2021

HTTP://SIETAR.CH/JOURNAL/

SIETAR SWITZERLAND
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA
Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research

Intercultural Competences in the 21st Century

SPRING/SUMMER 2021 VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

THE SWISS JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

SIETAR SWITZERLAND
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA
Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research

First published in 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland by SIETAR Switzerland http://sietar.ch/

ISSN forthcoming

© 2021 (individual papers), the author(s)

© 2021 (selection and editorial matter) SIETAR Switzerland

All rights reserved. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the applicable copyright legislation, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process without prior, written permission from the Editor or Associate Editor. For permissions and other inquiries, please contact journal@sietar.ch.

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.

SPRING/SUMMER VOLUME 1ISSUE 1 2021

THE SWISS JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

HTTP://SIETAR.CH/JOURNAL/

EDITOR

Eugenia Arvanitis, University of Patras, Greece

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jillaine Farrar, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts - Business

DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING

Spyridoula Giaki, University of Patras, Greece

EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Dr Aminata Cairo, Netherlands
Dr Kim Hays, Switzerland
Sebastian Huber, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts – Business, Switzerland
Dr Bunny McFadden, USA
Vincent Merk, Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands and France
Dr Mary Gene Saudelli, Faculty of Professional Studies, University of the Fraser Valley, Canada
Assoc. Prof. Dr Claus Schreier, Mahidol University International College, Mahidol University, Thailand
Dr Joseph Shaules, Japan Intercultural Institute and Keio University GIC Program, Japan
Emeritus Prof. Dr Helen Spencer-Oatey, University of Warwick, United Kingdom
Prof. Dr Pia Stalder, School for Engineering and Management Vaud, HEIG-VD, HEG, Switzerland
Prof. Dr Ingo Stolz, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts – Business, Switzerland
Asst. Prof. Dr Nuntana Udomkit, Mahidol University International College, Mahidol University, Thailand

DISCLAIMER

The authors, editors, reviewers, director of publishing and publisher will not accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may have been made in this publication. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Table of Contents

Editorial 3

Eugenia Arvanitis, and Jillaine Farrar

A Message from Stephanie Magalage, Project Officer in the Futures of Education Team, UNESCO 4

Stephanie Magalage

Futures of Education: Learning to Become. How should what we learn, how we learn, and where we learn change in the future? 5

Eugenia Arvanitis et al.

Honoring Multimodality in Reflective Practices: A Guide to Nontraditional Autoethnography as Pedagogy 18

Bunny McFadden

Teaching mathematics in an intercultural school context: A theoretical review ...22

Georgia Karountzou, and Maria Pliota

DSTV and glocalization: The case study of the Greek target audience in South Africa 33

Sofia Arvanitidou

Holding Space: An Alternative to Diversity and Inclusion 41

Aminata Cairo

The role of cultural clubs in fostering students' intercultural competence: The case of Al Akhawayn University in Morocco 44

Rania Boumahdi, Abderrahmane Bahmida, and Abderrahman Hassi

Best Practice Example: What can an association such as SIETAR do to contribute to the integration of refugees in its communities? And why should it consider these types of action? 48

Anne-Claude Lambelet

Apples, Artichauts and Oz Moments: On language, culture and metaphors 53

Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin

A Salad Bowl for Beckmann: Making a Home in an Inclusive Society 56

Pritima Chainani-Barta

Reflections on Teaching a Course on Culture, Politics and History 64

Benjamin Haymond

Understanding and Assessing Culture on a Coherent Theoretical Background ...68

Hans Jakob Roth

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2021, www.sietar.ch/journal

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Editorial

This edition of the Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research highlights authentic responses from intercultural researchers and practitioners that answer important intercultural matters in a meaningful and diverse way. Contributors to this special issue bring research data as well as rich experiences in their interpretation of our focal topic '***Intercultural Competences in the 21st Century'***.

Cultural diversity has a profound effect on our social, professional, and private settings. Thus, the competence to communicate and collaborate effectively on an interpersonal level with the so-called *super diversity* (namely a myriad of attitudes, styles, values, beliefs, norms, customs, behaviors, and ways of life) constitutes a key skill for the 21st century. We define this competence as intercultural to denote the recognition, respect, and inclusion of diversity through our words and actions in all contexts. This competence not only constitutes a key qualification required in professional/business/international fields, it is a critical personal attribute for one's wellbeing and for broader social cohesion. However, gaining intercultural competence is a lifelong process of increasing self-awareness, developing social skills and behaviors around diversity, and gaining the ability to advocate for others.

In this context, we need to collectively reimagine lifelong and lifewide education as pillars of enhancing intercultural awareness as well as fostering social inclusion. This is why this volume begins with UNESCO's initiative on the Futures of Education which illustrates how education can contribute to the global common good. The contribution of SIETAR Switzerland's Stakeholder Focus Group sets the framework of how intercultural responsiveness and innovativeness can foster an inclusive education for all.

At the heart of education lies its transformative nature. This calls for more inclusiveness and reduced inequalities. By showcasing theoretical directions and practical applications, contributors to this volume discuss necessary pedagogical, cultural, and political changes. They attempt to:

- define intercultural competence in its various contexts (social, business, educational, etc.);
- demonstrate how intercultural competence is manifested in various settings;
- discuss how intercultural competence can be cultivated in education and training;
- highlight cases and good practices of programs that have resulted in tools of measuring intercultural competence.

Overall, the papers in this volume come to terms with multimodal and reflexive practices from a broad spectrum of settings and national contexts. Explorations of autoethnography, pedagogy, language, culture, home, and space pave the way to a collective intellect and intercultural action. In this way we build our knowledge around the diverse aspects of intercultural competences spanning local and global contexts. Lifelong learning and lifewide education are essential to gain intercultural competences in the 21st Century.

Eugenia Arvanitis, Editor, University of Patras

Jillaine Farrar, Associate Editor, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts - Business

---

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2021, www.sietar.ch/journal

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

A Message from Stephanie Magalage, Project Officer in the Futures of Education Team, UNESCO

At UNESCO, we believe that “since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” This vision marks the very foundation of UNESCO and whereas back in November 1945, peace referred to the absence of conflict, nowadays, we understand that peace echoes with many aspects of our lives: peace also means social justice, gender equality, economic opportunities. Peace also includes living in harmony with one another and our environment. If I had to define peace in a few words only, I would say that peace means respect, security and dignity for all.

Education represents one of the most powerful vehicles to build and sustain peace, in a broad and sustainable sense. This is why UNESCO launched the Futures of Education initiative, an ambitious attempt to reimagine how education can contribute to the global common good. In the framework of this initiative, the Organization has launched a global consultation process in order to co-construct a renewed vision of how knowledge and learning can shape a more prosperous future for humanity and the planet.

All submitted inputs are currently feeding into the preparation of UNESCO’s forthcoming global report on the futures of education, which is led by an independent International Commission that will launch the report on the occasion of UNESCO’s 41st General Conference in November 2021. It is within this framework that SIETAR Switzerland has contributed to the global discussion, by mobilizing over 20 key contributors on the ways intercultural competencies can play a role in transformative education, not only to address persistent issues but also to turn forthcoming challenges into powerful vehicles of inclusion. I would like to thank the amazing focus group that worked on the following inspiring contribution, and special thanks of course to Jillaine Farrar and Anne-Claude Lambelet who have been fantastic leaders in this collective reflection.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Futures of Education: Learning to Become. How should what we learn, how we learn, and where we learn change in the future?

A SIETAR Switzerland Contribution to UNESCO’S Futures of Education Initiative.

Published April 12, 2021. Reprinted here by permission with minor edits, July 2021.

Contributing Authors:
Arvanitis, Eugenia (Associate Prof.) – University of Patras, Greece
Bauer, Michelle – student, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland
Covarrugias Vengas, Barbara (Dr) - Virtualspacehero
Crameri, Amanda - Movetia, Swiss National Agency for Exchange and Mobility, Switzerland
D’Amato, Gianni (Prof.) - University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Davione, Eric (Prof.) - University of Fribourg, Switzerland
Farrar, Jillaine (Prof.) [1] - Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts / SIETAR Switzerland
Glaveanu, Vlad (Prof.) - Webster University Geneva, Switzerland
Grünenfelder, Rea – student / Offener Hörsaal (Open Lecture Auditorium), Switzerland
Hassi, Abderrahman (Dr) - Al Akhawayn University, Morocco
Lambelet, Anne-Claude[1] – SIETAR Switzerland Past President
Lezou Koffi, Aimée-Danielle - Félix Houphouet-Boigny University, Côte d’Ivoire
Ogay, Tania (Prof.) – University of Fribourg, Switzerland
Pechr, Judit – student / Offener Hörsaal (Open Lecture Auditorium), Switzerland
Saudelli, Mary Gene (Dr) - University of the Fraser Valley, Canada
Schaerli-Lim, Susan - Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
Shaules, Joseph (Dr) - Japan Intercultural Institute, Japan
Spencer-Oatey, Helen (Emeritus Prof.) - University of Warwick, United Kingdom
Stalder, Pia (Associate Prof.) - Haute Ecole d'Ingénierie et de Gestion du Canton de Vaud, Switzerland
Touhami, Alaeddine - AISA NGO, The Netherlands
Zittoun, Tania (Prof.) - University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Reviewers:
Arvanitis, Eugenia (Associate Prof.) – University of Patras, Greece
Farrar, Jillaine (Prof.) - Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts / SIETAR Switzerland
Lambelet, Anne-Claude - SIETAR Switzerland Past President
Merk, Vincent - Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands / SIETAR Europa Past President
Saudelli, Mary Gene (Dr) - University of the Fraser Valley, Canada
Waterhouse, Tom - Independent Consultant Focusing on Equity and Diversity in the Workplace, Switzerland

---

[1] Corresponding Authors: Anne-Claude Lambelet and Jillaine Farrar email: ac.lambelet@sietar.ch and jillaine.farrar@sietar.ch

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Abstract: Connecting minds and enhancing diversity are key to moving from mere awareness to fostering both inclusion and innovativeness in our futures of education. Inequalities around the globe are not new and neither are calls for more inclusiveness. Change needs to be educational, cultural, and political. Action is the responsibility of every one of us. This UNESCO Futures of Education: Learning to Become Stakeholder Focus Group, co-facilitated by Anne-Claude Lambelet, past president SIETAR Switzerland, and Jillaine Farrar, vice president SIETAR Switzerland, focused on how what we learn, how we learn, and where we learn will change in the future. Specialists contributed to the focus group from the fields of intercultural, inclusion, diversity, migration, human resources, international management, pedagogy, didactics, online training, and peace education. In two joint sessions in December 2020 and January 2021, the focus group met online to examine their views on the changing world, the broad purposes of education, and the implications for learning. Stephanie Magalage from UNESCO presented the parameters and overall goals of the UNESCO project to the focus group in the first session. With visions of the year 2050 and the exploration of the collective purposes of education, each of the focus group members listed co-authored this report. Special thanks to the reviewers who further synthesized the central points to consolidate the rich input for the international commission which will, in November 2021, provide an agenda for action and discussion by policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords: Intercultural, Inclusion, Diversity, Migration, Human Resources, International Management, Pedagogy, Didactics, Online Training, and Peace Education

What needs to change: Introductory remarks

Modern national cultures and educational institutions are transformed by the constant and loud presence of culturally different others as a process of vibrant cosmopolitanization (Beck, 2009). Culture, in this understanding appears to be a process of homogenization through standardized symbols, actions and products (e.g. in media communications, education, fashion icons, entertainment, etc.). At the same time however, culture is the lived experience of divergence, involving a myriad of styles, tastes, preferences as people actively express their values (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997). People thus develop senses of belonging that include their differences, experiences, and perspectives. When their differences are productively recognized and harnessed, people develop a more powerful sense of inclusion than they would if homogeneity was forced upon them (Kalantzis & Cope 2009). Arvanitis cautions that when differences are ignored, people feel less engaged and valued, which could have an impact on their productivity. However, our world remains full of antinomies. On one hand, there are grand narratives of belonging associated with ethnocentricity, accompanied with re-nationalization, populism involving radicalization and trends towards assimilation and suppression of (cultural/ethnic) differences to project a false sense of ‘normality’. On the other hand, new demands for legitimation and integration of plurality emerge as “natives (familiar others) and the alien (exotic) others unavoidably and involuntarily mix all over the world” (Arvanitis, 2018, p. 245).

Thinking about the futures of education is to envision prospectively the needs of contemporary young people and of those that have not even been born yet, globally. As D’Amato points out, education in the future will be challenged by different simultaneous evolutions: digitalization and fundamental issues such as climate change and social inequalities which have limited, since the birth of modern schooling, the promise of societal emancipation through education. A pessimistic anthropology perspective, in line with French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, argues that the education system has been mainly successful in reproducing the social stratification of middle-upper classes who benefit more than other groups from educational reforms. In this respect, demographic diversity by gender, origin, and religion will be the litmus test of any educational evolution. There is a competition between the liberal-minded openness

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

towards meritocratic competition, including a belief in the necessity to mobilize unused potentials, and the contrasting view to protect or restore the social reproduction of the status quo. The continuation of this societal challenge will be inevitable, and the solutions to be developed can be decisive for the future of education as much as – maybe still a promise too large – the evolution of our societies.

Obstacles to Transformation and Change of the Education System

Despite diagnosis of and remedies to the education systems' key problem, equipping future generations to deal with the challenge of ensuring the sustainability of our global world, Ogay argues that we have not seen much change. On the contrary, new challenges have emerged and education seems to have been unable to make a difference. We need to direct our efforts to understanding the obstacles that impede change and focus on the means or strategies to overcome these obstacles. Concerns about global sustainability are still largely perceived as those of a marginal and privileged elite of naïve dreamers, and ensuring global sustainability is considered contrary to the interests of the economy. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018; OECD, 2020) has tackled the idea that global sustainability is also an issue for the economy. While the OECD's proposal to assess the global competence of students in the PISA evaluations may seem somewhat simplistic, Ogay notes that experience shows that educational leaders adopt significant measures for change only when they score low in international comparisons.

The Role of Policy Makers and Practitioners in Implementing Global Learning

If, indeed, to paraphrase an old African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child", today it takes the world to raise mindful and responsible global citizens for tomorrow. According to Stalder, a key aspect for re-imagining education, learning and knowledge in anticipation of the year 2050 is global learning for living together in respect of the planet and its inhabitants. This includes policy makers and practitioners alike.

Policy makers: private and public (inter-, trans-, supra-) national institutions must all benefit from the crucial prerequisites for global learning: diverse, transparent and safe technology services and search engines to cover the multiplicity of needs and perspectives that characterize our world. This is a significant step especially if this is to include so-called development countries.

Practitioners: There is a strong need for the promotion and implementation of education and learning in global and interdisciplinary networks - models, platforms, methods, best practices - for co-constructing 'we-cultures', an ethos which values collaboration, compassion, and innovation, across borders.

To achieve this, we need to raise our own consciousness on multiple levels: as individuals, as elements of multiple systems and as global citizens, since our reflections, decisions and actions have an impact far beyond the tangible, here and now. Moreover, we should consider the three principles put forward by Bendell (2018, p. 22): resilience, renouncement, and restoration.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

What we learn

Education for Generation Global

Hassi states that education has not closely followed recent social, economic and technological developments and their implications. It seems to focus primarily on developing learners' hard skills despite the fact that scientific research and practical experience have shown that soft skills are crucial for success in our post-modern and postindustrial society. In fact, scholars have demonstrated that 75-85 % of professional success is contingent on soft skills and only 25-15 % on hard skills (Nelson-Jones, 2002).

Schaerli-Lim emphasizes that the priority is for educators to demonstrate to future generations the interconnectedness of our world and the dire consequences for the human race when this is ignored. To reduce further fragmentation, it is important to encourage contact across the globe. Education can be conducted online with fellow students from around the world. Education transforms students when they can work on real life projects together and this collaboration can instill the value of inclusiveness of different strengths and perspectives. It is essential for this to happen if students are to step away from monocultural communication models: generation global needs to learn early about intercultural relations and communication and how to apply these principles with people they encounter within their country as well as internationally.

To achieve this shift, the educational system needs to focus on an infrastructure where cooperation is more valued than competition. This needs to be reflected in a grading system that focuses on critical thinking and, according to Schaerli-Lim, also takes into account demonstrated skills in inclusion, community building and peace building. In such a learning environment, education is accessible and free for all and soft skills are the new hard skills.

Developing Global Citizens

Spencer-Oatey addresses the topic of developing global citizens and notes that simply asserting this egalitarian and collaborative goal may not be successful without gaining a clear understanding and awareness of the issues that may hamper its achievement.

The Qualities of Global Citizens/Global Communities

Individuals who

- Care for others, not just members of their own national/social/cultural group
- Appreciate the histories and current situations/plights of people in other parts of the world
- Care for the planet – action to promote biodiversity and reduce the danger of climate change

Communities who

- Collaborate with others to address common challenges
- Care for the needs of other communities
- Commit to reducing inequalities of wealth, healthcare, life opportunities etc., especially where these inequalities stem from prejudices based on race, religious belief, social class, gender, etc.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Dealing With the Challenges of Fostering Global Citizens

Schwartz (2017) found that two societal-level values are associated with more inclusive care and concern: high cultural egalitarianism (i.e. transcendence of selfish interests in favor of voluntary commitment to the welfare of others) and low cultural embeddedness (i.e. low concern for tradition, security, and anything that might disrupt in-group solidarity). In other words, societal level values are of significant importance in influencing the values of individual members of societies.

Spencer-Oatey advises us to give careful thought, therefore, to both societal level values and how they can be fostered, as well as to the values of individual members of societies (e.g. the children/young people in our classrooms). Without this, there is a serious risk that beliefs about global citizens and global communities will be regarded as ‘the idealistic values of the elite’ and will not permeate society. One way of addressing the fundamental tendency to look after our own interests at the expense of others is to demonstrate and illustrate our close interconnectedness with people across the world and how collaboration across borders is the best way of addressing our mutual needs and concerns. This is particularly evident with regard to world health – of people and of the planet. Covid-19 has demonstrated this especially clearly, in relation to the spread of the pandemic, the monitoring of spread and mutation of the virus, and the development of vaccines. In other words, if we don’t collaborate with others and don’t help others, we will all suffer. Educational projects that reveal this clearly to children/young people are therefore extremely important.

Global Learning as the Universal Core Value of Humanity

In anticipation of the year 2050, Stalder emphasizes the importance of acquiring knowledge to enable global learning to live together in respect of the planet and its inhabitants. Global learning means sharing knowledge, educating, and learning in multifaceted networks, beyond physical and mental boundaries.

Challenges: Performance and competition have become the dominant ideologies, to the detriment of deeper human values, such as collaboration. By its irresponsible consumption behavior, its ego- and ethnocentric views, decisions and actions, humankind destroys the planet and itself. It is crucial to re-balance individualism and collectivism.

Essentials: Learning means raising the consciousness of multiple identities, needs and perspectives. We have to learn to become together. Due to Covid-19 (or even thanks to it), we are more prepared for this than ever.

Touhami concurs with Sheikh Khaled Bentounès (Parole aux Femmes, 2015) that our society is the heiress of the past and has to cope with a spectacular cultural mix (p. 342). East and west are merging more and more. Globalization is widening its network without taking into account everyone's values and the family structures that bears everyone's own cultural identity. Rather than leading us towards unity, this dynamic is leading us into a binary, dualistic, increasingly atomized world, creating the problem of a world based on opposites, on antagonisms.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

How We Learn

Deconstructing Identity Dynamics

According to Frame, one of the major challenges for the education system of tomorrow is how to deal with the essentializing discourse about Us and Them. How can we combat inequalities (which legitimately call for minorities to be protected), without reinforcing the idea that 'cultures' are inalienable boundaries which separate people who are somehow different in 'essence'? One solution would be to try and promote understanding of, and thus deconstruct, the identity dynamics of everyday interactions, which lead to ethnic differentiation, on the grounds of geographical origin, religion, skin colour, or whatever traits are considered salient. We need to combat the ideas that cultures belong to certain people only, that groups can only be defined by their values.

It is important that the education of the future sees culture not as a source of difference, but as a way of bridging it; that while we need and are proud of our identities, while we use them to define who we are, these do not separate us unconditionally and inevitably from one another. We are not all the same – living in society, we need to cultivate differences symbolically, but, beyond this, Frame reminds us that it is our cultures which allow us to connect.

Knowledge for Its Own Sake?

Davoine, noting that digitalization has transformed relationships to knowledge, memory, learning techniques and social contacts, states that it is very important for the futures of education to identify three challenges of digitalization associated to three distinct missions of school education: training employability; accompanying learning processes; and developing world citizens.

According to French philosopher Michel Serres, among others, digitalization is a revolution for the cognitive structures of human beings because it changes our relationship to memory, to data storage, and transforms deeply our relationship to data processing. Defining the limits of digitized education will be essential to secure the development of children's cognition, learning and creative ability. Children should learn to process data, think, focus attention and reflect, with and without digital tools. A similar reflection should be made regarding the development of social contacts with and without digital tools.

Davoine calls for history to remain an important part of school education, but not as a stable knowledge of world facts, not as homogeneous standardized and flat ideology-driven narrative, but history as a debate and as a reconstruction of a dynamic narrative by integrating the plurality of voices and perspectives coming from the different social, regional and national groups. Likewise, philosophy and literature must remain an important part of school education. Reading classical world literature remains a gateway to understand deeply and comprehensively different contexts and perspectives of human experience.

Knowledge for Living

The content that we learn or teach has expanded over the centuries and has oscillated between massive information blocks and silos of specialization. Grünenfelder and Pechr recommend that

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

education be more tailored to students' specific needs and circumstances. Understanding why something is being taught and why it is necessary knowledge is essential and helps to maintain motivation.

Lambelet notes that learning how to learn or why we learn specific subjects has dangerously taken a back seat, leaving many students puzzled at best. In some cases, the frustration has simply led to ruptures with the educational system, leaving a youth ill-prepared to deal with their life needs and the ability to exercise critical thought when confronted with alternate facts, conspiracy theories, and radicalism.

The Dangers of Transposing Educational Models

Lezou Koffi states that the quest for professional performance has developed the paradigms of efficiency and profitability. In this context, humans, like machines, are only as good as their productivity and competitiveness. Added to this is the development of both national information and communication technologies (NICT) and social networks. Competition has thus increased with the paradigms of visibility, speed, and transience. Screens now isolate individuals from each other.

In the specific case of Africa, especially French-speaking Africa, Lezou Koffi adds that there is the transposition of educational models from the west, which are often unsuited to national contexts. Here again, school generates social inequalities. And communities are weakened as a result. The overall goals for education are to raise awareness about the preservation of the environment and to respect differences (sexuality, skin color, religion).

Catering to Diverse Learning Styles

To satisfy different learning styles, teachers must have the tools to optimize their education. Covarrugias Vengas emphasizes that without inclusion there is no real impact in virtual learning. She says this is true in every classroom and is even more true of the virtual classroom. The Covid-19 pandemic has only accelerated a process that had already begun as organizations, schools and universities continue to transition learning and event operations to the virtual space, but Covarrugias Vengas notes that inclusion is often not considered when planning virtual activities. It is essential to design for different learning styles, consider accessibility, diversify the voices of content, and curate representative imagery.

Where We Learn

Alternative and New Educational Models

Specific needs and circumstances in different parts of the word must be addressed. Arvanitis urges us to rethink how we deal with the massive quantities of information that our educational systems instill in our youth. What is important and useful may depend on the context. Education must consider learners' 'lifeworld', namely their everyday life experiences and learning gained in their respective family, community, and cultural context.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

More Transformative Vectors for Creativity

According to Glaveanu, we should not ignore the fact that the experience of not knowing is transformative for learners of all ages. It is because of not knowing that we are surprised, curious, made to think and feel things that are new, exciting, or sometimes scary. And it is this experience that puts us on a path of interacting with others, experimenting, tinkering with things and imagining worlds different from our own.

We should reintroduce wonder as a learning stance but recognize that the role of not knowing does not end here. It is not merely a precursor to knowledge, but a state in its own right. One in which things seem unsettled and, because of this, more flexible. There is no one answer and, as such, multiple solutions can be envisioned. Finally, one where the actual (what is) sits side by side with the possible (what could be). Glaveanu emphasizes that not knowing is not shameful in education, but a real opportunity to encourage Socratic inquiry, deep thinking, and intellectual humility. The future will need all of these, and more.

Interdisciplinarity and Dichotomies

In the future, according to Saudelli, education needs to be much more interdisciplinary in its approach than it has been in the past. We need to focus on Big Questions (and associated little questions) and bring the disciplines together to learn how to value and recognize the contributions that all disciplines, and their associated modes of thought, bring to these questions.

Saudelli states that we need to value the integration of disciplines – not dismiss them because they may present information one does not wish to consider, or towards which one already has a predisposed position. The days of the disciplinary silos need to be over and the disciplines need to learn how to work together, value evidence and truth, value different perspectives, opinions, beliefs and perceptions, and how people understand their lived experience. Moreover, Saudelli notes that for far too long, there have been too many dichotomies of thinking, dismissal of one perspective over another, this or that positionings. We now need to think about bringing everyone together cooperatively, embracing the Big and little questions of our time and moving forward. For her, this is the future of education: bringing together a global community to address these questions as a balanced community of learners.

Ethical Commitment to Service

Shaules explains that in our world, the role of education is to help

1. increase social trust through greater economic/political equality and engaged citizenry;
2. leverage the networked power of knowledge-based technology to solve real world problems; and
3. create collaboration between diverse individuals and across diverse communities. This implies providing people of all ages with both foundational academic skills (reading, mathematics, science and technology), complemented by the critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will enable them to tackle real-world challenges, which is motivated by a strong ethical commitment to equal opportunity, sustainable development, respect for diversity, and global citizenship.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

According to Shaules, to accomplish these broad-based goals, there is a need for the following:

- Increased networking among educational institutions. Collaborative agreements between schools and educational institutions will provide learners with diverse learning communities centered on a global vision of problem solving and sustainability.
- Educational institutions with different levels of resourcing and different forms of human and cultural capital should be encouraged to form resource networks that encourage networked learning and education that goes beyond local and national concerns.
- In elementary and secondary education, there should be continued emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy, but with increased emphasis on critical thinking, applied technology, civics education and environmental education.
- For secondary and post-secondary education, there should be a reduced emphasis on narrowly defined academic fields and increased emphasis on academic specialties that cut across disciplines.
- Research initiatives increasingly focused on interdisciplinary approaches to solving complex problems and meeting social needs in addition to economic goals.

Education Away From Competition

Through dialogue, education can aim at expanding students' worldviews, towards others, and towards what-could-be. According to Zittoun, this implies two complementary axes.

Dialogue with others and the world – peers, distant others, older people, and the environment - by:

- Fostering the capacity to collaborate and cooperate (through dialogical skills, exploratory talk, etc.) and critically engage with others' ideas in respectful ways (argumentation, etc.);
- Developing relationships to people living in different conditions, with various forms of knowledge, skills and experiences (locally, such as older citizens, people living diverse paths of life; transnationally, through online, intercontinental dialogue, etc.);
- Opening the classroom to a variety of everyday situations in the community, region, etc.
- Dialogue between what is, and what-could-be (imagination), by:
- Cultivating children and people's curiosity about everyday issues (observation, exploration, discovery…) and by encouraging project-based learning and skill development;
- Preserving spaces for playing, and creative engagements through the arts and fiction;
- Providing children and people with a great diversity of resources for imagining;
- Recognizing that children and youth (in general, learners) can, alone or as a collective, imagine solutions not yet thought of by adults (or experts).

Zittoun notes that developing dialogues with close and distant others, and with what-could-be, may thus be a way to expand worldviews, develop new, more inclusive perspectives, and

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

thanks to individual and collective imagination, foster complex and innovative solutions for the future.

Implications For Out-of-Classroom Experts

Lambelet puts forward that inclusive education should not be limited to teachers only but also involve out-of-classroom experts who will convey the values of inclusion and a shared sense of being part of humanity. Beyond classroom exchanges and projects with children from other cultures/religions, cross- generational exchanges, this should involve connecting children across generational divides by calling on both active and retired experts and parents from different social and cultural backgrounds in the classroom sessions with the teacher in a facilitation role.

Skills

Multilingualism and new pedagogical patterns

Connecting learning with out-of-class experiences and authentic/collaborative learning is, according to Bauer, a way of humanizing the language learning process and will hopefully increase students' curiosity about the world around them while creating ripple effects by assigning a name to a specific face.

Arvanitis proposes that plurilingual and interculturally competent citizens will have the ability to sustain personal/professional growth and inclusive participation in local/global democratic processes. Therefore, according to Arvanitis, a fundamental challenge for 21st century education is to build upon life-embedded learning so to extend and transform learners' lifeworld experiences. This implies a systematic reform with the aim of including language and cultural diversity as a social/learning resource of cohesion, solidarity, and economic development. But how can formal school learning connect to and engage with such a vastly diverse student body? Some pedagogues have long argued for the adoption of a 'pedagogy of productive diversity' (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009), which advocates for education that is equitable and transformative in nature and allows for multiple representations of culture with the goal of building concepts of a new robust, inclusive mainstream sociality. This pedagogy occurs through engaging with (heritage) language teaching, intercultural competence assessment, collaborative praxis, responsive feedback, and scaffolded/differentiated/ life-embedded learning.

To this end, new patterns of pedagogy can also include online forms that produce e-learning ecologies which harness the seven digital affordances as proposed by Cope and Kalantzis - (ubiquitous and differentiated learning, active knowledge making, multimodal meaning, recursive feedback, collaborative intelligence, and metacognition).

Stalder adds that fostering multilingualism is not only essential to learn about different cultures, but also to facilitating the consultation, comparison, analysis, discussion, and synthesis processes of diverse knowledge (re)sources.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

The Strategic Role of Internationalization

According to Crameri this involves not only committing to the internationalization of the curriculum but undertaking internationalization at home (IaH) by engaging in international cooperation projects and partnerships. This can be achieved by embracing the opportunities of online technologies and pedagogies: using Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) for curriculum internationalization and fostering virtual experiences in addition to physical mobility to increase the number of students and staff benefiting from an international perspective.

Crameri and Farrar concur that focusing on the exchange of knowledge rather than just mobility to facilitate equality and mutual benefit in international partnerships as well as hosting virtual events in addition to physical events will promote more inclusive participation of previously underrepresented individuals and institutions. It is vital that it is not a case of one or the other.

Farrar, on how to move current educational experiences to include more realized intercultural learning experiences to trigger deep, cultural learning, states that an increase in international study-abroad experiences, collaborative cross-border research projects, as well as internationalization at home are essential. Digital, online, and virtual study and work experiences have become increasingly important and will become even more important in the future as we reshape international learning in higher education. But so are extended, face-to-face experiences in other countries and with other cultures. Deep cultural learning needs realized intercultural learning experiences to lead to change.

Collaborative Skills in a VUCA World

The mission of education systems in many countries is focused on preparing individuals to contribute within the existing system. To meet the societal, economic, and climatic challenges of today/tomorrow, our future generations need specific skill sets and the ability to revisit the values that have led our society to where it is, and sort which values should guide our societies in the future. It is crucial that these abilities be taught from an early age. Lambelet notes that the current crises in our world will require multiple perspectives and the ability to work together, integrating local solutions and being able to learn from ancient cultures which found ways to live in harmony with nature. Collaborative skills development versus the constant urge to compete is essential to ensure that the fear to fail does not inhibit creativity, another skill very much needed to meet the challenges of the future.

Crameri emphasizes that in a post Covid-19 future, additional competences such as resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility will play a major role. Further, Lambelet adds that to face our VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world, future generations will need to learn resilience and be able to practice that skill which is essential to deep adaptation.

21st Century skills

Hassi argues that education ought to value and teach the 21st century skills that learners need to perform tasks in a broad range of occupations, live successful lives, and continue their lifelong learning. These skills include autonomy and individual initiative, familiarity with tools and technology, the ability to function within diverse groups, developing a critical attitude to

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

information, thinking in a creative and multidisciplinary way, being agile in responding to crises and unexpected events (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic), and becoming a lifelong learner.

Cultural Learning for Change

At the heart of the intercultural mindset is being able to shift cultural perspective and change behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways. Studying theories is interesting. Implementing these in an inclusive manner, however, takes time and conscious effort. “Cultural learning can be surface (conceptual, analytic) or deep (intuitive, insight-based)” (Shaules, 2019, p.167). Educators can be the living examples for the leaders of tomorrow, thereby positively influencing deep learning, intercultural mindfulness and inclusion in education, business, politics, government, and society. Farrar is convinced that through education, the scaffolding of intercultural mindfulness and inclusion required for peace and prosperity – and to save our plant – can be formed already during childhood years. She proposes three significant actions needed for our Futures of Education to become reality by 2050:
Actively align intercultural mindfulness with organizational inclusion policies.
Embed intercultural training into workplace diversity and inclusion transformation.
Be the living examples for the leaders of tomorrow, thereby positively influencing intercultural mindfulness and inclusion in education, business, politics, government, and society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, education has the potential to be a transformative power if innovation and interrelation of diverse cultural mindsets become the norm in teaching and learning. Overall, education in the 21st century will need to recognize differences as a productive resource/asset in building the new local/global civility. It will give prominence to various manifestations of lifeworlds and construct a new local/national/global identity through reciprocal cultural exchange, intercultural dialogue, risk taking, problem solving, negotiation and collaborations. Arvanitis states that the future demands a more comprehensive effort to empower the entire social fabric to foster stronger intercultural awareness of and responsiveness to the issues arising from the co-existence of citizens and non-citizens in modern societies.

Acknowledgement

This is a collective work following the focus group sessions. Every effort has been made to identify additional sources used. UNESCO’s and SIETAR Switzerland’s support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views of the individual authors, and the organizations cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

REFERENCES

Arvanitis E. (2018). Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Modeling Teachers' Professional Learning to Advance Plurilingualism. In: Trifonas P., Aravossitas T. (eds) *International Handbook of Research and Practice in Heritage Language Education* (pp. 245-262). Springer.

Beck, U. (2009). Cosmopolitanization without cosmopolitans: On the discussion between normative and empirical-analytical cosmopolitanism in philosophy and the social sciences. In K. Ikas & G. Wagner (Eds.), *Communicating in the third space* (pp. 11-15). Routledge.

Bendell, J. (2018). Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy, IFLAS Occasional Paper 2. Retrieved January 4, 2021 from http://www.lifeworth.com/deepadaptation.pdf

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (1997). *Productive diversity*. Pluto Press.

Kalantzis, M.& Cope, B. (2009) Learner differences: Determining the terms of pedagogical engagement. In S. Mitakidou, E. Tressou, B.B. Swadener, & C.A. Grant (Eds.), *Beyond Pedagogies of Exclusion in Diverse Childhood Contexts. Critical Cultural Studies of Childhood.* Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230622920_2

OECD (2018). Preparing our youth for an inclusive and sustainable world: The OECD PISA Global Competence Framework 2018. https://www.oecd.org/education/Global-competency-for-an-inclusive- world.pdf

OECD (2020). PISA 2018 results (Volume VI). Are students ready to thrive in an interconnected world? https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/publication/d5f68679-en

Nelson-Jones, R. (2002). Are there universal human being skills? *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 15 (2), 115-119, https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070110100947

Parole aux Femmes - Actes du Congrès International Féminin pour une Culture de Paix [Women's Voices - Proceedings of the International Women's Congress for a Culture of Peace] (2015). p. 342.

Schwartz, S. H. (2007). Universalism values and the inclusiveness of our moral universe. *Journal of Cross- Cultural Psychology*, 38(6), 711–728, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022107308992

Shaules, J. (2019). *Language, culture, and the embodied mind.* Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15- 0587-4

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Honoring Multimodality in Reflective Practices: A Guide to Nontraditional Autoethnography as Pedagogy

Bunny McFadden, University of South Carolina, United States of America

Abstract: Intercultural competency is a pedagogical skill that can be built and continuously improved, particularly through reflective practices such as autoethnography. However, traditional scholarly writing is conceptually limiting, so multimodal literacy can be a useful way of skirting rules and boundaries that restrict how educators think about their teaching practices. This experiential examination of good practices demonstrates autoethnographic approaches to reflection.

Keywords: Autoethnography, Best Practices, Reflective Practices, Multimodality

Definitions and Conceptual Framework

Autoethnography is the practice of writing about your personal experiences in a way that allows you to reflect upon your own culture and the subcultures you belong to. This article shows how the practice can be used in order to critically examine the power structures that dominate teaching (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015). As an example of autoethnography, this article is written in the first-person to demonstrate the techniques of reflexive pedagogy. When you teach, for example, Spanish by having your students speak Spanish in small groups, write Spanish in their workbooks and listen to Spanish songs, you are using multimodal pedagogical methods. There are also multimodal ways of practicing autoethnography about teaching. Best practices in education require reflexivity, but reflecting in writing may be intimidating, exhausting, or inaccessible for a variety of reasons. So multimodal autoethnography is an opportunity to document and reflect on one's teaching in new, often cathartic ways.

My teaching practices improved when I started photographing my classroom to share it with friends, family, and colleagues. It began as a way to meet requirements for applying for my Level III teaching license and complying with guidelines for classroom funding opportunities, but the practice made me more critical of how I used multimodality in my classroom and in my documentation of professional competency. By taking pictures of my bulletin and white boards, of my use of realia in lessons, and of the way I used clothing and style to accentuate topics, I was participating in multimodal autoethnography as a means of researching the self in order to improve practices. Such research is situated in a theoretical context that encourages criticality and sophistication (Langer, 1979). Unfortunately, it is often misunderstood or assumed to be unacademic, undisciplined, and inferior to written texts (Hull & Nelson, 2005). Music, artifacts, and food make texts come to life, but teachers must be able to justify their practices (Tan, Chai, Deng, Zheng, & Drajati, 2019), which is why I've chosen to examine the theoretical context of multimodality both in the physical classroom and in professional development.

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2021, www.sietar.ch/journal

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Suzanne Langer (1979) pioneered the coding and understanding of aesthetics as language, discussing how everything from painting to dance has a type of grammar and style. Daft & Lengel (1984) built media richness theory, which can be used to evaluate a given piece of media's efficiency or its replication of societal forces, and even to improve relationships between interlocutors, such as teachers and our students. The New London Group (1996) created the concept of multimodal literacy. These works help us situate the complexity of multimodal autoethnography as more than simply singing, photographing, blogging, and so on, about teaching. To engage in multimodal autoethnography as an educator is to meet the demand for reflexivity inherent in improving one's practices.

Multimodality is an approach to critical literacy that can include "spoken words, images, music, written text, and movement and transitions" (Hull & Nelson, 2005, p. 234). I began using this approach while teaching freshman English Language Arts at Albuquerque High School. The city library allowed me to check out a traveling trunk full of Great Depression-era artifacts like hats, washing boards, heavy irons, and kitchen items. I also played common songs of the time, including a 1932 song called "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" I cooked a treat of cornbread, which was a recipe that stretched thin resources at home to feed hungry mouths. I incorporated these elements into a lesson on the novella "Of Mice and Men" (Steinbeck, 1937) in order to highlight the desperation in times of precarious employment that drives the main characters' behavior on their ranch. I then documented the lesson photographically in order to share best practices and reflect on the successes of my lesson. In sharing, I was engaging in the kind of collaborative conversations that "defy the easy assignation of authorship but also suggest a more egalitarian form of knowledge production" (Collins, Durington, & Gill, 2017, p. 145). Freely sharing lessons and practices on social media is essential in efforts to decolonize those classrooms that make teachers their central sources of pedagogical knowledge and expertise.

Figure 1: Bunny's Great Depression Lesson

*Source: From McFadden's personal files, 2015**

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Multimodality as Social Justice

In my teaching community, I often connected with colleagues over our unusual classroom practices. One man I met was skilled with the banjo, so he used folk songs in his lessons but also in protest against unfair district policies. This combination of curriculum and pedagogical reflection is not only possible, but also encourages teachers to embody social justice as a movement.

Positive Effects on Marginalized Communities

Multimodality is inherently avant-garde (Kress, 2010). This makes it ripe for use in social commentary, including criticisms of traditional schooling. In both curricular practices and reflections on teaching, "a multimodal approach demands that we consider the ways in which current media practices are embedded in global systems of inequality." (Collins, Durington, & Gill, 2017, p. 144). One example of this is the documentation of meeting teacher competencies in the state of New Mexico; it is a strict and bureaucratic production that upholds traditional Western epistemology because it centers classroom experiences on what translates best to papers and forms that can be stamped by an outsider who is not embedded in the classroom. When multimodality is incorporated into pedagogical reflection, we honor that our value as teachers cannot always be documented on a Likert scale or formulated using Value-Added Measurement, both of which have been proven to be insufficient and biased methods of judging teachers (Kantayya, 2020).

In addition, multimodality has utility for working with a variety of students. It is a tool of social justice because it helps us analyze "power relations, specifically regarding race, class, gender, sexuality, and cultural differences" (Huang, 2015). It can make literacy more enjoyable for children with special education needs (Flewitt, Nind, & Payler, 2009, p. 215). Multimodality can also help English-language learners develop confidence and engagement (Yi, 2014). In general, it can reach learners where they are, especially when teachers tap into the rich media that youths use daily in their personal lives, such as music or food (Hull & Nelson, 2005, p. 252).

Applications and Conclusion

Teachers should consider multimodality on two levels: as a classroom practice and as a reflective practice for reviewing lessons. One approach is offering curriculum in a new format such as "film, photography, dialogue, social media, kinesis, and practice" (Collins, Durington, & Gill, 2017, p. 142). These same techniques can also be used to document a lesson, paying special attention to interactions between students, teachers, and the classroom in terms of "body orientation, direction and length of gaze, movements of the head, hand gestures, touch and talk" (Flewitt, Nind, & Payler, 2009, p. 224). There are a variety of ways to incorporate multimodality to the benefit of all educational stakeholders.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to acknowledge the chilly Swiss spring for keeping us inside long enough to write and reflect.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

REFERENCES

Collins, S., Durington, M., & Gill, H. (2017). Multimodality: An Invitation. *American Anthropologist*, *119*(1), 142–146. https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.12826

Daft, R. L. & Lengel, R. H. (1984). Information richness: a new approach to managerial behavior and organizational design. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *6*, 191–233.

Flewitt, R., Nind, M., & Payler, J. (2009). If she's left with books she'll just eat them': Considering inclusive multimodal literacy practices. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *9*(2), 211–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798409105587

Harburg, Y., & Gorney, J. (1932). Brother, can you spare a dime? [Vinyl recording]. Harburg Foundation. (1932)

Huang, S. (2015). The Intersection of Multimodality and Critical Perspective: Multimodality as Subversion. *Language Learning & Technology*, *19*(3), 21–.

Hull, G., & Nelson, M. (2005). Locating the Semiotic Power of Multimodality. *Written Communication*, *22*(2), 224–261. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088304274170

Kantayya, S. (Director). (2020). Coded Bias [Video file]. United States of America: Netflix.

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Routledge.

Langer, S. (1979). *Philosophy in a new key: a study of the symbolism of reason, rite, and art* (3rd ed.). Harvard University Press.

New London Group. 1996. A pedagogy of multiliteracies: designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review* 66(1). 60–92

Steinbeck, J. (1937). *Of Mice and Men*. New York: Penguin.

Tan, L., Chai, C., Deng, F., Zheng, C., & Drajati, N. (2019). Examining pre-service teachers' knowledge of teaching multimodal literacies: a validation of a TPACK survey. Educational Media International, 56(4), 285–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2019.1681110

Yi, Y. (2014). Possibilities and Challenges of Multimodal Literacy Practices in Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language: Possibilities and Challenges of Multimodal Literacies. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 8(4), 158–169. https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12076

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Bunny McFadden: Doctoral Candidate, Curriculum & Instruction Class of 2021, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Teaching mathematics in an intercultural school context: A theoretical review

Georgia Karountzou,[2] University of Peloponnese, Greece
Maria Pliota, Greece

The multicultural conditions that emerged in modern societies have highlighted the urgent need to develop educational programs and models that permit countries hosting immigrants to manage the diversity of the student population and the different needs and the requirements for learning and integration. Like most school subjects, mathematics, through the way it is structured, distributed, organized, and presented, contributes to students acquiring the necessary skills to meet the needs of manual and mental work. This paper explains how social origin and language acquisition affect the teaching and learning of mathematics and how ethnomathematics can contribute to a multicultural education.

Keywords: mathematics, learning, school performance intercultural, ethnomathematics,

Mathematics and school context

Mathematics, learning and teaching practice

Mathematics is a human activity produced by social processes (Koleza,2009). It is a tool for understanding and interpreting the world, because it can represent abstract relationships with symbols and shapes and turn a general notion into a concept that is easier to think about. Furthermore, it encourages the human mind to interpret different situations by using different approaches (Sakonidis,2004). Due to all of the above reasons, mathematics is a subject that is highly valued in the context of society and school (Koleza, 2002).

Teaching and learning mathematics depend to a large extent on language, since mathematics is related to abstract concepts and relationships that obtain meaning only through language (Barwell, 2008).The language of mathematics contains words, phrases and expressions that can be classified into four categories: a) “high frequency vocabulary”, which is related to social language and contains terms used in everyday life (e.g. smaller, closed); b) “general vocabulary”, which is found in the academic language used in school, but not directly in mathematics (e.g. describe, combine); c) “specialized vocabulary”, which includes terms of the academic language that are widely associated with mathematics (e.g. number, angle, equation); and d) "technical vocabulary", which contains terms of academic language related to a specific section of mathematics (e.g. supplementary angles, tangent, secondary equations) (Slavit&Ernst - Slavit,2007, p. 6).

Learning and teaching mathematics in school is a very complex process that is influenced by the action and interaction of historical, social, cultural and political factors within the school classroom and the environment in which it operates (Sakonidis, 2017). There are theories arguing that learning is the process of acquiring and accumulating knowledge, in which the individual constructs knowledge by accumulating and combining concepts in order to form more complex

---

[2] Corresponding Author: Georgia Karountzou, Nafpliou 15, Drepano Argolidas PC21060, University of Peloponnese,City, Tripolis, 31100,Greece. email: georgiakaarountzou@yahoo.gr

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

cognitive structures. There are other theories that perceive learning as a process of participation in which learning activities are examined in relation to the sociocultural environment they are implemented in (Sfard, 1998).

In the context of a theory of learning as knowledge acquisition, mathematical knowledge is transferred from the teacher (facilitator, mediator) to the students, while according to the theory of learning as participation, mathematical knowledge is the result of social agreement and participation in practice communities. These communities are a set of people who share common concerns regarding something they do, and they learn how to do it better by interacting frequently (Sakonidis,2004; Wenger, 2011). The above two theories, despite their differences, offer complementary perspectives on learning and teaching; their views are not competitive and one does not exclude the other (Sfard, 1998).

Mathematics and school performance

School performance in mathematics plays an important role in society because mathematical performance is an indicator of economic and social progress. Students with mathematical skills are considered to be able to do higher studies in scientific and technological fields and then participate in the economic and political life of a state (Valero, 2017). Moreover, the position of the individual in society is determined by his performance and efficiency in the work he undertakes (Vareltzi & Giavrimis, 2018). In the past, psychologists and mathematicians have argued that a person's mathematical ability is an innate ability, resulting in the perception that the failure in mathematics of students who usually belonged to lower-income social classes, indicated a lack of intelligence, natural skills and talent (Toumasis, 1985). This meant that some students were born gifted with intelligence and skills that led them to a higher school performance, and others were not. These views were intended to provide a scientific and ideological background to the inequality and injustice that characterize a class society in which conflicting interests exist (Toumasis, 1985). Today, the scientific community does not accept the notion that individuals' differences in intelligence determine the performance of children in school and considers this view to be a product of prejudice and racism (Fragoudaki, 2001).

Mathematical ability and performance are not affected by the inherent characteristics (words, symbols, hierarchical structure) of mathematics but by the way mathematics education shapes subjectivities and adopts practices that can lead to integration or exclusion, justice or injustice (Valero, 2017). Although many efforts have been made to date to improve mathematics education and make the most of research findings, many students fail in mathematics, and, in fact, most of them come from socially and culturally vulnerable groups (Sakonidis, 2004).

Performance in mathematicsand socio-cultural background

The process by which all school subjects are taught contributes to students acquiring the necessary skills for contribution to society through manual and mental work. However, at the same time, that process reproduces, conceals and legitimizes social inequality, by imposing the ideology that supports injustice. (Hasapis, 2005). This is certainly true for mathematics. Mathematical performance is associated with social discrimination and marginalization, since the subject of mathematics in school conveys not only knowledge and skills but also values, perceptions and attitudes that refer to specific social and ideological beliefs (Pantazis & Maniatis, 2008). Social

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

segregation based on performance in school mathematics has consequences for low-achieving students associated with either negative characterizations or marginalization, especially in the labor market. Good performance, by contrast, is a qualification that allows greater access to social goods (Koleza, 2002; Valero, 2017).

Since 1950, research in the Western world has found that there is a positive correlation between students' school performance and social background (Fragoudaki,2001). In fact, low performance, and low expectations for their future at school concerned mainly children of lower social levels (Fragoudaki,2001).In particular, with regard to performance in mathematics, the socio-economic class and cultural differences of the students play an important role (Pantazis&Maniatis,2008). A relatively recent international study on the performance of students in mathematics based on their socio-economic origin was implemented in 2012 by the International Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) using the PISA (Program Student for International Student Assessment) assessment program. In this 2012 assessment, the mathematical knowledge and skills of 510,000 students at the age of 15 (a sample representing 28 million students) from 65 countries were evaluated. The results showed that “a student coming from a more favorable socio-economic background achieves in mathematics a score higher by 39 points (which is equivalent to an additional year of schooling) compared to a student from a less favorable environment” (OECD, 2014. p. 12).

Mathematics education is interpreted as a method of classifying students according to abilities that have been characterized as important in society; it "acts as a sponsor of the suitability mark for the privileged of a particular society" (Koleza, 2002, p. 387). In addition, it identifies what is valuable, correct and normal; determines the successful participation in society of those students who have high mathematical performance; describes the organization of the world in a specific way; and, finally, promotes a model of power exercised by those who succeed over those who fail in mathematics (Sakonidis, 2017). Power is linked to mathematical norms, which legitimize mathematical activity in the classroom and are related to the ways and rules applied in the science of mathematics, as well as the ways in which teachers and students explain school mathematics(Sakonidis, 2017).For example, a student who does not think in a certain way and does not use tools consolidated in the mathematical community of the class is relegated by the class into a group that does not understand the world according to its mathematical aspects. A student who does not follow the commonly accepted goal for which we learn mathematics is classified as one of those who do not do real mathematics (Sakonidis, 2017). Regarding their school performance, what is particularly important is the language spoken by the students, each of whom—depending on their social backgrounds—comes to school with a different level of familiarity and competence as far as the language of the school is concerned (Askouni, 2007).

Prediger (2002) presents the different views of researchers about whether mathematical knowledge is independent of the socio-cultural context in which it develops. As an example, she cites Hersh's (1997, p. 11) view that "mathematics is perceived as a human activity, a social phenomenon, a part of human civilization, historically evolving and understandable only within a social context." Mathematics is recognized as a "cultural product", influenced by the human factor, through specific local and temporal cultural parameters (Koleza, 2002 p. 377). An opposite view was expressed by the sociologist Heintz (2000, op. Cit. In Prediger 2002), according to whom mathematics is very cohesive, since connections and relationships are discovered among its various parts despite the fact that they were developed separately by scientists who worked individually. Additionally, in mathematics, the conclusions that emerge are obligatory and cannot

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

be given different interpretations, because he who applies the rules of mathematics is always led to the same result. According to Koleza (2002), the difference in the views of these two researchers is related to the way each of them defines mathematics. Heintz is a supporter of formalist mathematics: that is, the absolute consistency of mathematical concepts and theories and the agreement between researchers of mathematics. She emphasizes the final, justified result and is not particularly interested in the process that leads to it. Unlike Heintz, Hersh considers the process that leads to an understanding of the content of mathematics very important, given that this process is influenced by social and cultural factors. In any case, researchers interested in bridging the two views summarized above do not consider it important how mathematicians develop the science of mathematics but how they help people to understand the subject (Koleza, 2002). Especially in the case of school mathematics, it should be taken into consideration that the field is influenced by the multiculturalism of modern classes, as the mathematics content interacts with issues of language and civilization (Xenofontos, 2017).

Ethnomathematics or ethnocultural mathematics

Ethnomathematics as a field developed later than other ethnographic sciences (e.g. ethnoastronomy, ethnopsychology, ethnocentrism, ethnomusicology, etc.), due to the belief that mathematics is a global language independent of the cultural parameters of its developmental framework (Stathopoulou, 1999). The field finally appeared in the 1980s, and D 'Ambrosio (1987, op. Cit. In Michael & Lemonidis, 2007), defined it as the way different cultures enumerate, count, associate, classify, and infer using a set of practices, knowledge and codes that are different from culture to culture. There are two reasons for the delay in the field’s development: the first is the impasse created by formalist mathematics, which was not interested in the context in which the concepts of mathematics evolved, and the second is the questioning of Eurocentrism in mathematics and history (Stathopoulou,1999).

Proponents of ethnomathematics believe that mathematics as a cultural product can differ among cultures and that the mathematical elements that students bring from their cultures can be used in the teaching process to improve learning outcomes (Michael & Lemonidis, 2007). Bishop (1994) argued that there is a gap between school mathematics and students' mathematical experiences at home or in the community. As a result, students experience a cultural conflict in the process of mathematical education. Cognitive distance is due to the fact that mathematical knowledge is presented regardless of the environment in which it developed and the fact that the school cannot recognize and use the mathematical knowledge that students bring from their culture. The result of this distance is the failure of students in mathematics (Pantazis&Maniatis,2008).Ethnomathematics goes beyond the separation of academic mathematics (the language that best describes the world according to theorists of modernity) and practical mathematics (knowledge acquired informally from everyday life) and is related to socio-cultural inequality. The field recognizes how important a role students' cultural capital plays in the learning process and in shaping their social identity, as well as highlighting the contribution of non-Western civilizations to the development of mathematics (Koleza, 2002; Pantazis & Maniatis, 2008). The juxtaposition of ethnomathematics with academic mathematics is linked to the view that mathematics contains cultural values, in contrast to the view of formal mathematics. Formal mathematics shapes teaching methods, and claims that mathematics is independent of values, since its concepts are indisputable. At the same time, it is linked to the isolation and

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

exclusion experienced by students who do not have the mathematical way of thinking required by academic mathematics (Koleza, 2002).

Ethnomathematics, within the context of cultural relativism, has been criticized for not taking into account the fact that the mathematical practices of cultural groups are not governed by neutrality, but reflect inequality within them (Pantazis & Maniatis, 2008).Some of the published work in ethnomathematics offers such a superficial understanding of students' multicultural experiences that there is a risk of the field being accused of recommending a folkloric introduction to the teaching of academic mathematics (Orey & Rosa, 2006).However, despite existing reservations about ethnomathematics, its social-cultural approach to mathematics education cannot be ignored. In combination with the multiculturalism in classrooms nowadays, the field’s findings create the need to adopt an intercultural mathematics education that emphasizes cultural capital and the experiences of all students (Pantazis & Maniatis, 2008).

Teaching mathematics in intercultural classes

The acquisition of language and mathematics

The notion that mathematics has its own universal language and that therefore one does not need natural language to understand its meanings is a misconception that particularly affects the mathematical education of students of different cultural backgrounds (Tressou,2003). Language can facilitate or prevent the effective learning of mathematics (Xenofontos, 2014). For example, if the language used in teaching is different from the mother tongue of the students, then the interactions in the classroom do not make sense, and, consequently, these students do not acquire mathematical knowledge (Tressou,2003). Research findings (e.g. Adetula,1990; Bernardo, 1999) show that students who learn mathematics in a non-native language have difficulty coping but perform better when math problems are expressed in their mother tongue. The relationship between language and mathematics in classes with bilingual/multilingual students began to be studied in recent decades, in the years since the 1980s researchers began dealing with the cognitive factors that influence the learning of mathematics. From 1990 onwards, an investigation began regarding the way students' language interacts with the language used in the teaching of mathematics and that of mathematics itself (Sakonidis, 2004). Sakonidis (2004) states that initial research showed that learning mathematics is not hindered by bilingualism and that mathematical performance is related to language development. Adler (2001, op. Cit., referring to Sakonidis, 2004) states that subsequent research has shown that using students' mother tongue in combination with ensuring their access to the language mathematics is taught in *and* the language of mathematics can improve their performance. Bilingualism/multilingualism are not only a problem or disadvantage for teaching mathematics but can become a source of learning (Barwel, Barton & Setati, 2007).

Students' mother tongues and the knowledge they gain in mathematics through their own languages can help them build the second language, as well as mathematical knowledge, in the new school environment (Tressou,2003).One practice that allows students to use their mother tongue as a source of learning is code-switching, which is defined as the successive change back-and-forth between two or more languages through the interaction of bilingual/multilingual speakers (Setati & Adler, 2001,Tirvassen,2001, op. Cit. in Salehmohamed & Rowland,2014).Through this practice, students can understand the subject and therefore have

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

access to the curriculum. It also makes it possible to manage the classroom (discipline, motivation, praise), and the people involved in the educational process can negotiate different identities so as to make the relationships between students and teacher more humane (Ferguson, 2003).

Teaching mathematics to non-native-speaking students is quite a complex process and a challenge, as these students have different languages, experiences, expectations and academic competences (Xenofontos, 2014). Moschkovich (2012) suggests that teachers who teach in classes with non-native-speaking children focus on their mathematical thinking and not on the accuracy of the language they use and emphasize their mathematical speech practices (hypothesis, justification) without using a simplified form of language. Furthermore, she proposes that teachers support students in their involvement with the complexity of mathematical language, treat their language and experiences as learning resources and not as obstacles and try to discover mathematics in students' words and actions.

Applying intercultural education within the teaching of mathematics

When mathematics is taught in a multicultural class, the analytical program, the management of the classroom, the expectations of teachers, the relationships between teachers and students and the professional development of teachers (Zaslavsky, 1998) all play an important role. When the curriculum is common to all students and all schools, it cannot meet the educational needs of a group of students, such as students with different language and cultural backgrounds, in such a way that there is equality in educational outcomes and participation (Mamas, 2014). An analytical program with an intercultural orientation concerns all students and focuses on both the acquisition of knowledge and the socio-emotional development of the individual. It takes into account the different ways in which they learn cultural characteristics and values and the knowledge, experiences and abilities of each student. It helps students acquire critical thinking, collaborate, respect human rights and understand that the various social groups and people interact and depend on each other (Evangelou,2005).

The search for ways to connect mathematics with today's diverse society reveals, on the one hand, an interesting leveraging students' experiences and informal cultural and linguistic knowledge in order to improve their performance and achieve their academic goals. On the other hand, this search aims at fighting against the prejudices that exist toward some cultural groups, giving importance to elements that make them unique but also to elements that are common to all cultures (Skoubourdi & Stathopoulou, 2006). As part of this research, Strutchens (1995) adapted the five dimensions of multicultural education within the teaching of mathematics, as defined by Banks (1994, pp. 4-5). These are "content integration", "knowledge construction", "reduction of prejudice", "fair pedagogy" and "strengthening school culture and social structure”. All five are needed in order for mathematics to acquire more cultural content.

Here is a more detailed explanation of how the five dimensions of multicultural education can be applied to the teaching of mathematics (Strutchens, 1995):

a) Integration of content” involves the recognition of the contribution of different cultures to mathematics in the curriculum and in classroom discussions, which would otherwise mainly focus on the influence of Western cultures. This recognition enables students

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

who have a different culture from the dominant one to overcome their fears and adopt a positive attitude towards mathematics.

b) “Construction of knowledge” refers to the process by which knowledge is constructed, both at the group level and the individual level. In this context, teachers can help students understand that mathematics includes activities that are universal and are observed in all cultural groups, such as "numbering", "counting", "locating in space", "design", "play" and "justification" (Bishop, 1988, pp. 182-183). However, there are differences in the way different cultures approach the above activities.

c) The “reduction of prejudice” is linked to the use of mathematics (e.g. statistics) in order to study cultural and social issues that can highlight and stop stereotypes and inaccuracies concerning cultural groups. At the same time, it can provoke positive attitudes towards the groups that differ from the dominant one.

d) “Fair pedagogy” refers to the interaction of teachers and students within the framework of mutual respect for culture. To ensure equality in education, teachers should consider that all students can learn mathematics, facilitate the construction of mathematical knowledge for students and acknowledge that students learn in different ways.

e) "Strengthening school culture and social structure" is linked to multicultural education through grouping, social climate, assessment, participation in extracurricular activities, teachers' expectations and the reactions caused by the heterogeneity in student population.

An important role in shaping an intercultural approach to mathematics education is played by the relationships developed between teachers and students who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the relationships between the students themselves in a school class (Pantazis & Maniatis, 2008). In fact, Cummins (2005) argues that these interactive relationships are more important to students' progress than any teaching method that can be used when teaching mathematics. Relationships between teachers and students show how teachers have defined their own identities; their expectations, perceptions and goals; the way they approach students' abilities; and the impression that teachers give students regarding the latter's contribution to society (Cummins, 2005).The different ways in which teachers treat students is due to the perceptions and images they have of them, which are related to the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students (Askouni & Androussou, 2001).

The beliefs and principles of many teachers result in low expectations about the competence of foreign students and students with different learning needs (Mamas, 2014). According to Askouni and Androusou (2001), many studies highlight the correlation between these students’ low results in school and the low expectations that teachers have for them. Teachers' expectations are more likely to be related to these students’ social development than their academic one, and, as a result, teachers' beliefs become a determining factor in students' school performance (Mamas, 2014).This differentiated behavior gives students indirect and clear information about what the teacher expects from them, thus affecting their learning motivations, self-perception about their abilities and self-esteem (Rist, 1977, op. Cit. Androusou, 2001).

Teachers' expectations of students are one of the factors shaping the evaluation practices that teachers apply in the mathematics lesson (Klothou&Sakonidis,2015). Their assessments are based upon the objectives of the curriculum, the effectiveness of the teacher's teaching methods and the results observed in students' learning (Kafousi, Stathopoulou, & Skoumbourdi,2010). The

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

traditional assessment model (teaching by the teacher, written or oral examination of students at a specific time and recording the student's performance with numerical or qualitative data), seeks to control the degree of control the dominant culture has over the student. It does not take into account the social factors and especially the power relations that develop in the classroom. By contrast, modern approaches to assessment recognize that the evaluation of students' achievements is a social process defined by social parameters (Klothou & Sakonidis,2015). In the Greek educational system, the assessment of students in mathematics is related to the estimated level at which students possess knowledge and skills and uses the attainment, which creates hierarchical relationships (Lazarou, 2015).

REFERENCES

Adetula, L. O. (1990). Language factor: Does it affect children's performance on word problems? *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 21*(4), 351–365.

Askouni, N. (2007). *Social inequalities in school* [Κοινωνικές ανισότητες στο σχολείο] (2nd ed.). Athens: Ministry of Education, University of Athens. Retrieved December 21, 2019, fromhttp://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/retrieve/3203/931.pdf

Banks, J. A. (1994). Transforming the mainstream curriculum. *EducationalLeadership,51*(8), 4-8.

Barwell, R. (2008). *ESL in the mathematics classroom*. Research Monograph #14, What Works? Research into Practice series. Ontario: The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

Barwell, R., Barton, B., &Setati, M. (2007) Multilingualism in mathematics education: Introduction. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 64*(2), 113-119. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-006-9065-x

Bernardo, A. B. (1999). Overcoming obstacles to understanding and solving word problems in mathematics. *Educational Psychology*, *19*(2), 149-163.

Bishop, A.J. (1988). Mathematics education in its cultural context. *Educational Studies in Mathematics,19*(2), 179-191.https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00751231

Bishop, A.J. (1994) Cultural conflicts in mathematics education: Developing a research agenda. *For the learning of mathematics, 14*(2), 15–18.

Chasapis, D. (2005). Social dimensions of mathematics education: Aspects and issues.[Κοινωνικέςδιαστάσειςτηςμαθηματικήςεκπαίδευσης: Όψεις και ζητήματα]. In D. Hasapis (Ed.), *4th Two-Day Dialogue on the Teaching of Mathematics. Social and cultural dimensions of mathematics education*, March 19-20, 2005 (pp. 9-23). Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Evangelou, O. (2005). *Interculturalism in the Greek primary school curriculum: Teachers' views* [Η διαπολιτισμικότητα στο αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα του ελληνικού δημοτικού σχολείου: οι απόψεις των εκπαιδευτικών]. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

Fragoudaki, A. (2001). Social inequality in education. [Η κοινωνική ανισότητα στην εκπαίδευση] In: V. Riga (Ed.), *Social identities/othernesses-social inequalities, bilingualism and school* (pp. 81-165). Hellenic Open University.

Hersh, R.(1997). *What is Mathematics, Really?* Oxford University Press.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Kafousi, S., Stathopoulou, Ch., & Skoumbourdi Ch. (2010). Assessment in mathematics and school failure: The case of students in evening classes. [Αξιολόγηση στα μαθηματικά και σχολική αποτυχία: Η περίπτωση των μαθητών των εσπερινών σχολείων].*Mentor*, 12, 19-35.

Klothou, A., & Sakonidis, Ch. (2015). Assessment in mathematics: Aspects of sense - making of primary school teachers. [Η αξιολόγηση στα μαθηματικά: όψεις της νοηματοδότησης των εκπαιδευτικών της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης].*Research in the Teaching of Mathematics*, (8), 55-86.https: //doi.org/10.12681/enedim.14240

Koleza, E. (2002). Typical Mathematics and Ethnomathematics: Epistemological and socio-political views. [Τυπικά Μαθηματικά και Εθνομαθηματικά: Επιστημολογικές και κοινωνικο-πολιτικές θεωρήσεις]. *Proceedings of the 19th Panhellenic Conference on Mathematical Education on the topic: Mathematics A Timeless Factor of Culture*, 8-10 November 2005 (pp. 376-389). Hellenic Mathematical Society.

Koleza, E. (2009). *Theory and practice in the teaching of Mathematics*. [Θεωρία και πράξη στη διδασκαλία των Μαθηματικών]. Topos.

Lazarou, I. (2015). Factors, criteria and objectives of the evaluation of students' written texts: A study from the point of view of the teacher. [Παράγοντες, κριτήρια και στόχοι της αξιολόγησης γραπτών κειμένων των μαθητών: Μια μελέτη από τη σκοπιά του εκπαιδευτικού](Master's thesis). National and Kapodistrian University of Athens & University of Cyprus.

Ferguson, G. (2003). Classroom code-switching in post-colonial contexts: Functions, attitudes and policies. *AIL A Review, 16*(1), 38–51.https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.16.05fer

Mamas, Ch. (2014). Inclusive and intercultural education: Two sides of the same coin?. [Συμπεριληπτική και διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση: δύο όψεις του ίδιου νομίσματος;].InCh. Chatzisotiriou, & K. Xenofontos (Eds.), *Intercultural Education: Challenges, pedagogical views and suggestions* (pp. 80-95). Saita.

Michail, M., & Lemonidis, Ch. (2007). Ethnomathematics and the teaching of patterns: A research study in students of 5th grade.[Τα εθνομαθηματικά και η διδασκαλία μοτίβων: Μια ερευνητική μελέτη σε μαθητές Ε΄ τάξης].*Proceedings of the 9th Pancyprian Conference on Mathematics Education and Science*, 2-4 February (pp. 291-303). Paphos. Retrieved February 15, 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289730164

Moschkovich, J. (2012). Mathematics, the Common Core, and language: Recommendations for mathematics instruction for ELs aligned with the Common Core. *Understanding Language Conference, 5 April 2012* (pp. 17-27). Stanford, CA: Stanford University.

OECD (2014). *PISA 2012 Results in focus: What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know.* OECD Publishing.

Orey, D. C., & Rosa, M. (2006). Ethnomathematics: Cultural assertions and challenges towards pedagogical action. *The Journal of Mathematics and Culture, 1*(1), 57-78.

Pantazis, V. & Maniatis, P. (2008). Intercultural Learning and Mathematics. The question of their relationship and the request of their coexistence. [Διαπολιτισμική μάθηση και Μαθηματικά. Το ζητούμενο της σχέσης τους και το αίτημα της συνύπαρξής τους]. VIII *Panhellenic Conference: Mathematics and Humanities*, Athens, 6-8 November 2008. Retrieved June 23, 2019, from https://www.academia.edu/8100348

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Prediger, S. (2002). Consensus and coherence in mathematics—How can they be explained in a culturalistic view? *Philosophy of Mathematics Education Journal*, *16*.

Sakonidis, Ch. (2004). *Learning and teaching mathematics*. [Μαθαίνοντας και διδάσκοντας μαθηματικά]. Athens: Ministry of Education, University of Athens. Retrieved January 15, 2020, fromhttps://www.kleidiakaiantikleidia.net/book31/book31.pdf

Sakonidis, Ch. (2017). The mathematical education of children of the Muslim minority in Thrace: Social, cultural and political parameters. [Η μαθηματική εκπαίδευση των παιδιών της μουσουλμανικής μειονότητας στη Θράκη: Κοινωνικές, πολιτισμικές και πολιτικές παράμετροι].*Research in the Teaching of Mathematics*, (10), 27-54. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/enedim.15217

Salehmohamed, A., &Rowland, T. (2014). Whole-class interactions and code-switching in secondary mathematics teaching in Mauritius. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*, *26*(3), 555–577.

Setati, M., & Adler, J. (2001). Between languages and discourses: Language practices in primary multilingual mathematics classrooms in South Africa. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, *43*(3), 243–269.

Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher, 27*(2), 4-13.

Slavit, D., & Ernst-Slavit, G. (2007). Teaching mathematics and English to English language learners simultaneously. *Middle School Journal*, *39*(2), 4-11.

Skoumpourdi, Ch. & Stathopoulou, Ch. (2006). The role of mathematics education in modern multicultural society. [Ο ρόλος της μαθηματικής εκπαίδευσης στη σύγχρονη πολυπολιτισμική κοινωνία]. In D. Hatzidimou & C. Vitsilaki (Eds.), *XI International Conference on the School in the Information Society and Multiculturalism, Rhodes*, October 21-23, 2005 (pp. 821-828). Kyriakidis Publications.

Stathopoulou, Ch. (1999). Ethnomathematics: The ethnomathematics in mathematics education. [Εθνομαθηματικά: τα εθνομαθηματικά στη μαθηματική εκπαίδευση]. *Proceedings of the 16th Panhellenic Conference on Mathematics Education on the subject Mathematics, Youth and Society, 12-14 November 1999* (pp. 440-445). Hellenic Mathematical Society.

Strutchens, M. (1995). *Multicultural Mathematics: A More Inclusive Mathematics*. ERIC Digest. Retrieved February 10, 2020, from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED380295

Toumasis, M. (1985). Intelligence and mathematical skills. [Ευφυΐα και μαθηματικές ικανότητες]. *Mathematical Review*, (29), 52-77.

Tressou, E. (2003). Mathematics in multicultural classes: Misunderstandings and possibilities. [Μαθηματικά σε πολυπολιτισμικές τάξεις: Παρανοήσεις και δυνατότητες]. *Panhellenic Conference on Mathematical Education*, (20), 465-476.

Valero, P. (2017). Integration and exclusion in mathematics education and 'construction' of the modern. [Ένταξη και αποκλεισμός στη μαθηματική εκπαίδευση και «κατασκευή» του σύγχρονου]. *Research in Mathematics Teaching*, 0 (10), 9-26. https://doi.org/10.12681/enedim.15204

Vareltzi, E., & Giavrimis, P. (2018). Students with low school performance and labeling theory. [Μαθητές με χαμηλή σχολική επίδοση και η θεωρία της «ετικέτας»] *Educational Sciences*, (1), 137-151.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Wenger, E. (2011). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction*. Retrieved January 30, 2020, from http://hdl.handle.net/1794/11736

Xenofontos, K. (2017). Beliefs of Cypriot teachers for the teaching and learning of mathematics in linguistically and culturally diverse environments. [Πεποιθήσεις Κυπρίων δασκάλων για τη διδασκαλία και μάθηση των μαθηματικών σε γλωσσικά και πολιτισμικά ποικιλόμορφα περιβάλλοντα]. *Research in the Teaching of Mathematics*, (10), 55-72.http: //dx.doi.org/10.12681/enedim.15467

Zavlavsky, C. (1998). Ethnomathematics and multicultural mathematics education. *Teaching Children Mathematics*, *4*(9), 502-503.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Georgia Karountzou: University of Peloponnese**,** Educational Coodinator. (Ph.D, M.Ed, MA in Human Rights and Comparative Education), Peloponnese,City, Tripolis, Greece.

Pliota Maria: French teacher. (M.Ed, M.S.).

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

DSTV and glocalization: The case study of the Greek target audience in South Africa

Sofia Arvanitidou [3], Deputy Director of the Vocational Training Institute in Lemnos island,
Greece

Abstract: In the evolution of cultural studies and globalization, theorists have ascertained that "transnational satellite broadcasters and media companies have tapped into the emergent geo-cultural and linguistic groups". This study aims to shed light upon the implications of satellite TV (DSTV) in the global sphere, more specifically the Greek paradigm in South Africa comparatively presented with a published case-study examining Turkish migrants in London. Moreover, the study investigates how and to what extent satellite broadcasting is inter-related or counter-related to the notions of technology, convergence, glocalization, cosmopolitanism and identity (global and local). The study contends that global media policy has to find ways to accommodate differences of view and perspective. Intercultural media have to accommodate the new cultural complexity that emerges out of the contemporary encounter between national and transnational cultures and spaces.

Keywords: intercultural media, diasporic communities, glocalization, cosmopolitanism, identity

Media and Diasporic Communities

Nowadays, it is more than evident that the term 'globalization' is used as globally as its meaning denotes. Its meaning is encapsulated in the interpretation that Armand Matterland has given as:

> One of those tricky words, one of those instrumental notions that under the effect of market logics and without citizens being aware of it, have been naturalized to the point of becoming indispensable for establishing communication between people of different countries (2000, p. 97).

The idea of globalization encompasses cultures, societies, and political and economic settings throughout the globe. What is taking place in one part of the globe becomes a reality in another part of the globe, severely influencing the group dynamics there and annihilating the notion of time and space. As Eriksen correctly puts it, "It cannot be contested that globalization in all its forms—political, cultural, economic, military…—is a pervasive tendency influencing the lives of people everywhere, from the Amazon rainforest to Japanese cities" (2005, p. 26).

More specifically, the geographical *scape* of South Africa contains several ethnic groups, amongst them those of Greek/Greek-Cypriot ethnicity that constitute "migrant audiences" yearning for the need to stay "connected to the identity groups of their country of origin". That need is fulfilled through the use of "transnational broadcasting systems", mostly televised broadcasting. In Castell's words, "transnationalism is the reality for millions of immigrants that bridge economies and societies between countries-for the benefit of their families, of their companies and of their countries" (2001, p. 166). Therefore, "new media technologies are making

---

[3] Corresponding Author: Sofia Arvanitidou, Sialma 8, Vocational Training Institute in Lemnos Island, 81400, Greece. email: sofia.arvanitidou@gmail.com

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2021, www.sietar.ch/journal

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

it possible to transcend the distances that have separated the ‘diasporic communities’ around the world from the communities of origin” (Robins & Aksoy, 2005, p. 44).

The above stance is effectively demonstrated in the words of Virilio stating that “continents have lost their geographical foundations and been supplanted by the *telecontinents* of a global communication system which has become quasi-instantaneous” (Virilio, 2000, as cited in Schirato and Webb, 2003, p. 68). All the continents have been converged to one global continent. Of course, for ‘global convergence’ to become applicable, it is presupposed that a prominent number around the globe have access to that technology. However, as Schirato and Webb demonstrate, surely, “being a member of an affluent technologized society doesn’t automatically provide access to its facilities or its advantages” (2003, p. 69). The above statement can be easily figured out if one takes into account particularities such as social status, personal interests and choices of non-prioritising the use of information technology amongst groups. Furthermore, one’s age group (young, middle-aged, old), gender (male-female), and other cultural specificities play a vital role in in the degree of bonding one experiences with communication technologies. Their effects are also of core importance to career-orientated members of big corporate models. Clearly, “what matters is not technology itself, but the social and economic system in which it is embedded” (Winner, 1986, p. 20). In other words, people’s livelihoods do not change because of technology; they “change in the light of the way technology becomes embedded in the overall context of the local and the global” (Mansell, 2005, p. 93), a realization that highlights the power of socio-economic factors over both global and local contexts.

Whatever the case, as Thussu points out: “In a digitally connected globe, flows of all kinds of information-political discourse, scientific research, corporate data, personal communication and media entertainment circulate round the world at a speed unimaginable even a decade ago” (2007, p. 1). To put the realization in a case study’s framework related to the South Africa landscape, the above question arises: What are the dynamics of South Africa as a regional media power? According to the published case study of Tomaselli, Wasserman and Beer (2003), “in comparison with the global power house of the United States and Britain, South Africa appears to be on the receiving end of cultural products carried by globalizing media” (as cited in Thussu**,** 2007, p. 153). Gordon, in his article “The new digital divide”, ascertains that South African broadcasters have been gearing up for terrestrial digital TV using a European technology called digital video broadcasting-terrestrial (DVB-T), but the government is seriously considering the application of Japan’s services of digital broadcasting terrestrial standard (ISDB-T) and, thus, increasing the competition against the backdrop of a vacillating regulatory landscape (2010). In Ahonen’s electronic article “Digital Divide: Global Household Penetration Rates for Technology,” a new term, ‘emerging world’, is used in substitution of the recently-called Developing World countries of Latin America, Africa and the less affluent parts of Asia, such as China, India, Indonesia etc. (2011). In the words of Deane et al: “Satellite television [...] in a decade has transformed television, having major repercussions for culture, regional, political relations, economic development and political debate, and has impinged on almost all other aspects of life on the subcontinent” (2004, p. 78).

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

DSTV and glocalization: The case study of the Greek target audience in South Africa

It is evident according to Hartley that “the global coherence of the *mediasphere* [term used in Hartley & Mackee, (2000)] as an organised system of communication was not apparent to most individual viewers until they could see it on their screens” (2005, p. 14). As Ghemawat demonstrates in his published case study concerning STAR TV operating in Asia, “satellite television itself is often cited as a key driver of globalization given its ability to stretch broadcast content across geographies” (2000). Accordingly, Multichoice Limited (MCL) a company that launched a service distributed via satellite and offering a bouquet of channels across Africa in 1993 constitutes the beginning of DSTV (Direct Satellite), underlining the first “transnational venture in the African continent” (Tomaselli, Wasserman and Beer, 2003 as cited in Thussu**,** 2007, p. 156). According to the same case study, in 1995 MultiChoice expanded into Greece and few years later into other countries as well. MultiChoice Hellas is the first license holder for the provision of pay-TV programs. In Greece, MultiChoice Hellas founded the NOVA bouquet channels, which transmit via satellite and contain specific content programs (such as movies, sports, documentaries etc.). However, as truly stated by Tomaselli, Wasserman and Beer, “growth in the satellite television market will be determined most directly by the expansion of the middle classes, able and willing to afford the subscription fees for the service” (ibid:157). This “direct-to-home” digital service includes channels of international standards such as Discovery, National Geographic, BBC World, CNN International and more, without excluding editions tailored to serve the needs of the audiences of a specific country. For example, ERT World (Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation) provides a satellite edition tailored for the needs of Greek expatriates. More specifically, “ERT World has created a special program, consisting of the best programmes from the three national Greek channels, NET, ET-1 & ET-3 and its own specialised programs targeted at the global promotion of Greece” (Wikipedia).

Similar to the paradigm of Turkish migrants in London, Greek-language “media can, indeed, be important for overcoming [Greek] migrants’ experience of cultural separation” (Robins & Aksoy, 2005, p.44). Using the case study of Turkish migrants in London and adapting it into the Greek migrant milieu in South Africa, one can conclude that it is important to the South African Greeks to watch the news broadcasting about Greece every day, the Greek soap operas, TV series, games, and reality shows in the essence that they feel “not so far away from the ‘homeland’. This live broadcasting of events happening in Greece brings them closer to the country’s modern identity, resulting at the same time in their “liberating themselves from certain outdated and culturally imprisoning notions of [Greekness] which had survived in the isolation of migration” (Milikowski, 2000 as cited in Robins & Aksoy, 2005, p. 49).

A comparative analysis of the South African example and a published case study about Greek satellite TV in the States also shows similarities to the Turkish situation in London. The programming for both countries (USA and SA) seems tailored to fit the Greeks abroad and to accommodate the time difference between Greece and the other parts of the world**.** Besides news and opinions, satellite TV offers traditional songs and dances, reality shows, sports, and Greek soap operas. However, a non-migrant Greek in South Africa, will notice that the TV series showing in SA were already shown in Greece five to seven years ago. The daily news shown has a certain originality; however, the style is not as formal as that of the news shown on the Greek

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

mainland. Clearly the update of information is not applicable here and a review targeting the improvement of transnational broadcasting should definitely take place, should the tailored edition succeed in serving the needs of the expatriates (Robins& Aksoy, 2005) and not of the media companies acting mainly as ‘subscription managers’. (Term used in Tomaselli, Wasserman and Beer, 2003 as cited in Thussu**,** 2007, p. 156.).

However, as Scannell ascertains, the programs do succeed in creating a sense of ‘dailiness’ and function every time in such a way that viewers or listeners come to regard them as a “natural, ordinary, unremarkable, everyday entitlement” (1996, p. 145-146 as cited in Robins & Aksoy, 2005:52). Can this disillusionment be a productive experience? According to Robins & Aksoy, the answer is positive regarding the Turkish migrants since they “develop a comparative and critical attitude, and may become more reflexively aware of the arbitrariness and provisionality of cultural orders” (2005, p. 55). The paradigm is similarly applicable to the Greek migrants. The ideas and stereotypes that the migrants carried all their expatriate lives about Greece are slowly dispersing and dissolving as the media communicate the new cultural order, which through the course of time has been altered and now works against the ‘confining mentality of imagined community’. Furthermore, the Greeks in South Africa are caught up in more than one cultural experience, being in contact with the multicultural milieus of South Africa and, thus, they become more flexible and open to changes. Hence, as Robins & Aksoy ascertain, the global media policy has to “find ways to accommodate differences of view and perspective. The media cultures have to accommodate the new cultural complexity that emerges out of the contemporary encounter between national and transnational cultures, spaces” (2005, p. 56).

Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization

Victor Roudometof, in his article “Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization”, contends that “the growth of transnational social spaces, social fields and networks is born out of internal globalization or glocalization” (2005, p. 121). More specifically:

> Internal globalization means that large numbers of people around the globe are exposed to other cultures on a daily basis without crossing borders on a regular basis, simply through the variety of communication media (including satellite broadcasting and other forms of communication) (Roudometof, 2005, p.121).

The process of globalization brings the population of the world under the same roof and every member of the population is, thus, linked and interrelated to each other. The flow of media takes a massive form, and its content has been conveyed and transported, annihilating the cultural, economic, and social borders imposed by nations. For example, television can provide a new space, a symbolic place (Harvey, 1995, p. 16) where both local and global identities are represented. The journey of the audiences is symbolic as their “imaginations connect them to the global, local or both” (Burawoy, 2000, p. 4). Thus, people come to imagine “distant events and processes more routinely in their perceptions of what is significant for their own personal lives” (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 115) de-territorializing themselves from “physical geography/place” (Rantanen, 2005, p. 98). It is, however, useful, according to Featherstone, 1995, p. 181) to think of “global and local cultures [as] relational” and, thus, eradicating the dominion of one over the other. As Tomlinson points out: “deterritorialization is the major cultural impact of global

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

connectivity" (1999, p. 30) as it leads to the transformation of the local identities "dislodging them from their 'anchors' in the local environment" (ibid).

In juxtaposition with the relational ratio of globalization and locality, the term, glocalization (Roudometof, 2005) derived from the blending of the terms global and local respectively, "is meant to transcend the binary opposition between the 'global' and the 'local' and to provide an accurate linguistic representation of their blending in real life" (Robertson, 1992). The notion of glocalization is strongly interrelated with the 'hypothesis of a cosmopolitan-local continuum'. The word 'cosmopolitan' is an English and French rendition of the Greek word kosmo-polite, a compound noun that literary means the 'citizen [politis] of the world [cosmos]' (Cheah, 1998, p. 22). According to Roudometof "cosmopolitans and locals diverge with respect to the degree of attachment to a local culture or to a state or a country. Cosmopolitans have a low degree of such attachment and locals have a high degree of such attachment" (2005, p. 125). It is better to conceptualize the two categories as forming a single continuum accentuating the fact that both global and local identities can be combined.

In the abovementioned comparative study, satellite TV targeting Greek audiences in South Africa is not at all local or 'ethno-cultural in its motivation'. It is entirely social, as broadcasting produces "a world in common, a world we share" in a cosmopolitan ambience (Scannell, 1996 as cited in Robins & Aksoy, 2005, p. 53). Hence, as Williams ascertains, "an emerging global civil society cuts across traditional, national, political boundaries and produces new forms of identity. Increasingly all audiences view themselves as part of a global community with hybrid or multiple identities". (2003, p. 84). This very concept of 'global community-culture' is introduced and analyzed in Wallerstein's book The National and the Universal: Can There Be Such a Thing as World Culture?, indicating the paradoxical semantic denotation of the word 'culture'. 'Culture' defines the particular characteristics of groups but at the same time these cultural values and beliefs can only be presumed in reference to a global-universal ratio of criteria. It seems as though "today's emerging global culture is tied to no place or period. It is context-less, a true mélange of disparate components drawn from everywhere, and for its purposes the past only serves to offer some decontextualized example or element for its cosmopolitan patchwork" (Smith, 1990, p. 177).

Local Cultures: Global Change

As Hannerz (1991) successfully demonstrates in his 'Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures', the dominant scenario of a future culture is that of the 'global homogenization of culture' generated by the new market dynamics that favor greater standardization and homogenization of products. Delving into deeper analysis, Appadurrai, in his article "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Culture Economy" (1996), published in the *Globalization Reader,* criticizes the idea of identifying 'homogenization' with the globalization of culture; on the contrary, he argues, globalization involves elements of homogenization that have been transformed into "heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise and fundamentalism". All these different theoretical frameworks seem to converge into the perspective of 'hybridization', which aims at "releasing reflection and engagement from the bounds of nation, community, ethnicity and class" (Pieterse, 2004, p. 83).

In this global sphere, then, mass communication technologies have, indeed, entered and altered the lives of people, whereas, at the same time, the radical growth of media services

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

(broadband services, digital media etc.)**,** in conjunction with "the national investments in new technologies, [have] put the media landscape in a consistent state of flux that requires rapid, direct decisions and initiatives from media companies" (Kontochristou & Terzis, 2007, p. 13). These media companies are making efforts to bridge the gap between people that have access to digital information technology and those with limited or no access to digital technology at all (the "digital divide", aterm used in Ahonen**,** 2011)**.** In South Africa, in particular, not all Greek migrants have access to Greek channels, as they have to subscribe to be offered the service. A large number of the Greek migrants in SA, however, tend to utilize the telecommunication satellite's capacity resources, and will probably continue to do so as long as their 'imagined' connectedness with the mainland Survives.

After all, as John Hartley, successfully points out: "Globalized TV came of age as part of a *mediasphere* where the smallest individual elements could clearly be seen to interact with all the others, right around the planet. This was a globalization not so much of technology, economics or even content, but of humanity. And television played the central enabling role" (2006, p. 19).

REFERENCES

Ahonen**,** T. 2011. **"**Digital Divide: Global Household Penetration Rates for Technology" [e-article]. Available from http://www.brightsideofnews.com/ [Accessed 13 March 2011].

Appadurai, A. 1996. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In Lechner, F. J. and Bolis, J. (eds.), 2004, *The Globalization Reader* (2nd ed.), Blackwell, pp: 100-108.

Burawoy, M. 2000. *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkley, Los Angeles, University of California Press.

Castells, M. 2001. "Information technology and global development." In Muller, J. Cloete, N. and Badat, S. (eds.) *Challenges of globalization: South African debates with Manuel Castells*. Maskew Miller, pp. 152-167.

Cheah, P. 1998. "Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitan –Today." In Cheah, P. Robbins, B. (eds.) *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and feeling beyond the Nation*. University of Minnesota Press, pp.20-44.

Deane, J., Dixit, K., Mue, N., Banda, F. and Waibord, S. 2004. "The other Information Revolution: Media and empowerment in developing countries. In O Siochru, S. and Girard, B. (eds.) *Communicating in the Information Society.* Geneva: United National Research Institute for Social Development, pp. 65-100.

Eriksen, T. H. 2005. "How can the global be local? Islam, the West and the globalization of identity politics." In Hemer, O. and Tufte, T. (eds.) *Media and Glocal change*. Goteborg University, pp.25-40.

Falk, R. 1999. *Predatory Globalization*: *A Critique*. Polity Press.

Featherstone, M. 1995. "Global and local cultures." In Bird, J. Curtis. B. Putnam, T. Robertson, G. and Tickner, L. (eds.) *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. Routledge, pp. 169-187.

Ghemawat, P. 2000. "Global vs. Local products. A Case Study and a Model". *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, pp 65-72.

Gordon, G. 2010. "The New Digital Divide". [e-article]. Available from http://www.mg.co.za/ [Accessed 13 March 2011].

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

“Greek Landscapes: Greek satellite TV in the USA” (case study*)* retrieved from http://www.greeklanscapes.com/greek-american/satellite-tv.html [Accessed 13 March 2011].

Hall, S. 1992. “The question of cultural identity.” In Hall, S. et al (eds.) *Modernity and its Futures*. Polity Press, pp. 275-310.

Hannerz, U. 1991. “Scenarios for peripheral cultures.” In King, A. (ed.) *Culture, Globalization and the World System*. State University of New York.

Hartley, J. & McKee, A. 2000. *The Indigenous Public Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hartley, J. 2005. “Television and Globalization.” In Creeber, G. (ed.) *Tele-Visions: Concepts and Methods in Television Studies*. University of California Press.

Harvey. D. 2005. “From space to place and back again: Reflections on the conditions of Postmodernity.” In Bird, J. Curtis. B. Putnam, T. Robertson, G. and Tickner, L. (eds.) *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. Routledge, pp. 3-29.

Herman, Edward S. and McChesney, Robert W. 1997.*The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism.* Continuum.

Hiebert, R. and Gibbons, S. 1999. *Exploring Mass Media for a Changing World.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hyden, G. and Leslie, M. 2002. Communications and Democratization in Africa. In Hyden. G. Leslie, M. and Ogundimu, F. (eds.) *Media and Democracy in Africa*. Transaction, pp. 1-27.

Joyrich, L. 1996. *Re-viewing Reception: Television, Gender and Postmodern Culture*. Indiana University Press.

Kontochristou, M and Terzis, G. 2007. The Greek Media Landscape. In Terzis (ed.) *European Media Governance*. Intellect Books.

Mansell, R. 2005. The fragility of Knowledge Societies: Ambiguity, cost reduction and access in developing countries. In Milward-Oliver, G.: *Maitland +20: Fixing the missing link*. The Anima Center Limited, pp 81-98. (Reproduced on accompanying CD).

Mattelart, A. 2000. *Networking the World, 1794-2000*, trans. Liz Carey-Libbrecht and James A. Cohen. University of Minnesota Press

Pieterse, J. 2004. *Globalization and Culture: Global Melange.* Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 83.

Rantanen, T, 2005. *The Media and Globalization*. Sage Publications.

Robertson, R. 1992. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. Sage

Robins, K. and Aksoy, A. 2005. New complexities of transnational media culture. In Hemer, O. and Tufte, T. (eds.) *Media and Glocal Change*. Goteborg University. pp. 41-58.

Roudometof, V. 2005. Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization. Available from http://csi.sagepub.com/csi/ [Accessed 13 March 2011].

Schirato, T. and Webb, J. 2003. *Understanding Globalization*. London: Sage.

Smith, A. 1990. Toward a Global Culture. In Featherstone, M. (ed.) *Global Culture*, Sage, pp.177.

Teer-Tomaselli, R. Wasserman, H. and De Beer, A. 2006. Chapter 9: South Africa as a regional media power. In Thussu, D. K. (ed.) *Media on the Move: Global flow and contra-flow.* London and New York: Routledge, pp. 153-164.

Thussu, D. K. 2007. Introduction and Chapter 1: Mapping global media flow and contra-flow. In *Media on the Move: Global flow and contra-flow.* Routledge, pp. 1-32.

Tomlinson, J. 1999. *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp.115.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Wallerstein, I. 1991. The National and The Universal: Can There Be Such a Thing as World Culture? In King, A. (ed.) *Culture, Globalization and the World System*. State University of New York.

Wikipedia: ERT World (formerly ERT SAT) retrieved from http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ [Accessed 13 March 2011].

Williams, M. 2003. Social Movements and Global Politics. In Kofman, E. and Youngs, G. (eds.) *Globalization: Theory and Practice*. London: Continuum, pp 80-92.

Winner, L. 1986. *The Whale and the Reactor: A search for limits in an Age of High Technology*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

World Bank. 2002. *Globalization, Growth and Poverty: Building an Inclusive World Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sofia Arvanitidou: Deputy Director of the Vocational Training Institute on the island of Lemnos, Greece. She holds two master’s degrees, one in Translation Studies and another in Education.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Holding Space: An Alternative to Diversity and Inclusion

Aminata Cairo,[4] Netherlands

Abstract: In this essay Aminata Cairo describes the highlights of her alternative approach in diversity and inclusion work, which she calls Holding Space. After working as a research professor in inclusive education in the Netherlands, she has moved on to create her own methodology in pursuit of creating spaces where all stories are honored as valid.

I Work With People

"I work with people." That's how I introduce myself these days. Until recently I was a lector (research professor) of inclusive education and hence am still often seen as a specialist when it comes to diversity and inclusion. But I prefer to leave that terminology behind more. Not that there is anything wrong with that terminology; it is just that there are certain expectations when people hear "diversity and inclusion." And although diversity and inclusion are inherent in the work that I do now, my approach falls outside of the norm.

What I do is hold space for people and their stories and try to get others to do the same, plain and simple. I would like to live in a space where all stories are treated as valid, so that's what I try to do. It is a simple goal, but a complicated journey to get there. I use my cultural heritage and various non-traditional theories to fuel my work. I use indigenous knowledge, the blues aesthetic, holy hip hop, and Caribbean and black feminist approaches to knowledge as they most resonate with me.

Core Principles

There are a few core principles that I use in my approach. From indigenous knowledge we have the basic principle that we are all related. Hence, we always start from the premise that this work is about us, and never about us versus them. Indigenous knowledge also gives us a different approach to time and an appreciation for incubation. The urge to find out "when it will happen" has been replaced with "it will happen when everything is right". It encourages patience and the awareness that other things are at play besides our intellect when it comes to changing our spaces.

Secondly, within this concept of 'us', we are divided in how we relate to each other. Often, we stand in relation as the Dominant versus the Other. In this scheme the Dominant is the one whose story is always treated as inherently valuable. Hence, they are acknowledged, often first. They get to speak first and loudest. The Other, on the other hand, is automatically delegated to 'less than' status. They are often overlooked, silenced, marginalized, taken less seriously, ignored, etc.

Key to this principle is that we all are in the position of the Dominant sometimes and all in the position of the Other as well. The person who is dominant on the job might be in the position of the other at home, or vice versa. Another important point is that we have learned our roles

---

[4] Corresponding Author: Aminata Cairo, www.aminatacairo.com

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

over the years through conditioning. We have become so conditioned that our behaviors have become normalized. We are used to always having the right to speak, or always being overlooked. It becomes our normal. It becomes our normal not just on the individual level, but on a societal level as well. What maintains the normal are a number of mechanisms that over the course of hundreds of years have become so ironclad and ingrained in our culture that they ensure that any attempts to break these norms will be met with resistance, from slight feelings of discomfort to forceful acts of sanction.

Normalized Mechanisms

The little girl who prefers to dress as a kick-boxer rather than a princess at the princess-themed birthday party receives smiles and perhaps some stares, whereas the little boy that prefers to dress in a princess dress is asked if he can either change clothes or keep his preference to dress this way at home. The Moroccan man in the Netherlands who owns a nice car is used to being stopped and questioned by the police an average of 5 times a week, whereas his white counterpart with the same car rarely gets stopped. The stories are endless. The stories are normal.

We are living at a time where young people in particular are holding up a mirror and confronting many of us, some for the first time, with these inequalities. Now, of course this movement is based on the work of others who for generations have fought to have their stories validated. But for some reason, the synchronicity of many factors has contributed to the fact that a lot of people are paying attention now and becoming aware that these unequal, normalized relationships keep us from being the best that we can be.

Thus, regardless of how quickly or how late people have shown up to become part of this movement towards change, this movement towards becoming better human beings, we welcome them.

But this work is not easy. We have seen that diversity initiatives going back for at least 30 years remain ineffective and unable to implement sustainable change. This is where Holding Space comes in as an alternative approach.

Doing the Work

Step one is a thorough understanding of how this Dominant-versus-the-Other paradigm works, and how we are all a part of it. Our job as trainers is to help people become aware of this paradigm, to subsequently help them identify the mechanisms at play, and then to help them become aware of their own role in this paradigm.

As a result, it becomes our job to assist them in shaking up and forcing cracks in this paradigm. This requires understanding and compassion for the Other who might not be aware of their conditioned role. It requires strategy. It requires sensitivity towards the impact this recognition might have. And it requires not taking things personally.

This work starts with oneself. We have all heard this phrase, and it is so true. When we support people in becoming change agents, we have to teach them that it is not what they do, but how they carry themselves that will make the difference. When they do this work, when we do this work, we will be moved. We will be attacked. People will share their frustrations and their level of discomfort as they are being confronted with uncomfortable and new understandings about the world in which they live.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Hence, before we do any of this work we have to be comfortable with who we are and with our standing in the world, so we will not be shaken. We might have to be purposeful in drawing from our own cultural traditions, so we can be solid and grounded. We have to be able to extend grace and compassion to the people we work with and hold the space for them, but also for ourselves, as we embark upon this work.

We have to give people room to explore, be hurt, confused, uncomfortable, angry, excited, and more as they figure out how to confront their old, conditioned stories and choose to contribute to a new story. We must hold the space for them to do the work, all of the work. We might even have to cause some cracks and disturbances to propel them into learning.

This work is not easy, but it is beautiful and satisfying. It is an honor to be called to hold the space for people and to be able to contribute to the evolving of who we can be as human beings in a new, better, story.

Holding Space: A Storytelling Approach to Trampling Diversity and Inclusion is available on www.aminatacairo.com. The podcast Holding Space in which Aminata Cairo and Winnie Roseval discuss the book with the general audience is available for listening: https://open.spotify.com/show/0HKZ6seiVDl7qwA99GoYYt.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Aminata Cairo: Independent consultant and the former lector of Inclusive Education at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

The role of cultural clubs in fostering students’ intercultural competence: The case of Al Akhawayn University in Morocco

Rania Boumahdi, Al Akhawayn University, Morocco
Abderrahmane Bahmida, Al Akhawayn University, Morocco
Abderrahman Hassi,[5] Al Akhawayn University, Morocco

Abstract: Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI) is an interesting example of an international institution that promotes cultural diversity, coexistence among its members and the intercultural competence of its students. In addition to the curricular approaches to fostering intercultural competence among students through academic courses and programs, various other mechanisms have also been put in place in order to enhance and promote students’ intercultural awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity, such as cultural clubs. This article sheds some light on the role of clubs as a leading promoter of intercultural competence and describes how they contribute substantially to developing students’ intercultural competencies.

Keywords: Cultural clubs, Students’ intercultural competencies, Al Akhawayn University

In a more and more globalized reality, with personal interactions and individual mobility at intensified levels around the world, intercultural competence has become crucial. Intercultural competence is multidimensional, due to the fact that it about intercultural knowledge. For instance, it considers specific cultural insights related to a given national culture; it reflects intercultural skills, which are the ways to function in a given culture; and it mirrors intercultural attitudes, such as appreciating, being sensitive to, and showing interest in diverse cultures. Ultimately, intercultural competencies allow individuals to function in effective and appropriate ways inside and outside their cultural comfort zone and within diverse multicultural settings.

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI) is an interesting example of an international institution that promotes cultural diversity, coexistence among its members, and the intercultural competence of its students. In addition to curricular approaches to fostering intercultural competence among students through academic courses and programs, various other mechanisms have been put in place in order to enhance and promote students’ intercultural awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity. One of these mechanisms is the cultural club. These clubs gather students with common interests in a given culture and play an important role in the AUI student experience, particularly in developing student intercultural competence. Despite the fact that the main purpose of the vast majority of the cultural clubs is to encourage AUI students to embrace culture, some clubs may pursue the goal of breaking down negative and positive stereotypes about the culture they advocate. Usually, a native member of the culture in question or someone who was socialized in that culture leads the cultural club; this person may be a faculty member, a staff member or an international student who can share linguistic and cultural insights with the club’ s members firsthand.

---

[5] Corresponding Author: Abderrahman Hassi, P.O Box 104, Hassan II Avenue, School of Business Administration, Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, 53000, Morocco. email: a.hassi@aui.ma

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

To shed some light on this topic, leads of six cultural clubs at AUI were interviewed, namely the Italian, Spanish, German, Korean, Japanese, and Turkish clubs. Overall, the interviewees concur that the cultural club, as a leading player of intercultural competence, contributes substantially in developing students' intercultural competencies. This article will present the main themes that emerged from the interviews.

Importance of Discovering a New Culture

The importance of discovering a new culture allows AUI students to broaden their horizons and see new perspectives about different cultures. In fact, the more students learn about cultures, the more they discover the beauty of diversity. Naturally, this will equip students to better interact with different people from diverse cultures with ease, curiosity, and comfort. For example, AUI students participating in the Korean Club have begun to see things about the Korea that are special and admire the Korean people's love of their country and culture.

In the immediate future, discovering new cultures through cultural clubs enhances college students' intercultural competences and prepares them for study abroad and exchange endeavors. It has been reported that AUI students who had taken part in cultural clubs had an enjoyable and fruitful exchange experience within their target culture. These students also stressed how helpful their experience at the club was in getting a heads-up about the other culture and how it helped them to refrain from judging others. They highlighted the role of the club in breaking down the negative stereotypes and prejudices towards other cultures that can be found everywhere on social media.

Being part of a cultural club contributes to character- and personal development. In fact, learning about other cultures is a form of learning about the self by comparing and reflecting on ways of doing things.

Upon graduation, many AUI alumni pursue further academic studies or start their careers in different corners of the world. Their experiences and contacts with other cultures on campus through cultural clubs come in handy when interacting with people in diverse cultural settings and contribute to improving their readiness to live smoothly in a culturally different environment.

Approaches and Methods Used by AUI Cultural Clubs

By and large, learning about a different culture begins by learning its language. Offering language courses is a very important and effective way of teaching the culture. The interviewees asserted that while it is possible to learn about a culture without knowing its language, learning the language can provide a deeper understanding of the culture, as it not only constitutes a means of communication, but also serves as a mirror of that culture. Additionally, while learning a language, one would acquire insights about the given culture, which serve as a source of motivation for learners, while at the same time nurturing their curiosity.

Further, cultural clubs on university campuses explore and introduce others to festivals and national day celebrations, gastronomy, music, movies, traditional attire, shows, and cultural trips that all place club members in a new and culturally different context with the aim of spreading the culture of the country they represent among AUI members. For example, the German club organizes "Germantine," which stands for German Valentine and involves going to fairs and

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

playing games. The Japanese Club organizes calligraphy and origami workshops. The Turkish Club celebrates Turkish Day, when activities take place all over campus throughout a whole day; it even organizes two trips a year to Turkey: one in January to Istanbul and another in June to Izmir. During the global pandemic, some clubs organized online activities to abide by the health measures, which were a breath of fresh air and a distraction from the exceptional situation many students were coping with.

The clubs emphasize enhancing participants' self-awareness, deconstructing ethnocentrism, and viewing other cultures with respect, all of which promotes acceptance and tolerance on a college campus.

Clubs' heads have stressed that sharing knowledge between the participants is the favorite method of transmitting culture-specific insights. While the concept of culture is an umbrella term encompassing deep components, such as basic assumptions, values, norms, and beliefs, it also includes an outer layer that is about the language, practices, behavior, and artefacts. AUI cultural clubs work mainly on this outer level in hopes of penetrating down to the other, deeper layers, as their members begin to understand the target culture, the way it functions, its dos and don'ts, and its preferred values with their corresponding norms.

AUI Community Support

All clubs profit from the help of faculty members who serve as advisors or language instructors. AUI Administration provides the clubs with the financial and logistical support that allows them to organize events and offer language courses. As a sign of appreciation for the contributions of the cultural clubs, the larger AUI community also supports the clubs by buying souvenirs or foods during organized events, such as tee-shirts or sushi during a Japanese cooking activity.

Assessing Intercultural Competence

To measure the level of mastery of students' intercultural competence, the clubs avoid evaluation techniques used in academic courses and activities, such as formal presentations and quizzes. The underlying logic is to remain on the fun side while participants are learning and further developing their intercultural competence. As effective feedback, students who go on exchanges abroad share narratives about their experience and the way their journey in a cultural club assisted them in smoothly navigating in the host culture. Invariably, these two events are closely linked.

Future Plans of the Cultural Clubs

Looking to the future, several clubs plan to organize cultural trips to diverse countries, offer more language courses at different levels, and work closely with their respective embassies in Morocco to encourage more personal involvement from their countries' ambassadors. Given the AUI expansion plans, the growing role of the cultural clubs will only benefit the AUI community, particularly the student body.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rania Boumahdi: MBA Student, School of Business Administration, Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco

Abderrahmane Bahmida: MBA Student, School of Business Administration, Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco

Abderrahman Hassi: Assoc. Prof., School of Business Administration, Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Best Practice Example: What can an association such as SIETAR do to contribute to the integration of refugees in its communities? And why should it consider these types of action?

Anne-Claude Lambelet,[6] Switzerland

Abstract: Founded in 2015, SIETAR Switzerland is a diverse community of individual and institutional members, all sharing a strong interest in the intercultural field. SIETAR Switzerland's goals are primarily to provide a networking platform for intercultural practitioners to exchange best practices and enhance their professional competencies. The Association serves as a link between research and practice, with the assistance of our academic and student members. Last but not least, it also takes a stance to raise cultural awareness in the Swiss community at large, contributing - wherever it can - to solving societal problems by facilitating communication between stakeholders of different cultures. In that context, constructively addressing the issue of refugee integration not only touches all of us but also fits in with the mission of the association. Therefore, when one of its institutional members, VSS-UNES-USU Perspectives-studies, requested expert advice and consultation for its project, SIETAR Switzerland responded positively. Perspectives-Studies were looking to include intercultural communication best practices and training in the programs they conduct for their 18+ Swiss-wide partner universities, institutions of higher education and volunteer groups which conduct mentoring programs within their organizations, for refugees from very diverse cultural backgrounds and regions attending courses.

Keywords: Integration, Migration, Mentoring, Refugees, Intercultural

Supporting Those Who Support Refugees' Integration

To achieve the goals set by VSS-UNES-USU-PERSPECTIVES Studies, the mentors' and mentees' exchanges clearly call on all involved to develop their intercultural consciousness and build a robust intercultural dialogue. The "most common challenges encountered by mentees and mentors", according to START! Study – University Integration Program at UZH's[2] team member, Chantal Marquart, "aside from general insecurities about potential cultural differences on both sides tied to a lack of knowledge of each other's culture/s, are challenges related to very specific cultural dimensions". These concern:

- direct/indirect communication styles
- time orientation (both present vs future and scheduling issues)
- rapport to hierarchy (not only mentor-mentee relations but also interacting with the teaching staff)

---

[6] Corresponding Author: Anne-Claude Lambelet, Past President SIETAR Switzerland and Lead SIETAR Switzerland-VSS-UNES-USU PERSPECTIVES Studies Project, Switzerland. email: ac.lambelet@sietar.ch

[2] START! Study – University Integration Program at UZH = project focused on supporting female refugees in the (re)uptake of their higher education in Switzerland

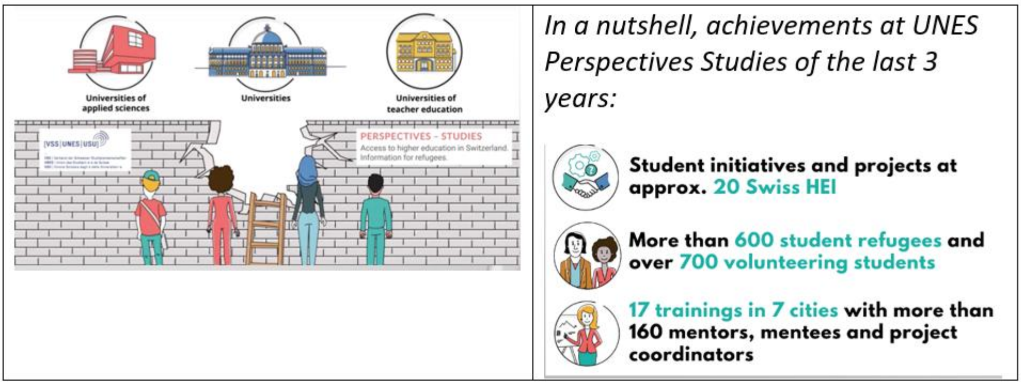
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

- gender dynamics (important in an environment where there is a higher % of female mentors)
- self-reliance vs interdependence.

It is clear that these are complications that are not easy to address without some intercultural preparation for young mentors and mentees, often at the start of their educational trajectory.

Other challenges often cited by volunteers of all ages across NGOs working with refugees is how to talk about their past with refugees, without running the risk of opening old wounds and - where group cohesion or cohabitation needs to be achieved for a specific project – navigating the deep divides between some nationalities/ethnic or religious groups. On a very practical side, understanding that family norms and loyalties may impact your work with a specific individual and knowing how to mitigate that risk, without compromising either your goals as volunteer or the refugee's family balance is also a tough challenge.

Figure 1 shows the achievements of UNES Perspectives Studies over the last 3 years. In this post-Covid return-to-near-normal phase we are about to enter, where so many individuals - refugees included and most certainly students - have suffered both from isolation and a deteriorating economic situation, volunteers also need to be alerted to the fact that mental illness may not be perceived in the same way by different cultures. Knowing how to address/escalate for professional help is also a key skill volunteers must develop.


Universities of applied sciences
Universities
Universities of teacher education
[VSS|UNES|USU]
PERSPECTIVES - STUDIES
Access to higher education in Switzerland.
Information for refugees.

In a nutshell, achievements at UNES Perspectives Studies of the last 3 years:

Student initiatives and projects at approx. 20 Swiss HEI

More than 600 student refugees and over 700 volunteering students

17 trainings in 7 cities with more than 160 mentors, mentees and project coordinators

Figure 1: Achievements at UNES Perspectives Studies of the last 3 years
Source: VSS-UNES-USU-PERSPECTIVES Studies

What Does the VSS-UNES-USU-PERSPECTIVES Studies/SIETAR Switzerland Collaboration Mean?

Given the challenges reported by PERSPECTIVES Studies, it was clear to the SIETAR volunteers' team that some quick action steps could be put in place for mentors and mentees by:
providing general principles about intercultural communication
raising awareness so they could identify cultural differences in communication and action

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

outlining strategies for intercultural dialogue: speaking openly, respectfully and serenely about (intercultural) differences and potential conflicts to build (professional/friendly) relationships.

Basically, our current framework of cooperation calls for SIETAR Switzerland to act as a go-to-resource for expert help in the intercultural field.

The first action steps put in place by SIETAR Switzerland to-date are:

The elaboration of a Toolkit dedicated to intercultural communication: accessible to all mentors and mentees in all the programs supported by VSS-UNES-USU-PERSPECTIVES Studies and available on their website. Contents include information on the concept of culture, a clearer understanding on the impact of culture on our value systems, the construction of our reference frameworks and our world vision, but also tools which will allow mentors and mentees to fine tune their intercultural competencies so as to optimize their exchanges across different cultures.

A 2 hour Intercultural Communication Training Module whose pilots are being delivered this year both in the Swiss-German part of Switzerland and in the Swiss-French part later this year. Dedicated to mentors and mentees alike, this introductory session provides context and tips to adapt and improve communication, thus facilitating mentor-mentee exchanges.

@intercultural-coffee-sessions an opportunity to exchange on best practices in an informal setting on a regular basis with other mentors and - by revisiting specific intercultural situations - to benefit from the successful experiences of other mentors.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation has prevented us from face-to-face support so far; we all look forward to presential events in the future as the pandemic is brought under control.

I would particularly like to express my gratitude to SIETAR Switzerland’s group of volunteers who work without any financial compensation for their time on this project. We can only rejoice that this team has expanded and now includes Claudia Cordes, Jillaine Farrar, Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin, Katarzyna Grzesik-Harz, Ann Marie Jakob and observer Nadja Urfer! I have the immense pleasure and honor to lead this initiative for SIETAR Switzerland and can only repeat how much I appreciate our volunteers’ support, input and dedication.

Laying the Groundwork for Collaboration Between SIETAR Switzerland and SIETAR UK’s Refugees and Asylum Seekers Project

Whilst I can say at SIETAR Switzerland, we are at the “launching ramp” phase within this area, I wanted to acknowledge the amazing support we have received from Dr Katharina Lefringhausen, the Community Development Director of the SIETAR UK project! An Assistant Professor at the University of Warwick, Applied Linguistics, Katharina has extensive knowledge in acculturation literature and how to assess training methods and outcomes in a scientifically rigorous way. She joined the SIETAR UK Community Development Committee in 2018. In this role, she leads a project that provides free intercultural training for volunteers who work with refugees. This is possible thanks to an experienced team of intercultural trainers and members of SIETAR UK who donate their expertise and skills to support and develop these trainings. As part of this work, Katharina co-authored a Training Handbook for Volunteers and Refugees and examined the training impacts on volunteers as part of a funded research pilot via the University

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

of Warwick. Currently, Katharina is involved in the ongoing revision of the training materials and delivery with her team of intercultural trainers based on the feedback received from volunteers who attended the training. Katharina and I hope to build fruitful exchanges between our trainers and volunteers who are working with refugees across both our national associations.

Benefits of Exchanges Between Refugees and Local/Native Volunteers: What Does Research Show?

According to Dr Katharina Lefringhausen, the contact literature, mostly inspired by the Intergroup Contact Theory (also known as Contact Hypothesis) proposed by Gordon Allport shows that positive intercultural encounters can reduce prejudice towards minority groups. Moreover, contact can enhance majority members’ well-being, level in cognitive flexibility and creativity (e.g., Hodson et al., 2018). For example, recent work has demonstrated that well-being is enhanced for majority members/natives, when there is more immigration in their country (e.g. Akay et al., 2014). Also the Categorization-Processing-Adaptation-Generalisation model proposes cognitive growth (e.g., cognitive flexibility and creativity) through diversity experience when such encounters challenge one's stereotypes (Crisp & Turner, 2011). Rather than contact per se, other scholarly research stresses that integration policies, intergroup ideologies and integration as an acculturation expectation endorsed by majority members can enhances majority members' well-being (e.g., Inguglia & Musso, 2015; Marks et al., 2018).

According to her own research, Lefringhausen shares that when majority members acculturate to minority members' cultures themselves (i.e., they adopt aspects of immigrants’ cultures), they experience less acculturative stress and have a stronger ability to "fit in" a culturally plural context (Lefringhausen & Marshall, 2016). Also those who choose to integrate (maintain their national culture whilst adopting elements of minority members’ cultures) experience other cultures as an enrichment rather than a threat (Lefringhausen et al., 2021).

SIETAR Switzerland’s Goals for 2022

We plan to roll out the full program live for the current Perspectives-Studies project and have discussed the possibility of doing some Train-the-Trainer sessions to develop individuals that will act as “multiplicators” in-house in the different project teams to accelerate the trainings.

With the support of the Board, the SIETAR Switzerland volunteers’ group will identify other opportunities to assist other organizations working with refugees and asylum-seekers, NGOs and their volunteers and consider developing a fuller, more extensive training program in the process.

Do you think your NGO and volunteers could benefit from a similar program? Are you interested in volunteering some of your time, experience, and enthusiasm for this exciting project? Please contact the author.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

REFERENCES

Akay, A., Constant, A., & Giulietti, C. (2014). The impact of immigration on the well-being of natives. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 103, 72–92. https://0-doi-org.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/10.1016/j.jebo.2014.03.024

Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2011). Cognitive adaptation to the experience of social and cultural diversity. *Psychology Bulletin*, 137(2). 242-266. doi: 10.1037/a0021840

Hodson, G., Crisp, R. J., Meleady, R., & Earle, M. (2018). Intergroup Contact as an Agent of Cognitive Liberalization. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(5), 523–548. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617752324

Inguglia, C., & Musso, P. (2015). Intercultural Profiles and Adaptation Among Immigrant and Autochthonous *Adolescents. Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 11(1), 79–99. https://0-doi-org.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/10.5964/ejop.v11i1.872

Marks, A. K., McKenna, J. L., & Garcia Coll, C. (2018). National immigration receiving contexts: A critical aspect of native-born, immigrant, and refugee youth well-being. *European Psychologist*, 23(1), 6–20. https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000311

Lefringhausen, K., & Marshall, T. C. (2016). Locals' Bidimensional Acculturation Model: Validation and Associations With Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustment Outcomes. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 50(4), 356–392. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397116659048

Lefringhausen, K., Ferenczi, N., Marshall, T. C., & Kunst, J. R. (2021). A new route towards more harmonious intergroup relationships in England? Majority members' proximal-acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 82, 56–73. https://0-doi-org.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.03.006

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anne-Claude Lambelet: Past President SIETAR Switzerland and Lead SIETAR Switzerland-VSS-UNES-USU PERSPECTIVES Studies Project, Geneva, Switzerland.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Apples, Artichauts and Oz Moments: On language, culture and metaphors

Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin, Switzerland

Abstract: Knowing a language well and understanding or making sense of the cultural references tied to the language are two different abilities.

Keywords: Language, Culture, Perception, Interpretation, "Intrinsic" knowledge, Sound Images and Concepts

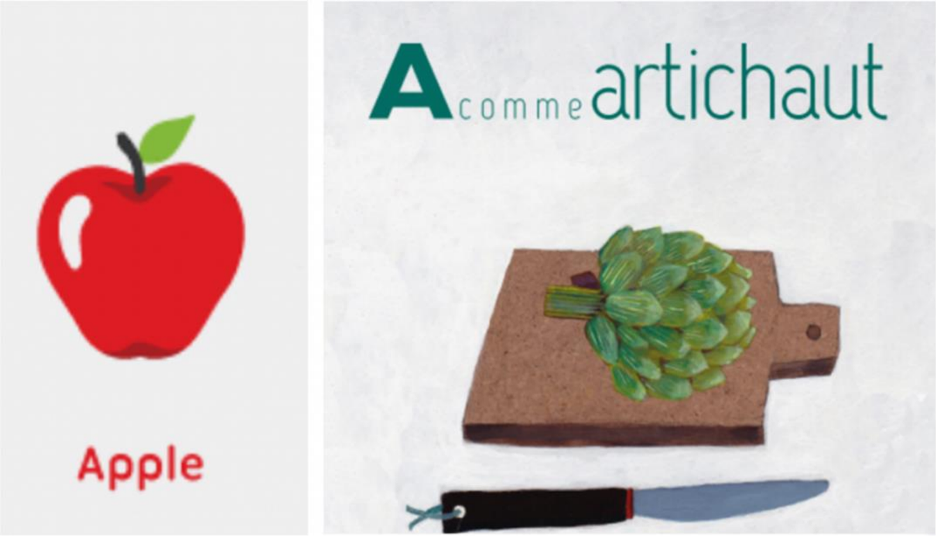


Figure 1: Apples and Artichauts
Source: From artichaut, @labelaure.fr; apple, slideshare.net

Great was the disappointment of the young Tanzanian teacher when she proudly showed her third graders the picture card of *A for apple* and got no reaction at all. The teacher had been given the flashcards by a British colleague and was looking forward to delighting her pupils with the shiny pictures. The only thing is: Most kids in rural Tanzania eat avocados or mangos, not apples.

Even the beautiful picture alphabet designed by French teachers in France will not actually support Swiss children in learning the French alphabet in the helpful way intended, because few of them (in the German speaking part of Switzerland, in this case the target audience) especially in rural areas, will ever have tasted *un artichaut*, so they will not recognize the object in the picture and make the appropriate connection to the letter A. An artichoke, like the apple in the example above, is not 'normal food'/everyday fare that is instantly recognizable in the cultural context it was used in here, thus defeating the point of the illustration as an effective *visual aid* and trigger. The unique, slightly bitter taste and sometimes tough fibers of artichokes would, if you could unite the image with the object in your mind, if the *image evoked a concept*, actually make a great cue, would *ring a bell.*

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

If an artichoke is, however, something you are not familiar with, if you don't recognize it as a vegetable or even something to eat and not just as some kind of plant, the instant-recognition effect of the image is lost.

The famous Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) claimed that language was a creative action in which we put together a *sound image* with a *concept* (very much simplified); the sound evoking a mental image or impression made on our senses by a certain object to create a whole. It is our perception, our way of making meaning and sense, that influences how we view this particular object or "thing". As interculturalists we know how much perception is influenced by culture and thus context, time and place.

Oz Moments

During an intercultural training for the employees of a Swiss municipality, we were collecting examples for what Janet Bennett calls "culture surprises" (the progression being from culture surprise through culture stress to culture shock), and I was just going to say that a culture surprise is like an "Oz Moment". The term was coined by Joseph Shaules (Shaules, 2015) and describes the moment of wonder and realization Dorothy experiences upon awakening in Oz when she says, "…I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore..". Taking a look at my audience, I realized that they might not be familiar with the story of *The Wizard of Oz*, so I asked. Well, out of all 22 participants, hailing from the Balkans, Italy, France and Switzerland, there was only a single one familiar with Oz, a woman of 39 (she volunteered her age) who had watched the film with her granny many times. So I kept the Oz Moment definition of cultural surprise and mild disorientation to myself, even though, having spent part of my childhood in the USA, the Oz Moment triggered a vivid and colorful memory of the point when, upon Dorothy's awakening in Oz, the film changes from black and white to full-scale technicolor.

So, in order to achieve the desired effect – triggering images, enabling our audience to *relate to a term on various sensory and emotional levels* (the most effective way of learning) – we need to consider the cultural connotations and implications of the metaphors we choose. Even if people have a very high mastery of a language, this does not necessarily mean that they are familiar with all the cultural references and connotations that come with growing up in a particular place, getting to know or being familiar with all the "kid's culture" things like the books, comics and other heroes of a certain time, age and generation, or spending long periods of time in an environment where this particular language is spoken, familiarizing themselves with the "everyday culture," such as current trends in food, art, policies and media.

Szusza, my Hungarian friend, upon moving to Switzerland, turned down all invitations to "have a coffee ", because she does not like coffee. As nobody explained that this was just meant as a casual invitation to socialize while having a drink, any drink, during the daytime, Szusza was soon considered to be impolite, even arrogant and anti-social, until finally somebody told her that it was totally okay to drink tea when invited for a coffee.

My son's comment at a first meeting in New York—"To do that, I'd need more vitamin B"—was met with confusion. In German, the *B* stands for "***B****eziehungen*", meaning relationships and networks, yet even that does not cover the whole picture. To have *Vitamin B* implies that you not only have a solid network, but also great social capital, and, depending on the context, there can even be a subtle undertone of being favored in the expression, or of people owing you favors. To understand all the nuances and implications, the different meanings of the expression according

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

to the context it was used in, you would need to have lived in a German-speaking environment for quite a while. These are the subtleties of a language that you won't find in dictionaries.

People tend to make sense of the world in their mother tongues – so for a Swiss audience your alternative to Dorothy and Kansas might be Pippi Langstrumpf and Taka-Tuka Land. As for people from other cultures, why not just ask them what their equivalent of an Oz moment might be? It could be an entertaining intercultural exercise to get people to talk about their childhood heroes!

REFERENCES

Bennett, Janet. (2017). Course material, Winter School. Groningen.

De Saussure, Ferdinand (n.d.) Wikipedia article and material from my studies in German linguistics.

Shaules, Joseph. (2015) The Intercultural Mind: Connecting Culture, Cognition, and Global Living. Intercultural Press.

Shaules, Joseph. (2018). Course material from "Mind, Brain and Culture: New Paradigms in Intercultural Understanding," Workshop Burg Reichenstein, Trechtingshausen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin: MA Secondary and Higher Education/Linguistics; MAS Intercultural Communication and Leadership. Owner and Founder Triple T training the trainers, Bern, Switzerland.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

A Salad Bowl for Beckmann: Making a Home in an Inclusive Society

Pritima Chainani-Barta,[7] Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Abstract: What happens to a person who leaves home forever? The article deals with the emotional turmoil of immigrants' experience when forced to leave their home and their families — forever. It discusses the challenges of making a new home in a society that shuts out immigrants, leaving them to fend with homelessness, loneliness and exclusion. As a ray of hope for the future, the article describes three exercises on building empathy as a tool for creating a more inclusive society.

Keywords: Inclusion, Home, Empathy, Migration

Home Sweet Home: Common to all cultures

One of the most basic human needs is to feel wanted, to have a sense of belonging. In our native countries, this need is met, at least in one way, by living in a sanctuary we call "home", a comfort zone where the scenarios around us are familiar to the eyes. This familiarity is uprooted – often brutally uprooted – when people migrate. It is only natural, therefore, that immigrants long for and, consequently, search for a new sanctuary to call a "home" in their host country: at best, a home in a society that makes them feel wanted and included. The search for a home and the longing for a sanctuary, current issues faced by immigrants in their host countries, bring to mind Wolfgang Borchert's post-war character, Beckmann, depicted in the play The Man Outside.

> That is life! A man is there, and the man comes to Germany, and the man is freezing. He is hungry, and he limps. A man comes to Germany! […] A door slams shut, and he stands outside.
> A man comes to Germany! He looks for people, but a colonel laughs aloud. A door slams, and he stands outside. A man comes to Germany! He looks for work, but a director is a coward, and the door slams shut, and, again, he stands outside. (Borchert, 1985, pp. 163 —164)

The Man Outside by Wolfgang Borchert is the story of a war-ridden soldier, Beckmann, who returns to the ruins of his hometown in Germany – only to be rejected by his wife and society. No one is willing to listen to him or answer his questions concerning the senselessness of the war or to understand the trauma he experienced in the war. He is a constant reminder to society of the horrors of the war, which were best forgotten or suppressed by the post-war society of his times. He is unable to communicate effectively with anyone he meets – the colonel, the theatre director, a woman who volunteers to take him home, among others. Each time the door is slammed, and he is left "outside". There was no room for the Beckmanns and war-weary home seekers of post-war Germany. Beckmann's post-war society slammed doors on those who threatened to trigger

---

[7] Corresponding Author: Pritima Chainnai-Barta, Leipizger 123, Interkulturalität, Hochschule Fulda, Fulda, Hessen, 36037, Germany. email: pritima.chainani-barta@verw.hs-fulda.de

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research
Volume 1, Issue 1, 2021, www.sietar.ch/journal

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

memories of the horrors of the war. Beckmann's contemporaries preferred to suppress the cruel experiences of traumatised victims rather than to acknowledge and consciously deal with them.

Decades after the end of the war, why are Wolfgang Borchert's thoughts on homecoming still alive? And in what way are they applicable to the current socio-political issues of today's immigrants? Certainly, the major difference between Beckmann and the immigrants is that Beckmann is a native German being rejected by his own countrymen, who had themselves experienced the horrors of the war and knew exactly, albeit subconsciously, what he was crying aloud for. Immigrants, on the other hand, usually do not share a common cultural background, history or tradition or even language with the natives in their host countries. The two sides may differ completely with regard to their respective historical and cultural backgrounds.

There are, nevertheless, some parallels to be found between Beckmann's search for a home and the situation of immigrants. Like Beckmann, who felt excluded and rejected by his countrymen in post-war Germany, immigrants today seek entrance into a society which is new and incomprehensible to their mindset and are confronted with rejection, too. Their earnest attempts at making a "home" in the host country are frequently thwarted. Often, they are up against a society that shuns them, slams its doors on them and, in some cases, even despises them. Witness the fact that many immigrants have difficulty in finding housing for themselves in their host countries. Apart from the bureaucratic and legal hurdles that aggravate the problem of finding private accommodation, more often than not, the difficulty is due to discrimination on the part of the owners, who do not want to rent a flat to immigrants (Foroutan, Hamann, El-Kayed, & Jorek, 2017). A name that does not sound typically "German" is enough to reject tenancy for some owners. The reasons for turning down tenancy to an immigrant cannot be compared to those reasons the Beckmanns of post-war Germany were rejected. Yet the cries of Beckmann find their echo in the cries of immigrants who, like Beckmann, feel unwanted and excluded. Beckmann is a glaring reminder of society's responsibilities in post-war Germany. Immigrants are today's Beckmann, with coloured skin, "head scarves", "burkhas", "salwar kameezes", "hijabs" and "other" costumes. Immigrants are the glaring reminders to society of its responsibility towards non-native members who are seeking a "home". Post-war German society had several complex issues. It is not my intention to analyse these but to merely point out a few parallels I see between the needs of a person like Beckmann and immigrants today – both of them seeking acceptance and understanding from society and above all inclusion.

The natives of a society may continue to exist in a comfort zone by shunning the issues of the immigrants; they may continue to slam doors on "otherness“ or rebuff "the other" and leave that person "outside"; they may avoid contact with people in their neighbourhoods, who have a different lifestyle and mindset, who are programmed by different cultures; and they may even reject some who are traumatised by war, violence, persecution, and exploitation. The Man Outside highlights the rift that existed between Beckmann and his post-war contemporaries, which was enlarged by their slamming doors on Beckmann. Coming to our current social issues, natives may scorn and reject immigrants, but the latter will not go away. Immigrants are here to stay in their host country, and, seeking entry and inclusion, they will persistently knock at the doors of the natives – just like Beckmann knocked at the doors of his contemporary German fellow citizens after the war. With all their "otherness", immigrants are seeking answers to why their host society slams its doors on other cultures, why "otherness" is left outside.

Immigrants are the Beckmanns of today who make their disturbing presence felt. "Otherness", which immigrants represent, has become an integral part of any native society today.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Immigrants, like Beckmann, need a home in a society which includes and welcomes their "otherness" and not merely tolerates it. Beckmann found his situation hopeless. The Man Outside ends on a note of utter despair and isolation. Yet the desolate message Beckmann leaves the spectators with was heard by a few contemporary sensitive souls in post-war German society, who began taking a closer look at the Beckmanns they had in their closets or in their neighborhoods.

The Salad Bowl: An inclusive society

In light of contemporary social issues, the question that arises here is how realistic the dream is of building a society that fosters harmony and togetherness of cultures and still retains the uniqueness and wonder of every individual culture. Such a vision is conceptualized in the analogy of a salad bowl. There are some ingredients in a salad which are lavishly included, as they are available in abundance. Yet a good salad depends on the right blend of its generously as well as sparsely used ingredients, delicacies, and dressing. All these mingle to make one delicious dish. Societies that prefer to slam doors on other cultures have nothing to offer in variety, like a bland lettuce salad with one ingredient and no spice or dressing. A salad-bowl culture has room for all the minorities; at the same time, it retains the uniqueness of each and every culture. Like the additional use of delicacies in a salad bowl which enhance the taste of a salad, other nationalities with their "otherness" and uniqueness are a valuable asset to any society that wishes to flourish.

Certainly, this is a utopian vision of society – an ideal situation far removed from reality. It may be a mammoth task to transform the rigid thought processes of members of a society who shun "otherness" because the familiar structures of their native culture provide them with a comfort zone they do not wish to disturb or change. Pursuing the vision of a salad-bowl culture and its establishment may certainly be an uphill climb, but success lies in the struggle and effort to realize the vision and not just in its immediate fulfillment. As Mahatma Gandhi says: "Full effort is full victory."

Keeping in mind such a vision, how does one go about promoting or developing a salad-bowl culture? How can natives, conditioned or programmed by their cultural constraints, understand the plight of immigrants who suffer a considerable amount of upheaval when leaving their homeland and seeking a home in their adopted country? How can immigrants understand the uncertainties and fears of natives when the latter are suddenly exposed to something so foreign and incomprehensible in their own home comfort zone? Most of our responses, behaviour, and judgements are conditioned by our experiences and our cultural and educational backgrounds. In the words of J. Krishnamurti, an Indian philosopher:

> How can we be free to look and learn when our minds from the moment we are born to the moment we die are shaped by a particular culture in the narrow pattern of the 'me'? For centuries we have been conditioned by nationality, caste, class, tradition, religion, language, education, literature, art, custom, convention, propaganda of all kind, economic pressure, the food we eat, the climate we live in, our family, our friends, our experiences – every influence you can think of – and therefore our responses to every problem are conditioned. (Krishnamurti, 2017, p. 4)

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Krishnamurti’s thoughts on culture are a challenge to an interculturalist who, being guided by the vision of the salad bowl, strives to overcome the barriers of culture and promote intercultural co-existence and understanding. Being such an interculturalist, I evaluated the chances of a successful intercultural co-existence between natives and immigrants when each group is so conditioned—in fact, rigidly conditioned—by their respective cultural mindsets. For a harmonious existence in society, I believe each group needs to significantly shift perspectives from their own cultural context and become more receptive to new or culturally unfamiliar perceptions of the “other”.

This is the phase of decentring (Lane, Distefano, Maznevsk, 2006, p. 58), of temporarily detaching oneself from one’s own cultural contexts and stepping into the cultural context of “otherness”. The idea is to get a feel for what the “other” sees and feels when in the “other’s” shoes. After this phase of decentring follows the phase of recentring, which involves deep reflection on the learning outcome of the decentring phase. Recentring is a revision of one’s own cultural conditioning and programming and, at the same time, an awakening of creative approaches in interacting with the “other” or incorporating “otherness” in one’s own lifestyle. Recentring is the phase of opening one’s mind and learning, developing skills to overcome one’s cultural constraints. Recentring means retaining vital aspects of one’s own culture while adding new dimensions to one’s own cultural reality (Lane, Distefano, Maznevsk, 2006, p. 59). The precondition to both decentring and recentring is empathy.

Towards inclusive co-existence: Three exercises in empathy

In order to explore the effect of decentring and recentring, I conducted three exercises in an intercultural training with university students in Germany. The students were Germans and immigrants and not well acquainted with each other at all; in fact, some were strangers to each other. The first exercise dwelt on experiencing language barriers. The second was intended to develop creative techniques to overcome communication hurdles. The third exercise aimed at further deepening empathy by feeling the realities of the “other”. Each of these exercises have been described below.

In the first exercise, aimed at building awareness of language barriers, students were given a sentence in Hindi, an Indian language completely foreign to them. They were provided with a dictionary and guidelines for reading the alphabet and understanding the sentence structure and were instructed to translate the sentence written in Hindi into German. After several minutes of labouring unsuccessfully, they gave up, expressing their frustrations at being unable to understand what was written. Some of them even expressed anger, some felt like tearing their hair out, some felt like tearing up the paper into tiny bits. What had happened here?

While reflecting on their experience in the recentring phase, these students realised what it felt like to be suddenly exposed to a message which cannot be deciphered. This is the plight of many immigrants, in particular, refugees who are not proficient in the language of their adopted country. My students reflected on language barriers experienced by immigrants which lead to a deep-seated loneliness, depression, and frustration – even irrational anger at the world and oneself. Looking back at The Man Outside, one of Beckmann’s frustrations is the communication gap he experiences with his contemporaries. He speaks the same language, but his loneliness at not being understood is very strongly felt. Loneliness and lack of understanding for their plight are two aspects which immigrants have in common with Beckmann.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

In a further recentring phrase, the sentence in Hindi was revealed to the students which was "Name five conditions a person needs to feel at home." Students first responded to the question in the classroom and analyzed, based on their own cultural perspective, five conditions that they considered were most important so that they could feel at home. Thereafter, students were then encouraged to interview native Germans and immigrants outside the classroom situation and compare the responses with their own. With a few exceptions, my students discovered that several conditions named by native Germans and immigrants (most of the immigrants were refugees in Germany) were common to both groups. Priority for both groups was security/a safe haven, family and friends, and a job or productive activity, such as getting an education. Students realised, irrespective of where we come from, what our culture is, and what our personal experiences are, we do share common ground and common needs. The satisfaction of these fundamental needs has the potential to turn a location or a settlement into a place called home.

The second experiment focussed on overcoming communication barriers (adapted from Pink & Unterberger, 2004, p. 65). The class was divided into two groups. One group of students was blindfolded outside the classroom. The second group was asked to move to various parts of the classroom. These were the "icebergs". The "icebergs" settled in their parts of the classroom and made themselves comfortable there. Once settled, they were not allowed to move about. They were not given any further information except that they were not allowed to talk to anyone. The blindfolded students, who were still outside the classroom, were given instructions to try to connect or communicate with the "icebergs" inside the classroom. The blindfolded students were also instructed not to talk to the "icebergs" while attempting to make contact. After the instruction phase in both groups, the blindfolded students were led into the classroom with the "icebergs". As they could not see, they had to gradually grope their way about and find an "iceberg".

After a bit of hesitancy, each of the blindfolded students found an "iceberg" with whom to make contact. It took just a few minutes for both groups to make friends. Some "icebergs" had turned on music, some had food on the table, some had a drink on the table. The blindfolded students used nonverbal communication to make friends with the icebergs. By the end of the exercise, the "icebergs" and blindfolded students were deep in interaction with each other. Some pairs were dancing, some listening to music in silence. One pair had even got around to giving each other a massage! It is amazing how creative one can get when the tools we normally use to interact with people are no longer available.

In the recentring phase, students realised that language proficiency is certainly an important requirement when we communicate, but, till the required proficiency level is reached, there are other ways for immigrants to find ways of interacting. This, however, is obviously possible only if both parties are willing. Many of my blindfolded students as well as the "icebergs" expressed their sense of insecurity and fear till they actually reached a point when they felt they were connecting with each other. The fear of the unknown, or even of being rebuffed, is common to natives as well as immigrants. Success lies in overcoming that fear and bridging the gap between the two groups.

In the third exercise, students were made to delve deeper into the aspect of migration and its ramifications (adapted from Hinnenkamp, 2006, pp. 104-122). Migration, irrespective of the reasons, is, in most cases, fraught with emotional turmoil and upheaval. In the decentring phase, students were guided and prepared to leave their familiar culture zones mentally and become more receptive to "otherness". They were instructed to write a short report on a situation about leaving their own home country and having to migrate to another country of which they knew

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

little or nothing. Just the thought of leaving their home and everything else behind and having to go away, not knowing when they would return home, was considered “terrifying”. The exercise gave the students an insight into the emotional turmoil many immigrants must go through when they leave their homeland. One of the students reported on her imaginations of what it would be like if she had to leave Germany. She fantasised about a political situation where political persecution and havoc had become a way of life, and she had to flee her homeland, Germany, leaving her family and everything she loved behind. Below is an excerpt of her imaginations as a refugee in a foreign country.

> It is loud and it stinks. We sleep on the floor. It is not as comfortable as my two-metre bed at home in Germany, but it is better than nothing. I try to keep contact with my family, but their electricity network has broken down. I don’t know how they are or if they are even alive. Each day I think of them and cry a lot. I feel horribly helpless in this country. I am alone. (Translated by the author from German.)

Not all students were able to decentre in this deeply empathic manner. Some just managed to produce impersonal reports about an immigrant’s situation away from home. Yet, the success of this exercise lay in students gaining some insight into what it actually takes to be away from home.

After decentring, students were mentally guided back into their own cultural context. This was the phase of recentring when they were led back to the comfort zones that they were accustomed to and that gave them the security they needed. Most of them voiced their relief that their reality was thankfully so different from their fantasy. True for them, but, for many immigrants, precisely this fantasy is the harsh reality they are confronted with. The phase of recentring is the time for deep reflection on the learning outcome that has been drawn from the experiences resulting from decentring. It is here that students consciously gained a better insight into the world of immigration and were able to develop a deeper understanding of just how much some immigrants are deprived of a basic sense of belonging and togetherness, of the kind of frustrations and loneliness some of them have to deal with.

As mentioned before, the purpose of decentring and recentring is to bridge the gap between natives and immigrants by building up empathy. Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, and one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology, focussed on the concept of empathy in his person-centred therapy: Empathy can be just a word, just mean listening, or it can be an exceedingly intense attempt to capture or understand the inner world of the person you’re dealing with – with all the nuances of feeling and meaning and so on which are real for him or her – not for you but for him or her.

> That’s particularly evident when you’re dealing with someone of a different culture, where their attitudes toward the family, for example, are different from your own, or their attitudes towards the opposite sex are quite different from your own. Can you catch the attitude or feeling that person has and understand it as it is in him or her? It’s a very demanding task. (Rogers, 1985)

In the above exercises conducted with students, each of the exercises was aimed at deepening students’ empathy, so that they were able to understand a world very different from their own

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

without passing judgement or commenting on the appropriateness of what they had experienced. It is my firm conviction that empathy, as propounded by Carl Rogers, is one strong tool we possess which we can successfully employ in our intercultural interaction. Before we even bring about change, it is so essential to understand the “other” and be mindful of the way we treat him or her.

A society with less empathetic members slamming its doors on the unfamiliar and leaving a certain group “outside” is, in fact, a threat to itself. Such a society, built on the fear and anger of its native members, will not get rid of the Beckmanns it has. Today’s Beckmanns will keep returning and knocking at the doors of society till they find compassion and inclusion, whatever the driving force. An empathetic and mindful society that can promote caring and compassionate relationships has enough room for the Beckmanns of our times. Such a society has the potential to pave the way for diversity, respect, and harmonious co-existence of several cultures – like the analogy of the delicious salad bowl.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Barbara Chap, social activist, who has always given me her unstinted support and encouraged me to write this article.

REFERENCES

Borchert, W. (1985): Draußen vor der Tür. In Wolfgang Borchert, Das Gesamtwerk, Hamburg: Rowohlt, pp. 163 — 164.

Foroutan, N., Hamann, U., El-Kayed, N., & Jorek, S. (2017). Berlin und Dresden: Welchen Zugang haben Geflüchtete zum Wohnungsmarkt? [Berlin and Dresden: What access do rufugees have to the apartment market]. Berliner Institut für empirische Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (BIM). https://mediendienst-integration.de/fileadmin/Dateien/Expertise_Fluechtlinge_Wohnungsmarkt.pdf

Gandhi, M. K. Quotes. http://sourcesofinsight.com/gandhi-quotes/

Hinnenkamp, V. (2006). Zweisprachig, halbsprachig, gemischtsprachig – über die (Nicht-) Anerkennung der Sprache von jugendlichen MigrantInnen. [Bilingual, semi-lingual, mixed-language-speaking: On the (non)recognition of the speech of young migrants]. In Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit Region Nord Dokumentation Weg-weisend. Vernetzung der Angebote der Jugendhilfe, Justiz und Polizei zur (Re)Integration von jugendlichen Migrant(inn)en [Working group Catholic youth social workers Region North Documentation. Networking of Youth Welfare, Justice and Police Services for the (Re)Integration of Young Migrants]. Bonifatiushaus Fulda. pp. 104-122. https://www.hs-fulda.de/fileadmin/user_upload/FB_SK/Professor/Hinnenkamp/Hinnenkamp_Anerkennung_Sprache_Vortrag_Weg-weisend_Fulda__12-10-06.pdf

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, Quotes. https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/850512.Jiddu_Krishnamurti?page=4

Lane, Henry W.; Distefano, Joseph J. & Maznevsk, Martha L. (2006): International Management Behaviour. Text Readings and Cases, Blackwell. Fifth Edition.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Pink, G., & Unterberger, C. (2004) Intercultural Encounters Training Manual – A guideline for practitioners OMEGA Health Care Center Graz. p. 65. https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/760268/intercultural-encounters-interkulturelle-begegnungen-omega

Rogers, Carl. Quotes. http://cultureofempathy.com/References/Experts/Carl-Rogers.htm

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Pritima Chainani-Barta: Research Associate, Interculturality, Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Fulda, Hessen, Germany.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Reflections on Teaching a Course on Culture, Politics and History

Benjamin Haymond, School of Computer Science and Information Technology, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland [8]

Abstract: There are different approaches to teaching about foreign cultures which depend on a range of factors. But what should students studying abroad know about their future host country? What information is necessary for them to develop social contacts and understand this new world around them? The approach being developed at the School of Computer Science and Information Technology at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts focuses on looking at a country or region's politics and religions, along with events in their histories and examples of popular culture.

Keywords: National Culture, Mass Media, Politics, History, Religion

Culture is Complicated Teaching culture is equally complicated. Teaching about culture to students preparing to study in a foreign country is even more complicated. What should they learn? There are so many approaches in the field of cultural studies and cross-cultural communication that it is hard to know where to start and what to use. There are the sociological and anthropological methods and then there is the psychological focus or the communication-related focus. All these approaches have value, but do they prepare students for going to a foreign country to live amongst the locals? How is it possible to design two courses, one to prepare students to study in England, the United States or another of the traditionally Anglophone countries and the other to prepare them to study somewhere in Asia?

In a 2019 interview, Helen Spencer-Oatey commented on how universities use onboarding programs to prepare students for what the universities expect of them while providing them with opportunities to make new friends. She noted the importance of a program like this but pointed out that "[it] is not synonymous with the development of intercultural competence." (Braimah, 2019, online). Her interview addresses some of the approaches universities take to incoming students. But what about outgoing students? What should they know about the target country and locals?

My own cross-cultural experiences gave me insight into addressing this problem. I moved to Germany with a history and linguistics degree and an ability to speak German. For my first two and half years, I travelled throughout Germany teaching and meeting people. I spoke a reasonable amount of German and was able to communicate to people and learn from them. By knowing something about the country and culture I was visiting, I was able to learn more.

It was through this approach that I designed content for two courses: one on Anglophone Culture, Politics and History and the other on Asian Culture, Politics and History. According to E.B. Tylor, an English cultural anthropologist, culture can be understood as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1920, p 1.).

---

[8] Benjamin Haymond, School of Computer Science and Information Technology, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, benjamin.haymond@hslu.ch

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Both courses addressed history, politics, and religion, as well offering examples of music, handicrafts and typical trade goods, among other products of the different cultures. Religion, in particular, is important for many reasons. It influences law, customs, and morals. But people don't have to be believers to be influenced by it. Tom Holland, an English classicist writes of Christianity in the West that:

"For a millennium and more, the civilization into which I had been born was Christendom. Assumptions that I had grown up with—about how a society should properly be organized and the principles that it should uphold—were not bred of classical antiquity, still less of human nature, but very distinctly of that civilization's Christian past. So profound has been the impact of Christianity on the development of Western civilization that it has come to be hidden from view (xxxviii – xxix)."

In the Anglophone course, England and the United States were the focus for about 60 percent of the content. Two other countries were chosen from among Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, and South Africa. The set of two differs depending on the guest speakers available that semester and the interest of the students. (Even though Scotland is not technically separate from the U.K., there is enough of a difference in government, history, religion, and culture to treat it separately.

The course began with an overview of English government. Students watched a video about the Magna Carta and got an overview of today's main political parties. As a taste of English history, they learned about the importance of 1066 and the different eras such as the Tudor and Victorian. Their introduction to English religion included the origins of the Church of England and other important religious movements such as the Quakers and the Salvation Army. They ended their overview of England with the concept of Britishness and learned about the British Invasion i.e. The Rolling Stones and the Beatles, as well as notable comedians and writers. An article by Barbara Ward Jackson gave them some more in-depth information on the British Empire.

With regard to the US, students were introduced to the contents of the US constitution and Bill of Rights. They learned about the American West and the Civil Rights movement. They were taught about new religions such as the Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Scientists, all of which were founded in the US. As an introduction to American popular culture, they listened to Blues and Dixieland Jazz and read about the life of blues legend Robert Leroy Johnson. They also read an article by Frederick Jackson Turner about the influence of the frontier on American life.

Applying the same approach to Asia was impossible. First, how should Asia be defined? Geographically, the landmass merges seamlessly with Europe. As Philip Bowring (1987) noted,

the word Asia was invented by Europeans, and its concept has been propagated by European geographers, politicians, and encyclopedia writers. … To talk of Asia at all may even be to talk in Eurocentric terms. That does not necessarily invalidate the word but it does make it necessary to ask: what does it mean (p. 30)?

A second problem involves which countries should be covered. Obviously, India and China are important but there are 46 other countries to consider as well. Which ones should be covered during the semester? Added to this are the histories. In some parts of Asia, civilization has flourished for more than 4000 years, as compared to the Anglophone world in which only about a thousand years have transpired since the Norman invasion. Which events should be covered? China had 13 dynasties and a republic before the current system was founded in 1949. India's

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

political history is equally complex. And there are lesser-known empires, dynasties, and events that were influential on a lesser scale.

Then there is the third problem of providing appropriate examples of Asian popular culture. It is one thing to introduce students to Bollywood, K-Pop, or sumo but what about other countries and their music and arts scenes? Is Kazakh Hip-Hop something relevant for a 14-week course? How relatable is it to the collective body of student knowledge?

This course required a new approach, which was inspired by a book written in 2015 by Peter Frankopan*: The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*. Frankopan offers a vision for approaching Asia using the Silk Road, which he saw as a bridge between east and west.

In fact the bridge between east and west is the very crossroads of civilization. Far from being on the fringe of global affairs, these countries lie at the very center – as they have done since the beginning of history. It was here that Civilization was born, and where many believed Mankind had been created … (xv). He writes further that it:

"… was in the bridge between east and west that great metropolises were established nearly 5000 years ago, where the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the Indus Valley were the wonders of the ancient world, with populations numbering in the tens of thousands and streets connecting into a sophisticated sewage system that would not be rivaled in Europe for thousands of years (xv)."

Starting with West Asia, and moving eastwards, the Silk Road acted as a guide for approaching Asia. Instead of focusing on individual countries, the course examined major religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. It touched on empires such as the Persian, the Mughal, and the Han. Instead of portraying culture through popular mass-media, the course examined goods such as tea, spices, slaves and gunpowder. Moving into the modern era, historical events such as the American Wars in South-East Asia, the two Koreas in East Asia, as well as the division of India in the late 1940's and the Arab/Israeli conflict on West Asia were covered. Other topics included Indian democracy and the Chinese model of governance. The course also covered the trafficking of endangered species in South-East Asia, the important of oil in West Asia, and the effects of technology and outsourcing in East and South Asia.

These approaches to preparing students to study abroad by raising their awareness of history, politics, and religion should make it easier for them to engage with locals and learn more about their countries and share in their experiences. Knowing something about a country and its people helps contextualize the individual experience abroad. My own experiences taught me that having some background knowledge of the places I visited reduced the amount of time needed for me to be accepted. It meant that I knew enough to tactfully inquire into people's lives and learn from them. With this knowledge, a student should be able to connect with citizens in these other countries and engage in a common and shared experience based on mutual respect and interest. If this can be achieved, it will be a boon to students for the rest of their lives.

REFERENCES

Bowring, P. (12. February 1987) What is Asia? *Far Eastern Economic Review, 32, (6)* 30-31.

Braimah, T. (Winter 2019) Helen Spencer-Oatey on Exchange Programs and Internationalization Strategies; Holistic approaches to enhancing ICC among students. *The First-Class*

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Postbuzz. http://sietar.ch/exchange-programs-and-internationalization-strategies-holistic-approaches-to-enhancing-icc-among-students/

Frankopan, P. (2016). *The Silk Roads: A new history of the world*. Bloomsbury.

Holland T. (2019). *Dominion: The making of the western mind.* Little, Brown.

Tylor, E. B. (1920). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom*. John Murray.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Haymond: Lecturer, School of Computer Science and Information Technology, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Rotkreuz, ZG, Switzerland

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Understanding and Assessing Culture on a Coherent Theoretical Background

Hans Jakob Roth[9], Switzerland/Myanmar

Abstract: The importance of corporate culture is recognized more broadly today compared to some twenty years ago. However, what exactly corporate culture is, how far it is based on personal cultures of employees and how its influence on employees can be evaluated remain obscure. Empirically based cultural surveys dominate. They are insufficient, however, and do not allow any strategic assessments. They must be replaced by tools that are based on a clear concept of culture, leading cultural and intercultural understanding into the 21st century.

Keywords: understanding culture, assessing culture, national culture, company culture, personal culture, comparative theory of culture

In a survey of four countries conducted by Dale Carnegie (2017) four years ago, around 94% of executives considered cultural factors to be very important. But the survey also revealed that only around 10% of the managers surveyed were willing to invest in corporate culture or intercultural understanding. The deeper reason may be the fact that the soft factor “culture” remains difficult to grasp and cannot be explained in an easy way.

In fact, previous attempts to determine corporate culture are based on empirical studies that do not rely on a coherent theory and concept of culture. The risks are therefore extremely high that they capture something that is ultimately not fully understood, leading to a wrong perception and conclusion. A historical example is the compass, which was already used widely by the Chinese some two thousand years ago. Interestingly, the Chinese word for compass is zhi nan zhen - the needle that points south. In the Han period the compass actually looked like a spoon whose head aligned with the magnetic north pole. For cultural reasons, however, the South was always seen more positively in China, while the North was usually associated with negative phenomena. Winter storms or the Golden Horde, the Mongols, would attack China from the north. The handle of the spoon was thus seen as pointing to the south; hence, the instrument’s name. No one knew the scientific reason for the turning of the spoon on the plate, leading to an understanding that was scientifically 180 degrees wrong.

---

[9] Corresponding Author: Hans Jakob Roth, EurAsia Competence AG, Yangon, Myanmar. email: hansjakobroth@gmx.ch

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

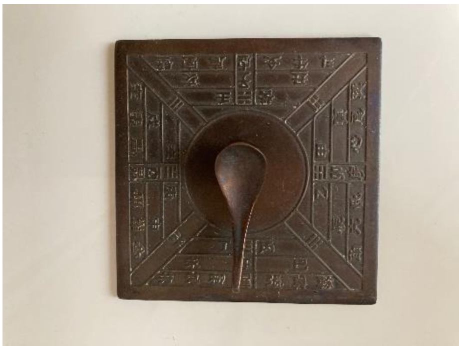


Figure 1: Model of a Chinese Compass During Han Dynasty
Source: Roth

The same thing happens today with attempts to understand culture on purely empirical grounds. Some of the explanations are right – but some are 180 degrees wrong without this being noticed at all. The mistakes are only revealed when you compare the results of different approaches or when you judge them using a comprehensive theory. The comparison approach has been taken e.g. by Venaik and Brewer (2008). They looked at the cultural understandings of Hofstede (1991) and compared them with the results developed and presented by the GLOBE group (House, Dorfmann, Javidan & Sully de Luque, 2013) and found that even when trying to define the same parameters as the ones used by Hofstede, GLOBE did not arrive at the same results. Worse, in my view, was that House's group (House, Dorfmann, Javidan & Sully de Luque, 2013) fell into Hofstede's (1991) trap of masculinity and femininity when it took up gender egalitarianism and assertiveness. Gender cultures must be explained within a cultural model, they cannot present an independent variable. We cannot unquestioningly use categories such as 'masculine' and 'feminine' in classifying cultural behavior, because they are themselves artifacts of culture. The model developed must be able to explain gender differences.

The comprehensive theory approach to understanding culture on its different levels requires a solid theoretical base (Roth, 2020). We have entered the 21st century without really understanding the differences between us and persons from other cultures. We do not know each other in the context of our respective cultures. This causes the key problems of international relations at the moment, be they diplomatic, social or economic. We still lack a comprehensive, comparative theory of culture and tend to judge others with our own value systems. In Western culture, for example, hierarchy in an Asian society is usually equated with autocracy. Both Hofstede (1991) and GLOBE (House, Dorfmann, Javidan & Sully de Luque, 2013) use this to define power distance. They wrongly see Japan as being strongly autocratic. But hierarchy is not automatically linked to power relations, as Hofstede believed. Even if the head of a family or a company has a hierarchically dominant position – I think of the president of a multinational Japanese company based in Tokyo whom I knew and who was able to claim the use of one of the six elevators in a 50-storey high-rise with thousands of employees – ideally, he must listen to the opinions in his group or company in order to maintain inner harmony. Nemawashi is the term for getting everybody's opinion before the president finally decides. The fact that he decides only tells half the truth. Loyalty of the boss to the group is the central element on which the loyalty of

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

the group members to the boss is built. When interdependencies are no longer recognized and rewarded, loyalties disappear. This is the end of any cooperation, especially in Asia, because the in-group / out-group difference is much stronger than in a European context. If the management of an Asian company cannot develop an organizational culture that guarantees a new "family understanding" at the company level, the focus is inevitably on one's core family and its interests. Loyalty to the company no longer exists. Hierarchy has nothing to do with coercion in a collectivist society. Instead, it has to do with respect –but with mutual respect. This also explains the modern Chinese notion of “nation” - guojia – the national family which the Communist party and the government try to underline so strongly at the moment.

In order to really understand culture, a basic model must be designed from scratch. It should be built on simple relationships in order to maintain universality and avoid the trap of cultural relativism. This is another critique one might address to many working in the cultural field: they try to integrate too many details and tend towards cultural relativism. An effort to define culture must concentrate on the meta level. The focus should be on the person, the community, and the environment in which people form a community. Natural and social surroundings play a decisive role in the development of values and beliefs, as does the fact that the human being has always been a social being. Culture develops out of the experiences which persons and communities make in dealing with their natural and social environments. To this synchronic view we must add the diachronic one, because experiences do not take place on a clean slate. They are partly based on insights acquired by earlier generations. All this indicates that culture is a process and cannot be understood in a static way. It is constantly evolving, both on a personal and on different aggregate levels.

When we understand culture like this, the way we perceive our environment becomes one of three key elements to form culture. The other two are the way we judge our perceptions and how we act on them. This means that we need to take a good look at the psychology of perception. Neuronal mechanisms to collect information and to manage perceived information become important sources of input for understanding what culture ultimately means (Kolb & Whishaw, 2015). Distance of perception plays an important role in two respects. Proximity and distance set physical limits to perception. Only in close proximity is it possible for us to use all the senses for perception of our environment. The sense of taste even needs something in our mouth for us to use it at all. Distance, on the other hand, reduces perception to the two senses of hearing and seeing. But even these senses have their limits. On top of that, sight depends on the physical focus of the eye. If we concentrate our view on a nearby object, we perceive the wider environment as blurry. Conversely, nearby things appear blurred when we look at objects lying farther away.

These purely physical conditions of perception are accompanied by a psychic aspect, which is also influenced by proximity and distance. In psychic terms, these can be described as closeness and detachment. These concepts can be used to define the degree of independence of the person from his or her community. Individuals may be detached from their community or have remained part of it (Elias, 1939, 1987). Many aspects of behavior depend on the degree of integration or independence of a person in the social environment, and this degree determines community dynamics as well.

Culture must therefore be understood at different social levels, not only in regionally different environments. A person's culture is not that of the family, and that of the family is not that of its neighbors. The culture of one city district can be very different from that of another district, and cities do not share the same culture, as we know very well in Switzerland. Yvette Jaggi, the former

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

president of the Swiss cultural foundation Pro Helvetia, once said that there was no such thing as a Swiss culture. She was, of course, right when looking at the four language regions, but at the same time she was completely wrong. There is no common Swiss culture within Switzerland. But as a Swiss diplomat working abroad, I was always representing Swiss culture as a whole. On a supra-national level, there is a Swiss culture, and internal inconsistencies among the language regions are one of its key characteristics.

In this sense, corporate culture does not simply arise from the value patterns the executive team would have liked to develop. Corporate culture is based primarily on the cultures of all employees. If these individual cultures do not match the values suggested by the executive team, the company has a cultural problem. And if corporate culture is still understood as branding, as is often the case today, then the company is on a completely wrong footing. Successful branding is the product of deeply engaged employees, whose commitment generates a comprehensive and sometimes remarkable corporate culture. This is the only convincing and sustainable approach to organizational culture – and it automatically includes branding.

Physical proximity and distance as well as psychic closeness and detachment are the key distinctive features differentiating between closeness-based collectivist societies and detached individualist ones. “Individualist” and “collectivist” are used here in order to make a clear distinction between “liberal” and “socialist” in traditional Western political science. In global terms, the differentiation between liberalism and socialism no longer works; this distinction remains based on Western societies and ideologies and presents a pitfall for modern, global assessments. These assessments must not be made on an ideological basis. Instead, social psychological parameters must be adopted in order to include non-Western social patterns. With this approach, we actually achieve a differentiation between “the West and the Rest”, as superficial this may sound at first sight. On this high level of abstraction, however, the statement is right, indicating above all that Western development has gone through the Renaissance and Enlightenment, detaching the individual person from his or her community, whereas in the rest of the world this detachment has never developed to the same extent as in Western societies. This is the background to a differentiation between individualist and collectivist nations. On this level of abstraction, the similarities of a Chinese and a Japanese society as compared to a German or a French one are quite obvious. It does not mean, however, that China and Japan are similar. If we want to compare the two nations we use a much lower level of abstraction, the level of the two nations – and we shall see some very important cultural differences. The most important one is probably the fact that Chinese society has its strongest roots in the core family, whereas the equivalent for Japanese society is the village, which encompasses different families – and is, in fact, the basic economic unit (Roth, 2007, 2020, 2021). On this level of comparison, national details become much more important. That does not mean they challenge the overall meta-level approach. National specifics will still have to fall within the meta-level frame, i.e. if and when the frame has been developed the right way! Horizons of perception are the decisive factors for conducting analysis at all levels studied, and the meta-level theoretical approach is the frame that surrounds them and keeps them together! This kind of flexible and dynamic approach considering different levels of observation is the only one that excludes both cultural universalism and cultural relativism.

The objective of an individual cultural assessment or of a cultural survey in an organization as a whole must therefore aim at determining the degree of integration or independence of employees, including the executive team. In this regard, it is quite possible to use previous

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

research. Certain parameters, such as different concepts of time, are known. However, these have often been poorly understood. The right interpretation can come only from a comprehensive approach and understanding of culture. For example, we are often unaware that societies that live in the here and now, such as collectivist societies of the Far East, do not plan at all and have reality flow onto them. They show a very different attitude to uncertainty because it cannot be avoided. The function of planning is to eliminate potential hazards or to minimize them in such a way that they become acceptable. If you cannot plan you are always confronted with the whole spectrum of possibilities which includes both dangers and chances. Western European societies are clearly risk-averse in their planning approach: they see risks as dangers and seek to avoid them by all means. Asians are confronted with dangers and opportunities at the same time. Chinese thinking is limited to here and now, the future is not related to the actual moment. It remains purely visionary. Contrary to many Western cultural assessments, the country does not have long-term planning – it works with very short decision horizons, but with visions that secure the direction. These visions remain completely open to realisation; they are fully detached from the actual moment. This is not the case with a plan that, in three years' time, will lead to results whose realisations start from today. China has an extremely short-term here-and-now thinking that prevents any planning. But in contrast to a plan, this thinking is highly flexible and allows easy and immediate adaptation to constantly changing circumstances. It takes advantage of opportunities that arise with the flow of time at every moment. The vision only determines the rough direction of development.

The background to these differences in understanding time lies in different views of feasibility. Since Renaissance times, detachment has pushed Western people to believe in being able to influence their own destinies. This is not Asian – nor Arab -- thinking at all. Insha'allah means first of all that another power decides about our destiny. But it does not mean that an Arab or Asian person are not able to influence life on their own. They do so by acting on given situations. They let themselves be carried by the flow of time and act when moments of influence present themselves.

A closeness-based society like China is also confronted with major challenges when it comes to basic research. Here the distance that allows an observer to make analyses or abstractions is missing. Basic research will always be a major challenge in collectivist societies such as China, Japan or the Arab world. Members of closeness-based societies are participants to what happens around them, they are not observers. They see the trees; they smell and feel them even - but they do not see the forest as a whole. Their participation hinders analysis and abstraction in a massive way. What hides this fundamental weakness, and what is likely to become a real challenge for Europe and North America culturally, is their great strength in the field of applied innovation. Being participants, persons from collectivist societies are potentially closer to the product and to the customer than American or European companies. This greatly favors conversion of an invention into a marketable product. One of the best examples is still the invention of the LCDs, Liquid Crystal Displays. Hoffmann La Roche in Basel had developed the LCD ready for production and licensed it to the then-BBC, forerunner of ABB. However, neither Roche nor BBC succeeded in converting the invention into value-added products successfully. The Japanese machinery and watch industry did so, almost ruining the corresponding industries in Switzerland. The most recent example is the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, which has just been awarded. The theoretical foundations for the lithium batteries were created in the West, but it was a Japanese engineer who actually produced the battery.

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

Capturing customer proximity, good governance, or compliance becomes more difficult because various influencing factors have to be evaluated at the same time. It is therefore essential to perceive corporate culture in all its breadth and depth. In principle, openness to the customer is better in an American or European environment, but product developments are too often made without considering the buyer. In a collectivist society, the customer is often perceived to be in the out-group. But when he is in the company's network of relationships, he is really king. He is not just getting something that has been developed in the company and by the company only. The product is tailor-made to fit him. Japanese consumer products bear excellent witness to this fact. Efforts to bring customers closer to production must therefore be based on different cultural foundations in Europe and Asia or the Arab world.

Compliance poses similar challenges, because in an individualist environment like Germany or the UK, values are absolute, while a collectivist environment understands them in a relational way. This is not unknown to us in Europe, because direct family members are normally not allowed to act as witnesses for or against other family members in a trial. They have a relational view and are not independent in their judgment. In an Asian company, the larger in-group/out-group distinctions associated with higher social integration will also lead to relational judgments and considerably stronger segmentation within the company. Whistleblowing is even more difficult than in a company based in the US and Europe. Any effort to limit intra-company risk must thus rely on mutual loyalties between leaders and employees and should be regularly underlined -- and lived at the same time.

Individualist and collectivist societies are thus characterized by fundamentally different morality and ethics. While absolute justice is paramount in individualist societies of the West – and thus in a Western company – in Arab or Asian collectivist societies, it is a situational justice based on patterns of relationships. Normally, these differences will have little influence on day-to-day activities. But in difficult or decisive situations, they can have a significant impact on responses that should not be underestimated and should be known.

Proximity and distance—and the perception of surroundings influenced by these two concepts—are therefore the parameters behind everything related to culture. They enable a cultural assessment, whether at the individual level or at that of a company or a nation. It remains important, however, to be aware of the level of comparison at which a cultural survey is made. Corporate culture is based on the culture of each employee. The culture of the research department where analytical thinking is associated with a certain distancing will be different from the sales department where proximity to the customer is required. On a meta-level it becomes possible to determine the different factors of a cultural assessment. They should map culture in a fundamental way on different levels and should allow comparisons with the values a management team would like to develop and to follow. Gaps between corporate culture and value creation should be closed in the interests of employee engagement. In any case, the discrepancy between management by objectives and employee orientation should be removed. It may be possible in the American environment to operate with management by objectives only. But even in Western Europe, the approach becomes difficult and in closeness-based collectivist societies such as those in the Middle or the Far East, achieving a company target without employee orientation simply becomes impossible.

Assessing organizational culture is thus the first step toward establishing an internal risk map for an organization. Such an assessment allows the management team to get a good idea about the cultural footprint of the organization and provides a secure base of action. The team receives

ISSN: XXXX (Online)

a clear picture of the strong and weak points in their organization. The resulting confirmation or questioning of management are excellent instruments to evaluate the results of company strategies and to develop them further.

In summarizing, we can say that cultural assessments must be based on a concept of culture that incorporates all parameters and does not leave them stand empirically independent in the room if they should deliver the right results. Only then can strategically relevant statements about corporate culture be made with a certain degree of certainty. An empirical approach may be right in many ways, especially if it is supported by artificial intelligence. But without a concept behind such an approach, strategies cannot be developed and assessed. Nor will AI replace human intelligence. The algorithms are only becoming more precise. If they were originally based on false assumptions, they will not become more "correct" with AI. The underlying concepts must be correct, otherwise they will only exacerbate existing errors. The large empirical base of Hofstede, for example, or of the GLOBE group does not make their work more precise.

We have reached a point in our practice of social sciences where we should detach ourselves more strongly from empirical foundations in order to regain a broader understanding of our world. In this respect Europe was in a spirit of awakening a hundred years ago and developed many hypothetical approaches that have become the mainstay of today's sciences. We should once again be more willing to give a place to evaluations and analyses that transcend empirical data. Of course, many hypothetical assumptions have been falsified in the development of science – but developments have shown that many were right as well. I miss this courage to interpret more freely in our views of social sciences today.

REFERENCES

Carnegie, Dale (2017). White paper: Transforming attitudes and actions: How senior leaders create successful workplace cultures

Elias, N. (1939). Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.[On the Process of Civilization] Suhrkamp.

Elias, N. (1987). Die Gesellschaft der Individuen.[The Society of Individuals] Suhrkamp.

Hofstede. G. (1991). Cultures and organisations. Harper Collins.

House, R. J., Dorfmann, P. W., Javidan, M., & Sully de Luque, M. F. (2014). Strategic leadership across cultures: The GLOBE study of CEO leadership behavior and effectiveness in 24 countries. Sage.

Kolb, B.; Whishaw, I.Q. (2015). Fundamentals of human neuropsychology. Worth.

Roth, H. J. (2021). Organisationskultur im global tätigen Unternehmen [Organizational culture in a global company]. Schäffer-Poeschel.

Roth, H. J. (2020). Kultur, Raum und Zeit [Culture, Space and Time]. (2nd ed.). Nomos.

Roth, H. J. (2007). Managing China. HJR Publishing.

Venaik, S.; Brewer, P. (2008). Contradictions in national culture. UQ Business School.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Hans Jakob Roth: Former ambassador and Swiss career diplomat, chair EurAsia Competence AG Switzerland, Yangon, Myanmar.

Permissions: journal@sietar.ch
ISSN: XXXX (Online)

HTTP://SIETAR.CH/JOURNAL/ 2021

THE SWISS JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

This is a peer-reviewed Journal to reach out not only to the SIETAR Switzerland membership but beyond to all those who believe that intercultural dialogue, inclusion and tolerance are essential to our future. By doing so we attempt to initiate a meaningful relationship between researchers and practitioners that will constructively answer important intercultural matters.

Submission Process:

To begin the article submission process, complete our SIETAR Switzerland Journal-Article-Template to ensure format consistency and email the completed template to journal@sietar.ch.
You can submit your article at any time throughout the year. The rolling submission deadlines, corresponding with the publication of journal editions, are:

- March for spring edition
- September for winter edition

If your article is submitted after the deadline, it will be considered for the following edition. Contact journal@sietar.ch for more information.