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# TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL TO REDUCE PREJUDICE AND EMPOWERING MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL

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## Abstract

*As cross-cultural pedagogics we define the total of educational interventions and enacted actions that aim at the creation of social conscience and social dexterities of interaction, reciprocal recognition and collaboration between students of various cultural groups, projecting the national particularities as part of the history of humans and of science, so that stereotypes, unfairness, racism, intolerance and biases that prevent the smooth living together of persons, are blunted.*

*Various studies have indicated that technology can instil interesting approaches in, and form guidelines for students and teachers as well as promote critical thought and social justice via means of cross-cultural pedagogic.*

**Key words:** Cross-cultural pedagogic, multicultural education, software, technology, stereotypes.

## CROSS-CULTURAL PEDAGOGIC

The significance of pedagogic is an important subject in the case of cross-cultural communication. We know that the evolution of humanity and society does not occur monotonously and uniformly but occurs within a big variety of social and cultural conflicts.

As “cross-culturalism” we define the total of the theoretical, alternative proposals and proceedings for the harmonious living together, the parallel coexistence and the essential communication of people in a frame of “cultural exchanges” and “cultural enrichment” via the reciprocal tolerance, comprehension and respect.

As cross-cultural pedagogic we define the total of educational interventions and enacted actions that aim at the creation of social conscience and social dexterities of interaction, reciprocal recognition and collaboration

between students of various cultural groups, projecting the national particularities as part of the history of humans and of science, so that stereotypes, unfairness, racism, intolerance and biases that prevent the smooth living together of persons, are blunted.

Education is one of the most sensitive and corruptible mechanisms, since the cultural frame is transmitted through the process of teaching and learning “via interaction”(Tsiplitaris, 1998). For this reason, it is necessary to present via education the cultural offer of all populations of world, to promote collaboration and respect as the corner stone of “mutual understanding” and “mutual appreciation”, parallel to the development of critical thinking (Trilianos, 1997)

Moreover, according to Segall et.al.(1996) “the attitudes towards out-groups are acquired with the socialization and the cultural subordination in the first years of a person’s life and it appears that they remain constant and relatively “unaffected by later individual experiences” and this is also the most important reason why education and more specifically cross-cultural pedagogic are considered to be perhaps the most important legislated government owned intervention at the inequality and the racism.

The basic principles that should condition the cross-cultural pedagogic, as these are fixed by H.Hessinger are the following:  
Education for “empathy”

Education for solidarity

Education for cross-cultural respect

Education adverse to the nationalistic way of thought

Education for the promotion of peace

## CROSS-CULTURAL PEDAGOGIC MEET TECHNOLOGY

Various studies have indicated that technology can instil interesting approaches in, and form guidelines for students and teachers as well as promote critical thought and social justice via means of cross-cultural pedagogic (Chisholm, 1995).

Educational technology is characterized by the possibility of changing the learning process into an active process via the mobilisation of the student - user and his/her entanglement with the instructive material.

Educational technology as a cognitive tool urges the students to be involved in the resolution of social problems, facilitating them to think alternative solutions to problems, as well as the individual parameters that are related with the initial problem, while selecting the most suitable solution.

Following the same line of thought, cross-cultural pedagogic should be "Learner Centered" so that active learning and the growth of creative critical thought are promoted.

An essential precondition for the achievement of this aim to a greater degree is the use of technology through innovative ideas and practices and not its incorporation in the traditional way of teaching.

When technology is used as a supervisory or informative means and not as a multi-purpose cognitive tool, it works "functionally" through an over simplistic relationship in which students are exhausted at the point of searching for information and no actual training is being achieved.

Technology, therefore, can not be used as a distinct cognitive object in the already overburdened analytical program, as was precisely the case of the introduction of computers in the secondary education, but it should be incorporated in all the classes, cognitive fields and school activities.

Respectively, cross-cultural pedagogic should not be coloured in folklore undertones (learning certain extra information concerning other populations in geography or in history classes) nor should it be inserted as a separate object in the already full analytic program but as an internal process according to which we accept the culture and the particular cultural characteristics of "others" as equally appreciable to "ours" and which develops throughout the duration of the training process. (Dragona).

More analytically, cross-cultural education with the use of technology is capable to blunt racial, training and social differences between the students, and this is because it offers and proposes concrete tools that encourage collaboration, mutual understanding, common effort towards an aim and communication and is capable to involve students in cultural creations.

Such type of tools are: the use of hypertexts and hypermedia, multimedia authoring tools, the use of the internet, of DC ROMs, of Web Quests, and of email services.

Hypermedia and hypertexts promote the multiple exploration and the approach of many and alternative directions (for example, the hypertexts in a historical fact ensure the possibility of multiple approaches to this historical fact and of multiple opinions that accompany it, abolishing the unvaried approach to knowledge. The use Cd-ROMs provides the possibility to students to explore the historical facts in a multi-sensory environment).

Using multimedia authoring tools, the students become authors and writers of their own historical version and they can express and explore how the historical facts are inter-connected.

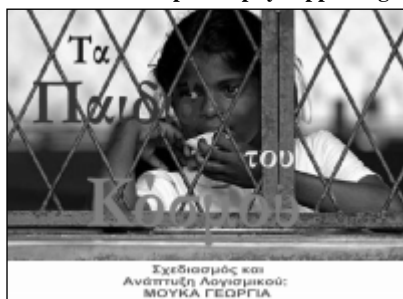
Multimedia tools are dynamic and creative and communication tools. Multimedia authoring tools have the possibility of offering simulations to the students and thus to ensure a cross-cultural teaching.

WebQuests are informative activities that ensure the provision of information to students -users through the web.

The Web provides the possibility of learning via sound, video and text. By extending these concrete possibilities, we create communities of discussion, forums for e-learning (online learning) and e - groups. All these can change drastically cross-cultural pedagogic in education.

### «CHILDREN OF THE WORLD»

A cross-cultural software - the philosophy supporting the software



The philosophy behind this software is derived from the very model which disputes the fable of homogeneity of school population, by importing the social element as a point of inequality and discrimination in the school order. According to the particular model, diversity is innate to schools. The school classrooms are non-homogeneous groups that are constituted by children as well as by teachers with different backgrounds.

Therefore, difference is inherent to schools because of the social inequality, which the school system accepts and repeats and not because of the coexistence of foreigners or gypsies in the classroom. No group in no school classroom is homogeneous even if it is constituted by 100% children of Greek origin and citizenship, Christians orthodox, with two parents etc. This homogeneity is an illusion; it does not exist. The difference is there, but before our schools were flooded by immigrants, gypsies, different colour people or people of different religion, we did not name it as such, we had no way of witnessing it existed. (Androutsou).

The monolingual and uni-cultural school today ceases to exist as a sovereign institution of homogenisation, provided that reality proves that it is judged insufficient not only for the indigenous school population but also for the other populations which it entertains.

For this the reason, the focal point is not only the integration and incorporation of alien school populations in the school classrooms and the folklore type acceptance of their culture, but also the cross-cultural training that will characterize our interventions (as teachers) with all the students independent of colour, culture and religion, sensitising them in specific verbal expressions and non-verbal behaviours.

### The software specifically deals with the units:

STEREOTYPES, GENERALISATIONS, LABELS, BIASES, OPINIONS, IMPRESSIONS, FACTS and

- it aspires to indicate how generalisations function and the though-labels which create stereotyped verbal expressions and biased behaviours,
- to achieve the prevention and the confrontation of biased phenomena
- to reduce negative stereotypes
- to contribute in the creation of climate of equality and justice in the classroom
- to decrease every type of discrimination, whether this concerns discriminations of sex, discriminations of race, discriminations of religion, discriminations between good and bad student, corpulent and slim etc

According to the basic tenants of the Anti-Bias Curriculum (Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force, 1989), awareness of stereotypes and biases consists the most basic condition for the creative juxtaposition of children with the different types differences.

Stereotypes and biases, which constitute part of social knowledge that is acquired by children during their socialization, often develop into negative attitudes and behaviours.

Stereotype Awareness does not only mean discovery of a deficit in our knowledge for the "other", but mainly sensitization and critical juxtaposition with the perception that the children become receptors of messages that connect specific attributes, such as the colour of skin, ethnic origin, sex etc., with social power, social privileges or social scorn. These are processes that characterize the "culture of sovereignty".

According to the Anti-Bias Curriculum (Gkovaris), in order for the weakening of stereotypes and biases to be achieved, each child should be improved in:

- (a) the construction of self-awareness, self appreciation,
- (b) the empathetic interaction with persons emanating from different cultural environments,
- (c) the critical thought in regard to the bias and the faculty to conceive the significance of bias from the position of the "other"

The children in the software are involved in creative activities in the frame of which they have the occasion to manufacture joint moral principles of action and coexistence and to revise or respectively to strengthen specific attitudes and perceptions.



"YOU SEE, HE SAID, THEY ARE THE OTHERS AND THEY CANNOT BE SUCH WITHOUT YOU AND YOU CANNOT BE WITHOUT THEM, YOU SEE, HE SAID, THEY ARE THE OTHERS AND THERE IS GREAT NEED FOR YOU TO FACE THEM." (ODYSSEAS ELYTIS)

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