Cultural diversity in schools: An ideal space for the construction of a critical and inclusive citizenship

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Abstract

One of the characteristics of societies today relates to the complexity and great challenges of our times: globalization, unemployment, humanitarian and refugee crisis, gender violence, military conflicts, social problems, political corruption, etc. The need to rethink the role of the teacher including their role in society is becoming increasingly latent. It is also necessary to rethink the role of students in a complex and changing society, and as such it is worth asking: What can we do as educators? The great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, known for his criticism of the banking model of education, focused on the mechanical transmission of content as a form of oppression. Freire promoted problem-posing education as an alternative to banking education, one that focused on the critical analysis of social issues. The cultural diversity within each classroom gives us the opportunity to value the richness of other cultures and offers us the opportunity to foster dialogue between cultures, that is, intercultural dialogue. This must be a dialogue that allows both students and teachers to make different readings of the world around them. Freire's pedagogy reminds us that change, although difficult, is not impossible and therefore appeals to the hope that we can change the world. This is, therefore, a dialogic proposal aimed at: a) promoting communication and understanding between cultures, b) improving a world that is

> *unfair to many people, and c) building a more supportive world for*
> *all human beings.*

Keywords: *Paulo Freire, Problem-posing education, social justice, cultural diversity, compulsory education.*

Introduction

It is necessary to begin by saying that migration and globalization have been, among others, factors that have contributed to the configuration of multicultural societies, in which different cultures co-inhabit. Cultural diversity represents the multiple ways in which the cultures of societal are expressed. Likewise, cultural diversity represents a manifestation of the diversity of life on earth (UNESCO, 2006). Migrations, globalization and mobility processes, produce a coexistence in a same physical context - for example, in schools - of diverse cultural realities. In this context, the social and educational phenomenon of multiculturalism stands out as a characteristic of our society. This phenomenon is equally visible in the educational centers and contexts of the autonomous community of the Principado de Asturias. The conservative vision of the school, generated by the monocultural framework and Eurocentricism that has characterized modernity, sees multiculturalism as a threat to National identity. But if, as we have been affirming, our societies today are multicultural, the big question is: what cultural model should the school transmit to new generations? Or, perhaps more importantly, is the school ready for multiculturalism? Answering these questions is not an easy task, we acknowledge, and how education exists in multicultural contexts is a debate that is still open.

Using the work of the great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as a reference, we can begin to approach the challenges of education in multicultural contexts. For

Freire, the main value and objective of education is the transformation of an unequal and unfair world into an ethical and deeply supportive one.

Freire's pedagogy proposes a critical reading of the world but one that does not generate despair. Instead it allows us to discover ways of resistance, ways to get ahead, and the permanent possibilities that humans have to rebuild their lives. This process of understanding his work has allowed us to identify contributions from his pedagogy that, we believe, are closely related to what we understand to be intercultural education. This in turn, leads to the development of a school model that embraces cultural diversity with a purpose of educating citizens willing to change the world.

We think that the great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire should be considered a fundamental reference. His pedagogy, as Besalú (2002) points out, is based on the principle that in order to educate people, they must be known, respected and welcomed, taking into account their cultural diversity. According to Freire (2012), the starting point of education is in the cultural, ideological, political and social context of the students, as well as in the recognition and assumption of their cultural identity and contextual reality.

Verdeja (2015) studied the contributions of Paulo Freire's pedagogy to intercultural education and identified the possibilities of applying Freirean ideas to the system of Asturian education in Spain. This paper addresses the following points:

1. Review, analyze and synthesize, selected works by Paulo Freire focusing on his vision of intercultural education.

2. Identify the main challenges that cultural diversity incorporates into the ESO curriculum in Asturias and establish, where appropriate, connections with contributions from Freire.

3. Establish coherent principles of intercultural education, that may be applied in practice within the Asturian educational framework.

Approach to the concept of intercultural education

Approaching the concept of intercultural education implies, on the one hand, recording the plurality of approaches and perspectives. It also means keeping in mind that there is no single satisfactory definition. Different authors speak, for example, of intercultural, anti-racist, multicultural, bicultural, multiethnic education, etc. This terminological variety can result in the same word indicating different realities according to contexts, authors or using the same term for different meanings.

A reflection of this is the difficulty of choosing a single term and we often find similar reflections under different descriptors. Of all of them, there are two terms that generally attract the most attention: multicultural education and intercultural education. Such terminological variety can lead, as often happens, to the same word indicating different things depending on the context in which we use it or depending on the use that the authors make of said terms.

We identify with the definition of intercultural education by Gil Jaurena (2002:15) who understands intercultural education:

> as a holistic and inclusive educational approach that, based on respect and appreciation of cultural diversity, seeks to reform the school as a whole to increase educational equity, overcome racism / discrimination / exclusion, favor intercultural communication and competition, and support social change according to principles of social justice.

According to Gil Jaurena (2003) if we stop to analyze this definition, we will see that intercultural education as well raised the following:

- It is an educational approach, a way of understanding education, and involves a continuous process (and not a specific program or action).
- As a holistic approach, it affects all educational dimensions (and not just the curriculum).
- As an inclusive approach, it involves education for all (and not just for minorities or immigrants).
- Perceive diversity as a value (and not as a deficiency).
- It aims to reform the school to achieve a quality education for all.
- It has four fundamental general objectives: equity, anti-racism, competition intercultural, social transformation.

These approaches (Gil Jaurena, 2002, 2003) are in coherence with the proposals of different authors such as Banks (1989, 1997); Galino and Escribano (1990), Grant and Sleeter (1989), Aguado (1996); Carbonell (2000), Bennett (2001), Gentili (2001), Scott (2001) or Grupo Eleuterio Quintanila (2013).

Although there may be many definitions, together, there are some conceptual lines that in turn form what we understand to be the lines of multicultural education, which in turn are considered within a global vision and that according to Lynch (cited in Ibáñez & Marco, 1996, p.19) can be expressed as follows:

- Develop empathy towards other human beings, the sense of human diversity, similarity, difference and interdependence, as well as

emphasize social capacity, including intercultural competence that makes us feel "at home" in a diverse cultural environment.

- Be aware of the reasons that originate intergroup conflicts at international levels and, if possible, contribute to their solution.

- Develop the commitment to combat prejudice and discrimination, as well as solidarity with human rights, both in the environment itself and outside.

- Know how to value the worthy achievements of all individuals and human groups and find a way to contribute to them.

- Develop an appreciation for human-environment interdependence, as well as the economy, role, objectives and limitations of the different economic systems, both locally and internationally, and responsibly promote adequate economic well-being.

- Acquire practical skills, knowledge and appropriate attitudes to act as citizens, workers or consumers, at family, individual and community levels, in a society marked by democracy and cultural pluralism.

- Develop imaginative, inquisitive and rational qualities, both at the level of judgment and communication, to apply them to activities derived from the cultural, social and environmental axes.

It can be said that we start from a socio-critical approach to anti-racist intercultural education that refers to the idea of training for everyone, within an institution, the school, which has to rethink its traditional political function of training a community. culturally homogeneous citizenship (Bolívar, 2004). In the words of Walsh (2010), a critical intercultural education must be a global political project of society, whose main purpose is to constantly rebuild that society, whose current functioning continues to perpetuate inequality, discrimination and the domination of some groups cultural over others.

Thus, it also seems appropriate to specify some objectives of multicultural education taking as reference Anglo-Saxon authors who, as the authors Ibáñez & Marco (1996) point out, are approaches that are highly contrasted in practice. We highlight authors such as Banks (cited in Ibáñez & Marco, 1996: 17) who establish the following as the main objectives of multicultural education:

- Transform the school so that all students, exceptional students, those who come from diverse cultural, social, racial or ethnic groups experience real equality of opportunities to learn.
- Help all male and female students develop positive attitudes towards different cultural, racial, ethnic and religious groups.
- Encourage those who suffer discrimination by teaching them to make decisions and develop social skills.
- Help students understand cross-cultural interdependence and see themselves from the perspective of others.

In the Spanish context, we highlight the contributions of Galino & Escribano (1990). Its general objectives are the following:

- Promote the idea that cultural diversity, and where appropriate ethnic diversity, is a positive element for all citizens, both for members of majority and minority groups.
- Familiarize each cultural group with the cultural characteristics of other groups. Develop the principle that all cultures are as valid and meaningful as your own.
- Provide students with different cultural aspects. Help them to be interested in dimensions belonging to other cultures such as music, literature, the lifestyles of other peoples, etc. always moving away from folklore.

- Start with attitudes and intellectual, social and emotional skills that allow the student to be adequately situated in a multicultural society as it would certainly be in the future, and integrated as we wish.

Paulo Freire: His vision of intercultural education

To begin, we made a documentary and content analysis of Paulo Freire's work in order to understand the main problems he identified within education and specifically his position on intercultural sensitivity. It is important to note that we acknowledge that Freire's books used here for analysis constitute a series of personal documents where the author reflects on various topics. We understand that the bibliographic contributions of the Brazilian educator can be treated as authentic personal documents and can be used to make a qualitative documentary analysis. We have chosen ten books that, we consider, constitute a representative vision of his extensive work. We have selected Freire's bibliography based on two main criteria. The first one has to do with books that had been translated into Spanish. The second one has to do with books that correspond to all his life stages. We start with the first books that Freire wrote in exile, in Chile. We also chose works from the central part of his life, in which Freire was very active. We also chose works from the final phase of his life from which you can see a Paulo Freire who has undergone an important process of personal and professional maturation. Finally, we chose works that were published posthumously and that are compilations of his writings (some unfinished) but some of his main collaborators such as Gadotti, Carlos Alberto Torres and his widow: Ana María Araujo Freire (among others) were dedicated to compiling and publishing. In table 1, we show the books, dimensions and terms used to perform our analysis.

Table 1: Dimensions and terms used to perform our analysis

DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS		
Bibliography of Paulo Freire	*Analysis dimensions*	*Terms*
1. Education as a practice of freedom (1969) 2. Pedagogy of the oppressed (1970) 3. Pedagogy of hope: a reunion with pedagogy of the oppressed (1993) 4. The political nature of education (1994) 5. Pedagogy of autonomy. Knowledge necessary for educational practice (1997) 6. In the shadow of this tree (1997a) 7. The meek cry (2003) 8. Pedagogy of tolerance (2006) 9. Pedagogy of indignation (2010) 10. Letters to whom he intends to teach (2012)	1. Cultural diversity 2. Anthropological conception of culture 3. Dominant culture 4. Dialogue as a method of knowledge 5. Education concept 6. Virtues inherent in teaching practice 7. Freire's Critique of Banking Education 8. Democratic school	1. Tolerance 2. Diversity 3. Cultural identity 4. Dialogue 5. Different "The Other" 6. Democratic School 7. Coexistence 8. Multiculturalism 9. Politics 10. Transformation

To perform the analysis of the information obtained from Freire's selected bibliography, first, we have proposed eight dimensions of analysis related to the objectives of the study. To continue with the qualitative analysis, we chose textual quotes from the Brazilian author in which selected key terms appeared. We chose such terms because after an initial review of his work we considered that there are certain recurring themes in his work, and we identified that these were key concerns of Freire that were addressed as recurring themes at different times in his life and throughout his pedagogical work. Of course, there are many more topics that also concern the author, but in our case, we have focused our analysis on those topics.

The qualitative analysis carried out has allowed us to verify the intercultural sensitivity of the author and has given us the opportunity to guide our focus towards issues of great importance in the context of our research. Specifically, we have been able to identify central ideas of his thinking, as well as some of his concerns, detecting, in addition, recurring themes in the author writings.

As a result of the documentary review and content analysis that we have carried out in a part of Paulo Freire's written work, We found a range of pertinent issues related to democracy, openness and social justice, as well as the classroom, the curriculum and pedagogy. The rest of this paper is divided broadly into the following two sections: Firstly, we present a summary of Freire's main ideas. Secondly, we outline how these ideas can be used to develop intercultural education in practice. To begin, we now present our analysis and identification of twelve key themes presented in the work of Freire.

1. Schools must be permanently open to change. For Freire (2012), teaching requires the recognition and assumption of the student's cultural identity. If talking about intercultural education is talking about the cultural identity of students, we can say that Freire was a pioneer in defending multiculturalism as a way of inclusion. The intercultural school must be permanently open to change, and as he himself points out, schools must be willing to learn from whom those who have not been schooled. Taking this into account, one of Freire's main contributions to intercultural education is to propose a model of a school that is constantly open to change and improvement. It must be a flexible, democratic, inclusive school model that recognizes difference as a value. It is a school that learns and takes into account the cultural identity of its students: with its students it learns ways to teach and they teach the school ways to learn.

2. Reflection on practice. From reflecting on his own practice and through an accessible and didactic language, Freire (1997) explores the knowledge necessary for educational-critical practice, which is based on an ethics-pedagogy and a worldview grounded in rigor, research, critical attitudes, risk, humility, good judgment, tolerance, joy, curiosity, and competition ... among other virtues, all of them, focused on maintaining hope. It is necessary, therefore, to rethink a model of initial training of alternative teachers and propose a model that allows teachers to develop such virtues. Additionally, this training model would enable future teachers to understand and use the necessary tools to address within their teaching not only professional competences, but also intercultural ones. This necessarily implies rethinking the figure of the teaching professional and discussing their role in teaching and in society.

3. Social justice. To talk about intercultural education is to talk about cultural wealth, but it also means talking about social justice. Both have been a constant and recurring theme within in the work of Paulo Freire. Freire was a person who had a special concern for *the other,* to denounce injustices and to show us that human beings have in our hands the possibilities of change and transformation. For Freire (1994), the pedagogical political practice of educators takes place in a society challenged by the globalization of the economy, hunger, poverty, tradition, modernity, and even postmodernism, authoritarianism, democracy, violence, impunity, cynicism, apathy, despair, but also hope. The pedagogy of Paulo Freire is a pedagogy of the land thus contemplating the earth as *a great oppressed* by the kind of injustices that we denounce. Taking into account the aforementioned, an intercultural school and an intercultural education model necessarily entails reflecting on the injustices and the causes they generate, such injustices as well as other problems such as immigration, visualizing poverty, analyzing the causes of differences between rich and poor countries, identify environmental problems and analyze

their causes, visualize violence against women and denounce abuses to which thousands of women are subjected worldwide, problematize about situations of inequality and injustices that threaten people's human rights.

4. Political will to change. Since education has strong socio-political components, Freire (1970, 1994) alludes to the impossibility of considering educational practice as a neutral activity on numerous occasions. As such, it is not possible to assume education as an activity that can be approached exclusively from a purely technical and methodological dimension - and therefore neutral - since it has social, economic, political and cultural components, etc. Given this, intercultural education would be a pedagogical project, with a marked socio-political and cultural character. This project, which must start from the respect and appreciation of cultural diversity, takes into account Freire's approaches and seeks the reform of the school and also of society through a coherent educational practice based on dialogue and intercultural communication. It is a project clearly oriented to favour social change according to principles of social justice and an ethic based on the right to differences.

5. Linguistic diversity. According to Paulo Freire (1993) there is no true bilingualism, much less multilingualism outside of multiculturalism. Politicians have to be very clear on the issue of language. They must realize that language is not only an instrument of communication but also a thought structure of the national being. It is a culture. Taking into account such approaches, Freire's intercultural education must be open to recognizing cultural diversity in the school and that includes linguistic diversity. This implies an attitude of respect for the cultural conventions present in other languages and linguistic varieties of the Spanish and international context. It also entails the maintenance and

learning in the first language, as well as having teachers from other cultures in schools and classrooms.

6. Evaluation as improvement of teaching practice. Freire (2012) refers to the critical evaluation of teaching practice. This critical evaluation exercise reveals the need for a series of virtues. From Freire's perspective, such qualities - of teachers - are built by each one of us by imposing the effort to reduce the distance between what we say and what we do. It also raises the importance of coherence between theoretical approaches and teaching practice. Taking these approaches into account, an intercultural education model must contemplate an evaluation system aimed at improving the teaching practice itself. For this, it is necessary to use a variety of assessment instruments and procedures that allow teachers to monitor their own practice, as well as review it. Such instruments, moreover, should be aimed at reducing the distance between what we say and what we do.

7. Problem-posing education versus banking education. We think that one of the main contributions of Paulo Freire's pedagogy to intercultural education is that which places a commitment to problematizing education through analyses of social issues in opposition to the focus on the transmission of content in the banking model of education. This is a constant idea in all his work, but it is perhaps in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1970) where he talks about this the most. From this conception of education, it is understood that students are active subjects and are in the process of building history. As active subjects, they may be able to problematize reality and critically look at a world in which it is urgent and necessary to ask questions and make proposals for improvement. Education must contribute to the culture of critical and participatory citizens. Intercultural education represents a model of problem-posing education. This educational model understands the dialogue as a method

in the construction of knowledge. It assumes the understanding of education as an act of knowledge within the framework of pedagogical objectives directed by the ideology of the formation of critical and truly autonomous subjects. It also means an education focused on the needs of human beings to seek solutions and improvements.

8. Democratic school and participation of the educational community. For Freire (2012), defending the presence and participation of students, families and teachers in schools, as well as in the choice of content is essential. This school model does not mean denying the indispensable performance of specialists, but it means democratizing the power of choice of content that extends, at the same time, to the debate on how to treat them.

9. Possibilities of change and transformation. Freire (1993) reminds us that the reading of the world must be carried out by critical teachers and, necessarily, must be accompanied by hope, dreams and utopia without ever forgetting that such a transformation, although difficult, is possible. Freire told us that education needs both technical, scientific and professional training, as well as dreams and utopia. Without the dream of a collective improvement, transformative activity is not possible. Intercultural education, taking into account these principles, involves making a critical reading of the world but that does not generate hopelessness, but rather allows us to see the resistance, the ways of moving forward, of building the new, the permanent possibilities that human beings have to rebuild our lives.

10. Textbooks and curriculum materials. Freire (1970, 1993, 1997) is surprised by the concern for the mechanical memorization of the contents, the use of repeated exercises that exceed the reasonable limit as soon as they remove a critical education of curiosity. Freire is committed to an educational model

focused on dialogic communication where, deep curiosity and critical reflection are the main methods of knowledge. An education model that, beyond addressing certain contents, reflects on the possibilities that human beings have, to change the world. Intercultural education necessarily involves working with a variety of sources and materials. It implies that students are the protagonists of the teaching-learning process and that they become the active subject of the teaching-learning process. It suggests, necessarily, using materials that arouse motivation, as well as the curiosity of students to investigate and ask questions in order to deepen the knowledge of diverse topics. This curricular material, at the same time, must be updated and must be manipulated by the student.

11. Review of curricular contents. As Freire (1970, 1993, 1994) points out, the questioning of knowledge forms is fundamental to answer questions such as: Whose culture is this? To which social group does this knowledge belong? According to what interests is certain knowledge transmitted in cultural institutions such as schools? . Multicultural education necessarily entails reviewing the cultural selection that makes up the common curriculum to make it a more universal and representative curriculum of cultures and social realities. Intercultural education should make visible the cultures that are currently absent in school curricula.

12. Coherence between theory and practice. Without a doubt, one of the most difficult virtues in the performance of the teaching task is the coherence between what we say and what we do. For Freire (1997), the fundamental moment in teacher training is that of critical reflection on practice. This reflection is done by thinking critically about today's or yesterday's practice; and how you can improve the next one. Intercultural education involves reviewing one's teaching practice, ways of acting and working, ways of adapting to changing social and educational contexts. It implies being willing to learn from

students because they also show us ways to teach and ways to improve our teaching practice.

Challenges that cultural diversity incorporates in the curriculum of Asturias and connections with contributions from Freire

In the current social and educational context of the phenomenon of multiculturalism stands out as a basic characteristic of our society. This phenomenon is highly visible in the educational centres and contexts of the Asturian autonomous community (Louzao & González Riaño, 2007). The concern for multiculturalism in the educational context has led various authors (Aguado, 2011; Banks, 2015; Díez Gutiérrez, 2014) to pose the educational challenges that education in multicultural societies entails.

To identify possible challenges that cultural diversity poses to the Asturian curriculum at the stage of Compulsory Secondary Education, we carried out a review of the subjects that make up the curriculum.

When the study was carried out, Decree 74/2007, of June 14, was in force, by which the curriculum is ordered and established in the stage of Compulsory Secondary Education. Thus, this Decree is the document that we have reviewed to contextualize the framework of the educational system in the Autonomous Community of the Principality of Asturias.

To carry out the analysis of the Asturian curriculum, we consulted each of the subjects of the curriculum and, taking as reference the following elements: objectives, content, methodological guidelines, evaluation criteria and contribution to basic competences, we carried out a qualitative and content analysis, focusing on the intercultural dimension that led to the following identifications.

In the formulation of the general objectives and content, several subjects include aspects related to the valuing of cultural diversity, tolerance, the consideration of other cultures and the preservation of artistic and cultural heritage. However, it should be noted that such diversity is restricted to the autonomous, Spanish and European spheres, ignoring other realities present in classrooms.

One of the dimensions of analysis in which an intercultural perspective is most present is that related to methodological guidelines. In the Asturian curriculum, a methodology based on dialogue is used as a facilitating instrument of learning, the use of a participatory methodology and collaboration, where the teacher plays a facilitating role in the teaching-learning process.

Regarding basic competencies, it is clearly evident that this document emphasizes the importance of an intercultural perspective. Thus, the importance of cultivating sensitivity, creativity and divergent thinking is underlined; promoting tolerance and appreciating identity traits as well as differences, abilities and skills related to civic coexistence.

In regards to the evaluation criteria theme we identified as a recurring theme of Freire's work, here we were able to, highlight that in most of the taught subjects evaluation criteria are formulated related to aspects such as research, reflection, cooperation, evaluation, etc. However, the establishment of clear and operational procedures to carry out such an evaluation is lacking.

Challenges posed by cultural diversity and connections with Freire's pedagogy

Drawing on the ideas and reflections from the Freire literature detailed above, we now consider issues for applying these ideas in our local context.

Taking into account the contributions of Freire's pedagogy and the analysis carried out in the Asturian curriculum, we proceed to comment on some challenges that cultural diversity poses to the curriculum. We will do this process of reflection by establishing connections with Freire's pedagogy and we propose it around the following challenges identified in the following section.:

The first issue is respect for the cultural identity of the students. Intercultural education implies respect and interest in the cultural identity of the students and, in the case that the student is from another culture, it also implies knowledge of the social reality of their country of origin and reflecting on their approach to Asturian classrooms. Likewise, it implies an interest in their culture. Freire's contribution consists in accepting and respecting difference - as Freire points out - it is one of those virtues without which school cannot exist. It is necessary to overcome the multicultural perspective where the knowledge of the cultures is reduced to folkloric and superficial aspects, without reaching a deep curiosity about the other and their culture. Education in multicultural contexts must be oriented so that students and teachers are concerned and curious about the social reality and the country of origin of the foreign students, as well as about the causes of immigration.

Another challenge that we find interesting to highlight is: Valuing cultural diversity or multiculturalism. Cultural diversity at school should be valued as a cultural wealth. In a context - be it educational or social - in which different cultures coexist, it is enriching, for all cultures, to share and learn things from different cultures, always respecting cultures and having as a reference the framework of Human Rights. In this sense, Freire's contribution consists in reminding us that the starting point of education is in the cultural, ideological, political, and social context of the students. Freire defends a democratic school

model that promotes the development of curricular content based on an anthropological conception of culture.

Another challenge is taking into account Linguistic Diversity. If there is cultural diversity in the school, that means that there is probably also linguistic diversity. Cultural diversity is often accompanied by linguistic diversity (Husén y Opper, 1983; Grupo Eleuterio Quintanilla, 2013).

However, on numerous occasions, the only thing it means for students - mainly non-nationals - are barriers derived from linguistic differences. On the other hand, minority languages at school, such as the Asturian language, suffer from diglossia. In this sense, one of Freire's main contributions is to keep in mind that there is no bilingualism, much less multilingualism outside of multiculturalism. He also points it out as a matter of political will and that implies a cultural imposition and for this reason, he points out that politicians have to be very clear on the question of language since this is not only an instrument of communication but also a structure of thought of being national. It is a culture. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize an educational policy that favours multilingualism at school and that focuses on the promotion of ethnic minority teachers who teach in the first language of the students.

Another challenge is to clarify the approach of intercultural education to adopt and develop an educational model consistent with such approaches. Perhaps this is one of the greatest challenges that we encounter since on many occasions we speak of an educational model that is inclusive, but what is put into practice is an assimilationist model. In this case, Freire's contribution has to do with the need for coherence between theory and practice, or to put another way, a coherence between the model of intercultural education that we want and the true model of intercultural education that we finally developed. Freire refers to various virtues that teachers must have, highlighting, above all, coherence while

recognizing the great difficulty of being coherent. To achieve this, it plans to use various instruments and procedures that help teachers review their own practice.

Another challenge of our educational system has to do with proposing alternative methodologies to the mechanical memorization of content. Despite the fact that the principles that inspire our educational system and the Asturian curriculum are others, for example a compressive teaching model, based on the principles of meaningful learning, we are still faced with an academicist teaching model focused on learning content instead of a comprehensive teaching based on the integration of basic competencies and basic learning to live in society and in which the deep curiosity of the students is not encouraged regarding the diversity of topics. In this sense, another of Freire's main contributions (1970, 1993, 1997, 2012) has to do with a comprehensive teaching model based on the principles of dialogic learning. The Brazilian educator always criticized the excessive use of repeated exercises that exceed the reasonable limit in that they leave aside a critical education and do not favour the curiosity of the students. Freire believes that teachers continue to provide answers to questions that were not asked of us and that also do not take into account the motivation or interests of the student.

Principles of intercultural education

According to the previous generic observations, different principles of intercultural education can be established. So:

1) A multicultural school model is a permanent school model open to change and improvement. It must be a flexible, democratic, inclusive school model that recognizes difference as a value. It is a school that learns and that, as Freire points out, takes into account the cultural

identity of its students. It is a school that learns ways to teach with its students and they teach the school ways to learn.

2) A multicultural school requires operating in terms of humanity and overcoming the most primary ethnocentrisms. It is necessary to question asocial aspects of our culture and foster respect and understanding for other people and their culture. A school open to the cultural reality of students is a school that demonstrates an interest in them, their peoples and their culture in order to generate processes of change to replace the unique and dominant worldview that presides over current relationships with other attitudes of meeting, dialogue and collaboration between cultures.

3) It is necessary to re-assess the model of teacher training and consider a practice that allows teachers to know and use the necessary tools to address their teaching functions, emphasizing not only in professional skills, but also in intercultural A multicultural school must necessarily have teachers from different cultures and that it can teach in the students' first language.

4) It is also necessary to rethink the social figure of the teaching professional and discuss their role, not only in teaching but also in the social and intellectual environment. It is also necessary to rethink the role of students in teaching-learning processes, especially as regards the possibilities of autonomous control of their knowledge building process. In a social context in which different cultures coexist, it is necessary for students to build their own worldview - as Freire insists. Given this, one of the main functions of teachers in the current

socio-educational context would involve consciously helping students build their own autonomous world view.

5) Intercultural education, from this point of view, would be a pedagogical project with a marked socio-political character. This project is based on the respect and appreciation of cultural diversity and seeks to reform the school and also society through a coherent educational practice based on dialogue between cultures, communication and intercultural competence. This is a project clearly aimed at promoting social change - as Freire also emphasizes - according to principles of social justice and an ethic based on the right to differences.

6) This model of intercultural education, necessarily, has to contemplate a system of critical evaluation and be oriented to the improvement of teachers' own teaching practice. For this, a variety of evaluation instruments and procedures can be used that allow us to monitor the practice itself. Such procedures must be aimed at reducing the distance between what we say and what we do, that is, to achieve coherence between theory and practice. This critical evaluation exercise, reveals - as Freire indicates - a series of virtues that are built by each of us and by imposing the effort to compare our convictions and our facts and that are demonstrated by the ability of permanently questioning of our position in the classroom, in the centre and in environment.

7) Intercultural education implies, among other issues, the need to: reflect on injustices and suffering and know the causes that generate immigration; visualize, without complexes, poverty and analyze the causes of the differences between the northern and southern countries; identify environmental problems and know their causes; to be

shocked at the fact of the violence against women and to denounce the abuses to which millions of them are subjected worldwide. That is, it is an educational model that entails problematizing situations of inequality and injustice that undermine human rights. This is, in essence, what Freire understands as *"Problem-posing education"*.

8) The approach of intercultural education that we support here - inspired by the contributions of Freire's pedagogy - represents an educational model that must be inspired by the construction of knowledge and not only in transmission and reproduction. It assumes the understanding of education as an act of knowledge within the framework of pedagogical objectives directed by the ideology of the formation of critical and truly autonomous subjects. It also means an education focused on the needs of human beings to find solutions and improvements for all human beings.

9) A model of intercultural education consistent with those we advocate addresses intercultural education in schools from an institutional approach. It aims to raise awareness for all and promotes, where appropriate, for the promotion of teachers of ethnic minorities. For this, it is necessary - as Freire claims - to overcome the multicultural perspective in which the knowledge of the different cultures is reduced to folkloric and superficial aspects of them, without reaching a real *deep curiosity* about "the other".

10) A multicultural school model must be open to the educational community and should favour mechanisms for the participation of teachers, students, families and the solidarity of groups in the environment. It is a model of a democratic school that, in addition to being permanently open to the contextual reality of the students - as

Freire dreamed - must also be willing to learn from their relations with the context.

11) Intercultural education involves making a critical reading of the world, but that, in Freire's words, does not generate despair, but allows us to see the resistance, the ways of moving forward, of building the new, the permanent possibilities that we have Human beings rebuild our life and our history. The world is something "unfinished" and it is a task of human beings to contribute to its creation.

12) Intercultural education necessarily involves working with a variety of sources and materials. It implies that students, as we have been repeating, are protagonists of the teaching-learning process and become an active subject of said process, using resources that are close to them and that arouse motivation and interest in learning, as well as intrinsic curiosity to ask questions in order to deepen the knowledge of diversity of relevant topics in their cognitive field. This material, curricular and not, must be permanently updated and must be manipulated, touched, contrasted and questioned by the students themselves.

13) Multicultural education necessarily involves reviewing the cultural selection of the contents that make up the common curriculum to make it more universal and representative of cultures and social reality. Intercultural education must make visible the "cultures" that are currently absent in school programs. At the same time, in the selection of curricular content - as Freire recalls - it is necessary to ask questions such as: to whom does that culture belong? Or in whose favor is that culture? Issues that will help us understand that, in short, no educational practice is neutral.

14) The profound transformation of schools is absolutely necessary to implement an intercultural education. For Freire, schools will not be transformed if they do not enter into the process of radical change. Such a process cannot stop coming from outside - social reality, activism, political will, etc. - but it cannot fail to start from within - the social context of the students, participatory methodology, democratic "agitation" of the teacher, etc. -. It is the essence of a committed school, of a school that learns from the contextual reality of its students.

15) Dialogue is an existential requirement, so Freire proposes it as a method of knowledge. He also points out that it has to occur with respect and humility. A multicultural school should favour the occurrence of dialogic communication processes. The dialogue represents a way in which teachers and students build knowledge. The dialogue allows us to express and expose our vision of the world and to know that other visions of the world are different from ours. It is not a question of *imposing* our vision of the world or of any overlapping others, but of understanding that there are different ways of seeing the world and that it is necessary to respect these different visions, having Human Rights as a frame of reference.

Final thoughts

Normally, school curricula employ content, concepts and situations from the perspective of the dominant culture (Freire, 1993; Santos Guerra, 1994; Torres Santomé, 2011) leaving aside the experiences of minority groups. For this reason, another of my fundamental questions is related to the imperative to evolve towards a less culturally skewed curriculum and in which cultural diversity has a place. Such diversity, however, does not fit well in school institutions designed to standardize and impose a cultural canon that few people question, because as Torres Santomé (2008) points out, this type of debate is not

stimulated from the educational administrations. It must also be borne in mind that the background social scenario in which schools are immersed, political, social, cultural, economic and labour revolutions are happening at a dizzying pace, something that is causing significant degrees of confusion in many social groups and groups and, of course, among teachers. This disorientation, says Torres Santomé (2008), becomes more and more evident in the extent to which, day by day, there is a greater diversity of students in the classrooms and neither the compulsory curricula, nor the curricular materials take them into consideration.

Gimeno (2005) reminds us that compulsory education is a universal experience that characterizes modern societies as if they were an anthropological feature of them. It is, therefore, a social and educational project that has been recognized as a universal right because it contains the possibility of dignifying human beings while contributing to the improvement of society. Thus, the first manifestation of optimism that derives from the idea of progress is expressed in having made compulsory education a right for all, which, as Gimeno (2005) points out, implies that every human being can improve.

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