

Interculturality and Multilingualism in Upper-Secondary Schools: An analysis of opportunities and obstacles in organisational and practical activities with newly arrived migrant students

Author 1: Kesak, Hennie (Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Pedagogy and Learning, Linnaeus University, Sweden)

Author 2: Basic, Goran (Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Pedagogy and Learning, Linnaeus University, Sweden)

Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to achieve a new level of knowledge of interculturality and multilingualism in conjunction with practical and organisational activities involving newly arrived migrant students in upper-secondary education. The analysis revolves around the following three research questions: (1) How do head teachers, teachers and other professionals working in upper-secondary schools describe interculturality and multilingualism in conjunction with practical and organisational activities involving newly arrived migrant students? (2) How do newly arrived migrant students describe interculturality and multilingualism in conjunction with practical activities in upper-secondary schools? (3) How do those involved describe newly arrived migrant students' identity formation and reformation during teaching and learning activities in upper-secondary schools, and the significance of such processes to social integration? The empirical material used in the study consists of qualitative interviews, field notes and documents related to upper-secondary education obtained from a number of Swedish municipalities. In addition to newly arrived migrant students, the study's informants are representatives of various professions working in upper-secondary education. Thirty interviews have been conducted with professionals working with newly arrived migrant students, as well as interviews with 10 newly arrived students attending different upper-secondary schools in Sweden. Analysis of the collected empirical data shows that the ethnic identities of both professionals and students are constructed and reconstructed during teaching and learning activities in upper-secondary schools. During these activities, an ethnified position of "us" and "them" is produced and reproduced between actors in the context of upper-secondary education. These positions are analysed in the present study as both an obstacle ("us" and "them" in the relationship between various ethnic categories of student and teacher, or as ethnified monitoring and social control in the school context) and an opportunity (a common ethnified "we" in the relationship between teacher and student).

Keywords

Intercultural perspective, ethnomethodology, trust, intercultural education, intercultural teaching, intercultural learning, ethnocentric pedagogy, conflict, social order, space, inclusive educational spaces, social-pedagogical acceptance, dynamics of education spaces, culture.