Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Modeling Teachers' Professional Learning to Advance Plurilingualism

12

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Abstract

Heritage languages bring forward an intriguing challenge in the cosmopolitanization era as diversity is defined on the basis of interconnectivity. Heritage languages are not an ethnospecific issue alone confined in traditional binaries (mainstream vs. minority status). They are intangible aspects of cultural heritage and an important component of plurilingualism. Modern citizens communicate in plurilingual settings and develop a wide range of language repertoires over their lifespan in their effort to sustain personal/professional growth and inclusive participation in local/global democratic processes. Only plurilingual and intercultural competent citizens have the ability to fully participate in public discourse and interact with "others" in all aspects of their interconnected lives. In this context, a culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes the active role teachers and students must undertake to construct their learning and acquire intercultural competence acting as "agents of change." Remodeling teachers' intercultural training emerges as an urgency due to widespread nationalization, ethnocentricity, and radicalization of modern world. Culturally responsive teachers avoid "methodological nationalism" as well as reflect on and adapt their teaching philosophy using learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as a valuable resource. Culturally responsive pedagogy paves the way to a more reflective professional practice presupposing teachers' strong intercultural awareness, competence, and responsiveness. Finally, culturally responsive instructional design reaffirms equitable pedagogy through collaborative teaching praxis, responsive feedback, epistemological framing, and scaffolded learning. Heritage languages

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teaching can be contextualized in a mainstream and culturally responsive pedagogy framework.

Contents

Introduction: Cosmopolitanization and Heritage Languages

The discussion of heritage languages is an intriguing challenge due to existing cosmopolitanization from within (Beck 2009). Diversity is not only plurality, but a matter of fluidity, border erosion, and worldwide interconnectivity. People are imperatively and coercively connected as new forces interlink markets, states, religions, cultures, and life-worlds of common people. Important transformations occur in our daily routines and identities, since global problems affect them. Cosmopolitanization occurs from inside with the constant presence of the *excluded/alien others* and the rise of new demands for legitimation and integration. Natives (*familiar others*) and *the alien* (*exotic*) *others* unavoidably and involuntary mix all over the world, resulting a wave of re-nationalization and radicalization.

In addition, societies and individuals confront new global risks, which create imperatives and possibilities for a new global civility and coordinated actions. Interlinked networks of different actors go beyond the boundaries of nation-state, in a conflicting and yet unifying way. Territorial and temporal characteristics of these networks are constantly redefined creating new *intermediate* (*third*) spaces of belonging and action (Soja 1996). At the same time, the mix between the *familiar* and *alien others* contributes to the emergence of reflexivity and global awareness, which re-determine identity. Identity can no longer be shaped by the opposition to *others* and the negative confrontational dichotomy of "we" and "them." Interculturality reconstructs the sites of human contact as spaces of inclusiveness, dynamic convergence, and collaborative/intercultural learning. In these contact zones, people and communities develop multifaceted forms of identities and personal expression generating intercultural capital (Pöllman 2013). A significant component of this capital is the respect and transmission of intangible cultural

heritage manifestations (traditional, contemporary, and living) from one generation to the next. These manifestations include nonmaterial cultural aspects transmitted such as oral traditions, rituals, languages, sociocultural practices, and the wealth of knowledge and skills to produce artifacts. Valuing intangible cultural heritage of different communities encourages reciprocity and mutual respect for cultural expressions of the *other*. It also contributes to the intercultural dialogue, inclusiveness, and social cohesion encouraging a sense of identity, continuity, and responsibility as people realize that may share similar expressions to those practiced by *others*. This is an intellectual act of humans to secure a sense of continuity with previous generations, reinforce cultural identity, take ownership of their living communities, and harness cultural diversity for future sustainability.

Heritage Languages is a vital component of transmitting the intangible cultural heritage of humanity mainly through the oral tradition and expression (UNESCO 2003). However, living/intangible heritage is constantly recreated in *intermediate* spaces of communication and action. This creates a new context in which heritage languages operate. Language and cultural experiences expand through formal and informal learning (in schools, travel, work, direct experience), whereas people build up a dynamic communicative competence comprised of their home, national languages, and languages of *others*. This dynamic change means that individuals may acquire in different levels new languages and lose old ones depending on their needs. These languages might include national/minority languages, mother tongues, first/second or heritage languages, foreign and regional languages, etc. Transnational polity such as the European Union has highlighted the importance of enabling individuals to communicate using the full range of their linguistic repertoire in a globalized world. The Council of Europe has adopted the term *plurilingualism*, to describe the full linguistic repertoires many individuals use in their lifetime for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction (Council of Europe 2001, p. 168). Linguistic competence is fundamental prerequisite for growth, mobility, and democratic citizenship. Similarly, individual plurilingualism is regarded as crucial to participation in democratic, economic, and social processes and in defining the sense of national and transnational belonging (Council of Europe 2001). In civic pluralistic societies, democratic processes no longer take place in confined spaces of national language communities, but in multilingual and culturally diverse settings at supranational and/or (sub)national levels. Consequently, linguistic homogenization or the imposition of a *lingua franca* is heavily biased and restrictive. This is because it hinders the fundamental human right and need of individual expression/identity and civic participation as modern people interrelate and interact in multilingual and global settings. To this end, both the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf) and the *European Language Portfolio* (http://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio) have been developed to harness the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe as a valuable common resource. A major thread here is to convert diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding. Europe recognizes and validates plurilingual repertoires and levels of communicative language competence

(linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) considering people as significant social actors able to communicate within various domains.

Thus, heritage languages cannot be seen only as an ethnospecific issue but as important component in the project of plurilingualism, which contributes to the development of a complex civic identity (Lo Bianco 2004). Plurilingual competence increases individual participation in local/global democratic processes as well as it offers greater understanding of the plurilingual repertoires of other citizens and a respect for language rights. From an intercultural pedagogy point of view, a comprehensive policy on languages can be justified on the basis of human intellect in transmitting intangible cultural heritage; human/language rights and respect for plurilingualism; personal/professional/economic growth; democratic social inclusion and cohesion as well as identity through harnessing cultural and linguistic diversity; and finally, civic participation (democratic citizenship). These elements offer a legitimation for languages enhancing intercultural communication, collective action, reciprocity, and individual responsibility.

In European official documents, the core principle of plurilingualism is connected to interculturality comprising an essential element of intercultural education. The Council of Europe calls for the need to infuse intercultural dialogue, intercultural awareness, and plurilingual competence at all levels of education. Similarly researchers note that it is crucial to acknowledge global learners' multiple sociocultural identities and their full range of *material*, *corporeal*, and *symbolic* differences (Kalantzis and Cope 2012). The meaningful engagement of all students with learning and with the world it surrounds them goes through an equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive and transformative approach. Here the role of the teacher education becomes critical to forge a new kind of intercultural understanding. Educators, as knowledge professionals, increasingly address sociocultural and linguistic challenges. Their ability to be aware of these challenges and assess their impact on students' achievements, mobility, and equity is crucial. Teachers are widely expected to act as *agents of change* securing successful inclusion of diversity.

In this context, teacher intercultural education requires systematic reform to promote language and cultural learning. From a cosmopolitan perspective, an epistemological shift is required. For instance, the tendency to analyze languages within the framework of the nation-state boundaries fails to acknowledge the changing social reality and transnational linkages, structures, or identities. This, in turn, restricts intercultural training by the so-called methodological nationalism (Beck 2000) or methodological ethnocentricity in which nation-states are perceived as universal and most important "containers" on which social activity could be interpreted. The dichotomy of inside (*we*) and outside (*others*) is inherent in methodological nationalism, which considers languages as an exotic exception to a standard national one. Intercultural professional learning models should go beyond methodological nationalism to capture the cosmopolitanized context in which languages operate. Methodological shift could mean the renewal of intercultural/diversity pedagogy and its epistemology though the removal of "ethnic lenses" on the basis of valuing individual diversity, considering a nonterritorial/geographical understanding of space and being self-reflexive about practices and power of agency.

Thus, a comprehensive pedagogical framework would train *culturally responsive* teachers who (a) are aware of sociocultural transformation and culturalization affecting their students (including knowledge of students' cultural capital and the factual information about cultural particularities); (b) hold a strong theoretical knowledge for an inclusive and culturally responsive curriculum and demonstrate instructional design skills and differentiated practice; and (c) act as reflective practitioners of their own professional learning being exposed to diverse concepts, methods, and tools (Gay 2000).

This chapter analyzes the theoretical and practical dimensions of the so-called Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as an attempt to reframe intercultural professional learning and validate student lifeworlds as a learning asset. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy coincides with other terms such as *culturally responsive* or *relevant teaching* or *diversity pedagogy* to define a new approach away from assimilation and/or integrationist logic. Culturally responsive pedagogy seeks individual and collective empowerment as it prepares learners for a local/global diverse reality.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Researchers (Gay 2000, 2010; Ladson-Billings 2009; Villegas and Lucas 2002) used the term *cultural responsive pedagogy* to describe teaching practices involving reciprocity, respect, and a deep understanding of differences. Cultural responsive pedagogy is a journey towards equity and inclusivity, which validates and affirms students' cultural capital in their everyday learning. Integrating diverse student lifeworlds and their cultural/linguistic uniqueness into learning is considered as an important resource/capital for effective learning. Detailed description of family cultural capital such as family background and structure, home languages, parental education level, interpersonal relationship styles, as well as approaches to discipline, time and space, religion, food, health and hygiene, history, traditions, and holidays, offer intangible cultural resources for learning (Perso 2012, p. 48).

Moreover, CRP follows the constructivist and inclusive tradition and it is learner-centered with a balanced agency in teacher/student relation. It aims at culturally reflexive, trustful, and caring school/class environment recognizing that all students learn differently due to their *material*, *corporeal*, or *symbolic* conditions (Kalantzis and Cope 2012). In terms of teaching, it applies situated, interactive, and collaborative learning as well as evidence-based practices, which empower learners and build on their prior experiences and needs. Emphasis is given on metacognitive inquiry and high order skills. Explicit scaffolded pedagogical design and assessment offers diverse and multilingual pathways of learning. Knowledge and learning rituals are expressed in different cultural contexts and shared in heterogeneous learning communities through self-reflectivity (Perso 2012, pp. 45–46).

Research data support that CRP affects student performance mainly through (a) balanced agency between teachers and students based on collaborative relationship and peer learning, (b) a global integrated approach to language skills across the

curriculum, (c) situated learning and validating student lifeworlds, (d) engaging students in challenging, authentic and real-world learning, and (e) emphasizing dialogue, empathy, and reflection over didactic approaches (Perso 2012, p. 59). Furthermore, CRP is oriented to maintain high expectations for all students, whereas student lifeworlds are utilized as a prime learning resource to promote high academic performance, (inter)cultural competence, and critical cultural consciousness (Gay 2002; Ladson-Billings 1995; Richards et al. 2007).

Finally, culturally responsive pedagogy could be better understood through its *institutional*, *personal*, and *instructional* dimensions. All three dimensions are crucial in establishing an inclusive school culture, and they are strongly correlated to high student achievements and well-being (Gay 2002; Ladson-Billings 2001). More specifically, the *institutional* dimension describes educational policies and organizational values. A culturally responsive schooling privileges the cultural/linguistic diversity and student lifeworlds as essential starting points and a valuable resource for instructional and curriculum design. Also, schools act as systemic mediators, which move away from traditional ethnocentric pedagogy and connect mainstream setting with home cultures and cultural/linguistic diversity of students. Thus, schools are transformed into intermediate spaces of reciprocal cultural contact where all students become culturally competent in each other's cultural mindset and language use. Affirming culturally specific attitudes would enhance all students to appropriately use and transfer cultural and linguistic codes in mainstream or other contexts. One example of this is making a meaningful use of code-switching many bilingual students perform during their school routines. In addition, the integration of heritage culture/language into curriculum as something that is not of little value or importance may counteract subtractive bilingualism. Both mainstream and heritage languages are taught in a *multimodal* and *kinaesthetic* way (Kalantzis and Cope 2012) creating alternative learning pathways, critical thinking, and openness.

Culturally Responsive Instruction

Instructional dimension refers to culturally responsive classroom practices, which focus on both high learning expectations and academic rigor as well as scaffolded learning activities harnessing student's lived experiences as a learning asset. Literature supports that students of diverse sociocultural backgrounds perform better in languages when teachers have high academic expectations for them. Also when teaching is authentic and relevant to students' cultural and linguistic prior knowledge, then it is beneficial for all students enabling them to see themselves as the main actors in their learning journey (Kalantzis and Cope 2012).

Culturally responsive practices cover six themes: instructional engagement; culture, language, and racial identity; multicultural awareness; high expectations; critical thinking; and social justice (Aceves and Orosco 2014). Lee et al. (2007)

list seven *Common Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Practices,* which refer to teachers' ability to:

1. Create a caring, respectful classroom climate valuing students' cultures;
2. Built between academic learning and students' prior cultural and language knowledge;
3. Make instruction meaningful and relevant to their students' lives (culture, language, and learning styles);
4. Fully integrate into the curriculum local knowledge, language, and culture
5. Hold high academic expectations for all students;
6. Create a more collaborative and challenging learning environment away from traditional teaching practices (memorization and lecturing); and
7. Build trust and partnerships with families, especially marginalized ones. (Lee et al. 2007, cited in Perso 2012, p. 66).

Overall, Aceves and Orosco (2014, pp. 13–16) highlighted four evidence-based culturally responsive teaching practices such as collaborative teaching, responsive feedback, modeling, and instructional scaffolding.

More specifically:

(i) **Collaborative teaching**
Research indicates that direct and explicit collaborative learning improves student literacy, engagement, and motivation. Collaborative teaching includes a wide range of instructional methods to enhance problem solving, peer, reciprocal, and differentiated learning. It enables both teachers and learners to engage in a collective learning sharing knowledge outcomes. This requires individual responsibility, accountability and positive interdependence, self-directed learning, and strong interpersonal skills (Aceves and Orosco 2014).

(ii) **Responsive feedback**
Ongoing, individualized, culturally relevant, and *recursive feedback* (Kalantzis and Cope 2012) increases students' learning, motivation, self-esteem, and metacognitive thinking. Culturally responsive feedback occurs when teachers provide immediate, critical, and ongoing feedback in well-designed activities. Informal and formal assessment activities capitalize on students' linguistic and cultural diverse knowledge perspectives. Culturally responsive assessment practices involve measures and procedures, which validate students' unique perception of learning (students' own lifeworlds/insights) and correct the imbalance in student achievements created by official norms and extrinsic approaches (reward and punishment through grades and class rank). Instructional biases in choosing assessment procedures contribute to students' underachievement and their placement in special reinforcement programs. Research also shows that responsive feedback had a positive impact on English language learners and underachievers (Fuchs and Vaughn 2012). Overall, students'

intrinsic motivation could be enhanced *through* recursive feedback, co-produced learning, and respect of cultural differences replacing the metaphor of extrinsic reinforcement.

(iii) ***Instructional modeling***

Instructional modeling involves explicit documentation and framing of learning repertoires (learning focus and outcomes, content, learning activities, etc.). Teachers' instructional design skills and the production of new knowledge/content are essential in instructional modeling. Constructivism, Multiple Intelligences Theory, Multiliteracies, and Learning by Design coincide with CRP approach as they are student-centered promoting intrinsic motivation and effective learning. These approaches provide an optimal framing offering opportunities for students to engage in decision-making about their learning content and techniques using their ideas, background knowledge, values, communication styles, and preferences in a self-regulated mode. This framing exemplifies and values student cultural, linguistic, and lived experiences and connects them with curriculum in a meaningful and effective way. For instance, acknowledging multilingual skills and using home language/s within ordinary class routine familiarizes students with their plurilingual profile and competence. Perso (2012) has also suggested that using community local stories, which are meaningful to students' everyday life, as well as teaching new vocabulary every day and placing visual aides/pictures around the classroom and school is appropriate technique for language teaching. In this way, English second language learners increased their writing, reading, and oral productivity feeling that their informal/prior/heritage learning is officially validated. Finally, child-centered approaches foster student dialogue and conversation and have positive effects on English reading skills.

(iv) ***Instructional scaffolding***

Instructional scaffolding is another essential element of a culturally responsive approach, and it is particularly effective for second/heritage language learners and underachievers (Goldenberg 2013) enhancing their self-esteem.

Teachers' ability for pedagogical scaffolding when design learning repertoires could bridge what students already known (prior knowledge) and are familiar with to the intended learning (new learning). Scaffolding may include an epistemic framework of mixing different multimodal activities (experiential, conceptual, analytical, and application) (Kalantzis and Cope 2012) to enhance deeper understanding and language learning. This is also possible through comparing language codes, analyzing code-shifting, and using heritage language modes. Moreover, teachers' ability to act as co-designers of materials is critical. Teachers and students are producers of knowledge and not just consumers of nationally selected materials, which are usually ethnocentric. Researchers have argued that diversity should be present in materials to reflect students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Banks 2004; Gay 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings 2009). Cross thematic and culturally relevant learning topics include all students and familiarize them with school routine. Authentic and multimodal materials support *kinaesthetic* learning (Kalantzis and Cope 2012)

and offer a valuable resource to knowledge production including diverse mass media, Internet, literary sources, ethnic interpretations of events, and personal narratives and experiences (Gay 2013). In addition, problem solving, as Aceves and Orosco (2014) note, is an important teaching approach. Higher order thinking skills are deployed and alternative solutions towards meaningful change are devised when students engage in solving real-world problems based on diverse cultural linguistic and authentic materials. Finally, instructional scaffolding impacts teachers' genuine interest in their students' learning styles and outcomes (McIntyre and Hulan 2013). Knowing students diverse learning styles (ways of knowing and doing) is important and can be ascertained through rigorous exploration of students' home cultures and expectations. This applies to all students as some value direct instruction or oral presentation and others may prefer a more self-directed learning (Perso 2012, p. 57).

Culturally Responsive and Competent Teachers

The CRP *personal* dimension refers to the mindset, attributes, and professional qualities of educators, namely their intercultural competence and responsiveness. Teachers (consciously or unconsciously) bring their own racial/cultural constructions and discriminative behaviors to the profession through omission or incorrect assumptions. Prejudices and misperceptions are widespread in mainstream pluralistic societies. They often grounded in fear of differences (e.g., language, race, ethnic background, cultural values, religion, color, or world views). Furthermore, racist behaviors might include harassment, ridicule, putting people down, spreading untruths and rumors, exploitation, racial vilification, and even assault, but also harmful assumptions, paternalism, prejudice, low expectations, stereotypes, violence, and biased curriculum materials (Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist 2003).

Culturally inclusive and competent teachers perceive culture as fundamental component of teaching-learning process being aware of cultural diversity in their classrooms. Multicultural awareness and critical reflection as well as self-awareness are equally important teacher qualities to counteract stereotypes and prejudices, challenge own beliefs, and engage in effective communication in a multicultural school community (Banks 2004). These qualities construct the so-called teachers' *diversity consciousness* (Bucher 2010) and their ability to maintain multiple reflection. On one hand, they self-reflect on the challenges of cosmopolitanization and plurilingualism and recognize how multiple social identities are shaped and contradict each other. On the other, they acknowledge their own personal cultural and instructional biases (beliefs, discriminatory positions, teaching practices) and the way these might benefit some students while disadvantaging others.

Sheets (2009, p. 12) has demonstrated that *Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors* (TPB) can have a detrimental impact on *Student Cultural Displays* (SCD). More specifically, *Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors* describe teachers' philosophy, actions, and attitudes in the classroom concerning eight dimensions: *Diversity, Identity,*

Social Interaction, Culturally Safe Classroom Context, Language, Culturally Inclusive, Content Instruction, and *Assessment.* All eight dimensions are interconnected with each other with both teachers and students being able to demonstrate more than one at the same time. However, teachers' preferable philosophy on these dimensions may hinder or enhance *Student Cultural Displays*: *Consciousness of Difference, Ethnic Identity Development, Interpersonal Relationships, Self-Regulated Learning, Language Learning, Knowledge Acquisition, Reasoning Skills*, and *Self-Evaluation*. This means that teachers who consistently recognize student cultural patterns are more likely to encourage students to display their cultural uniqueness, in the form of academic skills, sociocultural attitudes and knowledge, and the opposite. In other words, when teachers are culturally competent and responsive, they develop diversity consciousness to their students, promote ethnic identity development, provide opportunities for social interactions, create a safe classroom context, encourage language learning, select culturally inclusive resources, adapt specific instructional strategies, and use multiple ways to access competency (Sheets 2009, p. 13). In this context, students use their own cultural and linguistic repertoires and competences as devises to construct new knowledge and eventually to be able to operate in new sociocultural or multilingual settings and achieve better academic results. On the contrary, teachers who are unaware of or indifferent to students' cultural backgrounds promote dualistic reasoning, support assimilation to mainstream culture, control classroom social events, maintain a stressful climate, advance heritage language loss and silence, choose generic instructional content, employ universal instructional methods, and adopt limiting assessment criteria.

Finally, culturally responsive educators consider themselves as agents of social and pedagogical change aiming to nurture the same attitude to their students and help them to access and value their cultural capital as well as to confront inequalities (Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings 2009). Culturally responsive educators are expected to be aware of and counteract inequalities through their social-justice oriented work even at the microlevel of their classroom (Villegas and Lucas 2002). Teachers undertake responsibility of making schools more equitable and inclusive places fostering students' high achievements and well-being paying particular attention to underachievers (Gay 2004; Ladson-Billings 2001).

Teachers' Intercultural Competence and Responsiveness

Literature review on teachers' intercultural preparedness to accommodate diversified classrooms reveals a gradual shift from cultural awareness to cultural responsiveness. During the 1970s, much attention was placed on understanding cultural difference (similarities and differences between the various groups) rather than *diversity.* The rise of multiculturalism and ethno-specific services (in health and social security system, education, media, etc.) during the 1980s gave prominence to *cultural sensitivity*, namely knowing one's culture. Attention was given to the fact that "diversity exists between and within cultural groups" (Perso 2012, p. 17).

The dominant rhetoric was about maintaining a more positive attitude and being sensitive towards the culturally *other* without negative judgments. After the mid-1980s, a demand for (*inter*)*cultural competence* emerged especially in the United States, Canada, and also Australia to ensure access, accountability, and equity in the health care and social security system and cater for an increasingly diversified client population. The focus was clearly on particular skills someone has to acquire to actively and appropriately respond to different needs.

There is no clear or commonly accepted definition of cultural competence. Generally defined, *cultural competence* is the ability to interact and communicate effectively with sensitive, empathic, tolerant, reciprocal, and reflexive way with people in intercultural situations and diverse sociopolitical contexts. Researchers agree that cultural competence is a personal capability of someone to act. Bennett (2013) has defined a continuum of stages from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (e.g., denial, defenses, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration) to describe the developmental progression on which people experience differences. However, intercultural competence is not necessarily innate, but a dynamic concept, which develops over time through deep self or collective reflection. Critical preconditions are both the ability to empathize with how people from other cultures develop their worldviews and cultural practices and the deep awareness and reflection of one's own identity, biases, and prejudices. Petty (2010, p. 15) described cultural competence for both educators and students as a "*demonstrated capacity*" that enables them to work effectively in cross-cultural settings. There is a strong emphasis on access and equity as well as high academic achievements for all students. In Petty's terms, culturally competent people demonstrate capacity to "(1) value diversity, (2) engage in self-reflection on one's own cultural reference points, conscious and unconscious assumption, biases, power, and areas of growth, (3) build cross-cultural understanding over time with an ongoing commitment to continual growth, (4) build knowledge and understanding of historical and current systemic inequities and their impact on specific racial and other demographic groups, (5) adapt to the diversity and cultural contexts of the students, families, and communities served, (6) effectively manage the dynamics of difference, (7) support actions which foster equity (not necessarily equality) of opportunity and services" (Petty 2010, p. 1, cited in Perso 2012, p.28). This capacity is evident in all aspects of school life (policy, leadership, and administration; curricular development, instructional practice, and assessment) and involves all school stakeholders and families in decision-making.

On a more personal account, cultural competence has been perceived as a *lifelong* journey of transformation. This journey goes through various stages from "awareness of one's own values, attitudes, biases and beliefs and using one's own culture as a benchmark against which to measure others, to valuing diversity and understanding the dynamics of difference, and hence leading to integrating the knowledge and skills with professional skills to meet the needs of culturally diverse clients" (Perso 2012, p. 19). Other researchers described this journey as a passage from cultural awareness/sensitivity to *cultural responsiveness*. Mason (1993) and Banks (2004)

have suggested a continuum upon one (individual of organization) can reflect and determine the different level of attaining cultural competence. Mason (1993, cited in Perso 2012, p. 19) refers to five stages on the continuum: (a) *Cultural destructiveness* to others' cultures; (b) *Cultural incapacity* to deliver services and accommodate diversified needs something that may not be intentionally racist; (c) *Cultural blindness*, when assuming that all people are the same without differences, which may hinder their social integration; (d) *Cultural pre-competence*, when there is a growing recognition of cultural differences and actions are taken for equitable participation, even though this does not ensure equitable outcomes; and (e) *Cultural competence*, when there is a systematic self-reflection on the way cultural differences are respected and accepted, whereas actions are constantly monitored to ensure equity.

Banks (2004) adopted Masons' three initial stages, but he further elaborated stages d and e to emphasize attainment of cultural competence. He proposed three other stages, namely the *emerging, basic*, and *advanced cultural competence.* In the emerging stage, an individual/organization "recognizes diversity and inequity and attempts some improvements." Basic cultural competence is attained where one "accepts and respects differences [and] recognizes the need for systemic change." Finally, people with advanced cultural competence "hold culture in high esteem" pursuing an "[O]ngoing individual and institutional change to address equity based on informed decision making" (Perso 2012, p. 20). The last stage in Banks's (2004) continuum is regarded as the highest degree of *cultural responsiveness*. In other words, *cultural responsiveness* is the acquired cultural competence integrated and enacted in practice as a delivered outcome and manifested mainly through accessible, equitable, and quality services.

Overall, researchers agree that cultural competence can be demonstrated through three interactive to one another components: *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attitudes/awareness* (Byram 1997; Deardorff 2009). More specifically, knowledge includes cultural self-awareness; culture-specific information about various groups and their inner diversity, history, cultural communication and linguistic patterns, world views, belief systems and values; and sociocultural awareness and grasp of contemporary global realities (Deardorff 2009). Skills include *general* skills (e.g., problem solving – defining the problem and arriving at a solution from multiple cultural perspectives and empathizing with *others'* perspectives) and *containment* skills (e.g., patience, perseverance and skills to observe, listen, analyze, relate, interpret, mediate, and evaluate) (Deardorff 2009; Perso 2012). Attitudes refer to respect *others'* cultures; openness and suspending judgment; curiosity in viewing *others'* differences as learning opportunity and tolerance for ambiguity (Deardorff 2009). Here the emphasis is on critical examination of personal negative cultural assumptions or prejudices and potential ethnocentrism. Teachers' self-awareness/reflection is critical together with humility and willingness to learn, respect and nonjudgmental attitude as well as a clear commitment to social justice. To sum up, at the individual teacher level, cultural competence refers to a wide range of intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes: a self-reflexive stance and critical re-examination of one's cultural assumptions; empathizing and being aware of one's own and *others'* cultural biases;

diminish ethnocentric attitudes; willingness to engage in intermediate contact zones; differentiating teaching and recursive feedback.

Intercultural Training Implications

Culturally responsive and competent teachers use their student's sociolinguistic and cultural background as resource for new learning, maintain high academic aspiration for all students, and hold strong instructional design skills (Gay 2000). However, many teachers worldwide are inadequately prepared to address students' diversity (Cummins 2007) causing a cultural and linguistic alienation between them and their students (Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings 2009). This, in turn, limits educators' ability for effective instructional design and differentiated teaching. Ethnocentric curriculum and materials benefit mainstream students voiding the culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Orosco and O'Connor 2011). Even the antiracist information teachers receive in their educational training serves to reinforce rather than reconstruct, their bias towards race (Haberman and Post 1992). Other studies revealed improved teacher attitudes immediately after training, but no lasting changes to behavior (Sleeter 1993). Thus, superficial multicultural training may increase teacher knowledge, but has little or no effect on attitudes or behavior (Jackson 1994, p. 298).

Most teachers worldwide have not adopted a concrete diversity pedagogy framing to reflect on language and cultural diversity and guide their practice. This means that "most teachers teach the same way they were taught" (Sheets 2009, p. 16). For instance, the Greek teaching workforce appears reluctant to acquire new intercultural leaning as it threatens their ethnocentric and ethno-romantic narratives of identity as well as their sense of security and homogeneity. They prefer to maintain the old dichotomies of addressing *otherness* and through them maintain a traditional/didactic methodology (Dragonas 2008). Greek teachers are in their vast majority native monolingual/monoracial professionals with little international or intercultural experience, who deal with diverse student populations (e.g., Roma and migrant/refugee communities). However, the majority of teachers have no meaningful immersion in community- and language-specific activities, whereas heritage languages are not taught in the Greek school system. Also there is no consistent validation of their intercultural competence.

Moreover, tertiary intercultural courses are optional among preservice teachers, which means that many of them have minimal or no preparation in cultural diversity. In addition, preservice teacher intercultural training is characterized by a mismatch between the theory and cultural reality with student practicums not taking place in culturally and linguistically different settings. Teacher education practicums provide little time for de-briefing and self-reflection on personal experiences. Thus, preservice teachers have no real understanding of how their own sociocultural identities affect students' achievements and reproduce existing prejudice and inequalities. Finally, it is documented that prospective teachers have an

affirming attitude and high expectations towards mainstream students (Villegas and Lucas 2002), but no real understanding of the consequences this brings to nonmainstream students.

Reflection on diversity is important when training teachers as the majority of them cannot see themselves as *agents of change* that may challenge current inequalities (Cochran-Smith 1997). Overall, teacher reflection about diversity is limited at a lowest or middle level. The first refers to e*xclusive reflection* and represents traditional and mainstream perspectives about the *other* including folkloristic practices and celebrating simplistic multiculturalism (Morey and Kilano 1997). Some teachers may perform *inclusive reflection* (middle level) in which diversity is discussed and compared with the dominant norm. However, a challenging prospect for teacher force is to engage in a *transformed reflection,* which re-conceptualizes traditional views of diversity encouraging structural transformation and inclusiveness (highest level). In Greece, for example, several thousand teachers and tertiary students have been involved in peer learning projects of instructional design and differentiated teaching (Learning by Design implementation – https://cgscholar.com/bookstore/collections/365). From more than 535 teaching plans, only one quarter (25%) was focused on diversity. One fifth of the designs (19%) elaborated the idea of diversity as a human/children's right. However, the majority (40%) of teaching plans emphasized intangible aspects of cultural heritage and simplistic multiculturalism. Knowing about *other* cultures and exploring different customs, religions, food, celebrations, and clothing was central in instructional design efforts. These folkloristic aspects of culture provided an opportunity for scaffolded, field-based, and action research learning through an authentic approach to local cultural life. However, some plans made references to learning about Eskimo, native Americans, Asians, and Africans unveiling an *emerging* reflection and a superficial and stereotypical stance. Other themes, such as acceptance of the *other*, inclusiveness, racism, cultural differences, migration, and special needs, represented 37% of the designs and revealed a more *inclusive reflection*. Finally, references to language diversity were very minimal (4%). One explanation to this is the total exclusion of heritage languages in the Greek schooling system and their marginalized status.

The above implications highlight the importance of redesigning teachers' professional learning to include culturally responsive training/pedagogical framework for preservice and in-service educators. *Learning by Design* (Kalantzis and Cope 2012; Kalantzis et al. 2010) provides such a framework as it meets the standards of cultural responsive teachers described by the Australian *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (Perso 2012, p. 62). Research findings in the Greek context (Arvanitis and Vitsilaki 2015) revealed that the main Learning by Design affordances for 45 primary and secondary teachers were working in reflexive learning teams in real class contexts ensuring relevance with everyday practices and student actual learning, rethinking (professional) learning space with the optimal use of digital media, and documenting differentiated pedagogical choices to encounter diversity. Similarly Arvanitis and Katsaros (2016) found that the Learning by Design application had *catalytic*, *outcome*, *process*, *dialogic*, and *democratic* validity for primary school teachers in Piraeus, Greece. In addition,

instructional design artifacts (teaching repertoires) proved highly effective for intercultural education. In particular, reflexive and scaffolded learning enhanced second language learners' understanding of cultural differences and the notion of temporality (Arvanitis and Sakellariou 2014). Moreover, Learning by Design has proved very effective in promoting creative writing in multicultural classrooms, enhancing primary students' reflection on racial prejudices and reinforcing learning motivation (Tsoraglou 2016). Finally, research findings support that Learning by Design's scaffolded and multimodal framing cultivates students' ability to analyze social reality using cartoons depicting diversity and forming arguments and critical discourse (Paximadaki 2016).

Conclusion and Future Directions

Recent examples of terrorist attacks, negative perceptions towards migrants/refugees, xenophobia, and wide spread radicalization alert educational systems to look closely to their response towards cultural and linguistic diversity. Cultures play a critical role in learning as well as social and cognitive development of children (Sheets 2009), whereas heritage languages are important intangible cultural "assets" enabling people to interact effectively across global/local multilingual settings. They are also prerequisites for democratic citizenship and well-being in modern pluralistic societies. Only plurilingual and intercultural citizens have the ability to fully participate in public discourse and interact with *others* in all aspects of their interconnected lives.

Promoting plurilingual and intercultural competence is highly stressed by European language policies and rhetoric as a necessity to recognize, include, and validate diversity in modern pluralistic societies. However, the teaching and learning of languages is still very much based on a monolingual/ethnocentric paradigm. Most of the times, methodological nationalism and traditional binaries exclude heritage languages from mainstream schooling as the main focus is to integrate the *alien other* within the receiving culture. This is counterproductive as plurilingualism and heritage languages are deeply embedded in individual lifeworlds and intensified by migration and refugee movements, which continue to flow re-constructing the national psyche. A plurilingual and inclusive approach to language teaching would help societies to forge new *collective awareness* of diverse interpretations and conceptualizations as well as the challenges embedded in a cosmopolitanized world. Intercultural pedagogy needs to address this pressing issue as newly arrived refugee students will find a place in mainstream schools in Europe as its future citizens. Their family languages can be seen as personally contextualized and meaningful tools for both learning other languages and demonstrating intermediation skills.

In this context, teachers and students must undertake an active and collaborative role in constructing learning and advocating new moral values for an equitable education. This *balance of agency* counteracts students' disengagement or low achievement and enables teachers to assume greater responsibility towards an

equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy. Changing teachers' professional training and practice to reflect more inclusive approaches to diversity requires an integrated epistemological framework of learning and doing. Culturally responsive pedagogy offers this framework as it is centered on flexible and adaptive scaffolded curricular activities/repertoires fostering intercultural learning and action. Content-related strategic discussion assists students to collectively understand concepts, derive the main ideas, solve real-world problems, and relate what they are learning to their own cultural backgrounds. At the same time, culturally responsive pedagogy enables educators to acquire strong intercultural competences and be more reflexive on their teaching philosophy. Culturally responsive teachers are able to make purposeful choices to differentiate their teaching and scaffold learning. They are doing so by recruiting activities from progressive, traditional, critical, and transformative pedagogy. Teachers' professional learning strengthens as they collaboratively design and explicitly document (*retrospectively* and *prospectively*) their teaching repertoires harnessing students' cultural and linguistic diversity.

In conclusion, an important mission for intercultural pedagogy is to re-visit its epistemic principles for an equitable, inclusive, and effective education for all. This is crucial due to growing anxieties sprang from globalization, technology, new divisions, fears about identity/security and new ethnocentrisms. Intercultural education becomes more important in a cosmopolitanized context, as it is expected to address and provide solutions for a cohesive sociality and personal fulfillment and self-realization. Only culturally responsive *knowledge professionals* equipped with sound pedagogical knowledge and *intercultural responsiveness* can validate diversity as a productive advantage and effectively counteract inequality and prejudice. Forming strong professional ethics can only be sustained through vibrant communities of practice, which advocate a new role for teachers and the necessity for modern pluralistic societies to investment more on intangible cultural aspects, such as heritage languages. Local applications of responsive professional intercultural paradigms connect global research with local circumstances and validate normative expectations of an inclusive society. *Learning by Design* application in Greece serves the purposes of a culturally responsive pedagogy thought an extensive trial of differentiated teaching plans. Finally, emerging new intermediate spaces for professional and academic dialogue on interculturality shape significant preconditions for transforming education such as *collective wisdom* and *diversity consciousness* (http://intercultural.upatras.gr/en/).

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