

## ABSTRACT

Intercultural education requires a new approach, which is free from prejudices and is characterized by an emphatic, tolerant attitude of pedagogues. Intercultural pedagogy in general highlights the cultural, social and educational questions and conflicts, which affect the majority and minority as well; and which requires a suitable methodological toolbar in order to be solved.

The subject of ethics in primary schools provides an opportunity for the students to discover those sets of values, which ground the base for social life, and which help accept social diversity. During the development of social competences; the openness for intercultural dialogue and development of positive attitudes are in focus. The aim is to practice democracy and accept religious and ethnical diversity, gender-equality and freedom from prejudices.

**Keywords:** *interculturalism, multiculturalism, ethics, social competences, acceptance*

## ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ

Az interkulturális neveléshez új szemléletmódra van szükség, előítélettől mentes, empátikus, befogadó pedagógusi attitűdre. Az interkulturális pedagógia általánosan világít rá a többséget és a kisebbséget egyaránt érintő művelődési, szociális, oktatási kérdésekre, konfliktusokra, amelyek megoldásához megfelelő módszertani eszköztár szükséges.

Az erkölcsstan lehetőséget nyújt az általános iskolában a diákok számára azoknak az értékelveknél a megvilágítására, amelyek a társadalmi együttélés alapját képezik, valamint segítik számukra a kulturális sokszínűség elfogadását. A szociális kompetencia fejlesztése során előtérbe kerül a kultúrák közötti párbeszédre nyitott szociális kompetenciák fejlesztése, a pozitív attitűdök kialakítása. Cél a demokrácia gyakorlása, a vallási és az etnikai sokszínűség, a nemek közti egyenlőség elfogadása, a megkülönböztetés-mentesség.

**Kulcsszavak:** *inter-, multikulturalizmus, erkölcsstan, szociális kompetencia, elfogadás*



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## EDUCATION FOR INTERCULTURAL APPROACH IN ETHICS TEXT BOOKS

*Interkulturális szemléletmódra nevelés az erkölcsstan  
 könyvekben*

*Pojava interkulturalnog pristupa u knjigama etike*

### Introduction

The base for living together in a society peacefully is the cooperation reliant on a concrete system of norms and values. Ethic is a learnt behavior, which determines the personality of people. Ethical sensitivity may be formed via education, but this raises the need for pedagogues whose personality is suitable for forming the ethical value system of children. For intercultural education there is a need for a different approach of pedagogues, an attitude, which is tolerant, empathic and free from prejudices. Intercultural pedagogy does not only show the problems of minorities occurring in social and scholar integration; but it reveals the educational and social questions touching both the majority and the minorities, which raises the need for the development of a new theoretical frame and methodological toolbar. The aim of ethics as a subject is a multi-level approach of moral values. For students, this subject highlights those core values, which form the basis for living together in a society; and helps them accept cultural diversity. During the development of social competences, the improvement of openness for intercultural dialogue and forming positive attitudes is in the focus. The aim is the active practice of democracy, acceptance of religious and cultural diversity, gender differences and freedom from negative differentiation. The core of social competence is the effective intercultural communication based on empathy. When forming attitudes, fighting prejudices, understanding others, accepting differences and striving for compromise is crucial. Learning ethics is possible only via personal experience and active participation.

The first part of the research was based on the overview of the national curricula of ethics subject, which aimed to find out, whether the development of intercultural competences is part of the ethics curricula. The second part of the research focused on the ethics text books applied in primary schools. We examined the values exhibited in the teaching material and aimed to reveal how the different parts of the material support the

interiorization of intercultural sensitivity. At the lessons of ethics pupils face with the fact that there are approaches and values different from theirs and they get to know the idols representing these approaches. They practice selflessness, helpfulness and understanding others via situational games. With the help of these games they learn the consequences of being selfish and segregated. These sessions enhance the sensitivity of pupils against the segregation of others. There is a separate part of the teaching material focusing on the cultural-national society, in which pupils face with the fact that several minorities live in our country, whose culture is part of the national culture. Besides their own nation's customs and habits those of the minorities are also introduced, together with the festivities of other nations. By this time the knowledge and acceptance of these is supposed to be normal for the pupils.

### **Interculturalism and multiculturalism**

With the breakdown of borders and the development of media the world has opened for everybody. In order to be able to live with the new opportunities, we need a new, open, tolerant and integrative approach to avoid facing and fighting conflicts day by day. In our rapidly changing world we need to prepare pupils to be able to adopt and get along. Besides growing up in a family, education is also a crucial task of the society and within institutional means the main role of schools, as well. The children of nowadays need to grow up in an intercultural and multicultural approach in order to prevent prejudices towards those, who are different in any aspect.

Both in common language and scientific literature the concepts of intercultural and multicultural education are often mixed or used as synonyms. However, it is crucial to clarify that these two concepts bear with different meanings.

Emese K. Nagy (n.d.) started off with the concept suggested by UNESCO, which determines multiculturalism as ethnic groups having different cultures living together in a mutually peaceful atmosphere. Under interculturalism, the interaction between cultures is understood. In an intercultural society the intercultural education of social groups with different mother tongues and cultures is the task of social educational institutions.

According to Laura Arderlean (2000), the 'inter-' prefix refers to interaction or exchange. The word 'culture' combined with the prefix 'inter' results in a meaning built on the recognition of values, lifestyles and individuals. In a given society the individuals living in it are ready to recognize the importance of different cultures in a mutual way.

Following the thoughts of Katalin Forray (2015), the European academic literature applies the concept of interculturalism, when the topic is about the effects of different cultures on each other, considering education and socialization. Even nowadays, the intercultural paradigm is rather a viewpoint or strategic aim than a well-working method. This statement is also supported by the fact that the concept is used in many different meanings. Intercultural education may mean an educational program, which aims the education of different target groups (linguistic or social minorities, immigrants, refugees ...).

It may also mean the integration into international educational programs, or smaller communities, groups joining their linguistic nation or former home country.

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Intercultural education may be a general aspect, an element of the curriculum, which is part of the national curricula.

In the words of D. Larchner (cited by Ardelean, 2000), interculturalism is a way of education, which creates openness towards cultural differences and helps cease and prevent cultural prejudices and ethnocentrism. The aim of intercultural education is to teach empathy, solidarity and the respect towards the culture of others. The school policy of intercultural education is dedicated to achieve equal chances.

Hoopes has already referred to the importance of intercultural approach in 1981. He differentiated seven levels of intercultural competence, which also mean categories matching the properties of different age groups. Intercultural education has to follow the step-by-step principle, as intercultural approach may be developed in young individuals only in small steps. We can talk about ethnocentrism, when all the individuals take their own picture of the world as the base. This is followed by the second level, when the individual discovers the existence of different approaches and value systems and then understands the reasons lying behind the differences, as well. During scholar education it is very important to reach the fourth level, when the children are able to respect the culture of others and recognize their values. In the life of secondary-school students the sixth level may also appear, which is the level of selective application, when the students already feel certain elements of the other culture as their own. The highest level means assimilation, application, biculturalism, multiculturalism, when the adaptation to the other's culture is happening in the way that the individuals are able to identify themselves with it. This level may only be reached with the help of conscious multicultural education initiated in early childhood by the family and the educational institutions. This is why it is highly important to start the development of intercultural competences in early childhood and maintain them in primary school, as well.

We have seen several solutions in the educational practice, which support multicultural education – perfect opportunities are provided by cultural projects, classes of foreign languages, subjects of civilization, tales, games and cartoons among others (Bencéné, 2014).

In Hungary, multiple levels of development of intercultural and multicultural levels may be observed. The turning point was after the change of regime in 1989, when people started to recognize that minorities have different needs; and their lack of success in school may be linked to uniformized education. After this period, following the new educational principles, the solutions for the educational problems of children with handicaps or arriving from deep poverty or bad socio-cultural background were also sought. The basis of real acceptance is understanding and empathy. The next step may be taken by the introduction of ethics as a subject in 2014, where intercultural approach may be developed efficiently.

### **Education of ethics in primary schools**

A crucial role of the education of ethics is the protection of traditional social values and enhancing the norms, behaviors and actions supporting the humans living together. Ethical values and the set of correct forms of actions and behavior are necessary in the human society. In ethical education the first 'teachers' are the parents and the family

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surrounding the children, and this process may be continued or be hindered by the kindergartens and schools (Páll, 2013).

Nowadays, educational institutions highly focus on developing the cognitive skills of their students, however it is equally important to develop them socially, teach the values and train the character for a complete personality (Péter– Deák, 2013).

According to the curricula of the education of ethics, it is a fundamental task to educate the next generation to ethics, form their system of values and norms, their attitude towards the community and their way of thinking and behavior (Kerettanternv 1-4, 2014).

On the lessons the key for developing ethical sense efficiently is a methodology considering the properties of different age-groups. Transmitting ethical norms directly may seem unnecessary preaching for the young generation; so ethical education may only be successful by touching the emotions of the young individuals (Bábosik, 2010). The teaching of ethical rules already starts in the moment of birth, the arrival into a family. Based on continuous repetition norms are learnt, their application becomes a habit. However, it is very important in the process of teaching and learning to make these norms conscious; to provide continuous feedback and explanation for the children. The personality of the teacher and the process of teaching gains credibility only if it is based on setting a personal example, as the children will imitate these behavior-models (Burai, 2013). Ethical improvement is a complex, lifelong learning process, therefore the subject of ethics in schools is also multidisciplinary, it cannot appear as an isolated concept in the structure of subjects. The aims set in the curricula need to appear in daily life as well, covering the scholar education as a whole. The main values need to be followed during the education of every single subject.

### **The curricula of ethics**

The curricula of ethics does not contain the expression of intercultural and multicultural education, but an outstanding aim of the development of ethical sense is the focus on the improvement of empathy and the understanding and feeling for people in their sorrow. The basic tasks contain the enhancement of sensitivity towards each other and the ability of caring for other people. When discussing the general role of ethics as a subject it is mentioned, that the understanding of values and norms may be hindered by difficulties even within one single culture, as it may result in the confrontation of individual interests. During forming the ethical sense of students, it is highly important to provide some key points for orientation in the system of norms. Besides seeking and forming one's own values, we have to consider that the system of values and norms varies by culture, and students need to prepare for accepting and respecting different sets of values. Besides following the interpersonal values forming the behavior, children also need to learn how important the basic norms standing outside our own culture are (Kerettanternv 1-4, 2014).

In our globalizing world, the key to the many different cultures living together is the application of intercultural and multicultural approach and accepting and respecting each other's cultural properties. The first step on the way leading to acceptance is getting to know something. The bases of this process may be followed clearly in the curricula of ethics, following a spiral system. The most fundamental bricks of efficient education are the pedagogues also knowing the subcultures from which their students arrive.

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### Lower grade

The development of ethnical identity in children starts in kindergarten; it may be dated around the age of four. The families have a decisive role in creating the picture in the children's head about their color of skin, ethnicity and their narrow and wider environment. The generally accepted norms and forms of social behavior are already developed by the effect of the socializing role of the family and kindergarten. However, pedagogues also need to consider the different systems of norms developed in those children, who arrive from a different socio-cultural background, often characterized by different expectations than those of the society in general. They need to watch out for the spontaneous appearances of aggression as well as prejudices, and have to set the goals of education based on these experiences, compensating the drawbacks of these families.

In first and second grade – originating from the age characteristics of these groups – the primary educational aim is the discovery of one's own world and environment. In the topics of 'Peers – they and I' the development of social skills and handling personal relationships also appears, which is the base to accepting others. Love, sympathy and antipathy as concepts already appear among the key terms at this stage. At this age, children learn to make differences between the worlds of adults and children. The central topic is the understanding of the reasons to the question 'why?'; what the others are like and why it is good if we are different. And one more important question occurs: who we love and if there are people, who cannot be loved (Kerettanternv 1-4, 2014).

When discussing all these matters, the value system of children brought from their families may easily be discovered. Special attention needs to be paid to the behavioral appearances of 'I don't like'; as it can never turn into hatred or active aggression.

All the people living in communities need to learn the expected forms of behavior in the certain community, as they provide the base for living together both in ethical and legal mean and influence and coordinate behavior and interactions. However, the most important is to make the children not only learn the rules, but also enable them to apply their knowledge in the daily life (Kulcsár, 2009).

At the topics of 'my proximate and broader community' the world opens up slowly for the children. The discovery of being different in one's own society does also appear, they learn to understand that not all the children live in the same living conditions and that in our country and in the world there are many-many forms of living. Customs, habits, traditions and helping others are the main concepts in this topic.

Certainly, the expectations are matched to the age characteristics and the essence of the education is the development of a realistic picture about the world matching the certain ages. At the age of 6-8, children need to be able to accept emotionally that their fellows may live under completely different circumstances (Kerettanternv 1-4, 2014).

In third and fourth grade, pupils are already able to consciously reflect on their own activities. The effect of peers comes into the foreground, the opinions of friends and classmates become more and more important compared to that of the adults. However, pedagogues still need to remain credible examples, who represent the ethical model accepted by the society.

At the age of 9-10, the analytic thinking of children improves rapidly, therefore those dramatizing methods and role plays, which make the children face with real or imaginary

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ethical decisions, may be applied effectively. At this age not the tales, but realistic movies and documents can help reveal the opinions and systems of ethical norms of children. Besides enhancing self-recognition, one of the most important achievements is to recognize and accept viewpoints differing from one's own. The key concepts contain acceptance, helpfulness and understanding the feeling of segregation. A new topic of 'Cultural and national community' is also introduced, where children face for the first time with the fact that numerous minorities live in our country, and we have to regard this as a value, since it makes our culture richer and more diverse. The aim is to accept and find it natural for the other social groups to have traditions and customs and understand that theirs and ours both have a value (Kerettanterv 1-4, 2014).

Ethics may never be an isolated subject; in the lower grades it can be implemented into basically any other subject; the creativity of teachers is endless, they can educate in every situation of life. According to the guidelines of the curricula, ethics may be integrated into visual culture, Hungarian grammar and literature, environmental sciences, handicrafts and household subjects, as well. On the other hand, education will be more successful, if the acquisition of ethical norms is integrated into the complete life in school, including all the subjects, by matching the ethical questions into the current topics (Páll, 2013).

### Upper grade

By the age of 11-12, the long term time-approach of children is also already developed, therefore they are able to think in a common, European space and value the heritage of the Hungarian history. They are able to recognize the conflicts of interests and to acquire peaceful, constructive solution patterns during the analyzing phase. Social sensitivity may be improved very well in this life-phase.

The concept of being different is broadened topic by topic; in the chapter of 'Body and soul' besides defining health and illness, handicaps are also identified. In the lessons, children talk about the abilities that may be missing and how they could be replaced or how people lacking these abilities may live a complete life. An interesting question to raise is how children can live with a handicapped classmate, how they can help them in order to live a happy, complete life also within the school. Key concepts include handicap, acceptance and integration. In the topic of social life, the aim is to raise consciousness about ethnic and religious diversity and make pupils regard it as a value. In the case of those pupils, who belong to a minority group, the aim is to reconfirm their cultural identity. Developing social sensitivity and responsibility is a crucial point at this stage. The key concepts contain the meanings behind minority, religious community, equality, inequality, poverty and solidarity. When discussing the topic of ethnic communities, the question of where, when and which group is a minority, and how this situation may change. They also discuss the most important conditions of how minorities and the majority may live together peacefully. They get to know, which religious groups are present in Hungary, and they value the colorful world, which is created by them in our country. It is very important to make children understand that things that are unknown cannot be immediately seen with prejudices. The first step should always be the collection of knowledge and personal experiences, judgment follows only after. The case is similar when understanding social inequality. In lower grades, children have already understood that not all of them come from the same family background. By the end of sixth grade, they also need

to understand how big weight poverty can put on people and how they can help their fellows coming from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds without hurting them.

The expectable result of the two-year-long period is to be able to accept social norms and be open for the habits and cultural and religious traditions different from one's own. They need to be able to show feelings for someone's sorrow and take part in helping those, who are in the need of it.

In seventh and eighth grade, the formulation of the children's own picture and view of the world begins, which results in having their own systems of values and being able to orientate themselves in the broader world. In the topic of 'Individual and community' the question of freedom and restraints is also raised, together with the problems of personal freedom and prejudices. The focus is primarily on the borders and the discovery of personal freedom and boundaries, together with the opportunities and barriers raised by the multicultural society of our globalizing world. The expected results include openness towards different cultures and accepting that cultures and nations are mixed in our globalizing world, which results in positive and negative outcomes as well, and they need to be solved in a tolerant manner (Kerettanterv 5-8, 2014).

### **Efficiently, but how?**

As it has become clear during the examination of the curricula, the material of ethics clearly contains the basics of intercultural and multicultural approach. The opportunity is given for development; the approach may be implemented in the next generations. The only question is if the well-collected, up-to-date knowledge will arrive to the children effectively; in a way that they will be able to apply them in their future life, driven by inner motives.

The methods applied during the educational process are crucial, as the enforced but not understood ways of behavior will only generate refusal and defiance. In the lower grades, pedagogues need to apply methods, which are based on gaining experiences, a general characteristic of children at this age. They should help them to discover the values, as they will not learn the norms by hearing, but rather by applying them (Bencéné, 2014: 38-43). At this age, our aim is to found the base for value-consciousness, which may only happen by paying attention to each other and living the moments of daily life together. Children and adults both need rules and boundaries, which provide the world with a system (Stöcklin–Meier, 2005).

A crucial step of education of ethics is the formulation of the intercultural approach; however the development is not only dependant on institutional education, but also on the approach of the families behind the children. Family, as the primary platform of socialization gives variable input for every single child. In this aspect, there are children with advantages and disadvantages, but from any background they come, it is highly important to look at the world without prejudices. They should be open and ready to learn and accept differences.

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