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## REPRESENTATIVENESS AND THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL CONTENTS IN TEACHING OF INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO PHYSICAL CULTURE: TEACHERS ATTITUDES

**Abstract:** Multiculturalism was recognized as one of the crucial problems of education in this epoch. Great attention is paid to raising people awareness of the importance of bringing cultural content into curricula and recognizing the importance of cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic and other diversity in all aspects of education.

Physical culture signifies the diversified satisfaction of the elemental human need for movement, it is a part of the cultural values that are based on motor activities, which serve to improve and confirm the personality. As the ultimate goal of physical culture is body shaping but also the formation of the spirit, we can say that physical culture is very important for the development of tolerance, fair play, learning to respect rivals in the competition, and therefore learning of his culture. Given that there are many multicultural areas in Serbia, the representation of intercultural content in schooling and teaching children tolerance and acceptance of diversity is of great importance. The paper is concentrated on highlighting the importance of intercultural content in teaching and the possibilities for increasing their representation, especially in teaching of physical culture, which teachers from the examined areas find insufficiently presented. The paper will analyze the role of intercultural content in education in the opinion of teachers, with a focus on teaching of physical education, and in context of subjects that are otherwise represented in schools.

**Key words:** physical culture, culture, multiculturalism, interculturalism.

### THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Changes in lifestyle disrupt traditional relationships among people, large migrations of the population increase social mobility and lead to accelerated stratification of society, ideological and cultural organization occurs, concentration and centralization of social power becomes the dominant

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framework of mass society. Mass society and culture shape sport. Sport cannot be viewed in isolation from social status and context.

Successful communication between different cultures enriches the intercultural community with a more efficient, receptive system of national heritage protection, by achieving unity with diversity, because culture instills in people a way of seeing things, thinking, listening to what is said, and thus overcoming the issues that occur when people live together. Otherwise, humanistic values and emphasized features can lead to devaluation and poverty of cultural practice and suppression of creativity, which is a new form of the dehumanization of the world. Hence, there is a gap between the culture of everyday life and educational goals, between the consequences of cultural changes and educational aspirations.

Intercultural education as an intercultural value enables successful communication between different cultures, which, regardless of their origin and achievements, can be for the most part universal and animate all people with their meanings, wherever they lived and worked. That is why it is very important that the educational system encourages the search for links to connect and understand intercultural values. This would enable, with the use of new knowledge and positive practices, faster and easier adaptation of individuals to the new conditions. So, we can treat interculturality as one of the main principles in education (Vidosavljevic et al, 2016). Respect of cultural differences and their recognition by professionals in the context of teacher education, is one of the main areas of research today (Chen and Starosta, 2000; Chen, 2010).

Culture as a way of life and as a totality of human heritage is subject to changes that are increasingly intensified in the modern era of technological integration and globalization. These changes affect different areas of culture and significantly affect the continuity of the cultural system, but also the relativization and fragmentation of cultural experience. They affect different areas of social life and different forms of subcultures, which is confirmed by the extensive presence of culture and even physical education in the development of awareness of humanistic nature and the importance of true culture for man and modern society (Markovic, 2004).

Considering that physical culture is a multifunctional phenomenon in modern living and working conditions, it is reflected, above all, in the general development of the personality and its socialization, humanization and improvement of interpersonal relations, development of physical abilities and preservation of health.

In order for physical culture to become a significant force within the overall social progress, it is necessary to devise more humane criteria and measures of what physical culture really contributes to a richer and freer life of man and society. Therefore, under such circumstances when most social communities are multicultural, it is necessary to adapt the education system to new conditions using new knowledge and examples verified in practice.

It is necessary to develop carefully planned special curricula and methods that would include dialogue between members of different cultures

and that would enable the development of interindividual understanding and understanding of the world in a rational way.

Scherr (2001) mentions several strategies by which interculturality can be developed through sport:

- "The position of a foreigner" as a starting point in education - movements, for example, of a domicile dance can change forms, and movements originating from dances of other countries can be incorporated into curricula so that children learn that their sport and their body culture is just one of many others.

- Assigning team tasks as a challenge - when students are given tasks that require teamwork, conflict management skills can be developed at the same time. Also, the rules of the game must be agreed in consultations, which is a prerequisite for cooperation.

- Experience of recognition and belonging - in sports, children communicate in different ways, verbally and non-verbally. In this context, children learn to recognize other people's emotional, cognitive and social signals, and thus, through identification with others, create a basis for the development of a sense of belonging.

In physical education, students not only learn movements (motor development and fitness in order to preserve health), but also learn through movements (cognitive and emotional-social goals). In terms of social goals, all students, regardless of ethnicity, should develop communication skills, the ability to provide and receive help, give feedback, cooperate, and learn to accept victory and loss (Derri et al., 2014).

Physical culture, as a part of general culture, should be viewed as an activity of special importance, because it has a very important role in the development and strengthening of the physical ability of young people. Physical culture is also an irreplaceable factor in uniting abilities, desires and energy, as integration elements for "wholesome development of people, satisfying their personal needs and interests for creativity and leisure, as well as elevating the general mood and ensuring psychophysical relief " (Vuckovic, 1987, p. 35).

The primary meaning and character of physical education is universality because it has the properties of a specific direction. It is a form of physical culture, systematically and purposefully organized activity aimed at acquiring knowledge and developing motor skills and psychophysical abilities for proper physical development and strengthening, improving and preserving the health of young people and adults, but also preserving and strengthening social, moral, intellectual, aesthetic and other qualities. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to prepare and train teaching staff.

Compared to other subjects, physical education was positively assessed by children in schools. This widespread positive attitude of students is certainly a good prerequisite for achieving good results regarding the promotion of intercultural communication in schools. As it is a compulsory

subject in schools, physical education should be used to teach young people and children that participating in sports activities with people who have different physical characteristics, different standards and moral concepts can be a challenging and valuable experience. In physical education classes, the development of social relations can be initiated much more easily than in other subjects. Consequently, school sports can be a training ground for interpersonal relationships where participants can develop respect for the strengths and weaknesses of others. In this way, students can experience a sense of belonging to different social groups (Pühse and Gerber, 2005).

Schools should design an environment and curriculum that would encourage students to develop their social skills in a way that they can effectively coexist in different cultural contexts (Derri et al., 2014).

Recently, cultural changes have been taking place in the European educational system (even in our country), therefore, the new intercultural society puts emphasis on preparing young people for work and cultural life, promotes unity, tolerance, respect for diversity, humanism, peace, rapprochement and the formation of consciousness based on a common spiritual heritage. The role of physical education, physical culture in these processes, is very important and diverse. In addition to creating a good socio-emotional climate and a suitable environment for undisturbed relations among participants in the learning process (tolerance in communication), a new and different approach to intercultural learning content is needed in order to incorporate and innovate intercultural in schools, starting with their selection, teaching strategy, and their realization. Teacher is the one who has an important role in this process, and he/she should align his/her role with these learning contents. As a prerequisite, teachers should have a positive attitude towards diversity and a willingness to change that will enable them to train students for self-learning by encouraging and developing creative thinking and creative abilities to reach an alignment between school knowledge and environment.

The development of intercultural in schools in the modern system of youth education has an emancipatory role in developing awareness of the humanistic nature and importance of true (and even physical) culture for man and society, because it is crucial for his existence and development. Humane intercultural and pedagogical processes are topics which started to be intensively studied at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century. Intercultural education multiplies and supports diversity in all areas of life and creativity. For Delor (Delor: krulj Draskovic et al., 2017), four factors will be combined in educational process: learning for the knowledge, learning for working, learning for common life, learning for existing. Therefore, it is necessary to develop curricula for different levels of intercultural education.

In Europe, some scholars say that the promotion of cultural diversity helps to transform education from a nation-oriented to an interculturality-oriented and to the curriculum based on it (Schissler and Soysal, 2005). European societies rely on different models to address cultural and religious

diversity in education, with different potential consequences for young people's experience in schools. In general, intercultural education involves embracing the development and implementation of formal policies and reforms aimed at promoting equal educational opportunities for culturally and/or ethnically diverse groups, regardless of origin, social status, gender, or disability (Banks and McGee Banks, 2009). The available literature offers multiple approaches to multiculturalism, including the contributions approach, the additive approach, as well as the transformation, and the social action approach (Banks, 2006). The contributions and additive approach say that the cultural contents of minorities are included in the curricula, while its purposes and structure remain the same. Although the social action approach represents the highest level of multiculturalism, the transformation level is the actual level that teachers can reach in the classroom. The focus on differences increases the refusal of multiculturalists to question the impact of these differences on the lives of individuals (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997). Interculturalism suggests that social justice and fair values mobilize teachers toward transforming their pedagogy and curriculum to empower their marginalized students (Zembylas and Iasonos, 2010). Teachers aim to promote education that challenges power relations and promotes social change (Tiedt and Tiedt, 2009).

Taking into account that the situation in Greek schools is no longer characterized by cultural homogeneity, Derry et al. (Derri et al., 2014) conducted a survey with 79 fifth and sixth grade elementary school students. The aim of this study was to examine the effects of the intercultural curriculum compared to the traditional curriculum in the field of physical education in terms of their impact on learning social skills in intercultural classes. They conclude that the intercultural model of education has a positive impact on the social development of both domicile and foreign students, but only under the condition of longer duration of intercultural educational programs. On the other hand, students who attended traditional lessons did not show significant changes in social skills, whether they were Greeks or foreigners. Moreover, students who attended intercultural lessons showed more cooperative communication and had a better relationship with peers regardless of national origin.

## **METHODOLOGY**

We wanted to determine the attitudes of primary and secondary school teachers about the possible impact of intercultural education, as well as the possibility of understanding and encouraging intercultural values through subjects in primary and secondary schools. The sample consisted of teachers (125 male and female teachers) from schools in the cities of Subotica, Bujanovac and Prijepolje. First of all, multicultural environments were deliberately chosen, while schools and individuals (teachers) were subsequently chosen randomly.

Out of the 125 teachers surveyed, 65 work in primary schools and 60 in secondary schools. There were 56 male teachers and 70 female teachers. The

age structure of teachers is as follows: most of the participants are between 31 and 40 years old (39.2%), followed by those aged 41 to 50 (28.0%), and then between 51 and up to 60 years of age (12.8%), followed by younger teachers, up to 30 years of age (12.0%), and the least of the teachers are older than 60 (4.0%). Five teachers did not declare their age (4.0%). Structure of teachers based on their years of service: most of the teachers (36.8%) have up to 10 years of service, a slightly smaller number (33.6%) from 11 to 20 years of service, 16.8% have been employed between 21 and 30 years, while 9.6 % of them have 31 to 40 years of service. Data on years of service are missing for four teachers, (3.2%). Most of the surveyed teachers teach natural sciences - 35 of them, and social sciences - 26 of them, followed by Serbian and foreign languages (15 each), vocational subjects (14), art subjects (11) and physical education - 4, while 5 teachers did not provide data on the subject they teach.

Table 1. Possibility of using learning content related to intercultural education in the classroom in teachers' opinion

	M	δ	No %	Low %	Medium %	High %	N %
Social sciences	3.70	0,49	0	2	32	86	120
Mother tongue	3.57	0,61	0,0	1,6	25,4	68,3	95,2
			0,0	6,3	29,4	61,9	97,6
Art	3.40	0,78	4	10	40	67	121
			3,2	7,9	31,7	53,2	96,8
Foreign languages	3.27	0,71	2	12	58	49	121
			1,6	9,5	46	38,9	96,0
Physical education	2.83	0,71	6	24	75	16	121
			4,8	19,0	59,5	12,7	96,0
Natural sciences	2.53	0,82	10	51	44	15	120
			7,9	40,5	34,9	11,9	95,2
Vocational subjects	2.52	1,00	23	31	43	21	118
			18,3	24,6	34,1	16,7	93,7

The results of the research indicate that the intercultural learning contents are still insufficiently used in all subjects, as well as that these contents can be most successfully used in social sciences lessons (M = 3.70) and mother tongue lessons (M = 3.57). "Medium" success can be achieved in teaching art subjects (M = 3.40), and physical education (M = 2.83), and the least success is expected in teaching natural sciences (M = 2.53) and vocational subjects (M = 2.52).

123 teachers evaluated the possibility of successful usage of learning content from the field of intercultural education in teaching mother tongue. Most of them graded such a possibility with 4 - "High" (61.9%), and with 3 - "Medium" (29.4%). The average grade is 3.57% (on a scale of 1 to 4, between medium and high, still closer to the grade "High"), with the standard deviation of SD = 0.61. The social science subject was assessed by 120 teachers, the

majority of them graded such a possibility with 4 - "High" (68.3%) and with 3 - "Medium" (28.4%), the average grade thus being 3.70.

As for other the subjects in Table 1, in the participants' opinion, the possibility of successful usage of the learning content in question is rather low.

Having in mind the fact that young people are interested in increasing the number of quality content related to intercultural education which is seen as a significant innovation in modern approaches to school organization, teachers are of the opinion that the extent of using such content depends on the subject, however, they can actually be successfully used in all subjects.

As for the question: Whether and to what extent were they able to learn more about interculturalism during their schooling, the participants provided the answers shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Learning about interculturalism during schooling*

		F	%
1.	No, I never learned about it	16	12,7
2.	To a small extent	73	57,9
3.	Yes, I learned a lot about it	21	16,7
Total		110	87,3

When it comes to learning about intercultural content during schooling, the analysis of the answers shows the following: around 62.4% of teachers learned a little about interculturalism, 20.8% of participants believe that they learned a lot of good content related to this topic, and 16.8 % claim that they never had the opportunity to learn such content (Table 2). These are, therefore, clear indicators that teachers do not acquire enough knowledge about this topic during schooling, and they do not have the knowledge and skills to teach students about intercultural education, because these contents were missing during their schooling.

In order to verify this claim and shed some light on it, we asked the following question, which referred to the possibility of learning about interculturalism during schooling through the curricula of 7 (seven) subjects (Table 3).

In Table 3, the results of the research show that the learning of intercultural contents during schooling differs by subjects. During schooling, most people study interculturalism in social sciences and their mother tongue lessons ( $M = 3.29$  and  $M = 3.12$ ), as well as in art classes ( $M = 3.11$ ), followed by foreign language and physical education classes ( $M = 2.85$  and  $M = 2.52$ ), and the least in vocational subjects and natural sciences ( $M = 2.34$  and  $M = 2.03$ ).

*Table 3. Learning about multiculturalism during schooling by subjects*

	N	M	SD	No %	Little %	Medium %	High %
Mother tongue	102	3.11	.82	4 3,2	17 13,5	44 34,9	37 29,4
Foreign language	101	2.85	.95	11 8,7	21 16,7	41 32,5	28 22,2
Natural sciences	100	2.03	.98	37 29,4	33 26,2	20 15,9	10 7,9
Social sciences	102	3.29	.77	2 1,6	14 11,1	38 30,2	48 38,1
Vocational subjects	96	2.34	1.13	31 24,6	20 15,9	26 20,6	19 15,1
Physical education	102	2.51	.81	14 11,1	28 22,2	53 42,1	7 5,6
Art	99	3.11	1.01	8 6,3	22 17,5	20 15,9	49 38,9

Previous findings that teachers are not sufficiently trained for intercultural education are confirmed by these results. Moreover, these results indicate their interest in topics related interculturalism and the need for their introduction during schooling (Table 4).

*Table 4. Teachers' interest in multiculturalism topics*

		Φ	%
1.	No	3	2,4
2.	Little	6	4,8
3.	Medium	39	31,0
4.	High	44	34,9
5.	Very high	27	21,4
	Total	119	94,4

Ranking of teachers' interest in topics related to interculturalism is indicated with numbers from 1 to 5, where we can see that their interest is justified and we can conclude that teachers are very interested in interculturalism topics, because almost two thirds (60%) chose "High" and "Very high" option.

*Table 5. The need to introduce content on multiculturalism during teacher education*

		F	%
1.	Yes	101	80,2
2.	No	9	7,1
	Total	110	87,3



Regarding the need to introduce content on interculturalism during teacher education, 80.8% of participants believe that it is necessary to introduce these contents in the curriculum, and 19.2% believe that it is not necessary.

These results confirm our earlier statements about the need to improve the curricula with quality content related to interculturalism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Globalization trends significantly change life, work and communication of people, which creates numerous unfavorable situations caused by increasing mobility of the population (economic and other migrations, poverty, national frictions), etc., and if we add to it natural disasters and war conflicts, the issue of intercultural values of education and even cultural and pedagogical communication becomes very important. Education, and especially the one about the school system, should be open to new intercultural contents from all fields, because all cultures have the same cultural phenomena, but they shape them in different ways. This ensures that certain subjects help students develop appropriate competencies for understanding intercultural sensitivity and encourage them to be tolerant towards other cultures, and they have a certain influence on the process, goals and contents of education, which is referred to as interculturalism. It is therefore necessary to provide suitable curricula for different levels in all areas of intercultural education with an emphasis on its importance and the value of its content. This will contribute to intercultural values becoming an important feature and permeating the quality of modern youth education. Considering that intercultural education supports the differences in all areas of life and creativity, while physical culture as a part of general culture, and also physical education with its universality, significantly encourage the modernization of intercultural education and develop awareness of humanistic nature and importance of true culture for man and modern society.

Physical culture is focused on the health of children and young people, on the development of physical strength without neglecting the spiritual and certain intellectual qualities, and thus on the development of interculturalism in schools.

Serbia has always been at the crossroads between East and West, where different cultures met. Therefore, our culture abounds in diversity in all aspects of modern life, including education. In the borderlines of our country, in multicultural environments, it is a great challenge to organize and teach classes adapted to all cultures and their specifics. These challenges are even greater if the competence of teachers to teach multiculturalism and interculturalism is taken into account. The results of our research speak in favor of the insufficient representation of these contents in their education. Teachers believe that their knowledge in these fields is modest. Interculturality aspires to become the main factor and an integral part of quality modern education that relies on acceptance and

respect for the richness of diversity (tolerance) and full access to cognitive achievements (information) and on reassessing old beliefs by choosing change for the better (pedagogical communication).

In our research, teachers express the view that there is room in the curriculum to introduce intercultural content, and most of all in the social sciences and humanities classes. Physical education is not seen as a subject in which the interculturism-related learning content could be applied, while our research presents data that confirm the opposite, that in fact, physical education is a subject that is suitable for the development of social relations and that school sports can be a training ground for interpersonal relationships where participants can develop respect for the strengths and weaknesses of others (Pühse & Gerber, 2005; Derri et al., 2014). In this way, students can experience a sense of belonging to different social groups and develop a positive attitude towards them, which will contribute to improving the overall atmosphere in learning. In addition to creating a good socio-emotional climate and a suitable environment for undisturbed relationships among participants in the learning process (tolerance in communication), to incorporate and innovate intercultural in school, a new and different approach to intercultural learning content is needed in order to incorporate and innovate intercultural in schools, starting with their selection, teaching strategy, and their realization. Teacher is the one who has an important role in this process, and he/she should align his/her role with these new challenges and redefine it and adapt it to these new circumstances. The results of our research show the good-will and interest of teachers to introduce intercultural programs in the classroom.

Our paper presents the current situation regarding the representation of intercultural content in schools, and the competence of teachers to implement it in multicultural environments, as well as some of the strategies for its introduction, especially in physical education lessons.

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## **ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЕ И РОЛЬ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОГО КОНТЕНТА ОБУЧЕНИИ В МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ СРЕДЕ С АКЦЕНТОМ НА ФИЗИЧЕСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЕ: ОТНОШЕНИЕ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ**

**Резюме:** Мультикультурализм один из ключевых проблем образования этой эпохи. Большое внимание уделяется повышению осведомленности людей о важности включения культурного контента в учебные планы и признанию важности культурного, расового, этнического, языкового и другого разнообразия во всех аспектах образования. Физическая культура означает разностороннее удовлетворение элементарных потребности человека в движении, она является частью культурных ценностей, которые основаны на двигательной активности, которая служит для развития и подтверждения личности. Физическая культура, кроме формирования тела и формирования духа, очень важна для развития толерантности, честной игры, обучения уважению своего противника на соревнованиях и, следовательно, изучения его культуры. С учетом того, что в Сербии существует много многокультурных районов, представление межкультурного контента терпимости и признания разнообразия в обучении и воспитании детей имеет большое значение. Работа сконцентрирована на том, чтобы подчеркнуть важность межкультурного содержания в обучении и возможности увеличения их присутствия, особенно в преподавании физической культуры, которое учителя из исследуемых областей находят мало присутствующим. В этой работе будет дополнительно проанализирована роль межкультурного контента в образовании и воспитании по мнению учителей, с акцентом на преподавание физического воспитания, а в контексте преподавания предметов, которые иначе представлены в школах.

**Ключевые слова:** физическая культура, культура, мультикультурализм, межкультурность.