be aware of why I am here, who am I and think what he can be.

- Development of increased empathy and awareness of other’s intrinsic value - equality and cultural diversity. Here the goal is to understand who the other students are, what the others to be and how others differ than that they think the others are. The students are prepared to focus on the above issues and trained to act the way they value.

Fig 7.1. Building self-efficacy and empathy in the intercultural classroom

To understand who I am, who you are and who are we, teachers need to build intercultural competency by teaching students to value themselves and others. A person’s level of self-efficacy and empathy will influence the learning community either in a positive or negative way. Therefore teachers have a central role supporting students to develop high level of self-efficacy and empathy.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used is an action study and conducted dialogues with teachers. There where 10 teachers and 20 students in one school participating in two workshops, one for the teachers and one for the students. There is two phase in this research project. The first phase focus on finding teachers and students thoughts of self-esteem and empathy related to intercultural perspectives, and data from the respondent has been collected in spring 2009.

PHASES OF THE ACTION RESEARCH:

Phase1. The main goal is to reveal here and know situation to identify their pre-understanding and assess the need for efforts in relation to their awareness of self-worth and cultural identity.
Action 1: Conduct a workshop with teachers through dialogues to identify their understanding on self – worth and cultural identity.
Action 2: Conduct workshop with students through dialogues to identify their understanding self – worth and cultural identity.
Action 3: Analyze results from the material in the first phase as a starting point for phase 2.

Phase 2: The main goal is to develop, implement a program and evaluate efforts (training) of self-worth and cultural identity.
Action 1: Develop a program together with teachers for students to understand their own cultural identity and cultural diversity.
Action 2: Implement the program together with teachers and groups of students.
Action 3: Analyze the process and results from the program.

The workshop for teachers was arranged for teachers teaching at 5th grade from one school. The purpose was to discover teachers’ knowledge of the two concepts; self value and empathy. Through dialogues with the researchers and teachers the purpose was to reveal where the teachers stood in relation to self-worth and empathy. How they put emphasis on these aspects of class and education. Procedure adopted was based on dialogues on group interview method with open questions. Teachers were given sticky notes where they were to answer how they defined self-worth and equality. The answer was then shared with all. The same method was used with the students, but the question was reformulated and adapted to the students’ level at 5th grade.

The results from the first phases served as background for this paper. In the second phase, the experiment will be carried to find out the effectiveness of the instructional package prepared for intercultural education and will be implemented in the school.

**FINDINGS**

Self value and empathy is closely connected to each other and it was difficult in distinguishing these concepts. For the students, self value is important in both academic and cultural aspects. My hypothesis is that it can be difficult to value others if you don’t value your self. Often the teachers focus more on the social dimension (empathy) than the individual dimension (self value). Intercultural education is related to those two dimensions. That is the main reason for why I focused on those two concepts when I conducted this action research. The results from the first phase in the action research helped the teachers and students to get a better understanding for different cultural customs and beliefs of each student in their class.

The table bellows show selected quotes from the teachers and students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLES FROM DIALOGUES WITH TEACHERS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES FROM DIALOGUES WITH STUDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self value:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self value:</strong> Can you tell who you feel and think about yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you define self value?</td>
<td>I will be a kind and good person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel respected</td>
<td>I will help someone and be honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be valued</td>
<td>I will be less angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All individuals are equal valued</td>
<td>I will be less stubborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What you think about your self</td>
<td>I will not be bad looser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing your self</td>
<td>I will not think that I am better than others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel important</td>
<td>I will be supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like my self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Empathy:**                          | **Empathy:** Can you tell how you want to be with others? |
| How do you define empathy?            | Kind and nice                           |
| Able to see and understand other peoples situations and reactions | Helpful                                 |
| Shows insight in others              | Justice and honest                      |
| Shows empathy                        | Trustful                                |
| Help others to feel as a part of the society | Considerable                           |
|                                       | Take care                               |
|                                       | Supportive                              |
|                                       | Be themselves                           |
|                                       | Listening                               |

Table: 7.1 Findings from dialogues with teachers and students
The conclusions from the dialogues with the teachers showed that it helped them to be aware of the importance to focus on building a better environment for developing a climate where the students focused on I am OK and you are OK. Even if the teachers knew the concept of self value and empathy they did not actively practiced this in their teaching. The teachers challenge was to put their theory into practice. It was found that teachers had a basic understanding of concepts, but they had difficulty in distinguishing the concepts, self-value and equality. They understood the importance of this was an important part of their job in teaching, but expressed that to small extent had the opportunity to activate this in the daily teaching situation. It was more sporadic efforts by the needs that arose in class, such as bullying.

The conclusions from the dialogues the students are that it is a topic that engaged them. They were aware of and expressed their own needs, strengths and weakness may be more than the other students needs. They said that the teachers seldom focused on this topic in their teaching and that they would like to do this workshop again with the teacher. This supports conclusions from the teachers that their challenge is to put their theory about these concepts into practice. It was also found that students and the teachers had a basic understanding of concepts, but they had difficulty in distinguishing the concepts, self-value and equality. In the dialogue with the students two of the students openly expressed example of bullying that was not told to the teacher before. As often as when bullying occurred, and it was necessary to take certain measures for it. That is, it was barely prevention efforts in this area. There was no program at school that included these intercultural topics specific, but they made more as part of other programs such as anti-bullying programs. Therefore it is a need of an hour to develop a program to follow up those bulling example in this school and also prevent bullying to develop and implement a more overall program that focuses on intercultural dimensions. This is also a starting point for the second phases in this action research.

CONCLUSION

Through positive interaction and sharing responsibilities in the group activities promote the understanding of cultural diversity among the group. It was a starting point to provide a chance for the teachers and students to value the other cultural practice. In future this program will certainly create a curriculum and pedagogy that validates the dignity and humanity of each learner. They are noted through the data collection that the teachers and student’s had respect for themselves and the others. The students experienced that they were as worth as much as others and that others are worth as much as themselves. The action study helped to promote a starting point for developing a better intercultural environment. The experience gained from dialogues with teachers and students shows that this is a well-known issue for teachers and students, but they are not working very actively with these issues daily. The conclusion is that this action “the intercultural program” content and structure worked well in relation to the programs objectives “cultural identity and diversity”, but it needed to be implemented as an integrated part of teaching in classrooms in a long run for fruitful effect.

REFERENCES


IV. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
Interculturalism in art education refers to pedagogic strategies that support positive attitudes regarding the specific aspects of cultural plurality of our societies. Cultural plurality and diversity refer to the variety of cultural identities and are understood as sources of knowledge.

The question that inevitably opens is how to insert contents about interculturalism in the pedagogical process not transforming them in an exotic product and how to discourage a «decontextuited cultural tourism» that does not fit any educational aims. Trying to solve this question, we developed a general pedagogic strategy based on the comparison of theoretical concepts from the worlds of music and visual arts. The task that students were engaged in was to listen to music and to try to transform it in visual signs which should be later shaped in a visual composition. With this exercise, cultural characteristics became known through an individual engagement in universal expressive languages that do not share the eventual obstacles imposed by verbal communication. In fact it was an approach art education from critical perspectives regarding the complexity of «visuality» deeply integrated in nowadays everyday life.

In the conclusion we reflected on how to develop a teaching-learning process sensitive to the differences and commonalities of different cultures living in our space.

Key words: identity, diversity of cultures, interculturalism, art education.
DEFINING THE ELEMENTS OF INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

Each person’s individual encounters with the products of another culture are part of the individual’s personal development. The intercultural encounter is a unidirectional, nonreciprocal experience: an individual encountering using the products of another culture and in so doing having an experience which cannot be exactly replicated from the perspective of the other culture. The optimal intercultural encounter facilitates individuation – in other words, through the use of other’s symbols one can become more fully one’s self. The course of an intercultural encounter begins with the individual, as yet unaware of the “Other”. In brief, the experience of an “Other” always begins with and returns to the Self. Cases of apparent »mutual« exchange are thus two separate encounters focused on a (at least apparently) shared set of symbols.

Exchanges deal with »the ideal/virtual« word of images and ideas promoted by media and »the social/individual« position considering the unaccepted, repressed issues of (social) ego resulting in a subject projected on Others. Repressions are often culturally-driven. For instance, western cultures have long perpetuated masculinist, rationalist, empiricist biases, which not only led to repression of much opposing material but also exacerbated the problem by an extreme valorization of the ego. Those parts of the Self which are deemed unacceptable to the ego, for reasons of culture, personal history, religion etc. are repressed into the unconscious and as a result are subject to being projected on others: the external Other becomes a substitute for an unacknowledged internal Other (Harbeck, 2001).

To be fully oneself is to be fully situated in the context of humanity as a whole; any insistence on separation from the whole is an act against fullness of identity. The implications for intercultural awareness are fairly clear: »Since there is only one earth and one mankind, east and west cannot rend humanity into two different halves. Psychic reality exists in its original oneness, and awaits man’s advance to a level of consciousness where s/he no longer believes in the one part and denies the other, but recognizes both as constituent elements of one psyche« (Harbeck, 2001, p. 23). So, we cannot know or understand the “Other” until we understand ourselves, for it is always on the basis of oneself, that one understands anything. Without acknowledgement of the role of the self in this process, the result may be disillusionment and the intercultural material may be devaluated. Another possibility, and an increasingly common one, is that the “Other” may be »allowed to remain« “Other”. This is the problem of post-modernity. Instead of recognizing the status of the »other« as an equal, there is the undermining of the »other« by a declared indifference to distinction, while attempting to maintain the same balance of power. On a personal level this could mean a reaction of fear of Other’s power. Abetting this response is a cultural admonition against appropriation, which originates with »others« reacting to their fears of subsumption (Harbeck, 2001).

The very awareness that the intercultural material is potentially a tool for learning about oneself can also lead to an egocentric use of it, which is the opposite of what should occur. Any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language, culture, institutions and political ambience of the representer (Said, 1995). Following these ideas, it is obvious that »intercultural attitudes« are mostly unconscious, the moment they become conscious, they can fall into a »decontextuated cultural tourism« that does not fit educational aims.

EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGY AND INTERCULTURALISM

The educational and cultural system is an important element in the maintenance of existing relations of domination in many societies in which such systems of domination persist and reproduce themselves without being consciously recognized by the people involved (Apple, 1995).

School is a part of a larger frame work of social relations that are structurally selective and express carefully designed sets of values. The traditions that dominate the field assist in the reproduction of inequality while at the same time serving to legitimate both the institutions that recreate it and our own actions within them. School in fact teaches »necessary abilities« but in forms that are a guarantee of subordination under the dominant ideology or an expression of the acquaintance with their practices (Althusser, 1980).
While there is a formal right for everyone to be represented in the debates over whose cultural capital, whose knowledge »that«, »how« and »to«, will be declared legitimate for transmission to future generations of students, it is still the case that a selective tradition operates in which only specific groups’ knowledge becomes official knowledge. Thus, the freedom to help select the formal corpus of knowledge is bound by power relations that have very real effects.

However, concerns about ideology as a set of ideas proposed by the dominant educational system and the teacher as its »realizator« make it necessary to be engaged in critical interrogations of the conceptual, empirical and social assumptions of the historical reasons behind the »circulation« of certain objectives. In the case of intercultural encounters in school context, it is necessary to seek for »a space in between« in which (educational) ideology should not be ruled by the same compulsory programs for all students and should function as an (invisible) instrument of (spiral) »reproduction of society« engaged with interculturalism in a more organic way. This means that the teacher should be critical, conscious of his/her position as a »reproductive instrument«, engaged with the individuality of every single student. Students and parents should be able to choose programs, to think of and define the kind of education that fits their expectatives.

INTERCULTURALISM AND ART EDUCATION

Actually, interculturalism in visual art education deals mainly with the effects of western art canons’ dominance in the majority of the world’s formal art education systems (Mason, 1999) as evidenced in the predominance of Western instructional approaches to drawing, the emphasis on »creativity« in syllabuses, textbooks, examination systems etc. This approach is problematic for all sorts of reasons; because it is Eurocentric, it instructs students to believe that fine art produced according to European values in the »right« kind of art and is always the product of individual (male) »genius«. It produces a kind of cultural alienation where dominant groups are responsible for designing and managing art education systems limiting the possibilities of developing appropriate forms of art education.

The avant-garde as an »individual« expression separates Western (modern-ist) art from the Other which is marked by such signifiers as »craft, folk, mass and tribal (Jazgozdinski, 1999). Arts intercultural curriculum many times presents a taxonomy of cultures ranked ordered with the colour; »white« repeatedly missing from its representation. Such curriculum is clearly racist but appears anti-racist at the same time. This good-will gesture of desiring to »know« the “Other” becomes a pedagogical strategy for many art teachers of an inadvertent and unintentional containment in which »difference« is interpreted as benign and diversity as simple »acknowledgement«.

In this context a relevant question is, should interculturalism be imposed as learning content by the curriculum? The strategy of »adding on« the art of cultures has been variously characterized by many authors as the implementation of new forms of racism or ethnic determinism. This solution is also questionable from the point of view of the plurality of situations in the »actual class«.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH ARTS

The extended modernist will to »create a new world« had important consequences in the field of visual art and visual art education. It resulted in what could be designated as »visually conditioned dependence« from an invisible central power that designed the »visual modern common path« forgetting that every cultural tradition rules itself with its own definition of space and the position of human being in it. In order to build significant backgrounds for intercultural encounters, it is necessary to redefine the limits of identity, widening definitions of the human being and the values that are meaningful for each individual student.

However, it is not easy to shape a formula that would concentrate all the elements that should be taken into account when dealing with other cultures’ products. In fact, our own culture always functions as a filter that reshapes notions and perceptions of others.

In this context, we sustain that interculturalism at school and particularly in art education should stand in the realm of competencies not of learning contents. This means considering the affective aspect of education as the one that can synthesize pupils’ experiences, leaving contents of motifs and media of expression to be chosen freely, not imposing questionable ways of expression (e.g. drawing models by observation because of their links to contradictory methods that lead to «westernization» of expression) encouraging other functions as memory and imagination instead. Actual freedom aiming to develop the holistic aspects of pupil’s personality (affective/social/moral, cognitive, psychomotor) should mean a turn from a narrow structuralistic to a phenomenological/experiential approach. In this way we would educate to perform specific competences as tools to promote creative individualities, with self-respect, positive self-image, improving self-expression, encouraging a meaningful (positive) concept of the self and discouraging negative projections.

AN EXPERIMENTAL EXAMPLE: APPROACHING SOUTH AMERICA THROUGH VISUAL ARTS AND MUSIC

As it has been stated, expressions as multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism and similar have become frequent in the European pedagogical discourse during the last decades. Having started in countries where immigration increased after 2nd World War as Great Britain, France and Germany, it has widely extended in the last years. It is obvious that their meanings are shaped by the representations, the language, culture, institutions and political ambience of the «representers» as a wide contextual discursive background. Probably these kinds of often contrasting discourses look strange from the Latin American experience and perspective. Interculturalism does not mean the same in Latin America, with vast centennial experiences of immigration, emigration, internal migration, relative «comprehensibility» of languages and societies that were «naturally» formed within multiculturality, as it does in Europe, where nationalities and identities are mostly understood and conceptualized in quite a different way.

The question that inevitably opens is how to insert contents about interculturalism in the pedagogical process not transforming them or ourselves – in the case that we have the possibility to “present” our culture to others - in an exotic “exported” product and how to discourage a »decontextuated cultural tourism«, that does not fit any educational aims. At this point, Said’s statement that there is nothing especially reprehensible about certain domestica
tions of the exotic, the point is only to acknowledge its occurrence and understanding them as re-elaborations of materials within a new frame (1995) is really appropriate. The question now becomes, how to make the new frame conscious to enhance vivid and sincere representations of the “Other” in question, not to produce mere exchanges of information but a certain kind of identification that should let students penetrate the cultural identity of “Others”.

Because it is obviously necessary to build new cultural paradigms that should foster the development of every pupil and student, regardless of his/her cultural background, we reflected on the possibilities to do so through art education.

The proposed activities took place in a secondary school specialized in music education, Srednja glasbena in baletna šola Ljubljana in Slovenia. Its curriculum comprises so called general educational subjects, among which visual art education is included; the core of the curriculum is devoted to subjects related to music (practice on instruments, theory and composition, history of music etc.). The subject Visual Art Education is developed in 3rd year with 17 and 18 years old students that have a wide range of experiences in the “musical artistic world”, practically very little with the “visual artistic world”. Our main didactic question was how to construct an educational strategy that would contemplate an intercultural approach and still remain within the frame of interest of the students that are highly motivated by their vocational election linked to music.

A general strategy was based on the comparison of theoretical concepts from the worlds of music and visual arts. Chromatic values, tonal values, chiaroscuro, intensity, temperature, saturation of colours, concepts as dot, line, surface, space and structural compositional elements as contrasts, rhythm, domination, proportion, harmony, equilibrium, unity, symmetry and asymmetry can find their equivalents in the world of musical theory: harmony, intensity, rhythm, domination, proportion, mayor or minor key, high and low pitch, melody ... Yet Paul Klee frequently made notes on the relationship between painting and music and was particularly interested in the ele-
Figs. 1–12: Examples from the first and second exercises based on Piazzola’s musical theme.
ment of time in both forms of art (Düchting, 2005). Wasily Kandinsky was interested in the meshing sensations caused by synaesthetic experiences, Johannes Itten worked on abstract compositions based on mathematical proportions and rhythmical divisions, August Macke and Franz Marc discussed a theory of correspondence between musical notes and colour, only to mention extremely briefly a wide range of very interesting experiences that have connected different artistic languages along Art History.

The task that students were engaged in was to listen to music and to try to transform it in visual signs which should be later shaped in a visual composition. Students had to visualize music and “translate” it into concrete visual signs. Departing from the elements of musical language, which they are familiar with, they tried to understand them in a different context, through different sensible channels, reshaping them in an artistic product including the new concepts they had to “learn” from Visual Arts Theory. The musical themes chosen for the exercise were from the Brazilian composers Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso as well as from the Argentinean Astor Piazzola. Two exercises were planned for every theme: starting with Piazzola, students had to detect the elements of the musical composition and express them with simple drawing elements (figs. 1-7). In the second exercise they had to include one more colour, to be able to make more significative differences (figs. 8-12). In the case of Gil they had to elaborate a collage trying to pay attention to the compositional elements, reflecting on the temporality of music and the way that should be expressed in a visual art work (figs. 13-16); in the last exercise they added the problem of colour and harmony in the composition trying to evoke the symbolic function of colour linked to the characteristics of the music that was the basical theme (figs. 17-24).

It is important to state, that when planning the lessons with the aim of “building bridges” between different cultures, we consciously avoided choosing the art motif or the title of the musical compositions as the starting point. Stressing on the motif can be effective as well as very controversial as it can be the most superficial or evident aspect of the artistic work. With this exercise, cultural characteristics became know through an individual engagement in universal expressive languages that do not share the eventual obstacles imposed by verbal communication. Nevertheless, there are still many open questions regarding important aspects of the process of planning lessons of Visual Art Education within interculturality, especially those connected to pedagogy, didactic approaches and contents.

In Slovenia a new school reform (at all levels of education) is taking place. The main goals within the subjects linked to visual art education include the development of observation, space representation, creativity, imagination, evaluation of artistic and natural objects, the knowledge of contents from artistic theory and history, artistic techniques, processes and materials, and the rendering of a direct relationship between practice and theory on the basis of the problem-solving approach. In this way, the instructional process follows three indivisible stages: presentation of the problem, expression - proposal of a resolution- and evaluation of the results. Concrete decisions on matters as the possibilities to establish links with other cultures analyzed in this paper, are formally left to the teacher. This experiment means a new step in the reflection on the proper approaches regarding the problem in the context of the new school reform.

CONCLUSION

In the curious world created by global capitalism, identity is in flux. The nation-state seems weaker as a result of transnational bodies as it is in our case the European Union or the Mercosur in Latin America. In this context, transculture – the violent collision of an existent with a new or different culture that reshapes both into a hybrid transculture that is itself then the subject to transculturation – highlights those places were the carefully defined borders of identity become confused and overlapping, a task that requires new histories, new ideas and new means of representation (Mirzoeff, 2002).

As to a conclusion, an important question is which are the approaches to visual art education that respond to universal values and are not influenced by historical, ideological and other conditions. Actually, this determines new approaches to learning and understanding the differences as well as the commonalities of cultures through art: the function of the representation necessarily becomes the primordial element. Function implies de-
Figs. 13–24: Examples of the third and fourth exercises based on Gil’s and Veloso’s musical theme.
dispositions at different levels and points of view: on one side for the author himself/herself on the other for the receivers of his/her message through art expression. In this way will those that think that they should learn about space drawing nudes – as it is common in the most academic approaches - be able to do so; those who do not agree will be able to work departing from a definition of space that “is theirs” and not “learned” as a product of limiting school programs. The combination of theory and practice promoted by art education therefore must serve to develop a sense of enquiry, an ability to take practical and intellectual risks, to be aware of decision making in a reflexive manner, to evaluate creative responses, to be able to articulate reasons for preference, qualitative judgements, or comparative aesthetic values. This is so for the teacher as well as for the students.

It is important to approach art education from critical perspectives regarding the complexity of »visuality« deeply integrated in nowadays everyday life. To develop a teaching-learning process sensitive to differences in our space means that we are able to detect the aspects in which »visuality« and »space as a source of expression« are present in school subjects. Art education gives the student an idea of how to observe and analyze things in a new way. If the majority of people are not familiar with art education it is because the programs are not made relevant to people’s daily lives. Such programs are frequently neglected in the sense that they are not critical to important questions as for example, the exclusive influence of western conditions of validity in the selection of (»academic«) goals and contents in culturally diverse contexts.

Another interesting element is what Ross argues: »Any consideration of the nature and effectiveness of learning must include an analysis of who provides the teaching. In particular, the transmission of culture cannot be considered as something that is defined in formal curriculum terms: it is not composed only of what is taught but is also crucially affected by who does the teaching. The hidden curriculum of the staffing of our schools conveys important messages about the culture that we wish to transmit. In an age when the notion of culture is becoming increasingly plural and diverse, we need to ensure that the teaching force reflects the composition of our society« (2003, p. 217).

Art education has strong reasons to exist in education and particularly it might be a way to promote learning experiences, creating representations of the world, creative and critical thinking through aesthetic dimensions. In fact, a global understanding of contemporary world demands a complex of elements and experiences, which should be one of the principal objectives of school education at all levels.

REFERENCES

In this document we want to analyze the program from the perspective of our everyday practice. With this purpose in mind, we are going to start offering a very broad outline from where we will develop some more specific aspects: What is the newcomers programme about? What are the aims pursued? Who are the targeted students? What kind of teachers’ profile is required? What is the methodology?. We will turn then to refer to particular aspects of our daily practice, among which we emphasize the welcome plan. The Newcomers Programme emerged in Madrid as a response to three basic circumstances in education: the newly arrived students, teachers that accommodate their classrooms to students with language difficulties, and the educational system in general as an answer to social demands.

The objectives are clear: on the one hand, to provide a communicative competence and on the other, to facilitate their integration into a new education system and a new culture at the same time, in which they will have to adapt from their arrival on. It is therefore essential to plan an appropriate methodology based on the enriched and positive role of cultural diversity, the appreciation of the arriving culture, considering it as valid as the culture they encounter when they arrive. In this experience we should take into account that we all teach and we all learn.

With this philosophy in mind, the Newcomer Programme has been developed in FUHEM 18 (Employee’s Home Foundation), from January 2002 to receive secondary education students from other countries. These students have to deal with a new language to learn, new people to meet, a new culture to understand. Therefore, it seems necessary to implement the Welcome Plan carefully, to create a climate that could put an end to the fears that might arise. In this paper we will outline how we develop the welcoming stage in our school, and the key role of the host student.

**Keywords:** Newcomers Programme. Aims. Methodology. The profile of the Newcomers Programme teacher. The Welcome Plan and the host student.

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**NEWCOMERS PROGRAMME BASIS**

Educational measures vary as social changes take place. These changes increase educational demands. Taking this premise as our starting point, it becomes essential to find solutions that can satisfy all members involved: students teachers and the education system itself.

**Students:** What skills do I need to deal with a new language?

**Teachers:** What should I do with students who cannot follow up a lesson due to their limited Spanish proficiency?

**Education system:** What solutions can we give to this new social demand?

Thus, Newcomers Programme starts in Madrid as a programme addressed to immigrant students who incorporate into the Spanish education system for the first time and who cannot speak Spanish and/or with an achievement gap according to their age. These students remain in this programme for a period of time which should not go beyond nine months.

**AIMS**

To give immigrant students who have limited Spanish proficiency appropriate communicative skills. These skills will allow them to interact in their everyday social environment.

To give assistance to foreign students with a significant achievement gap.

To make easier and as briefly as possible the students’ move to regular curriculum classes and to the education system.

To state in the Educational Curriculum Project assistance to these students.

To put immigrant students learning process into context.

**TARGET STUDENTS**

Secondary as well as Second and Third Primary Cycles in schools which receive public funds. The total number of students per group should not be over 12.
STAGES

The Schooling Committee is in charge of assigning a place in the nearest Newcomers Class to their home with the consent of the students’ family. Their incorporation can be carried out any time during the school year, although they cannot stay for a period of time longer than nine months.

The students’ complete incorporation to a regular curriculum class is based on the teaching staff evaluation. The Education Inspection must be aware of this previously. Integration stages:

1) Welcoming stage.
2) Development of learning and gradual move to regular curriculum class.
3) Monitoring stage.

MATERIAL LEARNED

There is no official syllabus for Newcomers Programme. This means it is left to the teacher’s judgement what material should be learned or prioritized. A list of useful resources is provided on teachers training courses.

TEACHERS

A Newcomers Programme teacher must be trained on teaching Spanish as a foreign language. It is also important to have experience teaching foreign students and students who show a significant achievement gap. However, these requirements can be adapted to the school’s Curriculum Project. As with any other class, the teacher’s duties are related to teaching, tutorial support, evaluation and monitoring of the students.

NEWCOMERS PROGRAMME IN
FUNDACIÓN HOGAR DEL EMPLEADO (FUHEM)

Among the principles of FUHEM, cultural diversity is considered a positive and enriching phenomenon in our society. Therefore, immigrant students as well as educationally disadvantaged social groups are welcome to our schools. This makes our schools carry out teaching skills which promote a better understanding of other cultures.

Having this philosophy in mind, our schools welcome students to the Newcomers Programme.

What follows is the experience and critical reflection of one of the classes involved in the programme.

NEWCOMERS PROGRAMME: AN OPEN DOOR

A child, another child, a teenager and another one, embarking on a trip across multiple paths / roads that will lead them to an unknown territory, to meet new people, to learn a new language, to understand new traditions.

OUR CHARACTERISTICS

Lourdes School is a semi-public school (receiving public funds) that belongs to the Teaching Section FUHEM (Employee’s Home Foundation), together with other teaching centres located in Madrid. Among the principles of FUHEM, cultural diversity is considered a positive and enriching phenomenon in our society. Lourdes School is a secular and pluralist school.

NEWCOMERS PROGRAMME STUDENT PROFILE

Newcomers Programme students at Lourdes School are Secondary School immigrants, up to twelve, who join the programme progressively during the school year not knowing the Spanish language and/ or with a significant achievement gap. The countries of origin have been changing every school year since the beginning of the programme, but they have mainly been Moroccan, Chinese, Romanian, Brazilian, Bulgarian and Ukrainian students.

The time they spend in the programme varies according to their nationality, it is shorter for those whose native language comes from Latin (less than nine months) and longer for the rest.
NEWCOMERS PROGRAMME TEACHER PROFILE

“They are coming.
And I am not prepared.
How was I going to be?
I am a new teacher, and I am learning from practise”.
Frank McCourt. The Teacher.

“Profesión”

[Image of a word cloud with professions]

OUR PHILOSOPHY

That open door to our Newcomers Programme means agreeing with the following premises:

- Heterogeneity is positive.
- We all teach and we all learn.
- Students’ culture is as valuable as the teachers’.
- We are all different even if we share the same origin and language.
- A multicultural society is the combination of exchange and interaction.
- We all look for solutions to confront difficulties.
- Respecting each other means respecting oneself.
- We might be friends but we will always be classmates.

HOW DO STUDENTS INTEGRATE?

When a student enters the Newcomers Programme he / she goes through different stages:

a) **Welcoming Stage**: The student is posted to a regular curriculum class. Because of its great importance, we will develop this stage more carefully.

b) **Exposure to Language Stage**: The students join the regular curriculum class for easier subjects, such as Physical Education, Technology, Plastic Arts and any other subjects they can confront. They have a double tutorship, on the one hand the Newcomers Programme course tutor, and on the other hand the regular curriculum class course tutor. The aim of this stage is double: language learning and school integration. They do not only have to share a room but also have the feeling of being part of it. This is why they have to do the same activities as other students do: Trips, excursions, workshops, a week on cinema are organised.

c) **Moving to regular curriculum class**: Once they are sufficiently fluent in Spanish, they fully join the regular curriculum class, sometimes in the same school or in another one, when there aren’t any places available.

d) **Monitoring Stage**: Newcomers Programme follow up on the student progress together with the new course tutor. At this stage, the student goes through a tricky situation, since he is afraid of facing his new reality in an autonomous way. For this reason, it is very important that all the teachers at school coordinate.

HOW DO WE WORK? OUR METHODOLOGY

We start from students’ knowledge.

We encourage a positive attitude to learn a new language by avoiding fear of making mistakes.

We focus on language functions by making easier communicative situations in a contextualised framework.

We provide students enough time to fit in and communicate in the new linguistic code.
We give more importance to the linguistic structures than to the words; that is a way to increase the communication by means of using simple and clear expressions.

We approach the contents in a global way, so that the activities are interrelated to different areas of knowledge.

We start from situations which call our students’ attention because they answer their needs and experiences or have a recreational meaning.

We put into practice functional learning so that pupils can use it whenever they need, both in the practice of the acquired learning and extrapolation of the new learning.

We encourage cooperative learning in order to promote peer relation.

We promote brainstorming of different points of view, collective decision-making and conflict resolution through dialogue and cooperation.

We adapt the resources we have (texts, computers and audio-visual devices) for the better achievement of our aims.

**WHAT DO WE TEACH? OUR CONTENTS**

Depending on the features, the groups’ needs and interests, the contents may vary. Nevertheless, we have established some centres of interest which are important in their daily routines and so, it is obvious they must be prioritized.

Bearing in mind that our Newcomer Program receives Secondary School students, we try to approach some curricular contents which make their access to the ordinary groups easier. For this reason, we work on Mathematics concepts for students who can’t follow up the contents of their regular curriculum class and Mathematical language, Applied Spanish for Social Studies and Science for the whole group in a systematic way. Students who are proficient in a Second Language, which is taught in the school, attend their regular curriculum class.

**WHAT AND HOW DO WE EVALUATE?**

We start from an initial assessment which is based on:

a) **Personal and family data collection.**

Students give us information about their social and family situation. Our school has elaborated a questionnaire which is delivered to their families. If they can’t understand the questionnaire in Spanish, they can fill it in with the help of the course tutor or voluntary pupils who have been in the Newcomers Program before.

b) **Assessment on their linguistic competence.**

We have designed some tests which evaluate the linguistic skills of these students. There is not a definite period of time to carry them out since we prioritize direct observation as a method to get reliable information during their first weeks.

A continuous and global assessment is carried out by means of direct observation.

Besides, when their communication skills are fluent enough, they are tested in order to observe the linguistic competence acquired.

The class tutor keeps families informed about the results in each term.

Once the schooling period in the Newcomers Program is over, a personalized report is given to each of the students. This report consists of the results of the teaching/learning process and it is also sent to the Education Inspectorate so that the students’ data are registered.

**WELCOME PLAN: WHY DOES A NEWCOMERS PROGRAMME BECOMES NECESSARY?**

When a student arrives for the first time at our school, he/she has certain characteristics which make him/her a candidate for Newcomers Programme. He/she needs certain skills which will enable him/her to achieve a complete integration and autonomy.

Thus, welcome plan becomes essential as it provides a self-assuring atmosphere within a language, place and traditions different to theirs.
AIMS

To make their integration and autonomy easier.
To welcome the students and their families on their first school day.
To gather information concerning them.
To report families on the schools characteristics and Education System.
To get to know teachers and peers.
To get used to the school (classrooms, cantina, playground...)
To know their timetable and school routines.
To detect needs.
To assign a host-student.

DEVELOPMENT

Three stages are considered:

1) School welcome: Students and their families are welcomed by teachers and other staff (see AIMS section).

2) Welcome plan:
   During these first weeks it is important to create a reliable and gratifying climate that helps the students get closer to the new school environment. Among the measures to be taken, we underline the following:
   - To draw and label spaces and class materials of common use.
   - To make a poster where the students place the photographs of the teachers and the students who are joining the programme. The poster is called: I am...., and it is used as an identity card where the students write their names, age, countries, their likes.... etc.
   - To put the flags of the different countries on a cork globe.
   - To speak and research on different countries, cultures etc. of the students who are coming.

   - To exhibit the photographs.
   - To choose a host-student for the students who arrive. Our school “Colegio Lourdes” has a service of Peer Mediation Programme. A host-students from this group may arise on a voluntary basis, and they will guide the students to their classrooms. This will ease their integration with the other students. When a student who is completely ignorant of the language arrives, it is desirable that the host-student assigned speaks the same language.
   - To carry out a first evaluation.

3) Move to regular curriculum class.
   Introduction to regular curriculum class teachers and attendance to all possible subjects. The role of the host-student becomes very relevant at this stage, as it serves as a guide in a moment when fears may arise and cause some blockages in the student.

ASSESSMENT

This plan of reception constitutes the first stage of the period of adjustment of the immigrant student. This stage should be overcome when he/she arrives at an unknown country and place, and he/she must get to know people and who he/she does not understand.

Although the needs of an immigrant student are many, being the acquisition of language and cultural skills among them, we must not forget that what is really sought is the complete development as a person. For these purposes, the welcoming stage means the first door that must be open.

The welcome plan helps the students adjust to their new environment in a non-traumatic way and also helps them develop some attitudes to learn a new language and new traditions without losing their identity.

On the other hand, this welcome plan tries to encourage the rest of the students of the school to create a tolerant attitude towards these students.
Among all the songs listened to throughout the year, the students chose one which has been compiled on a CD. This CD has previously been handed in by the end of the year.

**ASSESSMENT**

Music has been used as a satisfying and recreational activity as well as a linking device among every member of the class regardless of his/her level. Music learning, oral expression and audition have been encouraged. The activity has been useful to make students express their personal views and feelings on the songs listened to.

Each song is set in a specific socio-cultural context, and students have to explain the characteristics of the song.

Prosodic stress has been adapted to musical stress and rhythm.

The topic of each song has been developed and related to the contents of the units learnt.

To sum up, the purpose of this didactic unit is integrating students in the group and encouraging body language. In conclusion, we may say there is no doubt that the power of music is a universal tool.
It is not an easy job, but sometimes it is just wonderful to see the progress in children’s relationships and signs of openness to human values.

I have been teaching in the same place as I live. Many times I have noticed that children are sometimes not ready to accept people from other places. This is all the result of parents’ world view. Slowly I have been trying to change some things in peoples’ way of thinking. I must say that many things have changed in past few years. Place where I live is a beautiful place with beautiful surrounding and tough people. We don’t have any ethnical groups. The community is self sufficient and people are just happy with themselves. It is great to be satisfied with yourself and you culture however the way of thinking is copied by the children.

I observed the situation in the classroom. I was not happy about what I saw. I found out that children could be really cruel to newcomers. So I started to talk to them about the proper behaviour, about differences among people.

At first we talked about differences among people in the classroom, home-town and country. Later on I decided to offer children the opportunity to look across the borders by using European projects.

I wanted to open children’s and parents’ minds for the outside world. I wanted them to learn about different perspective and way of seeing our world. I wanted to enable them to learn that people are people wherever they live with all their characteristics.

At first there was some nagging from some pupils. Luckily the majority was enthusiastic about the project, so they helped me to carry the burden and move ahead.
The most interesting project in my opinion was last year’s project called Communication channels. The project joined 9 European countries. It was about our verbal and non-verbal communication.

Intercultural difference is not simply a question of language. We do not always just use words to communicate something. There is a whole language of body movements and gestures that we use all the time, known as body language. And body language is not the same in all countries. One of the ultimate goals was to make pupils aware of the nature of communication and the importance of getting the accurate meaning of words when speaking with people from another culture. Also, to enhance observation skills, the ability to interpret data, awareness of cultural difference and an appreciation of the difficulties for people in a foreign environment. Through different web tool we presented our way of communicate and had guessing game where we could guess about the expressions of the body language.

We took photos, recorded voices, made posters and it was interesting to learn expressions not only in English but also in other European languages. The most interesting is Greek language with Greek letters. If they did not offer also Latin letters we would be totally lost.

This year’s project is about European perception of human values which are currently a topical subject. Students will be able to value the importance of human values, acquire a positive stance towards the introduction of the European dimension within the school setting. They will develop their affective skills and increase their motivation towards native as well as foreign language learning. Students will understand how human values are expressed and perceived by other Europeans.
The values we work on are: friendship, beauty, equality, collaboration, democracy, justice, wisdom, openness, respect for others, and concern for others.

Projects can be also a good motivation for students who have problems with learning foreign language. I teach those students English. Their motivation is low and they do not see the point of learning English. That was the reason why I started a project with German secondary school. Students found pen friends and every English lesson we could have in the ICT room they checked messages. Some of them communicated even later when they left our primary school. Writing letters they improved linguistic skills, and learnt about the way of life in Germany, their customs, celebrations, school system and much more.

Projects are really wonderful methods to enrich our knowledge. It is great for teachers because they learn about new teaching methods, exchange good practice and sometimes just enjoy having contacts and friendships with colleagues from other countries.

In the future I would like to continue with cooperation with countries outside Europe and develop my intercultural competence as much as possible in order to pass the knowledge to the children.
V. TEACHER EDUCATION
The paper focuses on diversity as one of the main concepts, which represent the basis for intercultural education and understanding the quality of the educational process in early education. We are considering reasons for putting attention on diversity at classroom level and advocating for the intercultural approach, which represents knowledge, skills, values and core beliefs incorporated in all teaching and learning processes, which the teachers can not be taught separately or additionally but only as one of the important elements of quality education. Based on our research experiences, we also propose a holistic approach to preparing teachers for new challenges in the teaching and learning process. We point out that in the process of building teachers’ competences we should not only focus on knowledge and skills but also on changing/reexamining their/our values and core believes. We also point out that this should be an on-going process with professional and peer support that should give teacher the opportunity to learn from his/her experiences or in professional interaction with other teachers by exchanging and discussing specific experiences.

Key words: intercultural approach in early childhood education, diversity, building teachers’ competences

Many teachers present their work on intercultural education with activities that they undertook with their children, in which they showed recognition for life and people in other countries or other »cultures«. They often supplement this approach with visits or/and other kinds of interactions with exotic countries and their people. Another popular form of »intercultural education« is organizing different kind of days or weeks in which children get to know other cultures. Sometimes they even »use« parents or adults from their communities to present other cultures. These kinds of activities prove that teachers are aware of the need for confronting children with diversity in modern society. What is more, they are a kind of enrichment for the curriculum and the educational process. But on the other hand, they are only a very small step towards quality education with an intercultural approach as a basis for inclusiveness and for the process of building competences connected with diversity in modern society. What are the reasons for this? How to develop their competence for respecting diversity as a basis for intercultural approach at their educational work? What kind of support would the teachers’ need in order to overcome this misunderstanding? In our paper we will focus our consideration on the situation in early childhood settings and on the first few years of primary education. In this framework we will focus our attention on diversity as one of the main concepts in intercultural education and understanding the quality of the educational process.

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY
A BASIS FOR INTERCULTURAL APPROACH

From children’s point of view, diversity starts at the micro cultural level of their families. The process of “intercultural education” starts at the moment, when a child is exposed to other families, people or cultures for the first time. Research shows that very young children of two or three years of age start asking questions or make comments about physical differences among people (Derman-Sparks, Tanaka-Higa, Sparks, 1989; MacNaughton, 2006) and can develop prejudices about these. This process depends on child’s experiences with diversity in his/her surroundings. The diversity of experiences increases when a child is enrolled in early childhood education setting or in first grade of primary education. He/she brings his/her family micro culture into the classroom and at the same time gets opportunities to be exposed to diverse social experiences, which other children and adults bring into the same classroom.

We cannot deny that the diversity among children in our classrooms was not present in the past. However, we have to ascertain that families are becoming much more diverse in modern societies due to migration, urbanization, mobility processes, improvement in technology, communication and
information opportunities, changes in political and economical spheres and children growing up in very diverse family environments. What is more, even inside of the same family’s micro culture children can expect changes which influence their identity. Very early in their life, children get opportunities to develop the capacities for living in a diverse world, but the main question is, if important adults know how to arrange those opportunities.

First of all, it is very important for teachers to be prepared for very diverse children in their classrooms. Many teachers don’t see the diversity on the level of their classroom; many of them said in good faith that all children in their classroom are the same and that they are not doing any distinctions among children. Some of them even add: “I don’t have a child from any other country in my classroom” or “There are no children with special needs in my classroom”. This kind of statements show that teacher in fact do not understand the concept of diversity and equality. Equality does not mean that everyone is the same, nor that people should be treated the same. It means that each person’s needs are met and that people will always have different needs and strengths. It is part of what makes each of use unique and why diversity exists in nature. If teachers do not recognize the diversity that exists among school’s members, families and children and name it, it may mean they are denying that they exist. Children will imitate their attitude, which is a good opportunity to develop negative attitudes towards diversity. Teachers’ inability to see “otherness” influences children’s sense of belonging and acceptance (Gilmore, Campbell & Cuskelly, 2003) and it influences children’s learning opportunities and inclusiveness.

We can find almost the same effects in cases where teachers acknowledge that some children are different, put them in boxes and treat them according to the particular box, for example: »Roma parents don’t come to school because they don’t care for the education of their children«. This kind of stereotypes are often in our practice (Banks, 1993), regardless of the fact that parents can have very different reasons for being less present in school (Yonezawa and Oaks, 1999; Linderman, 2001). Teachers are very often irritated by diversity in their classrooms and often comment like: “This child disturbs regular classes”. The UNCRC General Comment 7 (2005) points out that young child suffer the consequences of discrimination against their parents and families (pg. 6). Discrimination related to ethnic origin, class/caste, personal circumstances and lifestyle or political and religious beliefs (of children or their parents/families) excludes children from full participation in society. It affects parents’ capacities to fulfill their responsibilities towards their children, affects children’s opportunities and self esteem, as well as encourages resentment and conflicts among children and adults (pg. 5). When parents and families feel respected instead of discriminated, they will be more willing to be involved. One way to involve families in their child’s education is to view early childhood and other educational institutions as transition places where family life meets the public environment (Vandenbroeck, 2006).

If we agree that children learn what they live, it is important for teachers to understand that they have to change their everyday teaching and learning approaches and understand classroom as a diverse community of learners. Children will understand the concepts of diversity and interculturalism, if they will live by them in their own communities. Children treat each other with equity, fairness, respect, dignity and with competences, which we should develop through the intercultural approach, when they experience them in their own group/classroom. Teachers also develop these concepts in children by helping them understand how others feel when they are treated unfairly.

The first step that teachers can make to promote diversity and social inclusion in educational contexts is to develop a greater understanding of cultural backgrounds and social worlds of the families of children they work with. Children develop stronger self and group identities when teachers’ interactions acknowledge, respect, and affirm all children’s and their families’ cultures and experiences. Children are individuals but they are also members of a cultural group. A child’s sense of identity, feeling of belonging and values are shaped by the culture in which she or he is raised (Derman Sparks, 1989). At the same time, children should never be seen only as a member of one group. Everyone has multiple identities and schools need to foster and value all of those identities. According to DECET (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training Network, 2007) for children to feel respected and be successful, they need to feel that they belong in the
classroom learning community and empowered to develop diverse aspects of their identity.

In early years, children construct their understanding of socio-economic diversity, and develop attitudes towards social classes. They begin to internalize the culture of their own community. By the age of five or six they begin to recognize their membership in a particular community and develop prejudices against those from other communities. This is the time when they begin to absorb both positive attitudes and negative biases attached to members of other groups from family members and other key adults in their lives. By the age of 2, children are aware of ethnic divisions that are based on non-visible differences and usually develop negative attitudes in relation to it (Connelly, 2007). According to Connelly, attitudes that young children have towards ethnicity are not “free-floating” but grounded in their day-to-day experiences and thus play an important role in helping them make sense of their social worlds (Connelly, 2007). These phenomena are conditioning on some characteristics of children’s thinking at this age such as: over-generalization, egocentrism, concrete thinking, false associations, magical thinking (York, 2003). In addition, children are influenced by the adults in their lives and the processes of socialization. Naturally, children’s curiosity leads them to ask questions and comment on the differences they observe, but the way how adults react (explain, justify, and generalize) actually teaches children that some differences are not acceptable and that people can be excluded or discriminated because of them.

Early years are also the time when children need to be supported in building a strong, positive self-image which enables them to understand the concept of respect and to learn how to live with people, who are different from themselves. Once they respect themselves, it is easier for them to respect others. At the classroom level, respect implies admiration and high regard for diversity and is shown by incorporating each child’s experiences and his/her personal and cultural history into the learning environment. This includes having posters, photographs, dolls and books that represent diverse and multiple identities of children and do not show stereotypes in the classroom. Respect for diversity incorporates empathy, the capacity for linking with other people’s realities, feelings and needs. It is also about belonging and mutual acceptance as well as respecting the rights of others. Respect for diversity needs to be embedded in every day’s relationships between people in settings.

Teachers seldom use diversity in the classroom as a resource for learning. They often pretend that they did not hear children’s comments and ignore them. Many times they just interrupt further communication with comments that express the power of their position like: “I don’t permit this kind of comments”, instead of using them for learning experiences for all classrooms. There is some evidence that biases need to be addressed directly and that children from 3 to 8 years of age will not learn to be less biased without specific interventions, such as adult and peer discussions. Discussions challenge biases and teachers have to know that merely experiences with diversity are not sufficient (Van Keulen, 2004). Only a combination of exposure to diversity and adequate teaching strategies will result in a positive shift in attitudes of young children. Promoting positive attitudes and recognizing the needs of those, who are different, have to be embedded in the way how children and adults interact on a daily basis. Teachers need to learn to interact with children in this kind of situations and not to ignore them; they need to learn how to walk this kind of talks. Children’s questions about the differences they noticed should be answered honestly, even though they might be uncomfortable for teachers. When teachers acknowledge differences in a respectful way, the possibility for children to compare themselves to others in constructive ways is established.

Another way how to show children that differences can be an opportunity for learning and growing is to facilitate the development of dialoguing and decision making skills based on critical thinking skills about the information that they heard. Children need to be able to understand the perspectives of everyone, who lives in the society, and how the decisions that they make, may affect others. Children can develop these skills though transformative discussions in the classroom, where we can use the processes of naming, voicing, and acting that occur in the development of social justice concepts and use them for facilitating the acquisition of critical thinking skills. In this process children learn how to name or describe the issue based on their personal experience with it. The next step is to provide children opportuni-
Therefore we could say that the intercultural approach to the educational process is a basis for quality and inclusiveness of the educational process. From this point of view it would be much more appropriate to talk about the intercultural approach in education than about intercultural education. And when talking about the intercultural approach, we are not talking only about knowledge of different cultures, and recognizing and celebrating differences. The intercultural approach represents knowledge, skills, values and core beliefs incorporated in all teaching and learning processes. It is an essential part of quality teaching indicators and incorporates knowledge, skills and values focusing on:

- diversity, inclusion and democratic values;
- requires teachers to interact and provide children opportunities for different kinds of interactions among themselves, with other people from institutions and outside of it;
- involving parents and community members in the educational process;
- assessing children’s growth and planning for meaningful learning;
- involving children as active learners;
- creating a safe and stimulating environment in which each child will feel inclusive;
- continuous learning and reflection on his/her own understanding and practice and providing communication at broader school and out of school level.

A short review of obligations, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes presented above showed that the development of the mentioned competences is not something which teachers can learn and practice after one course on intercultural education. The competences are part of general teaching competences and not something additional or separated. We believe that only high quality teaching practice can help achieving intercultural education goals. In this perspective it is essential to define the main pedagogical principles, which influence the quality of teaching practices, based on intercultural approaches. You can not achieve goals like understanding and re-

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH INSTEAD OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

If we understand the educational process from the cultural constructivists’ point of view, it is not possible to talk about a quality educational process today, if we are not admitting diversity. Understanding, respecting and living in diversity represents the main concept in the quality education process (ISSA, 2009), which is one of the main concepts in intercultural education.
specting diversity, communicating and interacting with otherness etc. if you
don’t focus on the quality of interaction, on how to create responsive, caring
and engaging interactions among teachers and children, among children in
the classroom and among classroom and out of classroom communities, if
you do not create opportunities for partnerships with families and commu-
nity, if teaching strategies are not meaningful for children and don’t involve
children’s participation in the learning process, if teacher don’t know how to
observe and why to asses children’s growth and how to connect it with plan-
ning activities. At the end, teachers have to know how to create a supportive
and inclusive classroom environment, where all children feel they belong.
Building teachers’ attitudes towards otherness, respect, dialogue and interac-
tion in diverse communities should start in pre-service trainings. Teachers’ at-
titudes to those, who are different from them, influence their behavior and their
williness to implement inclusive practices (Opdal, Wormnaes & Habayeb,
2001). Teachers’ negative attitudes towards “otherness” become barriers for
inclusion because of their impact on children’s sense of belonging and accept-
ance (Gilmore, Campbell & Cuskelly, 2003). This process should continue in
teachers’ on-going professional development and life-long learning processes.
When talking about professional development process we are advocating for
more than just in-service trainings. Supporting systems for professional devel-
opment should help teachers implement new knowledge, skills and values into
their practice, or else we cannot expect changes at the classroom level.

We can illustrate this kind of building of teachers’ competences with the
research results of the Integration of Roma Children into Mainstream Edu-
cation in Slovenia (Vonta, 2007) project. In order to create an inclusive
environment in schools, we have to put a lot of attention on teachers’ pro-
ofessional development. Over three years we provided:

• One anti-bias training session (to make them aware of their own
biases and to offer them tools to overcome them.);
• One session on Roma culture and history (it touched upon some
characteristics of their culture, traditions and language and Roma’s
situation in contemporary society and pointed out some differences
in their understanding and comprehension of life);
• Two training sessions on bilingualism (focusing on understanding
the need to deepen the knowledge of children in their mother tongue
as a requirement for developing and learning a foreign language and
acquiring skills in a foreign language);
• Six training sessions on child-centered approaches in inclusive
classrooms (in this segment, the following basic concepts were ad-
dressed:
  o using child-centered methods that focus on the individual needs
  of every child in the context of holistic development;
  o understanding the influences of the physical and social environ-
  ment on a child’s learning, and the need to create a functionally
  and culturally adequate environment for Roma and other children
  that would stimulate choices and independent learning of children;
  o considering the individual dimensions of each child and adult
  when entering a specific learning situation;
  o creating partnerships with parents and identifying adequate
  methods for active involvement of parents and community repre-
  sentatives in classroom and school life;
  o planning educational work based on systematic monitoring of
  the child’s progress;
  o teacher as a stimulator of child’s learning, with the responsibil-
  ity to create a community of students and acceptance of lifelong
  learning).

Additionally to trainings we supported and provided team working, men-
toring, monitoring and networking with teachers from other schools. We
also supported some activities on the level of the whole school like train-
tings for teachers, who were not involved in the study (upper grade teachers in our case), as well as trainings and meetings with school administration. This holistic approach brought changes in teaching and in school environment. The study proved that Roma children made the biggest progress with teachers, who made the biggest improvement in quality of their teaching approaches measured by ISSA pedagogical standards (ISSA, 2005). The project also showed that teachers require a certain amount of time for the implementation of the child-centered approach, which was a complete innovation for them. Here it is important to note that the training sessions were not only about understanding and getting to know the new approaches, but about changing the teaching practices of teachers. For some teachers this was also an innovation, especially in comparison to old paradigms of teacher trainings, where only the attendance mattered and it was not important how you used the materials covered in your classroom. The new approach definitely requires more effort from the teacher, including the capability to reflect on one’s own teaching practice as well as the willingness to accept help and support from school or from the outside and to share experiences with others.

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This paper gives a presentation of different instructional techniques for teachers to design intercultural curriculum for students in their classroom. In recent years the teachers have to teach students with different culture, linguistics and abilities. Cultural diversity in school environment has increased in all countries due to immigration. At this point it is the need of an hour to develop the students to understand different culture. We have to enable the children to respect others cultural difference, celebrate diversity and value the other’s cultural beliefs and practices. Intercultural education helps to promote equality and to challenge the unfair cultural discrimination. For the classrooms to be appropriate learning environments for all students with cultural differences the teacher must develop the curricular design that helps for intercultural understanding. The curriculum should be based on the multicultural design. They must embrace an emancipator approach to curriculum and pedagogy that validates the dignity and humanity of each learner. When teachers design and modify curriculum which meet the multicultural group they will be able to help the children with different culture to respect and appreciate cultural diversity and experience others culture. The instructional techniques that are discussed with theoretical base will be presented in this paper which can serve as a literature base to develop practical guide for teachers to plan their classroom activities based on the cultural identity and understanding among students. Further, the guide will help the teacher to make curricular adaptations in classrooms bearing in mind the students’ points of view and to promote co-operation and empathy.

Key Words: Intercultural Education, Cultural Diversity, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Instruction

This theoretical paper deals with the instructional techniques for an intercultural education. Culture and education are interrelated and culture forges education content. The personnel involved in educational system have their own cultural perspectives and cultural aspirations in their curriculum design and teaching. Even then education is also vital for the survival of culture for promotion of better cultural understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Interculturality is a dynamic concept which refers to evolve relations between cultural groups. It has been defined as “the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect” (UNESCO, 2006). Intercultural education aims to impart awareness among children of their own culture and value to respect the cultural difference from their own. It is a system of education which initiates appreciation of each other’s discrimination and develop ones with cultural diversity. In Guideline on Traveller Education in Primary Schools (2002) intercultural education is defined as aiming to:

- Foster conditions conducive to pluralism in society,
- Raise children’s awareness of their own culture and attune them to the fact that there are other ways of behaving and other value systems,
- Develop respect for life styles different from their own so that children can understand and appreciate each other,
- Foster a commitment to equality,
- Enable children to make informed choices about, and take action on, issues of prejudice and discrimination,
- Appreciate and value similarities and differences,
- Enable all children to speak for themselves and articulate their cultures and histories

Many international standard setting conferences and documents stressed the need for intercultural education. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) also stresses the need for educational content which recognizes minorities, expressing that: “States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole”. The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) addresses the cultural rights issue and stresses the role of education in that “all persons should be entitled to
quality education and training that fully respects their cultural identity”. In this democratic world the education system should initiate to spotlight multicultural character in society and promote cultural interaction in the school set up for the promotion of healthy understanding among individual from different culture which in turn promote cultural identity and cultural understanding for future multicultural society. Multicultural society warrants intercultural education plays a vital role for the promotion of cultural appraisal. The benefits of intercultural education for all children include the following:

- It encourages the child’s curiosity about cultural and social difference.
- It helps to develop and support the child’s imagination by normalising difference.
- It helps to develop the child’s critical thinking by enabling the child to gain perspectives on, and to question, his/her own cultural practices.
- It helps to develop sensitivity in the child.
- It helps to prevent racism.

The above stated benefits are provided to the students when the teaching and learning process has solid aims of intercultural education.

**AIM OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION**

Intercultural education happens naturally through the ‘hidden curriculum’ of the social and visual world which the child lives. Intercultural education is for all children irrespective of their ethnicity, as today’s world is becoming diverse. Hence, intercultural education should aim to be:

- The reduction of all forms of exclusion
- The furthering of integration and school achievement
- The promotion of respect for cultural diversity
- The promotion of understanding of the cultures of others and
- The promotion of international understanding (UNESCO, 1992).

The above stated aim of intercultural education will be achieved only with the principle stated by UNESCO guideline on intercultural education. They are:

**Principle I:** Intercultural education respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.

**Principle II:** Intercultural education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.

**Principle III:** Intercultural education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.

These principles should be incorporated in intercultural education to promote cultural identity and cultural understanding. To carry out these principles in teaching – learning process teachers play key role in intercultural education. Teachers are those who interact with the children of culturally diverse and mould them. Today’s classrooms require teachers to educate students varying in culture, language, abilities and many other characteristics (Gollnick and Chinn, 2002). To meet the needs of these diversified learners teachers should not only be theoretically competent but also be able to instruct with culturally responsive pedagogy. They should create an environment where all students are welcomed and supported regardless of their cultural differences which in turn facilitate best opportunity to learn. The pedagogy which meets the cultural diversity comprises three dimensions. They are a) Institutional b) Personal c) Instructional. The institutional dimension reflects the administration, organization of the school, School policies & procedures and community involvement. The personal dimension refers to the cognitive and emotional processes teachers must engage in to become culturally responsive. Teachers’ self-reflection is an important part of the personal dimension. Teachers should examine their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and others, they have to discover why they are who they are, and can confront biases that have influenced their value system (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The instructional dimension includes materials, strategies and activities that form the basis of instruction. When the tools of instruction are incompatible with, or worse marginalize, the students’ cultural experiences, create a disconnection among...
students with school is likely (Irvine, 1992). Therefore instructional dimension should recognize and utilizes the students’ culture and language in instruction, and ultimately respects the students’ personal and community identities. Thus the three dimensions significantly interact in the teaching and learning process and are critical to understand the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrated fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures. Culturally responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching are:

1. Positive perspectives on parents and families: Every teacher should build on awareness among parents to understand the importance of intercultural education. Teachers should engage in dialogues with parents and involve them in school function and create a room for religious and cultural understanding so that they can pass on to their children.

2. Communication of high expectations: Effective and consistent communication of high expectation helps students to develop a healthy self concept (Rist, 1971). If the teacher expresses sympathy over failure, praises for completing a simple task, or offers voluntary help, it may send unintentional messages of low expectation. Hence, a teacher should promote high expectation among students to develop further.

3. Learning within the context of culture: Children learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, 2002). The effective communication among students creates a situation to understand cultural differences. Cooperative learning will certainly promote better learning exposure to understand children’s own culture and other peers cultural practices.

4. Student – centered instruction: The culturally responsive teaching will be effective when the curriculum is student centered. Student centered instruction will promote children to learn from themselves and develop sharing & understanding different cultural practices.

5. Culturally mediated instruction: Learning takes place in culturally appropriate social situations. Allow students with lot of opportunities to share their cultural knowledge. Teaching should make the students to raise question and challenge their own beliefs and actions.

6. Reshaping the Curriculum: The curriculum should be interdisciplinary in nature and integrated with intercultural concepts. It should incorporate higher order of cognitive and meta cognitive skills to understand, analyze and appreciate the cultural differences.

7. Teacher as facilitator: Teachers are facilitators for a culturally responsive teaching. Teachers should be able to accommodate different learning styles of culturally diverse learners.

The above listed characteristics for culturally responsive teaching will be effectively carried out only when the teachers are culturally responsive.

BUILDING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHERS

As today’s global society requires teachers who are culturally responsive teachers, Gay 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002, listed specific activities for teachers to become, as culturally responsive teacher. They are:

- Teachers must engage in reflective thinking and writing.
- Explore personal and family histories
- Acknowledge membership in different groups
- Learn about the history and experiences of diverse groups
- Visit students’ families and communities
- Visit or read about successful teachers in diverse settings
- Develop an appreciation of diversity
- Participate in reforming the institution

The activities listed above are in accordance with the definition given by the Traveller Education in Primary Schools. When the teachers engage in
reflective thinking and writing help them to create conducive conditions to pluralism in society. If teachers explore personal and family histories, enable the child to speak for themselves and articulate their cultures and histories. When the teachers acknowledge membership in different groups create awareness among children of their own cultures and attune them to the fact that there are other ways of behaving and other value system. The teachers who develop an appreciation of diversity are able to achieve the aim of intercultural education listed by UNESCO - promotion respect for cultural diversity, reduce all forms of exclusion by integration, and promote understanding of the cultures of others. When the teachers perform the above activities they are culturally responsive and they are able to adopt culturally responsive instruction in their teaching methods. To perform culturally responsive instruction effectively Heraldo et., al (2006) had listed certain activities to adapt the curriculum to be culturally responsive. The teachers who can perform the below activities to adapt the curriculum into culturally responsive, the instruction may take its shape as a culturally responsive instruction. Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999 stated certain activities for culturally responsive instruction. They are:

- Acknowledge students’ differences as well as their commonalities
- Validate students cultural identity in class room practices and instructional materials
- Educate students about the diversity of the world around them
- Promote equity and mutual respect among students
- Assess students ability and achievement validly
- Foster a positive interrelationship among students’ their families, the community and school
- Motivate students to become active participants in their learning
- Encourage students to think critically
- Challenge to strive for excellence as defined by their potential
- Assist students in becoming socially and politically conscious

When the instruction acknowledge students’ differences as well as their commonalities reduce all forms of exclusion. The culturally responsive instruction educates the students about the diversity of the world around them and promotes the aim of respect for cultural diversity. The aim of promotion of international understanding is achieved when the instruction foster a positive interrelationships among students’ families, the community and school. The integration and school achievement aim of intercultural education is achieved when the instruction is framed to motivate students to become active participants in their learning and encourage students to think critically. The instructions which assist students in becoming socially and politically conscious promote the aim - promotion of international understanding. Thus when the teachers’ instruction is designed with the above characteristics it ensures to achieve the aim stated by the UNESCO, 1992.

CRITERION FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION

The instructional techniques for intercultural education should be effective to promote cultural understanding among students in the classroom. The intercultural education is not a separate curriculum to be taught to the students. It has to be inbuilt within the curriculum so that teacher incorporates intercultural understanding in their teaching process. The interaction in the classroom will be framed by a set of agreed rules of classroom behaviour, which emphasis that classroom members treat each other with respect. This respect will be further emphasized through reinforcement in the interaction of classroom life. Teachers can unintentionally teach the children to understand the diversity among their peers. The teachers should understand all children in the classroom who differs in culture, habits, customs, beliefs and practices. Which in turn facilitate them to frame the curriculum depending upon their cultural diversity. The teachers should integrate the intercultural content across the areas of the curriculum and provide all children to get richer learning experience in an intercultural environment. Every teacher should be conscious to take into account of classroom climate, teaching approaches, assessment approaches and lesson content for effective intercultural transaction. The culturally responsive teacher should take all these components in planning process.
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The general instructional techniques used by the teacher can be successfully used for intercultural education if the teachers plan their instruction well in advance to incorporate the intercultural concepts in their teaching process. The question about how instruction might be provided effectively and flexibly to the diverse range of students in our classrooms has generated a number of alternative instructional strategies. One of the goals of a cooperative learning is to enhance individual student understanding and another is to develop positive attitudes towards cultural differences. The Collaborative teaching should focus on the cultural history and cultural personality. Collaborative learning plays vital role in intercultural education. Collaborative learning is important for children to understand different cultural beliefs. Peer tutoring and reciprocal learning within pair is examples of collaborative learning method in heterogeneous groups which encourage mutual interdependence and promote cultural accountability and understanding. It also focuses on cultural beliefs and practices and cultural understanding. This method also helps the student to develop cultural identity as it collaborates the individual with different cultural differences. They will be able to mingle with each other and promote effective team learning with small group projects for promotion of cultural diversity. In particular cooperative learning encourages collaboration through structured interaction in small groups. As the name implies it involves students in cooperation for cultural interaction. Speaker’s Corner which promotes discussion for intercultural communication also plays a vital role in the instructional techniques in intercultural education. The instructional methods discussed here serve as guidelines to prepare the intercultural education instructional guide that is planned by the author.

On the Whole, the intercultural education is effectively implemented with culturally responsive teachers who instruct culturally responsive instruction. Culturally responsive teachers play vital role to ensure that all of their students have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability. If instruction reflects the cultural and linguistic practices and values of only one group then the students are denied an equal opportunity to learn. Culturally responsive instruction addresses the needs of all learners. Even though the educational system plan the curriculum for schools it is the teacher who should act as an internal agent to adopt the curriculum to reflect cultural and linguistic insensitivity.

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This paper provides an overview and a theoretical framework for a cross-cultural collaboration of teacher educators: Bernadette Anand from Bank Street College, New York, USA, Jorun Buli-Holmberg University of Oslo, Norway and Sujatha Malini of Alagappa University in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India.

The paper frames the collaborators’ teacher training work through current efforts in India and Europe that call for addressing diversity. This report itself being authored by an American educator is of necessity mainly informed by multicultural work done in United States over the last 70 years. However, this should in no way be construed to mean that the United States has achieved inclusive/multicultural education. The US continues the struggle to shift its mono-cultural lens and single system seeing to recognize multiple realities and approaches. Efforts at expanding the lens to include a diversity of peoples and perspectives are also underway in both Norway and in India (Eurydice 2004; PLA, 2007; Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2005).

The collaboration of these three teacher educators originated with two workshops in 2009 one in Norway and another a workshop and presentation at the Internetwork Conference on Diversity, Inclusion and the Values of Democracy: Building Teachers’ Competencies for Intercultural Education held September 28th–30th, 2009 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Key Words: Multicultural Education, Teacher Education, Social Justice Education.

Bernadette advises in-service teachers in high needs locations within New York City and teaches Foundations of Modern Education, a literacy course and qualitative research for educational change within the Masters of Education division at Bank Street College.

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Jorun directs the Department of Special Education and Continuing Professional Development at the University of Oslo, Norway and has responsibilities for instruction in counseling, social and emotional difficulties and school transitions from primary, secondary to the world of work.

While the populations we serve in these countries differ racially, ethnically, and economically, our work in the preparation of teachers draws us together. As professionals, we have devoted collectively many years, first as teachers of the young and then to the advisement and preparation of educators who will work with a diverse group of children in all types of schools funded privately, publicly, governmentally and often through combined funding.

We share important core beliefs about education. First and foremost, we affirm that every child is entitled to an equitable education (Cummings-McCann, 2008; NAME, 2003). Coupled to this belief is our adherence, through critical thinking to the goal of individual empowerment (Sleeter, 1991; Banks, 1993; Freire, 1998). We hold that in classroom communities where mutual collaboration combines with understanding children’s inner resources, students learn to understand themselves, their own cultures and backgrounds and learn to appreciate others (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Further, students with appropriate support and skills can develop the responsibility for bringing about social change (Mc Laren in Sleeter 9).

We operate from a premise that educators equipped with content knowledge and understanding of the stages of child development are able to address the academic and social needs of their students. Our work in teacher education and advisement includes awareness and skill sets to directly and effectively address self-identity and self-empowerment in order to model a parallel process for the students (Gay, 1994). This requires teachers to have
a strong sense of their personal identities and to develop a consciousness and sensitivity to others’ realities and ways of being (McCall & Andringa, 1997). Teachers thus prepared are able to create classroom environments and curricula where everyone is heard, seen, and validated (Emily Style 1994).

Jorun, Sujatha and I came to this conference because teachers tell us of their desire to work respectfully with students and families who come from different cultures, speak different languages, have different familial perspectives and belief systems. (Eurydice European Unit 2004). Teachers would like to be prepared for diverse classrooms, be able to address diversity, have strategies or methods that create classroom communities where all students feel safe, are recognized and able to flourish (PLA, 2007). Our in-service teachers express the need for a toolbox of strategies they can use to encourage all the voices represented in the classroom. Our teachers ask for supports that effectively respond to views and practices with which they are not comfortable or familiar, others claim to sometimes knowingly or unknowingly resist or oppose such a classroom approach.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In framing this project I have researched current efforts in India and Europe that call for addressing diversity. However my work is informed by multicultural work done in United States over the last 70 years. However, this should in no way be construed to mean that the United States has achieved inclusive/multicultural education. The US continues the struggle to shift its monocultural lens and single system seeing to recognize multiple realities and approaches. Efforts at expanding the lens to include a diversity of peoples and perspectives are also underway in both Norway and in India (Eurydice 2004; PLA, 2007; Sarva Shiksha Abiyan, 2005). This paper presents a definition of multicultural education and summarizes theoretical approaches United States educators use when addressing issues of language, gender, race, class and other diversity markers in education (Sleeter and Grant, 2007). Next, examples illustrate how these markers may be linked to specific methods, curricula or projects. Lastly, I offer a model for thinking about institution-wide multicultural education and an outline of the project begun in Fall 2009.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Two workshops preceded this report. First, at the University of Oslo we addressed the topic of students with different needs through engaging participants in a series of flexible, creative and supportive pedagogical approaches to curriculum development and differentiation of learning within the inclusive classroom. The focus was on how classrooms might address “all kinds of minds” (Levine). The second occurred at this conference when we presented a workshop that expanded the previous framework to include levels of diversity beyond different kinds of minds to include race, class, religion, gender, language, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc. This second workshop engaged participants in four group activities designed to promote awareness of personal culture while exploring others’ lived experiences and practices. We offered time for reflection and integration after each exercise and focused on how the activity could develop a community that values each other as it works to promote learning and growth. We initiated a brainstorming session for participants to suggest additional methods that develop teacher intercultural competency.

The three of us see a need to continue the development of inclusive classroom communities where we teach, learn and concomitantly see the benefit to link with each other and other similar efforts that further inform and enrich our work. Since those present here represent different countries, sub-cultures, perspectives and ways of being that can enrich this collective journey, we invite all of you to contribute any best practices from your own experience that would help build and fill a multicultural toolbox that may be used globally. We will collate the contributions to draft a practical guide that includes instructional strategies for intercultural classrooms. This draft guide will be field-tested in three continents—Asia, Europe and the Americas. One school from each of these continents will provide the necessary inputs to propel the project. We will analyze the data fed back by the collaborators at each of these test sites to present an interim report at next year’s conference. The long-term goal would be to prepare a compendium of tools that promote multicultural education for global use.

We are women who recognize our similarities and our differences and acknowledge our differences around race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economics
and histories of dominance and empire. We grew up with our own set of biases and prejudices and as we continue to examine them we see how these separate and harm others. In our teaching we work towards tearing down barriers and establishing genuine relationships committed to the ideal of social equity.

FRAMEWORK FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

As I provide a definition of multicultural education I am aware there are a number of ways the term is defined and understood. I acknowledge that teachers may have very different goals when it comes to working with students who come from different backgrounds, have different languages and customs or learning needs. Often these ends are dependent on individual circumstance and demand; sometimes they are connected to teachers’ personal beliefs about the aims of education. These approaches are important to consider in any work with teachers around multicultural education. I also take to heart the caution around the use of the word culture (Gonzalez, Moll, Amalfi, 2005). If we do not think of culture as dynamic, multifaceted, embedded in context, influenced by social, economic, and political contexts, created, learned and dialectical (Nieto) we run the risk of stereotyping other cultures and viewing them as static fixed entities not allowing for shift and change that naturally accrues with encounters and experiences. If we consider our personal culture to be the normal and correct path to learning, then we may view other cultures as deviations. There is also the “fear” that without critical thinking we may engage in what Rowland-Martin calls cultural mis-education, the transmission of “cultural liabilities” or the omission of “invaluable portions of the culture’s wealth” (Martin, 2002).

Each of us must examine our personal multicultural philosophy and our own perspectives and assumptions surrounding it. We should try to “discern the educational conditions under which {we} will attempt to institutionalize this philosophy” (Martin, 2002). We call upon individuals and institutions to arrive at their own definitions of multicultural education and to think of how they may collaboratively implement their visions. That being said, here is a working definition of multicultural education adopted in 2003 by NAME, The National Association of Multicultural Education in the United States.

Multicultural education is a process that permeates all aspects of school practices, policies and organization as a means to ensure the highest levels of academic achievement for all students. It helps students develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups. It prepares all students to work actively towards structural equality in organizations and institutions by providing the knowledge, dispositions and skills for the redistribution of power and income among diverse groups. Thus, school curriculum must directly address issues of racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, abelism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia. To achieve these ends NAME indicates that it is essential that a trained diverse staff equipped with a set of cultural competencies and a school reform model takes into account curriculum, school environment, the larger community and the world (NAME).

We three educators with three diverse backgrounds are committed to working towards such a vision. This ideal propels us to social action – to work towards the goal of achieving a diverse staff that mirrors the populations we serve, to dissolve barriers that divide and separate us as we work to transform our educational spheres into all-inclusive spaces.

FIVE APPROACHES TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Individuals and institutions come to multicultural education with different expectations and sometimes all together different goals. There are some who have as their primary goal the integration and inclusion of immigrant families into their schools. Others work on developing attitudes of tolerance, respect and the establishment of a strong communal atmosphere in their schools and classrooms. Often there are groups that focus on understanding and addressing racism, prejudice, sexism and classism, and other separators. Sometimes specific schools are established to bring about equity between genders, abilities, and language backgrounds. Some diversity initiatives are driven by national policy as is the case with Norway through the Norwegian Ministry of Education; in India with Sarva Shiksha Abyian.
Educational institutions strive to have as their goal the promotion of the “education and achievement of all students particularly those who are traditionally dismissed and underserved in our educational system (Cumming-McCann, 2008). Further, strategies can be found within all communities if we understand diversity to be a gift and work towards its excavation. Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant (2007) tell us that we can achieve this goal for education through one or more of five different approaches to the discussion of race, class, and gender.

1. TEACHING THE EXCEPTIONAL AND THE CULTURALLY DIFFERENT

Here instruction addresses differences in achievement, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the US we have some schools that have been created to serve specific populations. For example, there is The Churchill School in New York City established for children with different needs and different learning styles or, The Harvey Milk School for GLTBQ students or Afro-centric schools (Brooklyn) that provide the academics through lessons that draw on African and African American interdisciplinary themes and cultural pedagogy. This approach can also be found within the classrooms where teachers assess their students’ different learning styles and backgrounds and then develop a curriculum that is relevant to each. It may also be seen when students who are linguistically and culturally diverse are engaged in separate language classrooms talking about their grandparents and parents using specific vocabulary words from their first language and the secondary one they learn.

2. HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH

Teachers look at ways they can help students get along together and treat each other with fundamental human respect in order to break down racial, ethnic, and gender barriers and reduce prejudice and bias. The development of these skills begins the process of building a healthy positive classroom community (Charnay). We see this approach in the anti-bias curriculum Louise Derman-Sparks and others created for early childhood educators. Recognizing that children develop attitudes of bias and intolerance as early as eighteen months, Derman-Sparks and her colleagues explored ways “to meet the many-faceted challenges of making culturally relevant anti-bias education an integral part of the daily practice in [our] early childhood programs” (Cronin et al. 1998). The result was the formation of CRAB (Culturally Relevant Anti Bias Project), a leadership program for early childhood care and education that provided a framework for the kinds of environments early educators could provide for anti-bias work with children ages 4-6. Development of personal and group identities in a safe environment with respectful interactions around differences and modeling of social justice practices were hallmarks of the project.

Another example of the human relations approach can be found in The Second Step Program originating from Washington State. It teaches children in preschool through grade eight how to develop and apply social skills of empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation. These life skills help students in their classrooms, their playgrounds, and at home http://www.cfcchildren.org/programs/ssp/overview. In many US elementary school classrooms, teachers establish morning meetings to help children learn respect for those who speak a different language and to develop positive student-to-student relations as they build a classroom community that mutually supports and learns from each other.

3. SINGLE-GROUP STUDIES

This approach can be seen when a particular group is uplifted through an in-depth study of that group. We have many examples of how teachers have created curriculum units around the Romas in Europe, the history and literature of African Americans in United States and India’s Dalits. Teachers also develop units on women in non-traditional fields such as aeronautics; they conduct “read-aloud’s” to bring about awareness of disabilities; they may conduct studies of Chinese paintings or Native American sand paintings in art classes.
4. MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

This method combines the first three approaches. It emerged in the 1960s and has as its goal equality and cultural pluralism. While the first three approaches worked towards inclusion, this approach accents integration, transformation, and full participation of all members in their societies. This style of multicultural education works to affect social change through a transformation of self, schools and society (Banks, Gorski 2003).

One specific activity I have used with students in the United States from grades 4 through adult centers on names and naming. I often begin with a reading of Sandra Cisneros’ “My Name” piece from House on Mango Street and have the students write their own name pieces that they share in small groups (Cisneros 1984). Classroom discussion flows around what is similar and what is different in each student’s name piece. How may names reveal elements about personal culture? What do names have in common? What would children like to learn more about their own and other students’ names? In lower grades we might engage in an activity around “same” and “different.” Using these words to talk about colors, shapes, and sounds, Janet Schmidt moved to more abstract concepts of skin tones. Using “authentic, age-appropriate multicultural and anti-bias teaching strategies” she encouraged and engaged children’s curiosities about human similarities and differences and designed an All the Colors We Are curriculum for her 3 and 4 year olds (Schmidt, 2002). By engaging the children in mixing paints to create their skin tones, talking about their predictions, making their unique faces, then arranging them from darkest to lightest, children explored their similarities and differences. They might be heard saying, Keiko is like Malik because they have the same eye color. Liesje is different from Arun because Liesje’s parents come from Holland and Arun’s parents come from India. Or, Courtney has more melanin in her skin than Brandon.

In their very practical book Turning on Learning, Sleeter and Grant provide a lesson plan a teacher may use around national anthems. Taking their country’s national anthem and then teaching it along side the women’s national anthem, the Mexican national anthem, and/or other national anthems, students can develop an understanding of the purposes of anthems and better appreciate the diversity of peoples who created them.

5. MULTICULTURAL SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

This last approach specifically accents working toward equality. It challenges us to address decision-making, change, and social action themes. James Banks sees the process of constructing knowledge as key to the work required around social justice. He talks about teachers working with students through an inquiry based curriculum in order “to critically analyze conflicting paradigms and explanations and the values and assumptions of different knowledge systems, forms and categories” (Banks, 1991). He tells us that when young people acquire these habits of mind and apply them to “prevailing myths” as well as to new ideas, perspectives, different sets of values and beliefs often from marginalized groups of people, they can become “more informed citizens.” In turn they will be able to see more globally, imagine a more equitable world and work effectively towards that goal (http://education.washington.ed/cme/view.htm).

Social Studies is a strong organizer for planning conceptual units and may be expanded to other curricular areas such as Science, Mathematics, Art, and Literacy. For example, a unit on change might call upon a group of middle school students to identify an area of social justice within their communities, look at the history and posit improvements they would like to see. In turn, these plans can be presented to local officials. Students learn the academic skills required to write effective persuasive essays, as they work towards social justice in their communities.

Sujatha, Jorun and I believe that this last approach, namely, multicultural social justice education will move us towards social harmony. The goal at the heart of our educational endeavor is the promotion of the “education and achievement of all students particularly those who are traditionally dismissed and underserved in our educational system”(Cumming-McCann, 2008).

A MODEL OF INSTITUTION-WIDE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Multicultural social justice education is a community-wide endeavor with community being comprised of at least five interest groups each with a unique motivation. Teachers want to teach; administrators want to run the
interests into a communal sharing where mutual interests become a core concern of the school community (Fig 2). This core of mutual interests I liken to overlapping circles, each one working towards the goal of understanding and promoting through meaningful dialogue a partnership of mutual stakeholders in the school enterprise.

The first circle represents students—the raison d’être for the school community. However, students seldom arrive as a homogeneous mass from a single culture. They have multiple learning styles, abilities and home languages. For instance, the teachers I advise in the Masters of Education Program at Bank Street College have school demographics that draw from multiple countries and languages. Sometimes well over 75 different language groups may be represented in the school where they teach. Coupled with these different languages are different family practices. Not wanting to sort and label students, many teachers and administrators work towards building universally designed curriculum and environments that support their recently immigrated students to learn English while they develop literacy in their native language and acquire the academics. In addition, when community grassroots organizations, social justice advocates, foundations and the like become collaborators in the improvement of students’ language proficiency, all benefit.

The second circle represents the parents/guardians, our partners in the education of their children. They may be traditional married couples, extended families, blended families, single parents of either sex and now more than ever gay parents. In addition, they may be immigrants, temporary workers, migrant workers or undocumented individuals. They can vary in income from the extremely wealthy to those on public assistance and sometimes belong to the homeless population.

All these in the second circle have specific student and family interests.

1) When all parents/guardians are assisted and supported in their childrearing; 2) when community resources and services are identified and in-
We would hope that they would engage in serious deconstruction of their own educational histories and examine their positionality in the classroom. We recommend they “explore the ways that human consciousness is constructed around issues of race, class, gender and sexuality” and to see that “democratic thinking involves an understanding of difference that nurtures a sense of empathy” (Korn and Bursztyn 2002). University courses may be a prime vehicle for this work (Anand 2009, Kohli 2008). Within these spaces, teachers spend more time reflecting on what they bring to the classroom life and environment (Walsh, 1996; Cochran-Smith, 1990). When they engage in community fieldwork they can discover the particular funds of knowledge families and their children bring to the learning process and use them as bridges to new learning. Haberman underscores this need and urges not only schools of education but school sites to “engage in the all important job of providing teacher training both in pre-service courses and through continuous professional development during the in-service period.” He reminds us that teachers for the most part do not represent the diversity of races, ethnicities and/or socio-economic situations of the students they teach or will be teaching. Most often faculties of the schools of education these teachers attend have “not had the expertise nor the experience to train teachers for teaching in low-income or multicultural situations.” See Fig. 3.

**NEXT STEPS**

All of us here at the conference represent different countries, sub-cultures, perspectives and ways of being that can enrich this collective journey. Our professional lives and our cumulative experiences can be the starting place for collecting ideas, lesson plans, and best practices that would help build and fill a multicultural toolbox for teachers across countries and cultures. We plan to gather your contributions and draft a practical guide that includes instructional strategies for intercultural classrooms. We will then,
test the activities in three schools— one on each of the three continents of Asia, Europe and America. Using feedback from each of these three test sites we will analyze the data and present an interim report at next year’s conference. The long-term goal would be to share a compendium of the most useful tools that promote multicultural education.

Join us by visiting www.projectculturalaccess.org

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INTER_CULTURAL:CIRCLE OF EVENTS

Miguel Prata Gomes 24
Maria Pinto 25

This poster presents a project which produced and articulated the scientific efforts, in Porto – Portugal since September 2008 (ongoing until Sept. 2010), linking and unifying several events related with the intercultural perspective. All the events were organized around the balance between theoretical / critical thinking and good practices intercultural perspective. INTER-CULTURAL:circle of events conglomerates a variety of scientific meetings, seminars, workshops, concerts, exhibitions… etc. which give to the participants different views about the cultural / ideological diversity and problems in the multicultural world we live. This circle of events aims to present, share, discuss and question several intercultural approaches to theoretical ideas and practices in intercultural education.

The articulation and dissemination of all these events have the final goal of building a line / network / community of interest where several intercultural projects could be created, discussed and developed... and hopefully applied in reality. Some of the events were: workshop "Agents for Tolerance", seminar “Education as an Instrument for Social Intervention in the XXI century”, seminar “Network of Solidarity Economy”, “Investigation-Action”, scientific meeting “1st International Meeting on Human Rights”, etc... In 2010 will be several workshops on Human Rights in collaboration with International Amnesty Portugal, implementation of intercultural material in schools (with Anne Frank House), exhibitions about “family diversity”, etc.

INTER-CULTURAL:circle of events is a project in cooperation between the investigation group of the Languages and Cultures Unit from Paula Frassinetti School of Education (Porto – Portugal) and the University of Porto (Portugal) integrated in the activities of the InterNetwork. Intercultural Education. Teacher Training and School Practice.

http://internetworkblog.gblogspot.com

Keywords: intercultural events, seminars, workshops, discuss theory / practice

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There were 7 countries involved in this Comenius project. At the same time, each partner school started a story set in their own country, which was then passed on to the next country, until all countries had worked on each story. The stories were approximately 10 sentences long. Stories were written in the mother tongue of each partner school and translated into English. Pupils had to research some of the places and objects mentioned in the chapters from different countries, and then they had to illustrate them. We hoped that the project will strengthen our pupils' understanding and realization that it is necessary to respect and protect human rights, whilst developing attitudes which form morality, and will prepare them for valuable participation in the life of society. We have also created a blog where we can share everything about each school involved in the project: http://comeniusprojectdialogue.blogspot.com.

Keywords: Communication, understanding, respect, languages

OBJECTIVES

In this teaching practice the aims were to involve pupils and staff in intercultural dialogue, where they could share ideas, opinions and views on activities and issues addressed throughout the project, thus enhancing communication skills in both mother tongue and foreign languages, aiming at: a) developing a sense of European citizenship based on understanding, respect and tolerance of different cultures, human rights and democracy; b) providing greater motivation for reading and writing for both genders, through intercultural stories and activities; c) and finally providing pupils with cross-curricular learning activities that can contribute to their overall development by helping them to have an increased awareness of their own culture and language(s) and those of the other participating countries.

26 Paulo Silva (Colégio do Sardão – Portugal); Deborah Manning (Springfield Primary School – England); Olivier Lopez (Ecole Primaire Sans Souci, Reunion Island, France); Ari Anttila (Mutalan koulu – Finland); Olga Chaure (C.E.I.P. Reyes Católicos – Spain); Burcu Ozcan (Tevfikbey İkili Retim Okulu – Turkey); Dorina Sacu (GHEORGHE TITEICA SCHOOL – Romania) / Email: teacherpauelsilva@gmail.com

METHODOLOGY

There were 7 countries implicated in this project. Each country started a story set in their own country at the same time, which would then be swapped to the next country crossing all the countries. The stories had approximately 10 sentences long. Stories were written in own mother tongue and translated into English and Pupils had to research some of the places and objects mentioned in the chapters from different countries.

CONCLUSIONS

Both pupils and staff gained a greater understanding of their own and other cultures which will foster greater tolerance and respect towards any culture different to their own. Pupils and staff developed a better sense of being a European citizen. Also improved their knowledge of Europe and its specificities and also gained awareness of the importance of their mother tongue and the importance of learning new languages, especially English. European countries will seem accessible to pupils through the interaction they were able to have with peers in partner schools, which might not otherwise have been possible. Ways of teaching subjects such as writing and languages were explored and improvements made based on good practice seen or discussed. Through encouraging pupils to take a major part in planning project activities and evaluating what they have done, they begun to manage some of their own learning and were able to work collaboratively, but know when to ask for help. Another result of this European cooperation was the comparison of different education systems and methods. During the project meetings, studies and communication process, we were able to know different education systems, apart from our own. We could then compare ours to the education systems in other European countries and learnt new methods and techniques which made our perspective wider. It has both enlarged our teachers’ and pupils’ views. By involving parents in research, Comenius exhibitions, or helping with activities in the project, we could extend greater knowledge and understanding of other cultures into the local community.

Our schools had integrated the project into schemes of work to be taught, which enriched the curriculum for students and created a greater European dimension to their education. Our local communities benefited by bringing...
other European cultures closer. The visits of the partner schools gave members of the community an opportunity to speak with and come to better understanding of Europe as a whole. The education professionals that participated in this project were able to share their experiences with peers and educational officials thus extending the experience to the wider educational community. Although mediation was needed, especially for younger pupils and those with special educational needs, this project activity increased pupil ability to manage basic communication in a foreign language. For most partner schools this language was English, but for the partner school in UK that was French or Spanish, although all schools had the opportunity to develop basic greetings in other languages. The ability to understand spoken messages were explored and developed during this project. Pupils had also the opportunity to develop their understanding of written messages through these bilingual stories. After the conclusions of all the seven stories, it was remarkable to acknowledge that the self-esteem from the pupils had raised, they felt important, as they were the ones to establish all the details from the stories. Then they wanted to share their stories with all their mates and families. All the responsible teachers from this project wanted that the pupils should be the ones to choose the characters, the plot from the story.

Throughout this project we intended to make wide use of ICT and aimed to develop basic skills, such as using computers to retrieve and research information, storing information, producing stories, instructions and presentations, and for exchanging information via email, video conferencing and a blog. Pupils were this way more aware of the opportunities for the use of ICT on a global dimension, not just for work within their own school. Use of digital cameras to enhance communication was also developed during project activities. Activities planned aimed to increase pupils knowledge of the country and culture of their partners. Awareness was developed through the creation of story settings and all the characters from it. Activities and dialogues also raised awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity and respect for these differences. Our cultures had expressed themselves through a range of media, including music, visual arts, literacy and drama.

Staff, parents and peers were also able to evaluate some of the aims, such as increased interest in learning another language, improved standards in reading and writing and greater knowledge of cultures in partner countries by looking at the work produced by pupils and observation in lessons. Also some project activities, such as cultural quizzes and writing a story set in another partner’s country, based on what they have already found out, will measure the effectiveness of project activities intended to increase awareness of other countries and cultures. The ability to communicate effectively with pupils in other European countries could be evaluated through the blog.

Pupils had a high involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of project activities. From the beginning pupils had decided what they think could be important to put in their stories based on what they believed had interested pupils in partner schools. They were responsible for finding/making these. The blog was set up for pupils at the very start of the project and news were shared from all partner schools about how project activities were going, any problems encountered and what they liked/learned about them. All pupils were represented through a class comenius councillor. Each school had a comenius council who had to consider how to approach the next project activity and then had to discuss this through email with partner comenius councils. A plan was then decided on, with adult support when it was needed. Within each partner school, pupils were told the aims of each project activity and were asked to evaluate these at the end of each activity – evaluations were shared with partner schools via the blog and pupils had discussed any changes or improvements that needed to be made. Pupils were also given regular evaluation questionnaires. The weekly blog had to be updated by a different class each week in larger schools so all pupils could be involved. Activities for the project were shared between classes in each partner school so that younger pupils and those with special needs had as much opportunity as the older ones. All project materials such as stories were produced by pupils. Where longer translations were needed, language teacher support had to be used.

Pupils developed a positive attitude to foreign languages and an interest in learning them through having an opportunity to practise these through intercultural dialogue with European peers.
We wanted to demonstrate to our pupils how important it is to learn languages so that they will be able to communicate with people from other countries. We aim to help pupils understand that other people and cultures are not opponents, but are our neighbours in a global community with positive common goals.

**BACKGROUND**

We hope that the project will strengthen our pupils' understanding and realization that it is necessary to respect and protect human rights, whilst developing attitudes which form morality, and will prepare them for valuable participation in the life of society.

We have also created a blog where we can share everything about each school involved in the project: http://comeniusprojectdialogue.blogspot.com.

**OBJECTIVES**

In this teaching practice the aims were to involve pupils and staff in intercultural dialogue, where they could share ideas, opinions and views on activities. Pupils could also address issues with peers in partner schools throughout the project, thus enhancing communication skills in both mother tongue and foreign languages.

Both pupils and staff have gained a greater understanding of their own and other cultures which will foster greater tolerance and respect towards any culture different to their own. Pupils and staff developed a better sense of being a European citizen.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Pupils developed a positive attitude to foreign languages and an interest in learning them by having an opportunity to practise these through intercultural dialogue with European peers.
SCHOOL COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

Good practices in Istituto Comprensivo 17 “Montorio” - Verona, Italy

Sergio Ballarin / Claudia Pimazzotti / Diego Zanetti

Our partnership in the INTER Network has allowed us to train a group of 20 teachers from Pre-Primary and Primary school (3-10 years old) on Cooperative Learning methodology. The training has been developed by the Centro Studi Interculturali (University of Verona) directed by prof. Agostino Portera, partner of the INTER Network as well. In Warsaw Conference, Dr. Stefania Lamberti presented the training process developed in our centre.

From this training (which will continue in the following years) a process of Action-Research has started in our school in Mizzole-Verona. Intercultural education is intended here as global education of the person within a living context and therefore as an intercultural community which may become educating and welcoming towards every single individual.

This presentation tries to show some of the specific activities developed in Pre-Primary and Primary classrooms:

- Cooperative Learning Methodology specifying cognitive objectives and social ability skills
- Materials and resources used
- The Teachers’ “Research Laboratory”
- Parents involvement
- Future Plans.

Keywords: Community of Learning, Cooperative Learning, Social Skills, Action Research

In the “School_community_images.pdf” the slides of the poster presentation are illustrated. Herebelow we transcribe the comments which accompany each slide (audio of the powerpoint film).

SLIDE 01 | The action research lasts five year. The general targets are: to encourage a positive and cooperative attitude to help students feel well among class mates, school mates, teachers and to create a good student-parent-teacher relationship (make school become a community).

SLIDE 02 | The specific targets of the action-research we have chosen for pre-primary school are cyclical and last three years:
I listen I speak – I speak I listen – I and the other

SLIDE 03 | In primary school the targets of the action-research are:
- Communication in first and second years
- Developing divergent thinking and creativity in the third year
- Developing critical thinking and the positive management of conflict in the last two years

SLIDE 04 | Let’s see how we develop a didactic unit in class: the students are involved in the process of education, the red/blue disc shows them the cognitive and the social targets to be achieved. They know that the final evaluation will consider both targets. The clock helps them to respect the time they have to wor.
05 | Work starts always individually, the students have one picture of a story and they have to choose the right caption between two options. Each student has one of the four pictures which form the story.

06 | Then they work in couples: the students check together if the captions chosen are correct, they may decide to change their mind.

07 | Next they work in groups of four students: they order the sequence of the story. The teacher establishes the roles and then either the teacher or the group decide who will be taking each role. At this stage positive interdependence within the group is considered very important. Interindependence may be of targets, material, role, etc.

08 | The assembly evaluates the group work: the finished work is presented and they evaluate the accomplishment of the initial targets. Literature offers many techniques to be used in these didactic units; we try to include the principles in cooperative learning:
- Positive interdependence
- Face to face interaction
- Direct teaching and use of social skills
- Acting in small heterogeneous groups
- Individual and group evaluation

09 | Didactic units are supported by cooperative games to help develop social skills and to get to know the others the students of this class propose cooperative games to the students of other classes. This way they contribute to create a community at school.

10 | The same methodology is also proposed to children in pre-primary school:

The same process takes place in Pre-primary School

Games of Cooperation and Relation

Pre-primary School
- cooperative game and relation games
- the didactic units develop the targets mentioned at the beginning of the presentation. This unit is about symbolization of rhythm and about speaking in a low voice respecting one’s turn to speak.

16 | Besides the usual meetings in Italian school, the parents of the students participating in the research will follow some training this year. The meetings support the achievement of the common targets for teachers and parents. This year parents are experiencing personally what their children are doing at school. Here, for example, they are playing a cooperative game to get to know one another.

17 | Here parents are working in groups (cognitive aspect):
- Mathematics: find out a geometrical formula and demonstrate it
- Italian language: write a poem
- Art: invent a short story and represent it using simple materials

- In mid year and at the end of the school year parents fill a questionnaire describing the new skills and improvements they notice in their children at home.

18 | When are didactic units carried-out? (structurally). Twice a week in each class. The teacher will turn to cooperative learning every time he/she thinks it appropriate.

19 | The Action-research Lab is formed by the teachers of the classes doing the research and is supported by prof. Lamberti of the Centro Studi Interculturali dell’Università di Verona. A larger group of 22 teachers of the Comprehensive School meets five times a year to share, analyse and propose to other classes the action research.

20 | The students are involved in their own education and every two months they fill in a “portfolio student chart” in which they reflect individually on the four aspects of the process.
SLIDE 21 | during the school year we use tests to check how the action research is proceeding. Quantitative tests are standardized and they allow benchmarking. The teachers use two protocols to have under control the relationships among students and to form work groups.

SLIDE 22 | This year the action research goes on with new students and new parents who join the training. Also non-teaching staff are involved and the teachers of the comprehensive school continue with the training.

Hvala, Thank you, Grazie.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Partnerships involving schools and community

Marta Santos / Maria Helena Araújo e Sá / Ana Raquel Simões

Migratory movements have undeniably marked European societies, over the last decades. In this context of social change, it’s imperative for societies and cultures to find a space of understanding and respect for each other, in which they recognize the value of diversity and promote critical participation and democratic citizenship. This aim is only possible to reach by means of intercultural dialogue, which is becoming a vital meaning of maintaining peace and world unity. (UNESCO, 2006). Schools play a crucial role in this domain. By promoting Intercultural Education, the Educational System tries to enable students to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the construction of a more democratic and fair world (UNESCO, 2006). However, this task should not be undertaken only by schools. Studies refer that the implementation of an intercultural approach in education should include the collaboration of different educational agents (students, school staff, family and the community in general), through the establishment of working communities (Aguado & Malik, 2006). Within these communities, teachers can improve their intercultural practices, through dialogue and sharing of ideas (Angelides, Stylianou, & Leigh, 2007).

In this sense, the development of partnership projects involving different educational agents, promoters of intercultural dialogue and plural citizenship, takes a significant relevance in the current educational and societal context. According to the previous considerations, a research study is being undertaken at the University of Aveiro (Portugal), with the intention of knowing teachers’ intercultural practices and conceiving, implementing and evaluating a collaborative intercultural project involving a school and the community in general. The target of this project will be children who attend primary school (aged between 6 and 10 years old).

In a first moment, we conceived a written questionnaire with the following aims: a) to get to know teachers’ representations on Intercultural Education and the importance of community’s participation on the development and implementation of intercultural practices in primary school; b) to identify teachers’ practices concerning Intercultural Education in primary school; c) to characterize those practices in terms of its aims, agents/participants, type of practices and evalu-
This poster refers to an ongoing PhD study at the University of Aveiro concerning intercultural education in primary school and the partnerships involving schools and the community. This study has two different phases: first, we wanted to get to know teachers’ intercultural practices; secondly, based in the results obtained in the first phase, we intended to conceive, implement and evaluate a collaborative intercultural project involving school and the community.

Because this study is just beginning, in this poster, we will present the results we have got until this moment, referring to the first phase of our research. We conceived a questionnaire as a data collection instrument, which had the following aims: a) to identify teachers’ Intercultural practices in primary school; b) to characterize those practices in terms of its aims, agents/participants, type of practices and evaluation process; c) to get to know teachers’ opinions about the implementation of intercultural practices in primary schools.

Our target public was composed by two different groups of teachers: primary school teachers and teachers working in primary school’s Curriculum Enrichment Activities (which include arts, sports, science and a foreign language). Until this moment, only this last group of teachers (CEA teachers) answered the written questionnaire. Out of 74 CEA teachers working in the district of Aveiro, the sample received was composed by 49 teachers (66%).

The results of this written questionnaire indicate that only 13 teachers (27%) reported having performed activities related to interculturalism. The aims of those activities were related to: a) awareness and respect for other cultures (72%); b) harmonious coexistence with the Other (7%); c) development of multilingual and intercultural competence (7%); d) inclusion of students from different cultures (7%); e) preservation of minority languages and cultures (7%). The Curriculum areas involved in these activities were Mother tongue (Portuguese), Foreign languages (English, Spanish, French), Expressions (Arts, Music, Drama), Sports, Mathematics, Environmental Studies and Project Area.

According to the data collected, the major percentage of activities (56%) consisted in plays, songs, dances, poems and dialogues about the characteristics and relationship between different cultures. There were also activities related to the Inuit people (11%), traditional games from other cultures (11%), an e-portfolio (11%) and Carnival celebration in other countries (11%). Students were the largest group who participated in these activities (44%), followed by teachers (37%), parents (11%), school employees (3%), members of the community (3%) and others (3%). The materials produced in those activities were worksheets (35%), posters (13%), videos (13%), students’ works (13%), websites (13%) and photos (13%). Only five teachers said that their activities had been evaluated. The assessment tools they used for that evaluation were: questionnaires (27%), observation (27%), interviews (14%), worksheets (14%) and dialogue with participants (14%). They indicated, as a result of that evaluation, an improvement of the relationship between the students (20%), although 80% of the teachers didn’t indicate any result. When they were asked if they had worked with other educational partners, only two of them referred to have established partnerships with the community to develop projects or activities of this kind and in both cases, the partner was the University of Aveiro.

According to this study, 84% of the teachers consider important to carry out activities related to interculturalism; 10% don’t think they are important because they think those activities are not related to their curriculum area and 6% don’t have any opinion on this matter. They consider important to carry out those kind of activities because, according to them, they allow us to know and respect other cultures (34%), to contact and interact with other cultures (35%), to value diversity (11%), to develop democratic attitudes and values (6%) to overcome discrimination / exclusion / racism (8%), and to co-exist peacefully with the Other (6%). From the data collected with this written questionnaire, we can conclude that, although the great majority of the teachers is sensitized to the issue, there are few who have carried out work on interculturalism. Very few teachers worked with educational partners and none of them mentions the importance educational partnerships can have on intercultural education.

Given these results, we find it’s essential to promote the development of activities aiming at approaches of intercultural education in the district of Aveiro and to involve schools and the community in such activities. Ac-
On the other hand, partnerships involving schools, parents and all the community are essential to improve the success of children, and to make them feel an active part of the society. Moreover, collaborative work is a great opportunity for the teachers and for all the partners to get involved and to respect and interact with different people, to share information, insights, advices, to dialogue and to reflect critically aimed at developing skills and deepen knowledge (Wenger, Mcdermott & Snyder, 2002) on interculturalism. Thus being, all the partners can improve their intercultural practices, not just in school but in their everyday activities.

The next step of this study will be to question the other group of teachers (primary school teachers) and to compare the results of these two groups. The data collected will allow the identification of some partners to create a collaborative network with educational purposes (involving teachers from these two groups and different partners from the community, such as cultural and sportive associations, museums, libraries, government institutions, etc.) and also the identification/description of good practices concerning an intercultural education, as well as of the constraints of such approach.

Furthermore, the good practices analyzed will guide that collaborative network of educational partners in the conception, implementation and evaluation of an intervention project which aims to disseminate intercultural education in primary school, which will be the second moment of this PhD study.

REFERENCES


PROJECT INBETWEEN

Paulo Silva 29
Herculano Castro 30

This project arose from the creation of a platform, in an educational context, for facilitating interaction and communication between a small group of young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders from the Portuguese Association for the Developmental Disorders and Autism-North (APPDA-Norte) and a group of students from the fourth grade of Colégio do Sardão Sardão. The general idea was that the two separate groups could develop into becoming one large group. We didn’t have as a premise for these students any individualized programming, nor a simple inclusion of individuals with autism in a school environment. Our aim was to create a set for both groups to interact in a dynamic and non-formal way.

Keywords: Inclusion, interaction, communication, bonds

OBJECTIVES

Awareness of the difference. Socialization and interaction with a distinct community (different age range and different cognitive level) in a different context. Establishment of partnerships and synergies in the school community and educational site. Openness and cooperation with new social realities. Acquisition of basic skills at the level of listening, written and verbal in another language (English). Ongoing reflection on the behavior of both groups initially, and on how these groups were evolving throughout the project.

METHODOLOGY

Monthly classes. Workshops aimed at clarifying the class about the characteristics of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Planning and implementation of various activities together, using the new information and communication technologies. Development of an original script. Production of a movie from the script created. Creation and maintenance of an informative blog on the Internet (www.inbetween.blogs.sapo.pt).

CONCLUSIONS

The children of the fourth grade began to cope better with the difference in others mainly because they understood it and accepted it through an effective recognition of the positive aspects of it. The young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders started living more comfortably with their own difference having raised significantly their levels of self-esteem. The differences blurred and bonds were created.

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