

INTERACT
Work package 9, summary
The Danish University of Education

The objectives of this Work package were to map the converging and diverging aspects in the approaches to intercultural education as implemented by the programmes identified, selected and assessed previously.

The Danish report focuses on how *democracy* and *second language/additional language* form a part of intercultural education trans-national.

Spain

The concept of democracy is seldom found in the titles of the courses, course descriptions or in the objectives of the courses. The idea of democracy is thematized in a more implicit way and democracy is not explicitly related to an intercultural perspective.

The word “intercultural” is frequently used as a descriptive adjective associated with several nouns, among others “citizenship”. The courses generally connect the intercultural perspective on educational issues with changes/ transformations in society or relate it to the undefined “nowadays society”.

The Spanish report concludes that in general it is the multicultural approach which dominate the courses and programmes in second language education, whereas the intercultural perspective where cultural interrelations are seen as resources is not very frequent/dominating.

Portugal

In the Portuguese courses and programmes (WP 8) the concept of democracy is frequently mentioned in connection with the concepts “citizenship”, “active citizenship” or it is used as an adjective: “democratic citizenship”.

Many programmes and seminars “promote reflection on the role of the educator and of the teacher as an active participant in citizenship education” (p. 39). The teacher is seen as a cultural worker (our analytical concept), who “builds bridges between school and community, between school and families, between school and citizenship, and between school and democracy” (p. 7).

In general, the courses and programmes in second language education seem to have a multicultural approach; they focus on ethnic and social minorities – and on immigrants more than on an intercultural approach where intercultural relations is seen as a resource and not as a problem.

England

The two reports (WP 7 and WP 8) present a number of conclusions on how the intercultural dimension in citizenship education is dealt with in initial teacher education courses and postgraduate courses. The concept of democracy is subordinate to this perspective and it is not directly in focus. In 2002 Citizenship became a statutory part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools in England.

In the course which prepares secondary school teachers for teaching citizenship, citizenship is connected with rights, responsibilities, respect, understanding and active participation in democratic and electoral processes etc.

Democracy is one of the most common key words together with citizenship, rights (including human rights) and diversity in the postgraduate programmes, whereas the word intercultural only appears in two postgraduate courses

Denmark

In teacher training (pre-service courses, WP 7) the concept of democracy is thematized in the following compulsory subjects: Pedagogical Education and The School in society. Democratic education of teachers and pupils is given weight (citizenship is not mentioned). The responsibilities, rights and duties of teachers and schools in a democratic society are pointed out and the teachers' role with respect to children "with another cultural background" is stressed. (The quotation is from the teacher training document)

But it is characteristic that the concept of democracy is not challenged by or understood in relation to the surrounding multicultural society. Diversity in society and in the classroom is seen as a problem rather than as a resource.

Danish as second language is an optional subject in Teacher training. The subject focuses on bi-lingual issues, cultural understanding and intercultural teaching/ education with a focus on immigrants and ethnic minorities. The postgraduate courses in Danish as second language have similar subjects and focus.

In the postgraduate courses and master programmes the concept of democracy is nearly absent. One master-program treats democratic education in an intercultural perspective. This course focuses on the concept of citizenship and not on "democratic education" which is more common in a Danish context. However, the concept of citizenship is currently acquiring significance in the Danish educational system.

Conclusion

In the Spanish reports on teacher training programmes democracy is not a frequent concept. The focus is on "intercultural coexistence" and on social cohesion that can be said to be a condition of or basis for democracy. In the Portuguese reports both democracy and citizenship are common concepts. The role of the teacher as "cultural worker" (our analytical concept) is given weight and a critical approach is the objective of several programmes.

Citizenship education has since 2002 been a part of the English educational system. The concept of democracy is subordinate to the concept of citizenship. "Democratic education" is a common concept in the Danish teacher training (pre-service courses). In the postgraduate courses and master programmes it is nearly absent. In general the concept of democracy is not challenged or reflected on in connection with the surrounding multicultural society.

With a few exceptions "democracy" is not connected with an intercultural and/or European perspective in any of the courses and programmes analyzed in the four work packages 7 and 8.

As regards second language/additional language subjects such as: “plurilingual education”, “bi-lingualism”, and “language policy” are common. Often these subjects are connected with multicultural issues such as: “Bi-lingualism and multiculturalism” (Portugal) and “Teacher specialisation in multicultural and plurilingual contexts” (Spain). In all four countries the courses and programmes focus on immigrants and ethnic minorities, and they have a multicultural and not an intercultural perspective. Citizenship and democracy do not form a part of these courses and programmes.