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Teacher Education for Multilingual and Multicultural Settings

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Introduction



Teacher Education for Multilingual and Multicultural Settings as an Important Issue in European Teacher Education Policy

Elgrid Messner, Daniela Worek & Mojca Peček

Increased cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms throughout Europe is creating a great challenge for teachers, resulting in a profound need to adequately prepare teachers and other experts to teach in multilingual and multicultural settings. As is often stressed during debates among ENTEP (European Network on Teacher Education Policies) members, the intercultural competence of teachers is crucial for fair and successful learning conditions in e.g. multilingual, multicultural and migrant contexts. Those competences require the ability to be mindful and self-reflective to internalized images and stigmatizations of 'others' in society as well as having the courage to work against discrimination. The ENTEP discussion paper *What is a European Teacher?* already identified *European multi-culturalism* as a matter of concern and the following passage describes 'Europeanness' among other factors:

A European teacher engages with the multicultural nature of European society. He/she has a positive relationship with his/her own culture and is open towards other cultures. He/she knows how to behave in a confident and non-dominant way. He/she works with heterogeneous groups, sees heterogeneity as valuable and respects any differences. He/she copes with the challenges of multicultural aspects of the knowledge society, and works to promote equal opportunities (Schatz, 2005).

As the qualities of teachers and teacher education as a whole, and the translation of new concepts and ideas into policy learning and practice, have been part of ENTEP's objectives for almost 16 years, it is insufficient for ENTEP members merely to share a feeling of urgency about issues on how to prepare teachers for teaching in diverse settings. On the contrary, ENTEP chose the above theme as a top priority. A number of currently interesting, positive and effective policy examples and practice models, new insights and reflections that can trigger discussions on a wider basis for policy makers throughout Europe and promoting multicultural learning environments in programmes at universities and in continuous professional development were expected to be collated.

ENTEP members first addressed this topic in the context of internal ENTEP seminars. This work is accumulated in the ENTEP discussion paper 2015 with the title *Preparing Teachers to Enhance Learning in Multilingual, Multicultural and Migrant Contexts* (Uzerli, 2015). It comprises the key issues and recommendations of members and experts from the European Commission in the context of European Peer Learning

Activities. This paper served as content preparation for the autumn ENTEP Conference in Ljubljana in 2015, in which issues of preparing teachers for teaching in diverse settings were at the centre of attention, the 2015 ENTEP conference in Luxembourg and the 2016 ENTEP Conference in Graz, where additional experts further contributed to this ENTEP thematic approach.¹ Additionally it was decided to gather, with others, all papers presented at those conferences in a new ENTEP volume.

The ENTEP book at hand can be considered an ENTEP response to challenges of increased cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms. It represents a series of significant contributions by several European experts who are either official ENTEP members or who dedicate their expertise to ENTEP with themes deriving from various important aspects of this topic. The book can also be seen in the context of conclusions and recommendations from the above-mentioned ENTEP conferences which were organized as 'Peer Learning Seminars' comparing and contrasting various national approaches and examples to the chosen theme. The recommendations and elaborations herein on theory and practice within the chosen topic intend to stimulate, inspire and enrich further discussion and professional discourse among policy makers, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers in teacher education institutions, student teachers and other stakeholders in the field, as well as the wider school community. They address substantial issues to be pursued in European teacher education and in particular highlight the need to further facilitate and intensify EU-wide research and support for quality improvement of teachers' work in the presented thematic examples. It should also promote new concepts and approaches for teaching with engaged political strategic interventions in the various current challenges in European member states.

The book comprises, in addition to the *Introduction* and *Conclusions and Recommendations*, thirteen articles from nine countries and gives an overview of relevant issues from various perspectives. The contributions reflect both the personal interests of the authors and the national significance that these topics have in their countries of origin. There are four strands of contributions. After the *Introduction* the articles in chapter I engage in *Theoretical Considerations and Practical Insights*, chapter II outlines *European Perspectives and Initiatives*, in chapter III the authors discuss *Policy Measures* and chapter IV focuses on *Mobility* as an impulse for intercultural learning.

The second paper in the *Introduction* is a slightly adapted version of the ENTEP discussion paper *Preparing Teachers to Enhance Learning in Multilingual, Multicultural and Migrant Contexts*, written by Ursula Uzerli (Germany), a former member and coordinator of ENTEP. The discussion paper has already been published on the ENTEP website. It gives a comprehensive view of the intercultural approach as a precondition for mindful and effective teaching in migrant contexts. As classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, it is of utmost importance to adequately prepare teachers, amongst

1 For more about these ENTEP conferences, see the ENTEP website: <http://entep.unibuc.eu/>.

others, in the context of intercultural awareness and competence. Therefore, an environment must be created in which teachers have the possibility to acquire the ability of being mindful and self-reflective and are also able to work against discrimination.

Concentrating on theoretical considerations and practical insights in chapter I, Robi Kroflič (Slovenia) asks *How to Keep Multicultural Education Alive: Selected Theoretical and Practical Suggestions* and opens the discussion by outlining different principles and criteria that have been developed in research against the background of current political conflicts concerning immigration. Furthermore, he introduces 'artistic experiences' which can be used as a new concept in schools, raising awareness of 'the other' and our personal limitations and fostering the thought of value towards the other person and common activities. Sonja Rutar (Slovenia) investigates the *Dynamic Interaction of Literacy Development, Positive Recognition and Child Participation – a Pathway towards a High-Quality Teacher Education and Educational Process*. This article outlines the importance of the process of education as recognition of socio-cultural diversity which includes meaningful literacy development, positive recognition of children and child participation. It is claimed that a lack of these measures in teacher education may lead to meaningless knowledge acquisition in elementary school. Nada Turnšek (Slovenia) demonstrates *Approaches to Diversity, Equity and Social Inclusion in Slovenian Preschools*. The article brings up three prevalent education approaches: the multicultural approach, the intercultural approach and the anti-bias approach, which encourage antidiscrimination and diversity training for teachers. Hereby the author describes the theoretical and practical applications, using Slovenian pre-schools as case studies. Sunčica Macura and Bojana Dimitrijević (Serbia) write about *Preparing Student Teachers for Multicultural Settings with Roma Pupils in Serbia*. This paper analyses the contextual factors influencing the quality of preparation of pre-service teachers against the multicultural background of diverse students. As an example the authors outline the practical activities in pre-teaching with Roma students in Serbia. The following article *Dealing with Diversity in Higher Education: Insights from Romania* by Mihaela-Monica Stîngu, Elena Marin and Georgeta Ion (Romania) analyses the inclusion of vulnerable groups in higher education, putting an emphasis on the approach of equity and the higher education policies which aim at integrating these vulnerable groups.

In chapter II Francesca Caena (Italy) in her contribution *2000-2015: European Discourse on Multilingual, Intercultural Matters vs Policy and Practice Regarding Teachers (with Italian Snapshots)* states that the relevance of a European language teacher education has risen substantially over the past years, as this has been a major goal in European policy discourse, and teachers themselves have highlighted the need for support. Promoting the Education and Training 2020 Framework Strategy, which posits that lifelong learning may overhaul teacher education, whereby further challenges may be met or encouraging deeply rooted change as outlined by the example of Italy. Klaus-Börge Boeckmann's (Austria) article on *European Perspectives on Teacher Education*

in *Multilingual Contexts. Initiatives of the Council of Europe and the European Union* comments on the European strategy for teacher education in multilingual context and analyses special concepts, programmes as well as tools and resources for multicultural and multilingual classroom teaching. In addition, the impact of the European context on the situation in Austria is discussed, especially how the newly developed teacher education curricula reflect the European strategies.

Chapter III focuses on policy measures in different countries and starts with Vlatka Domović's and Vlasta Vizek Vidović's (Croatia) article *Multi- and Intercultural and Minority Education in the Republic of Croatia – Challenges for Teacher Education and Professional Development*. The authors give an overview of key issues related to intercultural and minority education in Croatia with special emphasis on teacher education. While the role for intercultural education in the national curriculum is explained, the article concludes that the teacher education system does not respond to the dynamic societal needs for building intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Larisa Kasumagić Kafedžić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) writes about *Preparing Teachers to Enhance Learning in a Multilingual, Multicultural and Migrant Context – The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The aim of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to prepare students to know 'how to live together', promoting values of peace and skills for self-reflection. Different dimensions of teacher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina are analysed, thereby answering the question whether teacher education in the country is ready to accept this responsibility. Jean-Jacques Weber (Luxembourg) gives an overview *From Fixed to Flexible Multilingual Education: The Case of Luxembourg*. The Luxembourg education system is trilingual French, German and Luxembourgish. Since Luxembourgish and German are closely related, teaching basic German literacy skills is similar to the teaching in standard German state schools. In the past years more students have a Romanic language background, raising the question whether a more flexible language-in-education policy would be an advantage, and which implications this might have. In their contribution *The Federal Centre for Interculturality, Migration and Multilingualism: Supporting Diversity and Multilingualism in Teacher Education and Training in Austria*, Dagmar Gilly, Daniela Gronold and Barbara Schrammel-Leber (Austria) illustrate how nationwide cooperation and quality development in teacher education and training with respect to diversity and multilingualism functions within the work of this federal centre. In discussing the aims, activities and challenges of the Federal Centre for Interculturality, Migration and Multilingualism they show how this work gives structural support to university colleges of teacher education in Austria for constant quality development and professional dialogue in this area and consequently fosters the inclusion of these topics in teaching and its evaluation.

Chapter IV deals with mobility. *Erasmus+ Course 'International Teacher Competences' – A Successful Concept of Internationalization at the University College of Teacher Education Styria* by Heiko Vogl, Georg Krammer, Susanne Linhofer and Regina Weitlaner

(Austria) outlines the new ‘International Teacher Competences’ Erasmus+ course at the University College of Teacher Education Styria which is the first of its kind. The course aims to support effective teaching in multicultural settings. Hereby the modular system based on the framework of the key competence lifelong learning is extensively explained. In order to underline the importance of mobility and the interrelated effect on teacher competences, a study is illustrated which links student mobility to openness and emotional stability. Daniela Elsner and Daniela Worek (Germany) also discuss the *Professionalization of Teachers in the Context of Diversity – Opportunities and Obstacles of Mobility in German Teacher Education Programmes*. Although international and multicultural competences is desirable, the number of student teachers using exchange programmes is rather low – a missed opportunity to be a role-model later in their career as teachers, where one of the main aims is to build these multilingual and cross-cultural competences. This article outlines the challenges and opportunities for student teachers going abroad.

Completing the book and its goal “to gather perspectives and experiences on teacher education for teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings from different countries”, Mojca Peček (Slovenia) summarizes “common trends on how teacher education is organized and which are the greatest challenges for teacher education in different countries” in her article *Preparing Teachers to Enhance Learning in Multilingual and Multicultural Settings*. She draws conclusions and gives substantial recommendations on how to organize teacher education for teaching in multicultural and multilingual settings.

This book could not be accomplished without the help and great commitment of many people. We wish to thank the team of the Federal Centre of Interculturality, Migration and Multilingualism (BIMM) at the University College of Teacher Education Styria and its head Dagmar Gilly for the close look at the language and contents of the contributions, as well as for her conscientious work with the layout and the organization of the texts. We also thank the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education whose financial support has made the publication of this ENTEP book possible. And we thank DBV for their financial support. ENTEP is very grateful for this special commitment to its work.

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