

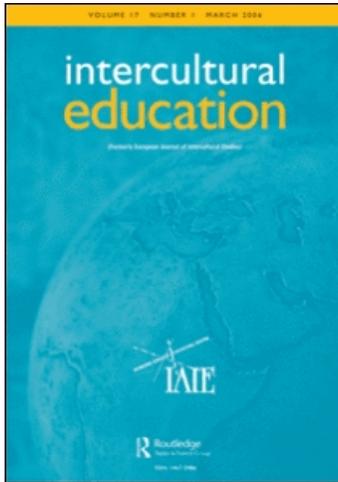
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Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 786636649]

Publisher Routledge

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Intercultural Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t713393965>

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Online Publication Date: 01 January 1994

To cite this Article Perotti, Antonio(1994)'The Impact of the Council of Europe's Recommendations on Intercultural Education in European School Systems',*Intercultural Education*,5:1,9 — 17

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/0952391940050102

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0952391940050102>

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The Impact of the Council of Europe's Recommendations on Intercultural Education in European School Systems

Antonio Perotti

Before we discuss the present topic, it is essential to emphasise that the Council of Europe's orientation to intercultural education has its origin in a very different historical context than the multicultural education that has been developed and practised in the United States and Canada. The Council of Europe did not clearly define its orientation until the mid-1980s. This occurred within the framework of teacher training relating to education in intercultural understanding, especially with respect to migration issues.

For more than 10 years, from 1972 until the beginning of the 1980s, the Council of Europe concerned itself almost exclusively with the linguistic and socio-cultural specificity of immigrant workers' children. During this time, no intercultural pedagogy directed at school children in general was developed.

A. Pedagogical concerns closely linked to immigration

It can be concluded that the recommendation issued by the Council of Europe's Ministers' Committee in 1984¹ represents the logical conclusion of more than 12 years of experiments conducted within the framework of the 'experimental classes' program. This program was launched in 1972 in order to assist immigrant workers' children. It was inspired by the Ministers' Committee resolution issued in 1970².

The 'experimental classes' program was not inspired by an awareness — already well developed in the United States, Canada and Australia — of society's multicultural nature, but by a political will to protect migrant workers' education rights, and by the perception that migratory patterns are a temporary rotating phenomenon.

The 'experimental classes', designed for migrant workers' children, were thus conceived in the spirit and the letter of sections 14 and 15 of the 'European Convention on the legal status of migrant workers'. This docu-

ment was submitted for signature by the member states in November 1977³.

The 'Experimental classes' program (1972-1984), closely linked to a boom in the immigration of children and teenagers, due to family reunification policies during the 1970s, can be summarised in two main principles:

1. Recognition of certain linguistic and educational deficiencies associated with children when they first arrive: ignorance of the official school language and often defective education in the native country. Hence the goal to establish a compensatory and integration-oriented pedagogy, as well as to facilitate the child's success in the local school system.
2. Recognition of the child's linguistic status and cultural background. Children carry their culture's linguistic codes and are marked by their culture's traditions and customs. Therefore, it is considered important to maintain and strengthen the ties with one's original language and culture. Implementation of this second principle is generally aimed at stabilising the child's personality and facilitating his/her re-integration in case the child returns to the country of origin.

The first objective was met by the development of a specific pedagogy incorporating support and 'hosting measures' (hosting classes, initiation classes, adaptation, bilingual transition classes, extracurricular activities) and the adaptation of methodologies for linguistic apprenticeship (teaching the host country's language as a second language or as a foreign language; linguistic teaching at the individual or group level, immersion method). This set of measures was designed to bring the immigrant worker's child up to the school norm.

The second objective was pursued by teaching the native country's language and culture. Teachers were usually recruited from the country of origin, and worked either inside or outside of the local school structure. Some teachers had pedagogical and organisational links to this structure, while others did not. In some cases, this second objective became the subject of a negotiated management between the governments of both countries concerned. The purpose of this bilateral management was to develop, according to the Council of Europe's guidelines, active co-operation between the countries of origin and the host countries. This would allow the initiation of activities such as educational material development, training sessions for teachers, and experimental workshops directed towards curriculum development.

The above-mentioned framework, associated with the 'experimental classes' program, had two principle characteristics: the attempt to respond to educational and individual needs and the creation of a linguistic basis to insure successful integration into the school system. One can conclude that the practical translation of the Committee's guidelines into the various European school systems took different forms, and that implementation took place more often at the primary school level than at the secondary level.

Above all, the guidelines effectively influenced almost exclusively the major immigration countries within the European Community (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, France).

Application of the Council of Europe's 1970 resolution should have been facilitated in EEC member states by a later directive issued by the Community Council of Europe. This directive went into effect in July 1981 after a four year trial period. The directive stipulated that member states had the obligation to offer foreign children an education adapted pedagogically to their specific needs. Host countries were invited to co-operate with the countries of origin in order to introduce appropriate measures that would allow native language teaching for migrant workers' children. This directive strengthened the Council of Europe's recommendations directed at the twelve member states⁴.

Even in the EEC countries, however, application of the directive was rather limited. In 1981, the European Parliament adopted a new resolution that put pressure on member states which had experienced delays in applying the directive. It called for legislative and administrative measures to be taken as soon as possible to meet the directive's provisions⁵.

The European Parliament indicated in the same resolution that the directive needed to be expanded to non-EEC countries, so that they would not be treated differently from EEC-countries. Another expansion was the stipulation that the directive would also apply to kindergartens.

However, the Parliament recognised that local authorities in some member states would have tremendous difficulties providing education in all immigrant languages. These difficulties surfaced in the reports submitted by the European Commission to the Council in 1984 and in 1988⁶, focusing on the directive's application. These reports dealt with the education of all immigrant workers' children, but con-

cerned primarily the education of children coming from member states.

According to Resolution A3-0399/92, dealing with 'cultural diversity and problems associated with the education of immigrant children in the European Community' (adopted in January 1993), the European Parliament was obliged to acknowledge that '10 years after its enforcement, the directive had still not been entirely incorporated into legislation in all member states'. It was also concluded that important progress was still needed in order to extend the directive to protect the children of non-EEC citizens. The European Parliament openly considered embracing a clearer definition of rights, as guaranteed by the EEC directive⁷.

From immigration to intercultural pedagogy

The framework serving as a reference point for the 'Experimental classes' program underwent significant changes during the 1980s. This is reflected in the resolution passed by the permanent conference of the European Ministers of Education at Dublin in May 1993. Recommendation R (83)13 dealt with promoting awareness in secondary schools about the consequences of migration for young people. Recommendation R (84)18 focuses even more specifically on this issue. As we mentioned earlier, this recommendation concerns teacher training in a migration context.

The contemporary reference point increasingly deviates from the educational situation of migrant workers' children and their specific needs. Because many emigrants have settled permanently in their host countries there are now many second generation children. This circumstance fundamentally changes the nature of the problem. School systems now have to gear teaching to the new requirements imposed by the multicultural, multid denominational and multiethnic character of society.

Some novel elements of the new European landscape include: the permanent settlement of immigrants; the concomitant educational and cultural aspects of intercommunity relations; global information and communication through the media; media influence on imaginary and symbolic relations between persons and groups; the development of collective identities, the resurgence of nationalistic movements and ideologies that preach intolerance, xenophobia and racism, the 'European' construction implying research on a 'European identity'; the development in certain places of religious fundamentalist movements and local regionalist movements, and the awakening of national and ethnic minorities.

For some years, this situation has challenged the capacity of educational systems in general, and school systems in particular, to transmit the necessary knowledge and abilities to citizens from different cultures allowing them to participate in a pluralistic democratic society. The challenge lies in the capacity of intercultural education to help develop concepts and educational methods that contribute to human rights education and the fight against intolerance and racism.

Recommendation R(84)18: The training of teachers in the field of intercultural education

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers' 1984 recommendation reflects a perspective which reveals an important evolution in the reasoning used to justify the introduction of intercultural education into European schools.

Special education was originally intended for a particular category of students (those with a different linguistic and cultural background). There is now a move towards educational change that addresses the needs of all children. Indeed, the recommendation justifies such an orientation by acknowledging that:

'societies with multicultural features created in Europe by the population movements of recent decades are an irreversible and generally positive development, in that they may help to further closer links between peoples of Europe and between Europe and other parts of the world'. This is the case to the extent that 'the presence in schools in Europe of millions of children from foreign cultural communities constitutes a source of enrichment and a major medium- and long-term asset, provided that education policies are geared to fostering open-mindedness and an understanding of cultural differences'.

The Ministers' Committee limits the recommendation's scope to the training of teachers. There is a conviction that the recommendation can play an essential role in facilitating the integration of students in schools and in society, and in fostering mutual understanding'. The recommendation, however, represents a significant step forward because it calls for an 'intercultural approach' to be adopted in all forms of teacher training. The recommendation applies to both host countries and countries of origin, 'because it concerns all children'.

The intercultural approach referred to in the recommendation is still closely linked to the migratory phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that there are developments taking place which will lead towards other forms of pluralism. Examples include co-operative international media projects (audio-visual media especially), the resurgence of nationalism and collective identities, the historical presence of ethnic minorities and the meeting of Latin, Anglo-saxon, Slavic, Greek and Turkish cultures. This meeting of cultures has been promoted by the emergence of a broader Europe, 'the common community', after the events following the fall of the iron curtain at the end of the 1980s.

In 1984, the Council of Ministers recommended 'that the governments of the member

states (within the context of their educational and legislative systems and their policies and available resources):

1. make the intercultural approach and the understanding between different communities a feature of initial and in-service teacher-training, and in particular:
 - 1.1 train teachers in such a way that they:
 - become aware of the various forms of cultural expression present in their own national cultures, and in migrant communities;
 - recognise that ethnocentric and stereotyping can damage individuals and therefore, attempt to counteract their influence;
 - realise that they too should become agents in the process of cultural exchange, and develop and use strategies for approaching understanding and giving due consideration to other cultures, as well as educating their pupils to give due consideration to them;
 - become aware of existing social exchanges between the country of origin and the host country, not only in the cultural field but also an awareness of historical trends;
 - become conscious of the economic, social, political, and historical causes and effects of migration;
 - become conscious too of the fact that the active participation of migrant children in two cultures and their access to intercultural understanding depend, to a great extent, on conditions relating to settlement, work, and education in the host country;
 - 1.2 put at the disposal of student teachers and teachers all useful information pertaining to the cultures associated with the countries of origin (for host countries) and

of the host countries (for countries of origin);

- 1.3 make teachers and pupils more receptive to different cultures by, inter alia, incorporating into teacher-training the use of authentic materials and artefacts in the classroom, thus enabling people to see their own culture in a new light;
- 1.4 help student teachers and teachers to understand and appreciate educational approaches other than those of their own countries;
- 1.5 make student teachers and teachers aware of the importance of direct contacts between schools and parents (especially migrants) and train them to establish and maintain such contacts;
2. encourage the development and use of appropriate materials to support the intercultural approach in the training of teachers in order to give a 'truer' image in school of the different cultures of their pupils;
3. as much as possible, encourage the creation of 'intercultural resource centres', where documents, information and various teaching aids relating to the different cultures concerned would be available, or encourage existing resource centres to act as such;
4. where appropriate, encourage the holding of national and international seminars and courses on the intercultural approach to education. These would be organised for teachers, teacher trainers, administrators and other persons involved in teacher-training, including welfare and labour officers who have close professional relations with migrant families;
5. encourage the creation of common in-service teacher-training courses for both host country and country of origin

teachers, as well as the training of teachers from the migrant community itself;

6. where appropriate, foster exchanges of student-teachers, teachers and teacher trainers in order to promote better knowledge and understanding of different cultures and education systems;
7. promote the circulation of intercultural education materials and training materials developed under the auspices of the Council of Europe'.

Three Major Orientations

To meet the needs mentioned above, the CDCC working sessions offer educational and cultural institutions assistance in three areas:

1. the first entails knowledge to be passed on;
 2. the second deals with the abilities and aptitudes to be fostered;
 3. the third suggests various educational models to be utilised⁸.
1. At the level of knowledge dissemination, the following issues deserve special attention:
 - The revision of approaches used in history and geography courses. A new approach should offer (in textbooks and in teaching) a less ethnocentric outlook, a critical analysis of prejudices, an international outlook, emphasis on interdependence among nations, and an acknowledgement of the contributions made by different civilisations and cultures, especially through migration.
 - The deepening of some human science arenas (especially relating to cultural anthropology, primary and secondary socialisation processes, historical and geographical contexts of cultural evolution, religious systems, economic, political and ideo-

- logical implications of power differentials among cultures, the existence of a dominant culture and its role, etc.). Educational and cultural institutions cannot ignore the findings of cultural anthropology (culture can be defined as daily existence and the relationships it entails), nor the findings stemming from the sociology of languages and cultures (their permeability, their symbolic transitions, the power differentials among them...).
- Knowledge of technological evolution, especially in the field of mass media.
 - An in-depth knowledge of human rights (concepts, history and national conventions, their applications, etc.) and the roots of intolerance and xenophobia.
2. At the level of abilities and aptitudes, the educational systems should, above all, disseminate values and strengthen practices and behavioural patterns aimed at developing positive attitudes toward:
- interpersonal and intercommunity communication and relationships, 'so that the discovery of alterity is perceived as a bridge and no longer as a barrier' (Levy-Strauss);
 - a critical reflection on particular identities (religious, national, ethnic, etc.), their rationalisation — i.e their relation to universal concepts (human beings, their dignity, their fundamental rights), their historical traits, and a reflection on their evolution in time and space. Such reflection is crucial in order to avoid any type of integralism, and to master the dynamics between the particular and the universal.
3. At the level of educational and cultural institutions, educational systems which take the new realities into consideration will be, in fact,
- a large, extensive comparative system. In such systems co-operation will take place among all components of the educational community, each having its specific place and role (schools, families, neighbourhoods, media, associations, social and economic institutions, territorial units, universities and research centres, professional associations such as psychologists and psychoanalysts, etc.)
 - an education system which functions as an integral part of a general coherent policy where the economic, political and social aspects strive toward the same objective: equal opportunities for individuals and communities. If equal opportunities are not created, educational inequalities will grow. European educational and cultural institutions will then be responsible for the creation of multicultural societies in which cultural and educational sub-communities will exist side by side, but will also be characterised by *hierarchical differences*.
 - an educational system which is capable of communicating the knowledge needed to understand the religious factor in human life.

Intercultural education standards: new aims and contents

Given the insights gained from the 'experimental classes' project, novel intercultural experiments should embrace the following criteria in order to be successful:

- aim at all pupils, whether they have indigenous or immigrant backgrounds.
- establish a close relationship between cognitive development and educational aspects, thus transcending a narrow linguistic outlook (bilingualism).
- meet not only personal but also community needs, aiming not only at the children's scholastic integration but also their integration into the community.
- involve all education parties, in particular parents, organisations, schools, local communities, media, etc. The support system should comprise a network of educational and socio-cultural institutions. Intercultural education requires a communication flow among communities that need to be aware of their interdependence.
- make issues such as interpersonal relationships among children, their teachers and their parents a priority. Also focus on the establishment of dynamic relationships between groups and individual members.
- have an impact on the entire range of school activities.
- take the dual function of language into account when teaching languages: language as a communication instrument (vehicular language) and language as an instrument of identity formation. Education in one's mother tongue facilitates this second function.

- involve all teachers in a given school system in interdisciplinary team work. ELCO-teachers (those who teach pupils their mother tongue and native culture) should play a special and active role in these teams.
- enrol all teachers in education courses.
- implement the above by revising school programs, especially history, geography, literature, social and civic education classes.

Integrating an intercultural approach into the educational policies of European countries

The most important aspects of an intercultural education approach have already been embraced by the Swedish parliament, by Dutch educational authorities and, more recently, by Italian authorities. Luxembourg authorities recently (1991) issued guidelines that adopt such an approach at the linguistic level.

On February 28, 1985, Swedish members of parliament decided to accept an intercultural approach to education. Swedish schools are supposed to implement such education with respect to both teaching methods and curriculum development. No time frame has been attached to the implementation of intercultural education in Sweden. Although various projects are underway, the development of such education is listed as a long term goal.

Intercultural education in Sweden does not include the allocation of special resources, nor does it constitute a distinct discipline. The intercultural approach to education in this country (independent of available resources) is designed to be integrated into the already existing curriculum.

A similar view has already been embraced and implemented by Dutch authorities. The ministers of Cultural Affairs, Education, and Social Affairs have co-operated closely to de-

velop a co-ordinated plan and put it into effect. The basic principles of the present educational policy have been defined in a plan that focuses on the situation of cultural minorities. It was presented to Parliament in 1981. A proposed law asking for priority measures to be taken in the area of intercultural education was submitted at the end of 1983.

The Italian Minister of Education circulated a letter in July 1990 that recognises the main aspects put forth by the Council of Europe. The minister suggests that teachers and educators use these aspects as points of reference, even in schools where immigrant children are absent. 'Intercultural education', the letter emphasises, 'enhances democracy, since cultural diversity should be understood as a positive resource in the complex development of society and individuals'.

European universities seem to be responsible for the gap that has been reported between the volume of knowledge imparted in tertiary institutions and the necessary cultural insights needed to cope with the issues of pluralism in our society. Such universities are characterised by 'selective memory', or a 'forgotten memory', and above all by a sense of self-sufficiency which is part and parcel of European cultures. How can one hope to overcome our society's contemporary difficulties when dealing with the presence of an increasing number of Muslims, and when dealing with the disparities between the regions South and the North of the Mediterranean (which weigh heavily on international relations), if society continues to look upon Islam as being basically 'absent', as 'the defeated one', or as 'the desert'?

Some European universities have introduced graduate as well as post-graduate courses focusing on the intercultural approach. These are to be found in psychology, pedagogy, education, history and urban sociology departments (Milan, Turin, Parma, Catania in

Italy; Lisbon in Portugal; Madrid in Spain, and universities VII and VIII in Paris).

In various countries intercultural education, as envisioned by the Council of Europe, still relies entirely on the efforts of individual educators, concerted efforts by groups of teachers, or networks specifically created for this purpose. We see, for example, the organisation CEFISEM (Centres of formation and information for the schooling of immigrant children) in France. Nevertheless, the availability of teacher training and suitable teaching tools is still very limited. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Council of Europe to develop intercultural education and insert it into the educational process, practical initiatives have not gone beyond the level of pilot projects.

Generally speaking, intercultural education principles have not been enthusiastically embraced in European countries, especially those regarding immigration issues. Discussions about intercultural education tend to be viewed as either family affairs or as the hobbies of activists. Such hesitation might be traced to various causes, including:

- political interests.
- high degree of specialisation needed to sustain a debate on interculturalism.
- the inability to cope with new societal developments in the technological domain as well as in the area of employment markets. Both have a stressful influence on educational policies.
- lack of interest on the part of higher education and university authorities.
- a profound difference in the way national or regional educational institutions address and master social and economic realities. Where such structural differences exist, there might be a political inability to control economic and technological evolution.

It is a utopian myth to believe we can influence the European educational systems in all of Europe (the philosophical background and the logical underpinnings of each educational system vary greatly from country to country). It is possible, however, to assist each nation in its pursuit to reflect on the causes of existing rigidities within its system.

European countries ignore each other's educational systems. Therefore, gaining knowledge about the idiosyncrasies of these multiple educational systems may allow us to be more successful in implementing changes in certain regions or contexts, especially in the light of the changes taking place in connection with the creation of the European political union. As far as strategies are concerned, we hope that the development of an international teacher network teacher will become a high priority, in the spirit of the Council of Europe's recommendations. This network should also include universities and NGOs that deal with education issues.

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Notes

1. Council of Europe Committee of Ministers: Recommendation No. R (84) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the training of teachers in education for intercultural understanding, notably in a context of migration (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 September 1984 at the 375th meeting of the Minister's Deputies).
2. Council of Europe Committee of ministers: Resolution 70/35 about the education of the children of migrant workers.
3. Article 14 refers to the teaching of the language of the receiving country and article 15 to the teaching of the mother tongue of migrant workers.
4. ED Directive 486/77; 25 July 1977.
5. Resolution of 12 October 1981, C 260/127.
6. COM (84)0054 and COM (88)0727.
7. A survey of the education of children with an immigrant background in Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium is given in the proceedings of an international colloquium, held in January 1992 in Nancy: *La pluralité culturelle dans les systèmes éducatifs européens*. CNDP/CRDP de Lorraine, Nancy, 1993.

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