

Intercultural Competencies of Teachers

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Abstract

The contribution presents the cultural diversity and competence of teachers to work in an intercultural setting. Multiculturalism / interculturalism is present today in all spheres of life all over the world. In many cases, teachers are the first people to whom children from different cultures make contact. Teachers should prepare students to interact and live with people from different cultural backgrounds. However, studies show, that teachers are not competent enough and qualified to work in an intercultural setting.

In our contribution, we focus on intercultural perspective in terms of integrating migrant children into school and society. In the contribution, we have first identified, on the basis of relevant literature, basic concepts and studies in the field of teachers' competence to work in an intercultural setting. The purpose of the contribution was to investigate teachers' competence to integrate and teach in an intercultural setting from the perspective of integrating migrant children into school and society. Our aim was to examine the literature and research on competences for working in an intercultural setting, especially in education, and to explore the views of teachers. The research presents interviews with Slovenian teachers who participated in the RoMigSc project. Presented are their views about the knowledge, competences and skills for work with migrant children, what are the barriers to integration, what kind of help and support is provided by teachers. We have found that the most common problems faced by teachers when dealing with migrant children are language barriers, difficult communication with parents, parental disinterest, unsystematic monitoring of student progress between school and adult education centres, stress in children. Teacher competencies, which have been identified as important are: ingenuity, empathy, pedagogical andragogical education, openness, accepting otherness, tolerance, intuition, general transferable competencies, emotional intelligence,

commitment, attitude without prejudice and labeling, respect, equality, willingness, teacher effort, enthusiasm for others, compassion. Teachers agreed, that there is need for systematic training of teachers for work in an intercultural environment. We came to the similar findings also in the CiSoTRA project, which addresses the support system for unaccompanied migrant minors and the competence of professionals to work. Professionals working with young migrants should have the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to work with a particularly vulnerable groups.

The quantitative methodology used in the contribution was the RoMigSc project questionnaire, which was carried out in 2019. Data were collected in Slovenia, Italy, Spain and North Macedonia, especially among representatives from educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. The analysis of the results shows that in general respondents are not prepared to teach about human rights, immigration and immigration, equal opportunities, diversity, shared values and discrimination. A statistically significant difference was found in teachers' willingness to teach discrimination in relation to other respondents.

Keywords: Intercultural competencies, integration, migrant children, prejudices