



## The Teacher Role as an Intercultural Mediator

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### Abstract

*In the education history, the teacher figure has incorporated new roles meanwhile in the classrooms were appearing Educational Needs. Thus, for decades, the training teacher from universities was composed of a brief set of different specialties (e.g. psychology, history, philosophy, theology, methodology, etc.) that enabled them to gain competency to thrive in a complex work environment and respond to the various educational problems that can appear in the classroom.*

*Nowadays, schools reflect on the social diversity that describes the globalized world (Tomé, 2016). Changing the student's lack of the intercultural inclusion to one of the fundamental needs that should be attended by the actual teacher. In this project, the need to train teachers in intercultural education is emphasized to improve their ability to become future intercultural mediators. Consequently, a new role is included to the already complex figure of the teacher. Therefore, this theoretical reflection is beginning to develop the current contextualization situation of the European schools. Proceeding with the importance of the intercultural education as a way to respond to inclusion needs and ending with the social intercultural mediation training of the actual teacher. We should underline that this project provides the basis of the mediator's role of the teacher with a general character, without focusing on any educational stage or specialty.*

### 1. Contextualization of the intercultural situation of the European schools

Current society is a diverse society which is constantly changing and in development. For decades, the European society is being characterized for being a melting pot. In their institutions, there are accepting people originated from other different countries. Those countries that predominate are from the African and South America continents.

This social reality is increasingly being reflected in the European schools. Is being characterized for symbolizing the cultural diversity that exists in this society. If we put Spain as an example, it's not strange to find in the same schoolroom students originated from Morocco, Syrian or Rumanian [2].

Under this circumstance, many authors are considering that European schools should respond to these educative needs that emerge in each of these students. They should offer the same learning opportunities as the other students of the same schoolroom [3, 4, 5]. For that purpose, the Inclusive Education is characterized to be a no exclusion paradigm as a role model. Guaranteeing in schools to not separate any student no matter the temporal or permanent situation their living, and provide them the education needs depending on their ethnic background [6].

Through the development of educational values, the Inclusive Education puts itself into real practice. Students are guaranteed to receive an education based on the ethical, democratic, social, equal, and fair development that emerges in the teaching-learning process.

In the European schools, the values that the Inclusive Education are focused on, are the ones that the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights exposes in the European Union's constitution and each country's constitution [8].

Since the Inclusive Education was incorporated in Europe, there trying to make sure that every student develops and improves their individual abilities and capacities [9]. Therefore, it is needed an education that is focused in the values mentioned before. These values would need to be built in a proper environment with educational professionals.

In a recent project, it was evaluated the concept of Inclusive Education that the European educational legislations had. The concept was understood the same way as it was explained before. The educational legislations of 32 European countries were analyzed in this investigation.

In all the educational legislations of these countries reflected the concept of Inclusive Education. Azerbaijan was the country that promoted more the Inclusive Education values than the others.

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At least, from the legislation level, European schools are promoting the Inclusive Education to not separate any student from others, no matter what. Diversity as an intercultural material is a positive component that will create a social union and new educational opportunities [10, 7, 8].

## **2. The intercultural education is important for the inclusion needs**

Many authors [11, 12] consider that the education of values is the solution for the environment conflicts that could be produced in actual schools. In Spain, like in many other countries of Europe, students from different cultural origins, ethnics or religions are introduced in schoolrooms. Environment advantages and conflicts from the actual social diversity [1] are reflected in these schoolrooms. In this school context, the education of values is needed. It would be mainly needed the education of values that allows the intercultural inclusion to be able to reflect the social inclusion [13]. Several investigations [14, 15, 16, 17] proved that the education for intercultural values is elementary for the creation of democratic cities. These cities would enjoy of the environmental benefits between citizens being able to exchange different habits, traditions, and behaviors which would enrich the origin culture. Those people that receive the education of intercultural values would be transformed into democratic citizens with the capacity of living in a pacific way [2].

The education of values is based on the formation of democratic values that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) dictates. In a recent investigation [2] various emerging values were included in this Declaration which were those constituted in the Bill of Human Rights of the European Union (2000) and the Spanish Constitution (1978). A new system of intercultural values has been created:

1. Primary intercultural values: Values directly transmitted in the intercultural inclusive education. This category is divided in subcategories like moral and ethnic values, social values, and transcendental values.
2. Secondary intercultural values: These values help to develop the intercultural inclusive education but not in a direct way. These values are divided in not ethnic values, productive values, and exchange values.
3. Tertiary intercultural values: Are those values that are traded less to transmit the intercultural inclusive education. In this category, the subcategories that are identified are: vital values, affective, esthetical, personal and ecologic development.

This author considers that the transmission of these intercultural values avoids the separation of students that can be produced by the different cultures, ethnics, or religions. This transmission of values is ensuring the Inclusive Education.

## **3. The actual lecturer training in an intercultural social environment**

The importance of the lecturer role as a mediator is going to be highlighted in this project. It's a new role created to solve the intercultural environment conflicts that can emerge in European schoolrooms. This could be explained by the rich diversity of culture that Europe has.

An intercultural mediator is that person who acts solving any type of conflicts coming from both sides or just by understanding them. For this action, the lecturer must be informed about the cultural characteristics of each character of the conflict [19].

It is divided in three types of mediation [20]:

1. Mediation that provides a communication between people of different cultures that has just a communicative difficulty but doesn't have any type of conflict. This type of mediation is named preventive and the aim is to restore the communication between the two parts.
2. The goal of the intercultural mediation is the reconciliation between people or parts. This type of mediation is named rehabilitative. Regulates the intercultural conflicts and tensions that can occur on environmental situations.
3. The creative mediation sets new interacting rules and methods with the aim of solving the environmental conflicts.

Some of the functions that a mediator lecturer may put on practice in some intercultural occasions [21] are: facilitate the student integration, create links between them, mediate the conflicts that emerge in schoolrooms or in the scholar institution, aware the main culture in a sensitive way of some characteristics of the minority cultures etc...



The conflicts that can emerge in the intercultural schoolrooms can be related with the following aspects:

1. The use or none of the hijab.
2. Comprehension of the official language and its use.
3. The cultural customs during the interaction between students.
4. Family customs of each country.
5. Restrictions in alimentation.
6. Use of Burqa.

Some of these conflicts are principal characters in nowadays news. That is why, it is important to be introduced a mediator lecturer in each European scholar institution.

It is considered necessary a mediator training for the lecturer. Therefore, will assume the new role that has been given and would be considered as an institutional mediator. In other words, a mediator that will use school services to evaluate the environment conflicts that emerges in school centers [21]. With this new role, the lecturer will be able to respond the intercultural conflicts coming from two important causes [22]:

1. Lack of knowledge of the values and codes that every culture represents. Some misunderstandings of these cultural values can complicate the mediator's role. In these cases, the mediator lecturer must give sense to these misunderstood values and behaviors.
2. Prejudices and relations of superiority appear in some occasions between people in conflict. The institution can have the dominant role and be part of the conflict. In this case the mediator's role is to remove the negative image and the prejudices that emerged from the dominant relation.

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