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# uniE culture

## **UNICULTURE HANDBOOK** **for academic teaching staff**

**Intellectual Output 2**  
**coordinated by**



**Transilvania  
University  
of Brasov**

**Project: Development of innovative approach for training for university professors to work in the modern diverse and intercultural environment UNICULTURE 2019-1-RO01-KA203-063400**

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## Introduction

The “UniCulture Handbook for academic teaching staff” has been developed within the Erasmus+ project “Development of innovative approach for training for university professors to work in the modern diverse and intercultural environment” UniCulture 2019-1-RO01-KA203-063400. The project is coordinated by Transilvania University of Braşov (UNITBV, Romania) and is implemented in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University (BUCKS, United Kingdom), Zagreb University (UNIZG, Croatia), Foundation for the Development of International and Educational Activity (FRAME, Poland) and Pax Rhodopica Foundation (PAX, Bulgaria). The project implementation timeline is November 2019 to December 2021.

The Handbook’s aim is to provide a theoretical background on teaching and working in academic intercultural and multicultural environments. The target audience of the Handbook is composed of university professors and assistants, but the book might be also useful for researchers, administrators and all the staff working and interacting with international students, students with diverse cultural backgrounds or with students at risk. Nevertheless, the book promotes social cohesion, respect for diversity, tolerance and equity, and can be a tool for all academic staff willing to improve their skills and knowledge.

Along with the “UniCulture Workbook for academic teaching staff” and the “Manual for trainers”, the Handbook forms a complete training package to be used by university professors and assistants in order to improve their social and teaching competences on working in intercultural and multicultural environments. The UniCulture training is designed to follow a b-learning approach, including options for self-study, online and face-to-face meetings and sessions. All self-study materials are available on the project website.

The Handbook is structured in four modules and 19 chapter presenting concepts and terminology and outlining the leading theoretical models and recent developments in the field. All project partners contributed to content development, with the advantage of sharing valuable national bibliographic resources.

The first module, “Socio-cultural competences in multicultural and intercultural environments”, was developed with the contribution of FRAME and UNITBV. It comprises five chapters and defines central concepts such as culture, globalizations, multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism, social identity. The leading theoretical approaches are presented, along with European Union policies and frameworks aimed at promoting cultural diversity and the developing of intercultural competencies. Furthermore, the module introduces

a relatively new topic, i.e., using symbolic communication and visual data for teaching in intercultural environments.

The second module, “Models for education”, was developed by UNIZG, PAX and UNITBV, and consists of five chapters. The module highlights theoretical models and ideological frameworks of intercultural and inclusive education. Key concepts such as prejudice, discrimination, racism, intercultural dialog, multicultural society, etc. are defined, along with the presentation of European policies on inclusive education, key features of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural pedagogy.

The third module, “Theoretical approaches and technologies of interaction with multilingual students”, was developed by PAX, UNITBV and BUCKS, and is structured in five chapters. The module presents leading paradigms of teaching and working in multicultural environment (e.g., the ethnic additive paradigm, the self-concept development paradigm, the cultural deprivation paradigm, the cultural difference paradigm, the language paradigm, the cultural ecology paradigm, the protective disidentification paradigm, the structural paradigm, the antiracist paradigm), insights on ethnocultural stereotypes and best practices regarding students’ evaluation (as resulted from the literature on docimology, assessment, validation). The module also introduces collaborative tools (learning platforms and massive open online courses, social media platforms and telecommunications applications) useful for teaching in intercultural environments.

The fourth module, “Social inclusion in universities”, was developed by BUCKS and UNIZG, and is structured in three chapters. The module presents a series of features of social inclusion in higher education, along with the European Union policy framework for social inclusion, previous experiences of member states in the development and implementation of strategies for social inclusion policies in higher education and associated challenges.

Each module of the Handbook was designed as an independent learning unit and each chapter provides references for further readings. Furthermore, for each Handbook chapter a set of case studies, scenarios and applications are presented in the Workbook in order to facilitate applications and practical implementation in the classroom. Readers are thus encouraged to use both complementary materials (Handbook and Workbook) available on the project website ([www.uniculture.unitbv.ro](http://www.uniculture.unitbv.ro)) if they decide for the self-training route, to provide feedback on their progress or any query using the contact details on the website.

## **MODULE I.**

### **Socio-cultural competences in multicultural and intercultural environments**

- 1.1. Globalization from a social perspective**
- 1.2. Culture as a social phenomenon**
- 1.3. Social and intercultural competences**
- 1.4. Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, Transculturalism**
- 1.5. Social and individual identity**
- 1.6. Symbolic communication and visual data in intercultural environments**

## 1.1. GLOBALIZATION FROM A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

by FRAME Foundation, Poland<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Globalization is a term that nowadays can be regarded as the description of a new philosophy of perceiving the world. It touches on all kinds of social relations, as well as the identity of individuals towards the environment. From a cultural perspective, it enables contemporary cultures to mix, which has the positive consequence of building cultural diversity, but it also creates challenges in the form of dangers to smaller, less attractive or marginalized cultures, risking to go extinct in the acculturation process. Globalization, however, is an irreversible process, so we are faced with a challenge: how to communicate between the various cultures, how to work in a diverse environment, where everyone may have different habits, different styles of life. These processes are supported by the possibilities of much greater mobility thanks to the development of the means of transport. In addition, the technological advancements has transformed us into a global society with unprecedented access to information, which, in turn, poses new challenges, first, to education systems, which, due to the dynamics of world development, are quickly becoming obsolete.

*Keywords:* globalization, multicultural environment, social relations, mobility, access to information

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## 1.1. Globalization from a social perspective

### 1. Definition of Globalization

Globalization is a term that used to be derived from economics. But it is not a well-known fact that this word was first implemented in the field of education (James and Steger, 2014). It was around 1935 when Scottish educator William Boyd stated that: “Wholeness ... integration, globalization ... would seem to be the keywords of the new education view of mind: suggesting negatively, antagonism to any conception of human experience which over-emphasizes the constituent atoms, parts, elements” (Boyd and MacKenzie, 1930, p. 350). But from the 1930s, to the 1980s, the connotation of this word has been changed. From the description of the “global mind” to the description of global economy. The first popular meaning of globalization was connected to the economy, as it was a consequence of the development of the means of transport. Faster and more spacious, carriers could spread more and more goods to more and more countries. Thus, the supply chains became longer and more complicated. But most of all, it created a process of denationalization of capital and means of production (Benería Berik and Floro 2016, pp. 95-96). The means of transport, however, caused not only goods to be widely transported. It had a big influence on the mobility of people around the world. And the development of communication media (especially the Internet) made the world much smaller. People started to perceive the world in a more global instead of local way. So, it can be stated that two main areas had the most important impact on globalization:

- movement of people - caused by the development of transport systems, but also by the global growth of wealth (United Nation, 2015);
- movement of information - caused by technology development, especially in the field of ICT, but also by the fact of better and wider global education for people (United Nation, 2015).

Yet this also caused the multidimensional relations in our life to be more visible and determined. It became more and more clear that all areas of our life are connected and tied by mutual relations. The graph (Figure 1) shows the relations among the spheres of human existence. They are interconnected by two-way relationships in which various dependencies function.



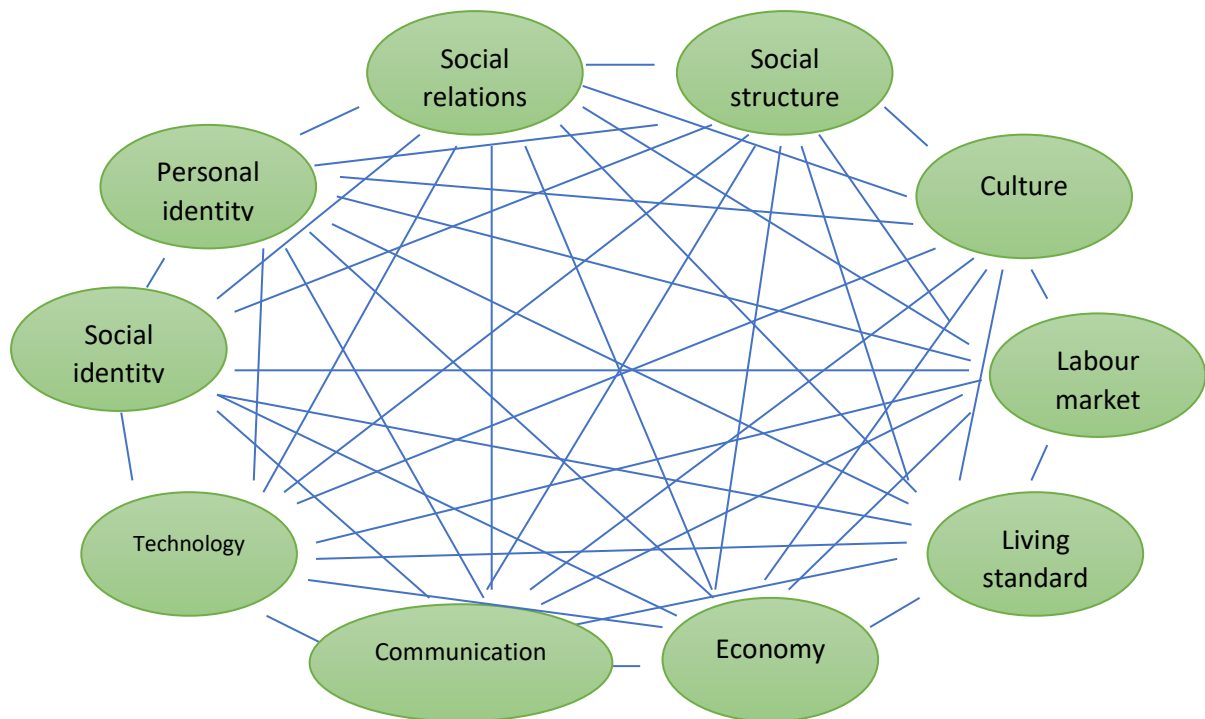


Figure 1. SEQ Global relations

Let us take an example: personal (self-) identity is the set of personal features and can be perceived as an indicator on how an individual is aware of his difference with respect to others (Deschamps and Devos, 1998, p. 3). It is stated in many papers that there is no possibility of self-awareness without awareness of others (Phillips & Silvia, 2005), so the relation between personal and social identity is obvious. If we feel like a citizen of Europe, we have to identify ourselves as a part of European community. But to develop personal identity, we should also have communication skills, which are dependent on: culture, as language is one of its components; social structure that enables us to identify with a specific group of people (e.g., teachers) and social relations, when we need to feel social responsibility for our students. But to feel this responsibility we must also have a sense of the importance of one's profession, one of the determinants of which is economic status, and thus the standard of living. The prospect of employment in the labor market is also important, as this has an impact on planning one's own development. Not to mention the necessity of functioning in the world of technology, adequate to the environment in which we operate. This shows the complicated web of contemporary relations. It is worth to reflect on these as not to think about nowadays human beings in separate categories or aspects (*see exercise 1.1 in Workbook*).

Thus, globalization became not only the term to describe specific aspects of our life, like economy or communication, but also the way of global thinking: about the world, us in it and the relations between us, us and the world, us and the culture. According to Scholte (2000), the definition of globalization that includes social issues can be pinned down by referring to the following aspects:

- globalization as internationalization, meaning growth in international exchange and interdependence;
- globalization as liberalization; this considers open global trade policies through international commercial and especially financial institutions;
- globalization as universalization; this is the creation of a global culture through the spread of common experiences;
- globalization as westernization (or Americanization), referring to the spread of social structures and modernity across borders, often to the detriment of local culture;
- globalization as deterritorialization: this is through the deepening of social relations between localities throughout the world in such a way that local events are increasingly shaped by distant phenomena and vice versa.

Yet, concerning the multidimensional aspect of globalization, it seems clear that we cannot rely on a single definition of globalization, however comprehensive (James and Steger, 2014). Moreover, globalization can be perceived from the perspective of development, as well as from a perspective of fear (Gogacz, 2013). Development is obviously connected with the spreading of ideas and thoughts, but there is also a dark side to the phenomenon: universalization and westernization can cause the process of acculturation (Berry, 2008), especially in relation to cultures considered less attractive or marginalized. From the perspective of multiculturalism, education processes should not be focused on development only, but also on preventive approaches against acculturation. Efforts should be made in highlighting cultural diversity and supporting marginalized cultures, thus preventing acculturation. However, it should be remembered that, like globalization itself, the process of acculturation is also a natural process that cannot be stopped. However, the word “development” needs to be looked at, as it should be properly spelled out, especially in the context of cultural and social changes, but also environmental changes. Incorrectly conducted development may lead to numerous crises and contradictions (Soliz, 2016). For example, the development in global industry entails the search for cheap labor in less developed countries, which in turn leads to deepening differences in the

wealth of individual parts of the world (Benería, Berik and Floro, 2016). We can add to this the use of natural resources without any ecological moderation or awareness happening in certain areas. It therefore becomes clear that there is a need to deal with some of the challenges of globalization. The most important ones are:

- taking care of sustainable development;
- proper migration policies;
- preventing economic, social and cultural marginalization in the globalized world;
- preserving cultural diversity;
- creating and developing tools for intercultural dialogue.

While the first two challenges depend on politicians and governments, the last two belong to the sphere of education, while the middle challenge connects both spheres and should be the result of cooperation between government agencies and people involved in the educational process. From the perspective of education, we can think about what we can do to meet these challenges. If you take a closer look at each challenge, you will notice that they form a logical sequence that starts with the last challenge. To prevent marginalization, a common, global environment for the coexistence of different cultures (including minor ones) should be created. And to create such an environment, dialogue is a crucial and fundamental ability. So, what can we do to ensure such skills among as many people as it is possible? Here are some propositions:

1. Include in education curricula soft skills from the start of the education process (pre-schools), onward.
2. Provide teaching staff with training in communicative skills, with a particular emphasis on intercultural communication.
3. Special emphasis on the value of diversity in culture by teaching about the cultures of minorities or little-known cultures, such as: Lemkos, Crimean Tatars, Basques, Kurds, Sami, or others. *Please also refer to exercise in the Workbook.*

## **2. Mobility**

The mobility process is the foundation of globalization. As it was stated above, the two main subjects of the mobility that caused globalization are: movement of people and movement of information.

### *Movement of people*

The development of transportation means during the 20<sup>th</sup> and through two decades of the

21<sup>st</sup> Century has dramatically increased. The journeys covering both short and long distances became much faster and more affordable. Travelling by car, fast trains and plain is now available almost to everyone, especially in developed and developing countries. Table 1 presents some facts about the shift from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the present times.

Table 1. Facts and figures about the transport in the 1920s and 2010s. Source: Desk research

Facts	1920s*	2010s*
Car production in the world	3 962 000	96 922 080**
Passengers carried by aviation	600	4 543 000 000
Passengers carried by train	1 200 000 000	31 162 000 000

\*Data per selected year. \*\* Data for top 50 manufacturers only

Statistically – each EU citizen travelled by any motorized mean of transport in 2015 over 12 000 kilometers (European Commission, 2015). This is also possible thanks to more efficient and comfortable passenger public and private massive transport means; however, cars are still the most popular among Europeans. In Figure 2 there are examples of changes in average speed for the most popular public means of long-distance transport.

These facts explained the mobility of people around the world. But the mobility of people is caused not only by the development of the means of transportation. However, tourism still accounts for the biggest number of travelers, as according to the European Commission more than 62% of European Citizens took a tourist trip in 2017 (Eurostat, 2019), there is also significant migration throughout the whole world. Only in European Union, in 2018, 7.8% of the population (i.e., almost 40 million) live in another EU country than their country of origin and 4.4% of the population (i.e., 22.5 million) of European Union are from outside of it. The migration process is depicted in Table 2.

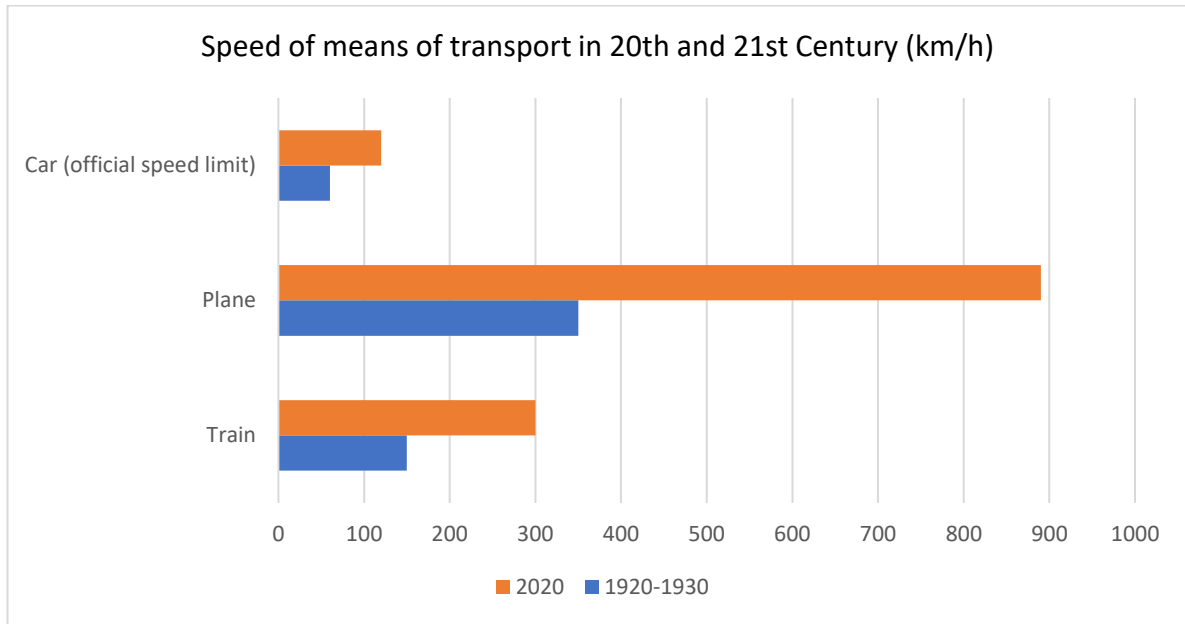


Figure 2. Average speed of means of transport in 1920s and 2020. Source: Desk research

Table 2. Migration data for UE for 2016 and 2017. Source: Eurostat

	2016	2017
National migration within EU countries	929 014	1 024 976
Immigration within EU	1 332 976	1 336 965
Immigration from outside EU	1 992 971	2 010 906
Emigration outside EU	626 995	662 485
First permits for staying in the EU	3 024 398	3 212 242
Citizenship of EU granted	994 799	825 447

The main reason for migration is economical, as 8.3 % of people employed in the EU are non-nationals (Eurostat, 2019). But the second reason is studying in another country than the country of origin. What is important here is that the number of international students is constantly increasing. In 2017, there were 1.7 million mobile students of tertiary education in the EU coming from abroad, this number has increased by 22 % since 2013. The growing trends for academic mobility also include the staff. The process can be viewed in the Table 3.

Table 3. Mobility of students in EU countries. Source: Eurostat

	2016	2017	2018
Share of mobile students from abroad of the total number of students in EU countries (in %)	8.4	8.1	9.0
Number of mobile Erasmus + students	300 018	325 755	340 100
Number of mobile Erasmus+ staff	60 028	83 177	95 191

Mobility of people is a part of our times, and, as globalization itself, is an irreversible and unstoppable process.

### 3. Movement of information

Movement of information is strictly connected to the technological development of information transfer means. From the invention of the telegraph, it became clear that the possibility of fast data transmission would have enormous consequences for the development of the entire world. This invention has profoundly impacted the social perception of information, as it separates information from communication and thus makes information available quickly, almost instantly (Hochfelder, 2012, p. 3). Then, at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, by developing wire-free technology, with the consequence of radio and, in the middle of the Century, television, another disconnection was made: the disconnection from cable added the elimination of space limits to the time immediacy.

Another step was the internet, the invention that has made an overwhelming career throughout the twenty years: from the beginning of the 90s in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to present time. The expansion of the Internet is easy visible throughout the last decades and is presented in Figure 3.

However, the greatest increase in internet access was due to the development of mobile telephony. According to ITU, 97% of the world's population is currently within the range of a mobile telephony signal, of which as much as 87% within the range of modern and high-speed LTE (International Telecommunication Union, 2019).

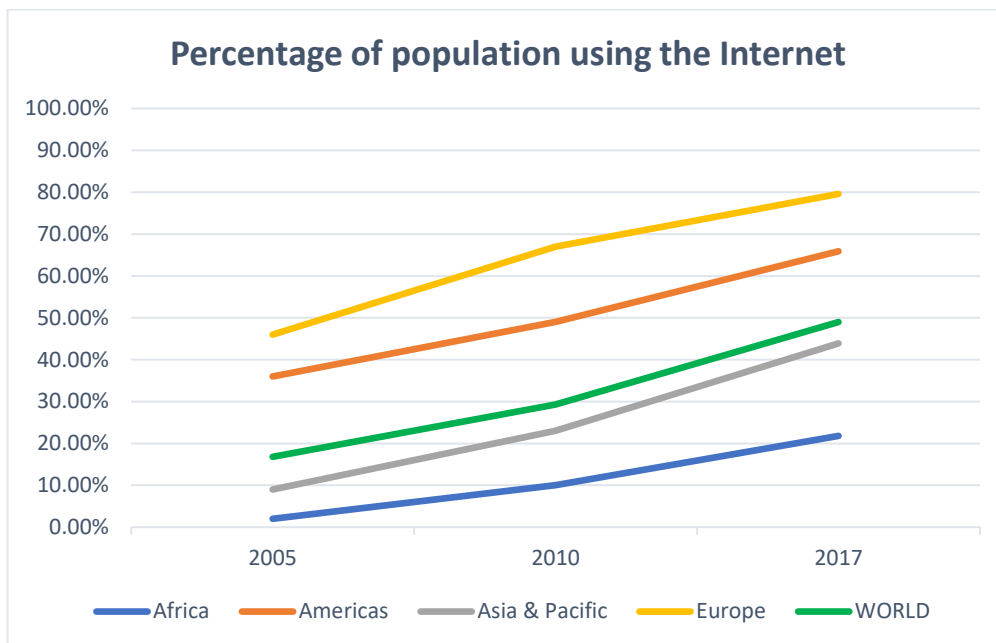


Figure 3. Growth of internet users in the world in relation to population (percent)

Source: International Telecommunication Union, 2019

Such unlimited access to information makes the whole world available most of all from a cognitive perspective. Of course, it requires meeting new challenges in the field of politics, social relation, but most of all education. Learning how to search information, how to distinguish correct and trustworthy information from the fake one, how to communicate with the people from other cultures or how to choose the information we really need from the immensity of information available – these are the challenges of modern education. And concerning the speed of development of the access to the World Wide Web, the education systems are almost always obsolete.

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## 1.2. CULTURE AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

by FRAME Foundation, Poland<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Culture is a phenomenon so multidimensional and complicated that offering a fully adequate definition is impossible. However, from a social perspective, it is a man-created tool that distinguishes social life from the natural world. It is also a tool for creating a sense of both individual and social identity. It is a complex whole, which includes both material creations of a human being as a member of society as well as intangible values, norms and patterns of behavior. Culture, like society, is stratified - its individual zones, however, are arranged concentrically, which enables a person to function on various levels: from a personal, through a local, to a global sense of being a citizen of the world.

*Keywords:* culture, society, social identity

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## 1.2. Culture as a social phenomenon

### 1. Definition of culture

The simplest things can cause a lot of problems as well. The word “culture” is well known and always use in many different contexts. So often, that we do not think about its meaning or meanings and how broad this term really is, especially in everyday talks.

According to Cambridge English Dictionary (2020), culture “is the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time”. This definition is very simple, so simple and general, that it doesn’t allow us to understand what culture is, and what is not. We found Merriam Webster Dictionary to be able to shed more light on the issue (2020). In their definition there are several meanings that show us, although in general, how multidimensional this term is. We can read that culture is “the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group”, but also: “the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time”. This definition also refers to values and attitudes, both social and individual, to patterns and conventions that are part of our lives, as well as to “enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training”. All this shows that defining the concept of culture is not only difficult, but even impossible, if we want to refer to all of its aspects. There is something, however, that captures the essence of what culture is. The very word that is derived from Latin- *Cultura* - means cultivating the land, farming, husbanding (Lewis and Short, 1879). It means that culture is related to the deliberate and conscious activity of humans who, entangled in nature, try to change it. Culture is perceived in opposition to nature, however it is also depended on natural circumstances, yet it is caused by the activity of humankind, and it is a means by which humans expresses themselves, wanting to distinguish themselves from the natural world. But culture is also a tool that tends to enrich life both in the natural world and among people.

The first anthropological definition of culture is given by E. B. Tylor (apud Bodley, 2011, p. 12). According to Tylor, culture is a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits, acquired by man as a member of society. This definition points out the most important features of culture: it is acquired, not innate; it is complex, and it has a social dimension. There is a difference between culture and lifestyle, which can be the result of living in specific cultural circumstances. According to Murdock (1949),

culture is always learned, it includes habits that are shaped by social experience. This is due to the fact that it is ideational in nature, it is made aware of by norms and patterns. Although it is an open system, it is integrated and structural. Murdock claimed that there are universals that are common to all cultures, such as: family, music, art, cuisine, religion, marriage or funeral rituals, etc. This means that all activities included in culture are of social nature, however they should be incorporated in individuals. Herskovitz (1955), who claimed also that culture is a “man-made part of an environment” (p. 305), in addition to claiming that culture is socially learned, he also emphasized that it is a dynamic creation, evolving in time, but also in space. In time, as it develops and changes over the years, along with changing generations, each of which adds something to the process of continuous development. In space, because culture is transferred from place to place. This is not only the case for migration, but also for cultural diffusion, which consists of the fact that some of its elements, e.g., more attractive ones, are taken over by another culture. This is particularly the case nowadays, in the process of globalization described in detail in the previous chapter (Birukou et al., 2013).

A question arises: how did it happen that mankind developed culture and what was the cause of it? Bronisław Malinowski, a Polish anthropologist, claimed that culture is purely teleological. It is a tool that is made by humans to meet their needs (Malinowski, 2013). This approach, known as functionalism, has, according to Malinowski, an individual basis, as he claimed that culture is a result of meeting individuals' needs rather than social ones. But still, culture has a social dimension, as it is represented by individuals, but it works through patterns of acting in the society. This makes us think of a culture as resulting from a social agreement. The discussions about the nature and degree of voluntary participation in culture are still vivid, as they are faced with the rhetorical question: does society create culture, or does culture create society?

## 2. Creating culture

Culture is created consciously and purposefully. We are talking here more of a collective consciousness (Kenneth, 2005). There are many culture-forming factors that are beyond human control, or that we are not aware of. There are two types of culture factors: exogenous and endogenous.

*Exogenous factors.* These are, as the name suggests, factors beyond the anthropological realm. These are mainly natural factors, such as climate or geographic location. Numerous

anthropological studies confirm that topography influences the specificity of a given culture. For example, communities that are easily accessible, such as coastal areas, are more exposed to other cultures and will therefore be more open, while communities in hard-to-reach areas such as mountains tend to be more conservative.

*Endogenous factors.* These factors are related to the very community that creates culture. They include: the size of the community, its internal structure, history, etc. An important endogenous factor is also the extent of what has already been shaped within cultural development. As culture is a dynamic process, the already developed components of culture are also factors that create culture.

### 3. Components of culture

The sphere of culture is found in both the material and the non-material world. Culture is made up of both material products, such as works of art or technology products, and patterns of behavior, norms, beliefs. Therefore, delineating the scope of the components of a culture is as difficult as defining it. Each result of an action defined as a cultural fact is an element of culture. However, it is possible to indicate some of the most important elements of culture that have a significant impact on the creation of universals, about which Murdock (1949) wrote.

*Language and symbols.* Language is a fundamental ingredient of culture. It creates the way of thinking and perceiving the world around us. When describing the mutual influence of culture and language we should define language broadly, as the means for communication and expression: language is not only a set of words ordered by the rules of grammar, but also expression of a non-verbal nature, in which most of our communication process consist of (Kramsch, 1998). Thus, language is also one of the most important factors that create culture. To begin with, gestures then have special meanings and can vary: what has special meaning in one culture can have a completely different meaning in another (Axtell, 1998). Symbols can also have deeper meanings that are the basis for creating individual and social identity (e.g., symbols important for some nations, religious symbols, etc.). The most important set of symbols is language. Language is a system that determines the way people communicate, but also the way they think. Human thinking is mostly conceptual, so we also use language for our internal dialogue, for thinking. One may even attempt the thesis (Whorf, 1956) that if a structure is not present in a language, it will not be in our consciousness either. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to the linguistic layer in any attempt of intercultural dialogue.

**Values and norms.** In human life, values determine what is to be desired. They are a signpost of behavior, determining what is good and what is bad. In culture, they not only play the role of guiding behavior, but together with the norms they set, they constitute an important factor contributing to belonging to a given group. Therefore, their importance is enormous not only for an individual who strives for good, but also for the entire group, the basis of which should be a sense of community. When defining norms, a community is guided by values, but also by what gives it cohesion. For example, the norms of table behavior are not in themselves a reflection of values, but an indicator of a certain level of personal culture that allows one to belong to a group of so-called well-mannered people.

**Artifacts.** Artifacts are a material component of culture. It is a large group which includes both technology and works of art. However, they are a reflection of intangible assets, especially values. They can have a symbolic dimension, such as elements of sacred art, but they are also, for example, a reflection of consumerism as a value: technological gadgets that are the product of the market that creates human needs. The perfect, symbolic indicator here is art, in which, like in a mirror, reflects the most characteristic features of the culture of the society it comes from.

#### 4. Areas of culture

The two main spheres of culture are: material and non-material. But this chapter's focus is on a completely different approach. The spheres, or rather the areas of culture are considered as the different zones of living of each individual, in the example of a common European citizen in regards to the culture that the individual is a part of. The following model (Figure 1) does not indicate separate, closed and disjoint zones, but highlights cultural stratification in which there are constant processes of mutual relations, transitions and interpenetration.

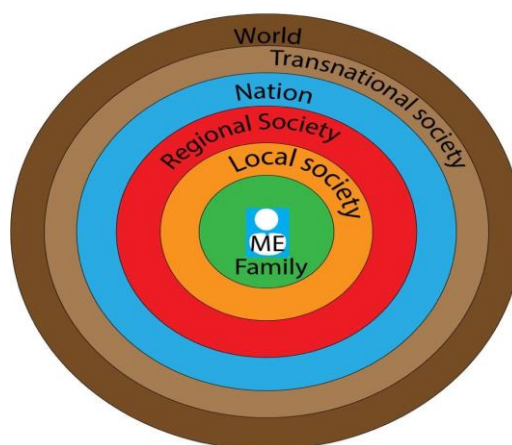


Figure 1. A model of culture

In the center of all culture there is a human being. Individuals that live as part of a culture must be enculturated to live in the culture and by the culture.

*Me (The Subject of Culture).* The subject of culture, or the enculturated individual, is at the center of culture. Not only from the point of view of its creation, but above all, because of the need to internalize it. Although culture is social in nature, it is fulfilled in individual cultural facts, in the actions of individuals. Therefore, when speaking of culture, one must start with its subject. More on the individual and social identity of individuals is provided in chapter 1.5.

*Family.* Family is the closest and the most basic social group that is also the most important cultural environment. From the perspective of enculturation, this is the first educational environment of individuals. The family provides the first contact with culture through the educational process. It is the most important factor shaping both the individual identity of a man and his sense of belonging to society.

*Local society.* This term is understood as the local community in direct relations with the individual. It may include a peer group, colleagues, neighbors. This is a very important group as it constitutes the majority of the so-called Dunbar number, i.e., the number of people who are in face-to-face contact with an individual and have an impact on his cultural development (Bodley, 2011, p. 11). It is assumed that it is about 150 people. The local society is more a transmitter of cultural knowledge, than a creator of culture.

*Regional society.* Regional society is associated with the concept of small homelands. It is this social sphere in which local customs are created. This social group is usually linked by a common history, but also by common ideals, and at the same time it is a group more real, less abstract than the nation that follows it.

*Nation.* The most characteristic and most important factor in creating a nation is language. Another one, common vicissitudes expressed in history. Just as the family is a group that is primal for culture and society, the nation is the general and most important culture-forming area. It is true that the habits closest to everyday life arise in the regional society, however, what constitutes the feeling of belonging to a group of common values, expressed by the most important social symbols, is precisely the nation.

*Transnational society.* Culture can be understood on a micro scale, from the point of view of the community, but also on a macro scale, as a coherent but diverse whole. From this point of view, we are talking about, for example, European culture, but we can also mention the culture of Islam or the Far East, or the culture of North America. What creates a sense of belonging is

common history, though viewed from different sides of fronts and alliances, as well as common values of the general nature (Binion, 2006). For example, what shaped European identity seems to be the Greco-Roman civilization and Christianity.

*World.* The last zone is connected to global identity as a world citizen. It can be considered in ecological terms, but also in terms of core humanitarian values. This zone is supported by contemporary globalization processes, but also by a growing sense of human community, especially in the face of climatic or pandemic threats.

All these areas of culture are concentric coils with the center in the subject of culture. It means that they are all components of a cultural identity. There is no contradiction between being a national patriot, a European or a citizen of the world. Each of these zones has an impact on cultural identity, they can only differ in degree, although the latter is not dependent on the distance of the zone from the center of the circle.

## Conclusions

What can be underlined, especially from an educational perspective, are some general theses:

1. Culture is a complicated and multidimensional phenomenon that affects our entire life: from who we are, what and how we think, what we do, to what we surround ourselves with.
2. Culture is something that is learned. No one is born with culture but can be brought up inside it.
3. Culture is social. It is different from the lifestyle of individuals; however, the lifestyle can be the reflection of culture.
4. The culture must be interiorized, what is called enculturation, as the culture manifests itself in the actions of individuals.
5. Culture arose as a natural reaction of human beings to the needs of life: in nature and among other people.
6. Culture consists of both material aspects, such as products of technology or art, but also non-material ones, such as language, values, and patterns of behavior.
7. Individual, as the subject of culture is at the center of several areas of culture's origin and operation. These areas can be imagined as concentric circles. Therefore, there is no contradiction between different social groups: from family, through nation, to a global

human identity.

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### 1.3. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COMPETENCES

by FRAME Foundation, Poland<sup>3</sup>

#### **Abstract**

This chapter draws attention to the difficulties in defining the concept of competences, in particular with regard to soft competences, including social ones. Characteristics of key competences defined by the European Commission are presented. Against this background, the characteristics of social competences are pointed out, with particular emphasis on cultural competences. At the border of cultures, there are cognitive problems that can be remedied by adopting the six-step model of getting used to another cultural reality. The chapter ends with open questions and reflections on the challenges we face in the case of multicultural communication.

*Keywords:* social competences, cultural competences, key competences

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### 1.3. Social and cultural competences

#### 1. Definition of competence, key competences

Competence can be defined as a capability to act, doing something well, efficiently, algorithmically or in a planned way (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2020). There are a lot of competences that can be important for a specific activity in different fields: from education, through personal to professional activity. Some of them have been recognized as key competences, in particular with regard to personal and social development. Since 2006, the European Commission has been defining such competences, taking into account the social and professional needs for specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. In 2018, the set of key competences was modified, and they were divided into 8 basic groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Key Competences for Long Life Learning. Source: European Commission (2019)

Competence	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Literacy	Reading and writing; understanding written information; knowledge of vocabulary; grammar and basic functions of literature; different styles in language.	Communicate: orally and in writing; monitor and adapt own communication to the requirement of situation; distinguishing and using different kinds of sources to collect and process information; to express opinions and thoughts in a convincing way depending on the situation.	Disposition to critical thinking and dialogue; appreciation of aesthetic qualities; interest in communication with other people.
Multilingual	Knowledge of vocabulary and grammar of different languages; awareness of main types and registers of different languages; social conventions and the	Ability to understand spoken messages, initiate and sustain conversations; read, understand and write texts; adjust the form of communication to appropriate situations.	Appreciation of cultural diversity; interest and curiosity about different languages and intercultural communication; respect for individuals language

	cultural aspect and variability of languages.		profile; respect for the mother tongue of persons to communicate with; respect for minorities and migrant backgrounds.
Mathematical competence in science and technology	Knowledge in mathematics, including numbers, measures and structures; basic mathematical operations and awareness of questions that can be answered by mathematics; basic principles of the natural world; fundamental scientific theories, principles, methods and the impact of science, technology and engineering; application of scientific theories.	Applying basic mathematical principles and processes in everyday contexts; understanding mathematical language and ways of proving; understanding statistical data; understanding of science, methodologies, observations, experiments; ability to use rational and logical thoughts to verify hypotheses; using scientific data for solving problems and achieving goals.	Respect for truth; curiosity; concern for ethical issues in sciences for sustainability and safety.
Digital	Awareness of opportunities and risks of digital technology. Knowledge on basic functions and mechanisms of	Using digital technologies on any layer of social activity: citizenship, social inclusion, collaboration, commercial solutions. Ability to use, access, filter, evaluate, create, program and share digital content.	Critical thinking, being open-minded. Curiosity and openness to technological development.

	technology, and about the logic that lies under technological solutions.	Protecting and responsibly sharing data.	
Personal, social and learning to learn	Rules and codes of communication accepted in different social environments. Components of a healthy mind, body and lifestyle. Self-knowledge about preferred learning strategies, development needs and ways to develop competences. Knowledge on how to find opportunities to develop.	Ability to identify one's own capacities, guide their development and think critically about them. Ability to learn and work collaboratively and autonomously. Understanding of external evaluation and ability to seek support when needed. Resiliency and ability to cope with stress. Constructive communication within different social environments. Showing tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints, ability to create confidence and feel empathy.	Positive attitude toward one's personal, social and physical well-being and learning throughout one's life. Tendency to collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. Respecting diversity and tendency to compromise. Setting goals, ability to motivate, and develop resilience and confidence to pursue and succeed at learning. Desire to apply prior learning and life experiences and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn.
Citizenship	Knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena relating to individuals, groups, work	Ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interests. Critical thinking and integrated problem-solving skills, and	Respect for human rights. Support for social and cultural diversity, gender equality and social

	<p>organizations, society, economy and culture. Understanding of European common values. Knowledge of contemporary events, as well as a critical understanding of the main developments in national, European and world history. Knowledge of European integration as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe.</p>	<p>skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities. Decision-making at all levels, from local and national. Critical understanding of and interacting with media and understanding the role and functions of media in democratic societies.</p>	<p>cohesion, sustainable lifestyles, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence, a readiness to respect the privacy of others, and to take responsibility for the environment. Interest in political and socioeconomic developments, humanities and intercultural communication</p>
<p>Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Knowing how to bring ideas to life – contexts and opportunities. Understanding approaches to planning and management of projects, which include both processes and resources. Knowledge about economics and social context of</p>	<p>Imagination, strategic thinking and problem-solving, and critical and constructive reflection within evolving creative processes and innovation. Ability to work individually and in teams and organizations. Making financial decisions taking into account costs and values. Ability to negotiate and communicate with others. Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk as part of making informed decisions</p>	

economics including challenges of employer, or organization and the awareness of necessity of sustainable development, as well as the principles of ethics and sustainable development.

Cultural awareness and expression	<p>Knowledge of local, regional, national, European and global cultures and expressions, including their languages, heritage and traditions, and cultural products, and an understanding of how these expressions can influence each other as well as the ideas of the individual. Understanding of communication within cultural diversity and relations between the author and audience.</p>	<p>Ability to express and understand ideas and content of the cultural products, including art, customs, relations. Ability of distinguishing values and functions: individual, social and commercial of different forms of culture. Ability to engage in creative processes, both as an individual and collectively.</p>	<p>Open attitude towards, and respect for, diversity of cultural expression together with an ethical and responsible approach to intellectual and cultural ownership. A positive attitude also includes a curiosity about the world, an openness to imagine new possibilities, and a willingness to participate in cultural experiences.</p>
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Key competences are not a ready-to-use set that is to be acquired. Rather, they are an area of interconnected skills and areas of knowledge from which to be drawn if one wishes to be a full participant in what might be called European culture, or even more broadly, Western culture. The interrelationships between the indicated key competences mean that it is not a set of “drawers” that can be opened in order to draw from them according to specific needs. In fact, interdependencies mean that key competences can rather be related to certain universal tools that help solve problems in the contemporary world, but which should not be used on their own or only for their narrow purpose. It will also not be possible to acquire all key competences to the full extent. At least because of individual predispositions or limitations. However, the functionality of one competence may be compensated for by another, for example, a shortage of digital competence may be supported by developed mathematical, scientific or personal competences for fast learning skills.

## 2. Social competences

Social competence is defined as “the possession and use of the ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behavior to achieve social tasks and outcomes valued in the host context and culture” (Topping et al., 2000, p. 32). This concept, based on psychology, has a broader dimension and is now considered in many sciences: psychology, pedagogy, sociology, management sciences. Therefore, its unambiguous definition causes many problems. Some define them as mainly connected to relationships with other people (Mallinckrodt, 2000), which require mostly communication skills and as such they will certainly be of interest to social psychologists. From the point of view of sociology, these are relational competences connected with social roles, although, as odd as it may be, sociology avoids using this concept. It is in vain to look for it, for example, in sociological dictionaries. In the field of management sciences, it can be defined from the point of view of usefulness, as the skills of efficient self-management and high interpersonal effectiveness. Therefore, the question arises whether social competences are a contemporary necessity for an individual to find himself in an increasingly complex, diverse human world, or are they really the basis of the process of socialization.

According to Kostelnik et al. (2002) there are six areas of social competences, presented below.

*Self-regulation.* This field relates to the emotional spheres of human life. This type of

competence allows you to control your own emotions: from fear, through anger, to contentment or joy. It is probably most dependent on the process of upbringing in the family, because it is based not only on the awareness of one's own emotions, but also on patterns of behavior towards them, communicated by e.g., parents.

*Interpersonal competencies.* In this area, the most important thing is to understand the needs and feelings of others, but also the ability to communicate and define the limits of interference in the intimate and personal zones (Hall, 1969).

*Intrapersonal competencies.* This sphere is about a positive self-identity. The links between self-esteem and interpersonal communication skills are so well known that it is impossible to talk about social competences without taking into account the individual's own identity (Walsh, 1994). More on the relationship between individual and social identity in chapter 1.4.

*Cultural competence.* This area relates to the cultural expression included in the set of key competences, but also goes beyond that. The sense of social justice and responsibility for actions in the social environment is important here. Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of the mechanisms of behavior and reactions that take place in a given culture.

*Adopting social values.* This sphere is important for the process of socialization, i.e., inclusion in society. It is a culture-dependent zone, but the skills that are essential to it may differ only between cultures in terms of their degree of advancement or commitment. Respect for diversity, compassion, a sense of community, flexibility - these are values that are independent of cultural differences.

*Planning and decision making.* For a skillful life in a society, conscious, planned action is associated not only with efficiency, but also with responsibility. Making decisions must be associated with the awareness of their consequences for the individual and the environment.

The above spheres include the area of social competences, the acquisition of which is related to several areas: the family, which is the closest and most important educational environment for a child, the school, which introduces the wider society to the world, but above all it is the first formalized institution with which one meets a person, as well as with the local environment: peers or those related to professional work. Their typology, compared to the key competences, cannot be easily defined. They are the result of many types of key competences, they fall in many areas, they are also interdisciplinary. Therefore, it is difficult to define or even indicate them in a clear and obvious way. Often, they are just any skill that improves the



relationships within a community, an individual's with the community, or an individual's with himself.

### 3. Intercultural competence acquisition

The biggest issue when coming in contact with someone who represents a culture other than ours is the clash with other elements of this culture: values, norms, and the way of communicating with the environment. This requires special competences, but also a certain algorithm of conduct that will result in actual contact with another culture. Figure 1 presents the model proposed by Swedish trainer and educator Patrick Gruczku<sup>4</sup> – six steps to acquire intercultural competency.

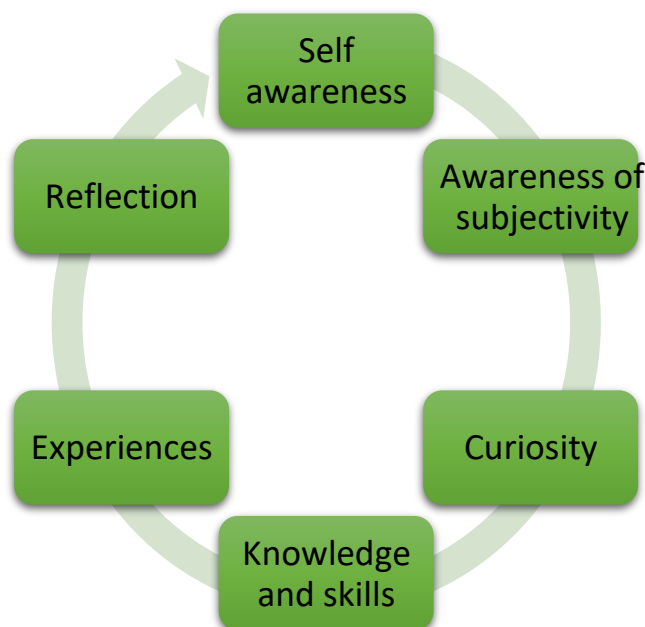


Figure 1: Six step model of intercultural competences. Source: Patrick Gruczku lecture for Intercultural Competence in Education by University of Iceland (2018), with author permission

1. The first step is about self-awareness, which relates to two spheres of social competences: intrapersonal competencies and self-regulation. But from the perspective of communication between cultures, this is a pre-recognition that things are not as they are, but as we perceive them. It draws us to the second step.
2. Awareness of subjectivity. One of the natural characteristics of a culture is ethnocentrism, which places our own culture at the center of attention and cognitive process. Meanwhile,

<sup>4</sup> The model is unpublished. It is presented with the permission of the author, Patrick Gruczku.

the awareness that “my truth” is only mine and not an objective truth allows you to open yourself to a different way of life.

3. Curiosity is the will to know my truth. And by knowing my truth I can also learn about the fact that there are other ones. Curiosity also helps to fight stereotypes, which are problematic not necessarily in themselves, but because they are incomplete. Only knowledge helps complete the picture of the reality that we could assess.
4. Knowledge and skills concerning cultures, starting from our own culture. The boundaries between cultures are elusive. Culture is not a box in which you are located and which you can leave. But if we start to recognize that fact, we also start to recognize the boundaries and thanks to that we will be able to distinguish between being at home or not anymore.
5. Experiences. We are the result of our experiences, but we also accept the experiences of others and relate them to our own. In these experiences, it is necessary to consider to what extent we are able to adapt to the community that surrounds us while still remaining in harmony with ourselves. Especially when there is a big discrepancy, there is also outrage: why should I adjust at all? Why can't I stay different?
6. Reflection about experiences and our place in the community. During this step the reflection arises: what can I learn from the situation? What can I learn from others?

The holistic approach to the model allows us to understand the role played by the contact with another culture in our lives. In fact, it opens the possibility of getting to know ourselves, and then helps us function in a group: not only in our own culture, but in whichever one we find ourselves.

#### 4. Challenges

Every life is a story to be told. And every story matters, but what matters most are many stories. As Aristotle said, we are social beings. But living in society requires seeing other people's stories. It is especially difficult when they come from a different cultural reality. There are, however, things that need special attention in the contact between cultures.

*Communication.* Its absence creates a void that becomes a space for the development of stereotypes, prejudices, but above all hostility, which is the result of ignorance.

*Relations.* Bad relationships are not always the result of cultural differences. We must remember that people can be hostile, although they come not only from one culture, but from one family.

*Globalization.* We do not live in just one culture. Globalization is increasing the fluidity between cultural boundaries. There is a phenomenon of transculturalism, which is described in more detail in chapter 1.4.

*Human nature.* We will not get rid of superstitions, stereotypes or assumptions. They are part of our nature. The very concept of a stereotype is not negative. It becomes the cause of negative phenomena when it is not followed by further cognition.

*Individuality.* It is called subjectivity and it is one of the most important values of our culture. However, in contact with social nature, it causes many challenges and problems. That is why it is worth paying attention not to lock yourself into the sphere of your own views and habits, but also not to get caught in group thinking. Maintaining the dignity of the group, let us also keep ours by keeping our own opinion without giving up our time to others.

## 5. Conclusions and final remarks

Living in every historical time is a challenge. But the contemporary world requires more complex competences, not only to survive, but most of all to live happily in modern society. In the present chapter among many competences, the key ones were distinguished. But in a globalized world it is important to be able to interact with people coming from different cultures, because their mutual mixing and penetration will gradually increase. That is why intercultural competences appear to be one of the most important. Every effort should be made to educate the next generation in their spirit, but also the elderly should acquire them in order to work with young people, regardless of their origin. In fact, working in an intercultural environment requires openness, readiness to get to know and accept the “other”, but it also gives plenty of opportunities for synergistic cooperation between different points of view represented by representatives of different cultures. For more understanding, see the Workbook, chapter 1.3.

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## 1.4. MULTICULTURALISM, INTERCULTURALISM, TRANSCULTURALISM

by FRAME Foundation, Poland<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

The concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism are very ambiguous. However, they concern one reality, namely one in which, in a globalized world, cultures are gradually mixed up. In this reality, several scenarios of action are possible. Multiculturalism may refer to the very phenomenon of the presence of many cultures in one area, but from the perspective of education, it is an approach based on the creation of common cultural identity based on the dominant culture. This is the case in the USA. There is a different model in Europe based on the idea of interculturalism. It is based on the coexistence of many cultures in one area, without indicating any as dominant, but based on intercultural dialogue. These two possible scenarios should be intentional, since the natural effect of mixing cultures is transculturalism. From the level of an individual, it means selecting those elements that are the most attractive and interesting. Lack of control over this process will result in uniformization and thus the disappearance of less attractive and niche cultures, and their values will be gradually replaced by consumerism.

*Keywords:* multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism, multicultural education, intercultural education

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## 1.4. Multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism

The concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturality are ambiguous and multi-faceted. They can be understood as nouns, then we can consider them as certain phenomena of a general nature, but they can also be treated as adjectives and then they appear as specific social phenomena assigned to certain specific spheres. Regardless of whether we describe them in a general way or rewrite them to specific areas, they must be assigned in advance to specific areas to which they fit best. Multiculturalism concerns mainly society as such, interculturalism feels like the best match in the domain of education, and transculturalism is a term related to culture. So, let us look at each of the individual concepts in detail.

### 1. Multiculturalism

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2020), multiculturalism means “the view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgment of their differences within a dominant political culture.” But another source describes it as a fact that is a consequence of globalization, in which there is a flow of people because of the development of the means of communication and transportation draws the flow of cultures (Benet-Martinez, 2012). According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2020), it is an idea about how “to understand and respond to the challenges associated with cultural diversity based on ethnic, national, and religious differences.” These approaches show that multiculturalism is a state of contemporary social world in which no culture can be closed, as people are constantly moving all around the world. The intermingling of cultures is rapidly increasing as a result of globalization. The spaces we call cultural areas do not shrink, but spread more and more, overlapping each other, which causes the mixing of cultures, customs and ways of life. Cultures as something that bounds or even creates societies cannot be regarded any more as separate islands (Welsh, 1999) – they are open spaces vulnerable to influences and able to mix with others.

Because the most important factors that bind cultures together are language and common history, therefore the problems associated with the multiplicity of cultures are mainly of a communicative nature. However, the need to communicate between cultures does not only concern language, but also other components of culture, which were discussed in chapter 1.1. Moreover, the consequences of having multiple cultures in one area are very important in shaping

social policy, as cultural influences in a multicultural environment can be very different. The majority culture prevails, and therefore the phenomenon of discrimination, rejection, marginalization of less numerous or less attractive cultures may occur. In a multicultural environment, the processes of mutual displacement of cultures are intensified, with the rule being that the less attractive is replaced by the more attractive. It also leads to numerous conflicts, such as hostility, in particular of the culture at risk towards the dominant one. For example, conservative circles criticize the so-called Western or liberal lifestyle. Hence the second understanding of the word “multiculturalism”, which becomes an adjunct to the word “politics”. Multicultural policy is about promoting cultural diversity and building a social dialogue to avoid friction and hostility between cultures (Iverson, 2001). To sum up, multiculturalism is a state that results from the development of global society in the world and requires certain political measures to adjust social life to this state.

Multiculturalism can be understood in a narrower or a broader context. In a narrower context, it concerns differences of a racial, ethnic, religious or cultural nature, but here we understand culture in the national sense. However, such an approach treats societies as a homogeneous group due to the ethnic, linguistic and historical background. Pope (1995) points out, however, that societies themselves are not homogeneous but heterogeneous groups, and there are also large cultural differences within a given nation. Therefore, there is also a broader approach to multiculturalism, not limiting it only to race or ethnic origin, but also taking into account other minorities such as sexual or subcultural minorities. This postulate, put forward in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, takes on even greater importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Progressive globalization has resulted in an intense rise in cultural diversity. Its undeniable advantage, however, is the increase in self-awareness and a sense of one’s own subjectivity. Therefore, when recognizing the freedom of an individual as a value, one should strive to take into account every cultural difference.

There are two strategies for creating a multicultural society. The first one is sometimes referred to as the salad bowl and the second, coined by Zangwill (1909), as the melting pot. The difference between them lies in the basis on which a society is built of various ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds.

*Salad bowl.* The idea of the bowl is generally based on the coexistence of many cultures in a given area. With this strategy, all cultural differences are preserved. It is a model that assumes the coexistence of many nations, values and ways of social functioning. The most important

factor in this model is maintaining dialogue between particular groups and eliminating conflicts, because this model is very prone to conflicts. The Salad bowl model is very characteristic of Europe, where many cultures and nationalities coexist, each of which is deeply rooted in the history of the continent. For this reason, a commonality is not possible.

*Melting pot.* The melting pot strategy assumes a common cultural ground for people with a diverse ethnic and cultural past. It must be centered around common, superordinate values. In this structure, cultural differences blur. Individuals can cultivate the cultures of their origin in the private sphere, but the social sphere is common to all. This model, inspired by the metaphor of the play called “The Melting Pot” written by Israel Zangwill (1909), however, assumes the possibility of giving up one’s own cultural behavior or values and adopting common ones, which is why it is characteristic of those environments that were built on migrants from the very beginning. USA or Australia are perfect examples of this. In this model, the superior value is being a citizen of a new society (e.g., an American), being a representative of the culture of origin is either secondary or even disappears in the next generation. It is acculturation that is the greatest threat in this model. It is very susceptible to the so-called macdonaldization, i.e., the adoption by the vast majority of society of common, but also the simplest rules of functioning in culture (Ritzer, 1993). This term, based on Max Weber's theory of rationalization, means a progressive process of acculturation and adoption of common, attractive, but created by external factors (such as marketing) values.

Currently, we are dealing with a mixed model more and more often, because globalization accelerates, on the one hand, the process of acculturation and the formation of a new, global culture, and, on the other hand, the variety of cultural patterns available to people makes them want to be assimilated.

## **2. Interculturalism**

While multiculturalism refers to social status, the concept of interculturalism refers to communication and education. Therefore, in this case we are dealing more with an adjective “intercultural”. There can be intercultural education, which will aim precisely at creating, deepening and maintaining intercultural communication. Since education is the basis for the formation of the communication process, it is possible to see the best differences between particular terms related to connecting cultures at the meeting point.

*Cultural education.* That is any form of education to live in culture. It is not limited only



to actively contributing to it, so it does not apply to art (this is not artistic education). It is education that relates to the cultural circles presented in chapter 1.2. Therefore, its subject will be both education towards values (ethics) and regional, patriotic, European and environmental education.

*International (extracultural) education.* This type of education is characteristic for international schools, which temporarily bring together children from different cultures. The parents are temporarily in a different country than the country they come from. The essence of such education is to avoid the cultural issues of a given culture or region. Such education focuses on global values such as truth, responsibility and honesty, as well as global ecological issues. It is focused mainly on transferring objective knowledge from sciences that is above any culture.

*Multicultural education.* This is a response to the coexistence of many cultural groups around the one that is dominant. It is an implementation of the melting pot strategy and is most visible in the United States (Holm and Zilliacus, 2009). There we are dealing with a multitude of ethnic groups that are, besides Indians, immigrants. Multiculturalism, which assumes focusing on the dominant culture, while emphasizing tolerance towards other groups, is possible only when a common, axiologically superior level is developed. In America, to some extent, it has managed to do so and to focus coexisting cultures to the idea of “American” society. That is why the concept of American patriotism focuses so heavily on the symbols of a common society that, from a historical, cultural and ethnic point of view, is rather non-existent. US residents are primarily and officially Americans, and in their private sphere belong to a variety of ethnic groups. They are Irish, Polish, Italian, Turkish, etc., at their homes, but they are Americans outside, in the society. This approach does not solve all problems, because the idea of multiculturalism assumes the coexistence of groups at the common level, any attempt to expose one’s own minority culture is associated with isolation from the mainstream. The axiological superiority of the artificially developed idea of “Americanness” is possible because the majority of the American “melting pot” society has similar roots: they are descendants of emigrants who had to develop new lands from the very beginning living in an ethnically and culturally mixed community. Therefore, the model of multicultural education is by no means an acceptable model in Europe, where attempts to build a “superior” European identity are doomed to fail because of the deep historical roots of each culture. Moreover, building any superstructure over national identities is not only unnecessary, but could bring back a series of ethnic conflicts that were very strong in old Europe. In addition, it would be easy to imagine the isolation of minority cultures,

which in turn would cause nationalism and xenophobia. Therefore, a different type of solution is needed, taking into account the salad bowl strategy.

*Intercultural education.* It also refers to common values but does not treat them as superior. It can be defined as the set of educational practices aimed at promoting respect and mutual understanding between all students, irrespective of their cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious affiliation (Młynarczuk-Sokołowska, 2013). Without bridging the gaps or even conflicts between cultures, students should discover what connects and what differentiates the human species from their understanding of cultures to see richness and diversity. Therefore, one of the basic features of such education is basing on national cultures.

Intercultural education, as opposed to multicultural education, promotes diversity, does not aim to unify under the banner of common values, but teaches tolerance, acceptance and perception of the other. Its aim is to preserve one's own culture while accepting cultural diversity in society. The idea is to teach how to actively live in a society where many cultures function side by side. The basis of such education is intercultural dialogue, acceptance of diversity, including linguistic diversity.

It is important that intercultural education has a solid foundation in knowing one's own culture, the culture of origin. This is the only way to avoid acculturation, especially in the case of minority cultures. Within a multicultural environment the culture that is dominant and more attractive prevails. With the wish to preserve the cultures of minorities that can enrich us in diversity, there is a need to take good care of them by supporting regional education, especially in the areas of these minorities. This can be the case of Lemkos in Poland and Ukraine, Bretons in France, or Sorbs in Germany. But preserving regional and national education regarding cultures also prevents problems related to social identity. Thus, an interculturally educated individual has a sense of being embedded in his own culture but is at the same time open to other cultures and can function with them in the common area.

It is obvious that multicultural and intercultural education is based on different foundations: while the former promotes the basic values around the superior culture – patriotism, a sense of community built around common symbols, the latter is based on human rights, equal treatment, tolerance and acceptance (Faas, Hajisoteriou and Angelides, 2014). Of course, this does not mean that each of them negates the values of the other – all the values are present, but do not have the nature of the basis on which a given type of education is built.

### 3. Transculturalism

While multiculturalism and interculturalism are two possible responses of a socio-political nature to the problem of mixing cultures in social areas, transculturalism can be considered more of a natural phenomenon. Culture should be always perceived as a dynamic structure, in which there are constant processes of diffusion. According to Welsh (1999) contemporary cultures are not homogeneous anymore: societies should be regarded as conglomerates of different people that have various styles of life, inside specific cultural structures. Such approach is not new, as the social stratification always caused the differentiations within one culture. But the social structures were more solid: the stratification was stable – living in one sphere of the society meant living in specific culture, with customs, beliefs and ways of behaving.

Nowadays, the social structures became more fluent – contemporary cultures offered more patterns and ways of life which results in constant changes, internal diffusion within a given culture. This process is even more intensified in contact with another culture. An individual is faced with the choices of various elements of culture, from among the whole range of facts, behaviors and lifestyles. We can choose from them what is most attractive to us, what we like. In the world of globalization, we are not living in one culture anymore. We wear the same clothes, created by global corporations and sold all over the world in chain stores, we eat food brought to us from distant corners of the world, or prepared according to recipes from a completely different culture. There is probably no large city in the world where we would not find a sushi restaurant, and we can get pizza almost anywhere. But most importantly, the choice of certain cultural elements is dictated by the interests we share over cultures (Slimbach, 2005). Therefore, transculturality can be considered a derivative of globalization, which is also a natural development process.

Transculturality can be considered at the macro level - claiming that, in a globalized world, cultures are closely intertwined through constant contacts, more and more free exchange of thoughts, people, goods and services. A view from the micro level takes into account the cultural identity of an individual, which is built precisely on the basis of acquiring wanted elements from various cultures that are easily available (Welsh, 1999).

Unfortunately, there is quite a serious threat of transculturalism. As one of the most important selection criteria is the attractiveness of a given element of a given culture, it leads to the elimination of cultures that are less attractive, or that require more attention or effort.

Therefore, it is an acculturation factor, which may result in the disappearance of niche or minority cultures. A global society, representing a pan-global culture consisting of attractive as well as simple, and above all standardized elements may become the long-term effect of transculturalism. Consumerism may become the overriding value in a global society. This process is visible in American culture, sometimes referred to as macdonaldization.

Therefore, it is worth counteracting this process by differentiating educational processes - above all. But it is also necessary to popularize niche cultures, strive to maintain traditions, support family forms of education and processes of transferring knowledge from generation to generation. Not to strive for homogenization and uniformity, but to develop intercultural dialogue. In this way, even as a pan-global society, we will be enriched with diversity rather than impoverished through a ready-made set of cultural patterns, most often sold to us by global industry, invented in the offices of large corporations by marketing specialists.

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## 1.5. SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

by PAX Rhodopica, Bulgaria<sup>6</sup>

### Abstract

Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership and the groups to which they belong. A basic distinction between personal and social identity is based on the level of inclusiveness in self-categorization. The chapter elaborates on the political, territorial, cultural and heritage concepts like "nation-state" and "state-nation". The "western" and "eastern" model of formation of European nations have also been reviewed. Furthermore, some grounding questions are addressed: how objective conditions affect individual level for the formation of national consciousness?; under what conditions does the transition to an active national consciousness take place? As national consciousness is expanding its reach among not only mainstreamers, but also on ethnic minorities, different concepts have been reviewed in this respect: elite/mass, pre-modernists and modernists; constructivists or objectivists.

*Keywords:* nationalism, subjectivism, objectivism, ethnic and civic model of the nation, cultural nationalism

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## 1.5. Social and individual identity

### 1. Nationalism: concepts and historical background

Social identity is a person's sense of who he/she is, based on group membership and supposed that the groups which people belonged to (for example family, social class, kin, football team etc.) are important sources of pride and self-esteem. Groups give a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world (Tajfel, 1979; McLeod, 2019). A basic distinction between personal and social identity is based on the level of inclusiveness in self-categorization. *Personal identity* refers to self-categories which define the individual as a unique person in terms of their individual differences from other (in-group) persons. Social identity refers to social categorizations of self and others, self-categories which define the individual in terms of his or her shared similarities with members of certain social categories in contrast to others. *Social identity* refers to the social categorical self (e.g., "us" versus "them", in-group versus out-group, women - men, whites - blacks, etc.) (Turner et al., 1994). The cross-point in the modern world and modern societies is national identity, and this is the main reason to deal with this phenomenon more closely on the following pages.

The "national" ideology dominates the European and subsequently the world space since at least the end of XVIII century. It sets and modifies the feelings of affiliation in community. In parallel, the nation frames the state sovereignty and other "traditional" identities – ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc. *Nationalism* is an ideologically complex phenomenon, and is sometimes referred to as "the religion" of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its origin is usually associated with the era of The French Revolution of 1789. However, there are various other theories, some of which refer to it as relating to the Western Hemisphere - The American War of Independence and anti-colonial revolutions in Latin America from the late eighteenth and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nationalism is considered in various different manners, being blamed or being considered the main agent of states' modernization processes.

In the modern world, the ideological force of nationalism (to a greater or lesser degree even in countries with an internationalist ideology) and political domination of the nation-state have caused successive changes provoked by the process of globalization. The events of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have revealed a complex picture in which the "global" competes with the reviving nationality, sometimes loaded with anti-globalization pulses associated with a different ideology. There are two main theoretical approaches regarding

nationalism: the *subjectivist*, in which the nation is considered as a purely subjective category, and the *relatively objectivist*, which accepts the nation as a historical phenomenon, a product of various objective factors and processes, among which economic development plays a significant role. This distinction is highlighted in classical philosophical and sociological works by Max Weber, Ernest Renan (Todorov, 2000). On the other hand, the main line of scientific discussion in the last two or three decades of dealing with historical issues places the roots and chronology of the nation and nationalism in the context of modernity.

The strong development of research in the nationalism field has created diverse terminological labels, which seeks to reflect the existing diversity, some of them summarized below:

- *cultural nation* - cultural community, formerly ethnic, protonational community;
- *state nation* - an active, self-determining political nation;
- *ethnic model of the nation* - ethnic community with an emphasis on origin (ethnogenesis), and not necessarily on territory (which can be perceived not only in the administrative sense, but also as a symbolic ethnic space). The nation is perceived more as a “superfamily” or symbolic “kinship”.
- *civic model of the nation* (civic nation) - the political, legal and economic community in a particular, historically distinct territory; equality of members before the law; common civic culture and ideology.

There are historical concretizations of these oppositions related to the idea of a “western” and an “eastern” model of the European nation, that attributes to the Eastern European nations a stronger emphasis on ethnocultural markers, while Western European ones are seen as a product of earlier formation of the modern state.

## 2. Nation and nationalism

*Nation* and *nationalism* are interpreted in close connection with *ethnicity* and *tradition*, with divided theoretical approaches. According to modernists, the nation is entirely a product of the modern age. Its essence is rooted in the imaginary (e.g., Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community”, 1983/2006) and thus the ancient concept of ethnicity expresses the demand for “historical depth” and “organicity” with no direct link to the pre-national community.

*National identity* expresses one of the collective identities in the modern world. According to the classical viewpoint of Anthony Smith (1991, 1998), there are two different



types: the connection of the individual with the nation as a choice and the “organic” connection of the individual with the nation as affiliation.

*Nationalism* expresses both an idea and a project, i.e., movement for the realization of the nation and at the same time one of the powerful ideologies in the 18th and 21st centuries. It overlaps by ideologues, propagandists and elites, being realized through national “renaissances”, nationalist movements (ethno nationalism, linguistic and cultural nationalism and modern nationalism).

The widest spectrum is to be found the meaning of the word in English literature, where this term has no negative connotations. In other European languages, nationalism is a narrower concept, referring mainly to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and often has a negative undertone. The big question is whether the nationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can manifest as a part of a subsequent process, which may not be determined as nationalism or a product and phenomenon of the modern age. Some of the modernists believe that nations and nationalism will disappear in the new era as nationalism is not essentially present and is a product of a particular historical epoch.

There is also a debate on the so-called *active (aggressive)* and *passive nationalism*. *Active nationalism* involves a struggle for supremacy among states, whose ultimate manifestation is the armed conflict. Active nationalism is usually planted in society by elites wanting to achieve their goals. This is done by means of nationalist propaganda (formulation of the image of the other as an enemy, through propaganda, education, literature, history, state-administrative mechanisms). *The passive nationalism* is related to the ethnic, national and national feeling and manifests itself in language, life, traditions, etc., but remains on a passive level. Franco-German relationships are an example of how aggressive nationalism has been replaced by passive nationalism and highlights benevolence among until recently extremely hostile nations. Active nationalism is developed in the event of a direct conflict of interests, while the passive nationalism may become active, quite often on innocent occasions (football games, etc.).

### 3. Citizenship and civic nation

The concept of *citizenship* is based on the modern principle of equality and human rights, in opposition to inequality (racial, class, caste, etc.), including three dimensions: civil, political and social. The *civic dimension* consists of rights related to the individual freedom in all areas. This is best personified by the institution of the court. The *political dimension* is included in the

right to participate in the exercise of power (for example, active and passive suffrage). It is personified to the greatest extent by parliament and local authorities' self-government. It also contains a wide range of social rights and standards, aiming to adjust the main social inequalities. An important point is the balance between equal rights and equal responsibilities and the relationship between rights and obligations in society.

#### 4. "Nation-state" and "state-nation"

There is a debate as to whether the chronological (historical) formation of the state can precede, respectively determine the formation of the nation (England, France, USA) or vice versa (Germany, Italy, the Balkan countries). The cultural-hereditary concept emphasizes three main elements of the nation, as proposed by Ernest Renan (1823–1892) in his classical work: general culture; strong sense of unity and solidarity; clear awareness of national identity that seeks its roots in history.

Hugh Seton-Watson (1977, p. 1) proposes a definition for the nation that is not historically determined by "objective criteria": "a nation is a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a culture, a national consciousness." According to Rupert Emerson (1960, p. 95), "the nation is a community of people who feel they belong together in the double sense that they share deeply significant elements of a common heritage and that they share a common destiny for the future... The nation is today the largest community which, when the chips are down, effectively commands men's loyalty".

According to the political-territorial concept of creating a state formation, territory is a prerequisite for the existence of the nation along with long historical/cultural traditions. According to H. Gert and S. Mills (following Max Weber) a nation is a group of people that, due to cultural traditions and common historical memories, is able to organize a state or at least is able to claim such a form of organization that has a certain chance to succeed.

However, *the main ethnic group* provides the culturally dominant attitude. Not every major ethnic group is a nation, and a nation is not simply a large ethnic group. The transformation of the ethnic group into a nation is a long historical process which leads to changes in the structure and in the mentality of the respective group. The independent, distinct culture is also inherent in ethnic groups and for nations. The differences are that in ethnic groups it is local while in nations it is part of cosmopolitan culture. Nations do not "react" in a simple way and formulate problem-solving policy. Ethnic consciousness tends to be weaker than the national one, due to lack of

literacy and literature. National consciousness includes the earlier ethnic consciousness, together with the myths, legends and oral traditions that have become part of the folklore. Literacy, however, contributes to the oral tradition and develops national historiography, literature, art, i.e., national culture. The modern nation is “a community of people situated on a common territory, which has its own specific modern culture connected by a strong feeling of unity and solidarity, which is based on a clear historical consciousness for national identity and has or strives to have a real political self-government”.

The anthropological perspective seeks a compromise between the two views. For example, the opinion of Clifford Geertz (1983) is that cultural heritage and the state complement each other in the process of nation building. Along with a natural sense of identity, manifesting through conscious commonalities, kinship, racial, linguistic, religious and regional common customs and culture, there is a pursuit of improving social status. This is carried out through the construction of a modern state where it changes the nature of the connections. They are forming two networks - the old network of cultural and heritage connections and the network of the new social ones - which can sometimes come into conflict with each other.

According to sociologist Anthony Giddens (2001), the state borders define the nation. This is an extremely static concept stating that the only root cause for the formation of the nation is the creation of the modern nation-state.

## 5. “Old” and “new” nations

Hugh Seton-Watson (1977) developed the concept of so-called “old” and “new” nations, rejecting the division between “historical” and “non-historical” nations. All nations have a history, but an interrupted continuity of statehood is possible. The state is the main guarantor for the development of nations. The “old” have integrated over the centuries a significant part of the population through the development of trade, literature, economic and social development within the state. So, in an evolutionary way, it leads to the formation of a national identity even in premodern era. “New” nations are emerging in the “age of nationalism” (i.e., the modern age). In these historical cases, the processes of formation of national consciousness and the rise of nationalism as a political ideology and movement are synchronous. They develop according to the elite-mass scheme, but more rapidly, under the influence of the “old” nationalisms.

In the *new European nations*, a major factor in the development of national consciousness is language, while in Asia (India, China) we find the sense of belonging to ancient civilizations,

and in Africa, the formation of a national identity within the new state-colonial structures. Until 1789, the “old nations” in Europe were the English, the French, the Dutch, the Scots, Hungarians, Poles and Russians. The “new” Nations are Germans, Italians, Norwegians and Irish, which are communities with a clear awareness of cultural identity, but not completely formed national consciousness. In the rest of Europe, nationalism develops even later - in the 19th century, under the elite-nation scheme.

## 6. Pre-modernists and modernists

The *pre-modernists* place an emphasis on the importance of relationships based on the common past, culture (“spirituality”, ethos), race, language, religion, territory, etc., which characterize a human community and distinguish it from another. They are the primary elements in the formation of ethnic groups and nations, i.e., they represent natural steps in the historical development of mankind.

The *ultimate pre-modernist* understanding is often derived from biologizing and racist approaches (see Joseph Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s conceptual models). Some authors believe that ethnicity (nation), nation and nationalism are biologically determined and represent a group expression of solidarity in the struggle for survival. The biologically defined attachment to territory, which as a result of centuries of development, leading to the emergence of the nation and the state as set, is called natural determinism (extreme geographical or biological determinism).

*Modernists* believe that nations and nationalism are products of the modern age, which begins in Europe with the French Revolution. The formation and development of national consciousness is connected to the creation of the modern state and its institutions, to industrialization and capitalism, to mass communications and to the introduction of a unified secular education and literature. The most authoritative representatives of this current are Ernest Gellner (1987), Eric Hobsbawm (1983) and Benedict Anderson (1983). Ernest Gellner (1987) rejects any connection between nation and pre-modern society, which he defines as agrarian, and claims that nations can be defined only within the era of nationalism. Their formation is the result of the deep social, economic and political changes that occurred from the end of the eighteenth century in connection with the development of industrial society.

The *industrialization* that occurred in some countries of Western Europe leads to significant social changes and to the formation of a new type of country that stimulates the

building of national consciousness among citizens and that aspires to impose cultural and social homogenization as opposed to existing “traditional” polyethnic empires (Ottoman, Russian, Habsburg, etc.). Ernest Gellner (1987) believes that patriotism is a permanent companion of human life [...], nationalism is a very specific kind of patriotism and one that becomes widespread and dominant only in the presence of certain public conditions that dominate only in the modern world and nowhere else. Nations can be defined only within the age of nationalism, not the exact opposite, as one would think.

Eric Hobsbawm (1983) also argues that *nationalism* originated in a certain moment in European history. He sees the nation as one of the many traditions "invented" by the political elites to legitimize their power in the modern age of revolutions and democracies. The modern state mobilizes and modifies the so-called protonational relations at a new national level, relying on the system of mass education. Protonationalism, based on stored memory (oral and written) for the old state, underlies modern nationalism. Hobsbawm employs the concepts of patriotism (a natural feeling stimulated by state institutions and mobilized in extreme situations), state nationalism (a system that includes invented national historical narrative, national language and literature, symbolism, ceremonies, cults etc., which personify the image of homeland in the mass consciousness). As a reaction to these homogenizing processes, the non-state nationalism arises among various minorities groups or dominated groups (an alternative project to create your own national country) (Hobsbawm, 1983).

## **7. Constructivists or objectivists**

These are researchers who seek a compromise between the extreme pre-modernists and the modernists. They are moving away from pre-modernism and believe that the formation of ethnic and national consciousness is constantly evolving. They accept the modernist understanding that nations are different from pre-modern ethnic groups but believe that nations as a phenomenon are not exclusive to the modern era.

The main tool deafferenting one ethnic group from another is the system of symbols, myths and means of communication. Ethnic boundaries are more in the minds of the members of the ethnic community and are based on these symbols, and not so much real landmarks for territorial delimitation. Among the more interesting theories and approaches that try to reconcile the strengths of the two main lines of thought is the contribution of Anthony Smith (1991,1998). According to Smith (2000), nationalism is based on the previous historical tradition of a

community, and an attempt to reformulate in the context of modernity.

The nation most often has its prehistory and predecessors, so a community can be “historical” not only in attitude, but also by having real predecessors. In turn, A. Smith applies the tools of deconstruction to extreme modernism and considers myths as phenomena of today’s “postmodern” times. For him, the nation is a complex and an ambiguous reality that cannot be reduced to one feature, dimension or approach. The most common markers are historical territory (homeland), common myths and historical memory, mass public culture, common legally defining rights and obligations, common economy with territorial mobility of members.

Anthony Smith (1991, 1998) believes that ethnic groups are the bearers of a lasting collective identity, which is expressed in a common name, historical consciousness and memories-myths of common past, origin, territory, and feeling for solidarity – i.e., in specific community – based on culture, language, religion, customs, laws, folklore, etc. He introduced the term *ethnocentrism*, explaining the essence of the ethnic group – its cultural traits, feelings, perceptions and manifestations, including legends and myths, symbolism and values that unite individuals. So, Smith underlines sustainable cultural elements - especially the community of myths and symbols that are preserved and are transmitted in the process of historical development regardless of evolution and destiny of a given ethnic community. In the modern period of Europe (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries), due to the revolutionary changes in western societies - division of labor, nationwide management, general culture and processes - these ethnic (ethnic) groups evolve into nations (Smith, 1991).

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## 1.6. SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

by Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania<sup>7</sup>

### **Abstract**

Communication is symbolic, and symbols are multivocal. These characteristics raise significant concerns, especially in intercultural communication contexts. One and the same word, one and the same visual representation can mean something in one cultural environment and something different in another cultural environment. Therefore, the simple words used to describe concepts and the images used in the teaching process to facilitate understanding by overcoming language barriers are polysemous and leave room for diverse, culturally variable interpretations. Therefore, the chapter will bring to light the fact that the words employed in verbal exchanges and the images used for effective communication can both cause difficulties in understanding and inaccuracies in comprehension due to the multiple meanings they carry.

*Keywords:* symbol, verbal communication, visual communication, polysemy, multivocality

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## 1.6. Symbolic communication in multicultural environments

### Introduction

How many times have you been misunderstood? You wanted to convey something, and those who listened to you or read something you wrote understood something different. What followed were multiple and complicated issues that you had to solve – you had to explain once again, to keep adding examples, to negotiate some meanings, and so on. In fact, every time we communicate, either orally or in writing, we may find that our message has reached its recipient truncated or distorted.

Let's not even refer to the hypotheses of a poor communicator, who is not that well informed or who lacks advanced linguistic skills or other similar cases. Let's stick to a situation that is fairly common in the academic environment, where the communicator has all the necessary skills for exemplary communication. Even in this case, there is a possibility that the message may be misunderstood. All the more so when the communicator uses a language other than his or her mother tongue or in situations where the audience listens to a speech in a foreign language.

But let's not take into account the issue of a foreign language either. Let's say that, although neither we, the teachers, nor the students are native English speakers, we speak it very well, have no trouble communicating whatever we want, and we understand every word of what is being communicated to us. Even in these perfect conditions, the issue of meaning in communication arises because the latter is symbolic, and the symbols are multivocal, i.e., they can usually mean several things. Situations of communication in multicultural environments tend to exacerbate the problem. I will use this chapter to show why that is the case.

### 1. Verbal communication is symbolic

When we communicate in specialized language, whenever we use terms, concepts, formulas that are very well known and established in the field in which we specialize or for which we train, we shouldn't face serious difficulties. When we use words like *speed*, *radical*, *chlorophyll*, *psychic*, *community*, etc., the meaning behind them is clear to both us and our audience. To make sure that we will not be misunderstood, we can even provide further details - for example we can clarify that "I use the term *community* as defined by Tonnie's".

Issues tend to arise when, in trying to communicate effectively, in trying to make our

message as accurate, complete and easy to grasp as possible, we resort to examples from everyday life. As paradoxical as it may seem, communication seems to be complicated by the use of common language, by the descriptions using simple, ordinary words. If I were to explain, for example, the concept of community with examples from my neighborhood from a small town in Romania, an audience made up of foreigners might misunderstand or not completely understand what I mean.

Because we are very often in a position to communicate by calling on common knowledge, to give examples using everyday words descriptions or images in the form of drawings, photographs or film, I would like to draw attention to the communication errors that may arise.

Suppose I exemplify something using a comparison involving elections, the cuteness of a cat, the reliability of a car, the teaching activity, etc. What the members of my audience understand can vary. Great differences may occur not only between what I wanted to convey and what the audience understood. There can also be significant differences among what individual members of the audience understand. In extreme situations, some may even understand things completely upside down.

Comprehension varies so much because it is influenced by personal feelings, experiences, taste, knowledge, etc. Suppose someone had a negative experience with a car (a serious accident, a costly malfunction, etc.). Whatever example I give in relation to that car, surely that person will associate my example with his or her experience rather than with what I wanted to convey. Someone else may have, let's say, a fear of cats – my invoking the pet will have very little chance to inspire anything other than anxiety, fear, repulsion. The same can happen with what someone thinks of an action, with what someone else knows about a situation, etc. So, the same thing can mean something to someone and something different to someone else. Even for the same person, something can carry a particular meaning in a certain context, in association with something, and another meaning in another context or in association with something else. More examples in this regard can be found in Case study 1 in Workbook. The same Workbook (see Case study 2) will offer an interesting analogy exercise that reveals the great differences between the meanings that people assign to the same animals, plants, cars, movie characters, personalities, etc.

The use of vague terms in communication also raises major issues, for example the pair *rarely / often*. Let's say that we talk about Romanians and that we describe them by mentioning that they rarely attend church. For a regular churchgoer, “rare” means something completely

different than for an atheist. The former might assume that Romanians go to church less than once a week. If the one listening is not a religious person, he could assume that Romanians do not even go to church on holidays. I will not even insist on the huge differences that may appear in the way Orthodox, Protestants, Muslims, etc. relate to the idea of attending the Church. The same kind of misunderstandings can be brought about by the use of other words such as *much / little, far / near, early / late*, etc.

Therefore, the issue is not limited to the symbolism of communication, but it also pertains to the fact that everyone seems to have their own personal symbolism, which shapes their understanding. It will be impossible for a communicator, no matter how experienced, to anticipate all the comprehension issues to which this characteristic may give rise. Of course, universal symbols do exist, and this is how we often manage to get along with each other, to act as one and so on. But even universal symbols can raise comprehension issues, because they can be multidimensional. For example, if I use the universal "+" symbol in a presentation, it can be read as a mathematical plus symbol, as a positive electric charge, as a cross, or it can mean that I am talking about something positive or an advantage, and so on (for a complex inventory of symbols see Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996).

Symbols can originate in interactions. If I'm in a position to address a group comprised of people who have previously interacted with each other, they might all laugh at a joke I didn't intend to make, they might turn their attention away from what I wanted to convey in favor of a moment they shared during the break, the most recent conflict in the group, the most pleasant common memory, etc. Groups, communities can create symbols or borrow existing ones and adapt them to their needs, by assigning new meanings and interpretations to which a communicator who is not part of the group or community does not have access. As a consequence, she or he cannot control the symbols conveyed in the communication or the way her or his messages will be understood.

Also, even if we once had access to the meanings assigned by people, groups, communities, cultures to words, beings, institutions, etc., it is possible that these meanings change over time. Many factors can be involved in this process – for example, history, context, frequent use of a symbol, etc.

I already mentioned personal symbolism, but the more important issue in multicultural communication situations is the different symbolism associated with one and the same word, context, etc. in different cultures. For example, in Western culture the dog is viewed as a useful,

appreciated, lovable animal, associated with the idea of a happy family. In India, on the other hand, the dog is considered one of the dirtiest animals and is associated with vagrancy due to the large number of stray dogs in urban areas (Literat, 2013). For other examples of words that carry different meanings in different cultures, see Case study 1 in Workbook.

Understanding is dependent on habitus (see Pierre Bourdieu's writings). We have specific understandings of references to a pandemic, a vaccine, courage, happiness, wealth, etc. because our perception and interpretation of the world around us follows different patterns. These patterns are shaped, over time, in the community in which we live, in which we are exposed, throughout life, to people of a certain type, to certain ways of thinking or acting, to certain sayings, to certain jokes, to certain news; where we participate in certain specific local events, where we get used to certain characteristics of the health system, where we hear legends related to certain characters, actions or places, where we get acquainted with specific ideas, with the stories behind some dishes and so on. Therefore, one and the same thing can be understood differently by people belonging to different cultures or societies. See also Case study 2 in Workbook for other explanations and examples.

## **2. Visual communication is symbolic**

So far, I have predominantly referred to the problem of words that can be interpreted in different ways. However, the use of images in communication raises even greater difficulties. Flusser (2003) shows that an image is not a denotative symbolic complex (with a single meaning), but a connotative symbolic complex (with several meanings, which allows for all kinds of interpretations). I will return to this idea.

The temptation to use images in communication comes from several characteristics that make them superior to verbal communication. I will mention a few below – see Scârneci-Domnişoru (2020) for a detailed account.

Weber (2008) shows that images are more accessible than most forms of academic discourse. That is why we use or we should use images as often as possible. Communication is both easier and more efficient if we employ images to exemplify the ideas or processes that we are trying to describe. Especially in situations where our audience is not necessarily comprised of specialists or when our listeners have different levels of knowledge and comprehension as far as that content is concerned, we use images as a way to facilitate access to information, to facilitate understanding. For example, if you want to describe the conditions in which poor people

in Romania are living, you will be better understood by many people if you show images of a room where many people live together, of what they have for lunch, etc. than if you were to talk about quality of life, well-being, deprivation, etc. (see Scârnecki-Domnişoru, 2016).

Images make communication not only more accessible, Weber (2008) shows, but also memorable (more memorable than verbal communication), giving it a greater impact on the viewer. Images are more expressive than words and “reaching the audience” is thus much easier. No matter how many words you use to describe, for example, the level of poverty in a community, no matter how many numbers you present in order to highlight an issue, you will not be able to have a greater impact on the audience than you would through a series of suggestive images (other examples, including images, are to be found in Case study 3 in Workbook).

Here is an example: researcher Claudia Mitchell describes the impact of a drawing made of a Rwandan participant. The researcher tried to uncover how young people in this African country perceived violence against women and children and collected, among other things, visual data in the form of drawings. She presented the results to decision-makers involved in drawing up social policies, illustrating them with some drawings. Mitchell et al. (2011) show one of the images, capturing a desperate woman throwing her baby in the toilet (the drawing is related to unwanted pregnancies resulting from sexual violence). This drawing is sure to “haunt” you, as it haunted the African decision-makers who looked at it before you.

In fact, we often use (or should use) images in trying to convey meanings because they capture the ineffable, that which cannot be expressed in words (see Weber, 2008). Describing pollution, war, disease in words is quite different than showing pictures of them. The images “speak” for themselves, and they do it much more suggestively than the most appropriate of words. Many people are familiar with the image of a starving child who is barely able to crawl anymore and has an eagle waiting next to him (the photo for which Kevin Carter won the Pulitzer Prize in 1994); it had an extraordinary emotional impact on the western world and captured the famine in Sudan in a way that no words would have allowed us to imagine it. There is a reason why it is said that a picture is worth more than 1000 words.

Moreover, Weber (2008) argues, images facilitate empathic understanding. If that is something you are interested in when addressing your audience, then images allow you to make those listening put themselves in someone else's shoes much easier, better understand a point of view, and embrace someone else's experiences without too much effort. For example, if you want to convey the difficulties that people with disabilities face in their daily lives, you can show

images (as did Pink, 2008) in which they deal with situations in which the physical arrangement of the city restricts their mobility.

The mentioned author made a photo exhibition through which she tried to make visitors get a feel for the issues that people immobilized in a wheelchair face in their daily lives, in public spaces. The photos invited the viewers to put themselves in subjects' shoes, to appeal to their empathy. The exhibition was very convincing, because it highlighted ordinary, everyday situations, moments that are familiar to each of us. They showed, for example, that if you were to go to the bank in a wheelchair, there would be no way to enter the building, that you would have to use the phone so that the bank employees come out to talk to you and solve your problems on the street.

More details about this visual communication, but also about similar ones, can be found in Case study 3 in Workbook, where one can also see some relevant images to support this idea and find references to two special types of visual communication that facilitates understanding – the photovoice and the visual essay.

Artistic knowledge facilitated by this type of visual communication is worth taking into consideration, especially in situations where conventional scientific communication is not an option. I also think that it's worth considering, whenever possible, when we want to exemplify scientific ideas.

The visual essay, for example, is suitable for any topic that allows for visual communication (see examples in Scârnecki-Domnișoru, 2019). Making a visual essay is accessible to anyone, does not require much effort, nor any particular level of knowledge or talent, and the presentation of such visual essays facilitates communication and comprehension; it stimulates empathy and ensures the response of those audiences that are otherwise hard to reach by specialists.

But the most important feature of images in terms of communication in intercultural environments is the one mentioned by Flick (1998) – their ability to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers. Images help us better understand each other, reduce the distances between us, and use fewer words that can be misinterpreted. How many times have we not used non-verbal language, facial expressions or gestures to make ourselves understood? How many times have we not said “it's better if I show you!”? Regarding gestures, it might be good to point out that, in their case, too, the meanings may differ in different cultures.

To illustrate the idea of overcoming language and cultural barriers, I'll offer the example

of a Canadian researcher (see Liebenberg, 2009) who talks about the difficulties she encountered when she had to conduct a study involving pregnant teenagers from a poor community in South Africa. Each of the differences between her and the participants in the study could have become a barrier in understanding: there were cultural, intellectual, racial, language, age and social class differences. The researcher managed to overcome these barriers relatively easily, by using images in her interaction with the teenagers. She asked them, first of all, to spend a week taking pictures of things that are important to them - good or bad. Having access to these photos lead to fewer difficulties in interviewing the girls, they understood each other a lot easier.

Therefore, very often words are not enough to “symbolize” a reality and images can assist presenters in expressing their thoughts and the audience in comprehending. It is often impossible to reduce to numbers or describe a state of mind, a feeling, an impression, a sensation in words; it’s hard to make others understand what you felt in a certain context or how much a certain gesture moved you. Images seem like a better tool for expressing and conveying emotion.

Images are much more expressive than texts and numbers. If you want to reach the audience, to convince, to raise awareness, or even just to inform, images are the perfect means. A presentation that contains images has a greater influence on the audience, it is more spectacular, richer, more comprehensive and more complex, less monotonous, less difficult to navigate and easier to penetrate.

The issues with visual communication arise with another characteristic, described by Bagnoli (2009): images are evocative. Let's say that you try to describe the atmosphere in which people lead their everyday life in communist Romania. An audience consisting of Romanians over the age of 45 will be better reintroduced into the atmosphere if they see images or objects evoking communism (for example photographs of people standing in lines for food, of store shelves, a TV show or a TV from that time, a semi-automatic washing machine, etc.). The problem is that images can conjure up various things to those who look at them, and the presenter may find it impossible to control what memories they evoke in the viewers and especially what kind of feelings these evocations produce. It can happen that the atmosphere gets ruined because part of the audience becomes nostalgic, while another one becomes sad or outraged.

Images, more than words, can carry different meanings, they are symbolic, and they can be interpreted in various ways. Even more so than in the case of words, the same thing captured in images can mean something in a context, in a culture, in a subculture, among the members of an institution, etc. and something completely different in another context, in another culture, and

so on. As in the case of words, one and the same thing captured in images can have different meanings for two different people, at different times in their life, in association with different things, etc.

Here is an example from advertising. Bick and Chiper (2007) show that a brand identity, in its initial version, as it is known in the culture in which it originated, can present some shortcomings when promoted abroad, where the brand comes into contact with local values, mentalities, taboos, symbols, experiences, and history. The authors mention the example of the Nike sign, which in Haiti and Romania is not necessarily suggestive of American fitness culture. Therefore, this sign takes on all sorts of vague meanings in cultures other than the American one. In Romania, for example, people associate the Nike sign with a V standing for victory, with a horizontal J (possibly Michael Jordan's initial), with the mark that teachers leave on student papers, with a comma or a symbol for luck. See other examples in Case study 1 in Workbook.

Schirato and Webb (according to Sligo and Tilley, 2011) argue not only that a picture is worth a thousand words, but also that it can be read in a thousand different ways, and Banks (2007) argues that “images are multivocal and that they `speak` in different ways to different people in different contexts.” (p. 94).

Kearney and Hyle (2004) conducted a study in which participants were invited to draw what a change in supervisor meant to them; they showed that, without the explanations provided by the cartoonists, the images could be interpreted very differently. For example, if you see a picture of a few birds in flight, what do you image the experience of having a new boss meant for the cartoonist? A pleasant, quiet, calm experience, a feeling of freedom, of liberation? Or the deep insecurity associated with flying, an uncontrollable, paralyzing fear? See other examples in Case study 1 in the Workbook.

As a result, visual communication is very much a matter of audience response. What do the images convey, how do they reach the viewers? Do they carry the intended meaning or one distorted in the act of comprehension, by the feelings they awake or by the context in which they are presented?

What we mean to convey can be overshadowed by collateral, but strongly evocative visual elements. For someone looking at a picture that should illustrate a housework activity, the strange clothing of someone in the foreground can stand out. The viewer may find this element so fascinating; he may imagine so many things about it that the original intended message of the image is lost.



So, it is very likely that what you wanted to convey through images will reach the audience in a distorted way. Trying an example, Banks (2001) shows that student audiences, in particular, do not “read” the films resulting from ethnographic studies in a “natural” way, the way the ethnographer would have intended. Rather, students tend to use the actions depicted in the film to confirm their stereotypes about “primitive” or “tribal” people. And this “reading” completely defeats the purpose of making the students understand the subjects.

Referring to the same problem, Holm (2008) talks about the “intentions” of those who look at images: because of personal life experiences, they can assign meanings that are very different than what the authors intended. Therefore, the way in which an image or a sequence of images will be interpreted cannot be entirely controlled or predicted. In Wiles et al. (2008) there are other references to authors who argue that the way images are consumed may differ from the intended meaning.

Of course, successful presentations (including visual ones) are made all over the world, every day, in front of diverse audiences, including intercultural ones. Christmann (2008) argues that, although images are polysemous, so they can be seen and understood in different ways, this does not mean that the meanings assigned to an image are arbitrary and completely subjective. My intention was thus not to demonstrate the impossibility of intercultural communication, but to emphasize that we must handle such contexts with special care.

## Conclusions

There are a lot of means of communication, and each of them has advantages and disadvantages. In order to avoid the issues outlined in this chapter, we should use a combination of such means. For example, we can clarify the symbolism of an image through verbal explanations or make sure we achieve our communication purposes by employing images along with a text or a verbal presentation.

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## **MODULE II. Models for education**

**2.1. Education in a multicultural environment**

**2.2. Dialogue and communication in a multicultural and intercultural environment**

**2.3. Inclusive education from a multicultural and intercultural perspective**

**2.4. Application of education models in multicultural and intercultural environments**

**2.5. Intercultural approaches in the development of a European educational system**

## 2.1. EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

by Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania<sup>8</sup>

### Abstract

This chapter presents fundamental concepts and approaches on education in a multicultural environment. It begins by underlining the main purpose of contemporary policies for education in multicultural environments, and then offers definitions of several concepts that are necessary for understanding the challenges and opportunities defining these environments. The following sections offer an overview of recent themes and approaches of education processes in multicultural environments, such as theoretical models, ideological frameworks and types of education, by emphasizing the general orientation of these approaches: to create culturally responsive learning environments. Finally, four professional roles associated with education in multicultural environments are briefly described: educators as cultural workers, trainers of intercultural communication, school mediators and intercultural mediators.

*Keywords:* multicultural environment, education, equity, culturally responsive learning environment, theoretical models, ideological frameworks

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## 2.1. Education in a multicultural environment

### 1. The premise of education in multicultural environments

A multicultural environment is a social context characterized by diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, religious, language or other forms of cultural identity. A multicultural environment is defined by groups of people with different cultural backgrounds living, learning and working together (Stoyanova, 2013).

In democratic societies, a multicultural environment is seen both as an opportunity and a challenge for educational systems (Banks et al, 2001; Beard, 2016). The opportunity derives from the wealth of co-existing values, ideas and practices, offering a large variety of resources for the social life. The challenge comes from the desideratum of harmonizing different interests and the need of relieving tensions or conflicts, which are frequently inherent to multicultural spaces.

The main goal of education in a multicultural environment is **equity**. That's because in multicultural environments, the academic success of students can be hindered by social problems such as racism, ethnic tensions or discrimination. Educational equity refers to policies, strategies and practices that support and facilitate the academic excellence of all students (Banks et al, 2001; Beard, 2016), thus avoiding any form of discrimination based on ethnic, racial, national identity or other type of cultural identity.

Starting from this premise, universities and schools should provide professional training for academic staff and teachers who work in multicultural environments. On the one hand, such training programs should help educators to identify their own attitudes towards different groups and also to better understand the cultural perspectives of other groups; on the other hand, such programs could provide educators with pedagogical techniques and skills designed to promote equity and support the academic success of all students. At the same time, students must become interculturally competent (Catteuw, 2012) by improving their knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to interact effectively with people from diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, and language groups (Banks et al., 2001).

The key idea in multicultural environments is, thus, “celebrating diversity in education with a commitment to social justice” (Oryan and Ravid, 2019, p. 3).

## 2. Key concepts in approaching education in multicultural environment

In this sub-chapter we will first define some concepts related to problems or challenges for education in multicultural environments (*prejudice, stereotype, discrimination* and *racism*) and then two important concepts related to solutions or opportunities for the educational system (*multicultural education* and *intercultural learning*).

**A prejudice** is a “negative attitude toward a social group and its members” (Wittenbrink, Corell and Ma, 2019, p. 164). In social psychology, the concept of *attitude* – understood as a predisposition of individuals to evaluate a certain aspect of reality - is a central one. Attitudes have three components: affect, cognition and behaviour (Duduciuc, Ivan and Chelcea, 2013). Prejudice refers to the affective (emotional) component of attitudes: “It captures the negative evaluative predisposition toward a social category and its members, the dislike felt toward the group” (Wittenbrink et al, 2019, p. 164). In multicultural environments, where different ethnic groups live together, ethnic prejudices could significantly influence interethnic relations, and the impact is mostly a negative one, since ethnic prejudices work as negative attitudes to ethnic out-groups (Vervaet, Van Houtte and Stevens, 2018).

Related to *prejudice*, the term **stereotype** is frequently used in the interethnic relations field. It refers to the cognitive component of attitudes and it designates “generalizations that associate category members with typical and distinctive attributes” (Wittenbrink et al, 2019, p. 164). If *prejudices* always have a negative connotation, *stereotypes* can be positive, negative or neutral. Generalization is the most important thing here. In other words, stereotypes are preconceived ideas about the defining characteristics of social groups, formed not based on experience, but learned in the process of socialization (Zamfir and Vlăsceanu, 1993).

**Discrimination** refers to the behavioural component of attitudes toward social groups. Discrimination is defined as “behaviour toward members of a social category when the behaviour occurs solely because of the target's category membership” (Wittenbrink et al, 2019, p. 164). More specific, discrimination removes members of a group from opportunities offered to other groups (Giddens, 2001) by limiting or blocking the access of people belonging to an ethnic, racial, or other cultural group to certain social resources.

It is obvious that the three concepts are closely interrelated (Wittenbrink et al, 2019). Stereotypes and prejudices could represent the basis for discrimination, and discrimination could produce, strengthen or validate some stereotypes and prejudices.

**Racism** is “the act of discriminating individuals based on their racial identification”

(Beard, 2016, p. 440). Racist doctrines, which have emerged in recent centuries amid Western expansion and colonization, have interpreted racial differences in hierarchical terms, believing that some races have a higher biologic potential than others (Giddens, 2001). Nowadays, democratic states support values and policies that promote equity and combat any forms of ethnic, racial or other type of cultural discrimination.

**Multicultural education** is “a means to lead a social change that would allow each cultural group a respectable existence, and to cultivate respectful dialogue between the various groups” (Oryan and Ravid, 2019, p.3). It is also seen as „an educational reform project that has been used in teacher education programs to promote educational equity and improve the academic outcomes of all students” (Beard, 2016, p. 441). In other words, multicultural education represents the main approach of education in a multicultural environment in order to enhance cultural wealth and ensure equity.

**Intercultural learning** is a concept related to interactions between social actors and also to outcomes of communication processes in environments where the principles of multicultural education are applied. It is defined as “a process whereby students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds learn with and from each other, developing a greater insight and understanding of different cultures” (O'Brien, Tuohy, Fahy and Markey, 2019, p. 26). The main objective of intercultural learning is to develop *intercultural competence* (Catteuw, 2012) or *cultural intelligence* (Presbitero and Attar, 2018), which refers to an individual’s ability to cope effectively in a cultural context that is different from his own or in a multicultural team. In our opinion, not only students, but also educators could be involved and could benefit from the intercultural learning process. *See Case Study 1 in Workbook.*

### 3. Recent approaches to multicultural education

**Challenges.** In higher education institutions, the multicultural environment could be a *natural* or a *constructed* one. A *natural multicultural environment* entails groups or communities where people (students and staff) with different ethnic, racial or cultural identities live together in a certain geographic area (region or country). A *constructed multicultural environment* is created through international mobility of students and academic staff. Nowadays, the environments of higher education institutions are becoming more international. Through programs such as Erasmus Plus, more students and staff travel, learn, teach and live in new cultural contexts for a certain period of time. Obviously, the process of adapting to the new



environment is far from easy.

Recent research on students' mobility show that students could experience problems related to interculturality in both academic and non-academic environments (Yarosh, Lukic and Santibáñez-Gruber, 2018), especially language barriers and differences between the social and educational systems of the host country and, respectively, those from the country of origin. In order to “deal successfully and appropriately with the multiple intercultural challenges and the cultural diversity they encounter” (ibid., p. 54), students need to develop their intercultural competence. This is also true for academic staff and refers to both types of multicultural environments: natural or constructed.

**Theoretical models of multicultural education and intercultural learning.** Based on the premise of the need for intercultural competence in higher education institutions, more theoretical models were developed. According to Yarosh et al. (2018), there are three models which are appropriate for tertiary education students.

A first theoretical model was formulated by King and Baxter Magolda (2005) and it was designed for students who face cultural diversity in their own countries and communities. In such a context, students should become “interculturally competent citizens” (p. 571) following a process of development of their “intercultural maturity”. This theoretical model meets the challenges of intercultural education in natural multicultural environments and proposes three dimensions of students' development: cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal.

A second theoretical model meets the challenges of constructed multicultural environments and it is focused on developing the intercultural competence of students who spend a semester or more in a foreign university. This model was designed by Williams (2009) and it also describes three dimensions of intercultural competence: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Based on these dimensions, certain learning outcomes could be formulated in order to maximize the students' success in the educational and cultural system abroad.

A third theoretical model was proposed by Fantini and Tirmizi (2006). The authors believe that intercultural competence consists of four types of elements, each of them fundamental for successful intercultural interactions: knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes. The novelty brought by this model is that each of these four categories is comprised of many other elements which, in turn, should be views not as separate dimensions, but rather as linked and overlapping components of intercultural competence. This model is largely known as KASA and provides a good theoretical framework for approaching challenges and intercultural

competence development in multicultural environments.

**Ideological frameworks.** The goal of producing education based on the principles of equity, respect for cultural diversity and performance is part of a broader Western ideology which supports a pluralistic worldview (Oryan and Ravid, 2019) and is related to a “lower level of prejudice, ethnocentrism, and perceived threat” (Watters, Ward and Stuart, 2020).

Two main ideological frameworks could be identified in supporting the social role of education in multicultural environments:

(i) *Education as agent of social reform.* This framework was formulated by Banks and McGee Banks (2016, apud Oryan and Ravid, 2019), who believe that the school’s mission is to create a systemic social change that supports multiculturalism. The authors describe five practical aspects for multicultural education: 1) integration of contents (data, information) regarding different cultural perspectives within teaching-learning processes, 2) developing cultural sensitivity and critical thinking in both teachers and students, 3) reducing prejudice, 4) promoting egalitarian pedagogy, and 5) constructing a multicultural organizational culture that could promote multicultural values both inside and outside the school.

(ii) *Education as a long-term developmental process.* This framework was described by Wurzle (1987 apud Oryan and Ravid, 2019) and focuses on the individual learning process through multicultural education. The goal of such a process is shifting individual mindsets from ethnocentric to multicultural. This can be achieved through educational interventions involving the following phases or aspects: developing self-awareness, learning about human condition and different cultures, making cultural choices from an egalitarian perspective, personalizing knowledge from an intellectual and emotional perspective, learning through inquiry and understanding the micro-climate of cultural realities (group identities and intercultural communication).

**Types of education in multicultural environments.** According to Paul-Binyamin and Haj-Yehia (2019), three main types of education can be identified in multicultural environments: separate, joint and multicultural education.

*Separate education* is specific to social contexts where different groups (mostly minority groups) promote their cultural autonomy. Such groups have the desire to strengthen cultural identity and solidarity and allow their members “to connect to their culture and heritage, often absent from the hegemonic curriculum” (ibid., p. 251).

*Joint education* refers to situations in which acceptance and integration of diverse cultural

groups in education settings are encouraged; the integration is also considered important for the future.

*Multicultural education* refers to what has been called in previous chapters „intercultural education”; it is even more valuable than the type described above: it “not merely fosters tolerance towards other, but views cultural diversity as an educational and social resource” (ibid.). This type of education is largely appreciated by scholars because it is best suited for the goals of social integration and equity in multicultural environments.

**Toward a culturally responsive learning environment.** In recent literature, many points of view regarding the definitions, types and dimensions of education in multicultural environments have been advanced. Generally speaking, three dimensions of multicultural education are considered fundamental for social and pedagogical interventions in multicultural environments: attitudes, awareness and practices (Beard, 2016). More precisely, educators should focus their teaching activities on multicultural attitudes (beliefs and assumptions), multicultural awareness (understanding of factors that influence academic success) and multicultural practices (pedagogical strategies that could support educational equity and success). In other words, the goal of equity in education can be achieved if multicultural environments became open to valuing their cultural diversity.

Education in multicultural environments reflects the democratic principle of respecting diversity. While in the past, in most countries, the educational system was supporting the objective of building a unique national identity (Andreescu, 2004), today there is a growing awareness of the need to make the voice of different groups heard and to empower them (Oryan and Ravid, 2019). Multiculturalism is thus seen as a positive value which is reflected into the educational system through the concept of *culturally responsive learning environment* (Beard, 2016) or *culturally-responsive teacher* (Oryan and Ravid, 2019).

#### 4. New professional roles in a multicultural environment

In recent decades, during the transformation of multicultural environments in culturally responsive learning environments, new professional roles have emerged. We will discuss four such roles: educator as cultural worker, trainer of intercultural communication, school mediator and intercultural mediator.

**Educators as cultural workers** (Paul-Binyamin and Haj-Yehia, 2019) develop students’ awareness and sensitivity to intercultural respect and equip their students with an in-depth

understanding of cultural diversity; they understand other cultural systems beyond folkloristic aspects (such as customs or food); they understand historical narratives as well as ways of thinking and behaviour even if they are painful; they address the curriculum from this larger and deeper perspective and promote this approach in their courses.

In multicultural environments where sensitive issues such as racism and discrimination go alongside with diversity, educators should utilize teaching methods that promote equity in education (Beard, 2016), such as cooperative learning, pair/share activities, open dialogues etc. Moreover, educators should have positive attitudes toward different groups of students and should know their cultural background and learning needs; in this way, educators as cultural workers could translate “knowledge into effective instructional practices and create learning environments that support the academic success of all students” (ibid., p. 447).

**Trainers of intercultural communication** are professionals whose main task is to develop the trainees’ intercultural competence. Their challenge is how to design courses and activities that would shift the focus from knowledge *about* cultures to knowledge oriented toward *how to* operate in a different cultural context; in light of this role, educators appear as coaches who guide the autonomous learning process of their students (Chiper, 2013).

**School mediator** is a formally implemented role in the secondary educational sector in some European countries, especially for assisting communication with Roma communities. School mediators work with socially marginalized families and students, especially from disadvantaged ethnic communities, in order to improve their educational participation, to consult and to provide counselling for community members, to prevent and mediate conflicts between families and schools and to promote multicultural values in a multicultural environment (Pop and Balea, 2016). In Romania, for example, where one of the largest Roma ethnic minority in Europe lives, the school mediator is part of the auxiliary teaching staff and became one of the most important mechanisms for offering support to Roma pupils interacting with the educational system (Szasz and Csesznek, 2019).

**Intercultural mediator** is a job that deals with the relations between immigrants and the receiving communities (Sani, 2015). Intercultural mediators must provide adequate support for immigrants and effective mediation between institutions of the host society and immigrants. In order to achieve these tasks, intercultural mediators must acquire skills such as: a good knowledge of the language of the immigrants and of the host country, the capacity to “interpret, in terms of culture, the social and cultural discomfort that the immigration process entails”

(Fiorucci, 2004 apud ibid., p. 2547), the ability to establish effective connections between immigrants and institutions in the receiving society and, of course, the capacity to “foresee the possible conflicts that, sometimes, may arise from the encounter of different cultures and traditions” (ibid.). See *Case Study 2 in Workbook*.

## Conclusion

In democratic societies, multicultural environments – spaces where people with different cultural backgrounds live – are seen both as an opportunity and a challenge for educational systems. The main goal of education in a multicultural environment is equity. The main mechanism for achieving this goal is the development of intercultural competence in both students and teachers. From an ideological point of view, education is seen both as an agent of social reform and as a long-term developmental process. Several theoretical models have been developed in order to better understand multicultural identities and to act in different social contexts characterized by multiculturalism. In recent literature one can find many points of view regarding the definitions, types and dimensions of education in multicultural environments, but most of them agree that multicultural spaces should become *culturally responsive learning environments*. In this context, new professional roles have emerged; such professionals use strategies and practices that support and facilitate the academic excellence of all students, thus avoiding any form of discrimination based on ethnic, racial, national identity or other type of cultural identity.

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## 2.2. DIALOGUE AND COMMUNICATION IN A MULTICULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

by University of Zagreb, Croatia<sup>9</sup>

### Abstract

Intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect (Council of Europe, 2008). The main distinction between dialogue and communication in a multicultural and intercultural environment and dialogue and communication in a standard socially and culturally homogenous environment is found in the difference between cultures that communicators are part of and which they use in their communication processes. One of the primary communication forms for achieving intercultural and multicultural objectives is dialogue. Dialogue is a form of communication requiring expression and acknowledgment of diversity and a reciprocal observation of competence in knowledge and expression. Dialogue is balanced communication, constructing knowledge without denying diversity. It requires negotiation. Dialogue is based on two communicative conditions: equal distribution of opportunities for active participation in communication; and empathy, that is competence in assuming another's perspective, integrating listening and understanding, interest in expression, and a sensitivity to the needs of others.

*Keywords:* dialogue, communication, intercultural environment, multicultural environment

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## 2.2. Dialogue and communication in a multicultural and intercultural environment

### 1. The meaning and importance of intercultural dialogue

The meaning and importance of intercultural dialogue is well presented in the European Union's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe. 2008): EU understands intercultural dialogue "as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue contributes to political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies. It fosters equality, human dignity and a sense of common purpose. It aims at developing a deeper understanding of diverse worldviews and practices, increasing co-operation and participation (or the freedom to make choices), allowing personal growth and transformation, and promoting tolerance and respect for the other" (Safonova, 2014, p. 59).

The main distinction between dialogue and communication in a multicultural and intercultural environment and dialogue and communication in a standard socially and culturally homogenous environment is found in the difference between cultures that communicators are part of and which they use in their communication processes. Accordingly, the difference between cultures is one of the foci of cross-cultural and intercultural communication research, with the fundamental understanding that intercultural means to be dialogic, to celebrate difference, otherness, and plurality (Xu, 2013, p. 379). Many who theorize about cross-cultural and intercultural communication (such as Levine, Park and Kim, 2007) have sought to find similarities and differences between cultures. According to them (apud Xu 2013, pp. 379-380), cross-cultural and intercultural communication research focuses on comparing the communication patterns of different cultures, examining how people of different cultures enact their cultural and communication patterns in interaction, and investigating how these cultural and communication characteristics influence interactions in particular contexts. Because of that, a primary focus of cross-cultural and intercultural communication scholars is managing cultural differences.

Intercultural communication and dialogue are especially important in contemporary

society, which is increasingly characterized by the expansion of its intercultural dimension so that the latter has become not only a circumstantial one but also a structural one. The contact between cultures highlights problems whose solutions imply the transition from multicultural to intercultural vision (from the juxtaposition of cultures to creative interaction of cultures) (Cosma, 2011, p. 87). It seems evident that possessing only the communicative culture that allows the individual to successfully communicate only in a mono-cultural and monolingual society is far from being sufficient today in the modern world (Safonova, 2014, p. 59). Because of its broader role in society, education, and specifically intercultural education, proves to be an increasingly urgent requirement in a world where contacts between individuals belonging to different cultures know unprecedented amplitude, as a result of the process of globalization (Cosma, 2011, p. 88). Intercultural education has the primary goal of the training of a new, richer individual identity, gained through the assimilation of some characteristics specific to the targeted culture/s. In other words, intercultural education seeks the training of intercultural competence. As a definition, we can say that intercultural competence is the person's ability to adjust their attitude, behavior, and knowledge to the interaction with people from other cultures, ability to demonstrate openness, flexibility and a positive attitude towards persons of different cultural backgrounds, the ability to revise beliefs and values concerning other cultures (Cosma, 2011, p. 88).

## **2. Adaptation to the new intercultural and multicultural society**

Adaptation to the new culture, necessary for everyone in a multicultural and intercultural environment, assumes the training and development of intercultural competence with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. As Cosma and Tudorache stated (see Cosma, 2011, p.88): from a cognitive standpoint, the assimilation of knowledge is necessary - getting information about rules by which societies work; ways that cultures decipher the reality; and knowledge about language as an essential communicating vehicle. In terms of emotional viewpoint, the contact with a new culture assumes that the one who crosses this experience must learn to get used to the absence of familiar things, social networks and has to begin to find sources of satisfaction in the new circumstances of life. To meet these unique circumstances, intercultural education can develop openness and interest in novelty, the recent acceptance as a possible alternative, tolerance, respect for difference, positive thinking, respect for general human values, and understanding of specific sensitivities. In terms of behavior, we must assimilate a new repertoire of interpersonal and social skills for interacting effectively in modern society. In this sense,

intercultural education can develop for the ones who are expected to interact in the international environment, the ability to communicate in formal and informal situations, the capacity to understand and avoid unpleasant problems arising from ignorance regarding different cultural codes, flexibility, ability to accept others reactions as a manifestation of what is human, etc. (Cosma, 2011, p. 88).

Universities are today, as in the past, places of both intensive multicultural and intercultural encounters and education. So, as Safonova (2014, p. 58) pointed out: which of the characteristics of modern university education may be recognized as essential for developing students' communicative culture that would allow them to live, communicate and co-operate successfully in today's intercultural global village and be interculturally competent? Modelling of modern intercultural communicative education today, especially in universities, has no other choice but to focus on forming students' perceptions of the dialogue of cultures and civilizations as the only alternative way of life in today's global world and as a personal philosophy of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (and students should voluntarily adopt them) and to cultivate attitudes to other cultures as equals, valuable in their diversity and uniqueness (Safonova, 2014, p. 60).

Firstly, the modern intercultural- communication-oriented pedagogy and its educational strategies under consideration are expected to considerably broaden the knowledge input in the classroom, including such vital points and aspects as the following, highlighted by Safonova (2014, p. 61):

- cross-cultural and intercultural communication as a human value;
- cultural awareness as a positive characteristic and a privilege of a man living in the global village who can think globally, interculturally and act appropriately locally in different corners of the Earth;
- most common socio-cultural factors influencing the individual's choice of a particular communication style with people from various cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds; the degree of impact of any person's values on his/her communicative interaction with other people and vice versa;
- modern reasons (very often history-bound) for common communication failures (up to giving up on communication) between particular cultural, linguistic, and social groups of people, between the representatives of different religious and/or geopolitical communities,
- negative stereotyping as a cognitive destroyer of any intercultural communication;

- what is meant by communicative attractiveness and unattractiveness of human behavior from the point of view of particular cultural and linguistic groups of people involved in communication, common communicative successes and failures typical of human interaction in intercultural settings.

Secondly, as the same author pointed out (Safonova, 2014, p. 61), it is equally essential to provide intercultural communication training for people in choosing the most appropriate strategies for intercultural dialogue with representatives of particular cultural or cultural-linguistic communities (ethnic, national, religious, continental cultures, civilizational and geopolitical groups, and social subcultures, as well as hybrid Internet-cultures).

Thirdly, we must not forget that language, verbal and non-verbal activities and communication in the narrow sense of these words are not ends in themselves in human interaction. Still, they are also a means of developing cooperation and looking for possible ways of solving global problems of modern civilization. Therefore, modern intercultural education can stimulate critical thinking and provide practical intercultural training by involving students in doing systematical thought-provoking and problem-solving tasks of different complexity levels (Safonova, 2014, p. 61).

It is important to stress that multiculturalism and interculturalism mean that both sites need to challenge themselves, adapt, and try to make something new from their interactions. This new culture will be closer to each of them. As Sen (2006, p. 150) states, multiculturalism that in practice becomes “plural monoculturalism” poses challenges to intercultural dialogue and should be replaced by a policy that focuses on the freedom of reasoning and decision-making and celebrates diversity to the extent that it is as freely chosen as possible by the persons involved (Crosbie, 2014, p. 92). When theorizing about multiculturalism, we also must keep in mind that the tendency to put culture at the center of analysis or of education ignores a recent change in the field of multicultural education, where the notion of intersectionality, i.e., many identities interplay in social situations, not just “culture” in intercultural contexts, is crucial (Banks 2008; Dervin 2014).

Identity and the concept of identification (identity as a process) become central in new intercultural education, together with a constant concern about the issue of power and how it influences the process of identification when it takes place (Holliday 2010; Dervin 2014). The following elements can briefly summarize the approach of contemporary intercultural teacher education that is used in the UniCulture project (Dervin, 2014, p. 85):

(1) The emphasis should be on identification (identity as a process) rather than culture. Culture can be analyzed as an element leading to the “solidification” of self and other, removing the individual’s agency from the picture – so can be other identity markers such as gender and religion and their intersection. Teachers should concentrate on instabilities and co-construction when examining situations of intercultural dialogue rather than explaining behaviors through culture as an “alibi” (Abdallah-Preteuille, 1986).

(2) The issue of power should also be central in the approach, not as an essentialized aspect of interculturality (only the powerful ones “win”) but as a standard and unstable phenomenon that matters (Foucault, 1995, p. 194). Power, like identities, is co-constructed and thus changeable. Teachers must become aware of this and teach their students how to deal with unequal power relations.

(3) Teachers should also reflect on the role of the teacher and staff member in the marginalization of some pupils. Yet whenever they feel that someone is being marginalized, it is important to question their perceptions.

(4) Finally, as in any act of interculturality, the context should be central in understanding what is happening and in deciding how to react. Education is controlled by curricula that have an impact on what is done and said. Being aware of these elements and negotiating their influence on what is happening in a classroom with the students are essential aspects of this new intercultural education (Dervin, 2014, p. 85).

### **3. Establishing new forms of intercultural dialogue and a more interculturally sensitive society**

The conception of dialogue is fundamental. As Bartulović and Kušević (2016, p. 11) says: common determinants of interculturally focused educational concepts also include an understanding of dialogue as an essential educational component. It is connected to prescriptive theory, which reflects transaction position (Miller and Seller 1985, apud Gay, 2004), which defines education as an interactive dialogue between students and the formal educational program, in which students have opportunities for research, critical thinking, questioning of status quo and knowledge reconstruction (Bartulović and Bartulović, 2016, p. 30). Intercultural education is primarily a question of relations or dialogue (Bartulović and Bartulović, 2016, pp. 50-51).

Establishing new forms of intercultural dialogue and, as a result, a new, more

interculturally sensitive society faces some obstacles also in historical processes. In European societies, since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, intercultural communication has assumed the form of modernist ethnocentrism based on values such as knowledge, pluralism, and individualism. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, historical changes created the necessity for new forms of intercultural communication. In the last decade of that century, a transcultural form of communication, based on dialogue, was proposed as a basis for cross-cultural adaptation, creation of multicultural identities, and construction of a hybrid multicultural society. However, this transcultural form creates paradoxes and difficulties in intercultural communication, mixing the preservation of cultural difference with the search for synthesis. Consequently, a new form of intercultural dialogue, dealing with incommensurable differences and managing conflicts is needed to create coordination among different cultural perspectives (Baraldi, 2006, p. 53). It is important to stress that communication is intercultural if and when different cultural perspectives prevent the creation of a single, shared culture (Carbaugh, 1994), i.e., if and when it presents contradictions (and potential conflicts) on the level of shared symbols, as this produces different cultural orientations. In this way, intercultural communication is culturally (and not interculturally) conditioned. What we need to achieve is mixed cultural coding, which can be successful only if cultural differences can be maintained and respected in communication: this means that contradictions and conflicts between cultural forms must be managed, not avoided.

A multicultural society can be interpreted as a society in which a mixed coding gives shape to the most critical communications. Mixed coding is based on hybridization (Pieterse, 2004), which in turn produces what is called *métissage* (Wieviorka, 2000). According to Wieviorka (2000), *métissage* means the fusion of different cultures, each with its history and tradition: therefore, *métissage* means unity of differences; however, this unity is embodied in individual actions, and consequently, it varies according to particular cases. Formulating a similar idea, Pearce (1994) has observed that any communication is intercultural as each individual is culturally different from any other. In functionally differentiated societies, *métissage* means the empowerment of personal diversity as the embodiment of cultural diversity. *Métissage* and hybridization produce cultural diversity in society (Pieterse, 2004). They create intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993; Bhawuk and Brislin, 1992) instead of promoting a new cultural form. *Métissage* adds an unpredictable cultural variety. Cultural diversity is not the product of differences between stable groups or societies: it is the consequence of the continuous production of hybridization through intercultural communication. The high contingency of this

variety also produces a search for cultural stability: sensitivity to all cultural forms in itself can lead to harmonious polyphony and fundamentalism. To promote the former and avoid the latter, some successful intercultural communication is necessary (Baraldi 2006, pp. 54-61).

One of the primary communication forms for achieving intercultural and multicultural objectives is dialogue. Dialogue is a form of communication requiring expression and acknowledgment of diversity and a reciprocal observation of competence in knowledge and expression (Todd, 1994). Dialogue is balanced communication, constructing knowledge without denying diversity (Jorgenson and Steier, 1994). It requires negotiation (Isajiw, 2000); above all, sharing normative expectations cannot be taken for granted.

Dialogue is based on two communicative conditions: (1) equal distribution of opportunities for active participation in communication; and (2) empathy, that is competence in assuming another's perspective, integrating listening and understanding, interest in expression, and a sensitivity to the needs of others (Gudykunst, 1994). Dialogue is supposed to produce a co-created cultural contract (Onwumehili et al., 2003): different cultures express themselves together in communication, appreciating each other. In this way, dialogue emphasizes conjunction among various cultural forms in communication, avoiding asymmetries and assimilation.

Dialogue intends to produce harmonization in reciprocity and coupling of interests and needs. Dialogue is a creative, co-constructed form of communication based on active participation and empathy. Dialogue is embodied in specific communicative strategies, centered on the participants, facilitating an understanding of another's actions, such as perception checking, active listening, emphasizing interest and understanding efforts, feedback aiming at clarifying the effects of activities, the utterance of non-aggressive and nonevaluative assertions (Gudykunst, 1994; Kim, 2001). Dialogue promotes cross-cultural adaptation through intercultural learning (Dueñas, 1994), which is reciprocal learning permitting participants to use newly learned cultural forms to give meaning to their world. Through intercultural education, participants can assign meaning to information using new cultural forms. Intercultural knowledge is learning *from* other cultures, not *about* different cultures, as it permits the use of various forms, not merely the knowledge of them (Baraldi, 2006, pp. 61-62).

## Conclusions

A new, transcultural form of communication promoted through the UniCulture project aims to create a new, harmonized and coherent culture of respect and reciprocity, adopting cultural forms that have value in the functionally differentiated society, such as openness, dialogue, learning, adaptation, conjunction, personalized identity and understanding (Baraldi, 2006, p. 64).

We aim to support the education system in encouraging learners to become interculturally competent. The process of becoming intercultural is a “personal transformation from cultural to intercultural (...) of growth beyond one’s cultural condition” (Lindsay and Dempsey, 1983, p. 267). For learners to become interculturally competent, it is essential that all participants in the education system – administrators, educators, and learners become aware of their cultural background and how their own beliefs and values influence their interactions with learners of others cultural backgrounds (Lustig and Koester 2006).

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## 2.3. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FROM A MULTICULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

by University of Zagreb, Croatia<sup>10</sup>

### Abstract

The chapter offers insight into inclusive education from a multicultural perspective. The multicultural character of contemporary Europe implies the presence of students with different backgrounds, and a therefore increased number of diversity challenges that should be addressed in education in all of its types and at all levels. (Inclusive) education is recognized to have an important role in preserving the fundamental values and principles of European Union, combating inequality, building inclusive and cohesive societies. The chapter gives information on current EU policy documents and recommendations. Moreover, it aims to provide a framework for understanding why policy development and implementation at a national, regional and local level differ. EU Member States differ according to a number of aspects and further implementation of inclusive education should take into consideration the needs and inclusion of different groups that differ based on culture, pluralism in society, class and socioeconomic status, previous education, gender inequality, language differences, religion, etc. Educational strategies and approaches, institutions and individuals in education should be aware of variabilities and inequalities and the constant changes in global and local context. Teaching and learning processes could be used for the development of intercultural competencies, especially intercultural sensitivity, which would ensure more dynamic, flexible, but also strategic education systems.

*Keywords:* inclusive education, multicultural perspective, policies and recommendations, inclusive and cohesive societies, intercultural competencies

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## 2.3. Inclusive education from a multicultural and intercultural perspective

### Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to provide insights into the basic understanding of inclusive education in multicultural perspective. Inclusive education – “education that is equally available and accessible to every person, while respecting individual differences in physical and cognitive abilities, various social, cultural and religious backgrounds” (Čerešňová et al. 2018, p. 13) – has been given an important role in preserving the fundamental values and principles of European Union, combating inequality, building inclusive and cohesive societies. The chapter aims to explain three main questions: (1) how EU policy documents set and determined approaches to (inclusive) education and its role in contemporary Europe, what recommendations have been issued and what instruments are envisaged for the implementation. Moreover, it aims to provide a framework for understanding (2) why policy development and implementation at a national, regional and local level differ, and how implementation depends on culture, pluralism in society, class and socioeconomic status, previous education, gender inequality, language differences, religion etc., characterizing each society. Finally, (3) the question arises how education can respond to the ever-changing circumstances of contemporary world, global and local context, and why developing intercultural competencies (especially intercultural sensitivity) is important for ensuring more dynamic, flexible, but also strategic education systems in the future.

### 1. European policies on inclusive education

The multicultural nature of contemporary Europe implies the presence of diverse ethnic, cultural and religious groups and societies as a result of migration, especially from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Increased mobility of EU citizens and arrival of the third-country nationals (including refugees and asylum seekers) are influencing national populations in the EU to become more diverse (European Education and Training Expert Panel, 2019, p. 2). In this changing environment, education in Europe, along with other aspects of everyday life, has faced a number of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity challenges and has been approached in different ways. Implementation of multicultural, intercultural, inclusive education during last decades has raised questions about the effects of different policies, measures and approaches, including strategies that promote social inclusion, tolerance and cohesion, and also about educational performance of students with different backgrounds, strategies of their integration,

etc. (Faas et al. 2014, pp. 300-302). A leading challenge of contemporary Europe – namely “populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism, discrimination, the spreading of fake news and misinformation, as well as the challenge of radicalization leading to violent extremism” (Council Recommendations, 2018) – has given education an important role in preserving the fundamental values and principles of the European Union – respect for human dignity, freedom (including freedom of expression), democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Inclusive education – defined as “education that is equally available and accessible to every person, while respecting individual differences in physical and cognitive abilities, various social, cultural and religious backgrounds” (Čerešňová et al. 2018, p. 13) – has become one of the priorities of European commission recognized to help in combating inequality, building inclusive and cohesive societies in the European Union.

Since the 1960s, several international documents have been delivered in order to ensure “access to education on an equal basis for all people” (Čerešňová et al. 2018, pp. 18-19). Building more inclusive and equitable societies, and consequently inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 is recognized as a goal by United Nations and UNESCO in documents such as *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015) and *Education 2030 Agenda* (UNESCO, 2017). During the last decades, European Union institutions (European Commission, European Council, and Council of Ministers) and Council of Europe have influenced the development of intercultural (education) policy for the member state of the European Union, as well as political and educational strategies for the integration of students in education and society (Faas et al., 2014, Čerešňová et al., 2018). There are a number of documents related to (inclusive) education<sup>11</sup> – for example *ET2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (2009), *Paris Declaration* (2015), *Leaders’ Agenda* (2017), *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* (2018), etc. – that set and determined approaches to (inclusive) education and its role in contemporary Europe. Policy documents bring the common directives and guidelines that can help stakeholders (institutions and individuals) in education better understand education, education systems, teaching and learning processes as means to promote and transmit the values of freedom, tolerance and equality, active citizenship, non-discrimination, and therefore to help to sustain participative and democratic societies (Faas et al., 2014). In order to gain a deeper understanding

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on this subject check: Triandafyllidou, 2011, Faas et al., 2014

of the education policy development, one needs to view it as a part of certain historical and cultural context, and in relation to other documents and (educational) discourses (Faas et al. 2014, p. 304).

Policy documents encourage and call for “concrete action at European, national, regional and local levels” (Paris Declaration, 2015), stressing the importance of attention devoted to and policies on youth, education, training and culture for the future of Europe. Education (“in all of its types and at all levels”) has been recognized to have “a pivotal role” in promoting common values of the Union, to help “to ensure social inclusion by providing every child with a fair chance and equal opportunities to succeed”, to provide opportunities “to become active and critically aware citizens” and to increase “understanding of the European identity” (Council Recommendations, 2018). Education and culture are seen to be essential for developing “a more inclusive, cohesive and competitive Europe” (Council Recommendations, 2018). Equality, social cohesion and active citizenship are recognized as the values and principles that should be promoted, based on the idea that education “should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights, prevent and combat all forms of discrimination and racism, and equip children, young people and adults to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds.” (Council Recommendations, 2018).

Promoting common values, enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, inclusive education and intercultural dialogue is indicated as the commitment of the Member States (Paris Declaration, 2015). Along with strengthening *European Identity*, inclusive and equitable education has been recognized to be important to prevent the marginalization of young people, “to foster cohesive societies and lay foundations for active citizenship and enhance employability”, and to sustain EU competitiveness (Council Recommendations, 2018). Higher education is recognized to have its part “in tackling Europe’s social and democratic challenges”, and “building inclusive and connected higher education system” is set as one of four goals of the EU Agenda for the higher education.

Despite decades of experience and presence of multicultural, intercultural and inclusive education in Europe, fast and extensive transformations of European societies and economies cause a need for further promotion of inclusive education and efforts in addressing the presence of children and young people from diverse backgrounds, especially in developing and improving national policies and strategies of inclusive education, and their implementation at a national, regional and local level. European commission has taken a number of measures, programs and

recommendations to ensure the legislative and financial framework for activities and persons involved in developing inclusive Higher Education. There are a number of existing Union instruments (available tools and funding instruments such as Erasmus+, the European Structural and Investment Funds, Creative Europe, etc.) and initiatives that are recommended to be used by Member states. The work of Member states should include initiatives – such as Erasmus+ programme, European Universities, language learning, the European Student Card, the mutual recognition of diplomas, awareness of the social and economic importance of culture etc. –, address – skills challenges linked to digitalization, cybersecurity, media literacy and artificial intelligence; the need for an inclusive, lifelong-learning-based and innovation-driven approach to education and training; and the legal and financial framework conditions for the development of cultural and creative industries and the mobility of professionals in the cultural sector (European Commission, 2018). Therefore, Member states are invited to implement recommendations, to improve national and regional policy reforms, to “develop and regularly review practical reference tools and guidance documents for policymakers and practitioners”, to “support research and stakeholder engagement to meet knowledge need”, to “assess and evaluate the action taken in response” to recommendation (Council Recommendations, 2018).

However, policy development and implementation at a national level may stray from the European framework. EU countries have a certain autonomy in the field of education, meaning that European societies have different approaches and rely on different models to address diversity in education (Faas et al 2014, p. 305). Stakeholders in education at a national, regional and local level transfer and implement European directives and guidelines in rather different ways (Faas et al., 2014, pp. 304-305 and p. 314). That depends on a number of factors, including the presence of diverse groups in a particular society, a broader understanding of culture and identity, dealing with concepts of integration, interculturalism, multiculturalism, intercultural and inclusive education and its different typologies, development and implementation of official policies (Triandafyllidou, 2011; Faas et al., 2014; Claeys-Kulik and Jørgensen, 2019). Also, the implementation of international and EU policies and recommendations should take into account globalization and other processes that require constant adjustment.

## **2. Access to / participation in Education - targeting groups needs**

Inclusive pedagogy focuses on extending what is ordinarily available as part of the routine of classroom life as a way of responding to differences among learners. It is a shift in

thinking about teaching and learning from that which works for most learners along with something “different” or “additional” for those who experience difficulties, to an approach to teaching and learning that involves the creation of a rich learning environment characterized by lessons and learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available to everyone so that all are able to participate in classroom life (for an in-depth discussion see Florian and Linklater, p. 2010, p. 370). Access to higher education should take into consideration the inclusion needs of different groups that differ based on culture, class and socioeconomic status, previous education, gender, (dis)abilities, native language, religion, geography and culture. Therefore, it has to find ways of incorporating students’ cultural and geographic differences into the classroom (see Gollnic and Chinn, 2017).

The teacher should take into account that students come from/belong to different cultures that have specific characteristics. Although most European countries have dominant cultures whose members are in the majority (e.g., Poles in Poland, Romanians in Romania, Croats in Croatia), one should also account for that fact that many citizens belong to minority cultures (see Bade et al., 2011; Bauböck, 2019; Kymlicka and Radatke, 2003). The status of members of minority cultures varies across the board (they can have the status of a national minority, language minority, etc.), along with the rights that allow them to nurture their culture (including school education, see Gollnic and Chinn, 2017).

Minority communities are formed as a result of changes in states and their borders, and migration of the population (Burguière and Grew, 2001; Arrighi and Stjepanović, 2019; Castles and Mark, 2003). Disintegration of states/changes of borders (often followed by war conflicts in the area of southeast Europe) and migration processes triggered by these changes resulted in the emergence of new immigrant communities and new minorities (see Hristov et al., 2012; King and Oruc, 2020).

To ensure and implement inclusive education from a multicultural perspective, teachers should familiarize themselves with the cultural diversity of the environment in which they work, and this is especially important in border areas (Agier, 2016). They should note the difference between indigenous and non-indigenous minority communities and modern immigrants. Furthermore, each student should be approached individually as students from the same ethnic community, e.g. Roma who belong to different Roma communities, may have their own cultural and linguistic specificities (Acton and Mundy, 1997; Schrammel and Ambrosch 2005), can be well integrated, but can also be marginalized and ghettoized (Magazzini and Piemontese, 2019;



Yaron and Leggio 2017).

Ever since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economically developed countries of Western Europe have been the preferred immigrant states, which is why many of their citizens today have immigrant backgrounds or were born in a different cultural environment (Bade, 2011; Gold and Nawyn, 2019). In the modern social context, migration and post-migration processes involve numerous cultural contacts and immigrant cultures are extremely important (Hoerder, 2002). Modern migrations are characterized by typological diversity, acceleration of migrations, feminization of migrations, globalization of migrations, increase in the politicization of migration, etc. (see Rajković et al., 2018; Gold and Nawyn, 2019; Kostanick, 2019). Members of the immigrant culture have many specificities and differ with regard to the states from which they originate, the age of immigrants during the migration, but also migration type (e.g., forced migrations: refugees, international protection seekers) or voluntary migration (e.g., migration for economic reasons, family reunification, lifestyle, etc.), coethnic migration, return migration (see typology of migration in Brettel and Hollifield, 2000).

All of the above resulted in the current pluralism in society. During the preparation and implementation of the teaching sessions, a teacher must be aware of the pluralism of students (a student may be part of the immigrant communities and/or minority communities, different race and ethnicity) and their class (social stratification) (Gollnic and Chinn, 2017, pp. 57-71). Student's level of comprehension is certainly affected by previous education, so the teacher must adjust his approach and refer students to additional literature so that they could make up for the differences. One should also attempt to avoid gender inequality/male and female differences (ibid. pp. 100-102). Socially constructed differences and the creation of gender identity occur in various cultural and religious environments.

Inclusive education from a multicultural perspective (Graham, 2019) should enable equal education for all students and promote equal treatment for female students (e.g., by working in groups where passive female students are placed in the position of group leaders, encouraged to present on behalf of the group, etc.). Student inactivity is sometimes a result of not only the culturally entrenched domination of (male) students in some cultures, but also a lack of language competencies in non-native speakers. With its language differences (bilingualism, accents, dialects, nonverbal communication, see Gollnic and Chinn, 2017, pp. 156-166), language is an important part of culture, so a teacher should be able to recognize these differences. A very important characteristic of inclusive education from a multicultural perspective is the tendency

towards the separation of church and state, freedom of religious expression, and religious pluralism (ibid. pp. 180-181, 203).

Students have different socioeconomic statuses (Cairns et al., 2017) and different dynamics of socially ascending (and/or descending) mobilities (Slootman, 2018), which can also be a result of migration (which can be particularly pronounced among refugees and members of marginalized minority communities, parents' unemployment, etc.).

A well-designed inclusive education from a multicultural perspective can and should contribute to intergroup relations and communication (Neuliep, 2006; Pastore and Ponzio, 2016) and ultimately to the integration of immigrants, e.g. to the cultural and religious dimension of integration, social integration, interactional dimension of integration (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016).

Apart from the fact that inclusive education should include students who are immigrants and descendants of immigrants/citizens of immigrant origin from other countries and religions and members of minority and marginalized communities (with all their cultural specificities), it is important to point out that cultural differences also exist within dominant cultures. It is important to incorporate students' cultural and geographic differences into the classroom (attention should be paid to regional diversity, rural, urban, and suburban areas) (Gollnic and Chinn, 2017, pp. 201-218).

### **3. Intercultural sensitivity and adaptation to a changing world**

Globalization is a dominant and ongoing process in the world during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Conceptualizations of globalization differ in scholarly research. While some define it as the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century process of the cultural, economic, political, and technological global integrations and shifts, others argue that globalization, its shaping process or its prominent elements, have began in a more distant past and are more than 5.000 years old (Appadurai, 1997; Graeber, 2013; Jackson, 2016, p. 1). Global changes and crisis flows and trends such as migration, climate change, global exchange of goods, internationally intertwined labor market, and the far-reaching character of economic crises, as a consequential or interrelating process of “international political and economic integration” (Jackson, 2016, p. 4) are occurring in the world in an accelerated manner. Although global processes tackle and transform all aspects of human life (political, economic, technological, educational) around the world, they are locally shaped, manifested, contextualized, and adjusted (*glocalization*), i.e.,

globalization (in) directly affects local transformations, receptions and bottom-up responses, so one speaks of the localized impact of globalization, local manifestations of universal processes, or the downside of globalization. There are scholars which emphasized the need for “global ethnography as a focused approach to the analysis of international educational projects that traces interconnections and interactions of local and global actors” (Jackson, 2016, p. 16).

In parallel to altering global trends and their adjusted local manifestations, different kinds of national/cultural/regional/formal and informal variability and inequalities intertwine into the macro-picture. Gender differences are the prominent example. In spite of a rising enrollment of highly educated women in the world, beginning from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, gender gaps on all levels of education and labor markets are persistent even today, as reported by UNESCO<sup>12</sup>. Another example is the Roma’s access to education. In parallel to the rising enrollment of the highly educated in the world, the Roma’s access is still made difficult, their level of education is low, and “they do not exercise their basic human right to education” (Mlinarević, Brust Nemet and Bushati, 2015, p. 10). The complex and challenging process of overcoming the segregation of the Roma in formal education systems is still a global issue and challenge. Hence, apart from major trends, processes of changes in the world are heterogeneous. Some processes are fast and accelerated, and others are insufficient, and a slowly changing reality in an individual’s everyday life.

What is the significance and role of higher education in European societies in an unrestingly changing world and in relation to global processes? Conversely, how do globalized processes of change impact higher education and European/national/local educational systems? In what way can educators be “shapers of globalization”? (Jackson, 2016, p.1) How to respond to the challenges and needs in educational processes in a contemporary world? Moreover, in what way can higher education systems affirm the implementation of inclusive education and intercultural sensitivity? Educators in higher education are called to actively tackle all these complex and multilayered questions. As Jackson (2016, p. 17) pointed out: “educators are no longer expected merely to react to globalization, they must purposefully interact with it, preparing students around the world to respond to globalization’s challenges.”.

Education on global processes and globalization (global learning), as a life-long learning

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<sup>12</sup> Source: UNESCO Web Atlas of Gender Inequality in Education, 2012., <https://tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#!/tellmap/-1195952519> (visited: September 18th 2020)

process and critical thinking, no matter which scholarly/education field and background one is affiliated with, require “the individual to acquire the set of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies needed for responsible living in a globalized world society” and raise “the need for constant development and modernization of the educational system” (Hudolin, 2018, p. 41).

On the one hand, “the development of intercultural competencies is a sensitive and life-long process” (Mlinarević, Brust Nemet and Bushati 2015, p. 9), and on the other, educators should act, adopt and respond rapidly in a changing world. Ongoing processes of the modernization of education, the development of new communication and learning technologies, and the goals of European citizenship-standardized education influence contemporary national/local education in various ways. On the one hand, such processes contribute to an awareness of cultural diversity in the world. On the other, they require more flexibility and dynamism, but also strategic, education systems promoting cultural diversity and quickly and efficiently answering the challenges of the changing and globalized world.

Each generation is more educated than the last, and the number of people with higher degrees and formal life-long education is higher than ever in the past. The role of higher educators is thus pronounced. It was noticed that “globalization in education cannot be merely described as harmful or beneficial, but depends on one’s position, perspective, values, and priorities” (Jackson, 2016, p. 1). Both institutions and individuals are essential to this process. Contemporary higher education systems should act as a whole and intertwine one’s personal ability and sensitivity to be actively engaged in the promotion of interculturalism as a value, and structured and institutionalized training and guidelines for practicing, promoting, questioning, and nurturing intercultural sensitivity and communication. Transferring knowledge and beliefs to students, affirming practice-oriented research and teaching, training them to be cognitively and critically engaged citizens, are some requirements for inclusiveness in higher education and beyond. It requires an educator's professional and personal conviction about the inevitability of cultural pluralism in the modern world and dismissing xenophobia and ethnocentrism.

In all levels of education (kindergartens, schools, colleges, faculties), interacting and working with people is immanent. The intercultural sensitivity in education is a justifiably pronounced concern in modern higher education systems and curriculums. In methodological, ethical, and epistemological terms, the ideas and goals of cultural relativism, multiculturalism, cultural diversity awareness, multidirectional communication, the irreplaceability of the emic perspective, and appreciation of the mosaic of differences, are a necessary part of contemporary

teaching process and standards of academic interaction (teaching, conducting research, data presentation, the application of knowledge, etc.). The above-mentioned concepts are implicitly connected to intercultural sensitivity and inclusiveness (in education, in research, and in society) and they should not be examined only theoretically in the classroom, but also applied by all parties outside academia.

Inclusiveness refers to various differences that different actors (students, educators, interlocutors, policy makers, citizens) encounter both in the classroom and in their everyday life: gender, age, multiethnic and multicultural differences, mental and physical disabilities. The knowledge, skills, and values that students gain from educators refer not only to theoretical knowledge but also to cognitive values, engagements in the classroom interaction (teacher-students, students-students), and equal and affirmative participation of students in an education process, as a prerequisite for students and graduates to transfer the acquired competencies in their future professional and everyday life.

The example of intercultural sensitivity's perspective and challenge is that educators learn, use and implement a sign language, as part of their life-long learning process, to affirmatively engage with deaf and hearing-impaired students in the classroom and adopt and create innovative teaching methods and materials that affirm the bilingual approach to education.<sup>13</sup> Although there are institutional prerequisites at many European universities that include infrastructure, equipment, and offices for students with disabilities, these capacities are limited, initial, and underdeveloped, and guidelines and education for teachers have only begun to be devised.

Educators interact with students intuitively, designing ad hoc individualized solutions, contents, and approaches, which is commendable. However, continuous institutional training, programs, and comprehensive tools to assure the intercultural sensitivity's perspective in the classroom are still not systematically implemented and brought to the level of best practices at many universities.

Intercultural sensitivity, as a way for both individuals and groups to gain an affirmative attitude and emotions toward differences in their contemporary social, economic, and political environment, is part of the aforementioned academic standard and a goal in contemporary higher education.

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<sup>13</sup> Source: *Ukratko: Glasilo Hrvatskog saveza gluhih i nagluhih*. Retrieved from [http://www.hsgn.hr/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ukratko\\_dvobroj\\_br48-49\\_za\\_web.pdf](http://www.hsgn.hr/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ukratko_dvobroj_br48-49_za_web.pdf) (September 20th 2020)

## Conclusion

The multicultural nature of contemporary Europe implies the presence of students with different backgrounds, and therefore a number of the diversity challenges that should be addressed in education in all of its types and at all levels. (Inclusive) education is recognized to have important role in saving fundamental values and principles of European Union, combating inequality, building inclusive and cohesive societies. A number of international and EU documents set and determined approaches to (inclusive) education and its role in contemporary Europe. They bring the common directives and guidelines that can help stakeholders (institutions and individuals) in education get a better understanding of education, education systems, teaching and learning processes as means that have the potential to promote and transmit the values of freedom, tolerance and equality, active citizenship, non-discrimination, and therefore to help sustain participative and democratic societies. However, policy development and implementation at a national, regional and local level differ. EU Member States differ according to a number of aspects and further implementation of inclusive education should take into consideration the needs and inclusion of different groups that differ in terms of culture, pluralism in society, class and socioeconomic status, previous education, gender inequality, language differences, religion etc.

Inclusive pedagogy focuses on extending what is ordinarily available as part of the routine of classroom life as a way of responding to differences between learners. The teacher should take into account that students come from/belong to different cultures that have specific characteristics. Although most European countries have dominant cultures whose members are in the majority, one should also account for that fact that many citizens belong to minority cultures. Ever since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economically developed countries of Western Europe have been the preferred immigrant states, which is why many of their citizens today have immigrant backgrounds or were born in a different cultural environment.

In the modern social context, migration and post-migration processes involve numerous cultural contacts and immigrant cultures are extremely important. During the preparation and implementation of the teaching sessions, a teacher must be aware of the pluralism of students (a student may be part of immigrant communities and/or minority communities, different race and ethnicity) and their class (social stratification). Student's level of comprehension is certainly affected by previous education. One should also attempt to avoid gender inequality/male and female differences. A very important characteristic of inclusive education in multicultural

perspective is the tendency towards the separation of church and state, freedom of religious expression, and religious pluralism.

A well-designed inclusive education from a multicultural perspective can and should contribute to intergroup relations and communication and ultimately to the integration of immigrants. Apart from the fact that inclusive education should include students who are immigrants and descendants of immigrants/citizens of immigrant origin from other countries and religions and members of minority and marginalized communities (with all their cultural specificities), it is important to point out that cultural differences also exist within dominant cultures. Educational strategies and approaches, institutions and individuals in education should be aware of variabilities and inequalities and constant change of global and local context. Teaching and learning processes could be used for the development of intercultural competencies, especially intercultural sensitivity, which would ensure more dynamic, flexible, but also strategic education systems.

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## 2.4. APPLICATION OF EDUCATION MODELS IN MULTICULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

by Pax PAX Rhodopica, Bulgaria<sup>14</sup>

### Abstract

In the last 15-20 years, under the influence of political changes in the world and Europe, the term “intercultural education” has been introduced, meaning education that reflects the heterogeneity of society at various levels. With the publication of The Universal Declaration of the Human Rights in 1948, the promotion of intercultural education as a concept, theory and practice became a reality. Equality of opportunities for students and the doctrine of modern pedagogy for both minority children and children at risk is discussed in the text to follow. Education in diversity and the achievement of awareness of one's own identity, in which the formation of students occurs simultaneously with the formation of the teacher, is also among to focal points of the current chapter. Furthermore, the following text provides insights into the new trends in the field of education and in particular the concept of intercultural education and training that can lead to promote equality of chances and become central in modern pedagogy.

*Keywords:* intercultural education, interculturality, intercultural dialogue, intercultural pedagogy

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## 2.4. Application of education models in multicultural and intercultural environments

### 1. Intercultural education

*Definitions and historical background.* In the last 15-20 years, under the influence of political changes in the world and Europe, studies in the field of psychology, sociology and pedagogy approach cultural and social integration of children and young people belonging to minority groups. The processes of cultural integration in the school are expressed by the term “intercultural education”, i.e., education that reflects in the practical heterogeneity of society at various levels. Intercultural education is also interlinked with intercultural relations, manifested by “intercultural dialogue” and “intercultural interaction (communication)”. That is a global idea that arose historically in the strong invasion of settlers from Asia, Africa and others to Europe, which also strengthens the existing heterogeneity of the population (Ivanov, I., 1999, Plurilingual Education, 2006, Koleva, I., 2012).

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* The most difficult problem is the relationship pedagogy-culture-politics, as the issues of universalism-regionalism are solved differently in various countries. The notion of the multicultural character of modern society and awareness of differences in international and intercultural terms is of great importance. In modern education, international tendencies towards separatism and cultural division are gradually gaining traction. With the publication of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, the promotion of intercultural education became real in theory and practice, as stated by the United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Article 26 of this document, and in particular paragraph 2, is devoted to the problems of education (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). The right of education is considered a part of basic human rights and it must be fulfilled with a spirit of understanding, friendliness and friendship to all peoples, racial and religious groups and be directed to understanding and peace among nations. The main characteristics of intercultural education, developed in many subsequent documents, are presented below.

**Equality of opportunities** for students and the doctrine of modern pedagogy for both minority children, children at risk and for children with behavioral deviations is an important topic to be discussed. **Education in diversity** and the achievement of awareness of one’s own identity, in which the formation of students occurs simultaneously with the formation of the

teacher is thus a central concept. There are three dimensions pointed out: (1) historical determinism, i.e., understanding the past (identity, the history and culture of others, evolution of their motives, etc.); (2) meeting the challenges of the present, including xenophobia, fundamentalism and violence; (3) the aims for the future: peaceful coexistence, solidarity, and respect for other people.

*Interculturality versus monoculturalism.* **Interculturalism** is a relatively new phenomenon which raises difficulties related to the implementation of the intercultural approach in education, related to the ethnocentric traditions of modern education, characteristic of each national country, especially for those countries that arose on the basis of an ethnonational doctrine. The term in direct opposition to “interculturality” is “monoculturalism”. It refers to the complete domination of a given culture or cultural group over the rest of society, as is the case of groups united on ethnic, religious or purely cultural grounds (Makariev, 2008).

The literature on the subject states that monocultural societies may favor phenomena as racism (demonstrating the original superiority of a race or ethnicity over another), ethnic and racial prejudice (opinions and assumptions of the members of one group regarding the others), ethnocentrism (tendency to underestimate other ethnic groups and overestimate their own), discrimination (inequality of institutional or social level), social distance (emphasis of differences and differentiation in the social plan), social inequality (institutional or structural); institutional racism (discrimination at the institutional level - police, school, etc.).

Interculturalism reflects the active opportunity for dialogue and interactions (real relationships) between cultures (Makariev, 2008) and emphasizes the need for positive contact between people in society, regardless of their cultural differences. Interculturalism expresses the idea of “the melting pot”, similar to that developed in the United States, in which society takes on a multicultural and multiracial form. One of these essential features is that, unlike the United States, where ethnic and religious groups are mixed throughout the territory of the country and are brought together by the common use of English language and “American values”, the European Union is a union of historical European nation-states aiming towards common European values. In Europe, the problem of communication among Europeans is far from being resolved, despite the increasingly extensive influence of English (Ivanov, 1999).

*Multiculturalism* or *pluriculturalism* expresses a context in which a variety of cultural groups co-exist, while *transculturality* expresses the possibility of dialogue and interaction of people from various cultural contexts.

## 2. Intercultural dialogue

**Cultural identity** is both a condition and an obstacle to intercultural communication, since the perception of others as “foreigners” strengthens the differentiating mechanisms. These mechanisms make it difficult to accurately assess differences. To overcome this challenge, it is necessary to emphasize the “others” as “similar” to reach understanding and recognition. Interculturalism, which emerged as an anti-racist and anti-assimilationist philosophical concept, is gradually becoming a social, mediatic and especially educational practice. The point of this process is the formation of a certain pattern of thinking and behavior for the future active generation.

**Intercultural dialogue** aims at intensive communication and mutual enrichment. The methodological basis is cultural relativism, which emphasizes the critical and tolerant ethnocentrism. In recent decades, an increasingly important role in social life has been occupied by “universal human values”, which led to international agreements in the attempt to promote the universal in cultures (Grekova, 2010; Koleva, 2012).

## 3. Intercultural pedagogy

New trends in the field of education and in particular the concept of intercultural education and training lead to equality of chances and become a doctrine of modern pedagogy not only on the treatment of children at risk or from ethnic minorities, but also in day-to-day teaching, including higher education. Intercultural pedagogy refers to the mutual enrichment of cultures, being in fact a system of principles. According to this concept, no two identical cultures exist and this creates a desire for interaction. It is connected with two phenomena we already know – interculturality and intercultural communication. Interculturality is a type of discourse and a type of action; it always has specific dimensions - psychological, historical, political, cultural, etc. Intercultural communication is based on cultural pluralism, and the protection of all social groups, the right to identity and cooperation. Hence, intercultural education can be defined as education based on the philosophy of interculturalism (Ivanov, 1999, Koleva, 2007).

**Multicultural (pluricultural) pedagogy** might be defined as a pedagogical strategy to emphasize cultural relativism, the values of each culture and its legitimate autonomy. This is an education that takes into account the peculiarities of all cultures existing in the national space.

**Transcultural pedagogy** is a pedagogical strategy in which the emphasis is on the common elements in culture and on universal cultural elements becoming a bridge for mutual

understanding.

**Intercultural pedagogy** is a redefinition of the pedagogy-politics relationship. Pedagogical ideas are closely related to political doctrines. Intercultural pedagogy approaches interconnected dimensions, such as political (reducing prejudices and recognition the value of other cultures), social (understanding the social problems of people with different identities), individual (individual socio-cultural experience for the positive development), socio-psychological (weakening the boundary between in- and out-groups).

Applying intercultural pedagogy guidelines in higher education systems requires a positive attitude towards students and students' cultural background. It requires teachers to stimulate students' experience in the new environment and to stimulate communication in the classroom. Maximum attention is to be devoted to students who are isolated, vulnerable and have limited access to resources. The school must be interpreted as a pluralistic environment for reciprocal enrichment. Teachers need to focus discussions on reducing conflict, by accepting the fact that the change of socialization models is a slow and difficult process. In doing so, useful methods for active learning might be employed:

- **structured discussion:** dialogue is one of the main methods of intercultural education. However, its efficiency is increasing significantly when the teacher set guidelines and rules, while also keeping some general framework of the issues discussed;
- **simulation and role-playing games:** the key here is the careful preparation of the preliminary context, the distribution of roles, the creation and simulation of “real situation” in the context of the classroom. Students' desires or unwillingness to participate in a role game should be respected, and if they refuse direct participation, they have to be actively involved in the monitoring and analysis of the game;
- **debate:** debate topics should be selected to be of interest to learners. They must be given the possibility to prepare for the debate in advance using specialized materials, research results etc.
- **analysis of visual materials:** for this purpose, photos, works of art and various images can be used.

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## 2.5. INTERCULTURAL APPROACHES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

by PAX Rhodopica, Bulgaria<sup>15</sup>

### Abstract

European societies have become increasingly diverse as a result of many factors (economic, social, cultural, and historical) and their different evolution in time and influence. This comes with a serious challenge for educationists having to address the presence of students with significant differentiation in terms of cultural, religious and social background. In recent years, there has been increasing activity at a European level in the field of intercultural education despite the principle of subsidiarity. European societies rely on different models to address diversity in education, with different consequences for students' experiences. So, Germany, Greece and Ireland prefer the term interculturalism and intercultural education. On the other hand, Britain and the Netherlands have historically worked with the concept of multiculturalism (Faasa et al., 2013, p. 6). Irrespective of which approach is accepted, it is of great importance to direct our attention to concepts and definitions and some of the basic moments and challenges faced in intercultural and interethnic educational environments.

*Keywords:* ethnopsychology; intercultural dialogue, interethnic environment, multiethnic education, educational technologies

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## 2.5. Intercultural approaches in the development of a European educational system

### 1. Definitions and concepts

**Ethnopsychology** is regarded as a distinct field in psychological anthropology. Ethnopsychopedagogy might be seen as an integral science, that uses the diagnostic tools of social psychology, the didactic tools of pedagogy and the object of ethnology to develop appropriate pedagogical technologies in education systems when working with children with different ethnic and national origins, relative to the mainstream ones (Koleva, 2000; Koleva, 2012).

In the pedagogical practice, it is necessary to apply specific technologies or forms of pedagogical interaction with the child, depending on his ethnopsychopedagogical features. This determines the use of appropriate pedagogical and psychological approaches, according to the markers of the environment, family language, ethnicity, customary ritual system, the socio-cultural status of the child and the parent in the community and others (Koleva, 2004; Koleva, 2007).

**Intercultural dialogue** expresses different forms of interaction and exchange between people of different ethnicities, cultural roots - leading to mutual understanding and conflict reduction. The real wealth of people is in their culture, their attitudes, their communities and their way of life. Intercultural dialogue is the exchange of wealth and wisdom, which each community owns. As they exchange this wealth, people get to know each other better as nations, religious communities and human beings, which in turn creates conditions for respect for the differences with which people are born.

**Minority or minority group** – a sociological group that do not express the politically dominant voice within population in a society; a minority considered from a sociological perspective does not have to be a numerical minority (e.g., Africa, apartheid). This can be any group that is underprivileged in comparison to the dominant group in terms of social status, education, employment, health and political power. The term minority group is often used in sociology, as a minority is most often understood as a ethnic minority, while minority groups don't typically refer to ethnic criteria, and can be comprised of people with disabilities, people of different sexual orientation, religious minorities, etc. (Krasteva, 1998; Grekova, 2001)

**Ethnic group** – a separate group by people whose members identify with each other on

the basis of actual or presumed total heritage - biological origin, history, race, kinship, religion, language, culture, territory, nationality or appearance. The members of the ethnic group are aware of their belonging, and the people outside it are recognized as distinct (Krasteva, 1998; Grekova, 2001).

**Nation** – here we will use the classic definition of French historian of religions Ernest Renan, according to whom the nation is purely and simply one “daily referendum” (Renan, 1993). And while such approach might be a little bit too banal, the purpose is not to get involved in an almost impossible to win battle on the enormous field of nation-focused research.

**Nationalism** – emphasis on the so-called civic nationalism. Civic nationalism (other names: revolutionary-democratic, political, western nationalism) asserts that the legitimacy of the state is determined by the active participation of its citizens in the process of political decision-making, i.e., the extent to which the state represents the “will of the nation”. The main tool for determining the will of the nation is the plebiscite, which may take the form of elections, referendums, consultations, open public discussion, etc. The affiliation of the individual to a nation is determined on the basis of voluntary personal choice and is identified with citizenship. People are united by their equal political status as citizens, their equal legal status before the law, personal desire to participate in the political life of the nation, attachment towards common political values and general civic culture. The point is that the nation is made up of people who want to live together on the same territory (Kohn, 1955; Hobsbawm, 1990; Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983, Todorov, 2000).

**Solidarity** – in the field of sociology and politics, solidarity is a sense of unity that is based on a community of interests, goals or preferences among people. The term indicates social relations, which connect people. Solidarity expresses mutual support and understanding in society, both between individuals and between community groups. This reflects the degree of closeness in social relations. The term is used mainly in sociology, politics and sometimes in philosophy.

**Empathy** – a phenomenon based on the “putting yourself into somebody else’s shoes” principle and having insight into the position of the other.

**Tolerance** – in sociology and psychology, it expresses the ability to calmly, without hostility, accept other people's way of life, behavior, customs, feelings, opinions, ideas, beliefs.

## 2. Education in interethnic environments

Education in interethnic environments refers to an interdisciplinary scientific area requiring integrated knowledge in the field of a subdiscipline. It builds a reflective picture of educational technologies integrating knowledge of social psychology, ethnopedagogy, pedagogy of development, psychology of development (age psychology, ethnopsychology, ethnopsycholinguistics, ethnopsychosemantics and culture anthropology).

*Child rearing in interethnic environments.* Raising children with different ethno-cultural characteristics in the context of a globalist and postmodern society is still a challenge nowadays. It requires construction of variable behavioral patterns of ethnic and religious tolerance and an ability for social intelligence and orientation, as well as reflection on behavioral characteristics of the child's personality at cooperative, personal, intellectual and communicative levels.

*Multiethnic education* refers to the education, training and socialization of children and adults with different values and value orientations, living together on the territory of one country. As they belong to different ethnic communities and groups, with diverse cultural traditions, customs and language, the educational process requires additional inquiries. Using dedicated socializing techniques, trainers may emphasize the inclusion mechanisms into the mainstream culture, while being at the same time aware of differences, particularities and ethnic heritage of each student.

*Socialization* results from the assimilation and active reproduction by the individual of the social experience in daily life. It includes construction of social ties, inclusion to culture, the development of self-awareness, the individual's notion of self, social knowledge, learning roles and the system for social orientation.

*The global education approach* is based on the following dimensions:

- **space:** if anywhere in the world a certain event occurs, it may not affect other countries and people;
- **time:** everything that happens is a consequence of a certain cause that is already a fact and affects what will follow;
- **integrity:** a person, event or specific situation cannot be separated into parts. Each person develops in many ways: socially, emotionally, cognitively, etc. Every question is composed of many elements (with one target unit) equally important to him or her.

*Values.* There are two types of values: **active** and **cognitive**. The active values appear in behavior and the choice of the real objects, according to the ethnopsychological attitudes of

individual. Cognitive values are manifested in the choice of symbol objects. They are reflected in the mind of the individual in the form of values orientations and serve as an important factor for social regulation of the types of ethnocultural relationships.

*Reflection:* a process of awareness, self-regulation and self-assessment of knowledge and behavioral models, in the process of joint communication and interaction at a personal, cooperative (joint activity), intellectual (process of awareness of knowledge) and communication level.

There are various theories about the development of the **ethnic psyche**: the approach based on “culture and personality”, the psychoanalytic school of anthropology; the school for the study of national characters by cultural anthropologists, the theoretical model of social character, the behaviorist approach to the study of ethnicities, cognitive anthropology, interpretive anthropology, etc. This diversity of theoretical approaches requires any educational institution to seek to impose its own image, its own specific education system, and to strive to introduce appropriate pedagogical technologies.

In a **postmodern society**, it is necessary to bridge the gap between individuals, social groups and nations, which is one of the great challenges of our age. In recent years, more and more researchers turn their attention to the study of the interethnic problems of education. Knowledge of the cultural content of the ethnic psyche is sliding on the surface of the real problems.

**Intercultural education** is based on the psychological aspect of ethnicity (the culture of the nation existing in the particular country, ethnic communities and subgroup divisions). Modern approaches to these issues are subscribed by ethnopsychopedagogy, a distinct discipline in the context of psychological anthropology. The psychological aspect of culture is a dominant topic of ethnopsychopedagogy, since the beginning of its development as a discipline.

In the late 30's a conceptual framework called “culture and personality” has been developed. The works of E. Sapir, R. Benedict, M. Mead, E. Cardiner and a number of other eminent anthropologists place the school “on the crest of a wave” for more than two decades in the research on the relationship between individuals, society and culture in North America. Many scholars investigating personality and culture have turned to the works of S. Freud, focusing on psychoanalytic theory and “psychodynamics” in interpretation of personal processes. The interpretation of mental processes by relating them to the “environment” was a conceptual perspective dominant through the 1930s and 1940s. Attempts to conceptualize the “culture-

personality” relationship in cultural anthropology in the 1930s and early-1940s are most often associated with the concepts of “basic personality” and “modal personality”. These two concepts (i.e., basic and modal personality) have a common root, but they are also rivalling, they complement each other, but they are also in a certain sense self-excluding.

### 3. Ethnopsychopedagogy

Ethnopsychopedagogy understands and explores the nature of culture by focusing on the psyche of its “carriers” - on an integral level. Culture is treated as “determining personality”, but with the ambition of delving deeper into this process, from an analytical standpoint: which specific countries or configuration of determinants are the most essential for the education of personality; how and when, and in what way they are mentally effective in socialization processes, etc.

*Educational technologies* in ethnopsychopedagogy are based on leading psychological concepts and approaches: behavioral, cultural-historical, ethnic identification and others. In his conception of the social character, Fromm (1962) claims that in the operation of society, human energy is structured in character traits, common to most members of a class and/or society as a whole. The concept however, does not concern itself with the individualization of the structure of the character of the individual, and to the ‘matrix of character’, which has developed in the process of the adaptation of the social subject to economic, social and cultural conditions. In its earlier work, Fromm (1962, p.62) describes the social character as “the core of the character, common to most members of a culture, as opposed to the individual character by which people belonging to one culture are different”.

*The reflexive approach*, in the context of the cultural-historical theoretical model developed by L.S. Vygotsky, emphasizes reflection and education as pivotal concepts. Other scientific developments as pedagogical psychology, psychosemantics, ethnopsycholinguistics and ethnopsychopedagogy point out the possibility of applying the processes of self-regulation, self-assessment and awareness to enhance interethnic tolerance and reflection.

The solution to the educational problems of minorities can be sought looking at both minorities themselves as well to mainstreamers.

- The **social approach** views minority groups as marginalized social groups. From this point of view, education is a condition and a necessity for success in the labor market and a national security priority. When the problem is approached from the point of view of

human rights, the focus is on equality and equal opportunities. According to this interpretation, the most serious reason for the failure of education among children of minority origin is discrimination.

- The **national approach** treats minority groups as political subjects and focuses rather on the degree of autonomy in the education system than on the specific content of the process of education. At a national level, the change of educational attitudes, reducing stereotypes and prejudices may overcome the existing problems in terms of the inclusion of vulnerable ethnic communities.

#### 4. European examples

Interculturalism and its many implications for the education system is among the important issues that will decisively shape the dynamics and features of oncoming European society. The question of an education system able to ensure equal opportunities to all students regardless of their social or cultural background and to develop intercultural awareness and skills on behalf of the entire school population will be a fundamental testing ground for an increasingly multicultural Europe.

In Greece, intercultural integration addresses several social groups: returning Greek emigrants, foreigners (both immigrants and refugees) and so called “ethnic Greeks” from countries of the post-Soviet political space and Albania. Special efforts are made to integrate migrant group with several laws and a set of measures (Markou and Parthenis, 2016).

Spain emphasizes migration groups, as Spain is one of the top destinations for immigrants with almost 7 million legal residents in 2013, and Roma community. Following state policy shaped in several documents, including a special strategy for integration, Spanish efforts are aimed at four major topics – schooling of migrant children, design and evaluation of specific programmes and resources, bilingualism and language diversity and values and attitudes approach. (Llorente et al., 2016). A similar approach is accepted in Germany, but it gives rise to a lot of problems. The big difference is that the state and society have to deal with a completely different situation which is complicated further by the presence of so called Gastarbeiters and their descendent and also new migrants from Eastern Europe, Middle East, Asia, and Africa. (Catarci and Fiorucci, 2016)

*On a practical level.* A necessary prerequisite for pedagogizing the educational environment is knowledge of the value orientations of the family and stimulation of intercultural

dialogue. On a practical level, ethnopsychological approaches should be applied to both minority and mainstream groups. This goal requires a strong understanding of the complexity of concepts such as nation (especially in its civil aspects), solidarity and tolerance (which define a modern nation nowadays).

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**MODULE III. Theoretical approaches and technologies of interactions with multilingual students**

**3.1. Educational paradigms of studying in a multicultural environment**

**3.2. Psychopedagogical development of the student in a multicultural and intercultural environment**

**3.3. The value - oriented model of social behavior**

**3.4. Didactic-metric methods and procedures to assess students' level of knowledge**

**3.5. Tools for education in a multicultural and intercultural environment**

### 3.1. EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS OF STUDYING IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

by Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania<sup>16</sup>

#### **Abstract**

Multicultural education is the response of educational institutions to the issue of cultural diversity, designed to help educators minimize the problems related to diversity and to maximize its educational opportunities and possibilities (Banks, 2015). In order to understand how, since the 1960s, the school has tried to respond to the challenges presented, both historically and currently, by the multicultural educational environment, this chapter aims to go over the main educational paradigms built over time and discovered in the literature review: the ethnic additive paradigm, the self-concept development paradigm, the cultural deprivation paradigm, the cultural difference paradigm, the language paradigm, the cultural ecology paradigm, the protective disidentification paradigm, the structural paradigm, the multi-factor paradigm.

*Keywords:* ethnic groups, multicultural education, paradigms

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### 3.1. Educational paradigms of studying in a multicultural environment

#### Introduction

The ethnic revitalization movements that took place in the 60s and 70s in Western countries such as the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom led to multiple social, economic, cultural, political and educational changes. And this happened the more so as educational institutions were seen as symbols of power, participating in the marginalization and stigmatization of ethnic groups (Williamson, 2008, apud Banks, 2009, p. 17). The response of educational institutions to ethnic revitalization movements has materialized over time in various paradigms which “not necessarily occur in a linear or a set order but relate in a general way to different phases of these movements” (Banks, 2009, p.18).

In the sense given by philosopher Thomas Kuhn, the concept of “paradigm” designates “universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 8). This concept also includes law, principles, explanations and theories of a science.

In the following paragraphs, I will review the most important educational paradigms developed over time as responses to ethnic revitalization movements, as presented by Banks (2015). The usefulness of these paradigms identified by Banks lies in the fact that they manage to capture the relationship between values in education, educational policies and programs. These paradigms are also useful because:

- a) they have developed as ways of conceptualizing and explaining a particular phenomenon, in this case the education of ethnic groups, over a period of time. If circumstances change or the capacity for knowledge increases, then the existing paradigm can be replaced by a more appropriate one;
- b) they are logical and easy to understand. Thus, if a new ideological perspective is identified, then it is relatively simple to develop the related educational policies and practical curriculum applicable to the classroom (Sullivan, 2004).

#### 1. The ethnic additive paradigm

*Major assumptions:* information about ethnic groups can be added to the existing curriculum without restructuring it.

*Major goal:* to adjust the curriculum by adding special units, lessons and holidays of the

minority groups.

*School programs and practices:* chapters with ethnic studies; courses containing information about heroes, food or holidays that are specific to certain ethnic groups.

The ethnic additive paradigm focuses on adding bits of ethnic or social class culture (Sullivan, 2004, p. 349). More precisely, some information about the culture and history of ethnic groups is included in the school curriculum, especially into the humanities, social studies, and language arts courses (Boateng, 2000). This information would highlight the heroes of ethnic groups and the celebration of ethnic holidays. Also, this may include “cultural representations on the walls of the school environment” and the use of phrases that are specific to the ethnic groups, so that individuals may feel culturally and socially acknowledged (Sullivan, 2004, p. 349).

This paradigm is considered to be the first because it appears during the earliest stage of the ethnic revitalization movement (integration), when ethnic groups demand that their heroes, holidays, and contributions be included in the curriculum. Also, in this stage, teachers have little knowledge about ethnic groups and find it easier to add isolated pieces of information “than to integrate ethnic meaningfully content into the curriculum” (Banks, 2009, p. 21).

## **2. The self-concept development paradigm**

*Major assumptions:* ethnic content can improve self-concept in ethnic minority students. Many ethnic minority student’s manifest low self-concept.

*Major goals:* to improve self-concept and academic achievement in ethnic minority students.

*School programs and practices:* special units in ethnic studies that emphasize the contributions that ethnic groups have made to the building of the nation; units on famous ethnic individuals.

A major goal of the educational institutions in the first stage of ethnic revitalization movements is to encourage pride in minority youths and to improve self-concept in ethnic groups. This approach is based on the reasoning that leaders of minority groups try to create a new positive ethnic identity and that teachers assume that people who experienced ethnic or racial discrimination and social exclusion have negative self-concepts and negative attitudes towards their own ethnic group (Banks, p. 21). This assumption corresponds to the basic idea of the behaviorist perspective, which has the capacity to explain the manners in which external factors

affect behavior. In the behaviorist paradigm, *the self* is defined as a “repertoire of behaviors directed by a history of environmental contingencies” (Reed, 2002, p. 240). Therefore, from the perspective of the self-concept paradigm, educational institutions deal with minority ethnic groups issues by focusing on “developing the individual regardless of cultural background and may touch base with cultural foundation to do this” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 349).

Unfortunately, this solution usually lacks depth and uses culture as a vehicle for communication rather than as an important educational foundation to be valued in its own right (Sullivan, 2004). Also, Boateng (2000) argues that the main problem with this paradigm is that, even though ethnic events are added to the curriculum, the interpretation and perspectives remain Eurocentric.

### **3. The cultural deprivation paradigm**

*Major assumptions:* low-income young people and those belonging to minority ethnic groups are socialized in families and communities that deprive them of the possibility to acquire the cultural characteristics and to make the cognitive acquisitions necessary to succeed in school.

*Major goals:* to compensate for the cognitive deficit and dysfunctional cultural characteristics with which ethnic young people start their educational journey.

*School programs and practices:* behavioral and intense compensatory educational experiences.

According to this paradigm, minority students fail to cope with school demands due to cultural deprivation and inadequate language and cultural skills. Theorists claim that poor school results are correlated with poverty, family disorganization, intellectual and cultural deficiencies (Coleman apud Saporito and Sohoni, 2007; Bourdieu and Passeron apud Wiggan, 2007; Bernstein apud Smith, 2012).

A culturally deprived child is described as one who cannot benefit from the educational opportunities usually provided by society for the best possible development of the individual’s potential or from the possibility to exploit the employment opportunities that society has to offer (Das, 1971, p. 80). According to cultural deprivation theorists, the goal of the school became compensatory with regard to culture as well as academic skills (Smith, 2012). Therefore, contemporary ideas about cultural deprivation have focused on ways of compensating for the dysfunctional family life of working-class children and, by so doing, giving them the opportunity to compete on equal terms with their culturally advantaged middle-class peers.

#### 4. The cultural difference paradigm

*Major assumptions:* minority groups have a strong, rich and diverse culture.

*Major goals:* to change school culture as to honor the way of life of ethnic young people and adapt teaching strategies to the specific traits of students with different cultural backgrounds.

*School programs and practices:* teaching strategies that are responsive and sensitive to cultural differences.

The integration and learning perspective focus on diversity as a source of knowledge for everyone in the organization. Cultural diversity is perceived as a catalyst for creativity, which will likely result in better performance, because differences in background lead to divergent thinking and new ways to organize tasks and work processes (Ely and Thomas, 2001). Van Vught (2008) also argued that diversity in education comes with opportunities for experimenting and innovation. For example, creating culturally diverse teams provides opportunities for mutual learning and developing innovative curricular material that fits both the needs of the diverse student population and the professional skills the job market asks for (Vos and Celik, 2016). Culturally responsive classroom management requires caring relationships, high expectations, assertiveness, and freedom from power struggles (Bondy et al., 2007). Also, teachers must understand “the whole child” (Smith, 2012).

#### 5. The language paradigm

*Major assumptions:* the school performance of students belonging to minority ethnic groups is poor because the educational contents are not taught in the language spoken in their family and community.

*Major goal:* to provide initial mother-tongue instruction to students from minority ethnic groups.

*School programs and practices:* teaching English as a Second Language; offering bilingual educational programs.

The language paradigm emerged in the 1960s, in response to the challenges faced by the English educational system in the integration of immigrants from India and Asia. As a result of classroom experience with students from different ethnic groups, educators unanimously agreed that language is the main barrier in the process of school integration. From their point of view, the fact that the subjects were taught in English, and not in their mother tongue, was a major obstacle in achieving academic success. Later, in the 1970s, educators in France found that the

same principle applied to students coming from Asia and North Africa. At the same time, in the United States, educators argued that, if the language problem of immigrant Puerto Rican or Mexican students were to be solved, then they could experience school success (Banks, 2009).

The solution consists in the special training of teachers and the development of instructional materials to support the teaching of English as a second language to immigrant students. Unfortunately, after these English / French language courses were made available to immigrant students, teachers realized that the integration and school success of immigrants are also influenced by factors other than language. Thus, an approach exclusively based on language is not guaranteed to improve academic performance for students belonging to minority ethnic groups.

## 6. The cultural ecology paradigm

*Major assumptions:* the low academic achievement of minorities is due, first of all, to their opposition to mainstream culture.

*Major goals:* to allow marginalized ethnic minorities to become a part of mainstream culture.

*School programs and practices:* educational interventions aimed at changing the cultural traits of minority communities so that they become more compatible with what is regarded as dominant societal practices and culture.

The cultural ecology paradigm considers the broad societal and school factors, as well as the dynamics within the minority communities. “Ecology” references the “setting”, “environment”, or “world” in which people (minorities, in this case) lead their lives, while “cultural” broadly refers to the way people (minorities) behave and relate to their world (Ogbu and Simons, 1998).

In his studies, Ogbu (1998) distinguishes between voluntary minority students (those who have voluntarily immigrated to a country) and involuntary ones (those that have been forced in one way or another to migrate) and finds that voluntary minority students generally do well in school, as they and their families adhere to the values and the culture of the country to which they immigrated, making it much easier for them to integrate and to cope with challenges. By contrast, involuntary minority students are more reluctant to change and manifest a rather hostile attitude towards everything relating to the culture they have entered, while being more conservative in their adherence to tradition, values and personal norms, making it much more



difficult for them to integrate and perform well in school. According to the ecological cultural theory, the family and the community to which the student belongs and the way in which they relate to the dominant cultural values have an important role in achieving school success. The value of the cultural ecology theory is that it will help educators understand why students may behave the way they do inside and outside the classroom when they are following their groups' pattern of behavior. It follows from the cultural-ecological theory that, in order to help minority students, succeed in school, the problem of the mistrust in schools (and the subsequent lack of effort) must be recognized and addressed (Ogbu and Simons, 1998).

### **7. The protective disidentification paradigm**

*Major assumptions:* when individuals feel that they should conform to group stereotypes or are being judged based on these stereotypes, their sense of self gets threatened.

*Major goals:* to overcome class or race stereotypes in the treatment of students who are part of marginalized ethnic groups.

*School programs and practices:* educational programs that eliminate racial or class stereotypes to create an academic environment conducive to self-confidence.

Steele (1992) suggested that stereotype threat causes minority groups to de-value the role of academics, and therefore to disidentify with school and to disassociate personal success from academic achievement. Also, stereotype threats could cause these individuals to activate the defensive mechanism of academic disidentification to protect their self-perceptions.

According to Voelkl (1997), disidentification from school is regarded as “a lack of feelings of valuing school and belonging in school”. The emotional state of disidentification is described as follows: “the student neither feels a sense of belonging nor of valuing school”. He does not feel like an accepted member of the community, has little to no sense of “fitting in”, does not feel comfortable or adequate, fails to incorporate school into his or her self-definition, may feel anger or hostility toward school, would rather be in a different setting, does not feel committed to or may be distrustful of the institution (Voelkl, 1997). To reduce the occurrence of stereotypes and their consequences, the teacher can create an open learning environment in which mistakes and missteps are valued as learning opportunities (Dweck, 2008), provide wise feedback that motivates students to improve (Cohen et al., 1999) and foster a sense of belonging (Walton and Cohen, 2011).

## 8. The structural paradigm

*Major assumptions:* schools are limited in their role in eliminating racism and discrimination and promoting equality among all students, including those on low incomes or those belonging to minority groups. Structural changes are needed, both politically and economically, to improve the academic performance of students from low-income families or minority ethnic groups.

*Major goals:* students and teachers should understand the structural economic and political factors that impede social mobility and be assisted in committing to radical social and economic change.

*School programs and practices:* educational programs that promote equality and help students understand the structural factors leading to racism and discrimination and how these structural issues could be addressed.

The school is generally seen, like other institutions in society, as having a seemingly neutral role, but, from a radical perspective, it actually represents the interests of the dominant group. When addressing educational issues, proponents of this paradigm believe that all policies introducing changes in education should take into account the general problems of society as a whole (Sullivan, 2000, p. 225). Radicalisms believe that the school cannot fight discrimination because its main role is to further promote the values of the dominant group, and multi-ethnic educational programs are rather built to prevent the rebelling of those discriminated against a system that creates structural barriers, than to deal with the real problems of marginalized groups. The solution would be to develop radical educational and community programs aimed at raising awareness among students, parents and teachers on the nature of capitalist society, specific social and economic injustices, the development of critical skills and practices and a commitment to overcoming economic, social and educational oppression.

## 9. Antiracist paradigm

*Major assumptions:* the educational inequalities suffered by minority students are largely due to individual, cultural, social, institutional and structural forms of racism.

*Major goals:* encourage the school, students and teachers to understand and address each of the factors mentioned above.

*School programs and practices:* prejudice reduction programs; analysis of cultural assumptions and their social and educational impact; appreciation of the strengths and limitations

of different cultures and what we can learn from each of them; understanding group identity and inter- and intragroup interactions, especially at school; understanding the different aspects of institutional racism and how it can affect the school; understanding how power in society and in school could be correlated with racial differences.

The anti-racist paradigm implies that dominant society is responsible for the school failures registered by minority students. Racism is viewed as the reason behind school inequity, and school is considered to play a major role in eliminating personal and institutional inequity both in academic practices and in society as a whole. This could be achieved through workshops and courses on racism for teachers and anti-racism lessons for students, by examining the curriculum, the attitude of teachers and the norms of educational institutions (Sullivan, 2000).

### Conclusions

In a multicultural society, education should reflect its multicultural heritage. For the education system to be in line with the needs of the contemporary social context and to help students become fulfilled adults, the school must educate children for life in a diverse, multicultural community.

In this sense, Banks raised the prospect of another paradigm, which acknowledges a multi-factor reality as a basis for a multicultural educational response. He noted that prior paradigms are often single-factor paradigms and therefore fail in the face of the multifarious forces shaping the experiences of marginalized learners (Sodusta, 2019). A multifactor paradigm is needed to explain the wide discrepancies in the academic achievement of different population groups, because single-factor paradigms cannot account for the complex and multiple variables that result in achievement disparities.

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### 3.2. PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN MULTICULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

by Pax PAX Rhodopica, Bulgaria<sup>17</sup>

#### **Abstract**

The whole world is experiencing the process of globalization, whose major tendency is intercultural mixing and student exchange. Today's society is getting immensely multicultural and multilingual and the number of international students enrolled in higher education is increasing every year. Pedagogy deals with the psychological aspect of adaptation, which partially overlaps with the concept of social adaptation and includes the adaptation of a person as an individual to life in society, in accordance with the requirements of this society and his or her own needs, motives and interests. The solution to the educational problems of minorities can be sought both from the minorities themselves, and from the majority. Approaches are different depending on the viewpoint: social, human rights, multiculturalism, nationality, etc. A necessary prerequisite for the pedagogization of the educational environment is the knowledge of the value orientations of the family and the stimulation of intercultural dialogue. The basis of the educational process is the perception of the student's central role within the process. Modern pedagogical technologies are dedicated to socialization of students - a process in which the teacher plays the role of moderator.

*Keywords:* psychological aspect of education, multicultural education, ethnocultural stereotypes, perception of the student, socialization of students.

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### 3.2. Psychopedagogical development of students in multicultural and intercultural environments

#### 1. Education in today's world

The modern world is experiencing the process of globalization, whose major tendency is student exchange and intercultural mixing. As our society is becoming **immensely multilingual** and **multicultural** and the number of international students in higher education programmes is rising every year, the research field of the process for acculturation is constantly expanding. Often **international students** struggle with many challenges like language barriers, loneliness, homesickness, adjustment difficulties due to cultural differences, difficulties to fit in, financial issues, perceived discrimination and prejudice, feelings of hatred and loss of social support, guilt and fear. In today's society, university professors often interact with a multicultural audience in a traditional or in an online format. The majority of university staff stresses the existing problem of *constructive knowledge transfer* in the multicultural environment as the major challenge in this regard. Besides, cognitive, psycho-pedagogical and communication specifics are also among the potential problems. The *development of education that is receptive to cultures needs* is the aim not only for specialists in different subjects, but also for teachers who have knowledge in cross-cultural challenges. These days, training courses and programs including distance learning are monocultural, that is, do not fully meet the needs of students in the information society. Thereby, the main question is how to build constructive education in a cross-cultural education context (Taratukhina and Tsyganova, 2017, p. 267).

#### 2. Psychological aspect of adaptation

The psycho-pedagogy deals with the adaptation and its psychological aspect. This aspect is partially overlapped by the notion of social adaptation. It also tackles the adaptation process of a person as an individual to the life of the society according to the requirements of this concerned society and their own needs, interests and motives. The most feasible path of achieving **successful social adaptation** is through proper upbringing and general education, professional and work training as well as co-existence and co-habitation

Today's understanding of **social adaptation** is closely associated with the acculturation processes. The most acculturation techniques include two main acculturation strategies based on two factors. The first influencing factor on the selection of an acculturation strategy is the

development and maintenance of the individual ethnic identity in society. A second factor is the *motivation* that corresponds to the willingness of the individual to come into contact with representatives of other ethnic groups, other groups of communicators.

The need for **multicultural education** as a tool for educational activities is a basic principle that determines the new standards and curricula and programs for the training of future specialists. Often, the teacher's task is primarily to encourage multinational groups within an environment of respect and collaboration. **Intercultural communication/dialogue** expresses different forms of interaction between people of different ethnicities, cultural roots, leading to mutual understanding and a reduction in conflicts. True wealth people have their culture, their relationships, their communities and their way of life. Intercultural communication / dialogue is an exchange of the wealth and wisdom that each community possesses. While exchanging this wealth, people get to know each other better as nations, religious communities and human beings and, accordingly, conditions are created for respect for the differences with which people are born (Taylor, 1994; Valchev, 2004).

### 3. Ethnocultural stereotypes – autostereotypes and heterostereotypes

**Autostereotypes** are perceptions, assessments, expectations, ideas relevant to the respective ethnocultural community, by its own representations, description, sustainable image of own ethnicity. In this complex, a vision of “ourselves”, of “ours” is quite naturally dominated by positive ideas and evaluations.

**Heterostereotypes** are sets of judgments, evaluative perceptions and definitions for other ethnic groups / peoples. They can be both positive, or negative depending on “records” in the historical memory of different ethnicities/peoples, from their historical clashes or their historical/cultural interactions.

**Intercultural education** includes the education, training and socialization of children and adults, bearers of different cultures, spiritually and materially, created in the historical development of a particular nation or ethnic community. Didactic and educational technologies are applied, revealing what is common and what is different in subjects carrying different cultures.

The solution to the educational problems of minorities can be sought both from the minorities themselves, and the majorities. Approaches can differ depending on the viewpoint: social, human rights, of multiculturalism and nationality.



- The **social approach** looks at minority groups as marginalized public groups. From this point of view, education is a necessity and a condition for success in the labor market and a priority of national security. When the problem is approached from the point of view of human rights, the focus is on equality and equal opportunities. According to this interpretation, the most serious reason for the failure of education among children of minority origin is discrimination.
- The **national approach** treats minority groups as political subjects and emphasizes their degree of autonomy in the education system rather than the specific content of the process of education. At the national level it is necessary to change educational attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices (of all subjects in the process of educational interaction, towards all stages of the education system) in order to address existing inclusion issues of vulnerable ethnic communities and social groups.

A necessary **prerequisite for the pedagogization** of the educational environment is the knowledge of the value orientations of the family and the stimulation of intercultural dialogue. **On a practical level**, ethnopsychological approaches should be applied to both minority groups, and to those who are considered as part of an ethnic majority. Understanding which complex concept is nationally accepted, especially in its civil aspects, is a good starting point. In this regard, it is advisable to pay attention to concepts such as **solidarity** and **tolerance** that are part of the content of a modern nation.

Naturally, the target group should have access to literature and materials related to the way of life of the respective minorities. To master the components of intercultural competence of participants in the educational process - students and teachers, an intercourse touring training is necessary. Its aim is not to impart exhaustive knowledge; it is rather a process of mastering thematic and focused knowledge of relevant areas of foreign cultures, ways of detection of cultural differences and opportunities to deal with them, using knowledge required to act adequately in intercultural situations. For pedagogues, the term “intercultural education” is more commonly used than the term “intercultural communication”, but the product of training (education) should be knowledge, skills, techniques and practices for effective mutually satisfactory intercultural communication (Roth, 2001, pp. 564-576).

#### 4. Perception of student

The basis of the educational process is the perception of student's central role within the development endeavor. Today barely would anyone dispute that every student is a unique person with his or her own qualities, interests, abilities and educational needs. Along with its narrowly specialized educational tasks, the educational system is called to develop, as a basic social value, the respect for the rights and freedoms of each individual and not to discriminate on any grounds.

However, equal access does not mean equal care for all students, but a differentiating care according to their different needs. It is not enough just to get to know and accept the other, but one should also take into account his or her cultural identity and the formation of a tolerant attitude through respect and esteem. It is necessary for students from minority groups to be approached with specific methods and to think from their position. Last but not least, students must be able to reveal their position on the main management issues and school development. They have to be able to actively participate in various forms of student self-government. This is how the university will educate citizens who are not indifferent to what is happening around them and who will be able to defend their position in society.

#### 5. Socialization of students

Modern pedagogical technologies are dedicated to the **socialization of students** - a process in which the teacher plays the role of moderator. This approach is especially suitable for building a personality with strongly tolerant behavioral patterns, oriented towards universal values in a global world.

Through perception, awareness and transmission of knowledge in life situations, students make their own models of behavior. In this sense, the directive and the monologue pedagogical approach to the “**subject-object**” principle is inappropriate. Accordingly, the ability for social realization in an interethnic environment must be stimulated in students. It is necessary for them to understand that no one's opinion of the world is universal.

The main approach is the situational one, which is being realized by resolving contradictions arising in everyday life without the moderators giving direct instructions and prohibitions that draw attention to the victim and appealing to an independent decision. Professors should moderate groups of students of different ethnic backgrounds. **Encouragement and support** of the positive qualities will lead to the construction of positive self-esteem in students and disadvantaged students.

The aim is to establish a sense of dignity and self-esteem that will facilitate student's integration into a multinational society. The inclusion of students is happening by stimulating activity through the expression of thinking in solving provoked or spontaneous contradictions. The student must understand that through cooperation and the achievement of common goals, individual goals can also be achieved. The right to freedom of expression of opinion and decision making is invariable. Only behavior that affects others is considered inadmissible.

The analysis of domestic and foreign research on the topic of **foreign students** and **minority group students** and their way of adjusting to the new socio-cultural environment and living conditions have led to the organization of socio-psycho-pedagogical support for the adjustment of international students or minority groups students. The identification of aspects for the formation of the cultural identity and the impact of different environmental factors have also played a significant role in the definition process.

The **socio-psycho-pedagogical support for the adjustment of international students or minority groups students** is achieved through the help of two interrelated topics:

- establishment of socio-pedagogical conditions for the successful adjustment of migrant/international students;
- formation of volunteer groups of students who are willing and able to work on peers' adjustment into the new cultural environment (Konkina et al., 2015, p. 210).

According to some authors (e.g., Konkina et al., 2015, pp. 210-217), the optimal means of solving this problem is project activities that assume getting familiar with the traditions of majorities culture, fostering the skills of constructive engagement, and forming tolerance in migrant children. Means to form cultural identity in migrant students include folktales, games and animated movies, used during the adaptive interaction in schools and at home. The result of such approach can be assessed from a bilateral perspective:

- it allows solving not only the problem of the adjustment of migrant students, but also helps student volunteers in getting hands-on experience of working with students;
- expanding the ethnic and cultural horizons of future university professors and teaching staff.

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### 3.3. THE VALUE - ORIENTED MODEL OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

by Buckinghamshire New University, United Kingdom<sup>18</sup>

#### Abstract

Within an university context, you may find learners in need of support within the organization, as they may face physical or emotional difficulties which may hinder their ability to complete their chosen programme. If the university system has a supportive community, for example student support, an area dedicated to student inclusion, counselling services, disability services, finance, accommodations and an active student union - the student journey could become more cohesive and the learning outcomes more achievable. The notions *misconduct*, *behavior problems* and *emotional problems* are interweaving, as one is a causative factor for the second. The chapter outlines the theoretical background on reasons for misclassifying students' behavior problems and directions to identify learners with behavior problems.

*Keywords:* social behavior, values, education systems, behavior and emotional problems

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### 3.3. The value - oriented model of social behavior

The objective of many education system is to support high quality education for all learners. Learners will thereby contribute to and be involved in a meaningful way in society. Education provision is a primary responsibility of states in many societies. Education has to be available to all learners. The education systems are required to encourage and support educational development for everybody. The providers of education themselves need development and training. Such providers are for example lecturers, assistant lecturers and other assistant within the institution. This further relates to the notion of student experience. Student experience takes into account whether their physical, psychological, social and learning needs are met. Educational institutions have a duty to have policies and procedures in place to help with the support of its students.

The fundamental responsibility for a student lies with the educational establishment that is structured in a phased approach, for example within the Student Life Cycle; the student embarks on entry to a place of Higher Education via the Prospect, Application, Admission, Registration, Enrolment, Progression and finally Graduation. Each phase of this process is handled and initiated by a different department whether internal or external to the Higher Education organization. Once the learner is within the establishment, the process of looking after the learners lies within the support structure of the university. It is not the responsibility of the professor to look after the learner as their role is to act as teachers, coach and mentor guiding the student through his/her studies and final outcome.

You may find learners in need of support within the organization; this may be physical or emotional and it may hinder their ability to complete their chosen programme. If the university system has a supportive community, for example Student Support, an area dedicated to student inclusion, counselling service, disability services, finance, accommodation and active Student Union, it would make the student's journey more cohesive and the outcomes more easily achievable.

The role of lecturers as stated above is to provide an active learning environment, coaching, mentoring, be it on a one to one tutorial based or within a larger context in a lecture situation. The scholars found that the needs of the learner are paramount in terms of the student's experience and outcomes. For example, in the past, within the university environment, very little attention was devoted to student experience, but due to expansion of the European community,

the Browns Report in the UK and Knowledge Exchange between universities, it is now a priority for higher education institutions to make sure that all students have a positive experience with their organization. For students with different educational needs, universities must put in place an inclusive policy to ensure equal access to education for all and to avoid a negative impact on the student outcome which may result in:

- restricted employment options as a result of curriculum cover;
- support being centered around disability only;
- funds are prioritized on specialist interference;
- rural areas and undeveloped zones are missing facilities;
- universities are not catering to a large numbers of learners with special needs at the expense of other learners that may require these services.

Hence it is important to state that learners have a right to access education with at least one provider. Education for all, inclusion, equal access and non-bias education should be principles embodied within this right. Often academics are experiencing some difficulty in supporting students with special needs in the classroom. Often, they lack knowledge and understanding on how to deal with and assist students' multiple needs. They often feel powerless, unequipped with relevant skills, expertise and knowledge to deal with students exhibiting behavior problems.

Illback and Nelson (1996, p. 24-30) support widening participation concepts as solutions for fulfilling the students' needs and support them to achieve their full potential. It is important to state that neither the students or the support they get need to be controlled, but the environment in which the student is placed is essential, in the form of accommodating facilities that the student can use as a support framework to help academics with identifying and understanding the student's special needs. Theories on emotional needs, emotional support, character types, collaboration, a participatory model, "taking ownership", class participation, a group approach, and equal systems, are studied to enable university's day to day approach on supporting students. To be successful, lecturers will need support for dealing with students with behavior problems in an appropriate way.

Ashman and Elkins (1994, p. 294) state that the identification of behavior problems is complex because various considerations can influence it. Academics encountering learners with behavior complications, encounter to some extent a difficulty in recognizing such learners - what they require is procedures and support to assist these learners. Lecturers are used on a daily basis in the classroom to what is recognized as normal behavior. Therefore,

they are able to acknowledge when a student's behavior is outside of what is accepted as normal behavior.

The concept of *behavior disorders* has a greater relevance within the context of education (Kerr and Nelson, 1989, p.5). Besides, it is less and less stigmatizing and more acceptable for students to exhibit such behavior problems.

Ashman and Elkins (1994, p. 294-295) present the following reasons for misclassifying behavior problems:

- No psychological tests are used in determining behavior disorders by measuring personality, anxiety or adjustment. Screening and projective tests, personality accounts, behavior assessment scales, are not always valid and subsequently could only be used to categorize learners who may have behavior problems. Identifying in the first instance of learners with potential behavior problems is done to the academics.
- Test performance is impacted by conditions which are not easy to control when administrated.
- The behavior of a learner is significantly different from day to day and during tests and towards the psychologist.
- Known educational needs, such as blindness, have no recognized definition.
- On a country-by-country basis, terminology used in referring to similar notions has different meanings. This makes reaching a consensus in the definition of such concepts very difficult.
- In many cases national definitions do not come up with solutions for dealing with identified behaviors, they tend to quantify the negative behavior exhibited by the learner. Consequently, definitions lead to the segregation of the learner as deviant, and not the behavior.
- In many cases all learners are labelled the same, with no distinction between mild behavior issues and serious behavioral problems.
- Up to 1970s, learners were classified as disruptive, but since 1980s universities and learners share the responsibility of dealing with disruptive incidents.
- On a case by case basis, the diagnostic bodies have different options on identifying behavior problems exhibited by learners; a learner can be spotted as suffering from mental health problems, but a different health specialist may view the same behavior as indicating emotionally issues.



Problematic behavior is subject to individual judgement. Judgment is a subjective factor according to which behavior is interpreted as being disorderly, abnormal or problematic. Laslett (1977, p. 29) describes such learners as those who “show evidence of emotional instability or psychological disturbance and who require special educational treatment or additional support within the environment in order to affect their personal, social and educational readjustment”.

Experienced lecturers can assume that some behaviors are normal if social and psychological backgrounds are taken into consideration. Some behavior can be a resultant of stress reactions to the environment. When student behavior changes follow a pattern, some difficulties can be encountered. In this regard Rutter (apud Laslett 1977, p. 33) differentiates a number of circumstances affecting behavior, namely antisocial, neurotic or conduct disorders, a peer group that do not adjust to presence of antisocial or neurotic disorders, the attention deficit hyperactive disorder - ADHD, developmental disorders, psychoses, psychosis that develop at or after puberty, mental development delay and students impacted by socio-economic conditions.

Prinsloo (1995, p. 7) argues that behavior should always be judged according to circumstances, as the laws of a country permit certain behaviors as normal and others forbid them. Religious norms also influence viewpoints on decent behavior and incorrect behavior. Cultural differences regarding acceptable norms, values, traditions, customs, and beliefs influence how behavior is perceived. People from different cultures follow their cultural values.

Behaviors that substantially differ from what is known as “normal” behavior are generally easy to spot, but sometimes the change is subtle. Grossman and Grossman (1990, p. 80) is of the opinion that academics have a moral duty to try to change what everyone perceives as problematic behavior. The authors (Grossman and Grossman, 1990, p. 80) take this assessment further to suggest that lecturers have to bear in mind that individual factors such as personal likes and dislikes, own moral compass, and personal main concerns, can impact their opinion on classifying a student's behavior as needing special attention or not.

Behavior patterns could be defined based on criteria such as social and cultural standards; developmental standards; frequency of behavior problems occurrence; the intensity of the behavior problem; period of time over which the behavior problem occur; any up normal behavior; the unfortunateness of time and place when the behavior is happening; especially when behaviors of these learners is compared to ordinary learners; and the fact that troubled learners usually experience such behavioral problem often during daily routine.

Based on the reviewed scholarly literature, behavior difficulties can be classified as:

- **more serious behavior**, regularly linked to possible psychiatric problems, for example anorexia or child schizophrenia;
- **less serious behavior** has a occurring pattern over longer periods of time. The causes are often deep-routed and require identification of the underpinning determining factors to the behavior drawback.
- **of a minor nature**, when behavior have been present for a while and can be linked to determined contexts. They are of a temporary nature and can be readily overcome with the support of the peer group within the daily life of the student.

Other researchers focus on distinguishing between *secondary* and *primary* behavioral problems. A primary behavior problem is stated as the roof of subsequent problems. A secondary problem develops from a primary problem. Categorizing of a behavioral display as “problematic” is made when the learner is disturbing fellow students. It is essential to remember that labelling students in class based on their tolerance and ability to cope, sensitivity and attitudes has a direct impact on the way they are perceived by their peers and therefore on how they will be supported.

Bower's definition of behavior problems is representative for many contexts. According to Bower (1969, 1981) a condition manifesting itself over a long period of time and to a marked degree with the following characteristics, which adversely affect learner's educational experience could define behavior problems/disorders in the following ways:

- an incapacity to study, which is not down to health factors, sensory or intellectual capacity;
- an incapacity to socially adapt to peers and lecturers;
- unsuitable type of behavior that is shown during normal routine;
- a permanent sense of unhappiness or depression;
- a likeness to emotional stress expression, e.g., due to problems experienced within the University the learner exhibits fears or pains; and
- presenting disorderly behavior in the lecture environment for some time, as well as a permanent reluctance to join other learners in their activities.

England's Code of Practice (Farrell 1995, p. 8) defines behavior problems as occurring when the learner:

- does not engage regularly with an educational establishment;
- exhibits obsessional and questionable eating habits;

- is showing signs of substance abused;
- behaves in a frenzied, unforeseen and disruptive way;
- is exhibiting signs of harassment towards other learners; and
- their mental health is questionable.

Grosenick and Huntze (apud Apter and Conoley, 1984, p. 16) consider *behavior disorders* as a better concept to cover a large and complete set of behavior problems than the concept of *emotional disturbance*. Behavior disorders are also more easily accepted by society and less stigmatized. Hewett and Taylor (apud Apter & Conoley, 1984, p. 16) state that mild behavior disorders are a result or indicative of behavior disorders, whilst more serious difficulties are associated with emotional disturbance.

*Conduct disorder* is classified by Barker (1983, p. 58) as “involving aggressive and destructive behavior and involving delinquency. The behavior should not be part of some other psychiatric disorder such as a neurotic disorder or a psychosis, but minor emotional disturbance may be present”. A response and a reaction to socially unaccepted behavior of the learner is to see it as a conduct disorder, while a behavior that fails to conform to accepted norms towards people or property on a persistent basis is "acting-out". According to Laslett (1977, p.33) a *conduct disorder* can be attributed to those learners that are socially misfits and have behavior outside of accepted norms and who "fail to correct their deviation in response to social sanctions". Such behavior is therefore to be considered socially offensive. To convey freedom from their hostility, anxieties and jealousies towards other influencers in their environment, they exhibit a certain behavior as a way out.

According to Wardle (apud Laslett 1977, p. 34), severe anxiety is seen as one of the causes for disordered behavior in learners and he refers to it as the “the cornered animal syndrome”. A learner with undetected fear behavior, or a serious problem that he or she experienced or is aware of, been let-down by a peer in the class setting, a reaction to a stressful environment at home, tensions involving the learner or one of his or her inner circle members, a broken relationship, cerebral dysfunctions, depression, suicidal thoughts, adolescent confusion and disturbed thoughts, or a sudden and quantifiable deterioration in the learner’s results could be the underlying root for the behavior. Furthermore, Wardle (apud Laslett 1977, p. 35) says that such learners should be supported through “a prolonged period of intensive, extensive nurture of a much more basic kind”. This needs to be linked to encouragement and support. Behavior modification programmes could see substantial

changes in learner's behavior in the classroom; although how long these changes may last in practice is not yet well defined and understood (Laslett 1977, p. 35)

Rutter describes those who are experiencing personality problems as learners with *neurotic disorders* (apud Laslett 1977, p. 35). Neurotic symptoms are linked to depression, obsessional behavior, disproportionate and persistent anxiety, compulsive behavior as well as irrational fear. These learners need considerate support from the lecturer and individual attention. Interpreting reality abnormally, according to Stroh, is related to schizophrenia, traumatic psychosis, childhood autism, organic psychosis with autistic features, psychotic depression, and obsessive-compulsive psychosis (apud Laslett 1977, p. 36). It was described as "conduct which is so profoundly disturbed that disruption of the normal pattern of development takes place at all levels, intellectual, social and emotional. It is behavior which has led to descriptions of these individuals as having broken with reality, or at the best, retaining a very slender hold on it" (apud Laslett, 1977, p. 36). Undoubtedly, the predisposition to generate widespread pressure in learners' relationships with their peer group is a feature of such behavior. Significant implications occur when such learners are to be accommodated within mainstream education.

Learners who *misbehave*, include those exhibiting "any conduct, committed in or out of an educational establishment, which tends to bring the establishment into contempt or disrepute, or interferes with the governance and proper administration of the organization, or interferes with the conditions necessary for any activity or is committed with the intention of preventing any person from exercising his or her rights, powers or duties as a member of the school community, or is committed in retaliation against such exercise of which a punishment of suspension or expulsion may be imposed" (Provincial Gazette Extraordinary, 1982, p. 2).

Bos and Vaughn (1994, pp. 3-5) identify learners with behavior problems according to following criteria:

- They are at the centre of attention because they have trouble in learning and interacting properly.
- They are faced with poor results – directly impacted by spelling, reading, or calculus difficulties, which causes them to underachieve.
- They have difficulty concentrating - they are easily distracted.
- They are inclined to be restless – they lack concentration, and they are easy distracted by noise.
- They have memory problems and are not able to remember what they have learned.

- They exhibit spatial problems and fine-motor problems.
- They are mostly asocial - and do not show any empathy.
- They experience stress and conflict derived from their problems.
- They have visual perception difficulties.
- They have difficulties with expressing themselves.
- They act aggressively, they are easily distressed, they overreact and show uncontrolled behavior to express their annoyances.
- They are lonely and not prone to interacting with their peers.
- They show peculiar behavior, such as staring blankly for long periods of time or sitting and rocking themselves endlessly.
- Their behavior is not representative for their state of general development.
- Their behavior endangers themselves, as well as others.
- Their behavior prevents learning or excludes them from important learning prospects.
- Their behavior impairs their own standard of health, comfort and happiness.
- Their behavior is socially unaccepted.

Bos and Vaughn (1994, p. 4), have put together a set of questions that could be used to determine the significance of a behavior problem for a student:

- Has the problem been persistent?
- What was the length of the behavior episode?
- How often does the behavior occur?
- What circumstances determine such behavior to occur?
- Are the problem behaviors disruptive to the learner's other activities?
- Can the event defining the behavior be easily identified? Is the learner experiencing difficulty in being accepted by a group of friends?
- Is the circumstance leading to the episode promptly forgotten?
- Are the activities of others disrupted by the behavior of the learner? How do the others cope with the problem behavior?
- Is a break from reality one of the behavior's consequences?
- Is the problem severe?
- Are former teachers' comments regarding their behavior known?
- What is the rapport between the learner and the lecturer like?

- Do lecturers employ any mechanism to assist the student with learning or behavior problems?
- Has the lecturer had a *range of tolerance* for dealing with students with behavior problems?
- What other possible causes on the student's learning/behavior problems has the lecturer explored the possibility of?
- Does the student cause tension in their peers' life due to behavior problems?
- Can accepted social norms be used to judge the student as being socially unacceptable or displaying an unaccepted behavior due to the behavior problem?
- Is the response in line with the behavior?

Determining features used to identify a student with behavior problems are as follows. A student with behavior problems is inclined to: set unachievable goals for himself; show an incapacity to learn; be unable to maintain good social relationships with peers and lecturers; experience inappropriate feelings or types of behavior; not act according to what is regarded as being age appropriate; be unhappy most of the time, feeling depressed and aggressive; experience minor emotional disturbances; express behavior that is uncontrolled, unanticipated, bizarre and disruptive; bully fellow colleagues, act destructively and exhibit delinquent behavior; suffer from a bad self-image; and be unable to function independently.

The notions of *misconduct*, *behavior problems* and *emotional problems* are interweaving, as one is a causative factor for second. A student, for example, who shows a need to be valued and affirmed (unfulfilled need for love), is straightforwardly manipulated by peers to exhibit wrongdoing; interrupting lecturers, for example, despite knowing that it is not allowed (misconduct) and later the student could even be influenced by the peer group in taking more severe actions (behavior problem).

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### 3.4. DIDACTIC-METRIC METHODS AND PROCEDURES TO ASSESS STUDENTS' LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

by University of Zagreb, Croatia<sup>19</sup>

#### Abstract

In this chapter, definitions of terms that are important for the understanding of this topic, such as didactics, docimology, assessment, validation, evaluation are presented. Assessment procedures are explained and some opportunities for improvement are listed. Types of tests used in education are further listed and explained. The importance of formative and summative evaluation, continuous assessment throughout the semester, motivation for the course is also presented. Followed by reflections on the importance of applying what has been learned, Bloom's taxonomy, defining learning outcomes, feedback information and student self-evaluation are presented. Concluding remarks of this chapter are emphasizing assessment subjectivity and objectivity, listing and explaining the most common mistakes and shortcomings that occur when assessing students.

*Keywords:* docimology, assessment, evaluation, types of exams, learning outcomes, assessment errors

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### 3.4. Didactic-metric methods and procedures to assess students' level of knowledge

#### 1. Terminology

First, some of the many definitions and clarifications of terms that are important for this chapter are presented. Didactics and docimology are important scientific disciplines related to education at all levels. They have been defined by many authors in their works.

Matijević and Topolovčan (2017) consider didactics as a scientific discipline that studies laws in the teaching and educational process. Jelavić (2008) defines didactics as a science whose subject is systematically organized learning that is oriented towards the development of the individual. He also adds that teachers should master basic didactic procedures. It is necessary to educate teachers about the pedagogical and methodological aspects of assessment (Divjak 2008).

Grgin (1999) defines docimology as a young scientific discipline that offers more appropriate ways and practices of evaluation. It seeks to discover and study the influence of factors that impair the metric value of grades when assessing knowledge, and to find ways and procedures for a more objective, reliable and valid measurement of knowledge. Docimology seeks to find procedures to eliminate or control undesirable factors affecting the assessment, in particular the influence of assessor subjectivity that spoils the metric value of school grades. Janković (2002) states that docimology has two directions. One direction is to discover everything that prevents quality assessment of knowledge; the other is to discover how to eliminate risk factors, and to measure knowledge according to criteria that are constant and the same for everyone.

According to Matijević (2004), docimology is the science of assessment, and it studies everything that affects assessment, assessment models and the impact of assessment on motivation. A special interdisciplinary scientific discipline that studies form of assessment in school is school docimology. Assessment, validation and evaluation are some of the more common terms used in education, but there are others such as testing, monitoring, measuring, valorization, etc. There are many definitions for all of these terms from different perspectives.

Jelavić (2008) says that assessment is determining the position of individuals on a scale of usually five degrees. Mužić and Vrgoč (2005) share a similar view, stating that assessment is the classification of individuals into categories according to learning outcomes and criteria, giving a grade based on a scale. Assessment should contribute to improving an individual's

success, not serve as the main purpose. Assessment is an activity for assessing an individual's success (Ivanek 1999). Stevanović and Klarić (2001) suggest how assessment should improve teaching and correct teaching methods if the results are not good.

Validation is an activity that determines the achievement in relation to the pre-set goals. Validation affects student's behavior, their relationship with the teacher and the subject, as well as their motivation (Jelavić 2008). Mužić and Vrgoč (2005) claim that validation should be upgraded and adapted, according to the changes, time context and circumstances, with a set of scientifically and professionally tested practices. Validation and assessment should present an incentive for students and guide them on how to learn (Jelavić 2008).

Matijević and Topolovčan (2017) state that evaluation is a process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information on achieving the goals of teaching, answering questions about how well and how. Evaluation considers the overall knowledge, the applicability of this knowledge in practice, criticality, flexibility etc. (Stevanović and Klarić, 2001). Burcar (2002) views it as a wider term than grading. Its purpose is, based on criteria, to evaluate efficiency, quality, accuracy, quantity of information, etc.

The terms assessment, validation and evaluation have various definitions in the literature. These three concepts are interconnected and intertwined and difficult to separate. An example of grading is assigning (usually) numerical value to the results of a student's work, like exams or assignments. Assessment is a part of validation (NN 82/2019). Validation is the systematic collection of data in the learning process and the level of achievement of educational outcomes, competencies, skills, abilities, independence, responsibility etc. (NN 82/2019). Evaluation is an even more complex concept. It involves collection and use of information for the purpose of improving education (Norris et al., 2017, p. 758, apud Španja, 2019). It is more comprehensive and detailed, analyzes goals, results and activities, helps in development and leads to changes in practice (Thistlethwaite et al., 2015, p. 292, apud Španja, 2019).

Many authors criticize assessment and believe that it is necessary to invent a different system that corresponds to changes in society and new insights. Henting (1997) states that grades are a feature of a society based on success, they are not a credible display of ability, assessment is not a fair system.

## 2. Assessment methods and procedures

Almost every teacher has his/her own assessment methods, procedures, criteria and elements that guide them. Some constantly change them or look for better ones, while there are those who use the same methods and procedures for years, and even the same exam questions.

Grgin (1999) claims that the success of assessment depends on teachers' ability to select and apply assessment procedures. Examination and assessment methods serve as an indicator of progress, the student must know how he/she is advancing, and in return success motivates him/her to study (Ivanek 1999). Stevanović and Klarić (2001) argue that the ability to memorize is often overemphasized at the expense of analytical and critical abilities and creativity. The exam is testing certain skills, knowledge and abilities in order to determine the results. Teachers should combine different methods of student evaluation and assessment, and the criteria should be clearly defined and published (Petričević et al., 2017). Other authors agree with this, such as Jensen (2003), who also states that grades must be based on various forms of assessment, and that students need to know the rules of assessment from the beginning in order for the assessment to be successful.

Matijević (2004) says that there is not a single, unique grading model. It is necessary to change the criteria and look for opportunities to improve the current methods of assessment. The concept of lifelong learning is often mentioned because society and the environment are changing fast and it is necessary to constantly learn and adapt to change. The same applies to teachers, which need to constantly learn and seek improvements to enhance their teaching and evaluation of students.

Strahinić (2012) points out that there are many examples of dissatisfaction with the existing grading system. More frequent testing leads to improvements in learning and to greater educational achievements. Assessment should be a learning aid and provide information on an individual's educational achievement. In addition to grades, teachers should instruct unsuccessful students on how to eliminate their shortcomings (Grgin 1999).

Stevanović and Klarić (2001) explain how examiners should be flexible, allow for originality in answers, the possibility to acquire new knowledge during the examination, examine in the form of problem solving, redefine questions, etc. In exams, students and teachers should be partners who learn from each other. The socio-emotional climate in exams is also important. Evaluation criteria need to be developed and changed (Ivanek, 1999). One of the ways to make it easier for students to pass the exam is consultation with the teacher (Matijević and Topolovčan,

2017). Matijević (2004) states that assessment and monitoring methods need to change as society changes, as those that are currently going through school will live in a different media-technological environment. Students need to be taught how to learn, be monitored during classes, be checked and graded, and get feedback based on the achieved results (Petričević et al., 2017). Teachers can help students practice for the exam, and guide them to what is important to know. Students who need additional clarification or instruction should feel free to come to the consultation and ask for help from the teacher.

### **3. Examination and evaluation types**

Jelavić (2008) points out that teachers should be aware that no two individuals respond the same to the same content, not everyone can learn in the same way. Success cannot be measured in the same way for everyone, because every student has its own way of learning. Types of evaluation should vary. Jensen (2003) points out that all types of intelligence should be valued because all students are smart in their own way. Teachers should give individuals the opportunity to choose the ways in which they express their knowledge. Some express themselves better in writing, some orally, some through projects, some through practical work, etc. Students should be asked questions that encourage critical thinking and reflections. There is no proven system that provides everyone with equal opportunities and equal criteria (Grgin, 1999).

Written examination can be conducted through exams, homework, essays, tasks of an objective type, seminars, etc. (Jelavić, 2008). Oral examination offers insight into several levels of knowledge, the individual has to describe, explain, solve problem, etc. (Jelavić, 2008). In oral exams, teachers shape their own ways of examining. Assessment is influenced by various factors, passivity or activity of the teacher, suggestive or non-suggestive questions, what questions are being asked, from what material they are asked, etc. (Grgin, 1999).

Essays can have a smaller or a larger number of tasks that can be answered more freely and extensively. Students should list, describe, interpret, compare, critique, analyze, etc. (Grgin, 1999). Seminar papers are often one of the tasks that students need to complete during a semester for a certain course. Looking at seminar papers, teachers can evaluate various elements such as conducting research, searching for literature, writing skills, critical thinking, presenting the topic to colleagues, etc. Seminar papers can be presented individually or as group work.

Through practical application of the acquired knowledge, the degree of an individual's qualification for a certain activity is shown (Stevanović and Klarić, 2001). Practical tasks can

mean an assignment in a computer program, laboratory exercises, conducting research, etc. Students can independently perform various activities and tasks in class, for homework, for a project, seminar paper, etc.

Through independent work such as researching the topic, the student is trained to use literature, critical approach, oral presentation, etc. (Stevanović and Klarić 2001). In group work, students can do everything they do individually, but here cooperation, teamwork, togetherness, etc. is encouraged. One of the forms of group work can be collaborative learning which activates all students and builds communication skills. The principles of collaborative learning are time for reflection, exchange of thoughts, personal responsibility, participation, reduction of fear and quality of contributions (Bruning and Saum, 2008).

Teachers should combine as many types of examinations as possible, and ideally allow students to choose which type of examination suits them best to express the results of their work. Also, in addition to the types of exams, teachers can combine the types of tasks and questions they ask students.

Thanks to modern technology, there are various online exam options. Matijević and Topolovčan (2017) show that online exams are most often taken from home. Students can use literature and online sources. Questions and tasks should be in the form of problem solving. Students need to select information, think critically, and figure out how to solve a problem, as well as show creativity in their work. Online teaching offers various opportunities for students' assessment – discussions, research, exercises. Different types of activities can be created that can be evaluated. Students have different opportunities because online teaching can assess student work during classes, attendance and activities, acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, independent work, seminars, participation in discussions, text analysis, etc. (Petričević et al., 2017).

#### **4. Formative and summative evaluation**

Evaluation can be formative and summative. Jelavić (2008) says that formative evaluation should be integrated into the teaching process after each major unit, because it enables learning through communication. Formative evaluation serves as a way for improvement and advancement (Mužić and Vrgoč, 2005). Formative evaluation is a good indicator of a student's progress and feedback on what has been learned is obtained (Petričević et al., 2017).

Summative evaluation is implemented after the completion of learning in order to observe

the achievements with regard to certain standards (Jelavić, 2008). Summative evaluation serves to obtain a complete picture of the work results (Mužić and Vrgoč, 2005). It is important to use both formative and summative evaluation during the semester because, as stated above, formative evaluation contributes to progress, which leads to better results at the end of the learning process, which is checked by summative evaluation.

## 5. Evaluation throughout the semester

Students should be monitored and evaluated throughout the semester. Teachers can devise various ways in which student's work and activities can be monitored and evaluated during the semester. In this way, students are motivated to be active and present at lectures and to work hard and continuously.

It is important to notice what kind of work habits the student has, what are his abilities and interests. Grades should be the result of a student's commitment over a period of time. Wider observation contributes to the humanization of assessments (Stevanović and Klarić, 2001). The teacher can evaluate all activities during the semester and form a final grade based on that (Petričević et al., 2017). Divjak (2008) explains how students can collect points throughout the semester on projects, assignments, colloquia and various activities. The maximum number of points that can be collected during the semester can be determined, e.g., 100 points and according to the acquired number of points, a grade is given. Additional criteria such as passing a colloquium or an exam can be set. There are several types of scoring and grading models. Attendance and participation in classes, assignments, exercises and others can also be evaluated (Cifrek, 2008). Jelavić (2008) says that more grades during the semester contribute to a more accurate final grade.

## 6. Motivating students

Motivating students for a course is not always an easy task, but motivation is important so that students want to learn with understanding and interest instead of just memorizing the necessary information, which they forget as soon as they pass the exam. Teaching should be motivating and interesting, including various forms of lectures and activities.

Koren (2014) defines motivation as an internal process that encourages a certain behavior in order to achieve a goal. Motivation to learn is the pursuit of acquiring knowledge and skills. Teachers should interest students in their subject and learning (Strahinić, 2012). In teaching, it is

necessary to change teaching methods in order to keep students motivated (Divjak, 2008). Jensen (2003) explains how it is necessary to remove demotivating conditions and encourage intrinsic motivation, to include activities that are grouped according to multiple types of intelligence because learning is visual, auditory and kinesthetic and stimulation is needed. Some of the ways to encourage intrinsic motivation are working in groups, telling inspiring stories, providing feedback, inducing emotional involvement, giving recognition. Motivated students are more willing to learn. Bruning and Saum (2008) believe that motivation can be stimulated by activating students' prior knowledge and connecting teaching content with their lives. In order to encourage an individual's motivation for acquiring knowledge, they can be included in their own evaluation (Ivanek, 1999). Motivation and success are achieved through active learning, continuous evaluation and self-evaluation (Tot, 2013). Howe (2008) states how motivation has an effect on individual's success. Motivation can be divided into external and internal. External motivation can be in the form of encouragement, praise or reward, and internal represents curiosity and interest.

## **7. Understanding and application of the learnt content**

Students are often asked to learn some content whether they understand it or not. Such content is mostly forgotten by students immediately after passing the exam because that information is irrelevant to them; it only serves as a way to pass the exam. The goal of learning should be for students to understand why they have learned something and how they can further use what they have learned in education and life.

In education, grade has become more important than knowledge. Assessment is most often based on the ability to recall information and the ability to think has fallen into the background. Students should be made aware of real-life situations where taught knowledge can be applied. Practical knowledge that is applicable in practice means that students learn with a purpose.

Practical application can also be a motive for learning (Strahinić, 2012). Stevanović and Klarić (2001) point out that the acquired knowledge cannot be used for a long time because the world and society are changing and new knowledge is constantly being sought. Teachers should prepare students for lifelong learning. Universities should enable students to use their knowledge, the ability to navigate and apply what they have learned, to think critically, to analyze, to solve problems, work in teams, and prepare them for lifelong learning as well as self-evaluation

(Petričević et al., 2017). Strahinić (2012) points out that a potential employer does not find certificates and diplomas as credible indicators of true knowledge.

### **8. Bloom's taxonomy and learning outcomes**

For each subject it is necessary to clearly define the learning outcomes and present them to the students at the beginning of the semester. Students need to know what they are learning and why, what competencies they will acquire and how much they need to know for which grade. Teachers can use Bloom's taxonomy to write learning outcomes.

Matijević (2004) points out that Bloom's taxonomy says that an individual's knowledge makes sense if the individual understands that knowledge, can apply it, critically analyze it and put it together with another knowledge. Bloom's taxonomy encompasses the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor areas (Koren 2014). Mužić and Vrgoč (2005) point out that Bloom believes that everyone can learn everything under the right circumstances.

Learning outcomes must be clearly defined in order to be evaluated. Learning outcomes should be cognitive (the acquisition of new knowledge), affective (the acquisition of values and attitudes) and psychomotor (the development of new skills). Teachers usually only test the knowledge and this needs to change in practice. At the beginning of the semester, the teacher should define the assessment criteria related to the learning outcomes and present them to students who learn according to learning outcomes (Petričević et al., 2017). Learning outcomes define what students are expected to know, understand and do (Divjak, 2008). Learning outcomes help both teachers and students. There does not have to be a lot of outcomes, sometimes 4-8 per a subject is sufficient (Erjavec, 2008).

### **9. Feedback information**

Quality feedback information between students and teachers contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning outcomes. Students need to know why they got a certain grade, what they did well and where they have made a mistake. It is equally important that teachers know why students did poorly on the exam.

Feedback should be a two-way process in which teachers and students receive feedback on students' knowledge, skills and competencies (Petričević et al., 2017). Grgin (1999) states how Page (1958) concluded that feedback affects students' knowledge. The feedback that was accompanied by the teacher's comments had a positive effect on later achievements. Students appreciate feedback especially if they have difficulty understanding the material. Teachers can



adapt their teaching when they are aware that there are difficulties present (Dockrell, 2001). Teachers should be interested in feedback provided by students on the understanding and adoption of the taught content (Strahinić, 2012). Feedback is necessary for self-correction and learning improvement (Jensen, 2003). Teacher can change something in their teaching, and students in their learning. Feedback information is important because students need to know and understand why they received a grade, by which criteria and what they need to do and learn to improve their success.

### **10. Students' self-evaluation**

Students can evaluate themselves or their colleagues. This way of evaluating can help students to realistically assess their knowledge.

When a student evaluates himself, he takes responsibility for the results of his learning (Peko, 2002). In self-evaluation, the student compares his/her achievements with the amount of effort invested (Razdevšek-Pučko, 2002). Tot (2013) states that individuals should ask three fundamental questions when evaluating their own work: how good is what I do, how do I know that, and what do I need to do to improve. Matijević (2004) states that self-evaluation develops responsibility, criticism and self-criticism of an individual towards his or her own activities and results. Students should be taught to evaluate their own results and the results of other students, and the teacher should create activities through which students can assess their knowledge (Petričević et al., 2017). Mužić and Vrgoč (2005) state that self-evaluation of students and teachers are important for the improvement of teaching. Students can also evaluate each other and help each other in the adoption of the teaching content.

### **11. Subjectivity and objectivity of the examiners and possible errors in assessment**

The subjectivity of the evaluator stands out as one of the main problems in evaluation. Many authors believe that no method of assessment can be reliable precisely because of the influence of teacher subjectivity. The examiner cannot be completely objective because he is influenced by various subjective circumstances (Strahinić, 2012). Grgin (1999) points out how evaluators are neither consistent nor objective. Almost every teacher has their own grading scale. The assessor should be impartial, professional, objective and realistic (Stevanović and Klarić, 2001). Ivanek (1999) points out that for an objective assessment the teacher should consider the individual abilities of the student.

Due to subjectivity in grading, errors in grading occur. It often happens that teachers consciously or unconsciously make mistakes when grading and give students grades unfairly. Numerous mistakes and errors in grading are listed in the literature; here we will mention some of them. It is a very broad topic that has been researched and written about for many years.

Grgin (1999) states that subjective factors influencing grading are: personal equation, halo effect, logical error, mean error, differentiation error, contrast error, tendency to adjust grading criteria to group quality.

The *personal equation* means that the teacher overestimates or underestimates, unjustifiably raises and lowers the criteria. The *halo effect* is when a teacher evaluates knowledge according to the attitude and opinion that he has formed toward an individual. Higher scores are given to individuals about whom he has a better opinion and vice versa. A *logical error* is when a teacher thinks that the contents of one subject are a prerequisite for another subject and gives an equal grade for both subjects for unequal knowledge. *Mean error* is when the teacher evaluates the knowledge with average grades. The *error of differentiation* is when the teacher adds intermediate grades, e.g., +3,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , etc. *Contrast error* is when a teacher forms a grading scale based on previous exams. If better students are examined first the criteria for the next students will be higher and vice versa. The *tendency to adjust the criteria* for assessing the quality of the group occurs when the teacher has several groups that differ in knowledge. In the group in which the students are better, there are higher criteria and vice versa.

Teachers need to be aware of the negative influences of subjective factors in assessment (Grgin, 1999). Some of the other errors in assessing others are first impression, selective perception, stereotypes, projection, physical attractiveness, the current mood of the examiner, etc. (Rijavec and Miljković, 1999). Deficiencies in assessment are also refinement of results to improve the image, inconsistency of assessment criteria at the same university, teacher inconsistency in the application of assessment criteria, teacher improvisation in assessment, poor understanding of students' characteristics, lines of resentment, etc. (Petričević, et al., 2017).

Grgin (1999) explains how more eloquent, emotionally resilient and resourceful individuals get higher grades in exams, which does not mean that they have more knowledge. Janković (2002) states that there is no simple solution to eliminate grading errors; teachers need to work on themselves, learn and change approaches. Teachers need to constantly improve, set clearer goals for education, combine various forms of testing and assessment, and determine clear elements of testing, criteria and passing limits in order to avoid errors in assessment

(Petričević et al., 2017).

Because of all the influences and errors that occur in grading, many scholars argue that grades are not a measure of knowledge. In universities, often the teachers have not completed the teaching course; they need additional training and the acquisition of pedagogical, psychological, didactic and methodological competence. Proper education should be mandatory for all of those who teach and evaluate.

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### 3.5. TOOLS FOR EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

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#### Abstract

This chapter presents a series of collaborative tools which can facilitate interactions between people with different backgrounds: learning platforms and massive open online courses, social media platforms and telecommunications applications designed for improvement of communication between students, applications for collaborative presentations, translation applications, databases used in global learning. Some issues on how technologies and digital literacies facilitate cross-cultural and intercultural communication and global cultural understanding are also presented, as well as ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the tools used in a multicultural environment.

Intercultural skills involve foundational competencies, facilitation competencies or curriculum design competencies, which each instructor should possess and develop, so she or he can successfully teach students belonging to a different linguistic, cultural or social group (Dimitrov & Haque, 2016). Digital skills are a key issue in the context of contemporary intercultural communication, where digital skills are defined as the ability to use digital tools in the learning process, while visual skills are the capacity to use, produce and communicate through images or videos.

*Keywords:* learning platforms, social media platforms, unified telecommunications services, applications for collaborative and interactive presentations, massive open online courses

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### 3.5. Tools for education in a multicultural and intercultural environment

#### Introduction

When teachers are in a position to teach in an intercultural and multicultural environment, they must possess the ability to engage all students in the learning process, but at the same time open new horizons to what is called global learning. Global learning refers to a critical analysis of interdependent global systems (physical, social, cultural, economic, or political systems) and their implications for people's lives and earth's sustainability (AACU, 2013). Teachers have to be able to design a curriculum in any discipline, so that the students develop the ability to critically reflect on the global context in which we live.

It is useful if, in designing curriculum, the teachers aim to identify or create bridges between topics, and guide the learning process as to ensure coherence and highlight those language components that are shared by the various topics (Council of Europe, 2016).

The bridges between students can be built with some 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. These are a combination of digital, global and visual skills (Karkoulia, 2016). Students today like challenging, exciting tasks and prefer visuals to text rather than the opposite (Karkoulia, 2016). Active and collaborative methods of teaching could equip students with necessary skills for their future professional life, such as teamwork and project/problem solving (Cameron, 2001; Wang, 2010). As we showed before, global skills refer to global learning. Students have to be able to read, interpret, respond, and contextualize messages from a global perspective.

For the teaching process to be successful in a multicultural and intercultural environment, teachers must be competent, knowledgeable and open. In other words, an open attitude is not sufficient, because we cannot teach without knowledge and without specific competence (Catteuw, 2012). We need cultural knowledge about others and also communication skills. We live in an age when we have access to a lot of online resources that would allow us to develop intercultural skills.

In a multicultural and intercultural environment, teachers need to employ various strategies to support the accumulation of knowledge and the development of skills, regardless of students' backgrounds, so that they can work in teams and achieve common learning objectives. As the literature shows, the adequate methods for teaching and learning from an intercultural perspective are those that favor interaction, group activities oriented towards collaborative writing or the achievement of a common result (Pasqualea, 2015). Through this method, students

feel more comfortable in interacting with others with similar backgrounds (Dunne, 2009) and seem to develop coping strategies for group integration (Rienties et al., 2014; Wilson-Forsberg et al., 2018).

Digital technologies have an impact on students because they allow them to share their work with a wider audience, encourage collaboration, and promote creativity and personal expression (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). For the current generation, visual information is essential. For students with different cultural backgrounds, it is even more important. Because of this, it is useful for teachers to develop their visual literacy. In other words, they should have the ability to understand, produce, and communicate through visual materials.

Technologies can be used to bridge multi-and intercultural gaps (Ferdig et al., 2007). Collaborative tools can help students to develop intercultural, intracultural, language and digital literacies (Çiftçi and Savaş, 2018). Even if the students are able to discuss, share, or collaborate, these exchanges can be superficial (Çiftçi, 2016). But even so, there are some advantages to using them. Both teachers and students must know words and idioms in different languages, as they can facilitate the process of integration and communication. In this regard, translation tools can be more than helpful.

Some databases that offer information about global issues to be addressed in global learning or digital tools, with performing good visual presentation, collaborative graphic or text materials and platforms that allow collaborative work can also be useful.

We will continue by listing some collaborative tools which can facilitate interactions between people with different backgrounds:

- learning platforms or massive open online courses, which enable the learning process;
- social-media platforms and telecommunications applications, which can improve communication between students;
- applications for collaborative presentations;
- translation applications;
- databases with issues to be addressed in global learning.

### **1. Information and communication technologies (ICT) for the intercultural educational process.**

E-learning is a concept that focuses on the use of digital technologies in education (Fischer et. al, 2014). Such technologies can be integrated into the education process in a

multicultural environment in many different ways. This section goes over some platforms and applications, as ICT tools for learning that allow information resourcing, contextualization of content, usage as communication tools, construction kit, visualization and manipulation. We will briefly reference how these tools could be useful in intercultural and multicultural communication.

### 1.1. Learning platforms Google classroom<sup>21</sup>

*Google Classroom* is a collaboration tool that is part of *G Suite for Education*, developed by Google for schools with the aim of simplifying the process of creating, distributing and grading assignments. It integrates Docs, Sheets, Slides, Gmail, and Calendar into a cohesive platform to manage student and teacher communication. *Google Classroom* is a web 2.0 tool that enhances the collaboration between students and instructors by providing the opportunity to comment and exchange ideas on Google Doc drafts.

*Microsoft teams*<sup>22</sup>. The *Microsoft Teams* platform is used by teachers and students to communicate one-on-one or in groups. It allows teachers to send messages and announcements to individual students or to a whole group at once. It can be used to create private chats with other users. The free version of Teams includes unlimited chat messages and search, online meetings, audio and video calling for individuals, groups, and full team meetups.

*Easyclass*<sup>23</sup>. *Easyclass* is another platform that allows educators to create online classes by storing the course materials online, managing assignments, quizzes and exams, monitoring due dates, grading papers and providing students with feedback. The use of the platform is free, thanks to a non-profit organization with shareholders from US, UK, Switzerland, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, and with a software development team composed of highly experienced professionals from Italy, Hungary and Romania.

### 1.2. Social-media platforms

There are studies where it was reported that social media is more effective than traditional classroom settings for intercultural communication (Li and Wang, 2014). Social networking sites (SNS) prove to be appealing for learning in an intercultural context as they can offer participants

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<sup>21</sup>More information you can find on:[https://edu.google.com/products/classroom/?modal\\_active=none](https://edu.google.com/products/classroom/?modal_active=none)

<sup>22</sup>More information you can find on:<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/education>

<sup>23</sup>More information you can find on:<https://www.easyclass.com/>



a sense of belonging to a community (Lee and Markey, 2014). While many works exploring how most SNSs can be used to develop blended learning models focused on Facebook, there are authors like Andujar (2020) that analyze how WhatsApp and Instagram can shape teacher practices and course design.

*Facebook.* Some studies indicate that Facebook can successfully be used for educational purposes and cross-cultural collaborative projects. It can be improved by integrating other Web 2.0 applications, but it requires individual efforts for maintaining the sustainability of the educational project (Wang, 2012). Facebook can support a teaching presence for both the instructors and the students, by enabling them to share responsibility for the teaching process, where the limits are coming from low-quality shares and irrelevant discussions in the groups that can negatively affect the learning environment (Keles, 2018).

*Twitter.* Twitter is another widely-used SNS, but there are few studies about its usefulness in the learning process and intercultural context. However, Parcha (2014) views Twitter as a unique way to begin the process of convergent communication among students. Some research subjects consider Twitter to be a very good way of communication for performing academic tasks, but to also have limitations, such as those related to multiple tweets and the need to tag everyone in separate tweets, and not receiving all the replying notifications (Frisby, Kaufmann and Beck, 2016).

*YouTube.* Intercultural learning and communication were researched from the perspective of the relationships between language and intercultural learning, the roles of pedagogy and informality in learning and the learning that can occur in online interaction by reading comments (Benson, 2015). Another study found that playing the role of content creators and responding to online comments also allowed students to develop a more cautious and responsible attitude towards online speech and etiquette (Chen, 2020).

### 1.3. Unified telecommunications services

Some studies revealed that there was a generation gap between *digital natives* and *digital immigrants* in using instant communication services like Skype or other Web 2.0 tools (Neva et al., 2010). More than one decade old study results report a positive impact on motivation and learning outcomes when learners were able to see each other (Juaregi and Banados, 2008). Desktop videoconferencing can provide students the opportunity to practice and enhance their communication skills outside the formal setting of the classroom, as a more recent study indicated that videoconferencing can be a convenient tool to motivate students to build up their

confidence, negotiate meaning and construct knowledge (Vurdien, 2019). Through video conferencing applications, such as Skype and Zoom, learners become engaged in an environment that creates a virtual co-presence (Lenkaitis, 2020a).

Video telecommunications services also have their shortcomings, as practitioners have identified an unknown usage limitation problem when simultaneously using large numbers of video conferencing tools (Byrne et al., 2020).

*Zoom.* Zoom is considered to be a user-friendly application that includes a free basic plan and allows unlimited audio and video recording sessions for pairs and up to 40-minutes for groups of three or more. Zoom platform can provide a collaborative autonomous learning environment that connects students and allows them to practice their second language skills (Lenkaitis, 2020b). There are some security concerns expressed even by students using this platform in the educational process (Forrester, 2020).

*Skype.* Researchers provided insight into the nature of learner reaction to Skype-based computer-mediated communication and offered an introduction into how the business world is making use of online environments for language learning (Terhune, 2015). *Skype in the Classroom*<sup>24</sup> is a free online community that connects students with experts and classrooms around the world for live virtual learning experiences that take place over video calls. Educators need to have a *Skype in the Classroom* account (registration is free), access to *Microsoft Teams*, a webcam and microphone and Internet access, while students need to have access to *Microsoft Teams*, a webcam and microphone for their computer and Internet access.

*Google Meet*<sup>25</sup>. *Google Meet* is included in *G Suite for Education*, which serves more than 120 million students and teachers globally at no additional cost (Soltero, 2020). Anyone having a Google Account can create a video meeting, invite up to 100 participants, and meet for up to 60 minutes per meeting for free. Google extended access to premium Meet features at no cost for all *G Suite for Education* and *G Suite Enterprise for Education* users until September 30, 2020, allowing meetings for up to 250 participants per call, live streams for up to 100,000 viewers within a domain, and the facility for recording meetings and save them to Google Drive.

*Amazon Chime*<sup>26</sup>. Using the demo application, teachers can create a classroom session

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<sup>24</sup>More information you can find on: Skype in the classroom. Educator Guide: Remote Learning. (<https://education-prod.azureedge.net/custom-page-assets/SITCEducatorGuideRemoteLearning.pdf>.)

<sup>25</sup>More information you can find on: <https://meet.google.com/>

<sup>26</sup>More information you can find on: <https://aws.amazon.com/chime/?chime-blog-posts.sort-by=item.additionalFields.createdDate&chime-blog-posts.sort-order=desc>

with a unique subject name, and can also share content using video-based sharing and mute all students with a special “focus mode”. After the class begins, teachers and students can share their videos, chat, and mute themselves (Mohan, 2020).

#### 1.4. Applications for collaborative and interactive presentations

*Google drive*<sup>27</sup>. For intercultural projects, the use of Google Drive at the early stages of the project, where file sharing and collaborative work was most needed, instructors recommended the use of Slack and Google Drive, but students were relatively free to choose from other available social media platforms social media or instant messaging apps (Swartz, Barbosa and Crawford, 2020).

*Trello*<sup>28</sup>. *Trello* is a visual collaboration tool used by teachers and professors worldwide for easier coursework planning, faculty collaboration, and classroom organization (<https://trello.com/en/education>). This tool can be used for free and it allows participants to create teams, boards, and invite others to collaborate. *Trello* is generally used after the exploration and kick-off meeting phase, as an additional support system for the management of intercultural and international mobility projects, as this tool can define and track the tasks that are performed at any given time.

*Mentimeter*<sup>29</sup>. *Mentimeter* is a tool that allows the speaker to visually create relevant interactions with the audience in real time. By using this tool, the speaker can find out what the audience thinks through online voting via mobile phones, tablets or computers. The purpose of this tool is to create effective and engaging interaction during conferences and meetings

*Kahoot!*<sup>30</sup>. *Kahoot!* is an application for educational projects that enables teachers to create tests, surveys and training games or organize. It works on both computers and smartphones. The main advantage of using this app is the ability to introduce new topics and concepts, to review content, distant learning usage, to create interaction by importing or creating slides and

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<sup>27</sup>More information you can find on:

[https://workspace.google.com/intl/en\\_ie/products/drive/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=emea-gb-all-en-dr-bkws-all-all-trial-e-t1-1009147&utm\\_content=text-ad-crnturectrl-none-DEV\\_c-CRE\\_471198180395-](https://workspace.google.com/intl/en_ie/products/drive/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=emea-gb-all-en-dr-bkws-all-all-trial-e-t1-1009147&utm_content=text-ad-crnturectrl-none-DEV_c-CRE_471198180395-)

[ADGP\\_Hybrid%20%7C%20AW%20SEM%20%7C%20BKWS%20~%20G%20Suite\\_EXA\\_google%20drive-KWID\\_43700056764761217-kwd-2833008900-userloc\\_1011804&utm\\_term=KW\\_google%20drive-g&gclid=CjwKCAjww5r8BRB6EiwArcckC7AVxAeBizLJygfivVvXuqABOnenBdaPpmTbN9PaQIm47y77CHsPRBoCKNAQAvD\\_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds](https://workspace.google.com/intl/en_ie/products/drive/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=emea-gb-all-en-dr-bkws-all-all-trial-e-t1-1009147&utm_content=text-ad-crnturectrl-none-DEV_c-CRE_471198180395-ADGP_Hybrid%20%7C%20AW%20SEM%20%7C%20BKWS%20~%20G%20Suite_EXA_google%20drive-KWID_43700056764761217-kwd-2833008900-userloc_1011804&utm_term=KW_google%20drive-g&gclid=CjwKCAjww5r8BRB6EiwArcckC7AVxAeBizLJygfivVvXuqABOnenBdaPpmTbN9PaQIm47y77CHsPRBoCKNAQAvD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds)

<sup>28</sup>More information you can find on: <https://trello.com/en>

<sup>29</sup>More information you can find on: <https://www.mentimeter.com/>

<sup>30</sup> More information you can find on: <https://kahoot.com/>

combining them with various question types, to reinforce knowledge, to create polls.

### 1.5. Massive open online courses (MOOC)

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) provide unlimited opportunities for people around the globe to train or educate themselves into a wide variety of topics without any commitment. The study pace and engagement level depend on the participant's wish and personal motivation. The result of emerging MOOCs all over the world can be interpreted as a way of democratizing education by providing a lot of accessible learning tools (Joo, So and Kim, 2018). Many courses do not require fees, leading to increasing popularity (Pasha, Abidi and Ali, 2016).

As English is the international medium for communication, most of the MOOCs are provided in this language, but a substantial number of MOOCs are available in languages like Spanish, French, Italian, Mandarin, Russian, German, etc. When the MOOC phenomenon emerged some years ago, most of them were American, and the majority of the courses came from US and Western countries universities (Altbach, 2014). The prevalence of English spoken MOOCs is preserved by the advantage of using English as a Lingua Franca (LFE), where LFE communication shift from passive risk-avoiding English users to owners of LFE (Tanaka and Nechita, 2020). English prevails over other languages in its use as a lingua franca (Avgousti, 2018).

A brief description of some of the providers of free MOOCs will be provided below, and it will include major sites where various courses are available. Courses are very diverse, and people from all over the world are enrolled, thus creating an infinite number of opportunities for participants to interact. Any kind of interaction during the tasks required by MOOCs can be applied to intercultural learning, but courses in intercultural communication are offered for those interested, too.

*Khan Academy*<sup>31</sup>. *Khan Academy* is a nonprofit platform that offers all of its courses for free for children ranging from preschool to high school, but adults can also find courses in entrepreneurship, personal finance, or preparatory classes for language tests beside standard courses for math, science, arts and humanities. In October 2020, localized platforms provide large amounts of content translated into Armenian, Bangla, Bulgarian, Czech, French, Georgian, German, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese (European and Brazilian), Serbian, Spanish, Turkish, and simplified Chinese. Another demo or lite sites are provided for another 29

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<sup>31</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.khanacademy.org/>

languages.

*Coursera*<sup>32</sup>. *Coursera* is a US MOOC founded in 2012, which works with universities and other organizations like Google or MoMA to offer online courses, certifications, and degrees in a very broad category of subjects. Participants can join Coursera for free, but they have to pay for certificates, grades or submitting assignments. The pricing system ranges from courses having a one-time fee, a monthly subscription fee for a specialization set of courses, or a yearly subscription fee. In October 2020, Coursera offered 38 courses in the category of Intercultural Communication, including specific courses as Conversational English Skills, Mediation and Conflict Resolution, or Write Professional Emails in English.

*Iversity*<sup>33</sup>. *Iversity* is a European-based MOOC platform founded in Berlin, and now is part of the Springer Nature global publisher. Universities that offer a course on the Iversity platform have the option to award participants with ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), which are recognized by any European Higher Education Institution. Paying gives participants a chance to gain a certificate that awards ECTS credits, but enrolment in Iversity courses is free. Available languages are English, German, French, Bengali, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish.

*Udemy*<sup>34</sup>. This MOOC has about 130,000 courses available ranging from career-focused subjects as finance, programming or marketing to courses on music, personal development or health. On [udemy.com](https://www.udemy.com), this huge variety of courses is organized in the following categories: Business, Design, Photography, Development, Marketing, IT & Software, Personal Development. Some courses are free, but earning certificates requires paying a fee. Instructor Q&A and Instructor direct message options are also included in paid packages. A simple search on the website with the term “intercultural communication” listed 4,972 results, and, based on a fast assessment, a course of 1.5 – 2 hours costs about 15 USD.

*edX*<sup>35</sup>. *edX* was founded by Harvard and MIT for providing online courses, and it partners with other big American universities like Berkeley or Cornell. The topics range from data sciences to arts and humanities. Most courses are free, but certificates and permission to submit assignments requires paying a fee between 50 and 300 USD.

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<sup>32</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.coursera.org/>

<sup>33</sup> More information you can find on: <https://iversity.org/>

<sup>34</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.udemy.com/>

<sup>35</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.edx.org/>

## 1.6. Translation applications

*Google Translate.* Google Translate is a free translation tool developed by Google, and it is open source. It means that the entire community can contribute to it. It can provide a word's pronunciation, has an incorporated dictionary, and gives you the possibility of listening to the translation, but its main function refers to the translation of a text, written words translation, image translation, and website or documents translation. There is also a function for conversation in different languages that instantly translates spoken language into the selected foreign language. There is also a mobile application translation, available in offline mode, named "Tap to Translate". More information about how you can use this application you can find on Google<sup>36</sup>.

One of the biggest issues is that accuracy tends to decrease with longer texts. There are some grammatical errors, and also the meaning of some expressions is not always conveyed in translation. There are a lot of technical articles detailing the limits of this application.<sup>37</sup>

This tool can be helpful in conversations between students and teachers or students who speak different languages. For an extended discussion, the translation accuracy will be lower, but it can be useful for individual words, or pronunciation. And students can use this to translate a figure during the presentation, or maybe some words, etc. Also, if a student is in the middle of an oral exam, and in a particular moment he/she does not remember some words, he can use the conversation function. Short documents can also be translated, but the translation has to be double-checked. When two students speaking different languages, they can use Tap to translate for more accessible communication. For professional translation, it is better to use other tools, but Google translate can be used as a starting point..

*Reverso context.* This tool includes a dictionary, conjugation of verbs, synonyms and different in different contexts<sup>38</sup>, but only in a limited number of languages. This site can be used by teachers or students when they need a more accurate translation than what Google translate can provide.

*Wordreference.* This tool provides a dictionary, conjugation of verbs and a forum to discuss language topics<sup>39</sup>, but for a limited number of languages. This site can be used by teachers or students when they want to translate at a high level than with Google translate and to ask a

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<sup>36</sup> More information you can find on: <https://translate.google.com/intl/en/about/>

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin, Martin (2019). *When and How to Use Google Translate*. Teach You Backwards. Retrieved from (<https://www.teachyoubackwards.com/how-to-use-google-translate/#dictionary>)

<sup>38</sup> More information you can find on: <https://context.reverso.net/translation/>

<sup>39</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.wordreference.com/>

question related to grammar, or contextual meanings.

*Linguee*. This tool consists in a dictionary accessible through a search engine and provides words and expressions in different languages. The meaning of the searched words can be analyzed in different contexts. You can find specialized terms and idioms in different domains<sup>40</sup>, but for a limited number of languages. There is also a function for document translation, only available for the most widely used languages. This site can be used by teachers or students when they want to translate professional expressions.

*The Free Dictionary*. This tool is a free dictionary that includes dictionaries from various professional areas (medical, legal and financial) and a collection of idioms, acronyms, quotes<sup>41</sup>, but is only available for a few languages.

*Magic Search*<sup>42</sup>. It is a search engine that combines various dictionaries or translation platforms for different languages. Sometimes, it can be challenging to manage all the pages and the application tends to run slowly. This site can be used by teachers or students when they want to improve their knowledge of a language, to find the right sense of a word, or to translate professional idioms.

*Youtube translation*<sup>43</sup>. YouTube includes a function that translates videos. You can add your subtitles, or you can run pre-existing subtitles. *Seeing* the captions that makes translation easier. In general, videos in English or other common languages have been incorporated. Also, only for common languages YouTube can provide automated translations. The process of adding subtitles to videos can be challenging, but there are some instructions. The site can be used by teachers or students when they want to make a video presentation and translate it to other languages.

*Powerpoint translation*<sup>44</sup>. PowerPoint for Microsoft 365 can transcribe a presentation and display captions in the original language, or subtitles in another language. This can help accommodate members of the audience who have trouble understanding the language when spoken, and for whom subtitles might be easier to understand, especially if they are translated. This tool is only available for a few languages and is not that accurate, but that is expected to

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<sup>40</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.linguee.com/>

<sup>41</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

<sup>42</sup> More information you can find on: <https://magicsearch.org/>

<sup>43</sup> More information you can find on: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/4792576?hl=en>

<sup>44</sup> More information you can find on: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/present-with-real-time-automatic-captions-or-subtitles-in-powerpoint-68d20e49-aec3-456a-939d-34a79e8ddd5f>

improve over time. The majority of the presentations made by teachers or students are in PowerPoint. Because of that, it can be an essential tool for education in a multicultural environment.

### 1.7. Databases with topics to be addressed in global learning

*Gapminder Foundation Hans Rosling*<sup>45</sup>. *The Gapminder Foundation* aims to increase the level of knowledge with a fact-based worldview that everyone can understand and reduce knowledge gaps between different populations regarding significant aspects of global development such as Environment, Health, Energy, Gender, Economy, Demography and Governance.

This foundation built a website where they publish different materials and tools for teaching in the classroom. They are free and very easy to use, oftentimes presenting innovative and simple ways to explain some facts that are hard to accept. All materials are in English, but some can also be found in Swedish and Dutch. Their formats range from text to video, making information accessible to anyone. Some materials are created especially for the teachers, while others are addressed to the general public.

Besides materials, the website provides an interactive and easy to use database with a friendly interface. Irrespective of the teacher's training, this database can be used to comparatively illustrate some aspects of different countries across the world. These resources can be helpful in breaking down barriers between cultures by illustrating similarities and differences between countries. In this way, we can create a pretext for dialogue and interaction.

*WorldLifeExpectancy*<sup>46</sup>. It is one of the largest global health and life expectancy databases in the world. As with the Gapminder Foundation, their purpose is to educate the population regarding health. The data is presented in a user-friendly way via tables or maps. All these are organized according to different health indicators. There are also some articles related to the same topic, but only in English. The teachers can find indicators for different countries of the world. Because they are presented in an attractive way, they can be used as a topic of debate for students from different countries.

Eurostat<sup>47</sup>. Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union and provides high-quality statistics and data on Europe. The data is presented in a user-friendly way via tables,

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<sup>45</sup> More information you can find on: <https://www.gapminder.org/>

<sup>46</sup> More information you can find on: <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/>

<sup>47</sup> More information you can find on: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>



graphs or maps, with a short description of the variables shown in a table. All these are organized according to nine statistical themes corresponding to specific EU policies. This site contains a lot of information, and thus its navigation requires some experience. The information is in English, French and German and only refers to European countries.

Regardless of what kind of course they teach, teachers can find indicators for different countries of Europe, presented in a way that is attractive for the students. The data can provide a conversation starting point, allowing us to overcome communication barriers between students with different cultural backgrounds.

*World Bank*<sup>48</sup>. World Development Indicators (WDI) is the World Bank's compilation of comparable cross-country data on development. It is a complex site with indicators and articles organized on different themes (poverty and inequality, people, environment, states and markets, economy and global links). It provides free and open access to global development data. The site has different language versions (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Chinese), and the data is presented in a user-friendly way via tables or graphs. Because it contains a lot of information and is very complex, the site is not very easy to navigate for new users, but, after a while, anyone can manage it.

Regardless of what kind of course they teach, the teachers can find indicators for different countries of the world, presented in a way that should be attractive for the students. The data can provide a conversation starting point, allowing us to overcome communication barriers between students with different cultural backgrounds. Also, the site contains a lot of indicators from almost any field, and so teacher are guaranteed to find some indicators related to their area of interest.

*UNdata (A world of information)*<sup>49</sup>. It is a database for the global user community compiled by the United Nations (UN) statistical system and other international agencies. The data is presented via tables and covers a wide range of statistical themes (agriculture, crime, communication, development assistance, education, energy, environment, finance, gender, health, labour market, manufacturing, national accounts, population and migration, science and technology, tourism, transport and trade). This data can be downloaded as a table in pdf and csv formats. The site only shows data as a table and some indicators lack data for all of the countries or all of the years. Finding a specific indicator on the site is not always intuitive, but the data is

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<sup>48</sup> More information you can find on: <http://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>49</sup> More information you can find on: <http://data.un.org/>

often useful in complementing the information found on other sites.

*Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMUS)*<sup>50</sup>. IPUMS provides census and survey data from around the world. It can be used to make a comparative analysis of data. Data and services are available free of charge. By comparison to the sites mentioned above, this site indexes the results of survey from different countries of the world, on various topics. It contains a disproportionately large amount of data from the USA compared to other countries, some of which is also old. Moreover, registration is required, and you have to provide an explanation for the way in which you want to use the data. Finding a specific indicator on the site is not always intuitive, but it can complement the information found on other sites, mainly because of the census and survey data.

*Other tools and resources for intercultural learning (wiki, blogs, forums)*. Forums are useful for sharing ideas, discussing, and evaluating perspectives, selecting information, reasoning, inferring on specific topics, comparing various interpretations, internalizing concepts, evaluating and synthesizing different positions, and gaining a deeper understanding (Biasutti, 2017).

Blogs are primarily a medium for reinforcing what the student has learned rather than influencing performance related outcomes (Strich, Mayer and Friedler, 2019).

Learners in a wiki-based group project environment perceived presence through social interaction with their peers and instructors to improve the learning experience and outcome (Luo and Chea, 2020).

Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) highlighted the different characteristics of forums, blogs and wikis in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1. Some characteristics of wiki, blogs and forums. Source: Miyazoe and Anderson, 2010, p. 186.

	<i>Forums</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Wikis</i>
Time orientation	Past and present	Past to present	Present
Presentation	Threaded	Reverse chronological	Final product
Structure	Controlled by moderator	Controlled by author	Open
Administrators	One/many	One	Many
Editing	Not allowed	By creator	By many
Consciousness orientation	Process	Process	Product
Work mediation	Collective	Individual	Collective
Activity orientation	Exchange	Express	Change

<sup>50</sup> More information you can find on: <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>

Mood-relevant  
orientation

Cooperative

Individual

Collaborative

## 2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the tools used in a multicultural environment

At the end of the course, it is useful for teachers to see if the tools they use have been successful in developing intercultural skills such as transmitting knowledge about different cultural backgrounds or establishing interactions. Also, they can establish which of the digital tools best correspond to which specific type of knowledge sharing/transfer/collaboration and contribute to developing Intercultural competences.

In other words, you have to measure *the usability of these tools and their degree of contribution to the development of intercultural competences*. For Sokolovski (2016), *usability* can be measured by using the following indicators:

- more efficient to use - it takes less time to accomplish a particular task;
- the ease of learning - operation can be learned by observing the object;
- more satisfying to use;
- learnability (intuitive navigation, easy to learn);
- the efficiency of use (the GUI is easily used for several actions);
- memorability (are the actions memorable?);
- few and non-catastrophic errors (the user is not blamed for a mistake)
- subjective satisfaction (overall opinion of the user for the GUI, and enjoyable to use).

Based on these indicators, you can use questionnaires for measuring the usability of some platforms, applications, software in the process of learning in a multicultural environment. For pedagogical purposes, we illustrate this point with some examples:

1. How fast are the following platforms/applications/software/databases in performing specific tasks? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not fast at all, and 5 is very fast)
2. How easy/difficult was it for you to work with the following platforms/applications/software/databases? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very difficult and 5 very easy)
3. How much did you enjoy working with the following platforms/applications/software/databases? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very much)
4. How effective do you think the following platforms/applications/software/databases are in the learning process? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all efficient and 5 is very)

efficient)

Based on research described by the literature (Çiftçi, 2016), some dimensions of *the degree of contribution of digital tools to the development of intercultural competences* would be:

- the overall satisfaction with digital tools and intercultural learning (valuable and enjoyable in terms of cultural exchanges) (Lee, 2011);
- increased knowledge toward both own and target culture (to contrast and compare cultures, knowledge, interest and awareness);
- varied levels of intercultural communicative competence development (communication between different cultures over appropriate technology).

The following questions might be used for assessment:

1. How efficient do you think the following platforms/applications/software/databases are in learning in a multicultural environment? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all efficient and 5 is very efficient)
2. How useful do you think the following platforms/applications/software/databases are in learning in a multicultural environment? (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very much)
3. To what extent have the following platforms/applications/software/databases led to an increase in the knowledge of other cultures? (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very large)
4. To what extent have the following platforms/applications/software led to an increase in the degree of interaction with students from other cultures? (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very large)
5. To what extent have the following platforms/applications/software led to an increase in the understanding of other cultures? (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very large)
6. To what extent have the following platforms/applications/software led to an increase in interest in other cultures? (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very large)
7. To what extent have the following platforms/applications/software allowed the comparison of different cultures? (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very large)
8. To what extent have the following platforms/applications/software led to a change in

attitudes towards students from other cultures? (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is very large)

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## **MODULE IV. Social inclusion in the university**

**4.1. Features of social inclusion in higher education**

**4.2. Areas of social inclusion within the university**

**4.3. Factors of policy-making strategies for social inclusion**

## 4.1. FEATURES OF SOCIAL INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by Buckinghamshire New University, United Kingdom<sup>51</sup>

### Abstract

Social inclusion is what all societies strive to achieve. The process of having a cohesive society where everyone can work together and respect each other takes time. Universities have their part to play in relation to social inclusion as they are an environment where everyone can achieve the same goal. The process of transforming the university environment into a more social inclusive society can be achieved via legislation, policy and procedural norms. However, this study shows that despite some of the challenges, an advance to a democratic and comprehensive development of the university can be established. Universities are vessels for change and progress in society in relation to people working together for a common good. These can progress towards improving policies for boosting the level of social inclusion by ensuring that they have dedicated staff possessing the knowledge and know necessary for this process to formalize and institutionalize within their systems.

*Keywords:* social inclusion strategies, social inclusion plan, self-assessment tools of social inclusion

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## 4.1. Features of social inclusion in higher education

The following section focuses on improvement strategies helping universities address the following areas:

- providing guidance to improve inter-cultural skills;
- controlling uneven attendance and drop-out;
- scrutinizing attendance;
- improving capabilities to guarantee advanced prospects for students;
- improving university-students and university-community communication and collaboration;
- collaborating with minorities' initiatives and associations;
- gathering data on existing support groups;
- be aware of the integration of students from socially diverse backgrounds in university and with local people.
- creating opportunities for volunteering within communities.

### 1. Strategies

When universities perform quality evaluation, a local development process can be maintained. A continued process can be obtained through a *development plan for Social Inclusion*, which should be in place for every university.

There are several ways to plan this development, however, it is central that the community assumes an appropriate method. All lecturers and professors are to be included into the university wide expansion planning, during preparation and implementation. It is important that the implementation phase be overlooked and monitored.

Each university is in a different phase in the process of the preparation procedure and likely to have a different idea on which is the best way to develop a comprehensive community. This, in turn, influences the means by which the university community is to be involved with the preparation activities. There are a few issues that may be taken into account:

- evaluation of the condition of the disadvantaged scholars;
- assessment of existing academic exercise;
- making a development plan;
- producing a comprehensive agenda of application;
- assessment;

- response on results.

The starting procedure contains an evaluation of the state of the art and an analysis of the university's position. Until now, the university community might have been involved in a department/faculty evaluation that emphasizes the degree of social inclusion of the students. The evaluation may offer evidence on the number of students from minority groups, and should mention distinct encounters, for example the number of dropouts, information on attendance and number of students joining the education events. The assessment of the current state should be able to recognize the educational and social requirements of the students and establish precise aims to stimulate their social inclusion.

This phase requires strong collaboration and should be sustained by senior management and staff via staff development initiatives. It requires the participation of members of the minority groups, for example the delegates of local communities or non-governmental organizations.

## **2. Preparing the plan**

The plan hints at a greater understanding of the limitations for social inclusion. Universities shall discover their assets and accomplishments; they may notice parts that need improvement and look for preliminary upgrading. Those requirements acknowledged by drafting the action plan may be challenged by the university. Using the plan as an instrument for the entire institution may help in involving all representatives of the university in different parts of the process. Therefore, the university may simultaneously work on a number of projects while distinctive units work on a diversity of duties, which accelerates things.

Some universities might have original action plans in place, and may, consequently, be prepared for a wider preparation tactic. After the action plan is prepared, university members are involved in implementation. The documentation of roles, achievement standards and the period using the action plan will make it easier for the university to put the strategies into practice. Those significant areas will be addressed first, as the university culture is becoming more comprehensive. New problems that require consideration may appear during operation. Therefore, the implementation should be flexible in order to be able to answer to varying conditions that they may encounter.

Directions for improving university development are as follows:

- educator preparation about discrimination and human rights;
- university provision for registration and attendance in obligatory learning;

- anticipation of dropout;
- intercultural undertakings;
- university-parents relations;
- after-hours help;
- collaboration among social aid services, healthcare, psychologists and university.

*A university pledge as a supplementary instrument* - it can be used within a university context as an additional developmental tool, to create a working programme for gradual evolution or reinforcement. An initiative that strongly confirms an ethos of inclusion must encourage:

- optimistic and helpful relations where students have the feeling they are appreciated.
- an environment where students feel protected and safe.
- displaying behavior that encourages effective learning within the University.
- delicate and receptive positions to student requirements.

### 3. Classroom development for social inclusion

Many investigations on inter-ethnic relationships showed that optimistic interaction and expressive collaboration may improve the course of individualization and constructive interactions among people from various cultural groups. Research demonstrated that contact among inter-ethnic individuals is not sufficient and people should perform common tasks together. The social condition is mandatory to be included - optimistic contact between group members within a trusty environment. Some crucial conclusions for classroom improvement:

- facilitation of contact and communication among individuals from different groups is vital; it can involve e.g., games, interactive learning.
- create opportunities to work on common projects to stimulate cooperation.

Professors that have experience of teaching in diverse classroom environments are often conscious of what advantages the collaborative and supportive strategies can bring, and therefore they need to be qualified to make use of these approaches for improving communication and collaboration *within and between ethnic groups*.

When planning the lectures, think of:

- which subjects would improve communication and collaboration?
- which subjects to avoid?
- how to link the socializing events with the course content?
- if class has a small number of students, which is the best way to do it?

#### 4. Important approaches to encourage social inclusion

The learning methods that use interactive training and where the learning is centered on the student are well known to be very effective. Therefore, using these methods for improving collaboration and contact between students is advisable. They will develop a feeling of fitting into the community. These types of activities are vital, provided that they:

- create an optimistic, helpful situation where scholars can talk freely, without being afraid, about their thoughts and observations;
- highlight the important function of language in allowing learners to develop and understand what they perceive;
- act responsibly towards emotional issues;
- allow students to talk and to develop empathy towards each other.

*Intercultural schooling.* Intercultural education aims to improve diversity and stimulate students in showing regard for being different. Intercultural education promotes bringing together students of diverse cultural backgrounds as a preliminary point. First, the students should be stimulated to cherish their mother language and ethnicity and, at the same time, be open to different cultures. Second, in order to improve consciousness of cultural differences, some classroom events may be used, especially in classes such as arts and history. Third, particular events may be used to tackle the student's experiences. They may include assignments that involve work on stories and evidence; interrogating and doing presentations on various issues.

*Project-based education.* The curriculum focuses on skills and competences, being based on ideas like boosting inclusion, cohesive and clear teaching. Learning-by-doing is often shown as an effective teaching method, because, besides knowledge, it can build skills and attitudes. Project-based education also addresses the issues that are stated in the curriculum, motivating a strong connection between different domains and a diverse educational approach.

Compared to the classical study approach, the role of the educator is significantly different. The teacher should be a facilitator throughout the teaching process. Students should follow the general rules given by the teacher, but they should get to decide the exact way to do it. Therefore, asking is more important than answering. The teachers must motivate students to collaborate, offer their support and feedback and be mindful of their observations.

*Peer mentoring.* A peer mentoring institutional program is a framework established within the university and supported by the university in which volunteer students provide

assistance to colleagues facing various barriers which prevent them from being successful (e.g. lack of family support and learning conditions and resources, language issues, arrival from another University with different requirements, etc.). Engaging in peer mentoring is beneficial for the mentor and the student. For students, the benefits are:

- a better attitude towards the institution, peers and community;
- aptitude and self-confidence;
- better grades and academic achievement.

Professors may see improvements such as:

- a better connection with the institution;
- confidence;
- compassion;
- skills for relational communication and conflict mitigation;
- building relations within the wider community.

The coaching helps the development of individual skills, knowledge and work performance. Though the process is mainly carried out one on one, the members can be presented with chances to take co-operative actions.

*Complementary actions (extra curriculum).* Complementary actions are a significant component of social inclusion of disadvantaged student groups. Out of university activities may be planned through education centres, NGOs, etc. Outdoor activities, trips, art-related activities, acting recitals, co-operative events with parents must be included in the social experiences of deprived background students, as they promote enjoyable interaction with other students. A great perspective can be provided through exercising and artistic activities. These activities improve originality and intercultural education, create prospects for group collaboration, good-natured conversation and interaction. This is a good occasion for the students to share their cultural values.

Establishing strong links with university and community partners is a vital component in supporting the education of minority students. An effective institution promotes a cooperative working environment, such as links with community initiatives, education centres, comprising minority students.

There is evidence which demonstrates that students' results have improved when the collaboration between family and university is good. The participation of parents, their connection with the institution is vital for successful course attendance and graduation. Parental

participation may be considered a fact alongside self-motivation and the need to do better within one's community. If a student has problems at school, it is vital to improve interaction with the student's support group to help with the identification of the problem and the solution. In the case of international students, separation from their family is often a source of discomfort. When students have a limited support framework, it is imperative to guarantee that they are able to get help inside and outside ethnic groups.

An initial step for promoting more care and community participation is to acknowledge the diversity within the community and the wealth of experience and knowledge which can be harnessed by the institution. People from various communities must not be considered as a harmonized group. For many students, separation and absence of help are important factors that put them at risk. If students are experiencing complications at university, the institution must have in place a policy and procedures to help integrate minority students into their establishment.

*Fostering access to education and university attendance.* The problems of erratic presence and dropout call for comprehensive university rules, as these issues cannot be resolved by educators themselves. The university must highlight the access to schooling for all students and propose approaches to stop school dropout. The policies preferred by the university community must be described within the development strategy. In case the dropout prevention team needs to conduct a conversation with the student who left university, using the following instructions: detect the circumstance, formulate inquiries, define deductions and recommend solutions.

Successful strategies recommended by schools should:

- address trouble students to the university facilitator for rebuilding interaction with parents;
- arrange attractive actions for students who left courses;
- establish consultations that help students' parents to convince those students that abandoned courses to re-join university;
- propose events for students that dropped out and returned.

*Collaboration with facilitators and education centres.* Universities cannot handle the learning requirements of minority and at-risk students by themselves. Therefore, collaborations of university with other establishments are essential. The involvement of parents in course-related activities can be done through collaboration with appropriate community associations. Approaching a collaborative attitude is helpful because it may encourage contributions from other interested parts of the society. NGOs can bring know-how regarding the needs of minority



groups and on how to approach the issues; NGOs can also help improve cooperation with different interested parties. The number of interested parties is correlated to the effectiveness of the actions and dissemination. There are examples of NGOs that can help universities in their endeavor. Universities and their personnel can benefit from:

- social facilitation, comprising moderators
- education centre provision;
- additional lessons (e.g., language, sport activities);
- special events;
- associations;
- cultural activities and trips;
- sportive;
- info facilities.

*University mediators.* Mediators can be found in student support centers or similar structures, being in permanent communication with the institution, and can provide support to both student and families. Mediators have information on students and their families, while carry out the following tasks: ensure students are supported from admission to graduation by the university body, ensure the retention of students within the organisation, provide a support network to assist and aid the students throughout their journey with the institution.

## **5. Strengthening social inclusion**

*Towards human rights.* The process of social inclusion is a continuous one, shaped by practices and policies. It is based on a careful positioning in terms of human rights and equivalence. As a result, universities must assume an active position which includes the most important values (optimism and inclusiveness, promoting diversity) to promote social inclusion. Not taking these steps would result in social inclusivity failure and lack of progress.

*Training of trainers.* The training of trainers is an important component of the process. That is because they need to be up to date on social inclusion issues. Teachers may require a special kind of intercultural training. Instructors that deal with minority students face special challenges. These challenges may involve mental obstructions, and necessity of specialized improvement to action pro-actively. Teachers may need to reflect on their feelings and standards, otherwise may need to fight discrimination and the wrong descriptions of society. Universities might deal with apprehensions within groups or discrimination of minority groups. As a result,

trainers should be made aware that it is not sufficient to improve their scholarly abilities. They need to extend their intercultural capabilities and improve professionalism by engaging in extensive training on the subject of social inclusion. This training will help them get the information and comprehension, to further improve abilities for intercultural collaboration.

The training of trainers must include some fundamental subjects that describe the procedures in tangible methods to track progress:

- training on human-rights, social insertion and indiscrimination;
- plans to improve access to learning;
- comprehensive university expansion;
- collaborative and supportive procedures;
- intercultural learning;
- policies to improve interaction and collaboration among interested stakeholders.

*Complete university development.* In a social inclusion process, the administrative and educational parts should balance one another. The development of the university aims to foster social acceptance as well as a strong cooperation between university and the community. A unified university development should aim at improving educational skills to increase social collaboration within ethnic groups. The improvement of classes may yield an improvement of social relations among students, thus promoting a conducive environment for acceptance. Good collaboration between family and university, as well as the participation of the outside community is likely to improve recognition.

*Tools for the University review* might be collected following the points below and the items provided in Table 1 for self-assessment.

#### Data about the university, students and lecturers

- How many students are enrolled in your University?
- How many of them have a minority background?
- How many minority background students are in each class?
- How do you evaluate the collaboration between the centre (if there is one) and the university?
- Did the number of students changed because of immigration recently?
- Is there staff in your university from different ethnic groups?

#### Attendance and dropout

- How many students or minority group students have a chaotic attendance record?
- Are you knowledgeable on the estimated number of minority background students not

attending school?

- How many minority background students have abandoned courses over the last four years?

Results in class

- Average score at course
- Average score of minority background students
- How many minority background students have First degree?

Social Inclusion

- Can you quote the example of an interaction with minority students during supplementary events?
- Did you notice anxieties?
- Did students meet with minority background students outside of course hours?

Academic Staff Training

- How many people in your staff have benefitted from training to improve their teaching in terms of widening participation and social inclusion provision?

Table 1. Self-assessment tool for social inclusion

Key University documents and their communication	Which components of University strategy incorporate a focus on facilitating students to reaching potential?
	How are the principles of equity and diversity reflected in the university's strategy?
	How are the concepts in questions 1 and 2 communicated to students?
Physical Environment	How are the university's premises used to make students welcomed?
Social Environment	How does the university make the induction of new students smoother?
	Which methods are used to guarantee that the needs of students are addressed?
	Which approaches are more effective in making the lectures clearer?
	How to deal with violence and discrimination?
	How to prevent dropout?
	What measures are taken to ensure that ethnic groups are included in special events?
Which criteria is used to assess the importance of different cultures in the university?	

	What kind of support is provided to minority students?
	How is the appropriate collaboration between student and teacher ensured?
	How are students with limited language skills helped?
Educational activities and resources	Which intercultural activity is reproduced in teaching?
	Which activities are most effective in making students acknowledge and benefit from the group?
	What supplementary activities efficiently improve the interaction between students?
	Which approach was used to evaluate the suitability of course content?
Involvement of parents	How will the parents be involved, including minority parents, in University activities?
Cooperation	Which are the actions scheduled to improve collaboration with the interested factors (e.g., facilitators, NGO)?

## 4.2. AREAS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

by Buckinghamshire New University, United Kingdom<sup>52</sup>

### Abstract

The social inclusion process takes time. Transforming universities into a broader social and educational environment cannot be rewarded without binding legal frameworks. International research, however, has shown that, while structural challenges may not seem insurmountable, steps for self-governance and broader university development can be successfully initiated. Universities can opt for a change in their local context and a development process. Strategies can be developed to gradually increase the level of social inclusion in universities by mobilizing university resources and focusing on local opportunities for collaboration. Social inclusion is a competitive concept that identifies the basis for social activism in any society. In theories of assessment of social inclusion, the authors argue that social inclusion should be revised to take care of care. Amendments are needed to emphasize structures, mechanisms, and practices that are subject to socially generated inequalities, to include insights from care theories, and to provide an adequate assessment of caregiver social inclusion.

*Keywords:* social inclusion, care, social activism

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## 4.2. Areas of social inclusion within the university

### 1. Why consider issues of diversity in the university curriculum?

- Provide high quality university education to all
- Expand participation
- Meet the needs of different student groups.
- Create an inclusive, relevant and accessible series of contributions.
- Equip students to demonstrate target group attraction and retention more and more helps achieve different environments and strategic goals of the university.

*Strategies for local development.* The local development process can be sustained when universities constantly evaluate their quality plans for improvement. A process of continuous improvement is a key feature of the university process and can be achieved by constantly updating the university development plan. University planning for a situation that is broadly participatory can be integrated into its development planning and is already taking place in many locations. There are other approaches to university development planning. It is important for the university community to take a proactive approach.

*Dimensions in diversity.* Diversity has a wide range of identity characteristics and always includes age, dependency or care responsibilities, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and motherhood (adoption, nutrition, religion or belief, gender, socioeconomic background), social membership, transgender sexuality.

*Equality, diversity and inclusion in the university process.* The similarity and diversity of inclusion issues can sometimes be seen as something in addition to the basic function. Integrating the equivalence reflection of existing processes at the qualification and module levels is an integral part of the function of these processes and will add real value by improving decision-making quality. The following guidelines directly address this core curriculum broadening process.

*Equality management structures.* Equality Diversity and Admissions Provides guidance on student-led and strategic positioning of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the Universal Institutional Equality Objectives Group with ideas and advice from sponsors. The team is responsible for the Fixed Year Strategy that drives the objectives and objectives of the Equality Proposal Scheme.

*Managing and Equality and Diversity in the University.* Universities have implemented

various provisions to emphasize equality and diversity in university processes and to ensure that they fulfill their statutory equality duties. Universities must manage and mainstream equality and diversity:

- ✓ conferring and engaging, developing inclusive policy
- ✓ developing staff
- ✓ resources sharing and widening participation
- ✓ planning and reporting performance
- ✓ monitoring equality of opportunity
- ✓ providing accessible information and services and publishing information
- ✓ working with equality organizations

All academic staff should be involved in the university development plan, both in its drafting phase and in its implementation phase. The application of the University Development Plan should be systematically assessed and monitored. Each university community is at various stages of the development planning process, and there are various ideas on the most appropriate way to develop an inclusive community. Figure 1 shows the associated responsibilities.

	Boards of study	Qualification teams	Module teams
Environmental Scanning	Create a curriculum that attracts a diverse student body		
Design and specification		Consider issues of equality, diversity and inclusion at an early stage of qualification and module development and document decisions clearly	
Approval	Use qualification and module specification guidance to assess specifications before final approval.		
Production			Ensure the language, content and imagery used reflects the diversity of culture, identities, and experiences in the UK, Europe and internationally
Post launch	Monitor student registration, completion and attainment of different groups on qualifications and modules and respond to results of monitoring		

Fig. 1. Responsibilities in university development plan

## 2. Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

Universities expand access to higher education by placing social justice and equality of opportunity at the center of everything they do. Institutions are committed to providing opportunities for academic success to every potential student who aspires to achieve their aspirations.

*Gender Action Plan.* Universities must come up with a gender action plan. Institutions need to determine how to address these imbalances strategically and how they can contribute to a more gender-balanced student population in the future.

*Inclusion.* The theme of admission is activated through the teaching, learning and research within the university, where all the elements are closely intertwined. Inclusion in this context means a wide range of socio-technological approaches that allow for the independence and participation of all learners and reduce and eliminate barriers to specific groups. It promotes values and opportunities for diversity and equality, especially in relation to disability, gender, age and ethnicity.

*Drafting a university development plan.* Universities should recognize their strengths and achievements; they will find areas to look out for and look for starting points to improve. Planning should include a level of access for students at risk and with disabilities and demonstrate continued improvement in this area. Current and future disabled students have a pending legal obligation to make fair changes to access as wide a range of PAs as possible. The advantage of using a holistic organizational method as a tool for the action plan is the integration of the entire university community management into the various aspects of the procedure. Academics can work in a number of fields while different teams work on different tasks and focus on planning things to happen quickly. The vast majority of universities already have their own action plans in place, so be prepared for a comprehensive planning approach.

*Development of new fields.* The choice of a new field course series should be based on market assessment, and this assessment should include the impact on the university's diversity, broad participation and ability to meet accessibility objectives.

*Recruitment Market Planning.* An enrollment plan can be developed not only for single-course courses and modules, but also for the curriculum as a whole. Student enrollment plans should take into account the current demographic profile of students at the university. Low representation can be addressed by ensuring that advertising addresses the issue of diversity in advance, targeting both the content and location of the communication.



*Qualification level guidance.* The equivalence and diversity of the new or revised components of the qualifications that require approval need to be considered. As part of this situation, a qualified academic team should identify the difficulties that students with disabilities or students at risk may encounter at a meeting of essential learning standards and prepare an outline that can be implemented. In addition to qualifying, special teams should conduct a special analysis to ensure adequate avenues for at-risk and disabled students to complete their qualifications.

*External assessment.* Once the university has approved a course for the product, an external assessor should be appointed for review. If the team portfolio is not particularly different, appointing an external appraiser will provide an opportunity to address this. In addition, the assessor should receive a brief overview of the feedback that the module intends to provide to the team on issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

*Creating module materials.* Diversity can refer to a wide range of identities and cultural features. Age, ethnicity, disability, gender, pregnancy and motherhood, responsibilities of care and dependence, religion and belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic and educational background.

The template presented in figure 2 includes fifteen questions to help expand and explain on these brief descriptions.

W – Writing in the minds of the audience

O – Opportunities to share different student experiences through drawing

R – Representation through different lenses

D – Diversity as a subject

*Review team.* The review team should try ensuring that critical readers selected for review and feedback are chosen from as many different pools as possible, and that they can include both the form and the content and comment on how it can be accessed. A brief description given to critical readers should clearly ask the reader to provide feedback and suggestions on issues related to the language, inclination, avoidance, and diversity representation of the module'

Opportunity	Good practice identified	Issues to be addressed
<p><b>Writing with the audience in mind (relates to 'Can all students access the curriculum?' and 'Do students see themselves reflected?')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any use of idiom, exclusive cultural reference or colloquialism?</li> <li>• Is there any use of English language inappropriate to the level of study?</li> <li>• Are there any assumptions about a shared lived experience of students?</li> <li>• Are there any case studies, activities or material that reinforces stereotypes?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Opportunities for exchange by drawing on different student experiences (relates to 'Do students see themselves reflected?' and 'Are students equipped to participate in a global and diverse world?')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there activities that allow students to use their own experiences and to share ideas and experiences to enrich the understanding of other students?</li> <li>• Are there activities and material that create respect and an appreciation of the value of difference?</li> <li>• Are there activities or material that makes students aware of how their experience and viewpoints are shaped by their cultural, historical, geographical, economic and other contexts?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Representation through different lenses (relates to 'Do students see themselves reflected?' and 'Are students equipped to participate in a global and diverse world?')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do case studies reflect diversity?</li> <li>• Is there material from different UK contexts where appropriate?</li> <li>• Is there material from other countries, including outside of Europe?</li> <li>• Is there a diversity of views expressed in material or if an author expresses a viewpoint from a particular background or experience is that acknowledged and any limitations that creates discussed?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Diversity as the subject matter (relates to 'Are students equipped to participate in a global and diverse world?')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there opportunities created for direct discussion of age, culture, disability, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation or other aspects of identity?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities created for direct discussion of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, etc?</li> </ul>		
<b>Person completing</b>	<b>Module</b>	<b>Date</b>

Fig. 2. Reflection points on University Development plan for inclusion and diversity

s materials.

*Recruitment of students.* The information provided to describe a qualification or module can influence the choices students make. Completing accessibility statements is important. The text should be written in a positive way. Transparency and clarity enable students with future and present disabilities to make informed academic choices. Universities should address specific issues of equality and diversity in faculty and therefore help attract students from a variety of backgrounds. In cases where specific qualifications or modules may not appeal to certain groups, for example the curriculum may not attract specific ethnic groups or attract people of one gender, it may be helpful to draw on a qualifying or module that challenges students.

*Boards of Study.* The Board of Studies is an organizational structure that is responsible

for ensuring standards and the quality in the development and distribution of curricula. They must therefore consider the success or otherwise of integration, diversity and inclusion integration modules. Further work will be done to provide additional guidance on identifying areas of concern regarding addition for involvements at the equality, diversity and module levels.

*Curriculum design - examples for the Qualification Specification.* In Appendix 1 suggestive examples of Qualification Specification are presented.

Fellows of the university should be involved in the implementation process by developing an action plan. Priority areas are considered first with the gradual incorporation of university culture as the focus is on developments in these fields and other areas of intercultural affairs. Problems with the implementation of the course series attention is required. Implementation must therefore be flexible to respond to changing circumstances and conform to the mission and policies that embody the intercultural perspective of the faculties.

Suggested issues for enhancing university development are: teacher training on human rights and discrimination, prevention of shedding, intercultural projects, university- parents links, after-hours support, university support for enrolment and attendance, classroom development for social inclusion.

*Classroom development for social inclusion.* Various research studies on people with positive ethnic relationships have shown that positive relationships, meaningful collaboration can enhance personalization and positive relationships between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The socio-psychological observation that is widely cited about interpersonal or interpersonal relationships states that “relationships alone are not enough - people need meaningful common tasks.” It is equally important to consider social conditions, as positive team relationships require trust, security, and equality for all involved. These key findings can be used to develop classrooms:

- It is important to activate relationships and communication between students from different groups through collaborative learning methods, social learning opportunities, sports, etc.
- Providing openings to work on common tasks is equally important when it comes to small group work, cooperative learning settings, or project planning.

### **3. Key strategies for promotion social inclusion in the classroom**

The main strategies for promoting social inclusion in the classroom are personal

strategies that can help all students in the classroom generate knowledge in a sustainable manner while promoting an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. Collaborative teaching methods can be of great help in supporting students to develop an interest in participating in the educational process. If lecturers are aware of these opportunities for student group mixing, the use of collaborative teaching and learning methods can be combined with interpersonal and collaborative efforts.

The benefits of collaborative and centralized methods are widely accepted. These methods are primarily useful in enhancing intercultural relationships and collaboration if teachers organize collaboration in mixed groups of students. Students learn to work together as individuals and develop a sense of belonging to a learning community. Predetermines activities are important as they:

- build a positive, supportive environment in which students can express themselves honestly without fear and talk about their ideas and observations;
- emphasizes the key role of language in helping students adapt to their world and develop an understanding of what they practice and observe;
- deal with emotional issues safely and in an age-appropriate way;
- allow students to discuss and understand real life situations and develop empathy for others.

#### **4. Intercultural education across the curriculum**

These approaches, designed as events or intercultural projects, are used to explore language in many contexts, including language education, curriculum teaching and learning, social work, conflict resolution, language policy, digital intervention communication, social media, language, and globalization. The aims are to enhance awareness of diversity and respect for differences between cultures in education. It uses diversity in classroom cultures as a starting point for showing similarities and differences.

Students can be confident to celebrate their own home language and culture and to be open to the experiences of other cultures. Linguistic and cultural diversity can be expressed through labels and signs in the respective languages.

Multi-curriculum classroom activities can be used to raise awareness of cultural diversity. In general education, students can develop their community skills and their speaking and listening skills by debating, presenting and communicating relevant issues. Teaching languages can provide students with texts for reading such as newspaper articles, autobiographies, diaries,

articles and pamphlets. Some activities can address students' experiences and life stories. Those intercultural projects may include working to write stories and accounts on migration, interviews and presentations on relevant issues.

*Providing additional tutoring and learning and teaching.* Is the university staff trained on issues related to education enhancement for broader participation and social inclusion funding? In Appendix 2 a self-assessment tool is presented to be used by university staff.

## Appendix 1. Examples of Qualification Specification

Curriculum Fit and Rationale For the Qualification Specification	Question prompts	Example
Is the qualification inclusive?	How will you make it clear to students that inclusive values are an integral part of the qualification?	<p><b>Internal examples of the sort of wording that could be adapted for use in marketing material to promote to students that the qualification embodies inclusive values</b></p> <p>'The development of any new module within the qualification will anticipate and respond to the needs of students with diverse needs, particularly those with disabilities and other groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act. This will manifest as adjustments to module materials. Activities will be planned that will be inclusive to all students, where possible. Where not possible, alternatives will be produced that enable students to meet the required learning outcomes'</p> <p><b>MSc in Mental Health Science</b></p> <p>'The qualification is fully accessible to all students that meet the entry requirements and there is an alternative entry route for those that are not graduates. The qualification team will ensure there is no bias in the production of module materials associated with the qualification.'</p> <p><b>Master of Business Administration (Leadership Practice) Apprenticeship</b></p> <p>'There are multiple ways that diversity will be embedded so that different student groups can identify more easily with the material and thereby engage to a greater extent.'</p>
Curriculum Fit and Rationale For the Qualification Specification	Question prompts	Example
Do all students see themselves reflected?	How will you challenge disciplinary norms and make the qualification relevant to a diverse student body? For example how will you support those responsible for finding or writing content to draw from sources that reflect a wide range of diversity rather than relying on previous content which may represent a more narrow range?	<p>All module team members and especially authors and critical readers will be briefed on and receive guidance on diversity which will include the university priority groups. In addition, they will be required to work to documentation such as the University Widening Access and Success Strategy <b>Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work</b></p> <p>One of the key challenges that the school faces is that of extending the reach of engineering qualifications to women. The offer of a distance learning opportunity should ensure a gender neutral route and promote diversity. We will try and build a large and active community of female engineering students through a conference and associated forum for International Women in Engineering Day'</p>
	How will you involve a diverse range of students in discussions about the concept and content of the qualification?	The University Business School has a diverse student body and draws from representatives of different groups of students both at the qualification approval Board of Study stage and at Teaching committee stage.
	How will you allow students to bring their own perspectives to learning activities and assessment to ensure equality of engagement?	'Discussion of different cultural experiences, situations and multiple perspectives is an intrinsic part of the qualification' <b>Postgraduate Diploma in Systems Thinking in Practice</b>
Are students equipped to participate in a global and diverse world?	How will content within the qualification aim to develop graduate attributes around global awareness and diversity? How will you ensure that the qualification includes opportunities for an understanding of diversity and allow students to recognise their own potential to make a difference in a rapidly changing international context?	<p>'Through use of examples that show the diversity of people involved in environmental management and technologies. Discussion of global issues is an intrinsic part of the qualification as is the need to study and consider different cultural experiences, situations and multiple perspectives.'</p> <p><b>Postgraduate Diploma in Systems Thinking in Practice</b></p> <p>'Materials have an international focus where appropriate and draw on found materials from diverse sources.'</p>

## Appendix 2. Self-assessment tool for social inclusion

Key University documents and their communication	1	What elements in key University policy documents include a focus on helping each Students towards achieving his or her full potential and developing a positive self-concept?
	2	How are principles of equality and diversity with an explicit inclusive and intercultural perspective reflected in key University policy documents?
	3	How are the ideas above communicated publicly in ways understandable and accessible to all Students?
Physical Environment	4	Where are the cultures and languages of ethnic groups and the University represented in pictures, multilingual signs, notices and other elements in the University's physical environment?
Social Environment	5	What routines are in place for welcoming new students, for assisting them in becoming part of the University and for ensuring that their culture is affirmed in the environment?
	6	What procedures are in place for ensuring that the capabilities and needs of new students are recognized?
	7	What methods are used to make University and classroom routines and expectations explicit in a way understood by all students?
	8	What procedures are in place for dealing with discrimination and violence?
	9	What measures are in place to prevent and address drop-out?
	10	How are special events planned to be as inclusive as possible for all ethnic groups in the University?
	11	How is recognition given to important festivals and special days of all cultures in the University?
	12	How are members of minority ethnic groups supported in developing an affirmative sense of identity?
	13	What consideration is given to ensuring appropriate language and behaviour in interactions between staff and students?
	14	What supportive environment is created for learners with limited knowledge of the official language?
Educational activities and resources	15	How is an intercultural approach reflected in the teaching practice of various subjects?
	16	In what co-operative learning activities are students involved so that they recognize and benefit from each other's strengths?
	17	How do extra-curricular options support positive interactions and <u>co-operation</u> between students?
	18	What method is used for assessing the appropriateness of images and messages contained in courses texts and other resources?

### 4.3. FACTORS OF POLICY-MAKING STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

by Zagreb University, Croatia<sup>53</sup>

#### Abstract

The chapter gives information on the focus and main ideas of the EU policy in the field of education and training that should be relevant for policy-making strategies of social inclusion at a national, regional and local level. Attention is given to the following factors; a) adopting and promoting the common values and general principles of the Union; b) strengthening European Identity; c) providing equal opportunities for every child/student; d) promoting active citizenship, critical thinking, active participation and community engagement; e) promoting intercultural and other competencies; f) offering support to educational staff and teaching, and families; g) using and implementing the Union tools and instruments; h) promoting and developing a European Education Area. EU Member States differ in their implementation of inclusive education policies. National, regional, and local preconditions, and contexts play a role in the processes of policy-making strategies and implementation.

*Keywords:* social inclusion, policy-making strategies, EU policy, recommendations

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### 4.3. Factors of policy-making strategies for social inclusion

#### Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to illustrate the EU policy in the field of education and training relevant for policy-making strategies of social inclusion at a national, regional and local level. Firstly, the chapter describes basic policy documents and recommendations delivered in the last decade by UN, European Union institutions (European Commission, European Council, and Council of Ministers), and the Council of Europe. These documents and recommendations provide the general framework, i.e., common directives and guidelines for planning European and national educational policies in the period until 2030.

Based on the analysis, attention is given to the following factors: a) adopting and promoting common values and general principles of the Union; b) strengthening European Identity; c) providing equal opportunities for every child/student; d) promoting active citizenship, critical thinking, active participation and community engagement; e) promoting intercultural and other competencies; f) offering support to educational staff and teaching, and families; g) using and implementing of the Union tools and instruments; h) promoting and developing a European Education Area. EU Member States differ both in their current implementation of inclusive education policies and previous experience in developing and implementing strategies for social inclusion policies in higher education. In this chapter we also provide examples of intercultural “thin spots” and micro challenges.

#### 1. EU policy framework for social inclusion

Education has been recognized as crucial for building inclusive and cohesive societies. Numerous policy documents and recommendations at an international and EU level are delivered with the aim to encourage stakeholders in education on further specific policy development and implementation. Namely, each EU state “is responsible for its own education and training systems” and should develop its own education policy, and work constantly on its improvement in accordance with European and international regulations. Based on national education policy, other regional and local stakeholders in education, for example universities and education institutions, are invited to develop their own educational policies and approaches to their implementation.

Policy documents and recommendations delivered during last decade by UN, European

Union institutions (European Commission, European Council, and Council of Ministers) and Council of Europe, provide the general framework, i.e., common directives and guidelines for planning educational policies in the period until 2030. The most important documents and recommendations that should be taken into consideration when developing national, regional and local educational policies and strategies are the following:

- *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* (2012)
- *The European Pillar of Social Rights* (2017)
- *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (2008)
- *ET2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (2009)
- *UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015)
- *Paris Declaration* (2015)
- *Education 2030 Agenda* (2017)
- *White Paper on the Future of Europe* (2017)
- *Leaders' Agenda* (2017)
- *Rome Declaration* (2017)
- *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* (2018)
- *Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions* (2018)
- *EU Youth Strategy* (2018)

However, it is important to note that the above list of policy documents and recommendations is not exhaustive, and that education policies correspond to and build on policies from other sectors and areas. Stakeholders in education and practitioners that work on the development of policies and strategies should be aware of the different national, regional and local context, and therefore include other recommendations dealing with ethnic, religious, cultural, economic and other challenges.

Some of the existing and mentioned policy documents and recommendations offer quite specific recommendations for Member states. The focus and (overlapping) ideas of the EU policy in the fields of education and training that should be relevant for policy-making strategies of social inclusion are the following:

- Adopting and promoting the common values and general principles of the Union, i.e., adoption of the common values and general principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (Treaty on European Union 2007/2012, Council Recommendation, 2018). Education, training and culture “are crucial for transmitting and promoting common values and building mutual understanding” (European Commission, 2018).
- Strengthening European Identity, i.e., raising awareness of the origins of the Union, the reasons for its creation and its basic functioning, and improving knowledge of the diversity of the Union and its Member States in order to support mutual respect, understanding and cooperation within and among Member States (Council Recommendation, 2018), and therefore strengthening European identity.

Education in all of its types and at all levels should be used for learning about the European context and common heritage, raising awareness of the “unity and diversity, social, cultural and historical, of the Union and the Member State. This should «strengthen social cohesion and a positive and inclusive common sense of belonging at local, regional, national and Union level»” (Council Recommendation, 2018). Diversity, as a “distinctive feature of Europe” and a “source of innovation and creativity” should help “to unite people across borders”, “promote equality between women and men” and “give a sense of belonging” (European Commission, 2018). Member states should encourage sharing of Europe’s Cultural diversity and shared heritage and increase awareness of the social and economic importance of culture (European Commission, 2018).

- Providing equal opportunities for every child / student, i.e., education in all of its types and at all levels should be used to provide every child with a fair chance and equal opportunities to succeed. All learners should have access to quality education, and support according to their particular needs (having in mind differences in socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic and other background types, and gender), and opportunities to make the transition “between various educational pathways and levels” with “adequate educational and career guidance” (Council Recommendation, 2018). Moreover, equality includes high quality early childhood education and care systems in order “to ensure that all children in Europe can have a good start in life” (European Commission, 2018).
- Promoting active citizenship, critical thinking, active participation and community

engagement, i.e., education in all of its types and at all levels should be used to promote and develop an education environment that would foster active citizenship and ethnics education, tolerant and democratic attitudes and social, and citizenship competences (Council Recommendation, 2018). Special emphasis is placed on the importance of critical thinking and media literacy, “particularly in the use of Internet and social media”. Moreover, there should be opportunities and structures to ensure the active participation of teachers, parents, students and the wider community, as well as to ensure “young people’s democratic participation and an active, critically aware and responsible community engagement” (Council Recommendation, 2018)

- Promoting intercultural and other competences, i.e., attention needs to be given to education in order “to unlock” the full potential of young people. This includes investments in developing skills, competences and knowledge. Attention should be given to language learning, promotion of native language and culture, as well on “skills linked to digitalisation, cybersecurity, media literacy and artificial intelligence” (European Commission, 2018). In developing competences “the most of opportunities offered by new technologies and global trends” should be used (European Commission 2018).
- Ensuring the support to educational staff and teaching, and families, i.e., developing measures that would help to empower educational staff to teach students the common values and general principles of the Union, to train students in critical thinking and media literacy and active citizenship. Also, developing measures that would help to empower educational staff to respond to different learners’ needs. Educational systems should ensure “continued education, exchanges and peer learning and peer counselling activities as well as guidance and mentoring for educational staff” (Council Recommendation, 2018). Support should be given to families and parents.
- Using and implementing of the Union tools and instruments – there are a number of Union funding instruments such as Erasmus+, the European Structural and Investment Funds, Creative Europe, Europe for Citizens, the rights, Equality and Citizenship Program, Horizon 2020, available to Member states in order for them to implement EU and national policies, and to sustain and strength participative and democratic societies. Member states are encouraged to use the available tools and instruments to support learning mobility at all levels of education.
- Promoting and developing a European Education Area – efforts should be given to ensure

learning, studying and doing research across Member States, to speak two languages (in addition to one's mother tongue), and to have a strong sense of European identity (European Commission, 2018). This should include strengthening the educational and cultural dimension within the Union (European Commission, 2018), by promoting cross-border mobility and cooperation in education and training, i.e., developing different forms of partnerships and collaborations between schools and communities.

Member states should work on overcoming “obstacles to mobility and cross-border cooperation” (European Commission, 2018), using the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ Programme, European universities, European Student Card, mutual recognition of diplomas, language learning etc. (European Commission, 2018). The European Education Area should cover “learners of all age groups, whatever their background, and all sector, including early childhood education and care, schools, vocational education and training, higher education and adult learning” (European Commission, 2018).

## **2. Previous experiences in the development and implementation of strategies for social inclusion policies in higher education**

The EU Member States have different experiences in developing and implementing strategies for social inclusion policies in higher education. A group of experts conducted extensive research and in 2019 they published a study on Social Inclusion Policies in Higher Education in EU-2019. We will point out its main conclusions in the text below “of different policies that promote access to higher education, participation and completion by students from under-represented groups, such as low socio-economic or educational backgrounds, ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees. This study formulates a typology of main policy levers used by Member States, regions and/or higher education institutions to stimulate widening participation and social inclusion in higher education” (see Kottmann et al., 2019, p. 5). Furthermore, the authors point out that “the study combines different approaches to enable a structured inventory and review of European, national and institutional policies regarding social inclusion and widening participation in higher education in the EU. Through the review of different policies, the study identifies a typology of policies aimed at enhancing social inclusion in higher education in the EU Member States (EU 28)”. (ibid.) The authors conducted research on eight in-depth case studies describing social inclusion policies in selected countries: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Latvia, The Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland. These cases

introduce the examples of good practices in social inclusion policies in EU Member States. A scan of policy levers applied across the EU Member States demonstrates sixteen (16) typical policy instruments used to promote social inclusion, which can be categorized within the following four main policy types.

*Regulations explicitly governing access and social inclusion.* These cover admission rules, accreditation and prior learning. These are policy measures set up for improving access and completion of HE by underrepresented groups. Their shared characteristic is that they try to facilitate entry into HE or recognition of prior learning by disadvantaged students. This group includes the following policies: a) accreditation criteria for higher education promoting widening participation; b) admission rules targeting specific groups of students; c) rules for the recognition of prior learning. Only one country (Czech Republic) has been identified implementing policy a), while the other two are in place in around half of the countries or more. (ibid. pp. 5-6)

*Financial policies:* these policies are aimed at students and students' families who lack financial resources to support higher education and/or fear that the return of higher education will not compensate for its cost. There are also financial incentives for higher education institutions. Six policies are identified within this group: a) need-based grants; b) merit-based grants; c) family allowances; d) tax-benefits for parents; e) student welfare benefits/support; f) incentives to HE institutions. Need-based grants have been identified in all EU countries while the other policies (with the exception of family allowances) appear in around half or more of the countries. (ibid. p. 6).

*Organizational policies:* these are policies addressing the organization of education, tailoring the programs, their content and their organization to the needs of non-standard students. It includes three different policies: a) improving competencies for students who have a disadvantaged background; b) differentiation/introduction of (new/shorter) study programs; c) more flexible provision of education (e.g., distance education; introduction of new time patterns for study programs; e-learning). All countries have developed organization policies across EU.

*Information policies:* the role of these policies is to inform (prospective) students about programs, funding and other aspects of higher education. It includes four different policies: a) special support for specific groups for study choice; b) special regulations and programs for refugees; c) monitoring of students - access, progress and retention; d) dissemination of knowledge from research on barriers to access HE for disadvantaged students. Around half of the countries or more use policies that fall under a) and b), while all countries are implementing

monitoring policies. (ibid.)

### **3. Identifying national, regional, and local challenges for policy-making strategies and implementation**

Each European member state has a national strategy of higher education and declaratively strives towards more inclusive access and wider participation of underrepresented or vulnerable social groups. National education, science, and technology strategic documents underline the importance of education and science as development priorities and a precondition for long-term social stability, economic progress, and the preservation of cultural identity. However, it is noticed that “countries differ regarding the definition of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups of students and only a few countries have explicit widening participation strategies” (Kottmann et al., 2019, p. 6). To what extent does teaching at academia represent, engages, and empowers underrepresented or disadvantaged groups, students with low socio-economic or educational backgrounds, students with disabilities, ethnic minorities, migrants, and refugees, as well as women and elderly? In which way it encourages, or discourages, them to develop their intercultural competences, and to play an active role in national higher education systems? In which way contemporary European societies might preserve the educational environment which will not “act as a tool for segregation and stigmatization”? (Puzi c 2008, p.393)

European, national and institutional policies, under the auspices of the European Council, emphasize the importance of intercultural education, through its diverse documents, strategies, policies, and recommendations, underlining the importance of a lifelong learning agenda, as well as the conviction that the implementation potentials and success do not depend on a single actor, but rather on the mosaic of actors at different levels of education (from pre-school to higher). Practices of the implementation of mentioned principles, objectives, and values have shown the variety of local, regional, and national challenges and obstacles (micro challenges). The supranational prescriptions seek for the recognition and observation of local, regional, and national particular features, which might encourage, but also impair, the short, medium, and long-term processes of change.

The existing national, regional, and local stereotypes towards vulnerable (e.g., ethnic and minority) groups, or reasons for low acceptance of the elements of the culture of minority groups, should be investigated and questioned in regard to their national, regional, and local facets, “top-down” and “bottom-up” dynamics and characteristics. Especially humanities and language

programs at the higher education level, from bachelor's and master's degrees to doctorates, are meant and invited to play a proactive role in creating an environment that nurtures cultural diversity in the globalized World. Let us display some of the examples of micro challenges in higher education:

- Many educators individually might have positive values towards empowering interculturalism and the intercultural environment in their classroom and teaching, but at the same time, existing national curricula might be insufficiently based on interculturalism, with the lack of methodology and content that promote cultural diversity.
- The social inclusion of youth is unquestionable, expected, and needed in higher education. However, as the comprehensive approach and the importance of lifelong learning agenda play a prominent role in national and European documents and policy recommendations, the discourse and the implementation of intercultural education should target older citizens (50+ people, “boomers”) more proactively as well.
- Since 2015 and over the following years, European countries faced intensive migration from the East, and they developed various strategies to “handle” the immense cultural differences. The integration of incoming immigrant children into school systems of the host countries was a challenging process for both sides: nurturing the original cultural identity (language, tradition and customs of the country of origin) and integrating into the school system of the host country (Puzić, 2008, p. 392).
- Although the data for the few recent years show the increased transport subsidies for students with disabilities, the national, regional, and local efforts are still insufficient<sup>54</sup>. Various actors, from national, regional, and local governments, policy-makers, curricula-makers to educators in higher education should make efforts to encourage students with disabilities to engage into higher education.
- The epidemiologic precautions under the Covid-19 pandemic and the prescriptions of wearing masks worldwide, in all aspects of our everyday lives, so in the classroom as well, proved to be epidemiologically crucial. However, they raise sociocultural questions related to intercultural education. One of these is certainly: how can students with hearing

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<sup>54</sup> For example, in Croatia “only about half of the eligible students with lower socio economic status were receiving the regular state scholarship (...) including students with disabilities” (see: Education and Training Monitor 2019 – Country analysis, Croatia, 2019).



disabilities, who are lip readers, participate in education programs with participants with covered mouths? The widely used new online learning programs, audio and video platforms, are also limited in that sense that they heavily rely on voice and audio interaction.

## Conclusion

There are many challenges and expectations facing the process of intercultural education at the supranational, national, regional and local levels. A lot of preconditions in the form of recommendations and legal assumptions have been made in the last decades, but they are yet to respond to everyday practical challenges that are part of national, regional and local contexts.

European policy documents and recommendations provide a basis for national education policy, and regional and local stakeholders in education, for example universities and educational institutions. The implementation of policy documents and recommendations (financial policies, organizational policies, information policies) calls for a better understanding of various existing national, regional, and local characteristics of everyday life experiences and micro challenges related to vulnerable groups and targeting their needs. Various examples of micro challenges in higher education call for a strategic approach and continuous work in a constantly changing world. The current pandemic is a prominent example of such challenges.

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