

**The impact of teaching methodology and school activities on the performance of migrant students: A basis for discussion, interaction and critical reflection on every day practices**

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# The main idea...

*The educational process is always intercultural, regardless the context in which it takes place, since all human experiences are intercultural and because each of us is an intercultural being due to the multiple micro-cultural identities we possess...*

(Androussou, 1996, Goffman, 1969).

- Focus on the teacher – student relationship

# The challenge...

*To find the different ways we can learn to value and affirm the diversity of students and confront the biases about race, ethnicity, social class and other differences...*

# The teacher in focus...

- Teachers are the most crucial factor influencing pupils' achievement (Kyriakides et al, 2010, Angrist and Lavy, 2001, Barber and Mourshed, 2007).
- Teachers' development in certain areas with processes that improve the teacher's job-related knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

# Cyprus Pedagogical Institute – Teacher Training Department

- Training programs related to *professional development based on the school*
- Development of projects in the school unit with a group of teachers
- The facilitator of the process can be an external advisor
- To view the teacher as a professional with experience and previous conceptions
- Important to rely on them to explicit their needs and worries, setting up a shared project, acting as active members.

# Projects in the field of Intercultural Education

- 1. *The selfish giant*: Narration and Language Instruction in a Multicultural Pre-primary Class as a model for teacher change and development .**

(Marianna Fokaidou, Pavlina Hatzitheodoulou)

A school-based teacher training applied in a public nursery school in Nicosia, Cyprus in which a big number of migrant pupils is enrolled.

# The project

- derived as a need of the teachers who worked in that particular school and had to deal with a diverse population of children for whom they had obtained little relevant information and training during their basic teacher studies.

*“Although we try everything, it is always so hard...”*

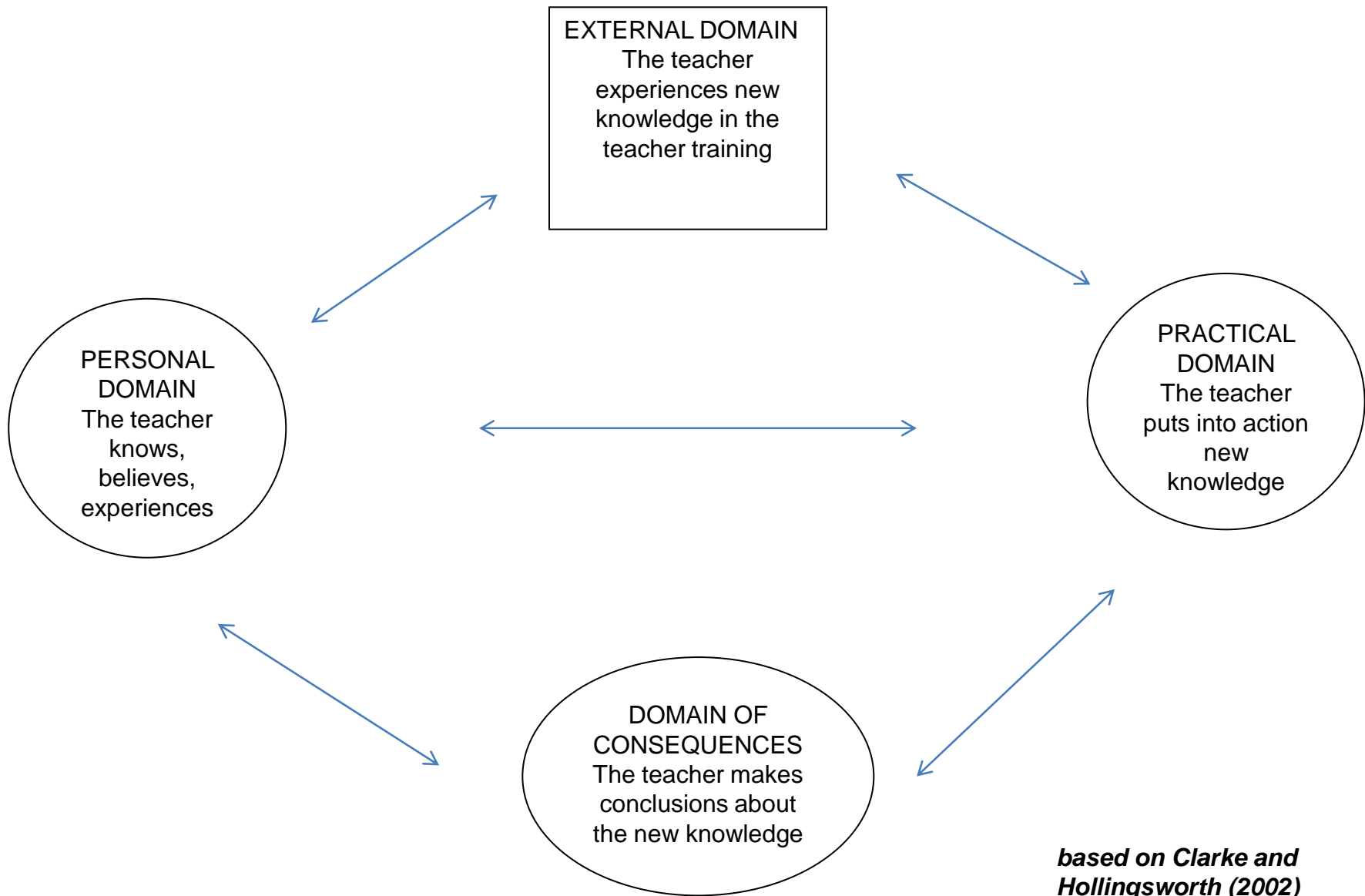
*“I feel that I’ve been punished by the system... Why do I have to work in this school?”*

*“They do not cooperate. There is no communication with most of them”.*

# The main goal of the sessions

- to create a basis for reflection and interaction among the teaching staff about issues related to the social and learning development of migrant pupils.
- based on Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) model for teacher change and development.





***based on Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002)***

# **Phase 1: Analysis of the school needs and first training session**

## **Acting on the personal domain**

- Field of reflection of each teacher as an individual and also as a group member, link to their own perceptions, personal expectations and limitations related to cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Through a presentation of general issues and workshops in which the teachers had the chance to participate actively.

# **Phase 2: Reflecting and enacting on the practical domain**

- cooperation with the teacher of the 5-year-old's class.
- duration: 6 weeks including 12 teaching periods of observation in the classroom

# Phase 2: Reflecting and enacting on the practical domain

- The way the children respond when they have to complete a task on their own, or when working in pairs or groups.
- The most effective group for each kind of activity.
- The way interaction could be best achieved during the instruction time.
- Types of activities suitable for group work.
- Non - linguistic elements that facilitated pupils in certain situations (e.g. picture, music, movement etc.)
- Environment by which comprehension was accomplished.
- Methods that the teacher used in order to motivate the pupils.
- The management of space, time and teaching material.

## **Phase 3: Reflecting and enacting on the practical domain**

- Development of a lesson plan on a story-telling session in order to discuss about different ways of adopting and adapting the language curriculum in the nursery class.

***As a connection to the fourth phase focusing on the consequences of the activities selected...***

# About the lesson...

Modified and differentiated tasks for the pupils with limited knowledge of Greek language.

Particularly expected that they would be able to:

- understand the basic scenes and facts of the story
- learn basic vocabulary

# During the lesson...

- Every scene of the story was accompanied by pictures and classical music pieces in the same emotional context .
- Specific activities were applied in order to increase the understanding and participation of all children (plenary discussion, group work etc.)

# **Phase 4: Reflecting on the practical domain and the domain of consequences**

- Teachers concluded that these approaches were effective and helped most of the children with limited Greek knowledge to understand and follow the meaning.
- It was conceived that the teacher can incorporate pupils' starting point and abilities in the lesson in a natural way, by focusing on specific points.



# Discussion - Reflection on

- How the teacher can discover ways in order to facilitate the involvement of the non Greek speakers.
- How setting the vocabulary as a main learning task in the nursery school was modified.

(more emphasis in the understanding of the meanings and in enabling the children to adapt them in future contexts).

# Main conclusion...

- Most of the migrant pupils reacted positively during the procedure of the session.
- This kind of training activities could be included in the daily school practice in order to support teachers' change and students' active learning process.

# At the end...

- Teachers were asked to reflect on what they had experienced.
- By collecting information, and by analyzing and evaluating this information, they were able to identify and explore their own practices and underlying beliefs.

# Statements...

- *“I realize that I don’t need to change so much the content of my instruction, but I rather need to think of my classroom organization”.*
- *“Yes, having special tasks during the group work has a positive effect on the involvement of the migrant pupils”...*

# Statements...

- *“We work with activities like this in our everyday praxis, but we might need to reorder our aims and classroom organization”...*
- *“I use very often this kind of activities in the classroom, but I never thought of keeping a diary”...*

# Projects in the field of Intercultural Education

## 2. *My house of Value*: School Intervention Program

(Pavlina Hatzitheodoulou, Marianna Fokaidou)

- An intervention program applied in a fourth grade at a primary school in Cyprus aiming at promoting intercultural education principles through the Art lesson.

# The Aims:

- To discover similarities and differences and learn about multiple social identities
- To increase self-confidence by emphasizing every individual's strong points, strengths and style and perspective of view
- To foster insight into feelings and behaviour and the effects they have on other people
- To deconstruct stereotypical thinking
- To promote identification by offering recognition and by increasing empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, respect as appreciation of the other
- To develop skills of discovery and interaction and action orientation

# The basic idea...

- Interculturality involves being open to, interested in, curious about and empathetic towards people ... and using this heightened awareness of otherness to evaluate one's own everyday patterns of perception, thought, feeling and behaviour in order to develop greater self-knowledge and self-understanding...

(Byram et al, 2009)



# The context

## In Cyprus

- orientalist, romantic and superficial view of the situation of multiculturalism
- no reflection that focuses on the other
- putting aside the self from the analysis of the social situation
- folklore foci of the culture of the “other”
- need to focus on interculturality as an enrichment aspect of the whole school curriculum

(Demetriou 2008, Gregoriou, 2004 ,Govaris, 2000)

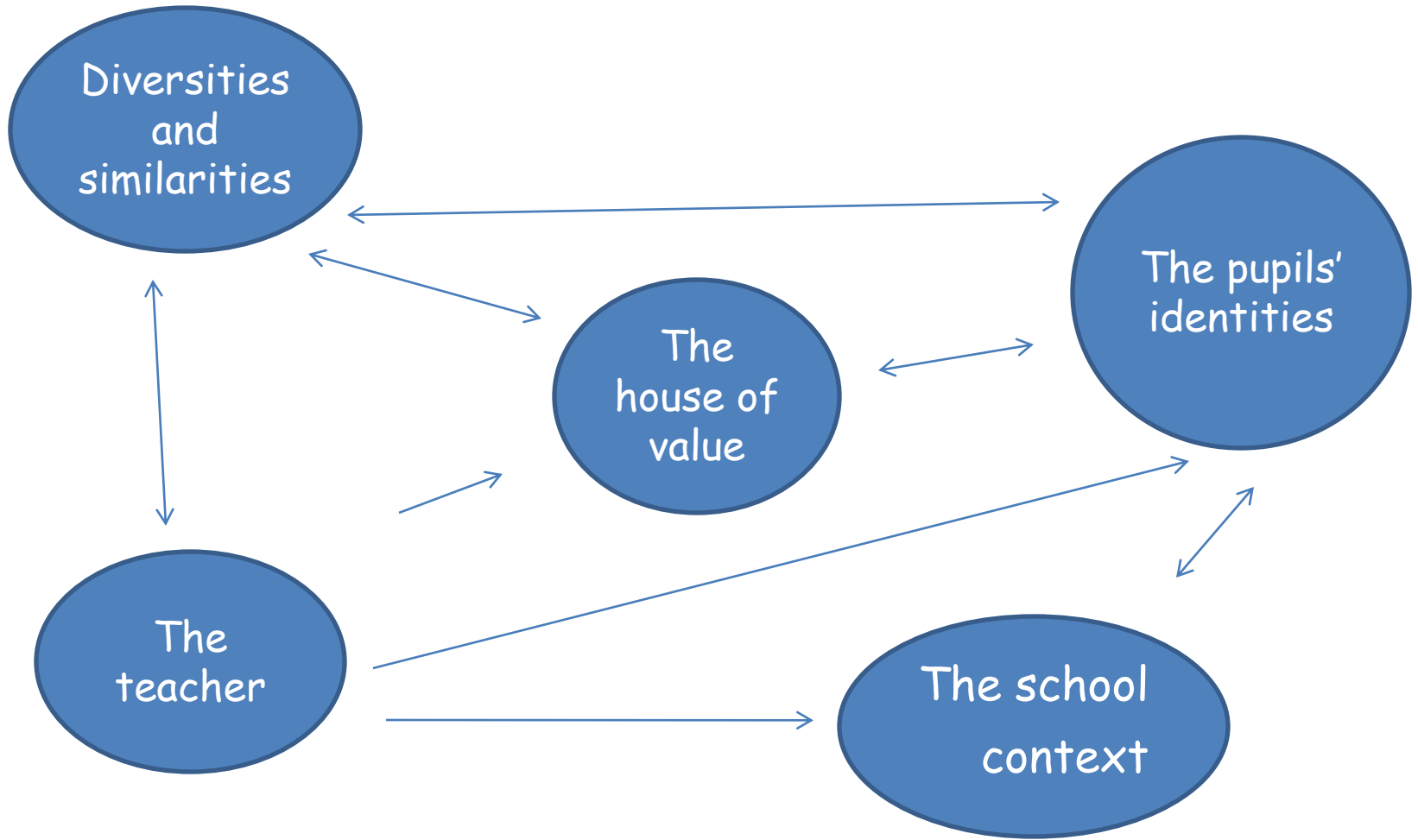
# The Art lesson

- Focuses on personal meanings and identities
- Activates the spiritual and creative dimensions of the students.
- Investigates the environments and the relationship with the students
- Investigates the self and the relationship with the other

(Fowler, 2001, Mc Kay, 2004)

# The method

- The action research methodology was employed in order to enable intervention
- Research tools used:
  - Activities applied in the classroom based on the Council of Europe material “Intercultural Encounters ”
  - Systematic observation of pupils in class using a protocol for systematic registering of pupils reference to particular concepts and recorded field notes on pupils’ comments
  - Interviews with pupils and recorded notes on pupils’ answers
- Search for patterns and themes, direct interpretation
- Development of a complex interaction model of involved patterns



# Fields of interest and observation during the procedure

- The way students conceptualise diversity, difference and similarity patterns and how they construct and reconstruct the boundaries and relations between the Self and the Other
- The way students put under scrutiny the notion of homogeneity
- The way a new perspective of looking at diversity at school can be used for enhancing educational results

# Examples of topics explored

## *At the Discussion*

- My identity. Describing my picture/s. What do I perceive about myself.
- Describing the Other in the picture. What is actually different and how does it come out.
- Describing a scene with other people. If you were the person in the picture what would you feel? What would be your asset from the encounter?

## *For Reflection*

- How is yourself expressed and perceived in the picture?
- Is any attribute, identification enhanced or acting as an obstacle in the situation? How did you deal with it?
- Is it good or bad to have your behavior being defined by a unique aspect of the self?
- How do our identities are involved? Does interaction and encounters contribute to self development?

# The findings

*"It's impossible to find two flowers which are exactly the same"*

*"We are not identical, we have our identities"*

- Children conclude that diversities are more than similarities but that does not discourage cooperation or good relationships
- They become aware that expectations (and probably stereotypical or prejudiced thinking) about the self (and the other) can diverge from what is expected

# The findings

- Through the various activities they had the opportunity of being in one other's shoes (empathy) and realised how complicated human intercultural encounters are since emotions, feelings, thoughts, experiences are involved.
- Children concluded that discussing, communicating, trying to see the other's point of view, giving explanations to discuss, to show what you have in mind is not always easy.

*"Despite where you are and through which perspective you look at the scene,  
it you that decide what or who to focus on"*

*"Although I wanted to focus on another thing that was more interesting I felt,  
I couldn't because I had to do what the teacher said"*



# The findings

- Although during the interviews the children gave great emphasis on multiple perspectives of viewing reality, when choosing what to put on their house of values these different perspectives were not regarded as part of the self

*“It is our school but it is not part of me, I want to have here my good memories and beloved people”*
- They also had the chance to discuss about the aspects or identities that may be decisive for certain actions (e.g. being a boy or a girl) but it took time to get deeply in that.
- They realised that photos or reactions do not always reveal the whole truth and this was the opportunity to discuss and become aware of issues of hierarchy in relationships.

# To sum up

- Difficulties in connecting the particular experience with the need to enhance experiences and encounters in order to learn about the self and the other – but not impossible!
- Though focusing on issues of concrete items etc they could finally go further and see their self and their “house of value“ through an holistic perspective

*“Different roles, different activities help us learn a lot”*

*“We usually change depending on our mood, our health, the situation we find ourselves, the impact of other people or events”*

# To sum up

## Some recommendations

- Issues on identity and diversity can be part of the curriculum and an emphasis on them can promote understanding if it is constantly part of the programme
  - Spend more time on the issue of perspectives
  - Interventions at the school in order to understand different parameters and factors that create the environments, the self and the others

# To sum up

- More complex conceptualization, more history, more politics to be introduced
  - working on family ties and negotiations
  - groups of houses of values
  - materials and techniques that give out messages
  - participation in the e-learning project
  - working on different perspectives regarding the house - Photographs of the house on different perspective



ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ  
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΕΝΩΣΗ  
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ

ΟΛΑ ΤΑ ΠΑΙΔΙΑ ΕΧΟΥΝ ΔΙ ΚΑΡΤΑ

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