

WP 13 Spanish Research Summary
Data Analysis – Teachers as Cultural Workers

The aims of this Work Package are:

- to find out about *teachers' perception* of intercultural education;
- to understand *teachers' perceptions* of their professional role as intercultural educators;
- to find out about the *impact of the media on teachers'* information acquisition in this specific area;
- to find out about *teachers' approaches* to culture and knowledge.

Guidelines agreed:

In the 5th INTERACT meeting, we agreed some guidelines in order to facilitate the comparative/contrastive analysis. These guidelines are:

- A. *Professional role in developing a multicultural society*
- B. *Impact on how students see themselves as intercultural citizens or on their participation in multicultural societies*
- C. *Disbelief that their teaching has any connection with the development of a multicultural democracy*
- D. *Conceptual Framework*
- E. *Teacher Education*

A. PROFESSIONAL ROLE IN DEVELOPING A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

In order to give an account on the teacher's professional role in developing a multicultural society, we have oriented the interview to have an answer to the following questions:

- *Is there diversity in your school? How is diversity incorporated into your school life?*
- *Would you say that you promote active citizenship, intercultural dialogue and democracy in your classroom?*
- *Have you ever taught issues related to intercultural education or civic education?*
- *Have you ever been involved with issues related to civic education?*

- What kind of sources do you use or prefer to use when dealing issues related to citizenship, intercultural dialogue and human rights?

The answers obtained suggest that teachers perceive the incorporation of diversity in the school in the following ways:

- The incorporation of diversity requires reinforcement classes for immigrant students:
- The incorporation of diversity does not require reinforcement classes for immigrant students:
- The incorporation of diversity is viewed as a privilege in schools:
- The incorporation of diversity is not viewed as a privilege in schools:

There are different thoughts about the way of seeing diversity in the schools. Most of the teachers agree that immigrant students need reinforcement classes in order to be able to follow the pace of the classroom and achieve the objectives stated by the teacher, however, some teachers affirm that these reinforcement classes are not so necessary since the special needs are practically none. On the other hand, the existence of diversity in schools is viewed by the majority of interviewed teachers as an enrichment for all the educative community, although some of them manifest that it is an advantage not to have diversity in their schools since it generates more difficulties than advantages.

The answers obtained regarding the promotion of active citizenship, intercultural dialogue and democracy in the classroom suggest that participation and dialogue are viewed as vital for the vast majority of teachers and they always have them into account in their classes. Together with equity, are the concepts which are associated to active citizenship and intercultural dialogue. The way they promote intercultural dialogue is by fostering all students' participation in the activities of the classroom.

From the answers obtained regarding the sources they use when dealing with issues related to citizenship, intercultural dialogue and human rights, teachers manifest there are scarcely specific material to deal with these issues but any material could be used if there is a willing on the teachers' part. That is, it depends more on the teacher than on the material itself to deal with citizenship, intercultural dialogue and human rights in the classroom.

Regarding the responsibility they have in educating their students towards interculturality, all the teachers affirm that they feel a responsibility in some sense. For them, interculturality allows individuals to interact with others in an effective way. They perceive its importance in a society where the coexistence of individuals from different nationalities is increasing. If the student is prepared to interact with other peers from different nationalities, he will be also prepared to interact out of the school with individuals from different backgrounds. Teachers, in general, have a developed consciousness of the importance of dealing with values in the classroom, and the impact they have on society.

B. IMPACT ON HOW STUDENTS SEE THEMSELVES AS INTERCULTURAL CITIZENS OR ON THEIR PARTICIPATION IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

For the subcategory “voice of minority group students in the classroom”, data suggest that from the teachers’ perspective every student is equally important for the rest of the peers and for the teachers. The fact of belonging to a different culture, most of the times, and depending on the topic dealt, offers an opportunity to have different and interesting points of view. A few teachers remarked that, the minority groups have even more voice in their classes than the rest of the students. In this case, we could be talking about positive discrimination.

Just two of the interviewed teachers manifested to be interested in the personal identity of students belonging to minority groups. They affirmed that it is necessary to know the personal identity in order to understand what happens inside the classroom. For the rest of the teachers, the personal identity has no relevance for the development of the teaching and learning process. They think that the personal and national identities should be clearly defined.

For teachers the most effective strategies for students to see themselves as intercultural citizens or participate in multicultural societies are: group activities and dialogue and promotion of participation.

No teacher stated to develop “discrete activities” in their classes. The activities related to these issues are not prepared in advance, they are on-going activities. Teachers affirm that these activities are more effective because they are done in the precise moment.

C. DISBELIEF THAT THEIR TEACHING HAS ANY CONNECTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Taking into account all the interviews carried out to the teachers of our national context, we have found **no evidence** of this matter. They don't live at school in a political sense, nor reinforce national identity, nor mention institutional constraints. This can be due to the fact that the immigration phenomenon is relatively new in our country and schools are centered in solving adaptation and integration problems the best way they can. National identity is not seen to be in danger up to this moment.

D. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Most of the teachers found the term “intercultural citizenship teacher” unfamiliar, and they expected us to explain it to them. We refused to, because we wanted to know what their own understanding was. Most of them explained the term in their own words and they could link some concepts to it. For the Spanish teachers, an intercultural citizenship teacher is:

- a teacher that promotes values.
- a teacher that attends to diversity in their classes.
- a teacher that feels the commitment of their work and assumes the responsibility of it.

The concepts that they link to “intercultural citizenship teacher” are:

- equity
- dialogue
- participation

E. TEACHER EDUCATION

As we could see in the previous Work Package, most of the teachers had no training about these issues neither in pre-service nor in-service education. The main reason is the insufficient offer of courses related to intercultural education or citizenship education in our Autonomous Community. Teachers stated that they think the offer will

increase now that diversity is becoming very common in our classes and some specific training is necessary in order to attend it.

Some of the teachers interviewed manifested that they train themselves by means of reading some books or articles regarding intercultural citizenship education, but there is very few material translated into Spanish and some of them have problems reading other languages.

When we asked them about their feeling about in-service training needs, they said that it would be very interesting to have this kind of courses or paper version information, because it is a very new topic for them and they feel they need help.