

CELEBRATING
THE EUROPEAN
YEAR
OF INTERCULTURAL
DIALOGUE:
THEORY AND PRACTICE
IN INTERCULTURAL
EDUCATION

WARSAW CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
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 navreme



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Patricia Mata y Luisa Lobo + Patricia Mata INTRODUCTION	8
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I. THEORY AND CONCEPTS ON IE

JM Lauret CONFERENCIA CLAUSURA	12
Paola Dusi CONFLICT AT OUR TIMES. A PEDAGOGICAL GLANCE	25
Jorun Buli–Holmberg, Marjorie Schiering, Drew Bogner THINKING AND FEELING ARE A NATURAL PROCESS FOR EVERY LEARNER	38
Carlos Afonso, Joana Cavalcanti, Mário Cruz, Miguel Prata Gomes, Paula Medeiros THE OTHER OF MYSELF: REPRESENTATIONS OF PORTUGUESE TEACHERS ABOUT INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION RELATED CONCEPTS	55
Patricia Mata y Margarita del Olmo AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION CONCEPTS. IS IT POSSIBLE TO REACH A CONSENSUS?	73
Inés Gil Jaurena y Margarita del Olmo EDUCATIONAL POLICIES REGARDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION. ANALYSIS OF THE SPANISH CONTEXT	87

II. TEACHER AND ADULTS TRAINING ON IE

Carmen Osuna Nevado y Caridad Hernández RACISM: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT. A GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT RACISM	100
Anastasija Aleksejeva THE READINESS OF THE TEACHERS TO WORK IN THE MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN LATVIA	107
Ewa Dąbrowa (Ph. D.) Urszula Markowska–Manista (MA) ON THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE IDEA OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE POLISH SCHOOL	119
Małgorzata Kołodziejczyk METHODS OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION READCOM READING CLUBS FOR ADULT LEARNING COMMUNITIES	131

Teresa Aguado y Beatriz Malik INTER NETWORK. INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, TEACHER TRAINING AND SCHOOL PRACTICE	142
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III. IE PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

Ana Carolina Walczuk Beltrão INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN PORTUGUESE FL: CULTURALLY RELEVANT CONTENT FOR CONVERSATION CLASSES	158
Dorota Domalewska ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND STEREOTYPE CHANGE AMONG LEARNERS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES	173
Miguel Prata Gomes, Ana Cristina Pereira, Elisabete Duarte, Patrícia Silva, Pedro Bastos Ferreira INTERCULTURAL PREJUDICES AND MISCONCEPTIONS IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOL BOOKS	188
Katarzyna Górak–Sosnowska TEACHING ABOUT THE WORLD OF ISLAM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS MUSLIMS AND OTHERS	192
Scholtke, Lena DEMANDS ON GERMAN CLASSES AND THEIR REFLECTION IN GERMAN TEXTBOOKS OF THE FOURTH GRADE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL	208
Inés Gil Jaurena INTERCULTURAL APPROACH IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MADRID: SCHOOL PRACTICE AT A GLANCE	225

IV. POSTERS AND EXPERIENCES

Linda Vanderlooven CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CULTURE OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS	238
POSTER INTER NETWORK	242

INTRODUCTION

Patricia Mata & Luisa Andrade Lobo de Rezende

The INTER Network. Intercultural Education, Teacher Training and School Practice (<http://internetwork.up.pt/>) is a Comenius Network funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme. The Comenius Action has the objective of supporting teacher training, establishing school partnerships across Europe and funding multilateral education projects on issues relating to language learning, intercultural education, environmental and science education (<http://www.comeniuslearningtogether.com/about-comenius/>).

The purpose of the INTER Network is to improve quality of education and contribute to innovation in schools by assisting them in the adoption / implementation of an intercultural approach, fostering the reflection on cultural diversity and providing a scenario in which to cooperate, exchange and elaborate practical tools for initial and in-service teacher training. Teachers can make a difference in schools by transforming their own practices and ideas about education and cultural diversity.

The aims of the INTER Network are:

- 1. To define, exemplify and promote intercultural education as an approach to deal with cultural differences at school in terms of theoretical foundations and practical implications.*
- 2. To critically assess the European, national and local educational policies and practices developed in relation to meeting the needs of culturally diverse students and communities, specifically those initiatives named “intercultural”.*
- 3. To elaborate and implement teacher training initiatives in the network institutions (masters and other postgraduate courses, seminars, workshops, etc.) in order to support teachers to deal with cultural diversity in a flexible way by adopting an intercultural approach in their daily practices.*

- 4. To elaborate, implement and disseminate tools to analyse, support, manage and improve the intercultural approach in schooling practices, in relation to curriculum and institutional dimensions*

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 “Theory & Practice in Intercultural Education” which took place in Warsaw between the 30th of June and 3rd of July of 2008. The overall conference was organized by the INTER Network together with the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE) and the Warsaw School of Social Psychology.

The different contributions included in this CD respond to some of the main dimensions addressed by the Network: Theoretical foundations on Intercultural Education, Teacher Training, and School Practices and Resources. They have been organized, following this structure, in four sections:

- I. Theory and concepts on Intercultural Education*
- II. Teacher and Adults Training on Intercultural Education*
- III. Intercultural Education Practices and Resources*
- IV. Posters and experiences*

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. THEORY AND CONCEPTS ON IE

Jeudi 3 juillet 2008

Jean Marc Lauret

I would like to use this address to try to define the notion of intercultural dialogue and to set out the conditions that make it possible.

My contribution falls into three parts.

The first examines the links between the notion of intercultural dialogue and that of difference.

In the second part I shall try to define the exchange that can be brought about through intercultural dialogue and advance ideas concerning the conditions to be respected so that this exchange can occur.

In the third part I shall look at the crucial link between the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the thought of universality.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIFFERENCE

For intercultural dialogue to be possible the first condition is a belief that it is possible for people of different cultures to understand each other..

This requires the rejection of:

- > the assimilationist position, which sees mutual understanding as dependent on the reduction of differences in a sense of common culture;
- > and essentialist or fundamentalist conceptions of difference between cultures and individuals of different cultures.

The assimilationist position has become untenable in a society that has become de facto multicultural and that recognizes the legitimacy of cultural diversity.

However, this recognition applies only to the existing situation. It does not necessarily open the way to intercultural dialogue.

Indeed the recognition of cultural diversity can lead to an essentialization of differences, notably when it is based on the model of biodiversity and assumes that dialogue between human beings belonging to different cultures is no more possible than interbreeding between different species.

I would like pause for a moment to consider the notion of difference.

Individuals differ through a plurality of “identity markers” of different registers (gender, sexual orientation, skin colour, profession and membership of various social groups, nationality, the place we live in, etc.).

There are two ways of looking at these differences.

The first sees them as binary opposites, classifying individuals into categories separated by unbreachable divides. This conception often goes hand in hand with the over-determination of one category, which is regarded as fundamental to the community one belongs to. This makes it hard to envisage understanding between groups. If what defines me is structured on the basis of a binary opposition such as, black or white, man or woman, heterosexual or homosexual, left or right, believer or atheist, Jew or Muslim, etc., there is no possibility of dialogue or understanding between members of the opposing communities.

The second sees them as positions on a continuum, conditional, provisional and interlinked by feedback loops, “closer to the derridian notion of *différance*” as Stuart Hall writes, a conception that reintroduces into the meaning of the word ‘difference’ the sense that comes to it from the French verb “*différer*”, to defer; in marking a shift in time, the possibility of evolution, of transformation, this brings greater fluidity to a notion which the logical concept of different tends to solidify. Where the insistence on a single identity concentrates on one of many positions in an attempt to attain homogeneity or to reduce a set of differences around a marker of identity that is supposed to homogenize the group, *différance* constitutes identity as a never-ending process and opens the possibility of having multiple individual and collective identities that are always developing. It alone allows us to envisage the possibility of dialogue and mutual understanding. It alone grounds an ability to escape the determinism of cultures of belonging to this or that community and invites us to step back and look with a critical eye. Thinking in terms of *différance* makes it possible to avoid being subjected

to different forms of belonging as atavism and to become aware of assumptions implicit in the thinking of a particular community one may belong to.

Such a conception of *différance* goes hand in hand with a conception of *recognition* that goes beyond the respect due to every individual, the recognized right of individuals to express their cultural identity in the private sphere. Beyond the right to culture, to respect for cultural identity, it leads us to extend the list of belief-rights by adding the recognition of collective rights, in other words that of cultural identities to enter the public space. This recognition leads to communitarism only if the pre-eminence of collective rights is asserted over those of the individual rights, if the assertion of collective rights challenges individual independence and reduces the personal identity of individuals to their membership of a community. Thinking in terms of *différance* grounds cultural diversity without at the same time fixing its elements in reified, stigmatizing representations. It alone enables us to reconcile the right to difference with an affirmation of every individual's right to equality and freedom.

Beyond its legal dimension, recognition manifests itself in the political fight against inequality and injustice. Intercultural dialogue risks proving illusory or an exacerbator of social tensions if it is not part of a global policy of combating inequalities, in other words if it is denied its properly political dimension.

WHAT IS EXCHANGED IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE?

For intercultural dialogue to be possible, before entering into it both sides must acknowledge the diversity and legitimacy of points of view. There is no possibility of dialogue between interlocutors who view the subject of the dialogue in the same way. Between individuals who keep to their own position there can similarly be no dialogue, merely a juxtaposition of two monologues. Learning about cultural diversity certainly contributes to intercultural dialogue. However, it is not enough to meet all the conditions that make dialogue possible. For dialogue to occur, there has to be a shared desire to meet the other.

Learning to meet others

Once one has become aware of the singularity of one's own individual and collective culture, what is it that may lead individuals and social groups to want to meet others? Meeting with others can be destabilizing and lead to feelings of insecurity. The only reassuring way of meeting with another is to meet my double. The desire to meet what is foreign is far from spontaneous and has to be learned and worked on. As François Jullien writes, "to enter into dialogue, it is imperative for each participant to open his enclosed position, bring it into question and place it before another."¹ This is a long way from any quest for ease. Ease would mean giving way to one of the three temptations that represent the hurdles at which intercultural dialogue can fall.

1. The desire to reduce the distance between oneself and others by seeking to impose one's point of view on them. Imperialism and dialogue are antagonistic terms. There is no possibility of dialogue between dominator and dominated.
2. Presenting your partner in dialogue with that which you assume he expects from you, dissolving your identity in your meeting with him. This is the reverse of the previous hurdle, describing the alienation to which the dominated falls victim when he finally submits. This is the position of those populations visited by western tourists who reflect an image of folk culture they assume will meet the tourists' requirements.
3. The dream of a fusion of points of view in a hypothetical synthesis. The aim of intercultural dialogue is not to reduce cultural diversity to a globalized shared culture.

What do we give and receive in the exchange arising out of intercultural dialogue that is worth our investment of effort?

1. As Maurice Godelier has shown, not everything can be given or sold. "Alongside the things that are sold and those that are given there are some that are not to be either sold or given, but which must be kept and passed on, and these things are the supports of identities that survive better than others over time."² If culture is the support of identity, it comes into the

¹ Opus cité page 243.

² Maurice Godelier, *Au fondement des sociétés humaines*, Albin Michel, 2007, p. 34. Voir les pages consacrées aux « objets sacrés » p.82.

category of those things that are neither given nor sold but passed on. But it is the exchange with others that makes transmission possible. A closed culture dies and becomes fossilized.

2. My discovery and understanding of the diversity of ways of seeing the world also helps me become aware of the singularity of my own way of seeing. Intercultural dialogue enables me to highlight the implicit assumptions underlying my own thinking, culture and values and leads me to rebuild and transform those assumptions, letting me step back and adopt a critical distance in relation to my thinking. It is meeting with others that gives meaning to my own singularity. The decentring this brings about feeds back into my own identity, which can then be enriched. “All dialogue”, writes François Jullien, “is an efficient – operative – structure that obliges one de facto to redevelop one’s own conceptions in order to enter into communication, and thus also to reflect on oneself.”³ The exchange arising out of dialogue is not a gift followed by another gift, it is mutual enrichment. It is a process that has no end. Involvement in dialogue does not imply a desire to conclude with agreement between the parties or the shared adoption of a consensual position. Intercultural dialogue is perhaps more similar to the African “parley” than to a debate concluding with a democratic vote. Where the democratic vote ultimately recognizes the majority position, the parley has pauses and parentheses but never ends. The same is true of intercultural dialogue.

3. The aim of intercultural dialogue is mutual understanding. This is what distinguishes it from the processes of creolization at work in some former western colonies. Dialogue is a voluntary, intentional process, motivated by a desire to meet others, whereas the process of creolization takes place without those affected being aware of it. Dialogue is an exchange between equal partners. The processes of creolization were born out of slavery, in other words an initial desire to eradicate the cultural identities of the deported peoples. To seek to understand the other is not to dissolve one’s own identity in the meeting, it is, as François Jullien writes, to seek to render “the values of the other intelligible in one’s own language” and in so doing to take them as a basis for self-reflection. If tolerance is to exist, it can come

³ Opus cité page 248.

only through work on the positions of each, which dialogue enables us to undertake in a spirit of solidarity.⁴

This conception of the benefits of intercultural dialogue allows us to draw practical conclusions concerning the strategy that must be implemented in order to promote it.

1. The necessary conditions for intercultural dialogue include multilingualism and a shared effort of translation. “The bird and the fish may fall in love”, writes Richard Powers in his sublime novel *The Time of Our Singing*, “but they have no word in common to refer to their nest.”⁵ This sentence sums up what is at stake in intercultural dialogue. Even if we have no word in common to refer to the nest, it is vital that we seek to translate the thinking of the other into our language. To make oneself understood means to translate one’s thought into one’s own language. While translation always goes into the mother tongue of the translator, it is necessarily a collaborative process that leads either side to think about what is implicit in what they say. Without this process, as Richard Powers also writes, “the bird and the fish can build their nest, but they will build their home on shaky foundations”.⁶ Exchanging, writes François Jullien, thus means “Each in his own language but translating the other, for translation exemplifies the operativity proper to dialogue: it really forces one to reconstruct within one’s own language, thus to reconsider what is implicit in what one says, to make one’s language available to the possibility of a different meaning, or one less caught up in other ramifications”.⁷

The promotion of intercultural dialogue is thus inseparable from the establishment of an ambitious policy to strengthen the position of foreign lan-

⁴ « La tolérance, entre valeurs culturelles, elle dont on ne cesse de dire aujourd'hui l'urgence entre les nations, écrit François Jullien, ne doit pas venir (elle ne le doit pas simplement parce qu'elle ne le peut pas) de ce que chacun, personne ou civilisation, réduirait la prétention de ses propres valeurs ou modérerait son adhésion à leur égard, ou même « relativiserait » ses positions (pourquoi l'Europe marchanderait-elle tant soit peu sur la Liberté ?) : c'est-à-dire les tiendrait pour de moindres valeurs dont on sacrifierait l'absolu et l'idéalité – chacun faisant effort et lénifiant ses conceptions et cédant du terrain et « mettant de l'eau dans son vin », comme le dit de façon si basement familière le « bon sens », qui est l'envers du sens commun. ... Une telle tolérance ne peut venir que de l'intelligence partagée : de ce que chaque culture, chaque personne, se rende intelligibles dans sa propre langue les valeurs de l'autre et, par suite, se réfléchisse à partir d'elles – donc aussi travaille avec elles » Opus cité, page 220.

⁵ Ed Le Cherche midi page 283

⁶ Idem p.421

⁷ Opus cité, page 248.

guage learning in schools and throughout life and the support to translation. This concerns not only the 22 or 23 European languages, but also the languages spoken in the countries of origin of immigrant populations.

Here we must of course extend the meaning of the word language to cover all languages, particularly the different languages of art. The establishment of intercultural dialogue implies a policy of exchange and co-production between different artists. For example, in the field of choreography it means translating the vocabulary and grammar of African dances into the vocabulary and grammar of contemporary dance.

2. However, the goal of exchange is not purely speculative. Above and beyond mutual comprehension it is also to feed our imaginations and transform the concrete conditions of our existence. Or, to put it another way, the goal of dialogue is not just to feed the curiosity of all those involved, although this curiosity is perfectly legitimate. To call a dialogue fertile is to say that it facilitates the creation of a new way of thinking, new ways of doing, the building of a shared nest, to prolong the metaphor, even if, as Richard Powers also writes, “the building of the nest” must “go on forever”,⁸ because we will never be done with exchange and the need to receive the fruits it bears. The goal of exchange is to produce new, hybrid, mixed realities. This does not mean diluting the identity of each in a culture of accelerated uniformization. Far from leading to uniformity, cultural hybrids, like their biological counterparts, work to enrich diversity and have unlimited potential for development. The strategy to be implemented must thus link the mobility of people to the mobility of works that feed the imagination (French : imaginaire, German : fantasy), in literature, film, the visual arts and live performance, and must therefore include the establishment of means to overcome linguistic barriers to the circulation of works (the establishment of a programme to support translation and subtitling).

⁸ Idem p.344

The drive towards equality as a condition for exchange and intercultural dialogue

The meeting of desires is far from transparent, stripped of all ambiguity or ambivalence. For a real meeting to take place, it is vital that neither side should be afraid of being caught out or dispossessed by the other. How can a meeting be experienced as an opportunity for enrichment, rather than a threat, loss or challenge to our own identity? Equality is a prerequisite for exchange, or must at least be one of the objectives to be constructed in the course of the exchange, even if it is never definitively gained and requires regular adjustments from either side. Where the people or populations involved are on an equal footing, exchange is reciprocal. By contrast, if “dialogue” is established between people or populations who have an asymmetrical relationship, particularly in economic terms, we can only speculate as to the effects, not to say the intentions, reflected in the desire of the “dominators” to engage in dialogue, particularly when this is portrayed as generosity, as a “liking for others”. Is placing value on the culture of others a way of expiating the sins of western society with its history of slavery and colonisation? Does it reflect a desire for a different place that is regarded as more authentic because it is not – yet – contaminated by commercial culture? There are ways of being open to the culture of others that seem more like the potlatch described by Marcel Mauss than a balanced relationship of giving and receiving. There are ways of reducing difference that smack of self-importance and paternalism.

In an inegalitarian context exchange is possible only if the “dominator” undertakes to rebalance the scales. Exchange is possible only if its establishment cannot be suspected of being a further attempt at domination. Before exchange can be reciprocal there has to be a stage of cooperation.

UNIVERSALITY AS A CONCEPT REGULATING EXCHANGES

One might imagine that respecting and valuing cultural diversity and dialogue between individuals of different cultures would lead to cultural relativism, and indeed that they are possible only if one refuses to measure

the respective positions of participants against a paradigm imposed on all. Aside from the fact that cultural relativism leads to an acceptance or tolerance of the unacceptable, it is impossible to maintain, being contradictory in terms; it is only one position among others, including its opposite, i.e. the assertion that some values are universal. Cultural relativism does not permit us to break into the enclosure that imprisons individuals in themselves, and we do not ask it to. It makes intercultural dialogue unthinkable.

It is the affirmation of the principle of universality that creates the conditions for an exchange between individuals from different cultures. This notion of universality is not obvious, is not self-explanatory in these days of the celebration of cultural diversity, since it is always suspected of seeking to reduce diversity, of regarding as legitimate only those positions which, above and beyond their diversity, respect universal principles. Nor can it be grounded in the adoption in principle, by a majority of peoples and states, of the universal declaration of human rights. A majority, even unanimity, does not provide universality with an adequate basis, in the same way that it is not invalidated by challenges to it. Calling values universal does not mean stating that they are a matter of unanimous agreement, it means asserting them as values that should apply universally to all of humanity above and beyond cultural diversity. In fact we should note that the claim to universality is a singular construction, a particular moment in the European and western history of ideas.

Questioning the principle of universality and criticizing its use in the service of special interests should however not lead us to question the need for universal values. François Jullien's book *De l'universel, de l'uniforme, du commun et du dialogue entre les cultures*, published in French at the start of the European year of intercultural dialogue, will act as our guide in grounding the notion of universality as applied to values.

As François Jullien recalls, in the western philosophical tradition concept of universality is an a priori concept that precedes all experience. Its legitimacy is grounded in reason rather than the empirical observation of agreement with its content, however unanimous, on the example and model of the laws of nature revealed by the application of the laws of scientific knowledge to reality.

Can this conception of universality be applied to values? Can values be grounded in a conception of universality as a logical necessity?

Let us follow the path taken by François Jullien.

Regrounding the concept of universality means first distinguishing it from uniformity. Whereas universality is a requirement of reason, uniformity appears as a descriptive concept of the standardization of life-styles, the reproduction and diffusion of similarity.⁹ Uniformity eradicates differences, it is the reign of similarity that takes over life-styles and the imagination; it is merely a pseudo-universality. The right to difference is the opposite not of universality but of uniformity, of levelling.

Regrounding universality also means distinguishing it from the common. The common is that which is shared, that which makes us belong to the same community, it is rooted in shared experience. The common is a political concept that relates to a joint, negotiated decision to adopt relations of belonging to a particular community, unlike universality, which regards "the totality concerned as something that must be, with no possibility of exception".¹⁰ The common relates to the city. The universal relates to the logos. Even when the common means that which makes us belong to the same species, humanity, it is still different from the universal, which remains an abstraction. This is not the abstraction of common characteristics observed in individuals, but a logical abstraction that precedes observation; it is a prescription. Universality is not derived from an awareness of what we share, of common values. The confusion of the universal with the common arises out of a shift from the terrain of morality to that of politics. It leads us to render absolute that which may be common to us. All the same there remains what is proper to us, what is not shared by others. "In defining an inside, it ejects".¹¹ The universal emerges from that which is politically common "and in return acts as an ideal or a horizon, as a regulating idea, to that which is enmeshed in the social substance".¹²

9 «La seule rationalité dont on puisse créditer l'uniforme, écrit François Jullien, est principalement économique et de gestion ; elle repose sur l'imitation ; elle n'est pas, en tout cas, à la différence de l'universel, de l'ordre du logique et du prescriptif » Opus cité page 32 - 33.

10 Opus cité, page 41.

11 Opus cité, page 47.

12 Opus cité, page 57.

François Jullien shows how the question of universality is not posed in other cultures, be it Islam, India, Japan or China. Similarly, it would be very hard to find universal notions, or even equivalents of our notions with pretensions to universality, in other cultures. And yet, “that the notion of universality is posed as such... only in the European context, that it is hard to find notions that, across the disparity of cultures, appear universal from the outset”¹³, in no way invalidates it. “Once it has appeared, even in a single culture (European culture, giving it its strength), or at least been made explicit there, the necessity of universality can no longer be relegated ... One can defy the claim to universality, criticize it, condemn it, break with it, but its necessity remains constant.”¹⁴.

What must be abandoned is the positive content of the notion of universality, which is always suspected of being culturally marked, in order to free the notion of universality as an operative concept that makes it possible “to empty any institution or formation of its assurance, born of the totalization that gives it its self-sufficiency, and to reopen a breach in the comfort of enclosure”.¹⁵ “It is dynamic and unconditioned; always taking non-exclusion further, to this end it works on not only theoretical constructs, but also political configurations, maintaining pressure on every form and structure and institution.”¹⁶

The same can be said of human rights, of the declaration of human rights which must be constantly rewritten, whose “universality is not given, but has the value of a regulatory idea in the Kantian sense, an idea that is never fulfilled and indefinitely guides exploration, that instigates work”.¹⁷ It is not the positive content of human rights that is universal, but the regulatory nature of the very notion of “human rights”, its unconditional, transcendent nature. It is the “failure or privation” of these rights that “revives a universality of transcultural, transhistoric humanity which I could not otherwise name, and in the name of which I can say no, a priori, to all that undermines them, in whatever context, and legitimately protest.”¹⁸

13 Opus cité, page 142.

14 Opus cité, page 143.

15 Opus cité, page 144.

16 Opus cité, page 148.

17 Opus cité, page 163.

18 Opus cité, page 185.

Here François Jullien concurs with Slavoj Žižek when the latter asserts the principle of universality as integral to political struggle. In Žižek’s analysis as set out in his *Plea for Leninist Intolerance*, politics emerged in Ancient Greece from the constitution of the excluded, the demos, as “the mouth-pieces of the society as a whole, in the name of an authentic universality”.¹⁹ Where “communitarism” imprisons individuals and groups in their own singularity, according to Žižek “politics proper always produces a kind of short-circuit between the universal and the particular [...] undermining the ‘natural’, functional order of relations within the social corpus.”²⁰ When Franz Fanon took up the defence of the “damned of the earth”, when, forty years ago in France, demonstrating students chanted, “We are all German Jews”, when today the same or different people proclaim “We are all illegal immigrants”, they are showing that it is by adopting universality that a particular fight gains a political dimension, which cannot be reduced to dealing with the particular situation suffered by a given social group, since that would be akin to neutralizing its true political dimension. As François Jullien observes, “Although, in distinguishing their position from the universalist point of view traditionally maintained by the political left, the protest movements of the cultural minorities [...] have maintained a radical particularism, they have nevertheless experienced the fact that their demands had a future only if they themselves [...] took up and revived the demand for universality”.²¹

From this point of view, the ethno-racial and community-based models of integration and positive discrimination have the ideological effect of denying the universal dimension that certain specific struggles can take on.²² This denial is the true source of rootlessness. Identity-based demands imprison individuals in victimhood, in a position of resentment. To see individuals or groups in terms of their origins is to deny them their membership of the human race, above and beyond their differences. As Slavoj Žižek also writes, “the colouring of particular identities is the phantasmatic screen that hides the fact that the subject is already entirely “rootless”, that his

19 Paris, Flammarion – Climats, mai 2007.

20 Idem p.32.

21 Opus cité, page 145.

22 Sur la genèse de la substitution en France du modèle ethno-racial au modèle républicain, voir Jean – Loup Amselle, *L’occident décroché*, Stock 2008, chapitre 9 La facture post-coloniale, pages 235 et suivantes.

real position is devoid of universality”.²³ Here the shift from the political to the cultural terrain has the effect of removing the aspiration to the recognition of the universal values of freedom and equality in favour of a tolerant coexistence of differences. While communitarism shuts the common in on itself, universality, writes François Jullien, “draws the *common* with it and promotes it: thanks to universality the common (of politics) does not become mired in an established form of belonging, is not restricted to any established form of sharing, but tends to expand [...] in terms of an expansion that knows no end [...] It is universality that turns the common away from communitarism.”²⁴

To write that universality is the regulatory concept that makes it possible to expand the common in a process that knows no end, even if it is shared by all, is to invite us to build this common space and to maintain its endless expansion.

Jean Marc Lauret

Head of the Department of Education,
Training, Teaching and the Professions
Development and International Affairs Section
Ministry of Culture and Communication
182, rue Saint Honoré
75033 Paris Cedex 01 | France
jean-marc.lauret@culture.gouv.fr
Tel: + 33 (0)1.40.15.78.72
fax: + 33 (0)1 40.15.78.00

²³ Opus cité p. 73.

²⁴ Opus cité, page 149.

CONFLICT AT OUR TIMES

A Pedagogical Glance

Paola Dusi

The possibility, implied in the concept of action, of giving birth to something new, of modifying oneself, shaping oneself, and one's surroundings, leads to repeatedly getting in conflict with oneself and others. Actions is always inter-action; each action carries with itself consequences for the self and for others. An action implies the possibility of a conflict in the same way as an agent implies a patient. The relationship is inherently one of contrast. It involves differences, and differences – as such – tend to generate conflict and remain in mutual strain. Since ancient times, individuals and groups have had to face with this inherent dimension of existing-amidst-others. However, contemporary society, more than preceding ones, is to face with increasingly conflictual situations, because of its complex and multiethnic features. Conflicts become the inevitable ground where to co-exist but at the same time they turn into a privileged chance of building the self. In order to offer educational guidelines which may meet the needs of a multicultural society, intercultural pedagogy promotes the acquisition of skills which may enable the individual to deal with conflicts and to transform them into self-educational context, into a relational practice able to create spaces of civility where it is possible to build new worlds together.

Key words: contrasting relationship, intercultural education, dialogic conflict

CONFLICT

From ancient times individuals and groups of people have been faced with conflicts, a constitutive dimension of being-with-others; and feeling the need to understand these conflicts, they formulated various justifying theories. Some people interpreted conflict in terms of force (it was positive for Heraclitus, negative for Anassimander); others, such as the Sophists, interpreted it in terms of opposing ideas in the political arena. With Aristotle and Plato, a new concept of conflict began to immerge viewed in terms of

pathology and an imbalance between man and his society. Christianity, with Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas, followed along the same lines holding the view that conflict was a disorder or an imbalance of the natural conditions of man and society. In modern times, Machiavelli and Hobbs developed an anthropological idea of conflict interpreted as man's natural condition- as competition among individuals, while Locke claimed that an individual had legitimate rights, and Smith gave importance to conflicts in that they favour well-being.

Hegel's view that conflict, intended as the main dialectical principle applied to the human condition, radically opened new perspectives; one was struggle, a situation of contrast that allows man and society to achieve greater and higher levels of moral development. We can trace two anthropological currents in the history of reflections on conflict. On the one hand, there is the theory whereby Hobbes attributes a warlike meaning to the word *polemós*; and on the other, Hegel's theory that accepts a more Vican translation of the Greek term. G.B. Vico does not speak of conflict in terms of war or of contrast that implies violence, but rather he translates *polemós* as 'cōntra-stāre' or 'staying-in-contrast'. This recalls the dimension of "contrasting relationships" as a way to experience a relationship. It is this accepted meaning of conflict- that is, not its degenerated forms that also exist in our lives- that this paper reflects upon.

Conflicting relationships are the condition of our existence. Conflict ties the strings of each of our lives at an intrapersonal level as well as at a greater interpersonal and/or social level. We are often in conflict with ourselves, torn between yearnings, choices, acquaintances and actions. All of us, at "the fork in the road", as J.L. Borges wrote, weave the pattern of our lives from the threads of doubt and bewilderment, especially at crucial times when we are called upon to make decisions concerning new plots for our lives and how to give it shape. This giving of shape is always involved with relationships, and relationships assume differences and "differences, simply because they are such, tend to cause conflicts, and, therefore, are constantly present in relationships of mutual tension. A situation of 'staying-in-contrast', in fact, is not at all unnatural, as Eraclitus said; staying-in-contrast should not be taken to mean pure separation. In its extreme forms, in the

horrors of war, staying-in-contrast reveals a truth: the inevitability of relationships" (Natoli, 2006, 47). A look at the etymology allows us to bring to light the intrinsically contrasting nature of relationships, whatever they may be. Just think of the dual relationship that gives origin to life and the relationship between mother and child.

The issues

Why 'staying in contrast'? Mainly to satisfy the fundamental needs that accompany the human condition and incarnate beings. Behind every conflict there are hidden issues that may be helpful in finding access to the resources necessary to resolve those conflicts; these are the system of values in a political, ideological or religious environment, one's beliefs (Festinger, 1978), the nature of the relationship between individuals or groups, the basic needs of a person (material or not) and the ethic dimension of one's existence (Deutsch, 1973). Human sciences have long studied people's fundamental needs. There have been innumerable psycho-dynamic and personalistic theories that have analyzed the complex question of human existence. First among these is the need to survive- physically and psychologically; this urges people to seek safety and well-being. Individuals and groups are guided by the need to identify the multiple aspects of our existence (personal, social, ethnic-cultural, moral and religious) which are tightly intertwined with the need to belong and one's self esteem. Halfway between the needs for security, well-being and self-realization, we find the need for autonomy and acknowledgement. These latter needs are classified as relational needs. In fact, they can only be satisfied by the other: otherness is at the heart of the self. Other needs that man is able to satisfy through intersubjective relationships are the opportunity to participate in the construction of knowledge and the sharing of that knowledge; these relationships allow man to achieve a symbolic and axiological dimension. The crucial role that the relational dimension plays in a person's life, so that he/she can establish a solid, multiple identity that can give meaning to their existence, makes it obvious that relationships themselves, in turn, are a privileged arena for conflict, full of expectations, desires and different perspectives for the actors involved in these relationships.

Conflict in a multi-cultural society

If contradiction and conflict are at work every second of our lives (Simmel, 1992), the reasons behind them are greatly augmented in a multicultural society. The natural tension that accompanies a relationship is exaggerated by real diversities that seem even greater because of the prejudices and misunderstandings connected to different ways of constructing one's world. In a complex society, accepting the culture of the majority or, alternately, that of the social status, means being an insider; whereas not belonging to or accepting the culture one lives in means being an outsider. Even interpersonal conflicts take on ethnic tones while the occasions for inter-group conflicts increase.

In multi-cultural contexts, real and concrete conflicts connected with belonging, which is a vehicle of one's identity, are exasperated and exploited to the advantage of those processes of simplification of reality and of finding 'easy' enemies to identify and combat. This allows us to take our attention away from social, financial and political problems which are much more complex and difficult to manage. The themes of identity and ethnic belonging become catalysts of looks, interpretations and conflicts.

Moreover, in today's political-cultural debate, one notices the opposing positions of anthropological perspectives that claim that all cultural forms of expression are equal and Herder's claim of the irreducible uniqueness of every form (Joppe and Lukes, 1999, 5). Today, there is the constant risk of accepting the essential definition of culture as the heritage of any given ethnic group (Turner, 1993, 412). By treating culture as the standards of what distinctly identifies a given group, we create identity masks that make the individual person invisible. To perceive cultures as total realities that are clearly limited and describable is fruit of a vision that tends to simplify, for the purpose of understanding and controlling, that which by its nature is complex. Such an assumption conditions the natural 'staying in contrast' that is characteristic of the human condition.

CONFLICT AS A PLACE OF LEARNING

The actual fact of being human and social generates conflicts. We are our own conflicts. It is precisely in conditions of crises that man can learn and give himself shape by taking advantage of the possibilities offered him

through relations or real actions. Conflicts have 'pedagogical worth' because they create important moments along the path of realization that an individual follows to achieve a state of autonomy. This is the issue- the stakes of the conflicts that mark the path for growth for every human being. Contrast, hindrance and difficulty are the conditions of crises, or moments of passage, the epoché, where the risk of loss exists side by side with occasions for personal growth.

An educational relationship could be called an arena of conflicts because of the differentiation and individualization that are achievable only through contrasting relations with the figures of reference. Conflicts involve matters of activity and passivity, of commanding and obeying, of doing and of being 'done'. One's education could be defined as a path of struggles where one can find one's own can be/able-to-be, the becoming of what one eventually will be: it is a struggle to achieve a harmonious balance between one's 'able to be' with and for the other, which is never a definitive situation. One's *vis existendi* feeds on a harmonious balance between one's self and others. This is a balance that is more than ever unstable in a multiethnic society, where individuals must face very obvious identity and value differences that all co-exist at the same time.

BECOMING. EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: LEARNING TO 'STAY IN CONTRAST'

It seems that contemporary society nurtures identity maladies, which fluctuate between forms of "identity bulimia" and "identity anorexia" (Dusi, 2008). People suffer either from an excess of identity or a lack of it because of their incapacity to break away from suffocating bonds or because of the impossibility to do so due to coercive social actions that impose social identity masks based on what one 'belongs' to as defined by one's 'ego-skin', religion and nationality. One's education is the result of intersubjective relationships where "*confligere*", as German idealism teaches (Hegel, 2001, 274-291), is found in relationships interwoven with acknowledgement. It is in the comparing of one's self when interacting with others that the forming of one's individual identity takes place- an identity that is quite distinct

from any other, one that is worthy of being acknowledged in virtue of the fact that it is quite unique (see Cooke, 1997). In complex reality, that which doesn't happen seems to be the opportunity of acknowledgement: "that constant feeling of being a nobody; worse, of not living at all: to realize that curious irritating or compassionate looks slide off of you as if you were just a shadow" (Komila-Ebri, 2007, 7).

In this perspective, it appears to be important that intercultural education teaches behaviour that would make it possible to learn from the inevitable processes of conflict that every individual, every institution and every social group must face in the course of their existence. That means educating people to have intersubjective behaviours able to evoke mutual situations of acknowledgement even in forms of social interaction such as situations of conflict (Honneth, 2003, 98). Without neglecting the incarnate aspects of existence, or outcomes that we could call materialistic, or the economic side of *confligere* (necessary for one's self esteem but not the object of this discussion), every contrasting relationship can have a positive outcome if one gains something for one's existence in the process, and if the conflict has been transformed in that occasion to continue the process of improvement of the individuals involved.

Every individual takes shape from the interwoven patterns of nature and culture by assuming individualistic, competitive and cooperative behaviours. However, because man learns through *mimesis*, education, as an experienced relational space, plays an important role in stimulating behaviour habits of a given kind. In this direction, education must offer young people in their formative years the instruments and situations that will allow them to reinforce their strategies of coping and resilience so that they can resort to defensive measures only in particular moments, or rather, they can learn an active behaviour style that expresses confidence in themselves when spending their energy. This means trying out models of action and interaction when teaching that will allow a person to stay in conflicting relationships while seeking mutual acknowledgement and individual self-realization. Pedagogy's view of conflicts emphasizes transformation of the people involved rather than the transformation of self-realization.

Learning to 'stay in contrast'

Education is required to play a crucial role by teaching people to live in conflict, taken as an occasion to grow and mature for one's own benefit as well for that of the other. First, teaching conflict means teaching one to be aware of one's self, of one's character and of the behavioural patterns that form it. Or, as D. Stern said, to know our RIG, which makes up the prototypes of our deeds, allows us to go beyond reactions and guides our actions. Besides, teaching conflict means teaching one to think, reflect, question one's self and to put one's self up for discussion. In this respect, it is important to forget about avoidance strategies- fleeing from conflict or aggression. In fact, even though they are opposing behaviour patterns, what both flight and aggression have in common is the aim to avoid conflict as soon as possible; but by doing so one does not take advantage of the opportunity for growth that there is in every relationship. It is by staying in and meditating on conflicts that we can find new paths for ourselves and for the conflict itself.

Teaching people how to deal with conflicts means teaching them to go beyond a perception of them in terms of dominion and/or submission in an effort to strengthen themselves in the responsible exercising of their freedom, or rather, in the ethical attention towards others. This is possible if one uses one's own strength to create something new, something not yet present in a conflict with one's self or with the other, and only if one is able to look beyond the walls that we feel surrounded by or that we would like to put around the other. It means educating individuals to use acknowledgement as a way to manage the intrinsic controversy in every relationship by keeping this relationship within a horizon of values that look to the progress of each of us in an awareness of a natural heteronomy of interests.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND CONFLICT: PLACES TO PLAN THE 'NOT YET'

According to Aristotle, *èthnos* is a term used to indicate a group of people who share the same life-style, a certain scale of values, and who participate in certain *ethikà*. The usual meaning of the word *èthnos* refers to people of a common language and culture- people who ascribe to the same group.

Today, people belong to multiple groups. More so than in the past, ‘real nations’, people from ‘pure’ linguistic groups and uncontaminated ethnic identities actually make up ‘imaginary’ communities that are the fruit of poets’, novelists’ and historians’ imagination, as well as that, naturally, of nineteenth century ideologist statesmen (Benhabib, 2005, 58), who brought to light the intertwining situation that involves all of them. A complex society cannot consider itself and be considered simply in terms of belonging because that would deny a large part of the interactions that go on within it; it would diminish the complexity of every human being. The claim that there is a single dimension to our existence, which has been shown by various research projects that studied new generations, does not correspond to the existential reality of human beings. The request on behalf of members of ethnic minorities to participate is compatible with the task of contemporary society- to construct shared ethiká through dialectic processes. “In an increasingly globalised and interdependent world, where encountering cultural difference can scarcely be avoided, the ability to enter into a tolerant and respectful dialogue is a vital skill for nations, communities, and individuals” (Unesco, 2007). In this direction, teaching people to ‘stay in contrast’ becomes a crucial place for intercultural education. Helping the new generations to acquire the tools they need to manage real confrontations between people of different and conflicting creeds and beliefs is an indispensable requisite to be able to live in a complex society and to pursue the construction of an intercultural one.

THE WAY OF DIALECTIC CONFLICTS

Conflict, from the Latin “conflictus(s)”, is a type of relationship characterized by tension, where antagonism, disagreement, dissension, struggle, dispute, and in the more degenerated forms, aggression and violence are generated. It seems appropriate here to point out the fact that the etymology of the term “dialog”, from the Greek “diálogos”, made up of “dià” (between) and “logos” (discourse), shows how the dimension of contrast, opposition and struggle expressed through ideas and discussion are intrinsic in a relationship with the other. In fact, the Greek preposition “dià-“ derived from the Indo-European “dis-“ denotes separation and, at the same time, ‘by means of’ or ‘through’. In

Latin, the Greek “diálogos”, besides the voice “diàlogu(m)”, gave origin to the word *divèrbium*, which meant the opposing (dis-) discourse (*vèrbum*) of two actors on stage.

Conflicts, as a place of contrasting dialogue, exist in a dialogic community, where conversing is uncomfortable because it is criss-crossed by processes in which mutual learning is built on challenge- on the ‘staying in contrast’ and putting one’s convictions up for discussion. Dialogic conflict is defined as a situation of ‘staying in contrast’ where the learning process and the sharing of constructing knowledge, convictions and ways of being are based on reflection.

In giving space to otherness, conflicts become places where one can question oneself, give oneself shape, grow alongside the other, or, in the worst of cases, grow in spite of the other, in a synergy that enables one to go beyond what is already known, that which has already been given, where one can pursue the co-construction of new spaces beginning with the current one. Other kinds of limitations and needs become opportunities and hardships in educational conflicts - hardships that characterize growing up. Conflicts become places that generate the ‘not yet’ when the subjects know how to face risks involved in trusting others and human behaviour. The chance of betrayal and failure bring with them an opportunity to meet others, to succeed and find other ways- a dimension where imagination and creativity open doors.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND CONFLICT: PLACES TO PLAN THE ‘NOT YET’

If one can learn to handle constructively the inevitable conflicts that abound in multicultural societies, one could reach an agreement and, educationally speaking, bring enhancement to the relationship (Hocker and Wilmot, 1991) through the increasing capability to be-with-the-other. We can be taught how to handle dialogic conflicts; the object of that change is to develop a capability to stabilize relationships that can deal with differences (Fisher and Brown, 1988). The dialogic approach in contemporary society takes on a rather complex shape: dialogue is a real sociologic necessity. The school of thought on

intercultural education focuses on the epistemological dimension: complex dialogue as a place where one can prepare for the 'not-yet'. Dialogue represents, from both an epistemological (μετάδοξις) and phenomenological point of view, the intercultural educational approach method. To speak of method means to speak of a course to follow and ways to practice. Dialogic conflict seems to be the method that education should follow in contemporary society; it is the method that enables educators to pursue a pedagogical and social utopia of the not-yet, or what does not yet exist: the intercultural society.

It is always risky to cross the threshold that separates two worlds because the experience brings with it a chance for both enrichment and loss. However, this can no longer be avoided especially in a multicultural society because the escarpments that mark boundaries- the line between the known and the unknown and the familiar and the strange- are no longer found at the extreme edges of society, but rather in the centre- in the neighbourhoods and buildings of our cities. The boundaries of conflict on the edges of the unknown have become mobile boundaries (Πλάγκτας) in the heart of the known. The ability to see the worlds of others means encountering the other, who, in turn, offers an opportunity for transformation. Teaching people to live in and accept dialogic conflicts offers the individual a new dimension: that of thinking of the other and thinking with the other. Contemporary society, which is multicultural but in new ways, and perhaps a bit excessive for western mentality, needs people who are able to go beyond the antithesis, the forms that divide, in order to unite the familiar with the strange and to live in conflict and to find solutions for the future.

Thinking generates an open mind, one that is capable of crossing boundaries, crossing thresholds, seeing new horizons for one's self and living alongside the other. But thinking finds nourishment in the other. As Homi Bhabba wrote, "working on the edges of culture requires encountering what is new and what is not part of a continuing past and present. This creates a sense of something new, like a rebellious act against cultural traditions" (Bhabba, 1994,70). Working on the edges is work done by individuals in dialogic conflict, whether these conflicts are found in groups and associations or in the uniqueness of inter- and intra-personal dialogue. In the abyss of global, complex society, it is necessary to ask ourselves how "to create a new society that no longer cripples man" (Garane, 2005, 122) and how to educate

this new man, who was formed from hybrids, contamination and relationships. "I am a new man. A hybrid cannot become crippled because he is born of many cultures that have crippled each other. He is the sum of all cultures" (Garane, 2005, 122).

If conflicts tie the knots of our existence in inter- and intrapersonal ways, then contemporary reality offers us the inevitability of encountering otherness and of measuring ourselves with others, where there will be the inescapable necessity for dialogue within the context of complex co-existence. Dialogue is the basis of the cultural dimension of human lives; words and deeds are unique. They are the place of inter-homina-esse (Arendt, 1995). Dialogical conflict could be, is a source of a new, better quality of life for people.

Dialogue "for what?" To move from the conflicting stage of multi-culturality to the dialogic stage of inter-culturality. We suggest to provide real opportunities for all those are living in our countries, not only to tolerate each other better but, above all, to do things together. Even if to know each other better is only the first step it is a necessary one to achieve mutual understanding and a contrasting cooperation. Needless to stress that dialogue requires securing conditions among which one seems to be crucial: partners of dialogue should respect mutually their identities. Dialogue requires perseverance in the quest for understanding the partner's culture specificity and the partner's system of values. Besides, the process of dialogic conflict can bring many benefits also to civic life, as: dispelling of stereotypes, honesty in relying ideas, intention to listen and to understand other human beings, etc.

There is a need for multiple forms of dialogue to ensure that all kinds of people have their real say. Marion Young argues that the "norms of deliberation are culturally specific and often operate as forms of power that silence or devalue the speech of some people" (Young, 1996, 124). To ensure that all kinds of actors have a real voice, education has to study circles use a variety of devices, such as ground rules, encouraging reflection on personal experiences and emphasizing the importance of readiness to listening. Listening in contrasting dialogue appears to be more important than speaking. education has to promote the value of listening because listening reduce pressure on people, give space to thoughts.

In a certain sense, dialogic conflict is an art which has to be learned. Therefore, to educate at contrasting dialogue plays a very relevant role. The duty of intercultural education, therefore, is to create learning contexts in which one can find the necessary tools to stay in a conflicting relationship, both with oneself and with others. So the ‘staying-in-contrast’ relationship (getting along in contrast) is a phenomenological condition. It makes up “the competitive background where men and women, the old and young, society and the individual, the alive and the dead, humans and the divine face unending human trials. To be acknowledged it is necessary to endure the hardships of a difficult apprenticeship carried out in the course of a long voyage through these persisting conflicts, whose universality is inseparable from their individuality, which can never be overcome” (Ricoeur, 2001, 347-348). Dialogic conflicts can become a form of inter-subjective actions, where single individuals can find, at the same time, individual satisfaction, mutual acknowledgement and an opportunity for personal enrichment. Dialogic conflict could become the relational practice through which one can create spaces of civility where it is possible to build new worlds together. Crucial in this perspective is the role of education. Needless to underline then that intercultural education – with the support of our democratic institutions- should endeavour to create the suitable ground for making people able at doing things together. The availability to share the world with the others showed it self in the dialogic conflict. Through dialogue and within dialogue, we “humanize what take place in the world and in our selves (...) and through our words, we learn to become human” (Arendt, 2006, 86). As Lessing wrote, there can’t be only one truth in the word. These impossibility makes it both necessary and inevitable a infinite dialogue among people.

Paola Dusi
 University of Verona
 Department of Education
 paola.dusi@univr.it

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THINKING AND FEELING ARE A NATURAL PROCESS FOR EVERY LEARNER

*Jorun Buli-Holmberg*²⁵

*Marjorie Schiering*²⁶

*Drew Bogner*²⁷

Thinking and feeling are a natural process for everyone. Thinking influences everyday happenings and belief-systems. 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. Individual's thinking and feelings are continually co-joined and impact each other in a reciprocal fashion. Awareness of "who" one is as a learner impacts "how" one learns. "How" one learns and teaches is reliant on awareness of "what" one thinks and feels which forms belief and value systems. There are common social and societal realities that encompass and transcend one's culture. We consider these are basic issues to address in Educational Guidance. In this article we introduce a model for academic and social cognition that combine thinking and feelings and other factors that influence beliefs and value systems. This model focus on the various cognitive processes that occur in the reciprocal thinking and feeling phases as Beginning Awareness and Organization, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Meta-cognitive Processes and how different systems as Sociology of the World (SOW) and Religion, Economics, Academics, Politics (REAP) influences cognition and meta-cognition processes.

Key words: learning, thinking, feelings, cognition, meta-cognition, beliefs, educational guidance

INTRODUCTION

In this article we introduce a perspective regarding thinking and feelings as a natural process for every learner and how different factors influence the process of cognition and meta-cognition. Thinking influences everyday happenings and belief-systems on home, community, state, national, coun-

25 University in Oslo (Norway) -j.b.holmberg@isp.uio.no

26 Molloy College - New York (USA) - mschiering@molloy.edu

27 Molloy College - New York (USA)- dbogner@molloy.edu

try, and world planes. When a teacher better understand *how* one thinks and *why* one has cognition and whether cognition occurs prior to meta-cognition will be helpful in the process of developing learner's thinking. When the how of developing thinking comes into focus then it gives possibilities to provided cognitive development. Therefore the first step for a teacher is to know what cognition and meta-cognition involves. Many authors who have conducted research on learning that involve attention, orientation, memory and problem solving, pre-language cognition, and creating meaning from life experiences (Damasio 1994, Dewey 1933, Gazzaniga 1998). This article deals with cognition and how feeling influence thinking, cognition and meta-cognition.

COGNITION AND META-COGNITION

There has been a multitude of conversations regarding the topic of cognition. Additionally, there appears to be a major definition that cognition is the process and/or processes that occur and are labeled, thinking. Meta-cognition refers to this process at the higher and highest levels. However, cognition in the finite sense refers to the ability of the brain to process, store, retrieve and manipulate information. These are commensurate with the ability of a person to respond to stimuli and interface with everyday life-experiences. There are four areas of cognition and these include; attention, orientation, memory and problem solving (Schiering 2003). The human race is continuously in the act of existing or being, it stands to reason that part of this involves acknowledgment of cognition. Whether this starts with beginning awareness through the use of one's senses or involves examination of stimuli, or simply a serendipitous situation, there is thought involved. We have cognition because it is part of the human condition that bridges geographical locations and time, which predisposes purpose or definition. It simply is part of our being humans.

Memory Acquisition and Memorization is part of Cognition. Cognition involves memory and memory may be initialized prior to birth, that attend to recalling smells and sounds introduced initially during a mother's pregnancy. A numerous studies have revealed that memory, which is exhibited through awareness or recognition is at the very beginning stages of cognitive development and, in fact, may occur before birth (Kase 2000, Yount

1996). When we remember something we actually reconstruct it by combining elements of the original experience. Damásio (1994) explains that it would seem very plausible for a person's delivering information and the one listening, viewing, or participating in it, in order to substantiate a memory of it; that it is of primary and fundamental import for recombining the elements. Dewey (1938) believed and promoted an experientialist philosophy that encapsulated a progressive organization of curriculum with perspectives centered on understanding of certain life events being common in all cultures. These include birth, death, success, failure, tradition, and love. Therefore, when relating information, such as telling a story. There is a subliminal understanding that people can only address, perceive particulars, configure generalities, respond through emotions and interpret what they find to be important in their life experience (Schiering 2001, 2002).

Telling a story or delivering information in a teaching situation for learning purposes has relevance to individuals, sans the aforementioned common cultural topics, and will bring about a connection to the presented material so it serves as a motivational component, create memory resulting partially from one's delivery style, and provide for immediate and later reflection, for *within* lesson comprehension. The story and/or information becomes part of the listener's experiential past and he/she may draw upon this for future decision-making, problem solving, and possibly self-actuating; hence the cognitive/meta-cognitive process has been twice addressed. Cognition or thinking includes memorization and meta-cognition or higher ordered thinking in that it involves problem solving and includes the learner knowing about his or her own thinking processes. Cognition also occurs in complex and interconnected ways depending upon the situation, the complexity of cognitive processes varying with the individual's collective life experience. The authors maintain that learners of all ages operate at all levels of cognition. Subsequently, while we think of memorization being reliant on *repetition* of material, it appears that making connections by referencing experiences is just as viable a means for retaining information and creating memory. Therefore, it's postulated that it's incumbent on the learner and those assisting in the learning process to create linkages where none may formally or previously exist and also provide repetition of these connections if necessary. The authors concur with the idea of memory acquisition

relying not only on what is to be memorized, but the manner in which the material is perceived. In this as other instances, style-of-delivery is as important as the connectedness of the material to the learner, and the ability to form memory from newly presented information. All of these require cognitive skills ranging from beginning awareness to reflection for culminating self-actualization, whether this is for testing purposes or retention for future problem solving situations.

Backtracking a bit and revisiting cognition as thinking, and memory as storing and then recalling and retrieving of thoughts, the role of comprehension is addressed in that it's the ability to understand something or have knowledge about something, as demonstrated in one's verbalizations in response to a situation or in taking action that demonstrates understanding/ knowledge (Schiering 1998, 1999, 2001). Subsequently, it seems to be of tremendous importance that, cognition is recognized through comprehension and may or may not be verbalized, but be demonstrated in three applications, which include:

1. Literal: Fact-based evidence of comprehension;
2. Applied: Comparison and contrast comprehension, resulting from making connections to one's own experience, or other read material, and;
3. Implied: Inferential comprehension, based on context or illustrative material being presented in oral, visual, tactile, or kinesthetic formats." (Schiering 1998)

Learning involves conceptual change-modifying one's previous understanding of concepts so that they become increasingly complex and valid (Abbott 1994). Thinking and cognition recognized through comprehension to produce understanding and is therefore a cognitive process (Allport 1937). Cognition is also related to the meta-cognition because in solving a problem learning occurs and is a receptive, meaning-making, and active orientation (Li 1996). The delineation of the process of thinking is vital in understanding what occurs during the transformation from cognition to meta-cognition. Thinking and cognition include: attention, orientation, memory and problem solving. The result of this conceptual change that modifies one's previous comprehension is a result of more complex think-

ing, or the higher order thinking that's referred to as meta-cognition. The differences between cognition and meta-cognition rests on the concept of the latter involving higher-order thinking that focuses on problem-solving, preceded by reflection for gaining insight, as well as the learner knowing about his or her thinking processes, and the ability to control related strategies by planning, choosing, and monitoring his or her thinking (Schiering 1998, 1999, Glatthorn 1995, Wilen & Phillips 1995). Examining this idea of problem solving being part of the meta-cognitive process, requires generative-knowledge, which is awareness of material to solve problems (Ennis 1985), and knowledge being constructed when students restructure or replace existing conceptions (Blank 1997) are essential components of meta-cognition. Students revealing and reflecting upon the status of their conceptions and problem solving techniques, how they know what they know, is the meta-cognitive element (Schiering 1998, 1999). This meta-cognitive element is then linked to learning as people develop skills that are genuinely transferable and connected to reflective intelligence and affected by self-awareness beliefs about one's abilities, clarity and strength of learning goals, personal expectations, and motivation for learning (Abbott 1994). Furthermore, connecting learning to cognition and then to meta-cognition was described by Bruer (1993:36):

The cognitive process as it relates to meta-cognition involves patterns and relationships, emotions, the need to make sense, intrinsic interest, formal and informal learning, history dates, and even mathematical formulas. One's way of enacting these processes defies logical structure since so much is based on individual perception.

Making connections from past experience is a progressive orientation that results in meta-cognition (Schiering 1998; McTighe & Lyman 1988). This is an awareness and action through thinking and occurs as the equivalent to going back and then forward to examine assumptions or structures in a person's natural proclivity (Fogarty & McTighe 1993). With this understanding there are continual connections made between what was and what is and/or may be in the future, decisions are reached through reflections on experiential situations that have impacted the learners/thinkers life.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

The learning process is organic as opposed to being mechanical, because we're human beings. Learning being organic in nature can be equated to a seed becoming a plant in that patterns are formed which are complex and cyclical, as opposed to mechanical, which demonstrates a linear progression. A learner is one who learns and problem solving is part of the learner's meta-cognitive process which revolves around the identification of the problem, and its meaning, for the person who is solving the problem. Other factors enter into the thinking process, which include collaborative and comparative components. Comparison to similar and different problems is followed by causes of the problem in the three areas of, identification, comparison/ contrast, and projections, which correspond to, respectively, what is the problem, how does the problem compare to other problems, and does the problem impact on one's life now and/or later (Glatthorn 1995). What the learner exhibits cognitively is a system of classification for the purpose of planning and finding a solution to the problem. In this sense, meta-cognition is domain dependent as it is instantiated in a context or learning task (Tobias & Everson 1995). The thinking processes incorporated for problem solving, as explained by Fine (1997) then subdivide into the following categories: (a) perceptual interpretation, (b) classification, (c) evaluation, (d) explanations, (e) intent assessment, (f) communication (g) action, (h) actualizing, (i) judgment, (j) summarizing, and (k) comparison to past personal, read, or shared experience.

Other definitions of meta-cognition include it being a set of skills and strategies one uses in monitoring and modifying how one learns and that thinking refers to the knowledge and control people have over their own thinking and learning activities (Cates 1992). Abedi and O'Neil (1996) defined learner's meta-cognition as consisting of strategies for planning, monitoring, or self-checking cognitive/affective strategies, and self-awareness. The authors think it is important to realize how information is acquired for solving problems and also to be aware of that meta-cognition include, information acquisition and problem solving as involving memory acquisition for deciding, and the preceding components of orientation and attention to a situation, We have already stated that "how" one acquires information is through style-of-delivery and relevance to one's life experience for memory

acquisition and retrieval. These factors are vital as creating memories and recalling them becomes a natural occurrence. It is also important to know that information can be acquired when a student's thought process is following the introduction and identification of a problem in three questioning forms: (a) What I don't know, (b) What I think I know, and (c) What I want to know (Olsen 1995). This gaining of knowledge concerning the problem solving techniques produces self-efficacy –a control over one's thinking and subsequently is part of the meta-cognitive process in producing one who self-actuates –goes forward and takes action to address the situation at hand (Schiering 1998, 1999).

Additionally, learning is a social experience. It involves interaction between and among learners as meanings are shared. Information is exchanged and problems are solved in a cooperative manner (Glatthorn 1995). As Olsen state (1995:134): *The ability to learn requires thinking about one's own thinking. This is meta-cognition, and it is essential in a world of continuous change.* Schiering (2001) further explains that meta-cognition is the ability of one to examine a situation, reflect on past similar or dissimilar situations that have relevance to the one being questioned, and bring that information forward to solve a problem or address the circumstance in the present or near future. The forms of learning are a combination of examining one's thoughts, ideas, opinions, judgments and feelings. Learning is also a descriptive or classificatory account of any event, circumstance, or experience that is apparent to the senses – the phenomena of a given body of knowledge, without any further attempt at explanation (Vermunt 1995).

DEVELOPING COGNITION AND META-COGNITION

It seems logical that cognition comes before or precedes the meta-cognitive processes. The authors comment that one might recognize that this is based on the idea that meta-cognition requires a higher order of thinking. In pre-language acquisition this might seem applicable. However, it may also be noted that in instances of pre-language, explaining whether one has cognition or meta-cognition relies primarily on the interpreter's perceptions of the utilized cognitive processes. Pre-birth experiences become part of one's memory, as stated earlier as being evidenced after birth in an individual's

behaviors through the beginning awareness and/or display of recognizing (Kase 2000, Yount 1996, Schiering 1998, 1999). In this instance the authors refer to beginning awareness being demonstrated through acknowledging, comparing, contrasting, classifying and realizing.

At this juncture, regarding, attention, orientation, and memory, which often-times result in the meta-cognitive processes of evaluation, reflection, deciding, problem-solving and self-actualization occurring in one's thinking and action processes. In some respects this idea of meta-cognition being evidenced at the same time, or in close approximation to cognition is ground-breaking or, at a minimum, differentiation of thought regarding the concept of cognition being simultaneously experienced. What creates the essential criteria in determining the use of cognition or meta-cognition is the experiential level of an individual. Simply stated the more experiences one has, the greater the potential for the meta-cognition processes to exist, or be utilized. Nonetheless, the authors' agree that even pre-language experiences provide a co-existence of cognition with meta-cognition, if the interpreter is familiar with the processes exhibited through demonstrated behaviors (Schiering 1999).

How does the concept of cognition and meta-cognition occurring simultaneously happen? Let's first examine the term "developmental" with respect to cognition. The implication from studying Piaget (1977) is that various forms of cognition emerge as a child advances in age. In fact, the word "development" implies a progressive orientation. Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986) using the term "scaffolding" as a metaphor to describe the "building of information" in a developmental fashion. The information-processing concept suggests that as children grow older that their use of learning strategies improves (Flavell 1985). Once again there is strong implication in thought transference that becomes concretized in the idea that meta-cognition is a higher order of thinking and, therefore, could not happen until a person was at a particular biological-mental-developmental stage. In point of fact, children are looked upon as being those who develop through the assistance of teachers and before that, family members and friends. Subsequently, it seems logical that cognition comes before or precedes meta-cognition.

However, the previously and generally accepted basic idea concerning cognition predisposing meta-cognition, is not necessarily correct, as some me-

ta-cognitive processes co-exist in action with cognitive processes (Schiering 2002, 2003). In pre-language situations the multi-faceted mind of the child may well be involved in reflection (meta-cognition), but the individual is not able to articulate that, except through observable behaviors, which are responses to a situation. Therefore, the key factor in determining the “simultaneous” cognitive and meta-cognitive processing concept as actually *co-existing*; is reliant in pre-language acquisition through inspection of an individual’s actions in settings that produce stimuli and resultant interpreted behaviors. In post-language acquisition, cognition and some meta-cognition co-existing rely on verbalization through explanation of a situation. Therefore, the key factor in determining the simultaneous cognitive and meta-cognitive processing concept as actually co-existing; is reliant in pre-language acquisition through inspection of an individual’s actions in settings that produce stimuli and resultant interpreted behaviors.

In order to fully embrace this concept of cognition co-existing simultaneously with meta-cognition, one needs to examine the term, development. Perry (1981) relates development is by definition movement. There is no reference to movement in either a forward or backward direction; just *movement*. Nonetheless, when one sees and/or uses the word, development there is an implied comprehension in educational settings that development means to grow in a linear manner. Herein lies a conundrum, because to develop is not necessarily to progress from one stage to another in a progressive fashion, but in this instance to develop in that cognition requires, by its very nature to be reflective, which requires movement laterally, as well as multi-directionally.

A MODEL FOR ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL COGNITION

A Model for Academic and Social Cognition, takes into account the “now being” concept provide learners and teachers with the opportunity to examine who they are as individuals in educational settings, as well as social-societal ones. This is because the Model addresses reflective practices and experiential learning and teaching, along with reflection on the mutual exchange of teaching and learning, which forms who-one-is of these realities. The Model partially rests on the culture that is designed to develop thinking and the

related learning that goes with it. The Model begins with the individual’s belief and value system, describing how a person’s thoughts, ideas, opinions, judgments, and feelings influence who one is as a learner. The Model describes as well how external social and societal factors, such as religion, economics, academics, and politics influence learning and teaching. An illustration of A Model for Academic and Social Cognition: The Interconnection of SOW (Sociology Of the World) and REAP (Religion, Economics, Academics and Politics). The Interconnection of the Sociology Of the World and Religion, Economics, Academics and Politics is reliant upon behaviors, beliefs, values, and actions in the sociological sense being interdependent, as well as transformational with respect to common social and societal realities. Multi-dimensionally and interdisciplinary the Interconnection of SOW and REAP, is an understanding of a ‘mutual composure’, or at least discipline in disposition of these situations that address what comes to be recognized as habitual behaviors within cultures and non-cultural congregates (Schiering 2003). By addressing this area we first look at the basic needs of humankind. These include the survival elements of food, clothing, and shelter. Without these life cannot continue. The accommodations one acquires over time will provide abundance, normative, or lack of these, and in so doing influence the common social and societal realities one experiences.

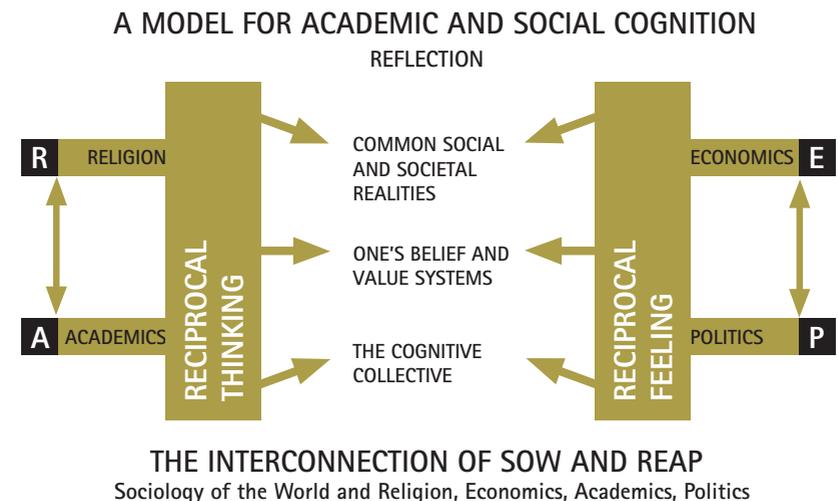


Figure 1: A Model for Academic and Social Cognition – The Interaction of SOW and REAP

The figure shows the initial graphic organizer illustration for *A Model for Academic and Social Cognition*. The above graphic organizer shows the key terms that influence common social and societal realities of the Cognitive Collective.

THE COGNITIVE COLLECTIVE

The Cognitive Collective is the joining of thoughts, ideas, opinions, judgments and feelings being reciprocally imposed. Connected one to these four factors partially identify, who one is as a learner and teacher. Just as thoughts, ideas, opinions, and judgments impact one's feelings, so too do feelings impact individual's thoughts, ideas, opinions, and judgments. The Cognitive Collective is substantiated to what we are thinking and feeling as human beings. To relate that I think, and therefore I am, is simultaneously connected to I feel, therefore I am. Our thoughts, ideas, opinions and judgments impact our feelings and emotions just as easily as our feelings and emotions impact our thoughts, ideas, opinions, and judgments. Either the thinking "us" or the feeling "us" can cause change to occur in the thinking or feelings responses one has to various stimuli or situations (Schiering 2002, 2003). The following is an explanation of the terms within the Reciprocal Thinking and Reciprocal Feeling:

Thoughts: Immediate conscious responses to reflection, which involve memory. Example: From my experience, I have thoughts that focus on learning being multi- dimensional.

Ideas: A prediction of future responses or speculation based on one's perspective as a result of reflection. Example: She got the idea about good teaching practices from the book on educational theory.

Opinions: A combination of thoughts and ideas in that a formulated-concept results. The teachers were asked their opinions of the curriculum.

Judgments: Concretized thoughts, ideas, and opinions which are impacted by memory, while being based on reflection concerning past experiences. Oftentimes based on one's level of attachment to a situation. Example: My judgment is that many teachers are facilitators of learning.

Feelings: A sensory and/or emotional response to stimuli that may be a descriptive or classificatory. Example: The water felt soft as it slid through my open fingers. Feelings are also the quality that something has in that one responds in a manner that connotes feeling of an emotional or intuitive nature and/or reflects on something to establish a formed response that is rooted in thought, ideas, opin-

ions and judgments. Example: The music collectively evoked the audiences' strong emotion as the symphony began. Subsequently, feelings and emotions are one in the same and yet can be observed or defined as being co-joined. These then are trans-rational responses to stimuli in that a sensory response to situations occurs at the same juncture as deeply held thoughts, ideas, opinions, and judgments. Feelings and emotions are referred to as "root responses" to stimuli.

RECIPROCAL THINKING AND FEELING

Schiering (1998, 1999) create a chart, Phases of Thinking: Evolving from Cognition to Meta-cognition. Here she provided detailed explanation regarding the terms within the chart were being exhibited, experienced, and/or verbalized through explanation, simultaneously, as opposed to progressively/ developmentally, as implied by evolving. Schiering, Buli-Holmberg and Bogner (2007) collaborating respectively and collectively expanded and then re-titled the chart: *Reciprocal Thinking Phases*. These three phases is operational zed to address cognition, memory, and comprehension as important factors for the purpose of focusing on learning goals. These address the questions

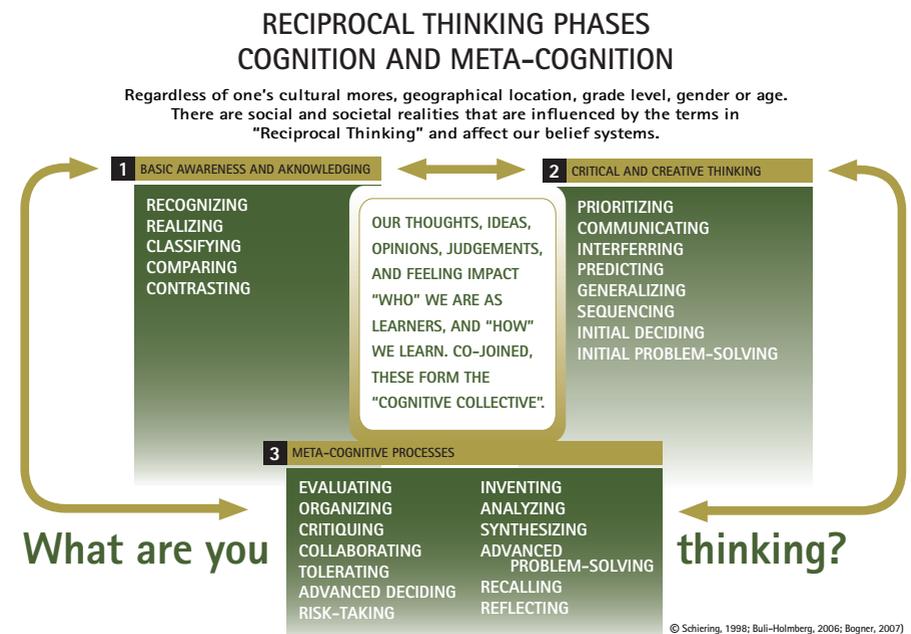


Figure 2: Reciprocal Thinking Phases.

of thought processes centering on cognition and meta-cognition being co-joined, reciprocal, and simultaneously experienced during everyday “thinking” and “feeling” situations. Schiering (1998, 1999) state that it is noted that regardless of one’s cultural mores, geographical location, grade level, gender, or age; there are common social and societal realities that are influenced by the terms in *Reciprocal Thinking* and affect our belief systems through our thoughts, ideas, opinions, judgments, and feelings.

Separated from the Reciprocal Thinking Phases are the Reciprocal Feeling Phases. While they’re represented by the same numerical notation of Phases, each Phase is referenced as “Experiencing Being.” Primarily this has been designed to realize that we are in the state of being. Feeling word/terms are defined as being reciprocal, or simultaneous in nature, as opposed to an individual feeling linearly. The Paradigm connotes feelings, resulting from emotions, being applied or imposed simultaneously. This is because feeling functions occur within fractions of seconds of one another. The question, “*What are you feeling?*” is offered to illustrate one’s being aware of their cognitive function for later enhancement of thinking through knowing which word/term in which section is being utilized.

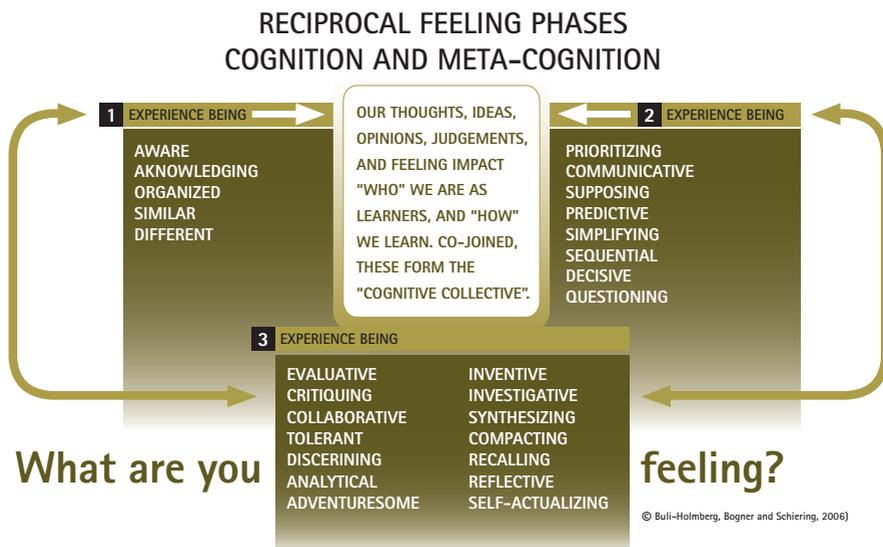


Figure 3: Reciprocal Feeling Phases.

The results of utilizing the Reciprocal Feeling Phases occurs when they’re addressed, collectively, by individuals or groups of learners and teachers experiencing comprehension in literal/fact-based, applied/ realizing the relevance to one’s personal experience, and implied/ inferential formats. The scope and sequence of events in read or auditory-related material, discussion, social literacy involving conversation, and/or anecdotal accountings is evident. An identification of what one is feeling serves as the culminating skill resulting from reflection and self-accounting, as well as self-actuating. These skills provide for empowerment and self-learning with attention given to, gleaning information from the presented material’s content, as well as implementation and application of skills for decision making and problem-solving. *Who* we are as learners and *how* we learn are co-joined to reference the thinking and feeling of the Cognitive Collective. This co-joining addresses the question, in a finite sense, of *what are you thinking* (Schiering 1998, 1999, 2003, Buli-Holmberg 2007, Bogner 2007), and is relevant to guidance when working with students in the development of meta-cognition and reading comprehension.

SUMMARY

This article began with the concept of the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes being inherent in a “thinking” population. This is for the purpose of collective reasoning, which in turn, influences everyday happenings and belief-systems on the home, community, state, national, country, and world plains. Then an examination of “cognitive processes” was addressed regarding cognition being defined as having components requiring: attention, orientation, memory, and problem solving. This was followed by, “Why we have cognition?” Here it was determined that this is the case on order to function as thinking, feeling, human beings with others of our species. Key factors in this article include: pre-language cognition, the linkages of cognition and meta-cognition and whether one precedes the other, comprehension, memorization and its connection to comprehension with two examples of memorization strategies, and an explanation of the difference between cognition being developmentally imposed and simultaneously imposed, with detail regarding how the later is normatively the case. We have also introduced and explained our model of Academic and Social Cognition and the two paradigms within the model; Reciprocal Thinking and Feeling Phases.

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THE OTHER OF MYSELF: REPRESENTATIONS OF PORTUGUESE TEACHERS ABOUT INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION RELATED CONCEPTS

*Miguel Prata Gomes*²⁸

Carlos Afonso

Joana Cavalcanti

Mário Cruz

Paula Medeiros

Having into consideration that we live in a multicultural society, it is important to analyse how far people view and accept each other. Therefore, one should reflect upon concepts such as: representations and stereotypes, because they are interpersonal constructs which are (re)built during the interaction of different sociocultural groups.

In this study, we focus our attention on the representations a sociocultural group – Portuguese teachers – has of intercultural education and the role of teachers and educators in the promotion of an intercultural approach at school. We believe that teachers have the responsibility to: find out the representations students have of the Other; reconfigure stereotyped representations; and create representations which favor dialogue and relationship with the Other flourish.

Following a sociolinguistic approach (Müller, 1998; Vasseur, 2001; Vasseur & Hudelot, 1998), which is related to the construction and diffusion of representations in discourse, we analyse the discourse of teachers during a workshop called 'The Other and Myself', in which they build and discuss about a didactic mask that portrays their own vision of both themselves and their ideas of intercultural education.

Keywords: intercultural education; representations; Portuguese teachers; mask; the other of myself.

28 Corresponding author: mprata@esepef.pt Escola Superior de Educação de Paula Frassinetti, Porto, Portugal (Paula Frassinetti School of Education)

'Escolher a própria máscara é o primeiro gesto voluntário, humano. E solitário.'
'To choose one's own mask is the first voluntarian human gesture. And solitarian'
 (Clarice Lispector in Gotlib, 1995)

INTRODUCTION: INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION (CONCEPT AND APPROACHES)

Multicultural society has developed in Portugal. Social and cultural diversity is a fact among students and teachers in Portuguese schools. After decades of emigration, Portugal nowadays became also the destination of considerable groups of immigrants [http://www.sef.pt/documentos/56/DADOS_2007.pdf (provisional data)]¹.

So, the acquisition of intercultural competences within this society is a necessity. In order to have success with the implementation of intercultural education and formation approaches in multicultural schools we need to understand how professors perceive their representations about culture, racism, diversity, minority, etc. This is the unavoidable condition to create the right materials, resources and intercultural education strategies, which we propose to implement at schools.

In this paper we, InterGroup at Escola Superior de Educação de Paula Frassinetti, intend to analyse the representations of teachers about intercultural related concepts.

THE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTATION

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we focus on the concept of representation, as it is a very complex concept itself. According to many authors, one has to distinguish between the concepts of attitude and representation. The first is 'an acquired latent psychological (pre)-disposition to react to an object in a certain way' (cf. Kolde, 1981). It can be defined as a predisposition to react in favor or against a certain object or topic. The information one has of a specific object entails a group of beliefs about it, including objective information or stereotypes. In this way, representations are that very beliefs which lead someone to have a certain attitude in relation to an object.

In 1961, Moscovici focused on the interdependence of behavioral and representing patterns, fostering varied studies related to the nature and structure of 'social representations (cf. Bonardi & Roussiau, 1999). Jodelet (1997:53) mentions that the concept of representation is not only a manifestation of attitudes. In fact, it is also 'une forme de connaissance, socialement élaborée et partagée, ayant une visée pratique et concourant à la construction d'une réalité commune à un ensemble social'. When one analyses a social representation, one tries to understand and explain the nature of social ties which are constituted between different subjects, their social practices and group relations (cf. Bonardi & Roussiau, 1999:25). In the following diagram we get to know the study field of social representations, including its emergence conditions, processes, states and epistemological status.

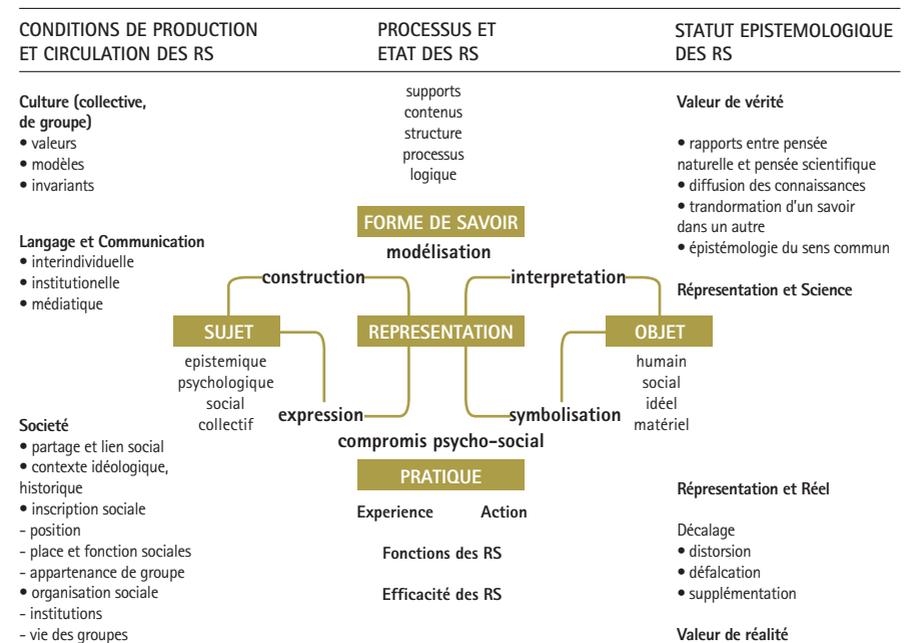


Diagram 1: Study Field of Social Representations (Jodelet, 1997:59)

Having this diagram into account, a social representation is 'une forme de savoir pratique reliant un sujet à un objet' (Jodelet, 1997:59). It is 'une forme de savoir' (idem) because it is a construct of the object which can be

directly observed by language, behavioral and material supports. However, it implies action towards the world and the Other too.

According to Moscovici (1976), there are two processes which are responsible for the formation and operation of social representations. Firstly, we have *objectivation* which can be understood as the way one selects pertinent information, changing it to representations which considers significant and will lead one to have certain attitudes towards something. This process implies a ‘résorber un excès de significations en les matérialisant’ (Moscovici, 1976). Secondly, there is the anchoring process. According to Guimelli (1994), it is a way to tie something to another thing which is socially established and shared by some members of a group.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF PORTUGUESE TEACHERS: (RE)DISCOVERING THEIR PERCEPTIONS ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Methodological procedures

According to these orientating lines, we have made a workshop with teachers who are Postgraduate students at Escola Superior de Educação de Paula Frassinetti (in two fields – Special Education (PE) and Early English Teaching (PI)). This group of teachers includes 30 and 16 teachers respectively. The majority of teacher work directly with children and teenagers in primary and secondary schools in the northern area of Portugal. This workshop is part of the activities which we have been developing in the scope of *INTERNetwork. Intercultural Education. Teacher Education and School Practice* (<http://internetwork.up.pt>). The sessions, which we carried through, with these teachers had as main aims: to promote interpersonal reflection about some of their life experiences, interpersonal relationships and possible knowledge on intercultural affairs; to promote self-reflection on the way each one locates in the interior of these very relations; to induce narratives that in a voluntary attitude of the very citizens, would result in such a way of self-observation, as of a negotiation of ways of behaving, attitudes, gestures or meanings associated to the different interpretations on the phenomena or cited situations.

On the one hand, the observation and recording of different narratives does not constitute the core of this article; on the other hand, our approach to the investigation-action model was motivated by the importance of inducing the reflection upon actions and stories lived by the teachers and the understanding of deeper differences in the varied social and cultural contexts. There is also the need to provoke the contact with those differences, having into account the future patterns for a change in the level of practices and relations in those contexts.

On a first stage, we stated the aims of the project, asking for the collaboration of the teachers in this investigation for a common self-reflection. Recording of all the activities was authorized by all. During these a mask was used as a methodological instrument for provoking teachers’ reflection and revealing their own narratives, due to the symbolism which one associates it with.

After the selection of a set of subjects and strategies of work - and, above all, on the basis of the intervention potentialities and narratives of the masks - the sessions had been initiated with the question that would lead to the first moment of introspection: “Who am I”.

Teachers had to write in the inner part of the mask words, images or any other kind of registry, according to their own thinking, which could better illustrate the ideas which define themselves. Some paths were proposed so that an inner dialogue with oneself could be established, namely through the presentation of the following keywords: language, world, contexts, family, nature, job, groups, place, friends, time(s), death.

We would like to refer that during this stage teachers showed a certain resistance, which could be easily understood as associated to the difficulty in writing diverse feelings to happenings of their own personal but also academic lives.

However, quickly they surpassed these problems when they were asked to answer the following question: “What do others think that I am?”. Sharing of feelings and an open dialogue spread throughout the classroom. After discussing all this, teachers were asked to fill in a questionnaire whose questions were presented in association with pictures and categories, which we would use in this analysis.

The mask as a methodological teaser

Throughout the sessions teachers were asked to write on the mask as a methodological instrument for provoking teachers' narratives, due to its strong symbolism. In fact, the mask, used in the Greek theatre to make the voice of the actor heard, allows oneself to overpass one's own body towards the crowd, as a way to project oneself through an artifact, which is a construct – one's own "persona". Moreover, there is a phantom place where a lot of life episodes are trained. This is the place of fantasy which is inhabited by our other self-beings. Therefore, each one of us is inhabited by a multiplicity of voices which are revealed in this full hollow place.

These characters, which we assume, also change and are rebuilt, so that one uses them in the social arena if they are needed. Behind the mask there is a crowd of people. Each one of them represent a part of oneself, of the other and of the world. This fantastic place is intended to fill in the vacuum – the hollow place. In this way, all of us are the reflection of the other, i.e., the reflection that the other sees and retains in his own mirror.

Once we are born, we are named, marked and singularized. We gain a history. Therefore, the human being is a never-ending narrative which is built from social and cultural relation full of different textures, colors, smells and volumes.

If we are products of a personal and social fiction, the vision we have of ourselves always is filtered by a possibility of trueness which is never absolute, but can be represented and supported by the look of the "Other of Me". In fact, we do not content ourselves in being only one. Although we reject the idea of fragmentation of one own self, the idea of being only one is also not comfortable.

Languages and their diversity are the expression of our need to say what we are and tell more about our own fiction and to relate ourselves with what surrounds us.

Each one of us has got a history which is permanently being constructed and which is continuously influenced by the relation with the world. Human looking is like a towel of remnants made of a lot of lines, colours, smells, tones, flavours, sounds, touches and affects. Each remnant is different from the other but united, interlinked and articulated to borrow meaning to what we live. (Cavalcanti, 2006).

Telling our story is to walk on unknown paths, to revisit memories and to update learning. We tell our story to unveil who we are, where we live and where we would like to go to. We tell it to get to know the mask which we elected and others elected to us. This artifact works as a second skin which protects the quantity of people who inhabit a body underneath it. Uncovering one's own mask can lead to new elaborations about reality and representations we build upon others.

Data analysis

The analysis, which follows, results from an exploratory analysis of the questionnaires which teachers filled in during the workshop. Having done a qualitative procedure, we present our analysis having into account the sequence of the categories which can be found in that very questionnaire.

a) culture

The concept of culture, understood as being something perfectly defined, characterized by a stability structure is an idea that, nowadays, will have to be exiled from our own thinking. On contrary, the idea of culture must be based on an eminently dynamic and constructive character. Culture is made and remade, constructed and invented through our daily practices... If our practices are changed, our cultural context (the "conception of the world" or Dilthey's *Weltanschauung*) will be changed and re-invented too! The opposite is also a fact: if the socio-natural context changes, our concept of culture will not be the same as before.

The general analysis of the data related to the representations, which Portuguese teachers revealed during our workshop, drive us to a clear static vision of culture. The representation of this concept entails a closed perspective, which is completely build and not modifiable idea of culture. This can be observed in some of their answers, such as: culture is "set of specific characteristics of a group" (PI8); "something one acquires" (PE1) "throughout life" (PI2) and that "we must preserve (...) and contemplate" (PE2). Therefore, there is a more or less defined and immovable representation of culture (or determined culture).

We can say that this representation of the idea culture is also very close or connected to a more static perspective of itself; moreover, it would articulate itself with the present control mechanisms: the uses, customs, values, etc. represent here safety mechanisms which assure a sense of totality and cognoscibility of the world we live in... it makes world more “familiar” (cf. Ortega y Gasset, 1997). On the other hand, it is also perceptible that these “conceptions, habits and traditions that are predominant in a people, country or group, according to which life is based” (PI16) configure the values that characterize/represent what culture is: the values are “transmitted firstly by the family and then by school; and then by ourselves” (PI15) and represent “the soul of a country” (PI14).

There are also, however, some examples of teachers who understand the characteristics of “dynamism”/mutability which are intrinsic in the interior of their representation of culture. For them culture is “created by us, absorbed by us” (PI13); it is “everything man produces” (PE18) and that “we need to (...) enrich” (PE2) “throughout life” (PE1).

So, from this analysis of the representations of the concept of culture, we can conclude, generally, that teachers are not fully conscious of the deep dynamic meaning.

b) racism

The main statement of trainee teachers suggests the emergence of a negative valued/ideological speech towards the ideas in the concept of racism. A major part associates the presence of this phenomenon to attitudes that, present in the societies – “the hypocrisy of the world” (PE2) – are practiced by other individuals whose actions are, generally, characterized by the assumed marginalization of the other. This is justified by the pretense “superiority” of the place where the one who marginalizes or discriminates is or thinks one is.

Therefore, the ideas of “disrespect by others” (PE4), “intolerance” (PE12, PE15), narcissism or “lack of love” (PE7, PE8, PE14), “non-acceptance” ((PE4, PI10) on the one hand, and “ignorance” (PE9) or “poverty of mind” (PE1), “illness” (PE1) or “lack of education” (PE4), on the other hand, are understood by the teachers as the main reasons, more or less (un)guilty of the process of human sub-alternization.

One can also note rejection from expressions that denote a strong emotional charge, like the example of teachers that tell us this phenomenon is “horrible” (PE17), “inadmissible” (PE21), but nobody proposes a more enlightened or deep reflection upon the supposed historical, political and social unreason for racism. Only a reduced number of teachers refer the question of the “colour of the skin” (PE4). Anyway, the place of the other, that is, the “victim’s” place is not directly stated by the teachers that have taken part in this workshop. Merely two teachers have mentioned the idea of “suffering” (PE6) or “lack of freedom” (PE20). That makes us think that this is neither in most cases “the other of oneself”.

c) diversity

Cultural diversity is a concept which is perceived by many as differences that exist between people, such as language, dress and traditions, and the way societies organize themselves, their conception of morality and religion, and the way they interact with the environment. According to UNESCO (2001:13),

‘culture (...) diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies (...) it (...) should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations’.

In this statement, the keywords are ‘harmonious interaction’, ‘heritage of humanity’, ‘dynamic cultural identities’ and ‘cultural pluralism’.

According to some teachers, diversity implies ‘richness of knowledge’ and ‘differences in thinking, habits, customs and ways of acting’ (PI8; PI9). Some of the teachers relate it to the education field, referring that it implies ‘diverse features such as culture which are different from pupil to pupil (heterogeneity)’.

Others go further mention that homogeneity is something that does not exist in our culture. They portray our society as ‘a big European city in which racial diversity boils and melts’ (PI14). For these teachers there is no pleasure to live in a homogenous society at all. They refer that the ‘difference complete us’ (PI16) and at the same time we ‘are able to learn and enrich our own culture in a natural and free way’ (PI1). According to some

remarks, this society is fostered by pluralism and implies acceptance and discrimination (PI15).

d) minority

The representations these teachers have of minority present differences, but a common characteristic: its relation with power. Some answers point out minority as an underprivileged group when declaring “those who have no strength or courage to highlight themselves in society (...) there is someone who does not let them!” (PI3). They would, then, be “result of a selfish society” (PE20) that would lead them to “injustice and poverty, war, suffering” (PI14).

So, they defend attitudes that supposedly value minorities since that these “teach us tolerance, union and the richness of complicity” (PE15), so that there should “be an acceptance by all cultures and respect” (PE19). One can see here a certain exaltation of minorities as a synonym of something exotic that must be cared for so that “genuity” does not get lost, in a perspective that gets close to a “benign multiculturalism” (Stoer e Cortesão, 1999), translated by an attitude of mere contemplation of the differences.

Other answers focus on another conception of minority when they declare that “minorities are often the ones with power; it’s not fair; this happens when majorities abuse their power” (PI11) or “sometimes minorities are the ones who manipulate the dominant society” (PI2). This leads us, consequently, to the minority as owner of the power (economical, political and social). We can find, as examples, the domination of a white minority over the black majority (cases of “apartheid” in South Africa), like the economic domination of a capitalist minority (OPEP- oil exporting countries) over the majority of the world population. In these cases, the belonging to the minority group would not be a disadvantage or an inequality, but the result of a struggle and rise for the power and its maintenance.

e) fundamentalism

Associated to the word “fundamentalism” the observations of the teachers turn around two vectors. On the one hand, the human motivation of the

phenomenon, and on the other hand, its consequences in social terms but in human terms as well.

The ideas of absurdity and “irrationality” seem closely connected to the question of belief, to which the ideology of western modern rationality is opposed. In its turn, statements – “thoughtless act”, “lack of openness and power of understanding” or in a more explicit way “obsession by determined values, beliefs, etc” indicate a criticism to the dimension of religiosity. The dichotomy between belief and rationality seems to orientate what is understood as “fundamentalism”. More at a level of the consequences and, therefore, the actions of the phenomenon the words, more expressive in the statements of the teachers, than in others, are: violence, cruelty, destruction, “uncontrolled persecution” or “extremism”, images that in its majority are associated to the understanding about war, this also being a widely used word. We can also question ourselves about the things that were not said and their meaning. Aspects such as nationalism were not mentioned, for example. It is interesting to speculate about the fact that the wrong association between Islamism and fundamentalism, which is broadly broadcasted by the media, was never mentioned. It is not occasional, however, the idea of religious war that appears in the registrations, which allows us to think that the religious belief and violence are intimately connected in the speech.

f) discrimination

In the answers of the two groups of Portuguese teachers it is common a negative representation of discrimination, which is associated to “a different form of segregation” (PE6) that is fundamentally established as a “non-respect for the culture and customs of the others” (PI4) and an “incapacity to accept and experiment what is different” (PI9), to “discriminate others for their culture, race and philosophy of life” (PI14). Therefore, that “ego-centric attitude” (PI16) would be a “signal of prepotency and arrogance” (PE2) and should deserve “repudiation and not be acceptable” (PE3).

That would imply a “struggle for any of us” (PI8) in the sense that “every human being should have rights and duties and as such should be treated equally” (PI12). That “integration”(PE12) would lead to a situation where

we “can all learn and enrich with the others” (PE7), that is, the “experiences are there to be exchanged as a way of our own enrichment” (PE19).

However, to do that “it is necessary to be integrated” (PI5), because it would be necessary to question “who is pushing away? Who is setting himself apart? Who wants this? Who does not manage to fit in?” (PE14).

The causes for this situation would be “result of the society so-called neo-liberal” (PE5) and a “weapon of the weak” (PI2), but that would strongly make a root in the individuals because “we have already learned stereotypes” (PI9).

g) pre-concepts

Associated to the word “prejudice”, we proposed a picture of a supposed homosexual couple (two men dating). Several reactions were observed. Some overvalued the presented picture, assuming clearly a prejudicial attitude towards its content, while others tried to define the concept itself. It is interesting to note that only one participant thought about the origin of the word, by declaring that prejudice is a “pre-conceived idea”, so its analysis coincides in part with the theoretical definition of the concept, translated as “(...) rigid pre-conceived opinions, generally unfavorable, towards individuals or groups, formed without considering adequate facts, experience or information to a rational judgment, leading, generally, to indiscrimination, to the unequal treatment of those individuals or groups” (Cardoso, 1996: 18).

We have observed in some statements that these teachers suggest somehow crystallized representations and that sometimes seem to be part of a universal heritage, like it is referred to: “Something imposed by society and taken as universal” (PE1).

Some participants associate prejudice to difference when they say: “Not acceptance of difference”; “There must be respect for the individuality, acceptance of the difference”. It is possible to infer that the notion of difference is associated there to the need for acceptance, and although the word fear was not said, it is known that the origin of prejudice is in fear, in the fear of what is strange or different, in seeing in the other something that (im) presses the look.

From the nineteen statements which were analyzed, it seems that only one demonstrates a more interventional character towards prejudice by saying that: 1. “There must be respect towards individuality, acceptance of difference”, because the verb “must” shows something imperative, that is, that cannot be different... the respect towards individuality and difference must exist.

h) stereotypes

As we have seen before, stereotype is a concept which is related to the concept of attitude. It can be understood as a specific behavior pattern, which can be approved among member of a group and taken as a valid one. At the same time, stereotypes reveal how the groups perceive their identity and cohesion.

Stereotypes are considered by many as being impossible to end and occur in intercultural communication due to many reasons. Stereotypes occur in intercultural communication when we take some truths related to a social group as truths to a subject which belongs to that same group.

Portuguese teachers see it as ‘something that is inevitable’ and ‘grows inside our memory’ (PI1). They grow in the society mainstream and it is that very society that supposedly makes people wear ‘collective masks’ (PI5), i.e., some people are obliged to act in a certain way to cope with the society main ways of thinking. Stereotypes are also seen as ‘ideas which are conceived around some representations and general beliefs in order to try to define a certain group of people’ (PI16). It is very interesting to notice that some teachers mention that ‘stereotypes aren’t always wrong; there is a bit of truth in them’. In fact, stereotypes cannot always be negative. In some cases, they show reality as it is, revealing the true being of a people or social group. But at the same time some mention it is a way to simplify what we think about the culture and language of a people and it does not represent the infinity of traditions, customs and ways of thinking of micro-societies which that very people entail (PI2).

However, some teachers refer that they are inevitable but they are also dissolved in modern societies (PI7). In fact, some teachers conclude that stereotypes are a sort of model created by the media and society which may or may not be followed by every person.

i) tolerance

Here also seems that the standard of representations which are strongly marked by common sense continues to be predominant in the group of teachers that have taken part in the activity when they had to reflect upon the concept of tolerance. Generally, they show that the notion of tolerance they possess is mainly associated to the Christian feelings that lead to solidarity, benevolence, kindness, happiness, peace, condescendence...

Although the majority does not propose any question, a participant asks: “To whom? With whom? How?”, revealing a reflective attitude towards the concept of tolerance, assumed in big part by the group as something related to kindness and condescendence. We have also noted that one of the participants related all the concepts to movies, placing Philadelphia (the story of a homosexual) in prejudice and Big Fish (the story of a man that spends his life telling stories to his son that one day finds out that they are all a lie) to tolerance. This association is doubtlessly original, but it cannot be revealing since that in both movies we can have several dimensions as horizon of analysis.

In building up an identity not only the way is important, but also the path when walking, and the materials that are used in the building; so all the walkers as actors of the process have the responsibility in the process and have to do it with conscience and compromise. Therefore, a Multi/Intercultural Education is the way, the material, the possibility to an emergence of social actors that are more conscious of their participation in the world.

j) future society

In the questionnaire we have used the biblical image of Tower of Babel so that teachers could reflect upon the representation they have of a future society.

Despite the fact that this image of the most famous city of the Babylonian Empire leads us to a vision, in a chaotic, disorderly and anarchic way, of what has the world become after the introduction of the divine “confusion of languages”, around half of the teachers portrayed a future society in which order and calmness reign. The main characteristic is therefore the view the future as a (PI12) “stratified society without the” mix “of different classes.

The lower part of the tower will be the class in which there is a greater number of people; the upper part of the tower is occupied by a minority. There is also a representation of a demand by the desired order, “the ideal would be to speak the same language... but we move towards individualism, towards a block of ice that will never melt” (PE1).

Another substantial part of the teachers shared a vision of the future society that, in general, is characterized by being somewhat chaotic “mutant” (PI2) and where some confusion and disorder reigns. The more appropriate image for this constant (re)development would be an indefinite “boiling volcano” (PI12) It is important to understand that this image of chaos in a future society is not perceived as something negative and where a fight to death between order and chaos will be installed in a world marked by “the ambiguity and the subjective”. However, in this world man will have “freedom of thinking, acting and fluence”.

It is evident, therefore, the idea of a “coexistence of two worlds” (PI8) where exactly the chaos becomes the catalyst needed for the construction of a free society of the future “to be equal in rights and options (PE15), [but] diverse in their being and existence”. Several teachers even talk about a “plurilingual” society (PI1; PI3) where “the mixing of different cultures will be more evident, but it will not lose its own characteristics.

It is understood then that some teachers feel deeply committed to building this society of the future. This representation of the world clearly shows awareness towards the need for work and training for teachers. It shows us that teachers are open to the need for implementing strategies and practices that promote intercultural education of a society which could become fairer and more open and diverse.

CONCLUSIONS

Being an important space in contemporary social life, school is also the space for the change, for the (re)signification of realities, for the identity (re)construction, for the provocation of a creative production of several dimensions of mankind.

In the meantime, there will be an investment in the teacher/educator training as an important and fundamental part/actor in the educative process, because education is doubtlessly the door to open to build up new paradigms, new mentalities, new sensibilities, and new ways of seeing.

Meanwhile, how can school make changes if it cannot change itself?

In which way can the teachers make the “fill in the daily life with meaning” possible for the students, as well as the active respect towards the richness produced by diversity, if they cannot represent reality beyond the stereotypes and the perception of the world full of prejudice themselves?

Is it possible to contribute positively to the education of children who launch themselves in a future which is more and more weaved by the complexity and multiplicity, when one does not understand the reality and history in a dynamic, alive, and full of diversity way.

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AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION CONCEPTS. IS IT POSSIBLE TO REACH A CONSENSUS?

Patricia Mata, Faculty of Education, UNED²⁹

Margarita del Olmo, CCHS, CSIC

Blanca Hernando, FUHEM Spain

This paper shows some of the preliminary results of the analysis of a questionnaire on Intercultural Education answered by the partners of a European Network³⁰. The questionnaire intended to gather the variety and richness of the partners' ideas on what Intercultural Education means, how it is being implemented in their contexts and the implications of these ideas on teachers' training and practices. The analysis shows that there are agreements but also some relevant disagreements that we are using in this paper to make explicit some of the implicit assumptions we use to build our ideas on Intercultural Education in particular and Education in general, and to open a discussion in order to make the concept more complex.

Key concepts: Intercultural Education, Teacher Training, Intercultural teacher competences

CONTEXTUALIZING

The authors of this paper are members of a European funded thematic network under the Comenius Programme. The Comenius programme –which is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme - pools EU resources to develop knowledge and understanding among young people and educational staff of the diversity of European cultures, languages and values.

The INTER Network (<http://internetnetwork.up.pt/>) is a group of 23 different institutions (universities, research centres, schools, different associations,

²⁹ pmata@edu.uned.es; mdelolmo@cchs.csic.es

³⁰ INTER Network: Intercultural Education, Teacher Training and School Practice. <http://internetnetwork.up.pt>. Lifelong Learning Programme, Comenius 3, 230244CP-1-2006-1-ES-COMENIUS-C3. Supported by the European Commission, Directorate for Education and Culture.

consulting companies, a centre of resources under the Spanish Ministry of Education, etc.) from 12 countries (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Slovenia, Île de la Reunion-France-, Great Britain, Austria, Latvia, Poland, Malta and The Netherlands). We have the purpose of improving quality in Education and want to contribute to innovate in schools by assisting them in adopting and implementing an intercultural approach.

Our specific aims are:

1. To define, exemplify and promote intercultural education as an approach to deal with cultural differences at school in terms of theoretical foundations and practical implications.
2. To critically assess the European, national and local educational policies and practices developed in relation to meeting the needs of culturally diverse students and communities, specifically those initiatives named “intercultural”.
3. To elaborate and implement teacher training initiatives in the network institutions (masters and other postgraduate courses, seminars, workshops, etc.) in order to support teachers to deal with cultural diversity in a flexible way by adopting an intercultural approach in their daily practices.
4. To elaborate, implement and disseminate tools to analyze, support, manage and improve the intercultural approach in schooling practices, in relation to curriculum and institutional dimensions.

The INTER Network continues and deepens a series of joint projects on intercultural education and racism.

The first project was a Socrates Comenius titled *INTER – A Practical Guide to Implement Intercultural Education at School* (2002-5),³¹ focused on developing, using and validating a practical guide that facilitates analysis, implementation and improvement of intercultural education in schools. The resulting INTER Guide, for initial and in-service teacher training³², is avail-

³¹ <http://inter.up.pt/>

³² INTER Group (2006). *Culture Is Our Focus, Diversity Is Our Normality. INTER Guide to implement Intercultural Education*. Vienna: Navreme.

able in six European languages. In 2005, the INTER project was awarded the **European Award for Intercultural Education** by the Evens Foundation³³ in Antwerp (Belgium) and in 2006, it was also awarded the “Premio Aula” for the best educational materials of the year by the Spanish Ministry of Education.

INTER: A Euro-Latinamerican Postgraduate Programme on Intercultural Education, funded by the ALFA European Cooperation Programme (2007-9), expands the engagement of the group to Latin America. The work plan foresees the joint development of an M.A. curriculum on “Intercultural Education,” to be implemented thereafter at participating universities in Europe and Latin America.

Our purpose with all these projects is to transform educational ideas and practices from an intercultural perspective. We all agree that current educational systems do not equally benefit all students, and we propose intercultural education as a useful approach to change school and to contribute to transformation of society into a more inclusive and fair one.

We use to start each one of our projects analyzing the previous state of the art, the context of each participant institution and country as well as the needs we are able to identify regarding the implementation of intercultural education. One of the conclusions of these analysis use to point out the fact that we use the same terms but we do not always mean the same ideas; that is to say, that the surface of our common assumptions could hide some disagreements that need to be deeper analyzed.

This is why it was decided that one of the first tasks of the current Network project would be to develop again a State of Innovation. The authors of this paper overtook the coordination of this task and decided to start analyzing partner’s ideas within the INTER Network. This paper shows some of the preliminary results of this analysis and is based on the paper³⁴ that we presented at the International Congress “*Theory & Practice in Intercultural Education*”, which took place in Warsaw, from 30 June to 3 July 2008.

³³ www.evensfoundation.org

³⁴ The paper was titled *State of Innovation Report on Intercultural Education within the Inter Network*

GATHERING OUR IDEAS

The original INTER Network proposal deal 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 for different partners and also to benefit from each other ideas, we thought that a questionnaire could be a useful tool to gather opinions in a short time from such a wide and scattered group.

Our intention was to get answers from a personal (instead of an institutional) point of view and along three different lines: ideas on the topic, analysis of the own context (defined by each partner on a professional, national, European or whatever other basis), and the distance between both, the ideas and the context. Asking about gaps we tried to clarify and refine the limits of our agreements and to point out our major disagreements on what partners think Intercultural Education is, how it should be implemented and which are the main difficulties we find on putting our ideas into practice. Our first draft of the questionnaire was piloted first among the members of the group in charge of the final analysis, and with the adjustments we did after this first experience we sent the questionnaire to the whole group of partners, giving them the possibility to answer it individually or collectively, or to apply it to colleagues indeed.

We included the following guidelines to fill in the questionnaire:

We expect that you answer from your own perspective, giving us few and significant references only when you think they are necessary

We don't want long answers but meaningful ones, so please take your time to think about them

When we ask about the context we expect you to talk about what you know / work / are interested in, and it should not be only focused on your national context; remember this is a European network and we need to offer a global perspective

Let us start by speaking about the questions and deal afterwards with the answers.

Regarding **Theoretical Foundations** we asked:

What do you think Intercultural Education is?

Is it different from how is it used in your context?

Please, give us five meaningful theoretical references and tell us why do you choose them

About **Teacher Training** we wanted to know:

Competences and skills an Intercultural teacher should have

Programs in Intercultural Education you are aware of

Needs or gaps you see in this area

-Further comments and suggestions to improve Intercultural Education

On **School Practices** we tried to find out:

Practices you know which follow Intercultural Education perspective

Gaps between Theory and practice (including Teacher Training Programs)

And finally we intend to know about **Resources and Communication**:

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

The main problems identified in answering the questionnaire were related to the ambiguity of some of these concepts, which are used in a different way in different contexts, and also to the difficulty in limiting and defining

a context to cross-compare it with personal ideas. We, the members of the group in charge of the analysis, participated answering the questionnaire as well. This fact made us aware of the difficulties and made it possible for us to help partners to clarify the questions up to a certain point. With this intention we organized a general virtual conference that was held at the Network virtual platform.

ANALYZING RESPONSES

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. For the purposes of this paper we are going to focus mainly on the first two dimensions: Theoretical assumptions and Teacher training on Intercultural Education.

To make the analysis, we have first reduced the answers to short sentences, and from there we have tried to extract what we thought were the underlying concepts; of course, it is important to notice that this process is embedded in our own interpretation. After that, and as a way to validate the process, we turned it around, searching for the concepts in the answers provided by the questionnaires. Our purpose was again two fold: first, to confirm that the concepts selected were actually used by participants; and secondly, to contextualize them and use some excerpts as examples. This complex process let us easily compare and group the main ideas.

After the analysis, 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.

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 promotion of practices and knowledge towards the development of a critical cultural awareness, involving the fostering of an active citizenship

One important element is to reflect on the concept of culture as a dynamic element. It prevents from the danger of categorizing people in an essentialist way

On peut aussi aborder l'interculturalité à travers des contenus spécifiques pris dans l'actualité mais aussi dans la vie de la classe ou de l'établissement scolaire, dans les cultures des différentes ethnies

Teaching about other cultures, not limiting ourselves to only these cultures which we can encounter in our country

The other two ideas related to Intercultural Education partners agreed on more are **equity** and **inclusion**. Here are some examples:

It makes people ready to live in a fairer and plural society, recognizing cultural diversity. It intends to promote active participation and to assure equal opportunities

To include everyone as they are and see differences as enrichment in the society

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. In our partner's words:

An educational practice to build a curriculum as a participative process including different social actors, necessities, and educational demands

It emphasizes interaction, dialogue and considers relationships as a chance of growing

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**.

It implies continuous reflection and questioning of assumptions, principles and practices

To become more competent in making contacts with other people and to recognize and use different situations, communities, relations in our life for (especially social) learning

It is necessary to learn to coexist, to respect, to learn, to value the things that make us different...

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 said plainly 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 as, 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 close to the practice of the members of the INTER Network.

Our second dimension concerns **Teacher Training**.

The first question referred to Intercultural competences required for teachers. Here our analysis procedure was slightly different from the previous one: we reduced the answers to sentences, but this time we did not reduce the sentences to concepts but tried instead to relate these sentences to the previous categories identified in the former dimension. Only when we could not establish a relationship among them, we introduced new ones.

Here we show the relationship between the categories (concepts) and the competences identified by the answers.

We see that most of the teachers’ competences, skills and attitudes that partners think an Intercultural teacher should have, seem to be directly associated with the formerly mentioned ideas on Intercultural Education.

But the answers regarding teacher competences added new concepts to the list of ideas related with intercultural education. Again, **difference**

CONCEPTS	COMPETENCES
Cultural awareness	Should be aware of its culture and other cultures
Diversity	To be sensible to cultural diversity To recognize and use diversity
Inclusion	To be able to use strategies to include
Equity	To be able to use mechanisms to neutralize socio-economic differences
Participation	To be able to facilitate participation
Communication	To be able to promote intercultural communication
Understanding	To be able to comprehend situations, relationships, contexts
Questioning	To think critically
Collaboration	To be able to promote cooperative work and action
Relate	To be able to develop interactions and networks
Respect	To be able to accept and positively value everybody as social beings without conditions
Learn	To commit to lifelong learning

appears, and other new concepts are **empathy, anti racism, cultural relativism, and enthusiasm**.

The answers to our question “How do you think a teacher could be trained on these?” show – in the first place – a certain agreement on the fact that **these abilities cannot be learned or taught**. Some significant examples say:

I do not think a teacher should be trained in this matter but they should always be interested in becoming better teachers.

Most of these competences can be learned, but others such as empathy and awareness are more difficult to learn

We wonder if any person can become a teacher like that: is it possible to train in “beliefs”, “ideologies” or “expectations”?

A few examples emphasized the need to learn them **by practicing**.

CONCEPTS	COMPETENCES
Difference	To tolerate and accept differences
Empathy	To develop empathy
Anti-racism	To be aware of how do we use differences to legitimate privileges To be aware of prejudice and bias
Cultural relativism	To be aware that things and norms have different explanations
Enthusiasm	To show enthusiasm
Learn	To commit to lifelong learning

By experimental training and cooperative learning

Combination of training and practical experiences

Participating in activities designed from an intercultural approach

Through learning autonomy and cooperation and by exposing to different scenarios and social changes

Which are the teacher training needs identified by partners? The answers are basically related with the following ideas:

Involvement

Interdisciplinary training

Experiential learning

Avoiding an assimilationist perspective

Avoiding identification of special groups

Practical knowledge

Tools to be easy implemented

The gaps that were pointed out in this matter were:

Lack of connection between theory and practice

Lack of connection between policy and practice

Teachers are not selected nor trained according to Intercultural Education principles

DISCUSSING ON CONCLUDING REMARKS

Now we are going to use the material of the analysis formerly developed to point out some of the disagreements within our Network which we think can contribute to a general discussion on what Intercultural Education is, as well as on the possibility of building a consensus that helps us to transform ideas and, consequently, practices.

Regarding the partners' answers on what Intercultural Education is, we found out that the more 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 in two groups. One of them seems to reflect a static vision of culture that lead 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 share 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. The following excerpts show examples of this approach to culture:

We are talking about teaching about other cultures

Knowledge of other people's cultural norms

Curiosity to know about other cultures

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:

One important element is to reflect on the concept of culture as a dynamic element. It prevents from the danger of categorizing people in an 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 allow us 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 other are not; that means that only a group of people is defined on the basis of their differences, and that these differences put in front of the rest of us a challenge that should be answered in some way³⁵.

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.

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 of reflection and analysis of their own ideas and practices, some other 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.

³⁵ This conclusion agrees with Inés Gil Jaurena (2008).

To deepen in the analysis of partners disagreements, we have proposed a new set of open questions to be discussed at the INTER Network forum, in the virtual platform. The questions are the following:

Regarding the concept of difference. Do you think that intercultural education has to do with differences? In which 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 easy implemented, others insist on research and reflection. Which aspects do you think should have more weight in the teachers’ curriculum?

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EDUCATIONAL POLICIES REGARDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Analysis of the Spanish context

Inés Gil Jaurena, UNED, Faculty of Education, Spain

Margarita del Olmo, CCHS - CSIC, Spain

This paper presents information and analysis of the Spanish educational policies regarding cultural diversity and intercultural education at the compulsory level. The educational policies are analyzed both at the national and the autonomic/local levels. The paper focus in two main areas: a) the way cultural diversity is conceptualized in the institutional documents; b) the structural measures developed by local governments to deal with diversity at schools.

Firstly, the recent Educational Organic Law (2006), that regulates the Spanish educational system, is analyzed as a general framework. Then the paper focuses in different institutional policies and measures developed at the autonomic or local level in the case of the Community of Madrid, where the authors have developed their main researches. In this context, the official educational programme promoted to deal with cultural diversity is called "Escuelas de bienvenida (Welcome schools)", and includes special measures such as the education of immigrant students in special classrooms named "Aulas de enlace (Linking classrooms)", where students remain for some time before joining mainstream classrooms. This measure will be analyzed in the frame of the intercultural education approach.

Key words: Intercultural education, schools, diversity, Spanish Educational Policy

In this text, the authors analyze the Spanish most recent educational policies from a double perspective: on one hand, the way cultural diversity is conceptualized in the institutional documents; on the other hand, the structural measures developed by local governments to deal with diversity at schools, specially in the case of Madrid with a measure called aulas de enlace (linking classrooms).

The authors have been working in the field of diversity and intercultural education in the last six years, and bear witness to how diversity has increased both discourses and concerns, in the context of education and society at large. In this paper we will analyze how this concern has been addressed by the most recent educational law in Spain, in what sense, and finally whether the intercultural approach has become part of the educational policy. We will try to address these issues both at the national and the local level.

"DIVERSITY" AND "INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION" IN SPANISH LEGISLATION

The terms "diversity" and "intercultural education" in the Law of Education

The first approach of our analysis is how the terms "diversity" and "intercultural education" are conceived when mentioned explicitly in the Educational Law (Ley Orgánica de Educación-LOE, 2006). The main results are the following:

The Educational Law doesn't refer to "intercultural education" explicitly. This term is not present in the documents.

The Educational Law refers to "cultural diversity" in one case: when talking about pluralism in the Autonomous Communities, as follows:

"(...) to favour the knowledge and appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity of the different Autonomous Communities, and to contribute to interregional solidarity and regional balance in the compensation of inequalities" (LOE, introduction, p. 17162).

In the same sense, the word "interculturality" appears in one occasion, when the goals of the educational system are collected in the preliminary title of the Educational Law. This word is linked to the idea of Spanish pluralism:

"g) Training/education in the respect and recognition of linguistic and cultural pluralism of Spain and of interculturality as an enriching element of society" (LOE, preliminary title, p. 17165).

Besides the former explicit quotation about cultural and linguistic diversity, attention to diversity is considered in the following cases (arts. 71-72, tit. II:

Equity in education, chapter 1):

- students with specific needs of educational support for:
- special needs (disability)
- high intellectual capacity
- late incorporation to the Spanish educational system
- specific learning difficulties
- personal conditions
- previous schooling
- students in difficult situations

The intercultural approach in the Law of Education

A second step in our analysis was to review those principles and goals of the Spanish legislation linked with what the intercultural approach conceives as important issues, even when they have not been explicitly mentioned as so. In this sense, we have found that some of the articles refer to important issues concerning diversity and intercultural education:

Introduction, Chapter I. Principles of education Art. 1.

- a) Quality of education for all the students, regardless their conditions and circumstances.
- b) Equity, which guarantees equality of opportunities, educational inclusion and no discrimination and acts as an element that compensates personal, cultural, economic and social inequalities.
- c) Transmission and practice of values that favour personal freedom, responsibility, democratic citizenship, solidarity, tolerance, equality, respect and justice, and that support the overcoming of any kind of discrimination"

Introduction, Chapter I. Goals of education Art. 2.

- b) The education in respect to fundamental rights and liberties, in equality of rights and opportunities among men and women, and in the equality of treatment and no discrimination to people with disabilities.

c) The education in the practice of tolerance and freedom within the democratic principles of living together (...)

k) Preparation for the practice of citizenship and active participation on economic, social and cultural life, with critical and responsible attitude and with capacity of adaptation to changing situations in the knowledge” society.

The compensatory approach in the Law of Education and the Ministry website

After searching in the Law of Education, we turned our attention to the website of the Ministry of Education (<http://www.mepsyd.es/portada.html>). Our main finding there was a webpage called “intercultural education” (<http://www.mepsyd.es/educacion/enseanzas/educacion-intercultural.html>) that can be accessed from two other links: “compensation of inequalities” or “students in difficult situations”. Unlike what happens in the Law of Education, the intercultural approach is explicitly acknowledged in the website, but identified with compensation in education. From these webpages as well you get access to a website created in 2005 by the Ministry of Education and Science, dedicated to resources for attention to cultural diversity in education (CREADE: www.mec.es/creade)

Related to this perspective, chapter II of the Law of Education, dedicated to Compensation of inequalities in education, includes the following principles (art. 80):

1. With the goal of making effective the equality principle in the practice of the right to education, Public Administrations will develop compensatory actions related to persons, groups and territorial scopes that are in unfavorable situations, and they will provide the economic resources and required supports for it.
2. Compensatory education measures will reinforce the action of the educational system in a way that inequalities derived from social, economic, cultural, geographical, ethnic or other factors are avoided. (LOE, p. 17180)

According to these principles, we find the following article as well:

First final disposition. Modification of the Organic Law 8/1985, July 3rd, regulator of the Right to Education.

3. Article 6 is drawn up as follows (...)

h) To receive the required aids and supports to compensate the lacks and disadvantages of personal, familiar, economic, social and cultural kind, specially in the case of presenting special educational needs, which prevent or make it difficult the access and remain in the educational system (LOE, p. 17205)

Conclusions about the legislative approach to diversity

As a conclusion, we can say that there is a politically correct discourse about objectives and principles of education that could be recognized from and intercultural approach; while terms related to deficit or that remind of it, as well as terms related to intercultural education explicitly, are avoided in the legislative documents.

But in fact, as it is shown not in the Educational Law but in the Ministry of Education website, there is an association of diversity and intercultural Education with compensatory measures derived from deficit or shortage models.

THE CASE OF COMMUNITY OF MADRID

Education in Spain is regulated nowadays by the Organic Law for Education (LOE), passed in 2006, but its development is a matter and competence of the governments of the Autonomous Communities (except the case of Ceuta and Melilla, the two autonomous Spanish cities in the North of Africa).

In this paper we will focus our attention in the Community of Madrid, as it is the place where we are developing our research and thus our knowledge of the field is based on a combination of ethnographic field work and the reading of the normative documents.

Programmes for addressing diversity in Madrid

In Madrid there is a Glossary of measures for addressing diversity, for an internal use in the Educational Administration, which lists 29 specific programmes. Some of them are the following:

Complementary and additional measures of educational compensation subsidized to non-profit private entities: activities developed out from the school timetable, meant for students in public schools, and directed towards the socioeducational insertion of students with special educational needs related to underprivileged social and cultural conditions.

Students with educational compensation needs: students who present a curricular gap of two or more years, if it is due to situations of social disadvantage or, in the case of immigrant or refugee students, due to the lack of knowledge of the Spanish language.

Educational compensation classrooms: organizational measure which has the objective of guaranteeing educational attention and favoring the integration of students with high risk of dropping out from school, by facilitating the development of the competences proposed in the general objectives, to get students to incorporate, if it is the case, to a curricular diversification programme or to a social guarantee programme.

Educational compensation: programme which locates specific resources, materials and humans, to guarantee the access, permanence and promotion in the educational system of students in a situation of social disadvantage

External compensation at school centers: complementary measures taken in public schools out of the regular schedule, with the objective of developing educational reinforcement with students with a high curricular gap, in order to make true the principle of equal educational opportunities for all.

Among these measures for addressing diversity, two are specially mentioned:

The welcome schools programme (http://www.madrid.org/dat_capital/bienvenida/ae.htm), described as a

A program addressed to favor the incorporation to the regional school system of foreign students who don't know Spanish language or have a significant curricular gap, due to an irregular schooling process in the country of

origin. It is composed by four actions: linking classrooms; immersion in the school, social, cultural and linguistic context; development of an active living together; and teacher training.

And the Linking classrooms, which have been defined by a working group in the educational local Administration as educational communities that pursue an intercultural education of all the students in the knowledge, understanding and respect for others, favoring socio-cultural integration and the creation of positive attitudes towards different cultures whose objective is described as follows:

framed within the Welcome Schools Program, these classrooms educationally address foreign students from 8 to 16 years who don't know Spanish or who present a high curricular gap due to a lack of schooling in their country of origin.

After the recommendations of the evaluators of the program, the recent normative has reserved these classrooms only for the teaching of Spanish as a second language, and it has excluded the students with a high curricular gap because the evaluators argued that they were very different situations, and the latter had to be addressed from a different perspective, but this is not always the case in schools.

The Welcome School Programme

The Welcome School Programme has four different subprograms:

- a) “Linking Classrooms”: It is the only subprogramme widely known and totally implemented. They are classrooms set aside for immigrant students where they are supposed to learn Spanish and fill in any academic gap.
- b) “Immersion in the school, social, cultural and linguistic environment”: with no regulations to put this into practice except as a general principle.
- c) “The development of an active being together”: it used to be promoted through programmes to bring together students from the Linking Classroom and from the rest of the school, but they were never implemented. Right now this development of active being

together is developed by special programs which during school hour enroll students from the Linking Classroom and some other class to do different things together (depending on the programme: usually some kind of art and crafts). There is also the mandatory norm that students of the Linking Classroom should attend regular classes for certain subjects (Gym, Music, math, etc.)

d) “Training of teachers”: Courses are offered to teachers with no perspective or goal, just any kind of course that gives teachers points for promotion, it could be Photography or Intercultural Education, any offered programme.

Each of these work lines comes under the competence of a different section in the Regional Administration of the Community of Madrid, thus it exists a lack of coordination among them, besides there is a person in charge of the whole program in the Education Section of the Regional Administration.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CASE OF MADRID

As a conclusion, it could be said that in Madrid most of the educational programs to addressing diversity have been designed from an explicit compensatory education approach, that means that students' deficits have to be compensated so they can join the mainstream classrooms.

The association between diversity and compensation, and thus between diversity and deficit, is still the predominant trend in the policy about addressing cultural diversity. One of the main reasons or arguments to hold this statement is the recommendation of the evaluation of the Linking Classrooms Programme, made by the General Sub-Directorate of Inspection, where the following recommendation is given:

In Compulsory Secondary Education, it is convenient to have Educational Compensation teachers to address the students who join the regular classroom, as an important part of these students show a great school delay, so they need a permanent follow-up and educational reinforcements when they leave the linking classroom.

On another side, the policy of attention to diversity is centered fundamentally in the measures directed to immigrant students, and specially the Linking Classrooms programme. The philosophy that underlines this measure is the instruction of the lingua franca, which is considered the main instrument for social integration; once defined from this perspective, attention to immigrant students is exclusively focused on teaching Spanish as a second language.

The Educational Section on the Regional Administration doesn't contemplate, in any way, the need of continuing instruction in the mother tongue, it doesn't practice it neither considers it positively. In fact, after the field works we have developed, we have seen how teachers we have worked with “think it positive that students quickly forget their mother tongues, because it will help them to learn Spanish more quickly and thus to integrate earlier with other students”.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

We can see a lack of correspondence among stated goals and principles of education (LOE) and practical measures and programmes promoted and/or developed in scenarios such as the Community of Madrid.

Comparing with other Spanish regions, only Catalonia conceives its Welcome Plan (Plan d'Acollida) in the frame of the Citizenship Plan (Plan de Ciudadanía), all the other practices are designed from a compensation philosophy. None of the cases (Madrid included) deals with diversity from an intercultural approach: programmes are focused in learning the lingua franca and other aspects, such as learning or recognition of other students' languages, remain unattended (del Olmo and Gil Jaurena, 2007).

Even tough intercultural concerns are implicitly acknowledged in the legislation, the gap among these assumptions and the practical measures proposed to developed them is undeniable. Thus, the answer to whether the intercultural approach has become part of the educational policy or not is negative: neither the policy nor the practical measures reflect consciously and resolutely an intercultural approach.

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II. TEACHERS AND ADULT TRAINING ON IE

RACISM: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT. A GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT RACISM

Carmen Osuna Nevado. Inter Group. UNED

Caridad Hernández. Inter Group. UCM Spain

In this paper we present a guide elaborated by the Inter Group in which we are members. This guide is a really useful and important tool in order to understand and deal with a so complex phenomenon as racism. Through this paper we present the guide but we want, as well, to present our own work process: our dilemmas, thoughts and reflections.

Key words: Racism, Antiracism Education.

INTRODUCTION

In this presentation we are going to talk about one of the works of the INTER Group³⁶: “Racism: What it is and How to Deal with. A guide to talking about Racism”. Before talking about this guide, we think it is necessary to explain that it is a result of another works of the INTER Group in Research of Intercultural Education.

Before this guide, the INTER Group of research in Intercultural Education elaborated another guide –within a COMENIUS Project³⁷- called “The INTER Guide” that will be presented in another session of this event-. In this Guide was made explicit the necessity of *showing the need to include in classroom antiracism education for everyone*.

Concerning this aim the INTER Group is developing, within its investigations about intercultural education and diversity, other works about racism as:

³⁶ www.uned.es/grupointer

³⁷ INTER: A practical Guide to implement Intercultural Education at school. REF: Socrates Comenius 2.1; 106223-CP-1-2002-1- COMENIUS- C21. Available in: <http://inter.up.pt/>

“Racism: a Teenagers’ Perspective. Results of a Preliminary Research from Madrid (Spain)”³⁸. This report is an analysis of the teenager’s perceptions about racism.

Different research projects:

“Racism, teenagers and immigration. Analysis and proposals of antiracism education”³⁹

“Integration strategies and racism prevention in schools”⁴⁰

Cultural Diversity of Students and School Efficacy. A Repertory of Best Practices in Compulsory Education Centers ⁴¹.

One of the products of these investigation projects is the Racism Guide that we are going to present in this session.

WHY AND FOR WHAT OF THIS GUIDE?

It is not easy to talk about racism. It is a complex reality that is present in our everyday experience, both inside and outside of the education centers, although its existence is usually denied. This was one of our first reflections, as a group, when we received the proposal to carry out an exploratory study⁴² that would put us in contact with teenagers perceptions concerning racism. The idea was to make the voice of the boys and girls who live with, suffer, or face racism heard, and to obtain relevant information from preparing a guide.

HOW THE GUIDE WAS MADE?

The number of people who collaborated in the guide is large, and we are from different institutions and different countries. Far of being an obstacle, this situation represented a huge richness and a really stimulating and interesting interchange of ideas and experiences. From the start we worked

³⁸ <http://www.navreme.net/publications/publications.html>

³⁹ PR41/06-15046. Available in: <https://campusvirtual.ucm.es/prof/racismo.html>

⁴⁰ HUM2006-03511/FILO. Available in: www.navreme.net/integration

⁴¹ SEJ2006-10176. INTER Group.

⁴² Report of “Racism, teenagers and immigration.” INTER Group

in small groups with different tasks and we used the ALF virtual platform (www.innova.uned.es) as a means to share materials, e-mail and news. The advantage of work in this way was that all of the authors could share both the documents and the multiple messages we used to communicate our progress and, most of all, our doubts and disagreements. Together with this way of working, we held, as well, several physical meetings. The first question that we, as a group, had to clarify was what we would call “racism”.

WHAT RACISM IS AND WHAT RACISM IS NOT?

Those of us who make up the group that prepared the guide had many different opinions and we did not always agree on how to think about and explain so complex a phenomenon as racism, but we did manage to agree on some basic ideas that we resume

We believe that we are not born racists, but that we all learn to be racist in this society.

How? Our society transmits racist assumptions in an almost imperceptible way, and we accept them without questioning them.

Why? Because these ideas allow us to legitimize the inequalities among people and because everyone who belongs to the majority group, or the group in power, ends up benefiting from this situation.

What can we do to dismantle these kinds of reasoning? It is only through continuous process of re-education that we can learn to guard against racism and to develop a critical attitude towards it instead of accepting it.

What consequences does this re-education process have? This process is difficult and costly, but it helps us to realize that some of us have more privileges than others and that it is almost impossible to give them up even when we consciously reject any argument that places some people above others independently of their personal merits.

GUIDE STRUCTURE

The Guide is articulated around several questions that we consider key issues for understanding and dealing with racism as a social phenomenon. It has a five-module structure –which content is closely related- that attempts to respond to these issues, but, above all, these modules attend to encourage processes of analyses, reflection, and action in the people who make use of the Guide, so that they will pursue their own questions and answers.

Module 1- What is racism? The module tries to define what we refer to, when we talk about racism.

Module 2- Racism: Why and what for? This module takes on the complexity of racism, with an analysis that emphasizes both the causes and the beneficial consequences that racist behavior has for the people or groups who practices it: social classification, hierarchy, power and privileges.

Module 3- How is it produced? This module analysis and invites the reader to join in the analysis of the manifestations of racism from two perspectives: the perspective of the factors that favors its appearance, and the perspective of the forms and characteristic of its expressions in different contexts.

Module 4- How is it reproduced? This module shows and analyzes the mechanisms that serve to perpetuate racism in society, such as the communication media or textbooks.

Module 5- How can we deal with racism? Recalling the ideas that have come up in the previous modules, this one considers dealing with racism through three processes: awareness, reflection, and action.

Finally, the Guide includes a glossary that provides a series of transversal concepts which will be mentioned throughout the different modules.

Each module has a similar structure, including some or all of the following sections according to this order:

Critical Incident which should cause the reader to reflect on the most important ideas that will be dealt with in the rest of the module. These vignettes are the critical incident of module two.

Information: This section was designed to offer the information we believe to be relevant to the subject dealt with in the module.

Resources: this section offers concrete references for obtaining complementary information of the subjects dealt within each module: reading and audio-visual material and references for Internet searches.

Food for Thought: this section offers issues and strategies for provoking personal or shared reflections of the ideas presented of suggested in the preceding sections.

Activities to Share: propose some activities that required collaboration with others. Some of these activities, can be carried out within the educational program, other are suggestions for activities that can be done in the participants' work contexts such as classrooms, schools, associations, courses, etc.

Working in the classroom: one of our main concerns to avoid the widespread idea that analyzing racism and dealing with it, means adding something extraordinary to the curriculum and doing it separately from the customary activities in the different subjects. That is why this section proposes activities which objective is to link the concepts with the proposals and integrate these in daily schools activities.

Each module ends with **Bibliographic References** of the material used in the preparation of each module.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

The Guide is intended to be flexible enough to be used in different educational context and with different audiences. Using the entire Guide, from beginning to end, is not essential, nor is it necessary to follow the given order of the modules, however, it is always a good idea to start with the first module, where the conceptual base of what racism is are established, and from there, go on to apply the modules chosen in the desired order. Full modules can be chosen, or only those ideas that seem most adequate for the group, choosing activities related to these ideas.

While preparing the Guide, we ran into some dilemmas that refer both to the audiences and to the Guide's contents and application. We tried to answer some of these questions, some of them we will explain next:

About audience: Even though we expect our main audience to be professors and professional educators, the Guide was conceived as a document aimed at any person interested in the subject.

Where and how use the Guide: The Guide may often be used in seminars or brief sessions, that is, for a specific purpose or with a very limited amount of time. Each module was created around a specific issue that gives its own entity. We think that is fitting to choose the modules or module to work with according to the conditions and time available (workshops, training seminars, sessions, etc.)

Individual reflection or/and cooperative activities: We recommend that you insist in the need to collaborate and participate in a dialogue with others, avoiding work carried out exclusively on one's own, as a way to become aware of, to reflect on, and to act against racism.

"Recipes" or general recommendations: we believe that we should point out that we do not think recipes are at all useful. Each social and educational context is different and requires specific procedures. We propose that the Guide be used as a tool to challenge our preconceived ideas about racism and its manifestations.

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THE READINESS OF THE TEACHERS TO WORK IN THE MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN LATVIA

*Anastasija Aleksejeva*⁴³, University of Latvia

Globalization has brought a new era of changes to the world. The effects of widespread migration and increased mobility have brought significant changes to a classroom environment. Children from diverse cultural backgrounds bring to the classroom a full spectrum of different attitudes, values, learning styles and their communities' perceptions on relevant teaching approaches. Nowadays it has become inevitable to make the necessary upgrades in teachers' training, enhancing their competencies for working with children from diverse backgrounds. The survey examines the theoretical aspects of the changes of paradigms within the education system in Latvia and in teachers' training, as well as gives an overview of teachers' evaluation of own ability to work in the multicultural environment

Key words: Multicultural, competency, teacher pre-service and in-service training, intercultural competence, diversified classroom, lifelong learning

Abstract in Latvian

Globalizācija ir uzsākusi jaunu pārmaiņu ēru pasaulē. Plaši izplatītie migrācijas un palielinātā kustīguma efekti ir ienesuši nozīmīgas izmaiņas klases vidē. Bērni ar daudzveidīgu kultūras bagāžu ienes klasē pilnu spektru dažādu attieksmju, vērtību, mācību stilu un viņu sabiedrības izpratni par saprātīgiem apmācības veidiem. Mūsdienās ir tapis neizbēgami izdarīt nepieciešamos jauninājumus skolotāju apmācībā, tas attiecas uz kompetenci, kas ļauj skolotājam strādāt ar bērniem ar atšķirīgam izcelsmēm. Darbs apskata paradigmu izmaiņu teorētiskos aspektus Latvijas izglītības sistēmā un skolotāju apmācībā, kā arī piedāvā ieskatu skolotāju pašvērtējumā darbā daudzkultūru vidē.

⁴³ Anastasija Aleksejeva is a graduate of Master of Education Science programme at the University of Latvia, the field of interest intercultural learning environment and teacher training. For correspondence please contact at anasalek@yahoo.com

Atslēgas vārdi: daudz kultūru, multikultūru, kompetence, skolotāja apmācība un tālākizglītība, starpkultūru kompetence, dažādība klasē, apmācība mūža garumā

A way of describing the school as a place, where different cultures merge is a new and progressive view at a modern educational environment in Latvia. It advances the understanding of the necessity of profound changes in the foundational principles of country's educational system, where it is no longer footed on the parallel co-existence of many cultures, mostly based on two languages – Latvian and Russian, but rather must be viewed as an environment rich of intercultural learning opportunities for both, the students and the teacher.

Even though Latvia currently is not considered as a target country for immigrants, the historical situation of Latvia and traditional presence of more than 150 different ethnoses on its territory have created circumstances conducive to state supported multicultural education.

Latvian philosopher, pedagogue and psychologist Julijs Aleksandrs Students, who in the beginning of 19th century founded a base for the pedagogical theory in Latvia, stated: “pedagogue (educator) is the entire community's creator”. Indeed, the teacher has an important role to play in the shaping of the future's community and nowadays one of the principal questions is related to the shift in the paradigm of teacher profession and its role.

Skills, abilities and knowledge that enable a teacher to successfully facilitate the process of learning within the intercultural classroom environment are ones of the most emphasized in EC pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

The objective of the survey “The Readiness of the Teachers to Work in the Intercultural Environment” (survey done and represented for author's MA thesis) is to examine how teachers evaluate own ability to work in the intercultural environment, as well as skills and knowledge that they view as necessary. Hypotheses of the survey was the following: the teachers are not sufficiently ready to work in the culturally diversified environment within the changing society of Latvia. The author examined the central theoretical aspects of the multicultural environment and the criteria of teachers' readiness, that enable them to capably work in a diverse environment.

EDUCATION SYSTEM OF LATVIA

Over the last decades the Latvian education system has been undergoing crucial and rapid changes in order to 1) facilitate integration of society on the base of the state language, 2) manage the problems, connected with heritage in education from previous political period during Soviet era and 3) become an integrate part of the European education system. The development of Latvian education system can be viewed in the following stages:

Stage I: from 1990 to 1994 – the democratization and decentralization, with changes mainly connected to transformation of the system to meet the needs of an independent and democratic state.

Stage II: from 1995 to 2001 main attention was on substantially supplementing the normative and legislative basis of the education system.

Stage III: The Education Development Concept Paper 2002-2005 (2001) underpins the third development stage of the education system. During this period of time the following activities have been particularly stressed: cooperation between education policy makers and its executors – the Ministry of Education and Science, municipal education boards, teacher's professional organizations, designers of vocational and higher education programmes and employers, as well as the activities geared toward the raise of public awareness and involvement in education development processes

Stage IV: the forth stage of Latvia's education system is governed by the national policy paper Basic Standpoints in Lifelong Learning 2007-2013 (2007). It emphasizes the following main goals: implementation of a Lifelong Learning Strategy, improvement of the quality of pre-school, primary and secondary school education, modernization of vocational education, raise of the competitiveness of higher education and the improvement of the quality of teachers' training and performance. These objectives were developed in compliance with a Latvia National Development Plan 2007-2013 (2006), where education and knowledge for the growth of economical and technological distinction are defined as the main strategic aims.

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION PROVISIONS FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN LATVIA

According to the data of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2008), ethnic composition of Latvia as per 2007 data can be described as follows: there are more than 150 ethnoses represented in Latvia. The largest of them in numbers are: 57,6% - Latvian, 29.6% - Russian, 4.1% - Belorussian, 2.7% - Ukrainian, 2,5% - Polish, 1,4% - Lithuanian, 0,4% - Jews, 1,7% - other nationalities. Now the state provides education for eight largest minorities in Latvia: Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Jewish and Roma.

The main document guiding the integration policy in the country - National programme for integration of society in Latvia 2001 (1999) states that the facilitation of the integration of ethnic minorities within Latvian society must be found on the common civic values and the State language.

Therefore to achieve vision of the Integration Programme and the goals of the Language Law, one of the priorities for country's Education system at the end of 20th and beginning of the 21st century was the development of education policy for ethnic minorities. Prior to 1989 the education was provided only in Latvian or Russian language, latter attended by children from not only Russian, but also other ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The first ethnic minority schools supported by the state were opened in 1990. The amendments to the Education Law were made stipulating the implementation of education programmes for ethnic minorities, The minority education programme was implemented aiming at transforming all minority language schools into bilingual schools.

Bilingual education is defined as a purposeful organization of study process in which pupils concurrently use two languages - the respective minority language (Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Polish, Lithuanian, Estonian, Roma and others) and Latvian; hence, the "new" language (in this case Latvian) changes its status from the object of learning to the tool of learning. Curriculum is being developed according to the specifications and needs of each national minority. The idea behind the bilingual education is to give national minority children the opportunity to acquire the Latvian language and culture without losing their sense of ethnic belonging.

It has to be underlined that, in opposite to common bilingual education programs throughout the world, the official state language has been added to the minority language (mostly Russian) and not vice versa. Of course, the concept of bilingual education can be extended, including schools where foreign languages are used as the means of education; nevertheless, as National report: development of education (2004) states, that this type of school is not very common in Latvia yet

The National programme for integration of society in Latvia (2001) outlined four types of bilingual education programs were developed and recommended in primary and secondary schools allowing a 3-year transitional period. The schools can elaborate their own models, too.

Model Nr. 1: studies in Latvian & bilingually (were implemented by 15% schools)

Model Nr. 2: studies bilingually & in native language (implemented by 13%)

Model Nr. 3: start with 1 subject in Latvian & gradually increase (42% schools)

Model Nr. 4: 1-3 grade – native language, gradually introduce subjects in Latvian and bilingually (11% schools)

Different model (19% schools)

THE CHANGING ROLE OF TEACHERS

Greater diversity in culture, gender, religion, social backgrounds are the factors that influence teacher's work on a daily basis. Society now expects schools to find ways how to effectively deal with wide range of issues, such as different student backgrounds, to be sensitive to culture and gender issues, to promote tolerance and social cohesion, to respond effectively to disadvantaged students and students with learning or behavioral problems, to use new technologies, and to keep pace with rapidly developing fields of knowledge and approaches to student assessment.

Teachers are now expected to have much broader roles and be capable of

preparing students for a society and economy, where they will act as self-directed learners, able and motivated to keep learning over lifetime.

The globalization and democratization processes that have been taking place in Latvia since 1990 brought crucial implications to the teacher's role and functions, raising concerns on whether it is really possible for teachers, who are fully-grown adults, to be able to change at all (Bluma 2003, 37). It has been particularly controversial period of time for teachers who were educated and taught in the Soviet era, but are suddenly expected to facilitate the development to students for the new democratic society which functioning is based on completely different vision, set of values, philosophical notions and practical needs.

These changes result in the necessity of changing the whole process of teacher training in Latvia and involve a change in the basic paradigm: from teacher who teaches to a student who learns. The student has become the active focus in the education process. Students today do not learn separate subjects but rather acquire learning competencies and develop motivation for lifelong learning.

Professor of University of Latvia D. Bluma (2000, 181) offers the following comparative summary of a teacher educated before regaining independence in Latvia and the present teacher.

Bluma (2003, 41) writes that the concept of lifelong learning is a new phenomenon due to the former authoritarian system, the lack of opportunities for self-directed learning and too much reliance on being acted upon. Some of the teachers are readily embracing the new concept, seeing the immediate and long term benefits for their professional career, making it "sense of life". Whereas others find it difficult if not impossible to take the responsibility and show own initiative, that would involve certain risks, changes in the everyday routine and unpredictable consequences. Those who are not willing are struggling with their old style practice based on authoritarian teaching, trying to shape the students as per certain model.

In order to stay in the profession teachers in Latvia have had to accommodate to the changes. One of the new challenges arisen after the collapse of the Soviet system is the necessity not only to recognize but also embrace the

TEACHER TRAINED DURING SOVIET PERIOD VS THE TEACHER TRAINED IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

SOVIET PERIOD	DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
Teaches, gives information, explains	Facilitates student's learning
Teaches formally	Teaches informally in a friendly environment
Does everything for the students	Creates situations for student's experiences
Decides everything	Involves students in decision making
Is creative about how to teach	Is creative in finding and offering situations for the development of student's creativity
Dominates the classroom	Builds relations on mutual respect and trust and encourages student participation
Focuses on student's errors	Focuses of student's progress
Is active, creative, innovative himself/herself	Delegates the right to be active, creative, innovative to students

diversity. During Soviet era the learners were considered a homogenous mass that had to be acted upon. Now with the student-centered approach being implemented, teacher is expected to employ democratic teaching style, utilizing the wide range of teaching strategies and methods. Moreover, the teachers have to become aware that Latvia's community comprises of not only Latvians and Russians, but also include other – more than 150 ethnoses and cultures and is expected to diversify even more over the coming years (Porina, 136).

TEACHERS' READINESS

With the globalization and modernization placing their demands on the course of development of education and training, the need has arisen for the educators all over the world to equip and keep updating individuals with an increasingly complex set of "baggage" in order for him or her to succeed in the world of constant change and transition. At the end of 20th century the

“competency” concept was also embraced by the world of educators, producing numerous outcomes - competencies required for the lifelong learning society.

The author used the following criteria that assess teacher’s readiness to work in the multicultural environment:

Intercultural competence

Job and life experience

Pre-service and in-service education and training

Intercultural competence: attitude, skills, knowledge, values

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

There has been research and efforts carried out to outline the specific elements of the intercultural competence. Byram (2001, 15) states, that teacher intercultural competence is to promote a culture of diversity in classroom.

Byram (2001) names knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as part of one’s belonging to given society the components of intercultural competence. He describes attitude as willingness to relativise one’s own values; knowledge - not a primary knowledge about a specific culture, but rather knowledge of how social groups and social identities function; skills - the skill of comparison, of interpreting and relating, as well as the skills of discovery and interaction; and the values - as a need to become aware of one’s own values and how these influence his/her views of other people’s values.

Byram (2001) emphasizes that the development of intercultural competence ought to lead to a critical cultural awareness and a political awareness of oneself as a citizen. Later he adds that it ought to lead to a political awareness of oneself as a citizen of the world.

FINDINGS

Based on the study of the theoretical sources on multiculturalism and the teachers’ readiness to work in the multicultural environment by international and Latvian writers, analyses of the relevant research

projects that had been carried out in Latvia (such as the research of minority education reform and bilingual education; diversity issues in teacher’s work; teacher’s profession, it’s status and the research of tolerance and acceptance in Latvian society), and the activities performed within the frames of this survey, such as teachers’ questionnaires, a focus group and the interviews with the experts in the field of multicultural education in Latvia, the author of the survey have made the following conclusions:

1. Internationally a wide range of scientific research and literature is available on multiculturalism in education. In Latvia these questions are less researched, the most attention dedicating to linguistic issues of the multicultural society. Basic surveys about this theme were carried out by researchers of the Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Latvia Poriņa V., Pušpure M., Margeviča I. (2002). INTER Guide: a practical guide to implement intercultural education in schools” (2002) can serve as an example of international cooperation of University of Latvia in creating tools for the MA and further education programs of teachers.

Only the scarce number of legislative instruments, norms and guidelines on country’s multicultural politics has been developed so far. The main documents currently enforced are “The Development of Education. National Report of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia” (2004); “The Education Development Concept Paper 2002-2005”, “National Programme for Integration of Society in Latvia 2001” (1999), project “The Guidelines for the Policy of Society’s Integration 2008 – 2018” (2007).

2. Diversity in Latvia is not defined and specified. There is a lack of the definition of multicultural environment, relevant to the historically developed unique composition of the country’s population. The notions of intercultural education, diversity education, citizenship education, bilingual education are used interrelated, thus blending into one the number of different issues of ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic diversity.

At the moment the development of such notion can be viewed as central in further works on the definition of the multicultural competence that would have to be scientifically sound and practically pertinent for Latvia. As a result the issues of multiculturalism are being narrowed down

to multilingualism thus shifting the emphasis to the issues of students' acquisition of the state language and the didactic and methodological aspects of the teacher's training and development.

However, it can be noted that on a practical level in comparison with many of the EU countries the intercultural aspects are incorporated into the school curricula. A cross-subject approach is being applied, the issues are integrated in every subject and not taught separately as a subject.

3. The survey revealed that the teachers, who work in schools where are implemented programs for national minorities, in comparison to the teachers who work in the schools with the Latvian language of instructions, feel themselves as more adequately trained and ready to face the diversity in the classroom and more aware of the ways how to use it for the benefit of the learning process.

This can be explained by the fact that the teachers for the national minority schools have received a tailored training in methodic, theory, psychology and other subjects for the purpose of implementing the bilingual education reform that started in 2004. The teachers who work in the schools with the state language of instructions have been less informed and interested in the issues of intercultural education as they have not received the respective university training in these issues and the composition of the schools is more ethnically and linguistically homogeneous. Such differentiated approach in teachers' training resulted in a stereotype that multicultural training in Latvia is necessary only for those teacher students and in-service training attendees who work in schools with minority education program. The subjects on intercultural education are indeed included into the teachers' curriculum at the universities, but are compulsory only for national minority school teachers. Also this survey proved that national minority school teachers are more than the teachers in schools with state language of instruction keen on receiving the training on multicultural questions, however, also teachers of other school type started to see the necessity.

Currently the in-service training institutions in Latvia are integrating the intercultural issues into their training programmes for all teachers passing across the message that the intercultural education expands over the ethnic and linguistic boundaries.

4. As the in-service training programmes on intercultural aspects are made available for the teachers, presently it is often that the supply exceeds the demand. In the survey the teachers and experts stressed out the necessity to improve the quality of the in-service training. It was pointed out that it is important to involve practitioners with the hands-on experience in dealing with the wide spectrum of multicultural issues in the classroom, ranging from the conflict resolution to the ways of integrating the topics of diversity into the classroom exercises and practical assignments.

5. Teachers training related to the subjects they taught is by far the most requested of the in-service training. Taking into account the need for the interdisciplinary approach in the intercultural education, the inclusion of the intercultural topics into teachers' subject training with the aim to provide them with respective tools and resources in addressing the diversity issues with their students while teaching their subject, could become an effective way of addressing the cultural diversity issues. This would also become the way to boost teachers' interest for a more in-depth training on the topics of intercultural education.

6. As per teachers' opinion, their knowledge of the main specific features of different cultures, its notions and traditions is the prerequisite for their successful work in the multicultural environment. To develop and sustain the positive multicultural school environment the teachers strive to include information on the different traditions and customs into their subject materials. Thus it is necessary to develop more books and interactive tools, video, audio and handout materials that can be used in a classroom. „INTER Guide: a practical guide to implement intercultural education in schools” (2002) is an example of the such a support tool that has been translated to Latvian and implemented in MA and in further education programs for teachers.

In conclusion author admits that both - teachers from the schools with the state language of instruction and the teachers from schools where minority educational programs are implemented have to be trained in intercultural education in order to come to the common understanding that not only some of the schools, but every classroom is heterogeneous. New and working teachers need more training in order to successfully manage diversity in their classrooms and to understand that intercultural education exceeds linguistic and ethnic aspects.

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ON THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE IDEA OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE POLISH SCHOOL

Ewa Dąbrowa (Ph. D.)

Urszula Markowska-Manista (MA)

Academy of Special Education, Warsaw, Poland

The presence of intercultural teaching and intercultural programmes of education in school and in social reality joins from setting in present the world transformations closely as well as led by state of migrating policy and policy to minority. Accession of Poland to the EU raised not only her attractiveness among tourists, but also all these who desire to educate here, to work and to settle even. The answer of these needs becomes in education fields numerous projects, meetings and festivals consecrated cultural diversity and showed problems of people with multicultural background. Unfortunately, the enchantment over plurality of educational proposals is usually devoid of the content-related verification. Concurrent him additionally fortuity, it inflicts that border gets blurred among usefulness, fragmentariness and briefness undertaken in school class with advisability and effectiveness intercultural educational initiatives. In this context are following questions important: Are all these initiatives sufficient? Can be they effective in undertaking the efforts of including minorities and foreigners in society, the passing on the knowledge about cultural diversity and the developing of the intercultural competences? Do these educational initiatives create the possibility to respect people with another cultural background? Do authors of educational initiatives identify the intercultural problems with appropriate knowledge? Is essential equipped in suitable workshop – methodical, and tool indispensable competences – possess to create initiatives in the fields of problems of multicultural society, in fact?

Key words: intercultural education, education system in Poland, multiculturalism, intercultural programmes

The presence of the intercultural teaching and intercultural education's programmes in the reality of school and outside school is strictly connected with changes occurring in the modern world and with the quality of a state's immigration policy and its minorities policy. The accession to the European Union has raised the attractiveness of Poland not only among tourists but among all of people who want to study, work or even settle down here. On the educational ground, an answer to this new need have become numerous programmes, meetings, festivals, etc. dedicated to other cultures and problems of a specific group, which are refugees.

The more clearly appearing delight in the multiplicity of educational and educational-animation offers is deprived of a reliable substantial verification. Accompanying it additional fortuitousness, fragmentation and shortness cause effacing borders between usefulness, purposefulness and efficacy of intercultural educational actions undertaken in a school class.

Zbigniew Kwieciński admits that 'Polish educational system appears to be drifting for many years, putting together in itself reaction to the market as a dominating rule organizing the social system after 1990, reaction to educational aspirations of parents and youth, to social behaviours and different elements of inertia of the past and eclectic imitation of the Western systems'.⁴⁴ Although many areas were covered by reform programmes, education for building a culturally diverse society remains outside discourse leading in the policy-makers' circles.

The space of the intercultural education in Poland is constructed in reference to general provisions of the Act on Education System.⁴⁵ In the 13 article we can read about ensuring pupils a possibility of maintaining the national, ethnic, language and religious identity (especially in the area of one's own language and history and culture) and about the obligation of promoting different cultures by a current minister. Properly matching programme contents in handbooks and didactic materials serve realization of accepted goals.

44 Z. Kwieciński, „Strategia rozwoju edukacji”. Przeznaczenia, przeinaczenia, przemilczenia, in: T. Lewowicki, E. Ogrodzka Mazur (red.), *Z teorii i praktyki mi dzykulturowej*, Cieszyn-Warszawa, 2006, p. 19.

45 The Act of 7th September 1991. (Dz.U.1991 nr 95 poz. 425).

This provision, elaborated later in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Sport from 3d December 2002, introduces no sound fundamentals neither for creating a cohesive conception of intercultural education nor for planning systemic and programmatic solutions through featuring separate offers for minority groups and rejection the integration characteristic for the intercultural education; it perpetuates a policy of partial separation. Simultaneously, this decree is to narrow in a context of contemporary cultural changes because it applies to persons and groups historically connected with Poland and noticed in the Act on Minorities,⁴⁶ leaving on a margin needs of new migrant milieus, e.g. Vietnamese, Bulgarians, Africans. An excuse for such a way of conducting the policy is homogeneousness of the Polish society. According to a census from 2002 persons of Polish origins constitute 97.1% of the whole population. Moreover, in Poland live 153,300 Germans, 48,700 Belarusians, 31,000 Ukrainians, 12,009 Romany people, 5,000 Jews and other minor groups. Diversification of a social structure is connected not only with historic determinants but with a flow of refugees (mainly from territories of Chechnya, Georgia, Iraq and Africa) and labour immigrants, as well.⁴⁷ According to sociologists and non-governmental organisations dealing with problems of minority groups and refugees statistic data provided by public institutions are clearly underestimated which comes from fear of admitting to a nationality other than the Polish one or, generally, of coming out of hiding (this problem applies to illegal migrants) and from lack of awareness of one's roots. This causes that a need of creating social and educational solutions taking into consideration cultural pluralism in Poland still remains unnoticed.

In the context of poor, as it seems, experience of the Polish school with multicultural issues two groups of questions are crucial:

Are created offers of educational actions in schools and for schools sufficient for realisation of assumptions of the idea of a culturally

46 The Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Language of 6th January 2005 notices presence of 9 national minorities in Poland (among others Germans, Belarusians, Russians, Armenians), 4 ethnic minorities (Karaites, Romany people etc.) and 1 language minority (Kashubians). Among many conditions that minorities should fulfill, a special attention is brought to a point on inhabiting of a group on the Polish territory for a period not shorter than 100 years. This means ignoring communities who poured in after 1989, e.g. Vietnamese.

47 In 2006 36,000 legal immigrants were recorded in Poland.

diversified society and the integration idea? What is the level of effectiveness of these actions?

Do creators of educational and educational-animation solutions have proper knowledge and preparation to identification of intercultural phenomena; are they equipped with methodical-substantial techniques essential for constructing proposition oriented on problems of a multicultural society?

THE IDEA OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE POLISH SCHOOL

The issue of intercultural teaching is known and widely discussed abroad on a theoretical and practical ground for a dozen of years. Attempts to introduce aspects of intercultural teaching into the school ground, as well as into informal local, regional and national educational actions have been noticed since 1990s in Poland, too. They relate to constructing and systematisation of hitherto theoretical achievements mainly with reference to the Eastern and Southern border. Practical projects still remain outside the mainstream of the Polish school's actions, alike an honest diagnosis concerning issues of intercultural teaching and needs and peculiarity of work with the majority and minorities who are different in the terms of culture, language, nation or philosophy of life.

Hitherto research⁴⁸ of a diagnostic character, prepared, among others at the UNHCR request, due to their selectivity and fragmentariness should be recognised as insufficient. Their main goal is a description of the refugees' children's situation or presentation of one of the minority groups, e.g. Romany people or Vietnamese without taking into regard the multitude of surfaces of meetings of an intercultural character and multidimensional intercultural competences. There is still a lack of a nationwide research which would take into consideration the educational problems and needs of

48 MOJE MIASTO WARSZAWA ORIENTACJA W SFERZE SYMBOLICZNEJ KULTURY A ADAPTACJA OBCOKRAJOWCÓW DO MIASTA [My city Warsaw orientation in the symbolic sphere and adaptation of aliens to the city] This research was related to acculturation processes of foreigners in Warsaw. Its goal was testing relations between socio-cultural adaptation, sense of direction in the city and identification-symbolic adaptation to the city.

different minority groups, taking into account their peculiarity and needs in respect to building social awareness, sensitivity and openness. This research 'gap' and fragmentariness affect projecting useful and effective solutions in formal and non-formal education.

An analysis of the school reality lets us discover presence of public, private and community schools and school classes for national, ethnic and lingual minorities. They aim at enabling 'maintaining and developing a sense of national, ethnic, lingual and religious identity, as well as, one's own history and culture'⁴⁹ through studies of one's own language, history, geography and culture and artistic and facultative classes. Those schools have their own programmes and handbooks and properly prepared personnel. Their network corresponds exactly with a map of location of minority groups on the Polish territory. One should notice, however, that such an educational opportunity is open only for groups recognised by law as national, ethnic or lingual minorities (which was already mentioned) which fulfil boundary conditions referring among others to a minimal number of pupils. Minorities' schools and classes come into existence in regions of the most numerous aggregations of representatives of a given minority. In a case of wide dispersion pupils use only weekend schools (e.g. Armenian children) or attend mass schools without any possibility of using any offer giving any opportunity of maintaining the cultural identity through an education way.

Children from different groups usually find themselves in public schools devoid of support and understanding of their own culture. Those schools usually do not have any special programmes giving any opportunity of work with a culturally different child and parent and solving difficult situations. This problem is signalled first of all by schools which accept refugees' children or have a large group of foreigners. Remaining ones appear to stay indifferent in spite of interest in issues of work with a culturally different student and intercultural education declared by teachers. They treat consecutive applications of pupils of different origins with great caution or even with reluctance⁵⁰ regarding potential, though often unreal difficulties

49 The Decree of the Minister of National Education and Sports of 3d December 2002 on the matter of conditions of performing by schools and public institutions tasks enabling maintaining the sense of national, ethnic, and religious identification of pupils belonging to national and ethnic minorities, §1.

50 This reluctance concerns mainly children of Chechen and Romany origins.

accompanying work with them. Quite often they conceal or overlook their presence in statistical data sheets delivered to organs maintaining and supervising them.⁵¹

Without any doubt, teaching programmes and handbooks, which lack references to intercultural matters, deserve being criticised. This state should be blamed in a large part on authors of a programme basis, which is imprecise and incomplete. Content referring to the culturally Other are usually proposed in politics and educational paths: regional education – cultural heritage in a region and European education. Such contents are included into programmes of other obligatory classes only additionally and are realised after finishing basic issues and in consequence they have a small impact on shaping intercultural awareness. Facultative classes and every-week meetings with a class-tutor appear to stay the space for intercultural contents. A report prepared for the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre clearly indicates deficits in the area in question.⁵² Teachers asked for pointing out interesting issues of intercultural education mentioned, among others, immigrants, refugees, education for dialogue and multicultural society, multicultural societies of Europe and of the world; the leading thread was the subject of national minorities.

The programme-organisational lacks are accompanied with restricted accessibility of methodical handbooks and educational packages with didactic materials helpful by passing on multicultural knowledge, preparing children and youth for gaining intercultural competencies and skills of coexistence and collaboration with the Others. A symptomatic feature of those aids is their fragmentariness and dispersion: they refer to human rights and freedoms, a situation of refugees (mainly Chechen) and/or cultures of autochthonic national and ethnic minorities in Poland and are published in a small edition.

The briefly presented picture of the Polish school is not optimistic. But one cannot overlook numerous initiatives of an educational-animation character

51 This fact is supported by statistic data from education institutions in the city of Warsaw according to which in school in Warsaw and its suburbs study 1,682 foreign pupils, including 341 Vietnamese, 263 Ukrainians, 178 Chechens, 112 Britishers, 78 Armenians and 710 of other nationalities. That data does not correlate with the number and demographical profile of minorities groups.

52 Report from research of educational requirement from 2005.

like festivals of cultures, days of European cultures, debates, foreign pupils and teachers exchanges, facultative classes dedicated to questions of a multicultural society, etc.; they are undertaken as a cooperation of pupils, parents and teachers and, quite often, local authorities, local communities, non-governmental organisations and foreigners. Those initiatives induce to superficial closing of cultures and can be situated in the area of the so-called ‘Cuscus pedagogy.’⁵³

THE CHARACTER OF CREATED EDUCATIONAL OFFERS

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue included, first of all, subjects dealing with non-formal education to the flow of the intercultural education. **Educational projects and programmes related to multiculturalism and tolerance** or containing in their theoretical assumptions a dimension of intercultural teaching, directed to children and youth, not always recognise the particularity of cultural difference and cultural similarity. Their aim is presentation/approximation of multicultural knowledge, considerably more rarely – developing cultural sensitivity and intelligence.

The initial link of intercultural education is teaching about its forms and signs, multicultural networks in historical terms, wealth of common cultural heritage and experience of other countries. Equally important is creating educational situations posing conditions for entering direct relations with representatives of different cultural traditions. A probe made on students of the Special Pedagogy Academy with pedagogy as their major indicates that the majority of them (70%) had not had any contacts with foreigners or people of other than Polish origins.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that achieved results are not representative, they indicate the essence of the problem: lack of any direct relations of many Poles with representatives of minority groups, which, on the one hand poses a danger of strengthening stereotypes and

53 This term is present in German lingual literature. It refers to a general and superficial study of a culture by means of learning its cuisine, folk dances, etc.

54 The probe was conducted in years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 among students of specialisations social-cultural animation and local educational Policy.

prejudices, on the other hand it demands taking into consideration this specific situation in projects created.

In a situation of cultural and national differentiation and growing requirements on the labour market, including growing demand for highly qualified employees in almost every branch of economics, insufficient knowledge of cultural codes and foreign languages, lack of crucial intercultural competences and knowledge about culturally Others may cause a feeling of fear, threat and in consequence become a barrier in searching for a ground of understanding and conducting intercultural dialogue or, in extreme cases, a factor contributing to release of conflicts and open confrontations.

Projects and programmes from the area of intercultural education are created for last few years mainly from initiative and with significant participation of non-governmental organisations' activists⁵⁵ for the use of them and other social groups. Their effects are quite often studies on minorities, human rights and the idea of intercultural education, as well as classes' scenarios. The multiplicity of authors and fortuitousness and differentiated selection of content bring up the question of their educational effectiveness.

55 Hitherto in the field of intercultural education were published in Poland, among others, educational materials: 'Following footprints of national and religious minorities in the Eastern Białostoczczyzna,' brochures and drafts of classes prepared by the 'One World' Association; 'To understand others or how to teach of refugees,' lessons scenarios published by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre; 'Intercultural education. A teacher's guide,' (ed.) A. Klimowicz, published by the NITTC; 'Compass. Education on human rights in the youth work,' The Council of Europe Handbook, published by the NITTC, the council of Europe and the Association of Children and Youth 'Chance;' 'Intercultural Education – a training package – KIT' the EU Youth Programme materials; a lessons scenario 'Multicultural society for every day' Decius Villa; 'The glass bead game' book and video materials of the Center of Arts, Cultures and Nations 'Borderland' in Sejny; the handbook 'The OTHERS – are we, too; On human rights, national minorities and refugees' by the Centre of Social Activity 'Prism;' materials for conducting classes about antidiscrimination 'Without prejudice' – monitored by Konsola together with the film 'Blue-eyed,' a workshop scenario and teachers' materials to the workshop 'Lets get know each other' by I. Czerniejewska, published in an electronic form by the British Embassy.

SUBSTANTIAL-METHODICAL PREPARATION OF EDUCATORS FOR IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS FROM THE FIELD OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND CREATING EDUCATIONAL OFFERS

For some time now the number of courses offered, including ones on an academic levels, concerning the multicultural phenomenon and the one most important for pedagogic world – intercultural education- has significantly grown. These changes should be taken with great optimism but with want, as well. Courses and trainings usually do not last longer than one day and are thematically oriented on the phenomenon of cultural pluralism in the contemporary world or on approximation of knowledge on a given culture (cultures). Longer courses, built on a basis of widened content and skills, are directed to a smaller group of recipients. An example is 'The Academy of Antidiscrimination Training' by Decius Villa with a cultural sensitivity workshop functioning within its framework or 'The Multicultural Europe,' a programme by the British Council realised in cooperation with universities.⁵⁶ Those offers in regard of their financial and organisational side were directed to a few dozens of people involved in non-governmental organisations activities.⁵⁷ It brings up a question, where and how should teachers gain knowledge and skills of work in a multicultural school (especially about specific needs of culturally different children and solving though and conflict situations)? This question should be acknowledged as an exceptionally important one because of the lack of offers and opportunities of educating in the interesting area in In-Service Teacher Training Centres and in universities in a framework of postgraduate studies. This means that preparation of future teachers during academic education becomes crucial. An analysis of studies programmes of specialisations pedagogy and special pedagogy allows us to notice gaps in a form of lack of content, topics, courses whose goal would be introducing notions and phenomena related to intercultural and multicultural teaching and education to students. Richer offers may be found on the University of Białystok and the Silesian University (branch in Cieszyn). However, faculties of psychology offering

56 The programme was finished in 2007. In consecutive years its 3 editions were realised.

57 This criterion was especially highlighted in 'The Academy of Antidiscrimination Training.'

studies in a specialisation intercultural psychology may take pride in the greatest achievement.

In the preparation of future pedagogic staff, as well as in the school work of the teachers lack offers of cooperation and a certain calendar of intercultural holidays/celebrations, offers of cooperation with non-governmental institutions, competitions for pupils and teachers in the area of multi- and intercultural education organised by both national and local authorities, 'good practices' proposition in the field of intercultural education, so every interested institution could share its experience. During meetings organised in the framework the 'Warszawa różnorodna. Edukacja obcokrajowców w Warszawie' [Diverse Warsaw. Education of foreigners in Warsaw] programme in 2007 and 2008 teachers have pointed out lack of access to reliable information and publications on the issues of intercultural teaching, absence of intercultural teaching programmes and intercultural educational projects,⁵⁸ lack of opportunities of obtaining support and advice or methodical-didactic resources (handbooks, scenarios, photos, films, games, etc.).⁵⁹ Content of the handbooks, in which it is hard to find references to intercultural issues (what was mentioned in the first part of the text), is an equally ponderable problem. Opinions like these are not isolated. Similar ones are expressed by teachers participating in a diagnosis of educators' needs in the field of multi- and intercultural education.⁶⁰

It should be underlined that often a barrier for undertaking a postgraduate education training and the lack of initiative in planning and conducting activities related to intercultural education in the case of teachers is caused

58 Intercultural teaching in school conditions is present only occasionally in a framework of content of other subjects, through cooperation of a school, foundations and associations (school celebrations and participation in projects and programmes) and in the field of social, cultural and educational cooperation (e.g. via international school exchange), in the framework of the Euro-regions cooperation and the EU programmes.

59 Topics of classes occasionally referred to education for democratic society, intercultural education, tolerance for 'difference' (we and they), stereotypes, prejudices, cultural awareness, communication among people – dialogue, realization of common European educational goals and international cooperation (Programmes: Socrates, Youth in Action, Leonardo da Vinci). Issues of the competences of a teacher who can manage multicultural challenges of the new century were raised by A. Kozłowska in *Mi dzykulturowe wymiary kształcenia nauczycieli* [Intercultural dimensions of teachers' education], in M. Janukowicz, K. Redzinski (ed.), *Edukacja wobec wielokulturowo ci* [Education in the Face of a Multicultural Society], Cz stochowa, 2001, p. 235–236.

60 Research realised within the framework of a statutory research project of the Special Pedagogy Academy in the Masovian Province.

by their financial problems arising from under-financing of the Polish education system. Meanwhile, the possibility of participation in admission-free courses, trainings or partially paid postgraduate studies is for this group not only a gigantic chance for professional development but a chance for the whole society for shaping an attitude of respect and tolerance towards cultural diversity and building a cohesive civil society.

Independently of the educators' school practice, stereotypical pictures of perceiving an Other (Black, German, Russian, Jew, Gypsy, Romanian) descending from knowledge, experience, memory and mutual relations in the past, functioning in consciousness of Poles in the middle and old age, influence transfer of knowledge on Others and shaping mutual relations in the diversifying present and future. This approach to the Others established in the social mentality function both in the public and private space. Changing it is unquestionably the crucial task of contemporary education.

In the context of hitherto deliberations one should consider justified the question of the direction of theoretical and practical preparation of teachers in Poland.

In connection with little offer of university preparation of teachers in the field of intercultural education, lack of references to multicultural issues in set education models and silhouette of an absolvent and simultaneous need of 'scientific' empowerment of intercultural activities, it appears necessary to enter intercultural education into teacher ethos and pedagogic mission. Equally important is enrichment of the education offer with multi- and intercultural content and questions related to cooperation and dialoguing of a family, a school and a local milieu for building a multicultural civil society.⁶¹

Preparation of educators for work in a culturally diversified environment should have a possibly interdisciplinary character, refer to various models and patterns of intercultural pedagogy, take into consideration peculiarity of cultural and social diversification of Poland retaining a lasting perspective free from all manifestations of parochialism and reaction.

61 Meeting diversity has to be accompanied with searching for systemic solutions in a form of introducing aspects of intercultural teaching to school contents and cooperation of school and other educational milieus in the area of non-formal local, regional, national and international projects and programmes.

CONCLUSION

The minor involvement of formal education in creation of a multicultural society is accompanied by a quick development of programmes or quasi-programmes offered by non-governmental organisations.⁶² Many of them referring to their assumptions – promotion of cultural multiplicity, dialogue respect – broaden the range of activities. This non profit activity only for some time begins being noticed and accepted by the Ministry of Education, Offices of Education, school superintendents, and centres for teachers training and its effects in the form of undertaken cooperation become gradually understood and appreciated by teachers, directors and participants of intercultural enterprises. Yet, one should notice that this activity is fragmentary – it bases on numerous proposition of activity deprived of structure and not included into Polish educational system; it does not relate to crucial problems that are faced by teachers/educators, poses appearance of preparing schools for dealing with multicultural society excusing themselves from elaborating their own solutions and making them lower their guard in the area of specific needs and problems.

Meanwhile, understanding values of coexistence of different societies under one roof and involvement in creating a country of diversity is for a great challenge the Polish education. For this purpose creation of theoretical models and concepts submitted to Polish needs and experience, redefinition of goals and tasks, elaborating programmes rich in intercultural content, finally a vivid intercultural dialogue and authentic practice in the area of intercultural teaching is necessary.

Developing on the Polish ground theoretical models and planning practical solutions in the field of intercultural education is a common effort enabling construction of a space for conducting supranational dialogue and building an open, multicultural society.

⁶²The development has been additionally intensified in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

METHODS OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION READCOM

Reading Clubs for Adult Learning Communities

*Małgorzata Kołodziejczyk*⁶³

Biblioteka Publiczna w Dzielnicy Ursus m. st. Warszawy together with Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven, Escola Superior de Educação in Castelo Branco and Portalegre, Volkshochschule in Vienna, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey have developed attractive intercultural approaches within framework of the project „READCOM – Reading Clubs for Adult Learning Communities” which was nominated by European Commission as one of 20 best educational projects of Grundtvig Programme in 2007.

The main result of the project was the handbook for the mentors of READCOM Clubs with 8 modules, containing various methods of developing intercultural competence as well as intercultural awareness in local societies. Every module had been prepared by another author from partner countries, taking part in the project. The handbook can be used as one complete work or each of modules can be used separately. The titles of the chapters are as follows:

Intercultural education, Creative meetings with books, Reading strategies, Literary writing, Multicultural Education through Books and Films for Adults, Transcending Boundaries and Bridging Gaps, Analysing the texts and the books, Editing and Publishing. Using the modules in practice had been constantly verified for almost three years at the workshops organized by each partners in READCOM Clubs in their countries.

Biblioteka Publiczna im. W. J. Grabskiego w Dzielnicy Ursus m. st. Warszawy (W. J. Grabski Public Library in Ursus District of the City of Warsaw) as the coordinator together with the educational institutions from Belgium, Portugal, Austria and Turkey has developed many attractive intercultural approaches within framework of project READCOM -

⁶³ Eurocoordinator of W.J Grabski Public Library in Ursus District of the City of Warsaw

Reading Clubs for Adult Learning Communities, nominated by European Commission as a one of 20 best educational projects of Grundtvig.

The main aims of the project were to organise groups of adults being interested in Life Long Learning programme, to promote intercultural education, to develop knowledge for better recognising and comparing different identities and different cultures through the books, movies, meetings, etc. and to create intercultural methods for making adults intellectually and socially active. Other aims were to develop knowledge of culture, habits and ways of life in partner's countries and to increase intercultural awareness; to organise discussing panels for readers and diarists through international and domestic meetings of the participants and through the website as well; to develop training courses for trainers, educators, librarians, teachers, Reading Clubs' mentors and all the others who are willing to be engaged in the activities of local communities; to develop a webpage for communication among READCOM groups across Europe; to promoting the exchange of practice and information; to develop appropriate pedagogical strategies in Lifelong Learning Programme; to exchange members of Reading Clubs; to share experience connected with their activities; to publish written guides in the languages of participating countries with methodological approaches to the activities of reading Clubs and suggestions of reading lists; to compare reflections and impressions on read books, dairies and other materials.

The target groups were different in different countries:

In Poland - educators such as teachers, librarians, teacher trainers, as well as the members of the University of Third Age.

In Austria - immigrants from former Yugoslavia, Turkey, Poland, etc.

In Portugal - people interested in reading but not being fluently literacy, as well as homeless people.

In Belgium - members of the reading circle, librarians and teacher trainers.

In Turkey - people interested in reading and history, and librarians.

The age: mostly adults of 50+ but there were young adults of 20- 40 as well.

The main achievement was the handbook for the mentors of the READCOM Clubs containing 8 various methods of developing intercultural awareness and intercultural competence. The modules were:

1. "Creative meetings with books"
2. "Intercultural education"
3. "Reading strategies"
4. "Literary writing"
5. "Editing and publishing"
6. "Transcending Boundaries and Bridging Gaps"
7. "Multicultural Education through Books and Films for Adults"
8. "Analysing the texts and the films"

The handbook can be used as one complete work or each module can be used separately, depending on the needs of the participants.

The handbook for mentors of the READCOM Clubs has been prepared by each partner of the project READCOM. Every module has been prepared by different authors from those countries. A short description of each module:

Creative meetings with books - Malgorzata Kolodziejczyk / Poland

The module titled "Creative meetings with books" made the participants more open and integrated with the whole group, enabled them to share their experience through discussing their diaries. The meetings were expected to increase adults' intellectual and social activities through their conscious engagement in developing their own reading and writing needs. Friendly environment of the meetings and different games played together should have encouraged the participants to present their own diaries and to integrate them.

Intercultural education - dr Margarida Morgado / Portugal

The aim and objectives of the second module Intercultural Education were:

- to understand the implications of the concept 'intercultural education' in relation to reading clubs
- to understand own role as citizen who promotes a fairer and more human society.
- to defend equal opportunities

- to consider human diversity in ethnic, racial, social and religious terms as a source for cultural enrichment

Reading strategies - Margarida Coelho / Portugal

The third module aimed at suggesting a set of various activities directed at different types of Reading Groups. The listed suggestions presented a number of ideas to facilitators of different types of Reading Groups and tried to improve on the relevant but more common meeting structure of plot summary, review of particular interpretations, and comprehension questions.

Literary writing - Marlen Schachinger / Austria

The fourth module - Literary Writing was neither similar to creative writing nor the same as a writing-therapy. Literary Writing lay priority on the text-work correcting the style, the sound of sentences, the language-fluency etc. It focused on theoretical knowledge, too. The possible literary quality of the developing product of a creative writing-exercise or during a writing-therapy should have been left out of account as it was not intended.

Editing and publishing - Piotr Jankowski / Poland

The main aim of the module is to develop the skills of the members of the club of editing and publishing their own texts and documents. The process of preparing the publication by ourselves and the participation in all the steps of work is extremely important in integrating the participants and developing them socially and intellectually. The sessions can be compared to working in a small manufacture like a printing house. Using modern electronic devices from the Galaxy of Bill Gates we are organising the work according the model of the Galaxy of Gutenberg. It is worth paying attention to that paradox.

Transcending Boundaries and Bridging Gaps - Annemie Leyssen with team / Belgium

Crossover literature can be read both by adults and by young readers 16+ of age. The Reading Circle wanted to explore the multifaceted nature of it and the diverse ways in which writers cross the borders to address a dual

readership of young and adult readers. Crossover literature is a major, widespread trend that appears to be sharply on the rise. An increasing number of contemporary authors seek to efface all borders between youth and adult fiction with dual audience texts

Module on Multicultural Education through Books and Films for Adults - Dr Ahmet Yıldız / Burcu Gündüz / Turkey

The module consists of three sessions. While the first one is introductory and open to the implementation only once for each group, the other two sessions do not concentrate on any specific topic, but rather present methods which are applicable for the explication of any theme concerning diversity in the society. On this regard, while using these sessions, the facilitators can focus on diversity concerning ethnicity, gender, age, language, race, religion, disability, etc.

Analysing the Texts And The Films - Mustafa Tugrul Firat / Turkey

The module aims to give the readers beneficial reading skills by examining the details in the text. This module does not only concentrate on the writing materials, also it examines the audio-visual, i.e. films, materials as an instrument to create a careful and skeptical reader.

Other achievements were:

Personal life stories as an excellent basis for comparing the reflections among the participants from different countries.

Common reflections on the books shared with Austrian, Belgium, Portuguese, Turkish participants - developing their knowledge of the life, the culture, the history of other societies and countries not only by reading but also by traveling and visiting them.

Common reading books from different countries, translated into the partners' languages.

Providing the activities focused on the culture, history and geography of other countries.

Organising the international conference to exchange ideas of intercultural education and dialogue and intercultural methods of the activation of adults drawn up in the Readcom handbook

Organising seminars and workshops for teachers to show best practices.

Common, direct meetings of the participants of the READCOM project, three times every year to make intercultural dialogue possible.

Learning through visiting different places, increasing awareness about other cultures.

Making intercultural quizzes on every country in 6 languages.

Disseminating knowledge about other countries and cultures and comparing their identities.

Creating and updating the website www.readcom.info by Public Library im. W. J. Grabskiego in six languages English, Portuguese, Austrian, Flemish, Polish and Turkish

THE WAY OF WORKING

1. The most significant was the decision that each partner would develop its activities according to the needs of local society and own possibilities, but the base of the activities would be the handbook for the mentors of the READCOM Clubs containing 8 various methods of developing intercultural awareness and intercultural competence.
2. Constant development and reviewing of the content of the handbook for the mentors.
3. Using the content of the READCOM website directly during the workshops, seminars, conferences
4. Using intercultural quizzes. Each partner of the READCOM project had to prepare the set of the questions about history and culture. An exciting method tells us that it is important not only to know the answer to the

question but also who asks us, what is the sequence of the questions as well as the way we find the answer. For example the partners from Poland, Portugal, Austria and Belgium were very surprised that the first question in Turkish quiz was about women's right to vote.

5. Using various sources for the development of knowledge about cultures, history, identities, languages, countries and communities participating in the project - from the books (belles letters, encyclopedia, dictionaries, diaries), theater performances, posters to the DVD (feature film, documentary, educational films), CD ROMS, internet.

IMPORTANT PROCESSES

1. the most important process accompanying the partnership was constant integration of the partners and the participants. We all could say that we become a big international family, having very fruitful meetings almost every three month so we got to know each other very much sometimes more than the friends from our own countries. What made our integration stronger was the development of our knowledge about history, cultures and identities of the countries and the regions participating in the project.
2. the second was constant reviewing the results of the meetings and the activities describe in the minutes of each meeting as well as in the Report to National Agencies
3. Converting successfully some intercultural methods such as “creative meeting with books” originally aimed at children to the activities for adults.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Public Library in Warsaw / Poland has organised a few meetings for educators, teachers, librarians and the activists of the University of Third Age. Those who were interested in stayed with us and worked together on the programme of the workshops within READCOM club at the Library and on the partnership within project.

The programme of READCOM Club consisted of the modules of the handbook for the mentors but it was adapted to the particular needs of Polish participants so the final programme was as follows:

IT classes (basic computer skills),

Creative meetings with books (“My favourite and today choice of books”, “the book of my childhood”, “the deepest memories”),

Book therapy (how the book can integrate us,)

English language course (basic English),

Intercultural workshops with books (“The Pianist” and the Snow

Searching for the identities Polish - Turkish

Each module was led by different educators and each lasted one or two months. The meetings of the club took place from November 2005 to May 2008.

Most of the members were of the age 50-65 and more than 15 people were participating in the classes constantly.

THE IMPACT FOR THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS AND THE TARGET GROUPS

The project has developed the programme of the educational activities of each partner very much. It aroused a big interest among the librarians, educators, the members of the University of the Third Age.

We have learned and we could develop the ways of organising international meetings, workshops, conferences.

We have improved our management educational qualification as well as language and computer skills.

The library has changed as an educational institution, into a better organised, more open and much more interested in developing the activities related to exploring other cultures and identities.

The target group got to know different cultures deeply and largely. Most of the participants would have never visited the places and the countries

which they visited with the READCOM project. The project integrated them very much, made them more open, more interested in sharing their own life stories. Thank to that they better recognize their own identities as well as the identities of different societies, different cultures.

Some educators participating in the project largely use the intercultural methods in the activities of their own institution. The special results of the project are:

A. The collection of the 8 intercultural methods which were great achievements in terms of methodology and intellectual content.

B. Intercultural quizzes as exciting methods which tell us that it is important not only to know the answer to the question but also who asks us, what is the sequence of the questions and the way we find the answer.

C. The strong integration of the partners and the participants which made us a big family and will allow us to think about further partnership.

D. The way of creating intercultural dialogue:

READCOM club at Public Library in Warsaw (Poland), organised for them in November 2006 special intercultural workshops with “The snow” by Orhan Pamuk.

The aims of the workshops were to know better the culture of Turkey and to recognize better the identities of Polish and Turkish people. We have used the methods created in the READCOM project very effectively.

The participants of the workshops had read the chapters, having been indicated by our partners from Turkey. After reading they developed their knowledge about the author and the history and culture of Turkey. At the beginning of the workshops the participants were asked to itemize the positive and negative features of Polish society.

Then they went through all the questions of intercultural quiz about Turkey directly from READCOM website. Some questions were difficult to answer, some of them were astonishing. For example nobody knew, what flower was the symbol of Ottoman Empire.

We managed to enrich the answers of the quiz by finding the additional information in the internet and in the books collected in our library .

One of the chapters of the book “The Snow” was read by an actor from Warsaw theatre. Some other chosen passages were read by the participants. Using the information from the read chapters the participants were asked to itemize the positive and negative features of Turkish society, described in “The Snow”. Then we started comparing Polish and Turkish features. The results were very interesting. They have found a lot of common features.

The conclusions of the workshops were very intercultural:

the picture of Turkish society in Orhan Pamuk’s novel was very depressing and surprisingly very similar to the picture of Polish society before Poland joined the European Union.

Another interesting results of the workshops, was the map of emotions – that map of emotions helped us very much to recognize the identities of the readers and the identity of the hero of the book as well as of the author.

The others could learn from the project:

1. how to use the intercultural methods created in the READCOM project in the educational activity of their institution
2. how exiting can be exploring a world of different cultures through books, films, theater, exhibitions, writing diaries and memories by using intercultural methods.
3. that intercultural methods allow us to discover new values, “new colours” of the books , the performances, movies, work of art.
4. how to look at ourselves and how to recognize our own roots and identity.

FINAL CONCLUSION

To Public Library in Warsaw/ Poland which is a local cultural and educational institution the project has been outstanding experience just in terms of interculturality - awareness of other cultures, searching for identities and recognizing them.

The mobilities enabled us to exchange experiences and to get know better other life style, habits and history.

Another outstanding experience is creating together with other partners the collection of various methods of making adults intellectually and socially active.

All those aspects have made that our partnership achieved real European dimension.

That would be not possible without the grant given by European Commission.

INTER NETWORK

Intercultural education, teacher training and school practice

by Teresa Aguado and Beatriz Malik, UNED, coordinator institution

The consortium of the INTER Network, a Comenius Network focusing on Intercultural Education, Teacher training and school practice, is grateful to have the opportunity to report on the network in this Warsaw Conference Proceedings. This paper gives an overview of the INTER Network, its rationale, aims, objectives, working plan, products, dissemination and innovation.

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

Social change and migratory movements over the last decades have deeply and extensively modified social structure and school population all over Europe and in the countries involved in the INTER Network. However, cultural diversity is not new, it has always existed as a result of gender, social class, age, rural urban settings, ethnic minorities and very clear regional/linguistic differences. In spite of this diversity only recent immigration from other countries has elicited reflection, legislation and educational concerns on these issues, raising two important elements in education: culture as a variable and heterogeneity as a norm.

Building upon the experience of partner institutions in teaching, research and innovation, and the knowledge accumulated in previous and ongoing Comenius cooperation projects, we assume that it is essential to analyse what is happening in the educational system and within schools, and to design strategies that will deal with cultural diversity in a proper way, so that education becomes significant for all students, regardless of their background. In our opinion, schools should implement an intercultural approach in order to provide a fair and quality education for all students, as this perspective is the only one that can guarantee a real equality of oppor-

tunities in education and the achievement of goals considered desirable in education. We consider teacher training is a priority in achieving this aim. Teachers can make a difference in schools by transforming their own practices and ideas about education and cultural diversity.

The term intercultural education has been conceptualized and used mainly in the European context. It is currently preferred to the term multicultural education, as it conveys more accurately the idea of exchange, communication, and negotiation between different interacting cultural groups. The intercultural approach is viewed as a model for transforming the school and is initially defined in as:

“An educational approach based on recognition of cultural diversity, aimed at every member of the society as a whole. It posits a formal and informal intervention model, holistic, integral and encompassing all dimensions of the educational process in order to achieve a real equality of opportunities / results, to promote intercultural communication and competency, and to overcome racism in all its expressions”.

Theoretical background on this topic and findings yielded by recent research studies have led to a certain consensus in relation to defining the aims and practical implications of an intercultural approach to education within European societies. However, it is also evident that there is still a great diversity of conceptual frameworks and practices that reflect a lack of full consensus. One issue on which exists general agreement is the need to introduce this approach in the initial as well as in-service training of teachers. If we intend to promote a real European dimension in education, we can go as far as to state that if education is not intercultural in nature, it cannot be considered education.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The INTER Network is a Comenius network (2007/2010) that purports to improve quality of education and contribute to innovation in schools by assisting them in adoption/implementation of an intercultural approach, fostering the reflection on cultural diversity and providing a scenario in

which to cooperate, exchange and elaborate practical tools for initial and in-service teacher training.

The main aim is to create the INTER Network itself. Specific aims of the network will be:

To define, exemplify and promote discussion about intercultural education as an approach to deal with cultural diversity at school in terms of theoretical foundations and practical implications.

To critically assess and exchange results, ideas and innovation about European, national and local educational policies and practices developed in relation to meeting the needs of culturally diverse students and communities, specifically those so-named “intercultural” initiatives.

To cooperate in the elaboration and implementation of teacher training initiatives in the network institutions (masters and other postgraduate courses, seminars, workshops, etc.) in order to support teachers to deal with cultural diversity in a flexible way by adopting an intercultural approach in their daily practices.

To elaborate, implement, make available and disseminate tools to analyse, support, manage and improve the intercultural approach in schooling practices, in relation to curriculum and institutional dimensions, and teacher training.

The target groups are both teacher trainees as well as in-service teachers and other school staff undertaking continuing education. These target groups include different professionals and students depending on the nature of the partner institutions. Our activities and outputs respond to the following dimensions: a) Communication between participants and facilities, b) Exchanges of results, ideas and innovation, c) a view of what the future looks like and d) Resources for intercultural education.

The INTER Network intends to create a learning community where teaching and learning are conceived as an active and cooperative process. The cooperation with others is a priority to clarify concepts or procedures, and to learn from others’ expertise.

CONSORTIUM

The INTER Network is composed of 23 institutions: schools, universities and research centres form 12 different countries across Europe and our main objective is having a view of how the future looks like through the elaboration of teacher training activities in order to promote intercultural education in schooling practices. We 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.

Collectively, the partners of the INTER Network combine expertise in all aspects of teacher training and school practice: theory, methodology, resources, scientific cooperation, multi-trans disciplinary work and end-user interaction. The network contains a broad, but integrated, range of expertise and type of institutions – primary and secondary schools, private agencies, universities, research centres, associations – necessary to tackle the set of tasks to be performed. Most of the partners have extended previous experience in EU-funded research projects, specifically in Comenius programmes and networks. Eight of the 23 partners have been collaborating in a previous Comenius project coordinated by UNED: The INTER Project. A guide to implement intercultural education at schools (2002/2005), which has been an excellent opportunity to acquire expertise in most of the competencies needed to meet the INTER network requirements. INTER network has grown out of the INTER Project. The final evaluation of the project has been really good and has enhanced our shared desire to guarantee a more permanent cooperation by applying for this EU support. This has made it possible to incorporate other institutions and groups we have established contacts with because they are also involved in projects and networks about cultural diversity in school.

The INTER network includes five different types of institutions: schools (5), research centres (3), associations (3), universities (9), private agencies (3). All of them are involved in reflection and action oriented to implement intercultural approach in education, specifically in teacher training (initial an in-service) and school practice (compulsory education). One of our

main concerns when setting up the network was to put together institutions working in different levels of the educational system, as well as in formal and non-formal educational settings. We consider this is an important requirement in order to introduce an intercultural approach and meet the INTER network objectives in teacher training and school practices.

VISION AND TARGET GROUPS

We propose shifting the school education vision of diversity from a compensatory to an intercultural approach. This implies considering that Intercultural Education is aimed at all members of society, it is not special education for special people. Its objectives include offering quality education to all students and not only to guarantee access to the school system. In the same way, it entails the development of intercultural skills, which imply acquiring knowledge, attitudes and skills for life. Last, but not least, it is necessary to permanently analyse mechanisms of personal and institutional racism. INTER Network should be an opportunity for every participant to practice intercultural competencies: communication skills, cooperation and cultural awareness.

The target groups will be both teacher trainees as well as in-service teachers and other school staff undertaking continuing education, as well as other community agents involved in education. More specifically, students in the undergraduate programmes of the participating institutions being trained as teachers (or guidance workers if this is the case), students in post-graduate programmes, undertaking further training, and teachers and other workers involved in informal education initiatives and projects of the institutions. Depending on the nature of the partner institutions, in-service target groups would include headteachers, supervisors, teachers, school guidance workers, youth workers, etc., enrolled in programmes related to intercultural issues, or included in this dimension.

Expected impact of the INTER Network will be to increase teachers' intercultural awareness, building up their competence to address cultural diversity in education, and making available a useful set of resources and tools to help them adopt an intercultural perspective in their practice, promoting

as well a closer collaboration between the school and the community. In the short term, we expect to have a scenario where exchange and cooperation will be the basis for elaborating and implementing the didactic material in the diverse teacher-training courses / workshops / seminars held in the partner institutions. On the long run, we hope to have provided teachers, guidance practitioners and other school staff with meaningful experiences and resources to adopt an intercultural approach in their work, in order to positively influence educational policies and practices, including curriculum, educational materials, methods and in-service teacher training. We also expect to continue and guarantee our "post network" cooperation by periodical seminars, virtual platform or any other type of permanent association.

We think the main priority of Intercultural Education is not to give recipes but to discuss a change in the fundamental ideas which currently shape Education. We propose to challenge the restrictive ideas about school education in terms of teaching as a technical process; and we propose a reflective teaching methodology at schools. We challenge the ways school education is dealing with cultural diversity (compensatory approach) and propose an inclusive and intercultural school. We challenge teacher training which focuses on individuals and propose cooperation (among researchers, professionals outside school, teachers, public authorities, associations, agencies, universities) in planning and implementing teacher training initiatives and school resources. We challenge the idea of school effectiveness and propose to reflect about the school objectives. School effectiveness should be related to achieving the school objectives with all the students, regardless of their social, cultural and economical background.

The network is promoted as an opportunity 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 discussion

with others is a priority to clarify concepts or procedures, but real learning requires experience and practice. We propose Teacher Action Research (TAR) as a method designed to engage educational practitioners in the assessment and improvement of their own practice. It can help classroom teachers to reconsider their teaching methods or to adapt to different situations, and it can also be a community activity, helping teams of educators to address diversity issues in schools and enact changes.

ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

INTER Network activities will be developed in 36 months and are distributed in 7 work packages:

- 1 - Building and Maintaining the Network
- 2 - Internal and External Evaluation
- 3 - Dissemination of Network and outputs
- 4 - Exploitation of outputs and products Workpackage
- 5 - Report on the state of innovation related to the network topics
- 6 - Creating teacher training activities and developing a directory of school practices and resources
- 7 - From us to others: implementation of materials, resources and teacher training activities

Building and maintaining the network, allocated to WorkPackage (WP) 1, will be a permanent concern during the network life. Nevertheless, activities related to this WP have been more intensive during the first six months of the INTER Network. A learning community virtual platform has been launched, coordinated by UNED. It is the means of communication among partners, allowing exchange of documents and ideas. Launching of the virtual platform has been done from the beginning of the Network. The platform we are using is aLF (www.innova.uned.es, developed by UNED), and the partner in charge of running it is UNED. Internal and external evaluation as well as electronic newsletters will contribute to building and maintaining the INTER Network by improving communication and exchange of documents. The platform will also allow the organization of virtual conferences on key points of the tasks completion.

A group of activities refer to the state of innovation analysis on the network topics: intercultural education, teacher training, school practice and resources. WP5 is developing activities oriented to elaborate the necessary knowledge to promote teacher training and school practice from an intercultural approach. Local context information is being used in comparative analysis. Teacher training courses and postgraduate programmes will be designed and implemented in the last phase of the INTER life and further on. At present, Higher Education institutions are involved in developing the European Space. This will be an excellent opportunity to implement the INTER postgraduate initiatives oriented to teacher training accreditations.

Action research in schools will enable to identify and inspire good practices from an intercultural approach. Periodical reports will analyse the way intercultural education is exemplified in daily practices. Resources and teacher training initiatives will be implemented in the diverse partner institutions according to the specific characteristics. It will be required to establish a base-line to implement the INTER products (number of participants, type of activity, duration, etc.).

The official language of the INTER Network is English. The virtual platform used in building our learning community, as well as the INTER Network website is available in English. The main outputs will be produced in English, and other national languages will be used in specific annexed documents if pertinent. We recommend that communications (e-mail messages) between partners use a bilingual version: English and the official language of the institution involved.

INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

Contribution of INTER Network to innovation in education is three-fold. In the first place, we propose a critical evaluation of the existing theoretical models addressing issues related to cultural diversity in school. Our intercultural approach challenges the restrictive or compensatory perspective usually implemented in teacher training and school practices in the European context. We foster an intercultural perspective aimed at all students, regarding diversity and cultural exchange as a permanent and valuable hu-

man characteristic. We consider that in education, culture is our focus and diversity is our normality.

To think of cultural diversity based around categories and characteristics provides justification for the development of recruitment policies on even more ethnic bases and the pursuit of appropriateness between the origins of the staff and the public with whom they should work. This attitude, based on the highlighting of misunderstandings between individuals and groups of different origins, is clearly a form of radicalisation of differentialism, as well as of the exacerbation of a logic of membership and boundaries. From an intercultural perspective, training dwells less on culture as a determinant of behaviour than on the manner in which the individual uses cultural traits in order to speak, to express themselves verbally, bodily, socially, and personally.

Secondly, we focus on developing tools for making able teachers and other professional to implement intercultural education in their practice. The envisaged outputs are elaborated and evaluated within a European context, and will contribute to introduce an intercultural and European dimension in teacher-training (courses, seminars, postgraduate studies) and school practice (guidelines, didactical resources, action-research reports).

The challenge is to break out of the mould of explanations and enter into a perfect mastery of change. This cannot be appreciated based on individual and group characteristics, but on the basis of issues centred around contacts, interactions, acculturations, malfunctioning, and associated issues in addition to a renewed and permanent obligation for interpretation. This is the main innovative contribution of the INTER Network: to give an opportunity to the group for practising intercultural education. Mostly, discourse about intercultural education is rhetoric.

In the third place, in the INTER Network, along with conventional methodologies, we will actively use ICT based methodologies such as virtual environments and e-learning, which will facilitate the discussion, exchange of ideas, and dissemination within the network and in the wider community. Innovation will be promoted in terms of making possible interaction between institutions working in different levels of the school system (schools, universities, agencies, local authorities, research centres). The network structure will permit the participants to multiply their learning opportuni-

ties with others, to develop communicative skills, to access and exchange information in diverse scenarios (virtual, face-to-face), to share experiences and practices by being involved in action-research, to reflect about our common questions concerning diversity in education.

INTER Network is oriented to provide a number of initial and in-service teachers an opportunity to review and challenge their ideas about cultural diversity in education by adopting an intercultural education as a theoretical and practical approach. Most of the teachers we have been cooperating with during a former Comenius project (INTER Project) told us that they feel isolated and unable to make changes at school. In this sense, the network structure allows to foster innovation because reinforce the links between partners and mutual support to make the changes necessary to implement an intercultural education by introducing this approach in teacher training initiatives and in the daily school practice.

OUTPUTS

Teacher training activities (ODL and face to face):

- Seminars, courses, research groups in the schools and a post-graduate master on intercultural education in order to promote good practices in intercultural education.

Web-based services:

- Website, community learning platform and electronic newsletter.

Annual Reports and studies on the main topics of the INTER Network:

- Intercultural education, teacher training initiatives and practices developed at schools.

- Dissemination of guides, directory of resources, multimedia tools, etc. for teacher training.

DISSEMINATION

Dissemination of products/results has been coordinated and established by all partners. Website: INTER Network - Intercultural Education. Teacher training and school practice.

Newsletter: Six electronic Newsletters will be delivered; they will have different sections that will inform about the Network progress, activities, initiatives,...as well as other contributions from outside the Network.

Resources / Good Practices: Directory of resources and good practices in intercultural education - A directory of school practices and resources will be produced as a result of the search, elaboration and evaluation of diverse materials and good practices in intercultural education. All partners will contribute to this directory, available at the website.

WORK MEETINGS

MADRID, Spain | 25 - 26 February 2008

The Steering Committee first meeting took place in the UNED. Each coordinator of the 7 Workpackages presented their ideas about the goals to be met by each group. The report and evaluation of the meeting is available at: www.innova.uned.es

WARSAW, Poland | 30 June - 3 July 2008

1st Open Conference of the INTER Network. The overall conference is being organized by INTER Network member 'The International Association for Intercultural Education', together with the 'Warsaw School of Social Psychology'. The title is: "Theory & Practice in Intercultural Education". The conference strands are:

Intercultural Education and SocialChange

Interdisciplinary background of Intercultural Education

Special issues in Intercultural Education

Practice of Intercultural Education

INTER Network: Intercultural Education: teacher training and school practice.

For more information, please visit the conference site:
<http://www.uczelnia.swps.edu.pl/ogolny/iaie/>

PARTNERS

SPAIN

Universidad Nacional De Educación a Distancia

Contact person: Teresa Aguado | maguado@edu.uned.es

Universidad Complutense de Madrid - UCM

Contact person: Caridad Hernández | cariher@edu.ucm.es

Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas

Contact person: Margarita Del Olmo

Ministerio de Educación. Centro de Investigación y Documentación Educativa

Contact person: Montserrat Grañeras

Colegio de Educación Infantil Rosa Chacel

Contact person: Claudia Suárez | alonsosuarez25@yahoo.es

Colegio Público Miguel de Cervantes

Contact person: Encarnación Rodríguez

Fundación Hogar del Empleado

Contact person: María Rosario Díaz

ITALY

Centro di Studi Interculturali – Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione- Università degli Studi de Verona

Contact person: Agostino Portera

Associazione Formazione e Ricerca Internazionale - AFORII

Contact person: Claudia Corselli

Istituto Comprensivo Statale 17 Montorio (Verona)

Contact person: Diego Zanetti

LATVIA

Latvijas Universitate

Contact person: Vineta Porina

MALTA

Multi Media House

Contact person: Antoine Gambin | multimediahouse@gmail.com

FRANCE

Université de la Reunion – Faculté des lettres et des Sciences Humaines - ORACLE

Contact person: Driss Alaoui

NETHERLANDS

International Association for Intercultural Education

Contact person: Barry Van Driel

AUSTRIA

Navreme Knowledge Development

Contact person: Bernd Baumgartl | baumgartl@navreme.net

Contact person: Luisa Lobo | lobo@navreme.net

POLAND

ECORYS Research and Consulting

Contact person: Wojciech Kreft

PORTUGAL

Universidade do Porto

Contact person: Maria Lopes Pinto | mariapinto@reit.up.pt

Escola Superior de Educação Paula Frassinetti

Contact person: Miguel Prata | mprata@esepf.pt

Colégio do Sardão

Contact person: Paulo Silva | teacherpaulosilva@gmail.com

SLOVENIA

Education Research Institute

Contact person: Tatjana Vonta | step.si@siol.net

UNITED KINGDOM

Nottingham Trent University

Contact person: Alan Browne

NORWAY

Universitetet i Oslo

Contact person: Jorun Buli Holmberg | ()

Spikkestad School

Contact person: Anne Britt Strupstad | anne-britt.strupstad@royken.kommune.no (NORWAY)

Welcome to our web page and feel free to use our materials and to share with us your ideas and knowledge about the intercultural challenge.

<http://internetwork.up.pt>

III. THE PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN PORTUGUESE FL: CULTURALLY RELEVANT CONTENT FOR CONVERSATION CLASSES

Poster session

Ana Carolina Walczuk Beltrão ⁶⁴

"Intercultural Communication" has been referred to as the encounter and interaction between people of different cultures. In the context of FL learning, therefore, it seems natural to withdraw elements from this multidisciplinary field to help learners communicate with representatives of other cultures in the languages they learn. Nowadays, the achievement of what Byram (1997) calls the "intercultural communicative competence" in formal FL education is of major relevance, as much as the linguistic competence in itself – which demand from FL teachers the adoption of culturally relevant content in their syllabus.

With the aim of generating culturally relevant content to be adopted by Portuguese teachers at the Institute of Iberian and Ibero-american Studies at Warsaw University, the author has translated and adapted Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange's book *Mirrors and Windows: an intercultural communication textbook* (2003) to be used in conversation classes. This material was adopted during the whole academic year of 2007/2008 among 3rd year undergraduate students, Portuguese major, who additionally had the task of generating their own culturally relevant materials for the classes.

Here, the author aims at presenting the outcomes of this challenge – to approach intercultural communication during Portuguese FL classes – taking under consideration students' opinions, and suggests that the generation and adoption of culturally relevant content should be especially positive in FL conversation classes.

Key-words: Intercultural communication; foreign language/formal instruction; foreign language/portuguese; foreign language/cultural content; foreign language/conversation.

⁶⁴The Institute of Iberian and Ibero-american Studies, Warsaw University, Poland abeltrao@uw.edu.pl;
abeltrao@wp.pl

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE FL CLASSROOM AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT CONTENT

The term "intercultural communication" refers to contact and interaction between members of diverse cultures – what, actually, has taken place since the beginnings of civilization (Samovar & Porter, 2004, p. 3). Hence, the novelty found in intercultural communication is not in the communication process itself, but in the systematic observation and study of it, from the second half of the 20th century. Hoopes and Pusch (1979, as cited in Damen, 1987, p. 20) wrote: "Nothing about intercultural or multicultural human relations is really new, but by putting certain ideas about communication, culture, society, education and human psychology together, a different way of looking at and learning about interaction among cultures has emerged."

Many factors have contributed to intercultural communication to become a relevant subject in the realm of Social Sciences. Firstly, the great wars of the last century were responsible for intensifying the contact between cultures, and, later, for the establishment of a number of international institutions. The world then witnessed the rapid development of technologies (telecommunication and transports), population growth, and changes toward the globalization of economy. Secondly, the 1960s inaugurated the stream of "multiculturalism", and from that time on the idea of cultural multiplicity started to be promoted around the world, especially in countries where immigration rates were high. And, like Sowell (1994) reminded, cultural differences "play a major role in the events of our times" (p.1). As the contact between cultures became more and more frequent, the concept of intercultural communication increasingly conquered academic attention.

D. Hoopes (1979, as cited in Damen, 1987, p. 24) saw the emergence of intercultural communication as an academic discipline in 1959, when E. T. Hall published his book *The silent language*, "the first comprehensive analysis of the relationship between communication and culture". Since then, intercultural communication as an object of study has maintained an eclectic nature, drawing different concepts and perspectives from other fields (anthropology, psychology, linguistics, communication, sociology).

The first textbook dedicated to the subject was published in 1975: *An introduction to intercultural communication*, by J. C. Condon and F. Yousef (Damen, 1987, p. 26).

The multiplicity of cultures, although desirable and highly praised nowadays, represents an obstacle for communication (Samovar & Porter, 2004, p.2). In most, it is common that the contact and exchange of messages between members of different cultures bring about misunderstandings – both verbal and nonverbal. Ethnocentrism may interfere in a very harmful way with people’s attitudes when in contact with other cultures, hindering effective communication and eventually leading to various forms of negative stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or even racism. According to the ethnocentric view, everything that differs from one’s own culture is considered “odd”, “wrong” or “reprehensible” – therefore, “interaction seems to be doomed almost from the start” (Gallois & Callan, 1997, p. 2).

The interplay of varied cultural patterns, beliefs, and values each communicator brings to the intercultural communicative process is to be reckoned with in every act of communication; the greater the variation in these patterns, the stronger the divisive force of these variables and the more likely the instances of miscommunication. (Damen, 1987, p. 24)

For being systematic, cultural patterns may be studied. However, one should not rely on the study of cultural patterns as static, discrete knowledge of specific cultures. First, the values which are seen as dominant in a social group do not necessarily represent the values of every individual; then, cultural patterns are very complex, and do not operate in isolation; also, cultural patterns may at times be contradictory and subject to changes inside social groups; and, lastly, societies may be heterogeneous, which renders it difficult to identify and describe cultural patterns exactly (Samovar & Porter, 2004, pp. 50-51). As Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002, p. 11) wrote, “(...) it is not possible to acquire or to anticipate all the knowledge one might need in interacting with people of other cultures”.

Intercultural communication advocates, therefore, that more useful than the learning of specific cultural patterns is the perception of cultural uni-

versals – Damen (1987, p. 88) recalled that cultural patterns in every society are generated out of universal human needs –, and the development of intercultural skills that may help people communicate efficiently. One of those skills consists in promoting an “intercultural consciousness”, which, according to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993, as cited in Camilleri, 2002, p. 12), is composed of three factors: the consciousness that one’s own behavior is culturally driven, the consciousness that other people’s behavior is also culturally driven, and the ability to expose, in cultural terms, one’s own point of view. Communicative skills, on the other hand, aim at improving one’s attitude in cross-cultural encounters, one’s interest in exploring cultural differences through communication, and the ability to perceive and eventually disentangle misunderstandings that originate from those cultural differences (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, pp. 12-13, 32). Cognitive skills, yet, are necessary so that one may “learn how to learn” about cultural differences and continuously adapt oneself to those differences – for example, learning to identify, analyze, and compare cultural patterns (Lázár 2003, p. 41; Smith, Paige, & Steglitz, 2003, p. 113). Moreover, some authors have mentioned the importance of displaying positive orientations toward cultural differences, like empathy and motivation, so that the communicative processes across cultures be effective (Samovar & Porter, 2004, pp. 303, 315). Having developed at least most of these skills, then, a person reaches what Byram (1997) called “intercultural communicative competence” – a term that added to Hymes’ concept of communicative competence the ability to communicate appropriately also across cultures.

In formal FL education, especially, methodologists and teachers have been turning to intercultural communication to help FL learners achieve intercultural communicative competence through content that is culturally relevant⁶⁵: materials that are culturally diverse and emphasize multiculturalism through research and other projects; that promote critical reflection about

65 The term “culturally relevant content” is usually applied to subjects other than foreign languages in formal education taking place in multicultural contexts. In the case of the FL classroom, the use of “culturally relevant” material is especially important to relate students’ own language and culture to the learning of another language, to future interactions in that language, and to the development of students’ intercultural communicative competence in general. In this study, it is important to have in mind that the context of formal FL education is multicultural as well: Polish students who more often go abroad to study and/or work are taught by Portuguese, Brazilian, and Polish teachers of Portuguese FL at Warsaw University.

the culture of students, teachers, and other people with whom students may interact; that respect students' and teachers' own culture and personal preferences and/or styles as to what concerns the teaching/learning process; that refer to people's real life situations or personal experiences; and, above all, content that should stimulate the active participation of students in the learning process. As Menchaca (2001, after Banks, 1994, Barba, 1995) wrote, culturally relevant education provides that "(...) students can connect new knowledge to their own experiences, thus empowering them to build on their personal background knowledge."

TRANSLATING AND ADAPTING MIRRORS AND WINDOWS FOR PORTUGUESE FL CONVERSATION CLASSES

The author, then, looked forward to applying the precepts of intercultural communication to her own Portuguese FL classes at the Institute of Iberian and Ibero-american Studies at Warsaw University, and was faced with the challenge to include culturally relevant content in the syllabus of practical language classes. With that aim in mind, and hoping that other Portuguese FL teachers would adopt culturally relevant content in their classes, the author set out to translate and adapt the content of Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange's book *Mirrors and Windows: an intercultural communication textbook* (2003) to be used in Portuguese FL conversation classes.

Conversation classes⁶⁶ seemed to be the most appropriate moment to make use of the translated and adapted material. Generally, intercultural communication is explored in FL classes by means of techniques such as comparisons, cultural assimilators, culture capsules, role plays, and the use of print or visual/audiovisual media – all of which involve oral communication practice in the classroom in the form of discussions and comments, for instance. The material translated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows*,

66 Conversation classes aim at: promoting oral communication practice and developing speaking skills by means of discussions, role plays, and other techniques; having students express themselves freely, but effectively, towards an objective; having students achieve fluency in the foreign language; developing students' logical thought and debating skills. And, according to Ur (1981), the development of reading and writing skills are part of discussions, too.

by its turn, provided very interesting and meaningful topics to be discussed in the classroom.

Mirrors and Windows is a collection of: stories of intercultural encounters and information about different cultures; questions that lead readers to think of their own culture; examples of how languages are influenced by cultural aspects; and tasks that arouse readers' curiosity regarding other cultures. It is composed of seven independent units, each of them bringing a different major topic: *Rock around the clock* (time); *You are what you eat?* (eating habits); *Conversation and... silence* (conversation patterns); *Men and women, girls and boys – Gendered identities*; *All you need is love (?)* (relationships); *Up in the morning and off to school...* (formal education); and *Bringing up baby* (children). Each unit is organized in four segments: introduction, "reflecting on your own culture", "discovering other cultures", and "language work".

The book stimulates, above all, discussions over cultural aspects in terms of everyday life, habits, world views, beliefs, and values. It is directed at language teachers and intercultural communication trainers, but may be used "by almost everyone" (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange 2003: 9). The aims of the book, according to the authors, are to lead readers to: reflect on how values, behavior and world views are culturally determined;

- develop the ability to grasp intercultural differences through the observation of other people's values, behavior, and world views;
- observe what in the use of languages is culturally influenced;
- practice observation and interpretation skills, as well as critical thinking;
- develop and adopt multiple points of view;
- "mediate" conflicts that may result from cultural differences;
- develop empathy, respect, and positive attitudes towards cultural differences.

The idea to explore intercultural communication in Portuguese FL classes was to be put into practice among 3rd year Polish students of the Portuguese/major undergraduate course at the Institute of Iberian and Ibero-american

Institute at Warsaw University. In the academic year of 2007/2008, it was a group of 11 students. The classes, on the other hand, would take place at a university classroom once a week for 1,5 hour, during two academic semesters. To translate to Portuguese and adapt the content of *Mirrors and Windows* to be used in Portuguese FL conversation classes, such conditions were taken under consideration, as well as the curriculum requirements.

The work of adapting the book began with the selection of original points that would be part of the Portuguese material and then translated; then, new information was added, more specifically anecdotes and facts on Portuguese-speaking countries and also on Poland, drawing from the author's own experiences. Finally, everything was reorganized into new segments: introduction, "reflecting on Poland and Polish people", "discovering other cultures", "comparing Poland and Portuguese-speaking countries and culture", and "language issues". Besides, additional materials have been selected: texts extracted from the media, scientific texts, literary texts, audiovisual material such as films and TV programs. Samples of the original English version of *Mirrors and Windows* and the translated and adapted material to Portuguese FL conversation classes are given in the appendix.

Later, as classes progressed, students were invited at all times to research and contribute with their personal experiences and/or knowledge acquired in their own intercultural encounters. Special attention was given to clarification, exemplification, and openness during discussions.

Also, in the second semester, having gone through almost all 7 units of the translated and adapted material from *Mirrors and Windows*, students were invited themselves to choose a topic they would like to discuss in class and prepare their own culturally relevant materials to bring to class. They were divided into 2 groups of 4 persons and 1 group of 3, and each group had to choose a topic and think of intercultural issues to be approached within that topic. Students, then, had 4 weeks to prepare their materials following the model given by the translated and adapted material from *Mirrors and Windows*, after which every group disposed of one whole class (1,5 hour) to present their works and share their reflections with the rest of their classmates. The topics chosen were: *Drugs and other sources of addiction; Health: body and mind; Rituals: birth, marriage, and death.*

STUDENTS' OPINIONS

What were students' opinions on the use of intercultural communication material in Portuguese FL classes? With this question in mind, the author designed a quantitative-qualitative questionnaire (in Portuguese) that aimed at finding out, in general terms: 1) the relevance attributed to the development of intercultural communicative competence among Polish students; 2) students' opinions on the approach to intercultural communication within Portuguese FL classes and their own experience of generating materials for the classes; 3) students' opinions on the material translated and adapted to Portuguese FL classes from the book *Mirrors and Windows: an intercultural communication textbook* (Huber-Kriegler, Lázár & Strange, 2003), regarding its content and treatment; 4) students' opinions on the goals achieved during Portuguese FL classes by the adoption of such material. The questionnaire has been distributed to the whole class by email right after the end of the academic year, and all 11 students have returned their answers.

All students have claimed that it is very important for Polish students in general (of any course) to develop communicative abilities to interact in culturally diverse contexts, and that such intercultural communicative competence becomes especially necessary in the case of Philology students.

The major reasons given for that were as it follows:

The European Union brings new prospects, and Poles need to integrate Greater possibilities (or even necessity) to communicate with people from other countries (professionally or not), living in a "global village"

Poles more frequently go abroad on tourism or for purposes of study and/or work

Also foreigners more frequently arrive in Poland on tourism or for purposes of study and/or work

Intercultural communicative competence would get Poles to reflect on their own culture

Poles need to avoid cultural shocks and misunderstandings, better understand other points of view that are culturally determined

It is impossible to learn a foreign language without developing such intercultural communicative abilities and getting to know the culture behind the language

Such abilities are indispensable for students who aim at working in foreign companies or as translators/interpreters

Moreover, 9 students have declared that the intercultural communication approach within Portuguese FL classes was a “good”/“very good” or an “interesting” idea/experience for them (the remaining two students did not write anything on that). Here are the transcriptions of some of their opinions:

“[The classes] (...) were very lively – lots of opportunities to interact.”

“We spoke a lot and discussions were captivating.”

“(...) the classes helped me a lot to learn the language, especially the spoken language. (...) more interesting than the ‘traditional’ classes.”

“I liked very much the fact that we could always recall our own experiences and memories, and confront our intuitions regarding the attitudes of Portuguese-speaking people with the knowledge of an actual native speaker (the teacher).”

“The classes we have prepared allowed us to participate actively (...)”

“[It was important to] (...) observe how language and culture are mutually influenced.”

THE MATERIAL USED DID COVER	STUDENTS WHO AGREED
Social interaction (different levels of formality, communication with members of diverse groups, ...)	11
Social relations and life cycles (family, school, work, ...)	10
National identities and stereotypes (what is 'typical', national and/or regional stereotypes, ...)	10
Beliefs and behavior patterns (moral values, religious beliefs; daily routines, ...)	8
Social identity and social groups (social classes, regional identities, ethnic minorities, ...)	7

Table 1: Content

THE MATERIAL USED	STUDENTS WHO AGREED
Displays cultural patterns, but stresses that each individual is unique.	11
Elevates the cultural consciousness of readers, promoting the relativization of stereotypes.	9
Is free from ideological tendencies (or question such tendencies).	9
Displays a realistic view of the topics to be discussed.	8
Presents phenomena in context, and not as isolated facts.	7
Offers updated and precise information.	5

Table 2: Treatment

Regarding the content of the material translated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows*, students were asked to agree or not whether it covered certain issues⁶⁷. The results are displayed in table 1.

Regarding the treatment given to cultural issues in the material translated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows*, students were asked to agree or not with some statements⁶⁸. The results are as it follows in table 2.

Next, students declared that they had based their choices of topics for group work (to prepare their own materials) on personal experiences they were going through at that moment: two of them were experiencing the planning of their weddings, and another friend who joined their group had already got married not long before; some students showed concern as to what regards the consumption of cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs by youngsters as forms of addiction; and yet another group was concerned with issues of health in general, and how to adopt healthy habits. Out of all students, 10 had enjoyed the activity of preparing their own materials for the classes (one student claimed to have had difficulties in finding sources, but enjoyed group work). Besides, all 11 students wrote they liked the material trans-

67 Based on Byram (1993, as cited in Cortazzi & Jin 2004: 203).

68 Based on Huhn (1978, as cited in Cortazzi & Jin 2004:203).

lated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows*. Students have pointed out as the major aims achieved during classes:

The acquisition of knowledge on different cultures and motivation to continue to explore cultural issues

Seeing the culture of other people not only as “curiosity”, but real life

Developing the perception not only of differences among cultures, but also similarities, making oneself realize how universal some cultural patterns are

Fighting stereotypes and developing more tolerance and respect toward other cultures, admitting that there are no cultures better than others

The recognition that understanding other cultures takes some time, personal involvement, and the understanding of one’s own culture

The recognition that the learning of a foreign language essentially involves culture, too

Openness to others and to new experiences

Getting to know classmates’ opinions and experiences, besides having a chance to integrate in the classroom

Generating an appropriate environment and motivation to talk in class (“Talk, talk, and once again talk!”), helping students develop oral communication skills

Discussing at times controversial topics without getting into conflict

Improving the perception of linguistic differences between the Portuguese and the Brazilian ways of speaking the language

CONCLUSIONS

From students’ answers to the questionnaire, it stems that the use of the material translated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows* during Portuguese FL classes was enjoyable and beneficial for Portuguese FL students in many ways: it was their first contact with intercultural communication in

class and they enjoyed it; they also enjoyed preparing and presenting their own materials for the classes, which allowed them to research and discuss topics of their choice autonomously; and, above all, they had the chance to talk freely on culturally relevant issues that aroused their interest, sharing personal experiences in a relaxed environment, which, according to their claims, ultimately led to an improvement in communicative competence and debating skills. In this sense, the material was especially useful for conversation classes because it stimulated students to take part in interesting and purposeful discussions. Also, both discussions and group work allowed students to strengthen their ties as classmates.

For all that, the author proposes that intercultural communication may (or even should) be introduced in every FL syllabus as a means to achieve students’ communicative competence and intercultural consciousness. This way, FL classes should generate not only “FL speakers”, but “cultural mediators” through content that is culturally relevant. Moreover, culturally relevant content may be particularly needed in the case of Polish students of foreign languages, since in recent years Poland has undergone political, economical, and social shifts accompanied by greater international exchange of information and migratory waves.

Definitely, intercultural communication and the material translated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows* to be used in Portuguese FL proved to be very much useful for conversation classes. However, this material must continuously be improved: first, students at times did not agree with statements contained in it, which may have been reflected by not all agreeing it presented “updated and precise information”; second, some students in their final remarks said they still lacked some controlled practice during conversation classes – for example, dealing with the vocabulary needed for discussions within each topic.

Therefore, the author realizes the need to further improve the existing material, but not only that. Very much needed is to further promote research and practice regarding the application of intercultural communication in FL classes. The development of culturally relevant content for Portuguese FL conversation classes is, of course, part of a much larger picture that focus on intercultural communicative competence in formal FL education.

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APPENDIX

Samples of the original English version of Mirrors and Windows and the translated and adapted material to Portuguese FL conversation classes

The original English version of *Mirrors and Windows*:

Book unit 1: *Rock around the clock* | Introduction:

It is interesting how, in English, the words associated with **time** are very much the same as the words associated with **money**. That is, you can "spend", "waste", "invest", "save", etc., both of them. English even has a proverb: "Time is money". (*Paragraph 1*)

In most English-speaking cultures, the idea of wasting time is seen as very regrettable. It is not that there is any harm in simply doing nothing, but it is, for example, regarded as unacceptable to make others waste time by being late. This applies to public transport timetables, and all appointments in business, health care, education and so on. Here, you are expected to keep appointments "to the minute". However, there are cultures where it is acceptable to keep appointments to the nearest hour or even day. There is no shame involved in being a couple of hours late. (*Paragraph 2*)

Time and delay are clearly used in many cultures to demonstrate power and authority. If you keep people waiting, you demonstrate that you have power over them. It becomes almost obligatory and expected. On the other hand, in much of Europe, it is considered bad manners. (*Paragraph 3*)

Language work:

1. Exact times are a source of certainty and reliability for a lot of people. As we have seen above, cultures vary widely in their approach to these phenomena. In native-speaker English, "vague language" usually plays a very important role, mainly in informal language. Look at these phrases: "Hang on a minute." / "Give me a couple of minutes." The word "minute" does not mean 60 seconds on your watch. Does vague language like this correlate with a relaxed attitude to punctuality?
2. Do your language and others you know have different greetings for different times of the day? Do they differ in their sub-divisions, for example when does morning end? Can you wish people a "happy month, week, day..."? You can in Greek.
3. The fable of the tortoise and the hare is quite well known in Europe, and is reflected in a number of sayings: "Chi va piano va lontano." (Italian: "He who goes slowly, goes far.") / "Lassan járj, tovább érsz." (Hungarian: "Go slowly and you'll get further.") / "Eile mit Weile." (German: "Don't rush.") / "Haste makes waste." / "More haste, less speed."

Also consider some other time-related proverbs where the message is a bit different, but again the point is that you have to use your time well: "The early bird catches the worm." / "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." (...)

The corresponding unit in the Portuguese version translated and adapted from *Mirrors and Windows*:

Unidade 1: Tempo | Introdução:

Para a maioria dos falantes nativos de inglês, a idéia de perder tempo é vista como algo bastante indesejável. Não há mal algum em não fazer nada, mas não se pode aceitar, por exemplo, que os outros percam tempo esperando por alguém que se atrasa. Isto também se aplica ao sistema de transporte público, aos encontros de negócios, aos serviços médicos, às instituições de ensino etc. Deve-se sempre estar “à hora”. No entanto, há culturas em que os compromissos são marcados para acontecer não a uma hora exata, e sim dentro de um período, que pode chegar mesmo a um dia. *(Corresponds to par. 2 in the original introd.)*

O que mais podemos falar sobre o tempo? Bem, em algumas culturas chegar atrasado pode ser claramente uma demonstração de poder e autoridade. Se você deixa as pessoas esperando, você mostra que tem poder sobre elas. Este tipo de atraso torna-se quase uma obrigação, e já é esperado pelos outros. Por outro lado, este tipo de comportamento em geral é considerado de má educação na Europa. *(Corresponds to par. 3 in the original introd.)*

O que você tem a dizer sobre os comentário acima? O que tem a dizer sobre a percepção e o uso do tempo em outras culturas? *(Questions that have been added)*

Algumas questões lingüísticas:

a) Existem em sua língua diferentes formas de cumprimentar, de acordo com o período do dia? Caso afirmativo, a que horas começa cada período do dia para você? *(Adapted from 2)*

b) Em português fala-se coisas como “dê-me um minuto” ou “só um minutinho” quando se quer que alguém espere por você. Obviamente, a palavra “minuto” não corresponde, aqui, a 60 segundos... Em sua opinião, esta forma vaga de usar a língua reflete uma atitude relaxada frente à pontualidade? *(Adapted from 1)*

c) É interessante ver que, na língua inglesa, palavras associadas ao tempo são muitas vezes associadas também ao dinheiro – “spend money”, “waste”, “invest”, “save” etc. Há mesmo um provérbio que diz “Time is money”. Será que outras línguas também fazem esta associação entre tempo e dinheiro? *(Corresponds to par. 1 of the original introduction)*

d) “Devagar se vai longe” e “Deus ajuda a quem cedo madruga” são provérbios que fazem referência ao tempo. Você conhece outros provérbios e/ou ditados populares que também façam referência ao tempo (em português ou outras línguas, mas, neste caso, explicando o que significam em português)? *(Adapted from 3) (...)*

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND STEREOTYPE CHANGE AMONG LEARNERS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Dorota Domalewska, Warsaw University, Institute of English Studies

This article addresses the issue of developing intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom which is a significant goal of Foreign Language Teaching; lessons enriched with cultural component help to promote tolerance as well as openness to other people and their culture, motivate to learning and counteract stereotyping. After discussing a series of theoretical issues connected with incorporating cultural component into the syllabus, the article investigates the problem of the stereotyping process that is usually activated automatically when encountering an individual of a different social and cultural identity. Finally, the article reviews various techniques that may help teachers modify students' prejudice and stereotypes.

Key words: intercultural competence, Cultural Studies, Foreign Language Teaching, stereotypes, stereotype change

INTRODUCTION

Social and economic changes influence education; globalisation and cultural pluralism have created a new context and challenge for formal instruction. Educational authorities in a number of countries perceive the role of school in increasing learners' tolerance, mutual understanding, and cultural awareness, as well as accepting cultural differences and developing the ability to bridge these differences. That is why developing learners' intercultural competence has become one of the main goals of modern schools. It is important to remember that, unlike communicative competence, the intercultural one is not innate; it needs to be learned. Hence, the role of school in developing intercultural competence cannot be overestimated, especially it is the foreign language classroom where students are prepared

to interact appropriately with people of various nationalities in the given social and cultural situation. The first part of the article presents theoretical foundations of transforming cultural competence into intercultural one (Byram 1992, 178), which takes place through Cultural Studies, one of the components of Foreign Language Teaching. In the second part of the article the emphasis is placed on the role of increasing learners' intercultural competence in helping students evade stereotyping; hence, a thorough examination of the methods allowing stereotype change has been presented.

CULTURAL STUDIES IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Culture and education merge; they infiltrate the same areas of human life, help to get to know not only artistic work but also the world, other people, relations with them as well as oneself. These are the goals of Cultural Studies, one of the components of Foreign Language Teaching, an integral part of the teaching programme vital for preparing students to interact appropriately with members of the target and other countries in the given social and cultural situation. The term includes both a cognitive, i.e. information, knowledge, as well as affective factor, i.e. cultural beliefs, values as well as positive and open attitude towards the target culture (Byram 1992, 18). In fact, Cultural Studies draws from various disciplines. First, ethnography has been crucial in the development of Cultural Studies since it describes and interprets social and cultural phenomena and the way they operate within the semantic system of the given culture. Anthropology has contributed to Cultural Studies in that it analyses all the components of culture and cultural relativism as well as cross-cultural comparisons. Psycholinguistics and psychosociology help to understand what happens when language is acquired and with it the meaning of words and culture of a different language. Furthermore, researchers (e.g. Bourdieu 1991; Vygotsky 1986) point out that language is socially constructed; it conveys not only linguistic but also cultural meanings and defines one's social identity. Cultural Studies is also a part of the field of sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis as it is interested in the effect of context on the interpretation of one's meaning and cultural norms, social status and expectations on the way lan-

guage is used whereas sociology is practical as it focuses on social interaction and its consequences. Zarate et al. (2004) provides a detailed account of pluridisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies.

CONTENT OF CULTURAL STUDIES

It is essential to delineate the scope of Cultural Studies within the framework of Foreign Language Teaching. The definition of the cultural content of foreign language instruction helps to understand culture as well as choose and evaluate teaching materials. Three elements of culture can be distinguished which do not form separate areas but rather merge with one another: artefacts (i.e. objects and products), sociofacts (i.e. behaviour, customs, traditions) and mentifacts (i.e. cognitive and affective factors influencing the model of thinking and perception of the world, e.g. beliefs, values, attitudes). In Foreign Language Teaching teachers usually focus on presenting artefacts of the target culture, intellectual and creative products, or sociofacts, leaving aside mentifacts. Teachers may also adopt the approach of perceiving culture as a set of norms governing speakers' behaviour while communicating appropriately in the target country or they tend to present cultural phenomena devoid of their context while Cultural Studies requires presenting the scope of these phenomena and the extent to which they are accepted in the target culture (Byram 1992, 115). Moreover, Cultural Studies should be involved in developing mutual understanding, positive attitudes, reducing the concept of otherness as well as recognizing and accepting norms, values and standpoints in both their source and target cultures.

A model of Cultural Studies has been proposed by various researchers (e.g. Budzko 2005, 22-23; Maley in Kurtchenia 2005, 102; Moran 2001 in Skopiniskaja 2003, 40) who distinguish the following components:

- cultural information, i.e. facts about products, practices and perspectives of the target culture as well as students' own;
- cultural practices in the everyday life of the people of the target culture;
- understanding of fundamental cultural perspectives – beliefs, values and attitudes;

learner's self-awareness, i.e. taking into account learners' need to understand themselves and their own culture as a point of departure for understanding the target culture and developing their intercultural competence; self-awareness also denotes the understanding that one's observations, interpretations and behaviour are culturally determined.

ability to explain one's own cultural point of view, which not only further raises learners' awareness of culturally-induced behaviour but also encourages them to have more profound understanding of the world and to develop intercultural skills.

Delineating the scope of Cultural Studies is especially problematic in the case of English as a foreign language due to a great variety of dialects. English is used not only in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where it is a mother tongue, but also in India, Pakistan, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia and Singapore, where it is one of the official and administrative languages, not to mention the global use of English as a foreign language. The goal of Cultural Studies should be to sensitize learners to this great variety of Englishes.

Another problem connected with determining the content of Cultural Studies lies on the part of the learner; like in the case of every foreign language course, the syllabus containing Cultural Studies needs to consider learners' needs, characteristics, aims as well as previous experience in foreign language learning. Only bearing these factors in mind is it possible to prepare a syllabus that will enhance L2 acquisition.

So far we have looked at the need to include cultural component into the syllabus of foreign language courses as increasing learners' intercultural competence not only helps to develop linguistic competence but also helps to increase motivation, tolerance, empathy, interest in other cultures, understanding of learners' native culture as well as to prepare learners for more effective communication with speakers of various cultural, social, ethnic or religious backgrounds. The next sections emphasise the role of Cultural Studies in modifying learners' stereotypes, which is an essential goal of formal instruction as prejudice and negative stereotypes affect the process of communication as well as may lead to false beliefs of other social, cultural, ethnic or religious groups.

STEREOTYPE CHANGE

The activation of stereotypes depends on whether the information is easily accessed from memory and whether it fits the object whereas the stereotype application is connected with using the stereotype in perceptual or evaluative operations (Kawakami et al. 2002, 517). Since most stereotypes are activated automatically, it is difficult, though possible, for the individual to change his or her beliefs. The individual may consciously decide not to apply cultural stereotypes and behave in a nonprejudiced way but it requires time, effort, cognitive efficiency and active attention (Devine 1989 in Macrae et al. 1999, 305-306). Another model that treats stereotyping as the first stage in forming global evaluation has been proposed by Fiske et al. (Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Fiske and Neuberg 1990 in Macrae et al. 1999, 313-316) who claim that people, when they are sufficiently motivated and pay attention at the individual attributes of the person stereotyped, are able to go beyond early categorization and individuate.

Other factors that allow the change of stereotypes are data and experiences that contradict the existent stereotype, especially in relation to one's own identity (the individual's own identity juxtaposes the picture of other social groups (Szczurek-Boruta 2002, 176). But the stereotype may be changed as a result of the effort of the given group that strives to alter its social representations (Stangor and Schaller 1999, 28). Furthermore, it is important to raise learners' awareness of the emotional and evaluative nature of stereotypes as well as the effect of stereotyping on cognitive processes. What is more, intergroup contact may lead to stereotype change; encountering an otherwise typical member of the group helps to perceive the outgroup as less homogeneous thus leading to stereotype modification. However, to ensure stereotype change people need to be confronted with a greater number of stereotype-inconsistent information. Finally, as far as the stereotype change is concerned, similarly to attitude change, the most effective strategy involves the modification of cognitive, affective and conative components along motivational factors. Finally, it needs to be pointed out that even if stereotypes are suppressed, in a different setting they are likely to be activated and influence human behaviour to a greater degree than if they were not inhibited.

STEREOTYPES AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

At the outset of the discussion on the impact of foreign language lessons on stereotype change it needs to be emphasized that education in general plays a decisive role in promoting tolerance as it allows learners to get to know and understand various norms and values that are different than the ones existent in their culture (Coenders and Scheepers 1998). Furthermore, it has been proved that instruction aimed at intergroup relations and conflict affects students' greater acceptance of structural reasons for racial and ethnic inequality and enables them to generalize to other kinds of group inequalities, e.g. poverty and gender (Lopez, Gurin and Nagda 1998). However, more often than not, such transfer of acceptance of one group onto another is limited (Schneider 2004, 417). On the other hand, school, as a social institution, may beget inequalities, especially in socioeconomic terms, as it treats various groups of people unequally (Lopez, Gurin and Nagda 1998, 305).

Stereotypes are resistant to change; rich input is often not sufficient to alter learners' beliefs unless the modification refers to the reinforcement of the existent stereotypes. Furthermore, factors such as students' mood, the size of the stereotyped group and their physical appearance also affect the stereotyping process (Gudykunst 2001, 122-133 in Itakura 2004, 39); in addition, direct experience with the stereotyped group tends to increase prejudice and discrimination (Hoover and Fishbein 1999, 447). Moreover, students may be satisfied with their, often inaccurate, notion of the target community and not feel the need to change their perception (Kennedy Vande Berg 1990, 518). Sex (males display higher prejudice and stereotypical thinking (Bierly 1985; Hoover and Fishbein 1999), social, ethnic and racial background (members of the groups that have been the target of discrimination and prejudice tend to exhibit less stereotypical thinking (Altemeyer 1998)) as well as age prove to be other factors responsible for the difficulty to alter stereotypes. The study carried out by Hoover and Fishbein (1999) shows that already preadolescent children are aware of their stereotypes, which implies that the attempts to diminish stereotyped thinking and enhance tolerance need to be directed at younger children whose cognition

and mental processes have not been specified in the form of fixed patterns of prejudice; however, formal instruction of adolescents should also aim at modifying their stereotypes.

The study carried out by Itakura (2004) shows that formal instruction is highly influential in the formation of cultural stereotypes. Although the existent stereotype is resistant to change, upon being faced with diversified data that contradict it, students tend to become more aware of cultural diversity and are more likely to think that the given stereotype is applicable to only a part of the target community. Furthermore, it has been proved that the source of the stereotype is crucial as far as its modification is concerned, if the stereotype is formed on the basis of the information gained from the mass media or hearsay from friends, it is more liable to change than if it was formed in the classroom; the native speaker appears to be the most influential even to the degree that students form new stereotypes on the basis of what they found from their native interlocutor.

Another research (Liceum Ogólnokształcące Umiejętności Twórczych) presents the respondents' opinions on the causes of people's intolerance and the possible means of counteracting it. According to the majority of the subjects, the lack of tolerance results from the lack of knowledge about other nations (29,5%), historical factors (22,7%), bad manners (6,8%), and lack of understanding of other cultures (6,8%). Furthermore, a vast number of the respondents (40,9%) believe education to be a key factor in decreasing intolerance. Other activities that may reduce the number of manifestations of intolerance include opening national borders (6,8%), organizing various events whose aim is to increase tolerance (6,8%), teaching tolerance (4,5%), promoting student exchange (4,5%), and reducing unemployment (4,5%). These findings are highly valuable as they show that people not only expect school to raise the subject of tolerance but also believe school to be the best source of promoting tolerance and counteracting xenophobia.

A large body of research (Byram 1997, Itakura 2004) shows that intercultural projects that promote intercultural contact facilitate the change in stereotypes and make students more aware of the diversity of the target culture (but still the favourable conditions need to be met for intercultural contact to weaken stereotypes). Students have to cooperate in order to make

the project; work on the project creates the situation in which learners may get to know, even befriend, each other, perceive themselves as individuals rather than members of the outgroup, and include the other person in one's own ingroup. Favourable attitudes towards the team members tend to be transferred to the whole outgroup (Bettencourt et al. 1991 in Nelson 2003, 320). However, the team needs to consist of the students of similar abilities who all will be able to contribute to the project; an incompetent member of the outgroup may cause the other group's members form unfavourable stereotypes.

A portfolio is also a valuable tool in enhancing students' cultural awareness since it supports cultural diversity and identity, encourages learners' autonomy, reflection as well as responsibility for the process of learning, enhances personal growth, develops linguistic skills, and involves using various cognitive strategies. Lee (1997, 358) argues for the significance in introducing portfolios as far as the development of cultural awareness is concerned as firstly, students are involved in the work as they are allowed to choose the topic of their interest; secondly, they get a greater insight into the target culture since they are encouraged to study the topic thoroughly; finally, the choice, plan, organization, and creation of the portfolio engages both higher-order cognition as well as the linguistic skills. Lee (1997) reports the results of the study on the role of portfolios in increasing learners' knowledge of the target culture; in the study in which 52 intermediate students of Spanish as a foreign language participated the researcher found evidence for the correlation between the use of portfolios and the enhancement of not only linguistic knowledge (reported among 97,4% of subjects) but also cultural awareness (92,3% of students). Furthermore, the task affects learners' attitude and motivation.

Role-plays and other techniques that develop empathy are also valuable tools in promoting tolerance. When the learners imagine life from the stereotyped person's standpoint, they are more likely to shed their stereotypical thinking of not only the person but the whole outgroup (Galinsky and Moskowitz 2000 in Nelson 2003, 322). This argument has been proved in a classic experiment carried out by an American teacher Jane Elliot (Elliot 1970 in Nelson 2003:308) who divided the class into two groups on the ba-

sis of an absurd criterion of the eye colour. On the first day of the experiment the blue-eyed students were biased in favour of while the grey-eyed students had to wear a badge and were bullied, which resulted in the fact that they were not only depressed, but also attained worse academic results. The following day the roles of the students reversed and the so far favoured students became victims of prejudice. In the experiment students learned to sympathize with members of stigmatized groups; they became more tolerant.

Furthermore, a large body of research shows that explicit knowledge about various social groups, their culture and values helps to decrease prejudice (Nikitorowicz 2000, 93), especially if stereotypes result from the lack of knowledge about the given group. When students themselves openly describe their attitudes and stereotypes as well as give examples of the outgroup members who do not fit the stereotypic image, their class-mates' attitudes are likely to become more positive (Aboud and Fenwick 1999).

Zawadzka (2004, 205 in Aleksandrowicz-Pędich 2005, 27) maintains that since the language assists in structuring and arranging perception, differences between L1 and L2 that exist in different ways of language production, different sounds and spelling result in the interference in learners' system of values and upsetting the existing balance, which leads to psychological discomfort and negative emotions that may cause the learners' need to emphasize their belonging to their in-groups and simultaneous depreciation of other groups. That is why, Zawadzka argues, the teacher needs to draw students' attention at the differences existing in the native and target cultures but without trying to relativize judgements. Furthermore, the work on the stereotypes of other nations provides a fine context for affecting students' autostereotype which, when negative, hinders intercultural communication (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich 2005, 27).

Learners bring a stereotypical image of the target culture and community into the classroom but they are also faced with instructional materials that carry overgeneralized and oversimplified image of cultural phenomena. A wealth of English coursebooks contain special sections devoted to the presentation of the foreign culture, which, in fact, give a fragmented view on the cultural complexity. Also texts as well as other activities and materials present stereotyped target culture.

It needs to be further accentuated that learners, to be able both to engage in effective intercultural communication and to critically evaluate other cultures, need to acquire the skills of decentralization and critical analysis of both native and foreign cultures. Decentralization is the capacity to relativize one's own outlook, convictions, values, and meanings; it entails the ability of adopting a detached and accepting position on one's own as well as others' beliefs and judgments, which serves as a point of departure for understanding that thoughts, understanding and behaviours are subjective and culturally-determined. Learners become aware that the way the individual understands the reality and acts in the given situation to a great extent has been determined by his or her social, cultural and educational background.

This awareness in turn allows learners to comprehend the otherness in a non-judgemental and accepting way.

Furthermore, the ability to analyse foreign phenomena from a decentered perspective is the only way that makes them appear as they are; otherwise, i.e. when they are perceived from the angle of a different cultural norms and traditions, they are given a distorted and twisted meaning. Finally, adopting a decentered stance offers the observer the possibility of a more profound understanding of both native and foreign cultural phenomena since “[i]t is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly ... A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another foreign meaning” (Bakhtin 1981 in Furstenberg et al. 2001).

The ability to adopt a decentered perspective is a key factor in developing empathy as it allows the interlocutor to understand other people's perspectives, feelings and convictions. Moreover, decentering plays an important role in interpersonal communication; it serves several functions in personal relations, such as the aforementioned function of increasing understanding, but also allowing prediction of others' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours; helping in relational development; compliance; confirming the other (Redmond 1995, 35). Hence, decentering proves to be an intercultural communication skill and an aspect of social competence.

In the foreign language classroom decentering entails the awareness that our observations, understanding and actions are culturally-determined;

adopting a decentered perspective means the ability to step out of our egocentric mode and perceive both foreign and native cultural phenomena from a different angle. Acquiring a decentered perception takes place in several steps; first, learners analyse various phenomena present in their native culture in order to gain greater awareness of them. Then, they may make comparisons with target culture phenomena, which entails both greater awareness of the target culture and the ability to draw conclusions. Finally, students may take some action towards the other or are capable of perspective-independent understanding of foreign phenomena, which is devoid of subjective judgement. Hence, the goals of decentering process is to change learners' perspective on looking at the given phenomenon and to encourage them to be less egocentric (the more self-centred students are, the more difficult it is for them to view the given fact from a different stance). These goals may be attained by using imagination or role-play techniques that will enable students to distance themselves and to direct their attention away from themselves in order to observe the phenomenon from a different perspective. It may also be practical to apply techniques used for identifying underlying beliefs and convictions, for example asking a series of questions that lead students beyond the superficial sense of the given phenomenon.

Various research has proved Cultural Studies to be an important factor in teaching learners the ability to decenter. Savignon and Sysoyev (2002) in their study in which sociocultural strategy training was incorporated into the foreign language curriculum showed that during the study learners were successful at making progression from an ethnocentric perspective on the target culture and L2 speakers towards a more decentered stance. Furthermore, sociocultural training as a part of standard education was met with students' positive attitude towards such instruction and the development of their communicative and sociocultural competence. In the study carried out by Furstenberg et al. (2001) learners were introduced to a comparative approach that encouraged them to adopt perspective-independent understanding to both native and target cultures. The research showed that such an approach helps students to go beyond the superficial and stereotypical view of the cultures and notice facts they had not been aware of. Furthermore, students' knowledge of the target culture has been increased and their motivation has been developed. On the other hand, Redmond

(2000) investigated the relationship between intercultural skills (decentering, knowledge of the target culture, linguistic competence, adaptation, communication effectiveness, and social integration), cultural distance (which was defined with the help of Hofstede's dimension of power, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity/femininity) and the amount of stress experienced by international students during their stay in the target country. Decentering proved to be an important factor in the amount of stress experienced by students; however, it did not have any effect on the handling of stress. The ability to adopt a decentered perspective on the target cultural phenomena made students more anxious due to the fact that such students are more aware of the differences between their native and target cultures.

CONCLUSIONS

The article tackles the problem of developing learners' intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom and provides theoretical basis for further research. It is of utmost importance to prepare students to be able to take part in successful intercultural communication; hence, incorporating cultural component into the syllabus proves to be essential, especially when teachers do not limit students to the exposure to only cultural information or practices but place learners in situations which require critical thinking and increase their self-awareness.

Besides, the aim of the article was to emphasise the fact that foreign language teaching should aim at counteracting stereotyping among other things through making learners aware of categorization and stereotyping processes that are responsible for perceiving another individual from the angle of their own social, ethnic, or religious perspective. Apart from the need to help students develop the skills of decentralization, teachers should help learners increase tolerance, openness to other people, sensitivity, empathy, and cultural awareness. The goals stated above may be attained with the help of various techniques, e.g. role-plays, intercultural projects or portfolio.

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INTERCULTURAL PREJUDICES AND MISCONCEPTIONS IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOL BOOKS

Miguel Prata Gomes ⁶⁹

Ana Cristina Pereira

Elisabete Duarte

Patrícia Silva

Pedro Bastos Ferreira

In this paper we want to analyze the intercultural values included in some Portuguese school books. We will show/analyze some prejudices and misconceptions as well as good examples of excellent intercultural education practices in these manuals.

Keywords: intercultural education; prejudices; misconceptions; good examples; Portuguese school books.

The intercultural approach attempts to promote equality, understanding the diversity as something essential for a positive construction of the society. The starting point is to understand the culture as a “rational construction” invented by man who gives the perception that this is the truly “vision of the world”. This leads us to focus the work inherent in the “intercultural education” at a deeper level, trying to discover and showing how deeper the concept of “difference” is something, too, created / invented / re-constructed by man and not something “naturally given.”

The promotion of intercultural approaches must provide curricular adjustments in the classroom, taking into account the individual needs and cultural diversity. Therefore, the teacher must meet the characteristics of students, planning carefully and assuming himself as a “processor” of society.

⁶⁹Escola Superior de Educação de Paula Frassinetti, Porto – Portugal (Paula Frassinetti School of Education)

*Corresponding author: mprata@esepf.pt

INTRODUCTION

This work is based on an investigation about some school course books of primary school education used in Portugal. The students, between 5 and 10 years old, work with educational materials organized by national editors that guide themselves by Ministry of Education orientations.

This work is based on two big goals: on the one hand, we intended to check the suggested samples of textbooks were following the curricular orientations; and, on the other hand, we want to analyze the intercultural present values in these very materials.

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS:

There was a longitudinal study on “interculturality in textbooks, the 1st cycle of basic education.” This focused on a search and compilation of cases (examples) related to “intercultural education” in school textbooks and official documents of the Ministry of Education. In this analysis of school textbooks we have focused on two priority curriculum areas for school children: *Study of the environment* and *Portuguese language*. The first area was chosen because it includes a block called “Block 2- The discovery of others and of institutions”. The second was chosen because it presents texts depicting multiculturalism. After the research, we set up criteria to evaluate the examples selected in each school textbook. Upon completing this process of selection and analysis, the results were organized according to the following components: objectives of the worked areas, concepts of different criteria (homogeneity, diversity, stereotypes, prejudice, integration, exclusion, tolerance, racism and minority), together with examples of their bibliographies, images, ideas and criteria.

CONCLUSIONS – TO PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL APPROACHES:

Few of the analyzed school textbooks are really concerned about an approach which uses a true perspective of “intercultural education. We have

found in some textbooks where there are images and / or texts which include valuable intercultural aspects. However, there are examples that go against the principles of intercultural education. Some materials from various publishers have good and bad practices of intercultural education.

Some examples may contain, in an explicit way, opposite aspects to the expressed values and recommended by the official Ministry of Education documents. These last ones, not always are explicit or enriched by procedural suggestions for teachers. There are few textbooks that care about intercultural aspects and even some of those have some errors. The integration of pictures which promote intercultural approaches should be an aspect which authors and teachers should really be careful about. Apart from that programs focus on our local and national patrimony neglecting profound aspects of world multicultural diversity.

The goal of intercultural education should, on the one hand, consist of the consciousness that Multiculturalism is a factual reality. The intercultural intervention programs should be directed to all society and not just to the minorities. The culture of a society is the result of the contacts that the people establish (in an intercultural way). As educators/docents we should develop a critical attitude and not be mere vehicles of culture, i. e., as followers we insert the values that are socially imposed to us, as guaranteed, real and immutable. Thus we should be aware of the vantage of an intercultural education. This process passes by profound changes in the educational policies that will only act when teachers question themselves and are aware of the implications of a real intercultural school.

We propose that cultural diversity should be considered. We must adapt programs, curricula, activities and achieve objectives, than those that target only one standard students. In this way, the teacher's responsibility is increased. He/ she is the one who shall value cultural diversity and seek good resources to the intercultural dialogue. Some of the textbooks that we have checked prove that it is possible to rethink education and social change in order to operate in favour of human relations.

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TEACHING ABOUT THE WORLD OF ISLAM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS MUSLIMS AND OTHERS⁷⁰

Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska

Even though Arab population in Poland reaches barely few thousand people, they belong to the most disliked nations, according to national surveys. The negative stereotype of Arabs is relatively fresh, but still strong. Moreover one might imagine that according to public opinion the 'Arab' category is much wider than in reality including most (if not all) Muslims. The paper analyses the impact of educational workshop "Meet the worlds of Islam" carried out in secondary schools Poland-wide on attitudes towards Muslims and Others (sample of 751 students from 9 different schools). In case of attitudes towards Muslims semantic differential scale (10 items) and social distance scale (10 grades Bogardus scale) were used. For the attitudes toward other cultures social distance was used (tent pole scheme) accompanied by some question on national preferences. It seems that the workshop proved to be an effective tool for modification of the stereotypes. Muslims stopped being the aliens known only from mass media and associated with violence, but started to be perceived as potential friends, neighbours, ordinary people with their good and bad sides. Despite the fact associations of Islam with violence, and few other core stereotypes, have not been eliminated.

Keywords: Islam, Arab, Poland, education, school, modification of stereotypes

Looking through the lens of statistic data one could believe that there is no need for intercultural education in Poland. Contrary to most EU states Poland is a monolith both in ethnic and religious terms. What is more, ethnic, national or religious minorities do not cause any significant problems in Poland either because of their advanced assimilation or (in case of immigrant communities) their marginal number. Relative lack of minorities might lead to two opposite attitudes toward the Other: affirmation of diver-

⁷⁰ This article bases on two other ones published in Polish: Górak-Sosnowska 2008 and Górak-Sosnowska 2008a.

sity, led by curiosity and interest in the exotic and unknown, or aversion driven by anxiety. CBOS surveys and comparative studies such as EVS or Pew Research Center reports reveal that in the case of Poland the second option seem to prevail, especially when it comes to non-European nations.

Under such circumstances the need of intercultural education seems to be obvious – especially in the face of Polish accession to the EU and increasing migration processes. Travelling abroad either for economic or leisure increases the exposure to other cultures, and also the number of immigrants increases – even though in absolute terms it is still marginal. Meanwhile the homogeneity of ethnic and religious structure in Poland influenced the efficiency of intercultural education programmes. It is hard to discuss the Others that are physically not there, while all information about them comes from secondary sources – especially media. This is the case of Muslims as barely 35 thousand of them live in Poland

According to CBOS survey Arabs belong to the most disliked nations. In 2007 only 12% of respondents declared favourable attitude toward this group while 55% - aversion, which placed Arabs on the last position among all nations included in the survey (CBOS 2007). The negative stereotype of Arabs is relatively fresh, but still strong. Moreover one might imagine that according to public opinion the 'Arab' category is much wider than in reality including most (if not all) Muslims.

EDUCATIONAL ANSWER: 'MEET THE WORD OF ISLAM'

Since 2005 ARABIA.pl Association and the Polish National Commission for UNESCO have been running a workshop project *Meet the world of Islam* for secondary school students Poland-wide. The aim of the workshop is to modify negative attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims. The workshop's duration is 6 hours and comprises theoretical and practical part.

In the first one by the mean of discussions and group activities students learn the basic concepts of Islam and the world of Islam, have a chance to cross-check their knowledge and beliefs about Islam and Muslims, and also

learn about differences and similarities between Islam and other monotheistic religions. This part of the workshop includes also 'hot topics' such as women in Islam or religiously motivated terrorism. The practical part provides a direct contact with some elements of Arab and Muslim culture in order to grasp its richness and diversity. The participants learn how to read and write in Arabic script, make themselves familiar with items of daily use from Muslim countries, have a chance to try on traditional clothes from various parts of Muslim world, listen to traditional and contemporary music (from Morocco to Pakistan) and learn how to brew Arabic tea.

So far the workshop has been carried out in over 20 schools Poland-wide, most of them belonged to the Associated Schools Network of UNESCO. Their list, accompanied by pictures and reports is available at the ARABIA.pl Internet portal⁷¹. In the autumn of 2007 a textbook with 20 exercises was published and targeted teachers who would like to include some information about the world of Islam in their curriculum – in all range of topics: humanities, science, as well as music or arts and crafts classes⁷².

SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out as a part of the evaluation of the workshop. It aimed at analyzing the impact of the workshop on the knowledge and attitudes towards Islam and Muslims by secondary school students. The research was conducted between 16th November and 11th December 2007 on a sample of 751 students using an auditorium questionnaire in 9 different secondary schools – all belonging to the Associated Schools of UNESCO Network⁷³. The schools are seated in four different voivodeships, in big and small towns (from around 30 thousand inhabitants to more than 500 thousand), some of them are ranked among the top Polish secondary schools (according to 'Rzeczpospolita' or 'Perpsektywy' rankings) while other are not even included.

71 See: <http://www.arabia.pl/warsztaty/>.

72 See: (Górak-Sosnowska, Kubarek 2007).

73 XLIV LO im. A. Dobiszewskiego in Warsaw, III LO im. J. Sowińskiego in Warsaw, II LO im. S. eromskiego in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, XIII LO im. M. Piotrowiczowej in Łódź, I LO im. T. Kościuszki in Starachowice, III LO im. S. eromskiego in Kielce, III LO im. Bohaterów Westerplatte in Głogów, II LO im. C.K. Norwida in Jelenia Góra and I LO im S. Banacha in aga.

The sample was split in two out of which one (experimental) was subjected to educational influence, and the other (control) was not. They consisted of 327 and 424 persons respectively. In both groups females constitute the majority (264 and 244 respectively) comparing to males (154 and 77). Due to this disproportion and the presumed impact of gender on the attitudes towards Muslims the analysis was split according to gender and carried out separately for males and females. In the experimental group the research was conducted by the trainer team, just after the workshop, while in control group – by trained teachers, school UNESCO coordinators. Total randomization was not possible by such method. That is why the results are rather preliminary and can serve as a pilot research. Also grasping the time effect was not possible as the questionnaire was handed out just after finishing the workshop.

The evaluation investigates the attitudes towards Muslims and (for the purpose of comparison) other cultures. In the first case two basic measurement tools were used: semantic differential scale (10 items) and social distance scale (10 grades Bogardus scale). For the attitudes toward other cultures social distance was used (tent pole scheme) accompanied by some question on national preferences – similar to the one asked yearly by CBOS.

TYPICAL MUSLIM

One of the questions tackled the features of a 'typical Muslim'. It comprised a list of 10 pairs of juxtaposed features, placed on opposite ends of a 7,5 cm long segment. Respondents were asked to mark on the segments how much prevalent are the features by a typical Muslim person.

The most predominant feature of a typical Muslim is religiousness (86% of respondents marked it in the first two quintiles [column 1]). Moreover it is the only feature with a linear, rather than normal distribution. A typical Muslim is also intolerant, fanatical, clear and backward (from 36% to 43% indications). The selections of features seems to exclude each other, but respondents who perceived a typical Muslim as intolerant and/or backward and/or fanatic did not consider him as clean⁷⁴. In other pairs positive

74 Correlations are statistically significant for all features with r ranking between 0,145 and 0,384, p<0,005.

FEATURE +	1		2		3		FEATURE -
	E	C	E	C	E	C	
unaggressive	28,9	22,7	49,6	56,3	21,4	21,1	aggressive
clean	61,1	37,6	30,9	41,7	8,2	20,7	dirty
not fanatical	14,8	12,3	45,9	45,1	39,4	42,7	fanatical
good	38,3	28,8	54,2	52,5	7,6	18,7	bad
hospitable	42,0	33,0	44,9	45,2	13,2	21,8	inhospitable
good looking	28,2	19,0	57,3	48,0	14,6	33,0	ugly
wise	33,1	26,7	61,0	59,0	6,0	14,4	not wise
progressive	19,6	13,6	50,6	46,6	29,8	39,8	backward
religious	89,4	86,2	9,7	13,4	0,8	0,4	unreligious
tolerant	24,1	12,0	44,3	44,2	31,6	43,8	intolerant

Table 1: Valuation of a typical Muslim by females (%)

Legend: In order to make the results more clear 1 and 3 designate brackets of 3 cm, while 2 – of 1,5 cm. E indicates experimental and C control group.

features scored on average approximately 10 percentage points more than their opposites, except for the aggression, which divided the respondents in two equal parts.

After the educational influence the valuation of a typical Muslim improved in case of 7 out of 10 features. Muslims became cleaner (61%) and more hospitable (42%), as well as less intolerant and backward⁷⁵. Wisdom and goodness also increased by 10 percentage points⁷⁶. In case of other features (aggressiveness, fanaticism, religiousness) no significant changes occurred. However they constitute the core of the stereotype of Muslims. One can therefore say that even though the respondents changed their image of a typical Muslims – after the workshop – the change was rather cosmetic.

Male respondents perceived a typical Muslims most of all as a religious person (85%). Intolerance and fanaticism ranked also quite high scoring over 50%. This way religiousness – which itself is neutral – got a negative tinge. A typical Muslim is also backward, ugly, aggressive and dirty (over

75 ANOVA respectively $F=40,984$, $p<0,000$, $F=8,904$, $p<0,003$, $F=15,431$, $p<0,000$ i $F=5,904$, $p<0,015$.

76 ANOVA respectively $F=9,093$, $p<0,003$ i $F=6,516$, $p<0,011$.

FEATURE +	1		2		3		FEATURE -
	E	C	E	C	E	C	
unaggressive	19,5	19,2	53,2	39,1	27,3	41,8	aggressive
clean	45,5	21,4	44,2	38,0	10,4	40,6	dirty
not fanatical	9,1	12,8	41,6	32,9	49,4	54,3	fanatical
good	29,8	20,0	58,1	49,0	12,2	31,0	bad
hospitable	46,8	29,4	37,7	37,7	15,6	32,8	inhospitable
good looking	13,2	11,0	65,8	46,6	21,1	42,4	ugly
wise	28,6	22,3	58,4	48,0	13,0	29,7	not wise
progressive	17,1	10,8	48,7	40,9	34,2	48,3	backward
religious	85,7	85,3	7,8	10,7	6,5	4,0	unreligious
tolerant	11,7	14,6	4,8	18,7	40,3	56,7	intolerant

Table 1: Valuation of a typical Muslim by males (%)

40% indication). Following two features – inhospitality and evilness – scored approximately 10 percentage points more than their antonyms. In regard to wisdom the opinions were split almost equally. After the educational influence the valuation of a typical Muslim improved significantly. Similarly to female respondents, it refers to cleanness (from 21% to 45%). In case of other features it is rather lowering negative valuation than increasing of favourisation. Hence a typical Muslim is less ugly (from 42% to 21%), less bad (from 31% to 12%) and slightly less inhospitable, backward and intolerant⁷⁷. In case of three other features (aggressiveness, fanaticism, religiousness) no statistically significant changes occurred. So the change in valuation is of the same character as in the female group – it does not touch the core of the stereotype.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE TOWARDS MUSLIMS

Another set of questions referred to declared psychological distance towards Muslims. It comprised ten situations of possible contact with Muslims ordered in two scales – social and individual. In the first case the mea-

77 ANOVA respectively $F=25,578$, $p<0,000$; $F=12,641$, $p<0,000$; $F=8,508$, $p<0,004$; $F=4,906$, $p<0,28$; $F=6,915$, $p<0,009$ and $F=4,550$, $p<0,034$.

surement was related to the level of acceptance of Muslims participating in public sphere: arriving to Poland as a tourist; working in gastronomy; working in Polish government office; and building a mosque in the neighbourhood. In the second case the measurement referred to direct contact with Muslim: being in one class at school; sharing the same desk; coming home; and relations – Muslim as friend (pl. *znajomy*), good friend (pl. *przyjaciel*), boyfriend/girlfriend.

The female respondents in the control group declare rather small distance toward Muslims on the individual scale. Almost all (90%) believe that Muslims can go to their class at school, most of them (over 80%) could have a Muslim friend, share with him/her a desk, or invite him/her home. Three out of four could become real friends. It changes in the case of having a Muslim boyfriend, which is the closest relationship and scored over 40% negative answers. The social scale results are different. While almost all respondents have nothing against Muslim tourists, they are less eager to accept them working in gastronomy (68%), building a mosque (53%) or working in a government office (47%).

CAN A MUSLIM	YES		NO		HARD TO SAY	
	E	C	E	C	E	C
come as a tourist	96,3	91,6	2,5	6,2	1,2	2,3
work in gastronomy	83,0	68,3	13,2	23,3	3,7	8,4
work in a gov. office	59,9	47,3	32,2	42,7	7,9	10,0
build a mosque	60,8	53,3	30,6	37,4	8,7	9,3
be in the same class	98,3	90,4	0,8	3,1	0,8	6,5
sit in the same desk	95,0	82,4	3,7	10,4	1,2	7,3
come home	88,4	82,4	3,7	10,4	1,2	7,3
be a friend	95,1	89,6	1,6	4,6	3,3	5,8
be a good friend	87,6	75,0	5,3	13,1	7,1	11,9
be boy/girlfriend	56,0	35,1	25,3	43,3	18,7	21,2

Table 3: Distance toward Muslims in the female group (%)

Legend: For a better clarity the answers „definitely yes” and „rather yes” as well as „definitely not” and „rather not” were grouped in just two categories – yes and no.

CAN A MUSLIM	YES		NO		HARD TO SAY	
	E	C	E	C	E	C
come as a tourist	92,1	72,2	7,9	23,2	0,4	4,6
work in gastronomy	82,9	58,3	14,5	36,5	2,6	5,3
work in a gov. office	54,0	35,1	46,0	57,6	0,7	7,3
build a mosque	60,5	38,5	35,5	52,3	3,9	9,3
be in the same class	90,9	68,9	7,8	23,1	1,3	7,9
sit in the same desk	82,9	61,6	14,5	29,8	2,6	8,6
come home	81,6	53,6	14,5	35,8	3,9	10,6
be a friend	86,9	64,2	9,2	25,2	3,9	10,6
be a good friend	77,6	49,0	11,9	35,8	10,5	15,2
be boy/girlfriend	57,9	32,6	15,8	52,7	26,3	14,7

Table 4: Distance toward Muslims in the male group (%)

After the educational influence the declared distance toward Muslims decreased significantly on both scales. The biggest change referred to having a Muslim boyfriend and working in gastronomy or governmental office (positive answers increased by 13-21 percentage points)⁷⁸. One of the reasons might be the relatively high base level of acceptance. Almost all respondents (over 90%) can have a Muslim classmate, share with him/her a desk, or have him/her as a friend⁷⁹, and slightly less (over 80%) can become close friends with a Muslim, or invite him/her home⁸⁰. Two in three respondents agree to have a mosque in their neighbourhood⁸¹.

The male respondents declare a moderate distance towards Muslims on the individual scale. Two in three students agree to have a Muslim classmate, sit at one desk or have a Muslim friend, but two out of five does not. Only half of the respondents would invite a Muslim home or had him/her as a good friend; the same number would not like to have a Muslim girlfriend. The distance increases on the social scale – every fifth would not like to have in Po-

78 ANOVA respectively F=23,801, p<0,000, F=12,937, p<0,000 and F=10,446, p<0,001.

79 ANOVA respectively F=13,010, p<0,000, F=8,938, p<0,003 and F=7,855, p<0,005.

80 ANOVA respectively F=12,770, p<0,000 and F=11,839, p<0,001.

81 ANOVA F=3,916, p<0,048, so the relation is very weak.

land a Muslim tourist, every third – that he would work in gastronomy, and every second – that he works in a governmental office or builds a mosque.

After the educational influence the distance decreased significantly. The majority of respondents (80-90%) agrees to have a Muslim classmate, share with him/her a desk, have him/her as a friend or invite him/her home⁸². Many respondents could have a good friend of a Muslim faith⁸³, two in three – a girlfriend⁸⁴. Also on social scale declared distance decreased significantly. The majority of respondents agree that Muslims arrive to Poland as tourists or that they work in gastronomy⁸⁵. Also many respondents have nothing against Muslim employees in Polish governmental offices or having a mosque in their neighbourhood ⁸⁶.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE TOWARD OTHER NATIONS

As mentioned in the introduction other nations were taken as a reference point in order to measure the impact of the workshop. The evaluation revealed however an interesting non-specific effect which will be presented in the following two subchapters.

One question measured the psychological distance towards several nations. The respondents were asked to place on a tent scheme with size of 18,5 cm x 7,5 cm tents of six different groups: American, Arab, Czech, German, Gypsy and Hindu. In the middle of the tent field there was a tent of Polish delegation. The biggest distance to the Polish tent, the bigger aversion toward the group placed.

Male respondents in the control group placed closest to the Polish one Czech tent (mean distance 1,1, 89% of them placed it in a distance lower than 2 cm) and American tent (respectively 2,1 cm and 71%). Further Hindu and German tents were placed (mean distance respectively 3,1cm and 3,5 cm). While the Hindu tent was usually put in the middle between the bor-

82 ANOVA respectively F=21,292, p<0,000, F=17,089, p<0,000, F=24,736, p<0,000 and F=16,935, p<0,000.

83 ANOVA respectively F=22,032, p<0,000 and F=27,850, p<0,000.

84 It is Worth mentioning that from the religious point of view such relationship could not be possible as a Muslim woman can marry only a Muslim man.

85 ANOVA respectively F=17,950, p<0,000 and F=14,549, p<0,000.

86 ANOVA respectively F=8,562, p<0,004 and F=9,401, p<0,002.

TENT	MALES		FEMALES	
	E	C	E	C
American	1,989	2,121	1,360	1,583
Arab	2,154	4,195	1,606	2,831
Czech	1,216	1,124	1,431	1,282
German	3,793	3,490	2,446	2,381
Gypsy	3,848	5,108	3,145	3,624
Hindu	2,060	3,178	1,483	1,922

Table 5: Mean distance toward ethnic and national groups on the tent scheme (cm)

der line and the Polish tent, the German scored most extreme distances out of all nations (standard deviation 2,9), and every fourth respondent placed it over 6 cm far from the Polish tent, which is at one of the corners of the tent field. Last two fields Arab and Gypsy had averages of 4,2 cm and 5,1 cm while every third and every second person located them beyond the 6 cm benchmark. After the workshop the mean distance changed significantly in three cases. The Arab tent ‘moved’ toward the Polish tent by 2 cm (specific effect) while Gypsy and Hindu – by 1,3 cm and 1,1 cm respectively (non-specific effect) ⁸⁷. In case of other nations no changes occurred.

Female respondents in the control group also placed Czech and American tents closest to the Polish one, but the Hindu one was also not much further (respectively mean distances: 1,3 cm, 1,6 cm and 1,9 cm). Further one could find the tent of Germans (mean distance 2,4 cm and almost 10% of respondents placed it farther than 6 cm) and Arabs (respectively 2,8 cm and 5%). The farthest one was the Gypsy tent placed on average in the distance of 3,6 cm. After the workshop the distance between Polish and Arab, Gypsy and Hindu tents decreased significantly⁸⁸ by 1,2 cm (specific effect), 0,5 cm and 0,4 cm (non-specific effect) respectively.

Another question referred to declared attitudes towards 20 selected nations and peoples, including the six from the other question. The respondents indicated their attitudes on a five grade scale.

87 For Arab tent F=32,235, p<0,000, for the Gypsy one F=11,868, p<0,001 and for Hindu F=11,150, p<0,001.

88 For Arab tent F=65,461, p<0,000, for the Gypsy one F=5,494, p<0,019 and for Hindu F=13,783, p<0,000.

Males in the control group like Czech most (83% likes them), as well as Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian nations (over 70% for Americans, British and Scandinavians). Further (over 60% positive indications) Latin nations were placed (French, Italian, Latino), as well as Japanese, Ukrainians and Africans. Ambivalent feelings, sometimes with advantage of favourability (up to 10 percentage points difference) are expressed towards Chinese, Hindu, Jewish as well as Vietnamese and Russians – that means nations that are distinctive in public opinion, either due to historic or economic reasons. The least liked nations (that means nations with over 40% negative indications, and the difference between positive and negative indications accounts at least 14 percentage points) are Arabs, Pakistanis, Germans, Roma – that means Muslims⁸⁹ and nations which traditionally evoked emotions by Polish people. Roma are the least liked group with 22% positive indications and 66% negative.

After the workshop males continued to favour Anglo-Saxon nations and Czech people (over 70% positive indications, for Americans – 64%). Similar results to the control group scored Latin nations, Ukrainians, Japanese and nations evoking ambiguous feelings – Vietnamese, Jewish and Russian. The answers indicate a specific effect – change in attitudes toward Muslim nations: Arabs (from 33% to 47% positive and from 49% to 27% negative) and Pakistanis (from 26% to 45% respondents did not know the answer). Moreover a non-specific effect occurred – defavourisation of Roma people decreased (to 52%) as well as worsening of attitude towards Germans (from 40% to 28% positive indications and from 56% to 61% negative). All effects – except for the last one – are statistically significant⁹⁰.

In the female control group the most favoured nations are Latin ones (Italians, French, Latino) and British – with over 80% positive indications. Somewhat lower scored Americans, Czech and Africans. Over half positive indications with relatively few negative ones (below 14%) got Jews, Ukrainians and Scandinavians, as well as some Oriental nations (Chinese, Japanese, Hindu, Indonesian). Ambiguous feelings with slight advantage of aversion (12-16 percentage points) evoked Roma, Russians and Paki-

89 One of the nations included in the questionnaire was Indonesian, who are also Muslim, but two in five respondents found it difficult to declare any attitude. The reason behind it is probably lack of familiarity with this nation.

90 For Arabs ANOVA $F=13,451$; $p<0,000$; for Pakistanis $\chi^2=11,684$, $p<0,02$ and for Roma ANOVA $F=5,026$; $p<0,026$.

TENT	FEMALES		MALES	
	E	C	E	C
African	1,6723	1,7340	1,9643	2,0242
American	1,8818	1,9451	2,1212	2,0411
Arab	1,8913	2,3006	2,2182	2,8016
British	1,6951	1,7642	1,7612	1,7972
Chinese	2,0365	2,0426	2,4107	2,5041
Czech	1,8299	1,8037	1,8507	1,7029
French	1,7583	1,7458	2,1429	2,0870
German	2,5000	2,4689	2,9851	2,8741
Hindu	1,8427	1,9213	2,1042	2,4000
Indonesian	1,8774	1,9427	2,2051	2,3146
Italian	1,5364	1,5714	1,9063	1,9845
Japanese	1,9211	1,9100	2,0877	2,1538
Jewish	2,0233	2,0281	2,5818	2,5500
Latino	1,5561	1,5272	1,9815	1,9268
Pakistani	2,1748	2,3938	2,5854	2,8713
Roma	2,5934	2,7600	2,9825	3,3333
Russian	2,5427	2,4333	2,5672	2,6963
Scandinavian	1,7616	1,8051	1,7288	1,7786
Ukrainian	2,0514	1,9842	1,8983	1,9677
Vietnamese	2,2318	2,2500	2,7073	2,5794

Table 6: Mean attitudes toward selected nations

Legend: the scale used is: 1 – definitely yes, 2 – rather yes, 3 – rather not, 4 – definitely not.

stanis, followed by Arabs and Vietnamese. The only group that scored more negative than positive answers were Germans – only every fifth female likes them, while opposite feeling express twice as many respondents. After the workshop favourisation of Latin and Anglo-Saxon nations, as well as Czechs and Africans continued, however in case of Czech, French and Italian it decreased slightly (by 7-12 percentage points)⁹¹. Over half of positive indications – similar to the control group – received Oriental nations as

91 In case of Czech people it is statistically significant with $\chi^2=11,144$; $p<0,011$.

well as Jews, Ukrainians and Scandinavians. In case of Arabs favourisation increased significantly (from 43% to 67% positive answers and from 23% to 10% negative)⁹². In the cases of other two Muslim nations favourisation increased slightly, but was not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The workshop induced significant changes in terms of valuation of Muslims and declared social and psychological distance by males and females. In case of valuation, respondents from the experimental group perceived Muslims as better, more hospitable, cleaner and wiser. The core of stereotype has also not been changed, a Muslim is still considered as aggressive, fanatic and religious. Interesting as the cross-gender differences in regard to valuation and psychological distance towards Muslims. Females valued a typical Muslim better than males, and cross-gender differences were even as high as 20 percentage points. Males and females also differ in regard to their susceptibility to the educational influence – in the first case it resulted in decreasing of defavourisation, while in the first in increasing favourisation. Moreover it seems that the workshop had bigger impact on males rather than females. While in the control groups the differences between mean valuation were statistically significant in case of 8 features, in experimental group it were only 6 and they were generally weaker.

The educational influence resulted in a much lower social distance both on the individual and group level. After the workshop the respondents were more eager to share a desk with a Muslim, invite him/her home or become his/her friend. Almost no one had anything against a Muslim tourist, most of the respondents would also allow him/her to work in gastronomy or in a governmental office, and finally – build a mosque. However again cross-gender differences occurred. The distance declared by females was far lower than by males, while differences on all levels were statistically significant. After the workshop six of the cross-gender differences became statistically insignificant – all from the social scale and two from the individual one. That means that the workshop exercised more influence on males than females.

⁹² $t=28,015$; $p<0,000$.

The workshop achieved a specific effect in both groups in terms of increased favourisation of Arabs. But also important are the non-specific effects, as the declared distance also decreased in regard to Hindu and Roma people, as well as defavourisation of the latter. The workshop did not result in any other significant changes. In regard to nations that are generally liked (Czech, Anglo-Saxon) the reason can be the base high level of favourisation. Hindu and Roma might have some link to Arabs – first nation also belongs to so called Orient, while the latter to the most stigmatized social groups (CBOS 2007, 4-5). That means that after a workshop on Muslim culture the participants became generally more open to other cultures – either exotic or vulnerable. It does not however result in a general openness – especially if they are familiar and known.

Again the cross-gender differences proved to be interesting. Firstly, males (particularly in the control group) display much bigger distance than females toward all included nations and groups, except for the Czech one. Secondly, the educational effect was again more powerful in case of males – both in regard to the specific and non-specific effect. It can however result from the higher declared level of base acceptance in the female group. Also the changes in attitude toward other nations are very much depending on the gender. Generally females declare much more positive attitude toward other nations than males. In case of some nations however – especially those liked most (Czech, British, Scandinavian) – the level of favourisation does not depend either on gender or on the educational influence. In cases of other nations – especially those liked less and non-European, gender seems to be an important factor. Men clearly prefer Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Slavic nations (with the exception of two Polish neighbours – Russians and Germans – probably due to the troubled history). Females prefer Latin nations, and relatively less Scandinavians and Ukrainians. The biggest differences refer to exotic (Hindu, Pakistani) or stigmatized (Arab, Roma) groups. That could mean that females are more open to unknown. However also in this case the educational influence was bigger in regard to males.

It seems that the educational workshop *Meet the world of Islam* proved to be an efficient tool for modification of negative stereotypes towards Islam and its adherents. Muslims stopped being the aliens known only from mass

media and associated with violence. They started being perceived as potential friends, neighbours, ordinary people with their good and bad sides. Despite the fact that the associations of Islam with violence have not been eliminated (what could have indicated that the results are not real) it was possible to broaden the image of a 'typical Muslim' by other features. Still it is hard to measure the sustainability of the results, as the questionnaire was filled right after the influence.

The workshop had also an important non-specific effect – increased favourisation of two other cultures – Roma and Hindu. From this perspective the workshop is just a tool to increase openness toward the Other – especially if they are exotic and/or vulnerable. Again it is hard to predict about the sustainability of this change, however one can point on the research of Barbara Weigl, who obtained similar result (educational influence focused on one culture resulting in a change of attitudes toward other cultures) and the results were sustainable (Weigl 1999, 125).

In both cases cross-gender differences proved to be important. One of the explanations could be the higher declared base level of acceptance of Muslims and/or Others. Another is that the workshop exercised bigger impact on males. In that case it could be useful to design intercultural education according to gender. The gender factor is also significant in other research on stereotypes among children and youth (e.g. Formanowicz and Weigl 2008), but not all (e.g. Weigl 1999). Research on the impact of gender could be therefore an important contribution to intercultural education programmes. So are definitely educational projects that challenge stereotypes on most vulnerable groups; it is possible to modify them, or at least soften – even if they are so deeply rooted as the ones regarding Arabs and Muslims.

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DEMANDS ON GERMAN CLASSES AND THEIR REFLECTION IN GERMAN TEXTBOOKS OF THE FOURTH GRADE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Scholtke, Lena, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)

In times of globalization, a good education and intercultural competences are important to succeed on an international level. In school there are the foundation for those abilities and attitudes constituted. Therefore, it is very important to include the cultural diversity into the concept of school and especially into curricula. Children have to learn to recognize cultural differences and accept them. Usually German textbooks are made for homogenous group of pupils. Changes in the social structure, the composition and the decrease of the German population ask for new standards in German classes that should be reflected in textbooks.

This paper will treat firstly the definition of culture, before speaking about cultural difference which set the new standards. Then there will be a brief description of the German population and social structure. Based on these changes the new standards have to be elaborated. The analysis of the current design of German textbooks and will be followed by further propositions how to adjust the contents to the demands of a multicultural society.

Key words: culture, social change, textbooks, representation of cultural diversity

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, new technology and the media of communication make the world come closer together. There is more frequently intercultural contact than 30 years ago. People from different nations are living together and have to get along with each other. Therefore, intercultural competences are more demanded in daily life than ever before. School and parents are the two main influences in the field of intercultural education of a child. Especially in primary schools from the first to the fourth grade are important values transmitted. The Aims of the first four years is to emerge the social

competence of the pupils, which plays an important role in contact with people from other countries. In this timeframe, the base for value education is build. The fifth and the sixth grade are designed as preparation for the different types of schools in Germany, like Hauptschule, Gesamtschule, Realschule and Gymnasium. The pupils are divided into as homogenous as possible groups to make teaching easier.

The representation of cultural differences in Brandenburg German textbooks will be analyzed in this case study, which will take into account the social changes and the resulting demands on German classes. To get an overview about the representation of cultural diversity in German textbook, German books from the Berlin and Brandenburg of the first four years in school will be consulted. To give the investigation a broader base and make the results more reliable both editions of fourth class German textbooks will be compared and out of the comparison recommendations for better school book contents and design will be elaborated. The textbooks taken from a primary school in Frankfurt (Oder) as well as from a primary school in Berlin shall show, how culture is represented in German textbooks and if the social reality of the students is reflected.

The state government provides the conditions for the choice of the textbooks, because education in Germany is sovereignty of the federal state. So the books are chosen by them and later every school can decide which one they like most and will use in class. Consequently, the state is an important factor of influence which is not to underestimate in education. The request of the study is not the comparison of the textbooks of both states but either to show good examples from both books and derive recommendations from good and bad examples. The Brandenburg books are the foundation for the analysis and by consulting the Berlin books some recommendations should be made about the conversion of cultural diversity in textbooks.

In the current debate there are different positions concerning intercultural education. First, there are representatives who think that differences already exist and that they should be shown in the books as well as these differences exist in real life. Accordingly, there should not only be reference to cultural differences but should be treated the topic of cultural differences and how to handle them. The contraposition argues that making cultural

differences a topic in the textbooks leads sooner to problems than it brings any benefits.

By the reading of Sigrid Luchtenberg (1999) four categories for the analysis were formed, which should serve the description of the current situation and summarize several dimensions of the categories of analysis. All categories can be divided into more advanced types, which would not be useful for this analysis, because all phenomena which appear in the books can be filed into these four categories. The starting point for the formation of groups is the explanations of the topic intercultural competence in textbooks by Sigrid Luchtenberg (Luchtenberg 1999: 79).

An assumption for the formation of the categories is the fact, that Germany a long time did not consider migration as a matter of politics until they noticed that there have to be laws to regulate the migration movements in the country. Nevertheless now Germany cannot deny that in the country live a lot of foreign people who interact. Therefore a definition could not be started at the level of a national definition of culture, but at the one that culture is a collective who is composed by people with the same interests, religion etc. The great diversity of collectives should be shown in the textbook and should reflect like this the current situation in German society.

The first category moves on a linguistic level. Terms, which are used for migrants shall be examined.

The second category has a bigger extend: firstly, it treats the use of names of migrants in the books and how these names are distributed; the representation of students from foreign countries in the pictures shown in the book, taking into account their clothes, their colour of the skin and symbols. The contents analysis will not only be made on text level, but on a pictorial level, too, because pictures appeal mostly to smaller children who cannot read and write properly.

The third type analyzes statements about the migration history of the students and their families.

The main topic of the group is the context in which cultural diversity is represented. Roles that embody people from different cultures, like for example in the economic sector, show about their position in society.

Education has to be seen as a holistic construct, which does not isolate the textbook from its context. The German books are just one fact that influences the education apart from the teacher and its interpretation of the book, the classmates and the mood of the student. Nevertheless they are an important transmitter of values.

In Germany the Textbook Institute in Braunschweig is occupied with the investigation of textbooks. Their main topics are representation and perception of foreigners and self-images related to culture. Further important topics, which are treated the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig are education in a global context, the textbook in conflict in Europe and the limits of textbooks (Homepage of the George Eckert Institute Braunschweig)⁹³

DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Important for the analysis is the basic understanding of the definition of culture which is a requirement for the analysis of culture. The traditional understanding of culture is based on the assumption that culture is a uniting element that is shared by many people. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that within a cultural group exist differences. Culture is often defined as “something universal for a society, organisation and a typical system of orientation for a group,” (Rathje 2006:12) which the majority of the members of a group for themselves and for others consider as normal, a matter of course and typical. This conception was always widely accepted, because it agrees with the subjective perception of every individual. People observed several national cultures and noticed differences between them, respectively differences were explained with cultural patterns. Until this time peoples starting point was the monocultural socialization of all individuals.

In times of globalization, the composition of the society is changing and considering the society as monocultural is not an option anymore. Especially the area of education shows that this monocultural conception of culture cannot stand the social change in society, because it does not represent the current situation in Germany and at its primary schools. The conception

⁹³ Homepage of the Georg- Eckert Institute Braunschweig: URL:
<http://www.gei.de/index.php?id=arbeitsbereiche>. 01.07.2008. Query: 30.07.2008

of a homogenous national culture needs a renewal. The society is a highly complex construct which cannot be considered as homogenous. There are a lot of subcultures in this complex construct. To arrange its environment human beings create an abstract world of symbols, like for example a language. These codes are widely shared and understood by the members of a culture. Furthermore there is still the question for universal cultural codes that are shared by every culture, which are understandable for every individual, like for example marriage, concepts of cleanliness or cooking (Maletzke 1996: 16f).

Other concepts, for example the one from Mae put the differences between cultures into the centre of attention. Starting from the assumption that every culture is hybrid and every individual is socialized differently and therefore that there exist huge differences within a culture. Emphasizing the differences can lead to a stigmatization of differences so that stressing them can cause more problem than solve any problems or clear up misunderstandings (Rathje 2006: 10).

Another approach offers Hansen with his theory of collectives, which represent one culture. He understands culture as a smaller unit and independent from national borders. Important influence on the collective and its culture have interests, age, sex, socioeconomic group as well as the education level. One individual can be part of different collectives. Within one collective there is commonness which produces feelings of unity and solidarity, without agreeing on every level. By knowing the differences within a culture, normality is created. In interaction between the different collectives there are certain types of relations. The first ones are well balanced relations where both cultures have balanced interactions, but there also exist asymmetric relationships. When one collective is inferior in the number of members and therefore they cannot trigger of an interaction or they are not recognized.

SOCIAL CHANGES

A closer view on the population development in Germany shows that the German population tends to have a higher age average than 30 years ago. There are less young people to maintain the pension system and the popu-

lation tree looks like a turned Christmas tree. Therefore there are a lot of social problems in social security to find, like the already mentioned the pension system or the governmental support for unemployed people.

Unemployment is a huge problem in several German states, but especially in the eastern part of the country. High unemployment rates force every day more children and young persons into poverty although the state tries to prevent this by offering financial support in case of unemployment. Especially in the former oriental Germany the cities have to fight against rising migration movements, because of the high unemployment rates.

Furthermore, fewer children are born and the first schools are already affected by a lack of students. Primary schools in rural sectors are closed. Schools are an important economic factor for rural sectors. Therefore, when schools are closed other commercial institutions suffer the lack of students, too. Frequently after a short time these shops have to close, because of the lack of clients.

The composition of society has changed in comparison to 1990. Today people from many different nationalities, with different traditions, life together in Germany and of course go together to school. Culture and cultural competence became more important for the daily life and today nearly everyone has contact to people from different countries, interests and socioeconomic classes. Law still not properly fixes the integration of migrants into the German society. The migration office is still looking for reasonable measure to support the integration into German society, like for example helping them with language courses or an exam on German culture, history, economy and politics.

A long time Germany did not consider itself as a country of immigration. Therefore, laws to regulate the immigration movement, especially for low qualified people, are still missing. In the meantime Germany recognized its status as an immigration country and accordingly carries out political reforms.

Another important factor that influences social changes is the technological progress. Inventions like mobile phones, personal computers and the Internet ease the communication between individuals, but also avoid the contact with real human beings. The Internet provides a great variety of possibilities as a research instrument, which can be very useful for students, but

there are also risks in the acquisition of knowledge. Children are exposed without any protection to racist, pornographic and further critical contents. Dealing with these topics has to be taught in school.

DEMANDS ON GERMAN CLASSES

The most important matters teachers have to change in their classes are to understand the group as a heterogeneous unit instead of a homogeneous entity. The German schools system is divided into school types according to their achievements in school. The division into Grundschule, Hauptschule, Gesamtschule, Realschule and Gymnasium is made by the assumption that homogeneous groups learn better. That is why changing the point of view for many teachers is very difficult. They are used to teach homogenous groups. The Pisa Study, made in several European countries, showed that such a division is not very successful, because there are still big differences in the achievements in school between the students of one class as well as the results of students from different school types can be very similar. Consequently an individualization of the classes is urgently necessary. Teachers have to pay attention to the needs of every student and support them as well as encourage them to good results. The state government makes the framework of primary school. They ask the teachers to accommodate individually teaching methods to the abilities of every student. Evaluation methods shall be more individual, too.

FRAMEWORK FOR GERMAN CLASSES

Education is sovereignty each federal state and so every state fixes its own framework for German classes. Books from the grades 1-4 are analyzed because values and norms are mainly educated in this time, what is explicitly mentioned in the paper for the framework of primary school in Brandenburg. Therefore in some states primary school is just until the fourth grade, followed by 2 years of orientation for secondary school. . While in other states primary school is from the first to the sixth grade (Framework German classes primary school 2008: 8). The framework of the primary school

in Brandenburg includes the first four years. Basically it is fixed that from “origin, social status and sex shall not result any disadvantages and either from the great variety of cultures” (Framework German classes primary school 2008: 7). Cultural Diversity should be enrichment and not a burden. Variety should not only be topic in German classes but also in other subjects to reach an integral formation. Another important point mentioned in the framework paper of German classes is the education of cultural competence outside the school, like for example in study groups after school, which are addressed to all students. These can support individual interests and topics that do not find any space in the classroom can find their space here.

Stressed is that the cultural and linguistic variety in the classroom shall be reflected in class. Languages shall be integrated into classes comparing idioms and expanding knowledge (Framework German classes primary school 2008: 24)⁹⁴. The intercultural education in class and school is a chance for everyone and supports the democratic learning (Framework German classes primary school 2008: 24)⁹⁵. The discussion with basic questions due to cultural items should be the base for the lectures.

The framework for German classes given by the state government is obligatory for all educational institutions.

CONTENTS OF THE TEXT AND WORK BOOKS

The text books from Brandenburg were examined from the first to the fourth grade, although in this paper just the fourth grade books are evaluated. There was a rising tendency of cultural diversity in the books visible from the first to the fourth grade. It was important to examine all the text books, although just the fourth grade is evaluated to make some statements about the organization of the learning process concerning culture. The used series of textbook was named Lesefreund, which are the reader and Sprachfreunde which are the workbooks. For the first grade there is just a reader which is named Fibel. Beginning from the second grade there are two text-

⁹⁴ „auf vielfältige Weise sprachvergleichend und wissenserweiternd in den Unterricht einbezogen werden kann“.

⁹⁵ Das gemeinsame Interkulturelle Lernen im Unterricht und im Schulleben ist eine Lernchance für alle und fördert das demokratische Lernen.“

books. The topics are repeated in every grade. At the beginning there is a section, where all the students shall get to know their classmates, because the classes are every year newly composed. Following chapters are included in the textbooks: the four seasons, living together, animals and plants, curiosities and interesting facts as well as the media.

In Berlin the first grade has also just a Fibel, which is more or less a reader. Then they use separated textbooks for grammar and reading. The comparison with the Brandenburg books refers to the fourth grade. In this case the textbooks from first to the fourth grade are examined, because of the same reason as above mentioned. The examined series is named Bausteine Sprachbuch und Lesebuch.

CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

This paper concentrates on the representation of cultural diversity in the German textbooks of the fourth grade to show if representation of culture corresponds to reality in the environment of the children. The categories were formed on the assumption that cultural diversity has to be shown in textbooks. There shall be a real image of the existing social reality in the region and show the students that outside of their reality exist other cultures. Another function is to make them think. Sigrid Luchtenberg proposes in her book on intercultural communicative competence three dimensions of the analysis, which are the base for the formation of the categories, but were expanded for the analysis of the textbook (Luchtenberg 1999: 80):

Terms: How are Immigrants or “the others” named? In Germany like in no other country nearly all terms for migrants have a negative connotation, because they form a duality between us and “the others”.

Representation of migrants: This category treats the description of people from other cultures. Which clothes they wear? The colour of their skin and the representation of their physical aspect play an important role. Different writings and languages are examined as well as if they are shown in original or in translation. Characteristics which were attributed to migrants and the use of non-German names are part of this category.

Background: This category treats the reason for the migration and the migration history, because the value of a person in Germany is often measured by their prosperity.

Context: The last category refers to the context in which culture is represented. Important to mention is that cultural diversity is not just visible in the daily life of people from different cultures, but when plants, animals and history are treated, there can be small excursions to other cultures other countries and their richness in plants, animals and traditions.

First the results from the textbooks from Brandenburg are presented and later compared with the textbooks from Berlin.

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTBOOK

Terms

In the textbooks of Brandenburg rarely the terms foreigner or migrant are applied. Terms like different or strange are more commonly used (Hoppe 2003:51)⁹⁶. However, these terms are not only employed for people with different cultural backgrounds but also for people with a physical or mental obstruction. Culture is not mentioned directly. Terms like multiculturalism or interculturalism are not used in any textbook. Multiculturalism is represented indirectly on a graphic level and so far perceived subliminal by the students. The pictures, painted or photographs, show people of different nationalities, but without naming their nationalities. They are shown by typical, sometimes stereotypical symbols and clothes.

In the Berlin books it is very similar; but they use the term foreigner more frequently. There is for example a poem about the topic being a foreigner. One time being foreigner in their own country is mentioned, too. The terms multiculturalism and interculturalism are used either.

⁹⁶ The rarely used German words are Ausländer and Migrant. In contrast Anders und fremd are frequently used.

Representation of cultural diversity

In the German books of Brandenburg and especially in the chapter living together as well as in the chapter which dedicate its contents to traditions and customs, cultural diversity is represented by showing different nationalities. Children with different appearances are illustrated, most of them painted.

Different writings and languages do not appear often. There is one section where the children are taught how to say “hello” in different languages. Every “hello” is accompanied by a picture of a child from this country (Hoppe 2003:113). The images mostly correspond to the stereotypes of this nationality. Migrant children are often demonstrated in difficult situations, like having problems with the German language, home sickness or the problem to get to know other children. These children have to fight against discrimination. Just a few non-German names were used. Ali is the most used foreign name in the Brandenburg books.

In comparison, the books from Berlin represent more cultural diversity. The books are characterized by widely spread cultural manifests all over the books. Cultural differences are not always explained explicitly; sometimes they are shown but not broached a topic. On page 58/59 in Bausteine Sprachbuch 4 different professions are illustrated. It is a painted picture showing people from different cultural backgrounds, which can be perceived by different appearances, with different professions. There are fashion shops, pharmacies and doctors; one of them is a coloured doctor. Different facets of the professional sector are shown, which include also coloured physicians (Bartonicek/ Fuerniss 2003: 58/59).

In Berlin many different nationalities live together and this is demonstrated naturally in the textbook. In the first chapter of the book there is given some space to exchange experiences from vacations. Connected with these exchanges is a lesson about how to say “good morning” in some important languages and how to count. Furthermore key words like house or sea are taught in English and Italian. The children are asked to share their knowledge about language they got to know on vacations or about their native language. They are asked what certain words may signify and which words

they know. Every child is called by the same word: ‘du’⁹⁷. Dividing the class into different groups is avoided by addressing to them by ‘du’. There is no one excluded by asking the Germans about their experience and foreign children about different lifestyles in their home country. In the same chapter orthography is treated and differences between the countries are mentioned. In German nouns are capitalized and in other languages just proper nouns are capitalized. Pictograms were used to help the students to find out the meaning of words (Hoppe 2003:6). Non-German names are more often used and in nearly all chapters.

Description of the migration background

In the textbooks of the school in Frankfurt (Oder) the origin and the circumstances which made the family emigrate do not play a big role. When the topic is mentioned the main reason to leave their country are economic hardship, the hope for a better life in Germany and political persecution. The immigration of highly qualified professionals is not mentioned in none of the textbooks. In this context economic problems in the home country were mentioned.

In the Berlin books just one time were pointed out the reason for the emigration to Germany, in a conversation between father and daughter about the economic situation of the family and their perspectives in Germany. Mainly the daughter is shocked about the circumstances they live under in Germany and that their life in their home country was better although they could not always get everything they wanted to eat (Hoppe 2003: 137).

Context

The topic of this chapter is the context in which culture and cultural diversity is shown. Festivals like Christmas, birthdays or Halloween are an occasion to demonstrate cultural differences between cultures. The different ways of celebrating festivals are stressed. Often are asked questions which divide the class into two groups. One example is the question about the life

⁹⁷ Means you used in an informal sector or between friends and in the family as well as to younger persons.

in Germany and the life in distant countries (Hoppe 2003:54). The class is divided into German students and foreign students from so called distant countries. The question fakes a division of the class into native and foreign students. In the own country living cultures are not included and so far migrant children excluded. Starting point is a homogenous German culture, where subcultures do not exist at all. Cultural differences in eating habits are often topic of the representation of culture, as well as which foods are typical for a country, how they are prepared and to be eaten.

Two times cultural differences are mentioned, like for example differences in appearance (Hoppe 2003: 137) or how school is constituted in certain countries (Hoppe 2003: 22/23). Other collectives like people with obstructions, mainly white people in wheelchairs, are mentioned.

In the German textbooks from Berlin culture is widely spread over all the chapters and more nationalities are included into the reporting. The reporting is about cultural artefacts in connection with sports, living together, work, funny stories and the last chapter is named: “What do you think?” Stories and situations are depicted, which shall make the children think about these topics and situations. One of these stories is “Who is afraid of the black man” (Hoppe 2003: 208/209). This story is a reflection about different appearances and struggles between children of different skin colours.

Another chapter describes the situation in distant countries. One topic of this chapter is school in certain countries as well as the marriage with 14 years. Funny stories from Turkey, for example, can be found there. (Hoppe 2003: 138)

Plays are a popular method to make the children think and to encourage them to act as if they were the migrant and would live their daily life. This is a good way to make them understand the problems and feelings of migrant children and maybe become a bit more responsible (Hoppe 2003: 177/178). Often they talk in school about experiences with other languages, from vacations or from their home country; every child can contribute to the class. The students shall find out all foreign words hidden in a picture and think about how somebody can order something to eat if he cannot speak the language of the country (Hoppe 2003: 7). Obstructions are less mentioned than in the other textbook series.

CRITICS

In Brandenburg textbooks have to be appreciated that they made a great effort to include cultural diversity into the textbooks. Even if the Berlin textbooks mastered better the representation of the diversity, which can be explained with the greater diversity in Berlin. Social changes were included in the design of the German books. Media are an important topic and many issues are connected with internet research. Migrants in the textbooks of Frankfurt (Oder) are just shown in some chapters there are attempts visible to show more about the background of migrants. They tried to show the existing diversity of languages and traditions by fairytales, stories from other countries and reports about topics like school and friendship between children from different cultures.

Nevertheless, there are a lot of good examples given in the Berlin books, especially concerning questions. They use in the textbooks constantly ‘du’ for all questions, which include all students and do not divide the class into two or more groups. The questions are open and offer space to express their feelings, opinions and experiences. The children can contribute their knowledge and the others take benefit of everyone’s experiences. As already mentioned in the description of the other books “distant country” is not the best term for other countries because it fakes that other cultures and their customs are far away although they can be next door neighbours.

In the Brandenburg textbooks the pictures constructed of other cultures have a negative connotation, because of the little integration of cultural diversity which is moreover concentrated just on certain chapters of the book and not widely spread like in the Berlin textbooks. The representation of non-German names in negative situations makes the picture of other cultures worse. They seem to be developing, poor and underdeveloped.

In the textbook used in Berlin cultural diversity is more represented, sometimes just in pictures without naming the countries of origin explicitly, but to accept cultural diversity as normal. Sensitization for daily situations succeeds because of the combination of daily situations with cultural diversity than in the other textbooks. These situations become part of their life and they get to know how to handle them.

Often popular cultural artefacts stand representative for the country, like for example the mangas for Japan and these small dolls you can tell your worries to, for Guatemala. It would be better to give some information about the life in these countries and try to show the commonness between both countries. Especially similarities should be stressed and differences moved into the background. In both books mainly migrants with an exotic or respected country of origin are represented. Neither the Turkish minority in Berlin nor the Polish minority in Frankfurt (Oder) were included into the reports of the books. On the graphic level Spanish, Portugues or coloured people are shown, but very few Polish and Turkish people. If Turkish students were mentioned in the books, the context was mainly negative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over all it would be very useful if cultural diversity is not just concentrated on certain chapter but widely spread over all chapters in the books, even if in some chapters it is just mentioned that there exist plants, animal and customs which are different from ours. Especially the minorities living in the region should be integrated better into the books. Their literature, customs and history can be interesting and help to understand their conduct. The aim is to cause understanding to deviated behaviour and educate the cultural competences of the children.

Another mean to integrate cultural diversity properly can be the use of resources in class. Open question make that every student can contribute its experiences and nobody is excluded. Suggestions for the tasks can be given in the textbooks. All the productions of the students, pictures, poems, short stories or fairytales can be recollected and published in a book. As a support can be used text from different countries and in the end of the book there can be a vocabulary list to support children whose native language is not German.

Questions should be directly addressed to the students and there should not be a division of the class.

The chapter which tries to make the students think seem to be very effective. Social problems are picked up and the students can express their opinion. In these stories nationalities are not mentioned to avoid stigmatiza-

tions. Situations of the daily life are treated and they concern all, foreigners as well as Germans.

The integration of different writings and languages of other countries in original and translations appears no that often in the Brandenburg books. Open questions referring to knowledge about other languages and writings, from vacations or their parents, offer the possibility to share their knowledge with all the other students.

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INTERCULTURAL APPROACH IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MADRID: SCHOOL PRACTICE AT A GLANCE

Inés Gil Jaurena, UNED, Faculty of Education, Spain

This paper presents some of the results and conclusions obtained in a research developed for my doctoral studies. Being the topic the educational practices in primary schools in Madrid analyzed from an intercultural approach, in the text I will show the objectives of the research, the frame of the study (both theoretical and contextual), the methodology I have used (based on observation in the schools/classrooms and interviews with teachers), and, mainly, some of the results and conclusions obtained. A general view of the main results will be offered, as a synthesis of the research I have developed. The conclusions about educational practices relate to the following dimensions: the conceptualization of diversity that the teachers in the study hold; their ideas about the teaching-learning process; their practices related to classroom methodology, resources and assessment procedures; and the school climate. Other commentaries about the context of the research, improvement proposals or implications for teacher training will be presented as well.

Key words: Intercultural approach, school practice, Spanish context, teacher training, observation scales

INTRODUCTION

Improvement in education in order to guarantee quality and equity requires a previous analysis of the educational policies and practices developed in a given context. Being this the case, and framed by the intercultural approach as a perspective that considers both aims (quality and equity in education) (Bennett (1990: 15), I have analyzed school practices in primary education in Madrid (Spain), as a diagnosis of the situation that supports subsequent improvement proposals and measures.

The focuses of the research have been the following:

On one hand, primary schools as a part of compulsory education, which has the moral and legal duty of offering quality education for all the students, baseline to have opportunities for a worthy life (Aguado, 1996).

On the other hand, cultural diversity as an increasing concern in the Spanish society and educational system, which requires an approach that helps to reflect and act in a way that transforms education in order to promote an scenario where diversity is respected and considered in a broad and dynamic sense (Abdallah-Preteuille, 2001) for the development of students and learning to live together (Gorski, 2000; Nieto, 1996).

On a third place, educational aspects that relate directly to teachers (ideas they express, school and classroom practices they develop), considered key agents in the educational process (Fernández Enguita, 2001; Pike and Selby, 1998: 59).

FRAMEWORK

Before describing the field work and its results, it is important to briefly explain which has been the frame within which the work has been developed, both in the conceptual and contextual senses.

Theoretical frame

School practice has been analyzed from an intercultural education perspective, considered as

an holistic and inclusive approach that, starting from respect and recognition of cultural diversity, seeks the reform of the school as a whole in order to increase educational equity, overcome racism/discrimination/exclusion, promote intercultural communication and support social change under social justice principles (Gil Jaurena, 2002b).

This approach is considered a possible and desirable educational response towards diversity, beyond assimilationism, segregation and partial measures.

It has its roots in interdisciplinary topics and concepts, being the following the most relevant for this work:

From anthropology, a broad definition of culture and cultural diversity, cultural pluralism and cultural relativism as an approach to diversity.

From sociology, systemic models for explaining social and educational dynamics and structures, and the consideration of schools as social change agents.

From psychology, cognitive models about prejudices and stereotypes, cross-cultural perspectives and the socio-emotional approach.

From pedagogy, diversity and adaptive models in the conceptualization of differences (beyond deficit models), constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, and critical pedagogy.

Contextual frame

The context where the research has been developed is the educational practice in primary schools in the Community of Madrid. Before entering the field, some aspects of the contexts have been analyzed, being the following the main results about the context (Gil Jaurena, 2008):

The “official” idea of diversity, thus the one hold and transmitted by the Ministry of Education (analyzed through the educational statistics (MEC, 2004) and through the recommendations about diversity education given to teachers in the Ministry of Education website) confound intercultural education with education of immigrant or foreign students (Gil Jaurena and Téllez, 2005). Diversity is categorized and limited to national origin. This diversity is viewed as a problem in education. The information given to teachers (CNICE, 2004) shows a monolithic view of culture and stereotyped images about students (generally negative).

The Spanish educational policies about dealing with cultural diversity (Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo, MEC

1990; Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación, MEC 2002) show a concern about diversity (not explicitly about cultural diversity), and solve it through compensatory education measures stated from a deficit model about differences (del Olmo and Gil Jaurena, 2007). Diversity is identified with immigration and special needs.

The practices and resources for diversity promoted by the educational governmental agency in Madrid, sometimes under an “intercultural” title, show special measures for special students: linking classrooms for foreign students (del Olmo and Gil Jaurena, 2007), translation services, mother tongue programmes in portuguese and moroccan for students with that origin (Gil Jaurena, 2004). General measures for all the students are not addressed from the educational Administration.

This panorama that offers a narrow view of diversity (associated with foreign students) and special educational measures gives an idea of the context where the research has been developed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on previous researches (Aguado et al., 1999, 2005, 2006, 2007; Banks, 1997, 1999; Bennett, 1990; Sleeter and Grant, 2003), and considering that one of the focuses is to consider aspects directly related to teachers and that fall under their control in some ways, I have chosen five dimensions for the analysis of the educational practices, organized as follows:

- a) Teachers’ ideas, beliefs and perceptions
 - a.1) Ideas and beliefs about diversity
 - a.2) Conceptions about the teaching-learning process and school achievement
- b) Practices developed at school and in the classroom
 - b.1) Didactical strategies and teaching methodology and resources
 - b.2) Assessment and evaluation
 - b.3) School climate

The field work has been developed in 26 primary classrooms, located in 14 different schools in the Community of Madrid, during years 2004 and 2005. Different collaborators have participated in the data collection (23 in total), and 27 teachers have been interviewed.

The data collection techniques have been both observation and interviews, done through three structured observation scales (for the classroom, the resources and the school) and semi-structured interviews with teachers.

The instruments have been developed or adapted from a previous research project (Aguado et al., 1999), and have been tested in different occasions (Aguado and Gil Jaurena, 2003; Gil Jaurena, 2002a; Gil Jaurena, 2002b; Aguado et al., 2007).

The observation scales are composed by different items, and each item requires an evaluation of the frequency (from 0 to 4) and a written commentary, observation or example that justifies or explains the quantitative evaluation. The information collected by this means has been used to describe and analyze the practices developed by the teachers observed (a.2, b.1, b.2, b.3) .

The information collected through the interviews to teachers has been used to describe the ideas about diversity (dimension a.1) and school achievement (dimension a.2) that teachers hold.

RESULTS

The great scope of information that has been recovered hinders the possibility of showing the results with detail. Thus, a selection of the main results is provided in this section, summarizing the general opinion when regarding to conceptual dimensions (a.1 and a.2), and focused in the extreme findings extracted from the research in the case of dimensions of school practice (b.1 to b.3): what is done and what is not in relation to each dimension. These summaries are shown in three tables.

Ideas about diversity

Teachers, when asked about “How would you describe your group of students? What characteristics do they show? How is it composed?” describe

his/her group putting an emphasis on homogeneity and general characteristics of the group in a 33% of the cases. When diversity is emphasized, it refers to capability and performance stressing difficulties and underachievement (68% of the cases) and to diversity in “culture” or national origin (60%). 20% of the cases mix these two categories, and talk about under-performance joint to cultural diversity (cultural origin different from the dominant).

Thus, diversity in most of the cases relates to:

- lack, difficulty, compensation needs, and/or
- national origin of students, understood as a static and internally homogeneous category

This conceptualization is related to a deficit model, far from how an intercultural approach understands diversity.

Ideas about the educational process and school achievement

Constructivist principles of teaching and learning are present in some sense in the discourse and practices of the observed teachers in their classrooms. For instance, it seems to be assumed that learning is an active process and that meaningful learning is linked to students previous knowledge, principles that are applied in the classrooms.

But, on the other hand, other key aspects in constructivism are not considered or implemented. In this sense, teachers have a total control of the educational process and students participation and decision about learning is limited.

When asked about what school achievement is, half of the interviewed teacher (48%) identify it as personal development, good behavior, attitudes such as respect, etc. In a more limited sense, 30% consider that school achievement refers to academic learning and contents. 18% explain school achievement as autonomous learning and critical thinking, and 4% relate it to social change.

When asked about why students that achieve well reach good results, these are the explanation that teachers give about school achievement:

- 30% causes internal to students: attention, effort
- 44% causes internal and external to students, specially families
- 26% causes internal and external to students, specially schools

On the opposite side, when asked about why students that underachieve get bad results, these are the explanation that teachers give about no school achievement:

- 38% causes internal to students: lack of effort (17%), deficit (21%)
- 58% causes internal and external to students, specially families
- 4% causes internal and external to students, specially schools

The role of schools in the (under)achievement of students is believed to be very low, specially in the case of bad results. This result is relevant from the intercultural perspective, which considers teachers and schools as key agents in the educational process and in the pursue of quality and equity in education. A reflection about teachers beliefs seems to be urgent in the educational agenda (Gil Jaurena, 2007).

Classroom methodologies and resources

In the explained conceptual frame that teachers present in this research, the results on dimensions of school practice show the most and least frequent practices observed in the schools and classrooms.

In the case of the kind of strategies, activities and resources used in the classrooms, these have been the main results:

CLASSROOM METHODOLOGIES AND RESOURCES

TEACHERS DO	TEACHERS DON'T DO
cooperative learning... with social purposes (not academic)	activities about prejudices, stereotypes
welcome activities for newcomer students	elaborate behavior norms in collaboration with students
work with projects (sometimes)	materials don't challenge stereotypes
use variety of resources	
materials reflect superficial aspects of diverse groups	

Assessment

The most and least frequent practices in relation to students assessment are the following:

ASSESSMENT

TEACHERS DO	TEACHERS DON'T DO
communicate evaluation results to the families (reports and interviews)	reflect about evaluation (meta-evaluation)
individual assessment of students	make explicit the evaluation criteria
use observation of students as a means for evaluation	use evaluation methods such as co-evaluation or self-evaluation
decide on the evaluation methods and criteria	consider evaluation as a part of the learning process
	consider language issues when students first language is not spanish

School climate

In relation to general aspects of the school, the most and least frequent practices are:

SCHOOL CLIMATE

TEACHERS DO	TEACHERS DON'T DO
promote communication with families	reflect cultural diversity themselves
value diversity (in the school documents)	value linguistic diversity
try to put the emphasis on similarities and not on differences	participate in teacher training activities about diversity issues

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

The results of this research show an ambiguous situation around interculturalism and diversity education. While diversity is conceived from a negative perspective by teachers, who feel disempowered about students' (under)achievement, some practices try to challenge this idea and work towards structuring more comfortable environments for all (not always reaching this goal). Some efforts and measures follow an intercultural approach, but some of them even go against it and its values: diversity and equity. As seen, school practice and ideas that the observed and interviewed teachers express match the ones hold by the educational Administration (see point 2.2. about contextual frame of the research), so any improvement proposal needs to address both political and school levels (theoretical and practical).

According to this, a main issue when referring to teachers and intercultural approach is teacher education, which, bearing the results in mind, needs to be focused on promoting awareness and reflection (individual and in collaboration) about ideas and practices. A conception of teachers as key agents for change entails their commitment towards reconsidering their educational theories and practices and assuming an intercultural perspective in their daily tasks.

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IV. POSTERS AND EXPERIENCES

OUR MOTTO: 'CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CULTURE OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS...'

Linda Vanderlooven⁹⁸

WHAT IS THE LEONARDO LYCEUM QUELLINSTRAAT?

In a 10-storey building in the town centre of Antwerp, we live together with a nursery school, a primary school and our secondary school: 600 children in total.

In Belgium, the first grade consists of the first and second year of general secondary education. For over 30 years the Quellinstraat organized only this first grade. But in September 2007 we started with a second grade. We count 300 pupils, 54 nationalities. Two third of our pupils are foreigners.

What about our school population?

We recruit mainly from socially deprived families, foreigners and natives alike. But for the past few years more and more native middle-class parents chose for our strong didactic program. As a consequence our school population is multicultural, multilingual and extremely diverse in terms of learning abilities.

Newcomers

One fifth of our pupils are newcomers from all over the world. During their first year in Antwerp they're intensively trained to learn Dutch in order to fit into the regular school system. We help these newcomers to develop all skills needed for school and for everyday life.

⁹⁸ Supervisor Leonardo Lyceum Quellinstraat, Antwerp, Belgium.

We also have a special illiterate group. Every year we welcome some children (Romanies, from some African countries) who never went to school before, even though they are 12 years or older. We offer all these youngsters a safe environment so that they can integrate in the best possible way.

Why did our school win the Evens prize ? What makes our school so special? 3 items:

1. *Learning in diversity*: every student has a different background and is good at different things. How can we make better use of that?

We try to create a relaxed and warm atmosphere, but disciplined through clear and transparent schoolrules.

Inclusion : equal chances for everyone, regardless of nationality, religion, culture, social class, physique,...

All students are different. Some are thinkers, others are creators or problem-solvers. We guide each student to find his personal best method.

We give strong support to linguistically deprived pupils.

We stimulate self-activation and independence.

Our education focuses on individual needs.

We offer a lot of socio-emotional and learning support.

There is a unique religious/moral program. Christian, Islamic, Jewish and non-believing pupils learn to appreciate each other through joint activities.

The school pursues a social policy. Poverty-stricken families are offered financial and material support.

Our students participate in decision-making.

2. *Educational innovation*. How do we do it?

A student's brain is not just a barrel into which you pour all the knowledge. Students are responsible for their own learning, while the teacher is only acting as a coach.

In the open learning centres students can work at their own pace. They have computers, dictionaries, encyclopedia and a coach at their service. Students are trained for self-assessment (e.g. portfolios of a student's performance, products and evaluation).

3. *New second grade vision.*

For our school population, moving up to the second grade gave troubles in the past. Why ?

Because of the classical structure/vision. Study choices have to be made after the 1st grade. The pupils are 14 years old then. Too early to make the right choice.

In the second grade, schools expect immediate results and offer very little learning support. Specific knowhow for our group of pupils is missing.

The result of all this is a 50% failure. Many pupils quickly slide from general to technical and vocational education, as we call it the 'waterfall system'. Potential talents are wasted, motivation is gone, disappointment, ... and even aversion towards school.

That's why we developed our second grade vision, which is different from others.

Our project: '*Give talents more time to blossom*'. Prevent the waterfall, stimulate the salmon!

A comprehensive second grade:

We offer a solid general program for all students, with 2 main study fields : languages and sciences.

Individual learning tracks for all students, especially for our newcomers. Their tutors follow and coach them during the next few years. This makes the transfer of newcomers to regular classes smoother.

Every student works at his own pace : teachers provide red, orange and green subject material.

We postpone study choices and the youngsters learn how to make good choices in the first place.

We focus on the essential curriculum (the goals set by the government).

All study choices are left open.

Failure is prevented by concentrating on reaching the goals at the end of the second grade. This gives some more time to the linguistically deprived students.

Want to be in our laboratory, too ? Just visit us at www.quellin.net ! Or come to Antwerp. Always welcome!

INTER NETWORK POSTER



Intercultural education. Teacher training and school practice.

PROJECT REF.: 134367-LLP-1-2007-1-ES-COMENIUS-CNW



What do we intend?

- The INTER Network, created in 2007 with the financial support of the European Commission (2007-2010), aims to improve quality of education and contribute to innovation in schools by:
 - Assisting them in adoption/implementation of an intercultural approach.
 - Fostering the reflection on cultural diversity and providing a scenario in which to cooperate, exchange and elaborate practical tools for initial and in-service teacher training
 - The INTER Network intends to create a learning community where teaching and learning are conceived as an active and cooperative process. We 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.
 - A view of what the future looks like: teacher training activities in order to promote intercultural education in schooling practices

INTER Network Structure

- The Inter Network is structured in a four-level organization in order to safeguard the involvement of all partners:
- General Assembly: with the participation of one representative from all partners institutions.
 - Steering Committee: prepare and advise on the overall policy, direction and management of the network.
 - Coordinator Office, at UNED with periodical meetings.
 - Work Groups: 7 workpackages related to: maintaining the network, evaluation, dissemination, exploitation, state of innovation, creating teacher training activities and directory of school practices and implementation.

Contact:

Teresa Aguado Odina (Coord.)
Faculty of Education.
National University of Distance Education (UNED)
Madrid, Spain
maguado@edu.uned.es
<http://internetwork.up.pt>

What do we want to promote?

- Communication between participants and facilities:
 - Meetings and Open Conferences
 - Web site: <http://internetwork.up.pt>
 - Virtual platform
 - Electronic Newsletters
- Exchanges of results, ideas and innovation: reports on the main topics of the INTER Network: intercultural education-theoretical foundations, teacher training initiatives, school practices, resources, communication and exchange.
- Resources for intercultural education: elaboration, implementation and dissemination.

Who are we?

- INTER Network partners are Universities, Schools, Research Centres and other Institutions related to Intercultural Education:
- Coordinator: National University of Distance Education (Spain)
 - Spanish Council of Scientific Research (CSIC, Spain)
 - Complutense University of Madrid (UCM, Spain)
 - Infant and Primary Rosa Chacel School (Spain)
 - Fundación Hogar del Empleado School (FUHEM, Spain)
 - Centre for Educational Research and Documentation (CIDE, Spain)
 - Miguel de Cervantes School (Spain)
 - Centre for Intercultural Studies. Verona University (Italy)
 - Association for International Training and Research (AFORII, Italy)
 - Secondary School Montorio 17 (Italy)
 - University of Latvia (Latvia)
 - Metis Education (Malta)
 - University of the Reunion (France)
 - University of Oslo (Norway)
 - Spikkestad School (Norway)
 - International Association for Intercultural Education (The Netherlands)
 - Navreme Knowledge Development (Austria)
 - ECORYS Research and Consulting (Poland)
 - University of Porto (Portugal)
 - Paula Frassinetti School of Education (Portugal)
 - Sardão School (Portugal)
 - Education Research Institut (Slovenia)
 - Nottingham Trent University (United Kingdom)

Authors: Carmen Osuna Nevado (UNED)
Belén Ballesteros (UNED)