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DEVELOPING AN INTERCULTURAL CURRICULUM - AN OVERVIEW OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF ITS APPLICATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL'S DAILY LIFE

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Abstract. Intercultural education should promote and develop a better understanding of cultures in modern society, an increased ability to communicate between people of different cultures, a much more flexible attitude towards cultural diversity in society, a greater willingness of people to engage actively in social interaction with people from another cultural origin, as well as the recognition of the basic features of human nature as something common. Thus, the basic goal of intercultural education will be to promote and develop the capacities of those who learn about mutual interaction and communication with the world around them, even when differences are present. To achieve all this through teaching in schools, concrete measures should be taken such as: learning to be based on cultural and linguistic diversity, to include a range of different cultural knowledge, experiences and perspectives in the curriculum, to celebrate, value and learn the history and life of different cultures and indigenous peoples, visits to culturally important places and intercultural experiences. Institutions must also ensure education that is historically accurate, impartial, and culturally appropriate.

Key words: *intercultural education, curriculum, teaching, teacher, student.*

Introduction

Intercultural education provides all students with cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity between individuals, ethnic, social and cultural groups and nations. This can be achieved through the development of a curriculum that contributes to the understanding and respect of cultural diversity, but also the global dependence between people, the development of awareness of rights and duties, understanding of the need for international solidarity and cooperation. The intercultural curriculum also contributes to the application of appropriate teaching and learning methods; developing communication and cooperation skills beyond cultural boundaries; teaching and learning foreign languages and promoting the cultural components of language learning; adequate teacher education and permanent professional development.

Intercultural education can be promoted through curricular activities at different levels: by defining goals, competencies, content and activities, evaluating methods, testing approaches and methods, teaching aids, priorities, and teacher-principal cooperation. This will specifically include promoting coordination and creating lessons, identifying intercultural

competencies and involving them in the learning process, encouraging students to think about the components of intercultural competencies and the ways in which languages and cultures work (Beacco et al., 2016). Intercultural education contains knowledge, values, and skills. The content of intercultural education can also be defined as knowledge that needs to be included in the curriculum. De Leo (2010) divides this content into four areas: 1. Culture, language, heritage, and cultural diversity; 2. Civil rights, citizenship, and cultural identity; 3. Equality and human rights; and 4. Peace and harmony between different cultures.

In accordance with the stated principles, according to Aguado and Del Olmo (2009), the design of the school curriculum becomes a process in which decisions about what, how and when to learn are consciously made in the group where the teachers work. Curriculum development should contribute to discovering cultural differences and their positive values; critical awareness of the fight against racism and discrimination; knowledge of cultural heritage; understanding and respecting all; awareness of growing global interdependence; awareness of rights and responsibilities; awareness of cultural values; respect for different ways of thinking (UNESCO, 2006). The vision of the curriculum is to nurture all elements of life with the specific goals of understanding the world through knowledge, skills and attitudes, the development of moral values and the personal and social development of connecting with others through understanding and respect (Tormey, 2005).

According to De Leo (2010), through teaching all students will have the opportunity to express their language and heritage, to appreciate the culture of others and its contribution to society, to learn the national, mother tongue and foreign language, to have equal access to education, to know and express their rights and to respect the rights of others, to become tolerant with understanding and empathy, to care for others and to behave in culturally appropriate ways. Regarding the design of the curriculum, Aguado and Del Olmo (2009) further state that it is a short-written document, but above all, it is a philosophy that is adopted by the educational communities as a whole. Intercultural education should be central to all aspects of school life. This should be reflected in the hidden curriculum as well as in school rules and practices, and in teaching the contents of the curriculum.

Curriculum design

United Europe's common values such as democracy, individuals, pluralism, openness, responsibility, identity, human resources... are all starting points for structural changes in pedagogical practice. The process of preparing students for life and work in a multicultural context and the strengthening of language and intercultural competences significantly affect the adaptation of the curriculum. According to Banks (Banks, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2002), curriculum reform and its adaptation into an intercultural curriculum create fair and equal educational conditions for all. Such a curriculum is one of the key conditions for the implementation of intercultural education in teaching practice. For Dantow, Hubbard and Mehan (2002), the creation of an intercultural curriculum is a long process of cooperation of several social factors, while for Porto and Byram (2015) such a process has its own philosophy, methodology, practice, and result. The development of a modern intercultural curriculum should aim at articulating the teacher's programs and teaching methods. This approach would enable the acquisition of knowledge, but also the observation of the world from different philosophical perspectives. According to Resman (2006), the school-parent partnership is a characteristic of the advanced intercultural curriculum. Designing such an advanced curriculum must take into account several aspects. Marsh (2009) emphasizes aspects such as situation and need scanning, goal definition, procedure selection, and outcome evaluation. Bennett (2001) imposes four tasks such as revising the existing curriculum, realizing an equality pedagogy, developing intercultural competences of future teachers, and achieving a degree of social equality. School curriculum should be designed so that students can influence the learning process. In reality, it is the education bureaucracy that does it instead of them. As Dufour and Curtis (2012) state, today's curricula are often directed by political and educational centers. That is one of the main disadvantages of curricula, especially intercultural curricula. Our society and educational policy makers should take into

account intercultural guidelines when constructing national and school curricula. Teachers and school principals should have a leading role in this.

Teaching materials and didactic resources

To better understand a topic, various tools are used, from computers to audiovisual materials, written and oral materials, stories etc. (Aguado & Del Olmo, 2009). Which teaching resources and to what extent they are used by teachers shows the dominance of the types of resources that are characterized by the content "knowledge about knowledge". How much real knowledge is retained is actually a condition of how much a resource will be used, but further those resources must also affect emotions, state Helgason & Lässig (2009). They further point out that fiction, movies, games, fact-finding, and museum visits are used to a limited extent, while photographs stand out as the most widely used resource. Photographs contribute to emotional and aesthetic experiences, but also to knowledge. Image is a useful tool for stimulating interest, especially if it seems confusing or challenging. Students can ask questions and seek answers, who painted it, where it was painted, what happened at the time, what happened later. It is important to avoid images that would reinforce prejudice (Tormey, 2005). Special care should be taken with the illustrations, especially those depicting males and females (Aguado & Del Olmo, 2009). The next type of materials are the stories used in teaching through experiences and lectures (Helgason & Lässig, 2009).

Roell (2010) states that teachers can benefit from films that deal with topics such as immigration, xenophobia, getting used to a new culture, i.e., the dilemmas faced by members of two cultures. Although movies cannot compensate for real interaction, they can contribute to the understanding of the problem. Many films contain intercultural content. In connection with the film, a discussion on a topic can also be initiated in the teaching; students can also identify with the character from the film if that character has some similar characteristics. In this way, emotions and empathy can also be developed.

Music can also contribute to intercultural content. Including different types of music, for example African music, creates an understanding of music, people, and culture. Music can be a means of transmitting knowledge, moral values, and the way we look at the world (Joseph, 2012). In that way, in fact, the culture of the community that writes the music is transmitted, and we get acquainted with their problems and attitudes.

Teaching activities

In the teaching work it is necessary to develop methods that are appropriate through storytelling, plays, poetry, and songs, to integrate formal and informal traditional and modern methods. The activities should be based on practical and participatory learning techniques and include cooperation with cultural institutions. It is necessary to promote active participation in teaching and active environment, such as practical work through interdisciplinary projects (UNESCO, 2006). In group activities, the teacher offers help and materials for successful work on the activities and thus facilitates understanding and learning (Aguado & Del Olmo, 2009). During the project the students are involved in the field of research and biographical research. For example, they interview people from their family and environment, but also local representatives. People from different languages, religions, and cultures may be invited to speak with students. This communication gives students and teachers the opportunity to get acquainted with cultural richness and to develop a relationship of interaction and exchange (Magos, 2007).

The plurilingual and intercultural approach includes activities that promote exchange in the teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and student-student relationship. The activities can be organized as a preparation for independent learning later, in project groups with collective project organization, in tandems, where they help each other, in groups and in specific tasks. Activities should be authentic including real life events and selected ones based on learning needs. This means that students engage in communication and real-world situations that are

truly relevant. The activities focus on the approach, meaning and form of real communication (Beacco et al., 2016). The teaching and learning strategies used can be different and they encourage cooperative work, participation, and self-regulation of learning (Aguado & Del Olmo, 2009).

In addition to project groups, according to Tormey (2005) we can single out other useful methods for intercultural learning. Structured discussions play a key role in intercultural teaching. They give students the opportunity to discuss their ideas. Simulation games and role-playing are used to provide an opportunity to participate in real-life situations. Debate is a method where students get the opportunity to discuss a topic that really interests them and they should be given time to gather information to prepare for the debate. Problem monitoring is a method by which students can follow a problem or topic that is currently relevant or of particular interest to them.

Conclusion

For interculture as an innovative approach to education on which the activities of schools are based, in addition to the dimension of the teaching content, it is necessary to respect the social dimension of the teaching process. Teaching is a specific interaction-communication process. Several authors claim that the quality of the relations that are established in the teaching process between the teacher and the student, and the student with the student, significantly depends on the achievements of the student, but also on the socio-emotional climate in the classroom and the school. The school must be aware of its role in communicating between peers and must enable and encourage students to talk. School is a place not only for learning, but also for contacts and conversations, a place where those relationships will develop and experience, where group rules will be adopted. DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) note that an important precondition at all levels of education is that the educational processes are realized in a suitable environment, ambience, climate, where respect, mutual participation, individual freedom and equality are common factors. Unconscious messages the child receives at school (ethical standards, disciplinary policy, dominant relationships) significantly affect the attitude towards human rights in general. This means that the school both explicitly and implicitly influences the formation of attitudes and values. Developing a curriculum that will integrate interculture as an educational principle is an ongoing process. Also, the process of implementation of such an intercultural curriculum requires serious engagement. This process depends on many factors but above all on the educational policies of the country. The intercultural curriculum should connect schools from different countries, which provides an opportunity for the exchange of information, knowledge, and opinions, especially for students of higher grades of primary and secondary schools. Meetings of teachers and scientists from different backgrounds enables the exchange of educational experiences in learning and understanding intercultural relations in various countries and has a significant informative and pedagogical value. Intercultural education requires the school to open up and renew itself, whereby curricula are connected to the reality of multicultural societies. Schools increasingly base their work on the principle of equality, and intercultural education requires additional recognition and respect for cultural differences between individuals. Schools should try to create equal social and educational conditions for children of minority groups, and one of their roles is to raise awareness about cultural differences, and how to oppose discrimination and develop cultural pluralism. The intercultural curriculum should encourage the development of students' awareness of the importance of developing democratic institutions and processes in their own society and at the global level; the development of a positive attitude and interest of students for constructive and effective participation in school's daily life and the community in which they live; development of students' awareness of gender equality, tolerance towards other peoples, cultures and religions, differences of opinion, training for peaceful conflict resolution, critical judgment of social events, use and evaluation of different sources of information when making decisions and engagement.

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