

VIII Forum on Intercultural Learning and Exchange Colle di Val d'Elsa, 2nd-4th November 2017

Final statement

The Eighth Forum on Intercultural Learning and Exchange took place in Colle de Val d'Elsa, Tuscany, Italy on November 2-4, 2017.

The Forum is an annual event sponsored by the Intercultura Foundation in Italy, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL) and AFS Intercultural Programs in New York. Participants are experts, researchers and practitioners in the field of intercultural learning.

The topic of Forum VIII was the *Intercultural Training of Teachers: from theory to practice*. Educators from all educational levels from 21 countries in Europe, Asia, Australia and America met to deliberate the challenges facing schools, universities and educational authorities in ensuring that teachers achieve intercultural competence in their initial education and that this is followed up through in-service programmes.

The practice of Intercultural Learning shall be for the purpose of promoting human dignity.

The Forum based its deliberations on Darla Deardorff's definition of Intercultural Competence:

"Intercultural competence is the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations; it is supported by specific attitudes and affective features, (inter)cultural knowledge, skills and reflection" - with the following dimensions:

- *Attitude (openness, respect, curiosity, tolerance of ambiguity)*
- *Knowledge and skills (cultural awareness, knowledge of one's own and other cultures, observation, ability to evaluate)*
- *Internal outcomes (adaptability, flexibility, empathy, the ability to see things from another's point of view)*
- *External outcomes (situation-appropriate behaviours and communication)*

It is opinion of the Forum that in general insufficient emphasis is placed on intercultural learning in teacher initial education and in-service training and that schools need to have a stronger focus on the transfer of intercultural learning to their pupils/students. The Forum therefore recommends

1. that educational authorities make intercultural learning an integral part of initial teacher education to ensure that teachers possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for them to function in an intercultural environment,
2. that credit is given for study abroad and for practical experience gained through traineeships in other countries,
3. that educational authorities, teacher education institutions and schools provide an in-service programme for professional development of teachers in the area of intercultural learning,

4. that school heads are committed to intercultural learning and professional development of all staff, including facilitating teacher exchanges and school partnerships,
5. that schools make adequate provision to facilitate intercultural learning for their pupils so that they acquire an intercultural mindset and become globally competent in their everyday lives through community engagement.
6. that appropriate assessment systems of intercultural learning are developed, alongside the needs identified (for example) by OECD with the PISA 2018 Global Competency Test, and by the Council of Europe with the Competences for Democratic Culture.

Therefore the Forum recommends_

A. Initial teacher education

That the following elements included in a credit programme for intercultural learning in initial teacher education are:

- A role for intercultural learning across the whole curriculum
- A critical reflection on own culture
- A critical understanding of terminology and theory of ICL
- An understanding of how to transfer theory to practice
- A use of meaningful contacts and mobility as experiential learning
- An understanding of power relations

B. In-service training

That the following elements be included in an in-service programme of intercultural learning for the professional development of teachers are:

- To encourage mobility as a learning experience also within country and community
- To provide ICL leaves to improve ICL knowledge and competence
- To encourage communities of practice among teachers
- To focus training on teachers' specific needs
- To propose ICL champions and role models.

C. Heads' commitment

That the school heads' commitment to intercultural learning in schools and to the professional development of all staff in the area of intercultural learning be secured through:

- ICL training opportunities for school heads
- A whole school approach to ICL (inclusive of community, NGOs, etc.)
- The inclusion of ICL in school mission statement
- A need assessment that includes time, support, resources
- School evaluations that include ICL activities
- Operational guides for school heads.

D. ICL for pupils

That the following methods be used to facilitate intercultural learning for pupils:

- Make use of internal diversity in the school
- Have a cross-curricular approach
- Build on mobility and other ICL activities for reflection
- Use flipped classrooms, cooperative learning and other engaging methods
- Have teachers as role models of ICL.

E. Assessment

That the following methods be used to assess the intercultural learning of teachers:

- Formative and self-reflective assessment
- Distinguishing between individual and institutional assessment
- Using a combination of methods while being sensitive to their implications
- Recognising that ICL is experiential, dynamic, processual, relational and contextual
- Connected to educational system
- Using peer evaluation
- Encouraging more research on assessment itself.

Colle di Val d'Elsa, 4th November 2017

Signed:

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