Chapter 19
Responsive Teaching in the Conditions of Intercultural Communication

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to inform educators and teachers about the central role of communication in today's classroom, confronted with the actual reality of cultural diversity. That includes the cultural diversity of children but also of the educators. The author ia particularly interested in helping teachers understand the ways in which diversity influences classroom communication and learning orientations. Analyzing intercultural competencies, there will be a better understanding of student-teacher communication and interaction. The new way of implementing the intercultural education ideas is the culturally responsive teaching, presented in this chapter with its most important characteristics. Teachers can also use different means of communication in classrooms, and that is why the author gave a great importance to exploring the communication skills that are indispensable to any teacher in his/her educational interaction. All these modern educational elements are included in a larger ecological perspective, which includes behavioral modification and a better integration in the environment.

INTRODUCTION

In a modern society marked by globalization, cultural diversity becomes an accepted and integrated element of government policies in the states. Multiculturalism includes a wide range of ethnic or race differences, of gender or religious, that pose problems of integration into the basic community. The author refers here, to efficient means and methods of approaching the cultural diversity at the social level. Not only education can homogenize these differences, but also positive interventions, processes of integration and assimilation, which can also contribute to the harmonization of an intercultural world /society (Marinela Rusu, 2017c, pp. 8-19).

Contemporary society has faced for many decades a phenomenon of ethnic movements (migration of population, for various reasons: war, economic frustration, simple desire for a better life, etc.). Thus, the concept of culture has acquired new, multifaceted meanings, becoming even more open. It has often been mentioned that cultural diversity is closely linked to fairness and justice in the exercise of individual rights, problems that have existed since colonialism, but which have become stronger in the last century, becoming a topic of international debate.

Obviously, cultural diversity has a special role to play in shaping an individual's personality. Knowing other cultures, other habits and ways of thinking, lead to personal enrichment, to a clearer understanding of the meaning of humanity that is found in any culture. The fact of coming into contact with the art of a nation (be it the old Ellada, the palaces of the Spanish monarchy or the original Venetian culture) contributes not only to the acquisition of information but also to the education of an important element in individual becoming, *the tolerance to what is different*, to what is not fully known to us, to what demands an effort of understanding and acceptance (Marinela Rusu, 2017a).

The concept of *globalization* has, in its essence, the meaning of a diminution of the differences between cultures, an acceptance of diversity through a common reunion in precepts, reffering to the profound / general human norms and conduct. But globalization does not want to erase *cultural identity* (nor could do that), but it is fighting for building a common, ideological and legislative foundation in which every nation can be identified (Gibson, 1984). With regard to specific cultural elements, they continue to define ethnic autonomy, characterizing the psychological profile of the world they come from. As a result of the process of globalization and computerization of the contemporary world, we inevitably encounter the issue of intercultural education, with the need to form a perception freed by ethnic, religious, philosophical or legislative limitations.

The term "cultural diversity" is commonly used in two different contexts. It is sometimes used to refer to the idea that cultural habits and lifestyles of certain groups around the world are threatened by the spread of a new concept: the *World Culture*. Therefore, in this context, *cultural diversity* is often understood to be something that requires preservation or protection. Cultural diversity is present between various stable, essential identities, "within and between" the inhabitants of the state. This is also the approach of the U.S. Department of Education (2000, p. 24), which has as one of its policy objectives to "Promote the development of an inclusive tolerant society in which both newcomers and host society, regardless of background, can, in time, share and develop a sense of belonging to that people, while respecting the cultures and practices inherent in the emergence of our new multicultural society "[1].

Intercultural speech is not based on the assumption that minorities require assimilation in the majority of cultural norms. The predominant context of intercultural dialogue is the volunteering and autonomy of non-governmental agencies and organizations run by minorities. There is, however, a very wide field, perhaps only vaguely outlined, in which interculturalism is invoked for its *reductionism* and its *simplistic character*, as the eurocentric deficiencies would persist, especially those inclined to naive universality assumptions or even tacit racism. Interculturalism is best addressed in its essence in the words of UNESCO General Director Koïchiro Matsuura in defining "cultural diversity" as a process that is taking place, not between fixed or static cultures, but between people who want to find solidarity opportunities in the negotiation of differences, such as members of heterogeneous or dynamic groups, large cultural/ethnic groups (as cited in Locke, 2002, p. 31)[2]. The author outlines some of the ways in which, intercultural communication can take place, facilitating education and personal development.

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