# Majorities, Minorities and Democracy

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### Introduction: majorities, minorities, democracies in Europe

Our title suggests that there might be a certain contradiction or possibly tension between the majority and minority parts of our societies. But it also offers a possible solution to this, accessible to all societies, based on democratic principles.

Countries that have been separate are today beginning to share the same future in Europe. Borders, especially between the European Union countries, are increasingly open. For many other reasons, Europe is turning into a multi-connected continent, naturally attractive to people living in other and non-European nations, from a wide range of ethnic groups. The number of areas in Europe inhabited by truly diverse groups of inhabitants is increasing.

It is of common importance to all European countries that they make the co-existence of majorities and minorities as harmonious and as satisfactory as possible for all groups. But this harmony must be protected by precautions in the area of law, business, and social relations and so on, common to all countries.

Special attention is paid to education. There is a specialised discipline within education, frequently called *multicultural educational* or *multiethnic education,* which we discuss further in this paper. We believe strongly that it is extremely useful and necessary that teacher educators in all European countries share their experiences of implementing multicultural education in their various societies, so that the younger generation grow up with positive perceptions and the ability to evaluate cultural systems different from their own. As a consequence, they will be able to demonstrate a different and positive attitude in their behaviour – not only towards minority group members, but also to the majority, and to the idea of democracy itself.

## Some theoretical foundations

Ethnographers have described some 739 ethnic groups living over the world (Hubinger, Honzák, Polisenský, 1985). In Europe there are some 72 'original' ethnic groups (Satava, 1994), established from early recorded time. This does not include people from the European part of the former Soviet Union, or the many migrant ethnic groups settled here who come from non-European countries. If we include these, a total of between 160 and 200 ethnic groups currently live in Europe.

These groups are often very similar to nationality groupings, and are very varied in size, from the largest – for example the Germans at around 80 million, the French with 59 million, 58 million Italians, and so on – to the smallest groups, such as the Icelanders (240,000) or the 60,000 Wends (Wends are a Slavic people of eastern Germany in German *Lausitze Wenden* or *Sorben*).

The expression 'ethnicity' comes from the ancient Greek word ethnos, which meant tribe, race or nation. Ethnic groups today are sets of people who usually share the same origin, the same language and have a common culture. Ethnic group members are aware of their *ethnic identity*, usually defined as 'the range of what an individual maintains as the attitudes, values, belief and behaviour code of its ethnic group' (Nesdale, Rooney, Smith, 1997). Ethnologists and sociologists suggest that one of the major features defining an ethnic group and ethnicity are language and territory. However, this statement can be of limited validity with respect to the most widely-spread world languages.

A minority ethnic group can be defined as an ethnic category in a certain period of time which is in a minority in a larger society, in a position of relatively politically weakness. In Denmark, for example, one can identify three types of ethnic minorities:

- the original people from former Danish colonies, such as Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.
- the minorities which have arrived in Denmark in recent times as immigrants or refugees, their children and grandchildren.
- those minority groups like the Jews and Roma whose ancestors were refugees and immigrants.

All these groups have issues in common, for example, in their relationship with Danish society and the Danish state: these often arise from differences between their culture and that of the Danish majority.

Minorities and majorities are defined relative to each other: a minority exists only in respect to a majority and vice versa. The terms are related to the population balances within a country: in Iceland, the majority is only 200,000 people, while the minority Tamil people in Sri Lanka numbers many millions.

## Culture as a key term in the discourse about majorities and minorities

The second key term is *culture*. The number of cultures in the world is unknown, and data are very varied. Definitions of distinct cultures are difficult: Průcha (2001,196) found one *Ethnographic Atlas* describing some 1264 distinct cultures (using 89 distinguishing features) and another *Atlas of World Cultures* defined 563 cultures (using 76 signs).

*Culture* has two basic meanings. The wider sense includes everything produced by human civilisation and activity, material or spiritual. The narrower definition used in cultural anthropology identifies the system of customs, symbols, values and norms followed by members of a particular society and which is passed on to future generations through socialisation (Průcha, 2001, 32).

Contemporary patterns of migration and settlement lead to greater and more widespread ethnic and cultural mixing of groups within a territory. The integration process of the European Union has significantly weakened the nature of borders between individual countries. While many European countries seem to be coterminous with a dominant ethnic group and culture (for example, Denmark/ Danes, France/French, Portugal/Portuguese, Poland/Poles), there are significant exceptions, such as the United Kingdom and Switzerland. A country may also have several cultural groups in a single nationality, e.g. Spain.

Apart from the majority groups and cultures, there are minority cultures in every country, which distinguish themselves from the majority by particular basic features such as descent, language and religion. The position of the minority groups may depend on their number or proportion, or on the extent of their differences from the majority group.

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A number of different kinds of minority groups can be distinguished:

● **Linguistic diversity**: sometime there are groups with very similar languages in a country (for example Czech and Slovak speaking groups), sometimes the languages are very different (for example, that of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia).

● **Racial diversity** – in most European societies there are minorities of south-east Asian (Vietnamese, Chinese), South Asian (Indian, Pakistani) and/ or Afro-Caribbean descent (Jamaican, Nigerian ...).

● **Religious diversity** – differences of denomination are negligible in some contexts but not in other (for example, Protestantism and Catholicism in Northern Ireland); in some places different religions share some common elements (for example, the monotheism and common heritage of Islam, Judaism and Christianity), and in others there are wider differences (for example, between Hinduism and Christianity).

Minorities may be more likely to be accepted by the majority if the differences are confined to a single category: if there are many differences the majority group may find it more difficult to understand the minority, and the minority may find adaptation more of an issue.

Minorities may become majorities if national borders change. No territory is fully isolated, so in practical terms it is never possible to combine a territorial border with ethnic nationalism. Groups who are majorities in one area or country may be minorities in other places. Migrants are thus often part of the majority community in their country of origin, but become part of a minority group in their new host country. To be a Pakistani in Denmark is different from being a Pakistani in Pakistan.

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It can be useful to distinguish different kinds of minority situations.

● **Minorities who formed the original inhabitants of a territory**. These would include the Sami, Greenlanders and the 'First Nation' peoples of North America. These are groups who have lived in a territory for a long time, typically had a non-industrial lifestyle and are now politically subordinated in the state. Their conflicts with the state often concern control over territory and rights to mineral and other natural resources. Examples include Thule minority issues in Greenland and the Norwegian Alta problem in 1970 between the Sami minority and the Norwegian government.

● **Minorities in largely urban and modern situations.** Migrants and their descendants, who have no original territorial or cultural connection but who are well-integrated in the system of capitalist production. They form part of the diaspora of minority groups within larger groups.

● **Minorities that constitute 'proto-nations'**. Within large and complex territories, minority cultures that seek to separate from the territory and have full political independence: for example, the Basques in Spain and the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

● **Minorities with no majorities**. Plural societies where several ethnic groups live side by side, but none constitute the majority. Such societies may be organised through compromises between ethnic groups competing for political power.

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Another characteristic that may influence the status of a minority is its numerical strength. Less numerous minorities may have more limited rights – for example, to education in their mother tongue. But smaller minorities are also less visible, and may be subject to less harassment and public discontent: their presence does not disturb the majority.

Larger minorities may gain legal rights, such as information signs in two languages, recognition of their religion and its practices, mother tongue teaching for their children, and their own tertiary education institutions. However, the majority group in society may feel threatened if for example minority group members work for lower wages than is the norm. Such a difference may radicalise the majority and even lead to racial and xenophobic activity or physical attacks.

Minority groups can also be distinguished by the length of their stay in a territory. Some minorities have been living in an area for generations – for decades or centuries – and yet maintain some autonomy, for example in their religion or language. Other groups of migrants, driven out of their country of origin for political or economical reasons, may be refugees from warring countries or ethnic conflicts. A third group are the nomad minorities such as the Roma.

New minorities can be formed by people originally part of the majority society who have chosen to define themselves through some new and distinctive feature or activity: for example, a religious sect whose members behave differently from the majority.

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Ways minority groups can be accommodated in a host community

● **Assimilation** is a way of adaptation in which minority members try to melt into the dominant culture and attach little importance to their original culture in these new surroundings.

● **Integration** is an adaptation process in which immigrants or minority members acknowledge that their contact with the host country is important, but in which they also keep their original culture.

● **Pluralism** or **multiculturalism** is a form of integration, in which there is greater mutual recognition of, and acceptance of, cultural distinctiveness and difference.

● **Separation** is non-adaptation. In this situation the minority group do not wish to live in contact with the majority culture members, and they create isolated communities within the majority culture.

● **Marginalisation** is the strategy of a minority group which wishes neither to be in contact with the dominant culture nor to retain their original culture. Identity is neither rooted in their original culture nor that of the host community. They only identify with the subculture of their own group.

schema after J W Berry, 1980, in Průcha 2001, p.155

## Minorities and the state

Almost everyone today has to accept as part of his or her identity the citizenship of a society. We all live in a state. Being a stateless person, without citizenship, creates serious problems and difficulties.

But nationalistic members of the majority community sometimes consider the presence of people who are culturally or ethnically distinctive in a territory as problematic. Racists and xenophobes typically construct ethnic diversity in a state as a problem in need of a solution. Forced emigration, murder and genocide are some of the cruellest methods governments have used to 'solve' ethnic problems: for example, in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, and in the former Soviet Republic under Stalin. Although these approaches have been less common in Europe since the Second World War, political purges in parts of Yugoslavia remind us that 'ethnic cleansing', genocide and forced migration are still in use.

Governments now use one or more of the following three strategies to reconcile minority and majority needs.

First the government/majority group can chose to separate, keeping the minority group physically apart from the majority. This is often linked to notions of inferiority, or to a belief that it is not acceptable to mix cultures. South Africa's former apartheid ideology created distinct races and separated them, and many North American cities are divided on ethnic lines. The US case may not be the result of policy so much as a combination of class distinction and ethnic stigmatisation of the minorities.

Assimilation is another possible strategy. In the final analysis this can lead to the disappearance of the ethnic minority as it simply 'melts' into the majority. In England the Norman ruling class was assimilated in the 200 years following 1066: they became 'English'. Similarly, Dutch farmers became Danish citizens, assimilated after a few generations in the new country. Assimilation can be forced or chosen. In some cases it may be very long-term if there are radical differences in appearance between the groups. In the USA most immigrants of European origin have been assimilated into the 'melting pot', have usually lost their mother tongue and have only vague memories of their origins.

Integration is the third form of minority – majority relations. Integration can be defined as participation in society's common institutions while maintaining group identity and cultural distinctiveness. Integration is a goal for political authorities and for minority groups in many European countries, although definitions of what is 'good' integration may vary. Some countries – or some majority groups – demand particular majority cultural norms or standards, and only allow the minority to be different in other aspects. This can include moral and political questions of rights and

equality, where there can be discussion about reconciling issues of individual equality and the right of a group to be different.

In most situations the members of minority groups feel oppressed by the majority/the government; they feel obliged to adapt their behaviour and practices and often feel that this threatens the cultural identity of their group.

The extent to which minority groups participate in society varies between these three strategies. A separated group will participate much less in society, will remain less integrated or assimilated, and will struggle to maintain its cultural independence. The price of maintaining separation will be having little political influence, and weak access to the labour market. European countries have experienced this with the ghetto, which used to be found in cities all over Europe. While it could be argued that ghettoes offered cultural and social security, close networks and relationships, there are two strong counter arguments that such separation based on culture and ethnicity is problematic. Firstly, those living in the ghettoes were seen as a threat by many of the majority group, who were afraid of losing control of the 'strange' people in the heart of 'our' cities. This is similar to the professed fears expressed by some current populist xenophobic movements, found in most European countries, that what they characterise as a 'tide' of immigrants will 'swamp' the national culture. Secondly, those people living in ghettoes were very often culturally disenfranchised and had much more limited access to the labour market. Unemployment is much higher among minority groups in nearly all European countries.

## Multicultural education

Multicultural education is the term generally used for education that deals with systematic development of learning, understanding and respect for other cultures. This can significantly influence attitudes and behavioural processes, especially in young people, towards migrants, members of other nations and of different minority ethnic groups. The terms *intercultural education* and *interethnic/multiethnic education* are sometimes used with the same meaning. There are two basic kinds of multicultural education:

- a process through which individuals develop positive perceptions and evaluations of cultural systems different to their own, and modify their behaviour towards members of other cultures through this knowledge
- concrete educational programmes which provide minority group students (ethnic, racial, religious and others) with study and curricula that respect their specific language, psychological and cultural needs.

Some specific educational programs are also aimed at the young generation of the majority society.

Multicultural education draws on knowledge from many branches of science and concerns teachers, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, psychologists and linguists. People have always been aware of differences in racial, religious and language characteristics, but the need for intentional and systematic education about these differences was initially recognised only thirty or forty years ago. The need was heightened by two sets of events: in the United States, ethnic and racial tensions developed to crisis point; and in western Europe there was mass immigration from countries with very diverse cultures – African immigration to France, Turkish immigration to Germany, Caribbean and South Asian immigration to Great Britain. These waves of migration have broadened and deepened, and continue to the present day.

All European countries, including those previously without immigration (northern countries like Norway and Finland, and post-Communist countries like the Czech Republic and Poland), now face the issue of developing forms of co-existence with their minorities. In all countries the school system is one of the state's most important means to develop fellowship and cultural coexistence: most countries have a strong ideological belief that everybody should attend school and that everyone has to learn in the same way at school.

School is a special institution: it exists in the grey zone between private and public spheres. In most societies there are demands for equality and fair treatment in the public sphere, while in the private

sphere people may live according to their cultural characteristics, at home and at leisure.

State schooling must find ways of working with children from both the new and the old groups, including migrants and refugees. Central aspects of multicultural society are mirrored in the school: intercultural communication, the right to be different and differences of influence. The majority group has the power in the multiethnic situation: Danish children are not made to learn about Islam or to learn Turkish, but the opposite is common, as it is in all European countries with minority populations with different languages.

## Multicultural education – a case-study of an international debate

A vigorous debate is being conducted in many fora and academic disciplines across Europe and the world. We have chosen as an example an essay by Hans-Ulrich Musolff – ' Multiculturalism as a Pedagogical Problem' – in *Bildung und Erziehung* (vol. 51, no.2) in 1998 (reprinted in *European Education* vol.33 , no.3, 2001).

Musolff begins with a critique of current pedagogical discourse on multiculturalism: it is built on the fallacy of the transcontextual. He argues that this ' ... blocks the way to an open dialogue on multiculturalism in educational science and constantly produces unfruitful controversies among the proponents of multiculturalism' (p.6-7). His argument is based on Werner Loch's statement 'the learning of culture is the characteristic and complete subject of pedagogy' (p.6). All cultures must therefore be understood in their own context.

To facilitate dialogue, Musolff proposes three steps:

> First, the concept of culture should be differentiated, second, the prefix 'multi' in the term 'multicultural' should be deconstructed to differentiate between at last four main types of varied and diverse cultures. Third, the concept of 'multiculturalism' should be depoliticised. By taking these steps the transcontextual fallacy can be rectified (p.7)

To differentiate the concept of culture he suggests three levels of culture: everyday culture, high culture and cultural discourse. This can help distinguish what kind of 'culture' we are discussing. The first of these is the anthropological and sociological concept of culture, the daily lived culture of norms, values, practices and routines. While 'high culture' might be associated with prejudice, Musolff argues it is important to our understanding of different kinds of cultures (see below). 'This innovative conceptualization of high culture is specifically applicable to the Western modern period. For only in this period are products of certain social practices evaluated with the qualitative criterion of their newness' (p.7). The third level, cultural discourse, is required to make and maintain criteria to evaluate cultural practices and products.

Musolff's second step to create an open dialogue proposes a categorisation of diverse forms of cultures. These are very different and diverse cultures, but they have elements in common:

- the diversity of cultures in the *New World* (North and South America, Australia, New Zealand)
- the *traditional* diversity of cultures in the *Old World* (in both Europe and Asia)

- the diversity of cultures in the older countries resulting from more recent population movement, and
- isolated cases that defy typology – Israel, South Africa, etc.[1]

The third step requires the depoliticalisation of multiculturalism. Musolff argues for a multiculturalism that 'approves of the safeguarding, preservation, and promotion of a diversity of cultures within a specific context' (p.8), but he argues that this does not invoke any strong generalised responses to coexistence and relationships between groups. Responses must be dependent on detailed knowledge of the context and the cultures involved. Not to be misunderstood, he goes on

> … a depoliticized form of multiculturalism does not assert that all cultures are equal, for the simple reason that cultures can not be compared, since there is no available standard or scale for their comparison. … Each of these groups must recognize that the other group's way of life has its own value. In this way the *equal* recognition of cultures should be guaranteed, a goal also advocated by the Council of Europe's recommendation that *teachers be trained to educate in a manner that promotes intercultural understanding* (p.8, emphasis added)

Peaceful coexistence between cultures with different values and norms is a political ambition, which must be built on the two basic values of 'equal opportunities for all' and 'freedom for all' (UN Declaration of Human Rights).

In the contemporary world many high cultures and indigenous cultures are being overtaken by mass culture, but Musolff sees possibilities for the 'old' cultures acting as common ground for cultural discourse:

> discourse may be the main vehicle of cross-cultural discussion. Discourse thereby justifies its own existence by showing that it can best contribute to mutual understanding between groups of different cultural origins. This is how people learn from and about one another: not because they reach a consensus, but rather because they learn something about tastes and the judgement of the other (p.11).

He points to the problem that mass culture lacks depth of meaning, and cannot therefore be a resource for cross-cultural understanding, even though it is consumed all over the world. We therefore need

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[1] He gives as an example the new Indian policy to make Hindi the only official state language. In the particular cultural context this contributes to an antipluralist Hindi identity, opening possibilities for separatism and clashes between India's different cultures and languages. In other cultural contexts, striving for a national language might be an important part of nation-building.

the universalism that is built into most high cultures. Mass culture is useful because it has world coverage, but it cannot replace high culture as the principal vehicle for cross-cultural understanding. 'The main difference, as far as a pedagogical viewpoint goes, lies in the fact that high culture require one to learn how to raise oneself to a *higher level of understanding'* (p.12).

Musolff argues that the New and the Old Worlds understand and use multiculturalism in different ways. In North America, multiculturalism is an acceptance of different cultural groups living side by side, each strengthening its own cultural identity, and – even with a common language of English – striving for diversity and some forms of separatism. In most European countries there has been a long tradition of assimilation to the main culture and to a high culture built upon classical languages. This tradition is still alive, and may be a common ground for a discourse of multicultural understanding.

He concludes with two possible scenarios for cultural diversity in Europe. The first is a traditional coexistence of many diverse cultures in the same country, that have no intention of assimilating with each other, and where the different cultures have some diffusion and a very slow process of intercultural learning. A process of building a common culture like this occurred before the rise of the nation states. With current mass migration to Europe, some may argue for this old scenario. A new scenario would be to continue the policy of assimilation, but without the repressive mechanisms previously used. Musolff argues that all citizens in the nation state should have a common language, even if their native language is recognised and allowed to develop:

> Without a common language there would be serious problems for intercultural, mutual understanding between citizens at the level of political discourse – a discourse that is necessary for the functioning of a constitutional or democratic state (p.14).

He ends with a comment on the debate on multiculturalism in Germany:

> It is not necessary for a group of immigrants to accept the German tradition as their own. But *intercultural learning* consists of acquisition of certain familiarity with this tradition in order to understand the innuendoes, hidden connotations, and the "quotes without quotation" that constitutes a rich culture. The desire to learn the language, literature, and history of the nation the immigrants have freely chosen as their homeland should not be viewed by either they or their multicultural proponents as a form of pressure (p. 15-16).

## Principles for teaching in the area of majorities, minorities and democracy

### *An interdisciplinary background knowledge of the area*

Successful multicultural education requires teachers to have a solid understanding and knowledge of relevant ideas and data drawn from historical, political, economical, sociological, anthropological and also psychological and pedagogical backgrounds. While no single person can be expert in all these fields, having some depth in several fields will give the teacher the basis of understanding the complexity of her/his task.

This requires that teacher-educators thoroughly prepare teachers and future teachers. It also requires a sufficient choice of well-prepared materials for this purpose, which allow teachers and student teachers to select the most suitable for the age and characteristics of their pupils and students. At the end of this booklet we provide examples of important books that can be of help, and some useful web-addresses, that give links to other sites and show examples of what can be found on the Internet.

### *Intercultural openness in the area*

The issues of majorities, minorities and democracy are topical and controversial, confronting our preconceived ideas and influencing us in many ways. Even those countries that have a small proportion of minority population, and where co-existence with the majority group is calm and not an issue, should be discussing and debating this area and developing multicultural educational approaches. If children are aware of the issues, and debate values and consider attitudes, their tolerance will be increased, as will their understanding of groups and individuals who differ from them. Their identity will encompass more than merely belonging to established ethnic and cultural groups, whether these are majorities or minorities. We have a long tradition of research in political socialisation, which has established how to learn to live in a democratic society, respecting human rights and including minorities as full members of the societies in which they live. While no final conclusion can be drawn from the research, most investigators agree that what happens in the classroom *is* important for the kind of citizens we become. Teachers have a role in socialisation for citizenship, particularly in developing how individuals think and *feel* about people different from themselves. Such openness is closely linked to regular informal evaluation of local, regional and international events.

### *Teacher – student democratic dialogue*

Teaching these issues must be based on thorough democratic principles when dealing with concrete questions of minority – majority coexistence. The dialogue between teacher and student, and

between student and student, must be built on the right of each person to express freely their personal opinion, and each person's respect for the opinions of others. Dialogues of this nature are often associated with strong emotions. Research in classrooms in many countries shows that traditionally verbal interaction is dominated by the teacher and allows little room for real dialogue. This is because of the situation where one teacher has responsibility for some thirty pupils, which to an extent explains the limited interaction. To break free of this pattern the teacher must prioritise the creation and management of a democratic classroom. Democratic dialogue enables all participants to improve communicative skills. The skills of developing factual arguments and – at the same time – of analysing the arguments of other participants empowers young people to resist the manipulation of their opinions and the prejudices which they meet in their communities and in the press and media.

## Interactive learning

Clearly this controversial and open-ended topic of the coexistence of minorities and majorities cannot be taught in traditional ways. Rather than formal didactic teaching, we suggest interactive learning as a leading principle. Interactivity concerns not just the relationships between teacher and pupil and between pupil and pupil, but the actual content of teaching, continuously updated and developed. Interactive learning should be ubiquitous, found in all activities in an educational institution.

We are especially concerned in this context with interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds meeting in the classroom and similar arenas, where the basic rules for *how* interaction takes place are agreed. Most schools already have these rules in place in their curricula and guidelines. The challenge is to use the rules to create a real democratic classroom. Classroom research suggests this presents a challenge for most schools, but there are documented examples of promising experience from many countries. Teachers can become democratic leaders in their classrooms, but they have learn how to do it and must be supported by colleagues and principals to change the pattern of the teacher-dominated classroom. Interactivity affects the openness of a school to what is going on in the neighbourhood, and its participation in these events.

This approach leads to the fifth principle.

## Personal experience with cultural otherness

The efficiency and quality of multicultural education will increase if pupils and students experience personally the way of life of a different ethnic group, nation or culture. Such personal experience can be multi-faceted: from deep contact with a fellow student's family and community to participating in cultural festivals or other

events held by members of a different group, or to visiting and possibly working in a refugee centre. Stories featuring a real person can be especially persuasive, and are enhanced if the main characters are of the same age as the pupils, and if they can communicate with them in person. Such approaches create an open space for long-term projects in which individual educational institutions can gradually develop within their local environments.

## Active Learning

Teaching in the area of minorities, majorities and democracy is demanding, and success depends on the right combination of content and creative teaching methods. We suggest active learning as a principal strategy for teaching complex contents. Active learning contain many different ideas, going back to Dewey's phrase 'learning by doing'.

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An active learning activity often includes:

● listening

● reading textbooks

● completing workbooks and worksheets

● taking quizzes

● solving problems

● achieving of group goals

● student's planning

● executing projects

drawn from Hendrikson, L (1984 ERIC Digest)

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Combining active learning with the learning processes of citizenship and democracy suggests it is important to differentiate active learning for different groups of learners. We suggest four distinctive features of active learning:

i.   a search for meaning and understanding
ii.  a greater student responsibility
iii. a concern with skills as well as knowledge
iv.  an approach to curriculum that looks to career and
     social settings.

Active learning is necessary if students are to take responsibility for their own learning, and the process involves students sharing and discussing ideas with others. The challenge is for them to define their role in the learning context, which is characterised as follows:

● an inquiring mind
● helicopter vision (seeing the whole from above)
● information literacy
● a sense of personal agency (taking responsibility for themselves)
● a certain repertoire of learning skills.

## Teachers and Active Learning

Holden and Clough (1998) suggest that the process of helping the students to be active citizens requires the teacher to keep a balance between providing security and offering a challenge

This argues for education as participation, which involves:

- reflecting on values
- assisting students to acquire the skills needed for taking action
- providing opportunities to the students to become active citizens.

This approach has implications for teachers and others who work with active learning:

The students have to learn how to participate, which again requires a large range of skills, including social skills, skills of communication and judgment, and the opportunity to practice and develop these skills during the whole learning process.

## Some useful books

From the vast literature on teaching Minorities/Majorities/Democracy we have selected and give a short summary of a few examples we think might be useful, covering different perspectives, theories, disciplines and teaching.

### Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality: A Global perspective

Shimahara, N., Holowinsky, I. and Tomilson-Clarke, S. (eds)(2001) Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum

Scholars from seven nations research ethnicity and race in relation to educational policy. They provide two major contributions to the literature on education and identity:

1) diversity of experience for minority students;

2) historical explanations of educational policy development throughout the world.

These give the reader insight into the (continuing) struggle with the residue of colonialism and racial and ethnic discrimination while developing educational policy that is socially just for all.

A major theme is how educational policy reforms attempt to mainstream ethnic minorities, and how minority identities react to and negotiate these policy reforms. The contributors uphold the importance of identity development for minority students.

### Critical Multiculturalism: Rethinking Multicultural and Antiracist Education

May, S, (ed) (1999) London: Falmer

This book is a dialogue between scholars from various countries who (though not uniform) share perspectives on multiculturalism and antiracism. The authors are critical of facile explanations in addressing diversity. May's excellent overview argues for a critical multiculturalism that does not essentialise culture and ethnic identities. The book demonstrates the complexity of understanding cultural differences and how countries responds to these. The transnational dialogue started here sets out theoretical and pedagogical challenges to be met.

### Multicultural Education: An International Guide to Research, Policies, and Programs

Mitchell, B., and Salisbury, S. (1996) Westport: Greenwood

This expands discussion on multicultural education beyond the US to include 42 countries, providing a range of descriptions of programmes in different religious and political contexts. An introductory overview of goals and methods is followed by 42 brief case studies of multicultural education. A much-needed reference work in the field of international multicultural education.

### Common Schools, Uncommon Identities: National Unity and Cultural Difference

Feinberg, W. (1998) New Haven: Yale U P

An excellent examination of the character and value of multicultural education, and its moral, political, and educational underpinnings. The fruitful and essential relationship of the discourses of culture, education and liberal democracy are combined. The overarching argument is an investigation of the tension between recognising distinct cultural identities and groups and the need for national loyalty and cohesion. A second thread is the tension between the claims of liberal individualism and those of various 'cultural' groups. Feinberg is sensitive to the moral, poltical, and educational claims of both sides of this divide.

### Antiracism, Culture and Social Justice in Education

Griffiths, M., and Troyna, B. (eds) (1995) Stoke: Trentham

This book collects new perspectives on antiracism, culture and social justice in the UK. This collection will challenge teachers, sociologists, psychologists etc. into reassessing their theoretical understanding and practice. Contributors are of African-Caribbean, South Asian, and White backgrounds; men and women: some have researched with their own communities. Written for a wide audience, attention is given to all sectors of education, from infant schools to higher education.

## Some useful websites

We have identified some websites on ethnicity and multicultural education. We have focused on sites that provide useful links with other sites in the field. We recommend you use these to see what is out there: you will satisfy both your curiosity and your needs as an educator.

### OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The website for the UN organisation, presenting the goals and tasks, and giving information on projects. Contains the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

www.unhchr.ch/udhr/download/dlist.htm

### NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL INSTITUTE

The NMCI works with individuals, organisations, and communities to create a society strengthened and empowered by its diversity, in the areas of workforce diversity, human resource management, multicultural education and cross-cultural conflict resolution.

www.nmci.org/store/manuals.htm

### EUROPEAN RESEARCH CENTER ON MIGRATION AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

This European research centre focuses on comparative research in international migration, ethnic relations, and racism and ethnic conflicts in the European context. Based at the Faculty of Social Socience, Utrecht University (NL). Members are drawn from Cross-Cultural Studies in Utrecth, Social Sciences in Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Political Science at Stanford University, USA, and Sociology in Trento University in Italy.

http://www.ercomer.org

### SOCIOSITE: ETNICITY, MIGRATION AND RACISM

Based at the University of Amsterdam, this presents resources and information for international sociology, and links many sociologically relevant locations. The system is easy to use, with high quality resources and texts. This web address takes you direct to texts on ethnicity.

www.pscw.uva.nl/sociosite/TOPICS/ethnic.htm

### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND ETHNIC GROUPS

Stanford University website mostly about multicultural education and ethnic diversity. It makes no attempt to be complete: it is just a starting point. Many good sources on teaching multicultural education, backed with teaching material and suggestions for teaching different themes.

www.library.csustan.edu/lboyer/multicultural/main.htm

### EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES

*Action-oriented/ practice-oriented research, providing information and documentation on minority-majority relations in Europe. Serves European governments and intergovernmental organisations. Founded in 1996 by Denmark, Germany and Schlesewig-Holstein, editor of* Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe, *JEMIE.*

http://www.ecmi.de

## References

Hubinger, V., Honzák,F., Polisenský, J. (1985) *Národy celého svta*. Praha: Mladá fronta

Musolff, H.-U. (2001): Multiculturalism as a Pedagogical Problem, *European Education,* 33(3), p. 5-18

Průcha, J. (2001) *Multikulturní výchova*. Praha: ISV

Satava, L. (1994) *Národnostní mensiny v Evrop*. Praha: Ivo elezný

The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe (CiCe) Thematic Network links 28 European states and some 80 universities and college departments which are engaged in educating students about how children and young people learn about and understand their society, their identity and citizenship.

A cross-disciplinary group, we include lecturers in social psychology, pedagogy, psychology, sociology and curriculum studies, and those who educate various professions such as teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, early childhood workers and youth workers.