



МАКЕДОНСКИ
ЦЕНТАР ЗА
ГРАЃАНСКО
ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ



First International Conference

**“Practicum of Future Pedagogues,
Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers
in Multicultural Environments –
Experiences and Challenges”**

27–29 November 2014
Skopje

Faculty of Philosophy
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is our pleasure to present the electronic edition of the proceedings of the First International Conference on “**Practicum of Future Pedagogues, Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers in Multicultural Environments - Experiences and Challenges**” held at the Faculty of Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, from 27 to 29 November 2014. The Conference was organized by the OSCE Mission to Skopje in cooperation with the Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC) and the five teacher training institutions in the country, i.e., the faculties of Philosophy and Pedagogy of the University of Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, the Faculty of Philosophy of the State University of Tetovo, the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Goce Delčev in Štip and the Faculty of Education of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski in Bitola.

The conference was opened by the Minister of Education and Science, Mr Abdilqim Ademi, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, Prof. D-r Goran Ajdinski and the head of the Human Dimension Department of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, Ms Ioana Cosma. The keynote speeches were delivered by Prof. D-r Lena Damovska from the Faculty of Philosophy of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, who described the concept and experiences of student’s practicum in the

country, by Mr Frank Crawford, education transformation expert from Scotland, who presented the Scottish and European inclusive practices in teacher training and Prof. Mark R. Ginsberg, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, who highlighted the pathways for teacher training that lead to positive impact in multicultural environments.

This Conference is a result of six years of intense cooperation between the OSCE Mission to Skopje and the five teacher training faculties in the area of pre-service teacher training and practicum placements of future pedagogues and teachers and it is a unique example of excellent cooperation between the OSCE and the five teacher training faculties. The event was dedicated to advancing the theory and practice of preparing future education professionals for work in multicultural environments and it promoted collaborative exchange between academia and practitioners involved in the practical training of future teachers. This, first-of-its-kind conference organized in the country, gathered nearly 100 university professors, teachers, pedagogues, students and education experts, guests from Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia. Abstracts and papers for the conference were also submitted by education experts from Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Russia. That many of the participants

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travelled long distances shows just how important the work of education professionals is, and how strong is their commitment to the well-being and prosperity of future generations.

We would like to thank all authors who contributed with their papers and to extend special gratitude to the members of the Scientific Board and the reviewers for their dedication and insightful comments.

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**CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS IN
MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS**

Abstract

Classroom is always a challenge for teachers. Diversity of children, of approaches, of new situations is their everyday life. Teachers should be well prepared to face with all challenges they will meet in their work. One of the specific challenges is working in multicultural environment and developing multicultural skills at children during educational process. At the first sight, it is an easy task, normal environment for working. And yes, it is but only for teachers which have lived in multicultural region, which have many years practice in multicultural classroom. It will be successful practice for every teacher who has been well prepared during his initial education.

Keywords: teacher, multicultural classroom

Introduction

The classroom is always a challenge for teachers. Diversity of children, of approaches, of new situations is their everyday life. Teachers should be well prepared to face all challenges they will meet in their work. One of the specific challenges is working in a multicultural environment and developing multicultural skills at children during educational process. At first sight, it is an easy task, normal environment for working. In addition, yes, it is but only for teachers who have lived in multicultural regions, which have many years practice in multicultural classroom.

It will be successful practice for every teacher who has been well prepared during his initial education.

Why Multicultural Education?

School is a unique environment for all participants in school life. Teachers, supporting staff, pupils, as well as parents meet in one place and share common interests. They all seek for a good and effective education for children. They should share the same values, beliefs and expectations. But they also share the same challenges. In the centre of all activities, two players take the main role: teacher and pupil. For every stakeholder the teacher's role is the most responsive one by the nature of their work and responsibilities. That role is not simply one, but very complicated. Imagine one school working in neighbourhood where all citizens belong to one ethnic and religious group. Since the nature of society and its functioning principles reflect over work in school, we expect one peaceful, routine kind of work with pupils in classroom. There is mutual understanding based on a same cultural and religious background, so the level of misunderstanding is very low. Now imagine opposite situation: neighbourhood where different ethnic and religious groups share living space. Reflection over school is different from the first situation. We can expect the same reflection over schoolwork since we deal with different kind of expectations, different attitudes, stereotypes, beliefs. The level of misunderstanding is higher, and we need skills to overcome expected conflicts. We need skills

to offer quality and safe environment for learning for all pupils.

We talk about two things: multicultural education and the way teachers are prepared to deal with working in multicultural environments and developing skills for living in multicultural society at pupils. Despite all other responsibilities teachers have an obligation to work with pupils on make them citizens with multicultural spirit. Also many teachers work in multicultural schools, which mean that they should be well prepared for all situations that arise from this unique moment. Awareness for those questions slowly becomes equal among other educational question in Macedonia the last few years. We become aware that our schools are places where future citizens, which will be those who are responsible for our society, learn how to practice active citizenship and understanding between differences.

Multicultural education is a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents. It affirms our need to prepare student for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.

(<http://www.nameorg.org/resolutions/definition.html>)

It is clear that all stakeholders expect from school to deliver philosophy of multiculturalism into practice, which means delivering concrete learning outcomes related to multiculturalism at pupils after leaving school. Society and school of the 21st Century must not neglect present and should be prepared for future living of their citizens and pupils.

What must school do?

The first step to reaching goals related to multiculturalism is to be aware of the situation and to make good plan for implementing all needed actions. The practice until now has shown that: multicultural education is most successful when implemented as a school wide approach with reconstruction of not only curriculum, but also organizational and institutional policy. Unfortunately, most educational institutions are not prepared to implement multicultural education in their classrooms. Multicultural education requires staff that is not only diverse, but also culturally competent. Educators must be aware, responsive and embracing of the diverse beliefs, perspectives and experiences. They must also be willing and ready to address issues of controversy. These issues include, but are not limited to, racism, sexism, religious intolerance, classism, ageism, etc. All staff should know the basic facts: Culture refers to the "traditions, rituals, beliefs, and values that are shared amongst a group of people. Each person is a part of at least one culture. Some families

participate in several cultures. Multiculturalism refers to the "sharing of many cultures."

(<http://www.teachhub.com/multicultural-education-your-classroom>). Every person in school has his own tasks related to multicultural education. They all make their own contribution to this issue. Despite all teachers are in the focus of interest and they are persons on which high pressure is taken. Everyone expect teachers should do their best.

What should teachers do?

Teachers need a deep understanding of diversity first of all. They need knowledge and skills to create multicultural classroom and to practice multicultural environment for teaching and learning. Deeply understanding of multiculturalism and the way of practicing it in classroom is a process like building a house. First we need a platform for putting foundation, and then we start to put brick by brick until our idea is finished. This means that our teachers during their initial teacher training process should acquire basic knowledge and skills for working in multicultural school and to teach in the way so pupils will develop their own skills. It is a question: Do our institutions offer such training for future teachers? Do we offer enough theoretic facts, opportunities to practice that knowledge in real classroom? Do our curriculum materials pay enough attention to this issue? Is there any space at all for completing their competences related to multicultural education practice?

Practice suggests what are teacher's responsibilities and some advices for teachers:

- Integrate a diverse reading list that demonstrates the universal human experience across cultures
 - Encourage community participation and social activism
 - Go beyond the textbook
 - By supplementing your curriculum with current events and news stories outside the textbook, you can draw parallels between the distant experiences of the past and the world today.
 - Creating multicultural projects that require students to choose a background outside of their own
 - Suggest that your school host an in-service professional development on multi-cultural education in the classroom (taken from <http://www.teachhub.com/multicultural-education-your-classroom>)
2. To what national, cultural, linguistic or religious group(s) I belong to? How do my teaching practices reflect this?
 3. What do I know about the cultural, linguistic, religious and educational backgrounds of my students and other staff?
 4. How could I learn more about the diversity of my students and staff colleagues?
 5. What are my perceptions/assumptions of students and staff colleagues from diverse cultural groups? Or with language or dialects different from mine? Or with special needs or requirements?
 6. What are the sources of these perceptions (e.g., friends/relatives, media, stereotypes, past experiences)?
 7. How do I respond to my students (emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally), based on these perceptions?
 8. What experiences do I have as a result of living, studying or working in culturally and linguistically diverse cultures? How can I capitalize on this experience?
 9. How can I adapt my teaching practices to be more responsive to the unique needs of diverse student groups?
 10. What other knowledge, skills and resources would help me to teach from a more culturally inclusive perspective? (from http://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/184853/Creating-a-Culturally-

Now: Do we really pay attention for preparing teachers to complete those tasks? Or we consider that when teacher will be in a position to practice multiculturalism, automatically he will know how to do that? To be a reflective practitioner is another one dimension of teacher profession. Practice also suggests ten questions for teacher reflection over multiculturalism, which will guide and evaluate teachers work.

10 Questions to Guide Self-Reflection: Creating a Culturally Inclusive Classroom

1. What is my definition of “diversity”?

[Inclusive-Classroom-Environment-mcb2.pdf](#)

What should we as institutions do?

Teacher Faculties must make revision over their teaching conception and approach to teacher preparation of their students. Initial teacher training must have all needed perspectives of equipping future teachers with competences about multicultural education. We are responsible for preparing future teachers with all needed knowledge, skills to deal with all challenges about working in multicultural classroom, and flourishing multicultural competences among their pupils. Theoretical base of multicultural philosophy should be delivered in other, modern way. Delivering only historical facts now days is not enough, but we have to talk about multicultural philosophy in modern society. Understanding of multicultural nature of modern society and its ways of development should be done in interactive way. Also putting students in a multicultural classroom during their practical work is crucial one. That approach will inspire them to think about real teaching situations and to propose concrete steps that should be taken. Working on whole school approach, revising curriculum, implementing teaching strategies is not an easy task. First of all students must observe a good practice and in a next level they have to be in a position to practice multicultural approach. They have to be aware of their values, stereotypes, believes, so they should learn how to be reflective teachers. This will help them to evaluate their practice to point out their

weaknesses and good sides. Interactive communication full with respect with pupils and their parents is another important issue. In practice, this means that our students must be put in a situation to practice this kind of verbal and non-verbal communication. They have to be prepared to deal with many problem situations that could be expected because of the specific nature of this work, but to deal on time and effectively. Conflict resolution is important part of teachers work. Practical work must show students how teachers deal with those situations. We as institutions must have deeply approach over practical work of students. This is very important for every student, especially for those who do not have many opportunities to be part of multicultural environment. The future for every teacher is unknown and unpredictable: where he will work and how he must deal with multicultural challenges.

Maybe the most efficient step will be to make one approach over students' practical work in an elaborated way, so every institution and in-charge person has a clear picture about this issue.

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First International Conference - Practicum of Future Pedagogues, Teachers and Kindergarten
Teachers in Multicultural Environments - Experiences and Challenges (PFPTKTME)

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св.
Климент Охридски", Скопје

371.13:323.11(062)

FIRST international conference "Practicum of
future pedagogues
teachers and kindergarten teachers in
multicultural
environments-experiences and challenges" : 27-29
November, 2014,
Skopje. - Skopje : Faculty of Philosophy, 2015. -
453 стр. : илустр.
; 30 см

Фусноти кон текстот. - Библиографија кон
трудите

ISBN 978-608-238-086-5

а) Обука на наставници - Мултиетнички
општества - Собири
COBISS.MK-ID 99983626