and develops communication skills of children in the context of normal social networking, even if by other means than speech. The aim is to empower children with a functional communication mean and the system AAC is only one way to achieve the goal.

It should be permanent considered that language and communication are by nature fundamental aspects of social life, so they must be permanently extended the ways of communication using AAC system to help integrate the most of children with special communication needs. And here we are referring both to the development of the techniques we listed above and the inclusion of language issues, cognitive and social aspects of communication in specific programs. In addition, easier access to communication for people with special needs requires a whole series of circumstances that facilitate communication, which we could create both with the technology and with professionals and the family help.

The adjustments the educational system and society need to make to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities should be part of a national strategy that would help find the most appropriate methods and techniques to achieve social inclusion of the people with disabilities, so they could benefit from active participation in social life. And is very important to do that because there are so many examples of nonverbal people with multiple disabilities who succeed to live independently.

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The pedagogy of diversity – a framework for transformative learning

Lecturer Ph.D. **MihaelaVoinea***,
Transilvania University of Brașov

ABSTRACT

The article is focused on the role of pedagogy of diversity as an essential condition for transformative learning. The theoretical premises of this research are to be found in the studies and theories about constructivist learning, transformative learning and human development. Transformative learning is more than learning,it is a real opportunity to develop social competences. Social competences can be developed in the social context through cooperation with "the other", which is different.For developing social competences only theoretical knowledgeis not enough: certain behaviours, in different social contexts, which promote tolerance, empathy and human diversityare necessary. A new school culture, for all educations actors: a transformative learning culture is necessary.

KEYWORDS: *pedagogy of diversity, transformative learning, social competences.*

1. Introduction

In our contemporary postmodern world the social competences are important to cope with the reality and the dynamic of labour market. Social competences, emotional intelligence, networking and cooperation, communication and the ability to adapt have become indispensable. In this context, the important questions are: Where do students learn how to adapt to a dynamic world? How do they learn? Are schools the only place for social learning? What kind of teachers can develop social competences, if they think "analogically" and students think "digitally" [1]?

Schools are almost the same in the world. It is not difficult to see a building and you know it is a school which has desks and chairs, labs and schedules etc. A lot of proofs "talk" about the school history: the students and teachers' photos, students and teachers' results, students' pictures, poems or diplomas.

School as an organization has not changed very much, but students have.

Young people today, corresponding to the description of "Homo zappiens", with the specific requirements of the world in which they were born and live, consider school "just one of the focal points of life", much more important for them being the relationships with friends, part-time jobs and going out at the week-end" [1.p.11].

A solution for this situation is the pedagogy of diversity and the transformative learning.

2. Pedagogy of diversity as a framework for transformative learning

As A.Nedelcu[2] shows, the term "pedagogy of cultural diversity" means generically an accumulationof response reactions andstrategies for managing pluralityin theeducational space. The pedagogy of diversity is not a new topic, but today this pedagogy is an answer for how can teachers make school more attractive for students.

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* Corresponding author. Tel.:
E-mail address: mihaela.voinea@unitbv.ro

The teachers must accept, understand and promote human diversity: diversity of values: social values (democracy, tolerance, justice, etc.) and individual values (independence, individualism, hedonism, etc.), diversity of learning styles, diversity of needs, etc.

For this goaltobecome a reality, the pedagogy of diversity must be actually felt in school life, from the curriculum, which should includeelementsfrom differentcultures,toteaching, learning and assessment which should be personalized, respectingstudents' style andpace oflearning,fromprogrammesfocused on the student to socially oriented programmes.

Given thestudents' and parents' increasing disinterest in school, teachers' demotivation toadoptinstructional strategiesandteaching stylesthat lead tochange, we support the opportunity of promoting the pedagogy of diversityfor the following reasons:

• the need tomake schoolmore attractive tostudents.This isreallya requirement ofpost-modernpedagogy, which, according to the constructivist principleofaffective-cognitiveunity, promotes a positive attitudetowards learning.

•the need to put school closer to the reality ofeverydaylifebylearning through "authentic tasks", through problem solving, projects, role playing, etc.

• the needto develop thesocialskillsso necessaryin adynamic, globalized world. The socialskillscan be developedby usinginteractive groupmethodsand throughcooperative learning.

• designingandimplementinginstructional strategiesbased on real life experiencesthat studentshavelivedin different contexts.[2]

The pedagogy of diversity became a condition for transformative learning, which has usually been defined as transformations of meaning perspectives, frames of reference, and habits of mind [3]. This learning is not only in agreement with the principles of the constructivist pedagogy, but aims the person entirely, with its lifelong learning, in different contexts. This learning is capable of producing transformations in individuals' minds because it fully involves the individual in learning and invites to introspection, reflection and reconstruction.

 Transformative learning is more than learning, it is a real opportunity to develop social competences. The socio-emotional development is a key factor for students to succeed in life. „Social and emotional development involves the acquisition of a set of skills. Key skills among them are the ability to:
• identify and understand one's own feelings,
• accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others,
• manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner,
• regulate one's own behaviour,
• develop empathy for others, and
• establish and sustain relationships." [4]

A lot of studies [5,6,7,8,9] show that students with social competences are more able to: express their ideas and feelings, display empathy towards others, manage their positive or negative feelings, feel self-confident, etc.

All these social competences can be developed in the social context through cooperation with *"the other", which is different..* Social competences need time: time for interaction with different students or teachers, time for social exercises and time for reflection. Social competences need different social contexts: at home, at school, in community,etc. Social competences involve transformative learning and the opportunity to make significant things: "Students acquire a sense of significance from doing significant things, from being active participants in their own education" [10,p.158].

In otherwords, the social competences are not developed in to authoritarian environment where the teacher is dominant and uses "classic" methods. For developing social competences only theoretical knowledgeis not enough: behaviours which promote tolerance, empathy and human diversity are necessary.

Teachers cannot promote something in students that they themselves do not possess. Interestingly, teachers who score at the higher levels of Kohlberg's framework do tend to implement a more democratic classroom organization and give students more opportunities to make decision, to help children become creative, self-directed, and responsible [11].

It is necessary to create a transformative learning culture, which is open to change and human diversity.

3. The role a pedagogy of diversity for develop social competence through transformative learning- a pedagogical research

The main purpose of this research was to demonstrate the role of transformative learning in developing social competences.

*Methods: A*questionnaire regarding students' attitudes on human diversity and a focus-group, as well as an analysis of the activity products (reflexive journals) were used.

Research hypothesis: the more diversity experiences students have, the more transforming learning effects occur, resulting in critical thinking, spirit of cooperation, tolerance. A number of 1oo participants - third year students at "Transilvania" University of Brasov. The students were selected taking into consideration the diversity experiences they had had. The selection criterion was the number of intercultural experiences (minimum one during the last year) and their duration (at least a month), working together with colleagues with special needs, working together with colleagues from another country or who are from another religion.

4. Findings and Results

Both the quantitative and the qualitative analysis of the results have shown that diversity experiences involve transformative learning.The formative effects are felt primarily on the socio-emotional level. The most frequently formative effects are shown in the table below:

Formative effects of transformative learning	Frequency
Empathy	37%
Tolerance (accept to human diversity)	23%
Communication skills development	15%
Awareness about human diversity	12%
Other (sense of life, cognitive effects, motivation, self-efficacy)	13%

Table 1. The formative effects of transformative learning

Conclusions

Firstly, this paper is an argument for giving students and teachers the opportunity to participate in their own classroom or school for transforming themselves and their schooling into caring and learning communities. The framework for the transformation is the pedagogy of diversity.

Secondly, a practical conclusion of this paper is that the teachers must promote a new school culture, which is based on the pedagogy of diversity which involves cooperation between different students and teachers in different social contexts, through projects between students from

different levels/schools, or students with different learning styles, team-teaching (teachers from different schools/countries) and open the learning experiences towards the community.

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