

Literature Review Example

Education



Literature Review
Writing Service

In one of the broadest definitions of education aimed at recognizing and affirming diversity as a social value that carries an invaluable pedagogical potential, Sonia Nieto (1999) determines intercultural education as a philosophy, a worldview, an open process involving relationships among people and discussing differences between complex systems social ideas and beliefs. The author emphasizes in particular the importance of multicultural competence and literacy in basic education as the basic skills that everyone needs to successfully deal with life challenges, not just culturally diverse or socially deprived students. He argues for his position with insufficient understanding of the differences, privileges and powers that often occurs in students from dominant groups and reflects on their (non) perception of their own cultural identity. Therefore, we can conclude that deep understanding of culture is at the very core of intercultural education, and it involves establishing a critical departure from one's own culture and its perception as unquestionable, as well as courage in trying to understand different cultures and their complex inter-relationships. We must therefore be aware that these efforts are a great challenge and that it may not be possible to fully realize them, but it is also imperative to establish pedagogical theories, models and practices aimed at overcoming the linguistic and cultural barriers (Coulby, 2006).

This understanding of intercultural education as a concept intended for everyone, not just culturally diverse students, is one of the general settings that most authors agree with in this area. Common definitions of intercultural education concepts also include:

- Understanding of dialogue as a fundamental component of education;
- Understanding the hidden curriculum as an integral part of the educational process and
- A demand for deeper understanding of the culture and identity of pupils, which does not stop on the superficial understanding of differences based on external, visible features (such as skin color).

This complex process of conceptualization of diversity, says Maxine Greene (1993), is one of the key elements in intercultural education.

Not to neglect the influence of global processes that significantly influence the more pronounced cultural heterogeneity of society, the author points out that there have always been other, different, foreigners in society. The fact that we notice them today more than ever before does not mean that it has not existed before, but speaks of the earlier (no) willingness to see them, which is corrected in today's society thanks to, inter alia, the system of human rights. What is happening in today's society, Greene (1993), is termed by interrupting old silence and by mocking voices that have long been mired.

However, this process is very slow and demanding, especially when we talk about the practical implementation of guidelines that provide citizens with the right to education on an international and national level, including respect for their different cultures, traditions and identities. Namely, most European educational systems, Gundara (2000), are still shaped so as not to recognize the diversity sufficiently and reflect the wrong assumption of the existence of a unique, homogenous national culture. Education, the author emphasizes, is closely related to the hegemonic canon and imprisoned in a "cultural prison" that recognizes only its own, Eurocentric tradition that serves as a starting point for assessing the value of other cultures. In order for this to change, it is necessary to form an intercultural curriculum that reflects the richness of different cultural traditions and provides the area for the self-articulation from the perspective of its own cultural standards, not the ones that are dominated by the Eurocentric tradition. Namely, curricula that promote exclusively national values increase the feeling of exclusion and water on the demand for separate minority schools, and thus towards the deeper internal divide of society that appears on the surface as a simple problem whose solution lies in the position of "political correctness" which strives for superficial interventions conceal the structural causes of injustice and inequality in society.

The highlighted problems of Gundara (2000) sum up, citing the obstacles to the introduction of intercultural education in European Union countries. These are:

Lack of a systematic approach to the implementation of intercultural education in the European Union and across Europe;

Understanding of intercultural education as a theoretical discussion at the academic level, without any real changes in the school system and the higher education system;

The absence of a single model of intercultural education at EU level, despite the theoretical consensus on the need to develop a model for a future European society where intercultural education and the promotion of social diversity play an important role;

Negligible influence of the international recommendations of the European Union and of the Council of Europe on the national education policies of European countries whose education systems continue to be strongly influenced by political control....

In addition to the above-mentioned external obstacles to the implementation of intercultural education, it is also important to point out the wrong interpretations of intercultural education, whose non-critical dissemination contributes to its "inward" distortion. For, as Gorski (2008) points out, the far greater problem of intercultural education than external attacks is internal problems.

Different mistakes about intercultural education are slowing down its implementation and contributing to discussions of its definition and purpose. One of the most common mistakes related to intercultural education is that it is intended for "culturally diverse students", while the category of diversity is most often reduced to ethnic or national affiliation, that is, its most obvious manifestation - language. This is supported by the ad hoc approach to intercultural education, which is seen in enabling the cultivation of minority culture and languages for pupils attending the major schools, whereby it easily falls into the trap of cultural egoism, i.e. the intercultural education to the "mercy" of the majority culture that cares about minority culture and allows her life.

Furthermore, such an understanding of diversity relies on a simplified, static version of identity dominantly generated by ethnicity and remains insensitive to numerous other identity markers, such as gender, class, religion, sexual orientation or disability, on the one hand reinforcing prejudices about certain minority groups, on the other hand, the existing relationships of injustice and inequality in society and the oppressive elements of the majority culture are in no way questioned.

The next flaw is about integrating content, or understanding that expanding existing curricula with content on different cultural, ethnic and racial groups is the core of intercultural education. This flawed discussion of intercultural education focused primarily on the analysis of the content of a formal curriculum, such as the nature of canonical knowledge, while other important dimensions (reduction of prejudice, introduction of culturally responsive teaching and evaluation methods, critical recognition of teachers and students, transformation of school culture) neglected. In addition, focusing on the content dimension encouraged the expansion of quasi-intercultural teaching materials, textbooks and manuals, which in a superficial way, often only at the level of a colorful cover that shows children of different colors of skin in the smiling wheel, contribute to the perpetuation of the reductionist understanding of intercultural education. Furthermore, it is very common and a misconception about the dangers of intercultural education by social cohesion, that is, the understanding that opening up space for different voices and perspectives leads to social disintegration (Banks, 2002). However, empirical data shows the opposite. For example, the survey conducted in 2008 in 27 European countries has shown that unemployment and poverty are more significant indicators of tensions between the Muslim minority community and the majority community than they are ethnic or religious identity (Sharpes & Schou, 2014), indicating the necessity of allocating responsibility for social cohesion among all social actors, not its exclusive locating in minority, especially Muslim communities, perceived as negligent in accepting the democratic values of the West and the threat to European national identities.

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