REFORMULATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF A DIVERSITY-CONSCIOUS TEACHER EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGICAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The relevance of this area of research is based on the increasing importance of globalisation, mobility, migration and super-diversity (Vertovec 2002), as well as the associated responsibilities of the education system – and hence also on educational institutions. It is postulated in this context that intercultural skills are needed as core qualifications and professional competence within schools and universities (e.g. KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2010; AUERNHEIMER 2013). With reference to current scientific discourse and based on personal experience with regards to the operationalisation of education concepts for (further) development of intercultural competence, it is hypothesised that the concept is in part focused on lines of discourse based on a more traditional understanding of intercultural paedagogy. Many concepts are founded on the presentation of stereotypes and culturalisations and (artificial) homogenisations can be generated based on attributions.It is also highlighted that even in practical situations with a focus on intercultural competence, culturalisation is facilitated since determination through culture is suggested, hence there is orientation based on the model of national cultures and a unilateral and short- sighted focus on foreignness and (cultural) differences suppresses existing balances of power. MECHERIL clearly demonstrates that concepts must be fundamentally rethought and reformulated (MECHERIL 2013:16). This is precisely where my thesis work comes in Reformulation of Intercultural Competence.

Keywords

Pedagogical, School Development, Intercultural Skills, MECHERIL.

Introduction

The relevance of this area of research is based on the increasing importance of globalization, mobility, migration and super-diversity (Vertovec 2002), as well as the associated responsibilities of the education system – and hence also on educational institutions. It is postulated in this context that intercultural skills are needed as core qualifications and professional competence within schools and universities (e.g. KRÜGER-POTRATZ 2010; AUERNHEIMER 2013).

With reference to current scientific discourse and based on personal experience with regards to the operationalization of education concepts for (further) development of intercultural competence, it is hypothesized that the concept is in part focused on lines of discourse based on a more traditional understanding of intercultural pedagogy. Many concepts are founded on the presentation of stereotypes and culturalisations and (artificial) homogenizations can be generated based on attributions. It is also highlighted that even in practical situations with a

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focus on intercultural competence, acculturalization is facilitated since determination through culture is suggested, hence there is orientation based on the model of national cultures and a unilateral and short-sighted focus on foreignness and (cultural) differences suppresses existing balances of power. MECHERIL clearly demonstrates that concepts must be fundamentally rethought and reformulated (MECHERIL 2013:16). This is precisely where my thesis work comes in.

The core question of this dissertation is as follows: How should a concept for further development of intercultural competence be formulated such that culturalisations and stereotyping, as well as exclusionary practices, are counteracted in social settings and in educational institutions?

The guiding objective and interest is thus to reformulate a concept of intercultural competence that targets the further development of individual competence profiles and the professionalization of teachers which is to be implemented in the context of organisational processes with the goal of dissemination that is conscious of diversity. To achieve this, this research deliberately appeals to the critical school of cultural studies. The generation, (socio)genesis and construct of (discriminated or segregated) social groups and exclusionary practices by and within educational institutions are reflection in this context, while addressing the relations among social practice, power and culture and their production through the behaviour of social players. Based on this perspective, it appears possible to reposition the traditional models of intercultural competences, which are largely essentialist and culturalised.

I first carried out a document analysis (Flyer; Online-Publications). Few of the findings: Sociostructural and migrational relationships remain unaddressed and much more focus is placed on apparent conflicts that arise due to diverse cultural patterns (approaches are highly culturalised and oriented on or even create lines of differences based on nationality and culture; other dimensions of diversity remain largely unaddressed).

The new concept comprises a didactically-prepared certificate of apprenticeship in which the relevant new topics and content have been implemented with the goal of initiating processes of self-reflection.

The development of a specific competence profile plays a significant role. It will propose a systematisation for a competence profile so as to make clear which requirements have to be met. The competence profile will clarify which fields of and requirements for action are important for the professionalization.

The key skill reflective competence with regard to personal interpretative behaviour will become a relevant key area in the reformulation of the concept of intercultural competence,

that can be described as reflexive, diversity-conscious intercultural competence.

The relevant key skill area of reflective ability, which is being developed in the new concept, therefore relates to:

a)   the ability to critically self-reflect

b)   a critical understanding of structure and society in the context of migration

c)   the ability to contextualise in situations which are flux or hybrid

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