Nathalie Muller Mirza

Civic Education and Intercultural Issues in Switzerland: Psychosocial Dimensions of an Education to "Otherness"

In contemporary democratic societies that deal with cultural and linguistic diversity, education faces new challenges such as how to promote a shared knowledge and competence framework about "citizenship," how to prepare the young generation to enter a complex world, and how to help immigrant students to integrate into the school system. Some of the European recommendations focus on the importance of promoting "intercultural education". However, so far little is known about concrete practices and their outcomes. This paper aims at documenting and providing elements of reflections about the difficulties and contradictions faced by both teachers and students involved in pedagogical intercultural activities in Switzerland. From the results of a qualitative research based on a sociocultural perspective, identity and institutional issues of addressing "otherness" in school are discussed. It stresses the importance of a frame in order to allow elaboration and transformation of personal and emotional experiences into thinking and reflexive processes.

Keywords:
intercultural education, citizenship education, identity, learning, qualitative research

1. Citizenship Education and (Inter)Cultural Issues

Democracy is affected by new challenges. One of these is to provide new definitions to the notion of citizenship in complex societies dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity. The question of social cohesion is addressed: how might members of a multicultural society develop shared representations, goals and values? How might they address differences and contradictory points of view in a constructive way? How might they face differences? School is traditionally expected to provide a frame for the integration of diversity. In the European context, each country develops its own way of promoting civic knowledge and the "ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems" (as it is stipulated in the "key competences for lifelong learning" published by the European Community, 2007). In this perspective, education is expected to reach a double objective: not only to help immigrant students to better understand the school and social system of the host country, but also to promote in all students – whatever their cultural, religious, and national backgrounds – social and cognitive instruments that allow them to enter a complex multicultural society.

However, this attempt of promoting what is called an "intercultural education" faces questions and tensions that might have consequences on the way teachers and students conceive it. One of these questions refers to the contents – the objects that are meant to be taught – that are not well defined in official documents and are particularly heterogeneous: they belong to social sciences (the reasons of international migration, North-South economic and social exchanges, etc.), but they also relate to personal and social experiences (migration experiences in the family, interpersonal relationships, stereotypes and discrimination processes, etc.), are close to know-how, and to ethical and moral values. As they are based on personal and social knowledge, they are tightly related to identity issues for both teachers and students (Grossen, Muller Mirza 2010). The question is thus: are these objects teachable in school? Do they not belong instead to the family sphere? How is it possible – if so – to develop a process of "decontextualisation and recontextualisation" of the personal experiences, which is the main characteristic of reflexive thinking in school? Moreover, is there not a risk to maintain and even construct "cultural" problems that do not exist in the classroom? Another paradox can be highlighted. On one hand one observes political initiatives which seek to promote a "critical citizen" ready to participate to the society in which she lives, to demonstrate autonomy, to be able to cooperate and resolve conflicts amicably in the frame of the legislation (Audigier 2006); on the other hand, the school institution provides what can be called a "school form" (la forme scolaire, in French), involving a separation between the "student" and the "child", a strong "disciplinarisation", directive and knowledge-focused pedagogical methods, the subordination to rules and authority that are not objects of negotiation (Vincent 2008). An important gap between policy statements and the school practices appears that some authors describe as an "organizing hypocrisy" (Rus 2008). In this context, it seems important to provide information related to actual teaching practices and the challenges faced by both teachers and students when intercultural education lessons are set up in classrooms.

The overall aim of the study to be reported in this paper is therefore to provide elements of discussion about the way teachers and students give meanings to this education and the psychosocial processes that are at stake. It is claimed here that teaching and learning "intercultural" topics is certainly not usual and mundane at all. What do the teachers choose as objects of knowledge? How do they design their les-

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sons? How do the students make sense of these objects? After an introduction related to definitions of intercultural education and its historical framework, I[1] present the main results of an empirical study set up in 6 classrooms in Switzerland. Adopting a psychosocial perspective, I examine both teachers' and students' perspectives on intercultural education issues.

2. Intercultural Education: A Shift of Paradigm?

In September 2007, the Arizona State Board of Education adopted the 4-hour block Structured English Immersion [SEI] model, requiring all school districts to implement the model from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Consequently, it meant that young immigrants or students who were not fluent in English had to spend 4 hours of English lessons per day, and these lessons focused mainly on English language. The proclaimed goal was to enable students to become fluent or proficient in one year. However, as a research carried out by the University of Arizona showed (Gandera, Orfield 2011; Rios-Aguillar, Gonzalez-Canche, Moll 2010), this instructional program reached results that were different from those expected. It seems that the students experienced a kind of segregation and that the separation from English speaking peers was not only harmful to their learning (the majority of them were not meeting grade level standards) but also to their self-esteem as they were stereotyped as slow learners. This anecdote is interesting as it sheds light on the paradoxical effect of education focusing on minorities or immigrant populations. The pedagogy chosen is a good example of what Michael Cole calls the "make the diversity go away" perspective: "For many, the 'English-only' 'throw them in the water' perspective is based on a straightforward assimilationist model of education designed to create a common, American culture, generally one that is Anglo-Saxon in origin, and Christian" (Cole 1998, 293).

This perspective on minority education is also in force in Europe. It originated in the period just after the 1950s when many European countries faced a high immigration flow. Teachers and politicians focused their attention on overcoming linguistic problems in school: instructional measures for learning the host countries' languages were set up. An emphasis was also placed on the opportunity to "preserve" students' languages and cultures of origin so that a return to their native country could be possible. Over time, however, this concept has been criticized "as the risks of a 'compensatory' and 'assimilatory' pedagogy became increasingly visible" (Portera 2008, 482). No consideration was given to the relationship between the immigrant students and the other students, nor to the connections between first and second language learning or to the role of the teaching of a second language in enabling or disabling access to the school curriculum (Perregaux, Ogay, Leanza, Dasen 2001). The double-edged sword of this approach became perceptible: "This led to the deepening of the racism of the dominant and majority populations who defined 'the others' by their 'ethnicity'" (Gundera, Portera 2008, 464). The students were labeled as being disadvantaged and it constructed issues of difference in terms of "deficit."

Since the 90s (for making short!), new terms, definitions and approaches have developed (Abdallah-Preitcelle 2004; César, Kumpulainen 2009; De Haan, Elbers 2009; Kumpulainen, Renshaw 2007). In Europe, the perspective of an "intercultural approach" grew up and tried to take into account the main criticisms that were addressed to the original form of this approach (mainly an epistemological and theoretical weakness, and a risk of reinforcing the stereotypes towards the immigrant populations). The Council of Europe defined intercultural education in terms of reciprocity based on the idea that interactions contribute to the development of co-operation and solidarity rather than to relations of domination, conflict, rejection, and exclusion (Rey 2006). In this perspective, a main concern is to regard children of immigrants no longer as a "problem" or "risk" but as "resources." The education of minorities is undertaken with consideration of the dynamic character of individuals' cultures and their identities. Moreover, this education is not merely addressed to immigrant or "foreigners" students but to all the children in an "inclusive" perspective (Unesco 2006). Indeed, if intercultural education is seen as empowering immigrant students and facilitating their integration processes in the school system, it is also expected to provide all students with communicative skills and intellectual tools in order to make them better able to integrate into a multicultural and multi-linguistic society. Another main objective is to elaborate a "space of sociability," that means the development of dialogue and argumentation competencies leading to the acquisition of shared rules and practices.

The shift is important. Some authors call it a change of paradigm (Allemann-Ghionda 2002). However, this shift also opens new questions and debates. If the issue is no longer only the integration of immigrants into the social and school systems, how do topics like cultures, otherness and migration become "objects of knowledge" in the frame of the classrooms? Such topics involve identity issues ("who I am in relation with the others") that are socially and emotionally loaded. How are these topics introduced into the classrooms and understood by both teachers and students?

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1 The study described in this paper is a collective work as it involved junior researchers and colleagues (see "Acknowledgments") but I report on the results alone here.

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3. Observing Actual Practices in Intercultural Education

3.1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Switzerland

Before presenting the general scope of the study, it might be helpful to understand the specificities of the national context in which the research questions have been raised. Concerning (inter)cultural issues, Switzerland certainly provides interesting features, but also some contradictory dimensions. Switzerland is often seen as the paradigm of a multi-linguistic and multiethnic country since it is composed of "Cantons" which are respectively German, French, Italian and/or Romance speaking (German, French and Italian are official languages at the national level within the Federal administration of the Swiss Confederation). However, each region tends to manage the linguistic issue within the borders of its territory: Swiss Cantons are in this perspective relatively mono-linguistic. Furthermore, related to diversity, Switzerland has a high level of foreign residents compared to other European countries. At the end of 2010, the number of foreign residents amounted to 1.7 million persons, corresponding to 22.4% of the total permanent resident population. The majority of them originate in EU/EFTA member states.[2] This rate can be explained by two main factors: by the fact that the calculation includes persons born in Switzerland to foreign-national parents (native-born foreigners — also known as the second generation — made up 22.3 percent of the foreign-resident population at the end of 2007), and also since Switzerland has a low naturalization rate, with just 2.9 percent of foreigners naturalizing in 2007.[3] However, in this country known for its neutrality and its active role in diplomatic peace processes at the international level, the media and political rhetoric over immigration has been heated in recent years. The right-wing Swiss People's Party (UDC – Union Démocratique du Centre) takes a significant place among the four parties represented in the Federal Council.

At the level of compulsory education, cultural and linguistic heterogeneity is significant. More than 85% of the classrooms are heterogeneous in terms of students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, the school system remains mono-linguistic and mono-cultural: the privileged instrument used to respond to this reality is to set up compensatory settings which do not take into account knowledge and contributions from foreign students (Lanfranchi, Perregaux, Thommen 2000). In the last few years, however, teachers have become more sensitive to an "intercultural approach" during their initial training, but in very diverse ways as assessed by a national report published in 2007 (Sieber, Bishof 2007).

3.2 Aims and Conceptual Frame of the Study

The study reported here aimed at describing and analyzing teaching-learning situations related to intercultural education issues. It mainly focused on the following questions: what are the meanings the teachers give to this education? What do they identify as "objects to be taught" when they teach "intercultural education"? What difficulties do they face? How do the students understand what they are supposed to learn? What misunderstandings are liable to emerge from these situations? The main focus of the study was on the meaning-making processes of both teachers and students in their way of interacting and defining "cultural" issues. It therefore adopted a socio-cultural framework in psychology (Bruner 1990; Cole 1996; Hanano, Wertsch 2001; Wertsch 1991) which assumes that "it is by analyzing what people do in culturally organized activity, people-acting through mediational means in a context, that one comes to understand the process of being human" (Cole 1998, 292).

3.3 Research Design

From this theoretical framework, we designed a qualitative research and focused on the following dimensions: on discourses and actual practices teachers developed in their attempt to "do" intercultural education, and on interactions between teachers, students and their use of pedagogical materials. The study had a three-step structure: we first conducted an interview with the teacher before the pedagogical activity itself in order to get a picture about his/her pedagogical intentions, representations and experiences about intercultural issues, and how s/he would concretely design the activity; the second step was to record the whole activity (which could last from 1 lesson of 45 minutes to 5 lessons). In the third step, we conducted a second interview with the teacher and focused on his/her feelings about what happened during the activity and his/her satisfaction or surprises about the way the students reacted and worked. We also had discussions with some of the students.

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2   Among the most represented nationalities in 2010 were Italians (16.3%) and Germans (14.9%), followed by Portuguese (12.0%) and Serbs (6.9%), according to official government statistics) (http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/en/index/themen/01/02/blank/key/bevoelkerungsstand/02.html, retrieved November 20, 2011).

3   http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=731, retrieved November 20, 2011.

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The study was carried out in six classrooms of primary and secondary schools in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Four teachers participated on a volunteer basis to the research during the years 2009 and 2010. They were asked to use one of the pedagogical materials that are at their disposal in a center for Global Education specialized in intercultural education and sustainable development (FED[4])

such as books, pictures and movies. All the materials concern the relationship with "otherness" and/or migration. In total, there were 105 students (39 in primary school and 66 in secondary school) aged from 4 to 16. We videotaped the lessons and audio-recorded the interviews. The following table provides some information about the contexts of the observations:

Table 1. General Information about the Contexts of the Observations

Teacher	Type and name of the document chosen by the teacher	School level	Number of the students and nationalities in the classroom
Karoline*	Child's book ("This place is mine" [Icic'est chez moi])**	Primary school (4–6 y.o.)	18 students 5 nationalities (other than Swiss)
Charles	Set of pictures ("Humanity on the move" [L'Humanité en mouvement])5	Primary school (8–10 y.o.)	9 students all are first or second generation of immigration students
Charles	Short film ("Border" [Frontière]) 5	Primary school (8–10 y.o.)	12 students 8 nationalities (other than Swiss)
Tick	Set of pictures ("Humanity on the move" [L'Humanité en mouvement])	Secondary school (10–12 y.o.)	20 students 5 nationalities (other than Swiss)
Emy	Book of novels ("A camel in the snow" [Un chameaudans la neige])5	Secondary school (12–13 y.o.)	22 students 8 nationalities (other than Swiss)
Emy	Book of novels ("A camel in the snow" [Un chameaudans la neige])	Secondary school (15–16 y.o.)	24 students 15 nationalities (other than Swiss)

*All the names have been modified.
**The documents:
· Ici c'est chez moi [This place is mine], 2007, J. Ruillier. Paris : Autrement
· L'humanité en mouvement [Humanity on the move]. 2005. Berne: Alliance Sud
· Frontière [Border] is a short movie taking part in a DVD called "Du respect pas du racisme" [Respect not racism!], 2004. Berne: Alliance Sud.
· Le chameau dans la neige [A camel in the snow]. 2007. Lausanne: Ed. d'en bas.

In the Canton de Vaud in which the research was carried out the proportion of foreign students (all nationalities combined) exceeds 30%. When we asked the students about their origins, many responded by mentioning two nationalities. In some classrooms, for instance Charles's, the proportion of second or first generation immigration students reaches 80%.

4. The Teachers' Point of View
In the following section, I present the perspective of the teachers on intercultural education: what are their professional backgrounds? What are the origins of

their interest for intercultural issues? How did they design lessons?

4.1 Teachers' Perception about (Inter)Cultural Issues
The four teachers who participated to the study all have specific professional and personal backgrounds that diversely orientate their interests in intercultural education.

Karoline is a primary teacher who has more than 25 years experience teaching. She is interested in intercultural education for many years and has collaborated with the center for Global Education (FED) on the Rights of the Child. She tries to take advantage of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of her students as much as possible, but she is also aware of the risk as she thinks that they also can be used as instruments for discrimination.

Charles has taught for seven years in "development classes" which are for students who need an

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4 FED is a Swiss Foundation called Fondation Education et Developpement, which promotes "Global Education" in schools. It aims at supporting an education "that enables children to become responsible citizens in a globalized world. Therefore [it] provides teaching materials, teacher-training, background information, and advice about Global Education to teachers from elementary school to high-school level" (www.globaleducation.ch).

individualized program. In these classrooms, learning objectives are similar to those provided by the curriculum of regular classes but tailored to each student's abilities. Charles' pedagogical concern is to facilitate a mutual respect among his students and to promote conditions for "leaving together." He claims that students' differences might be used as a cross-fertilization tool within the group.

Tick is a secondary school teacher and teaches geography. He is also professor in a University of teacher education. The issues of "otherness" and the perception of other groups are often raised in his lessons, for instance when he teaches about the topic of tourism.

Emy has taught French in a secondary school for more than 20 years. Multiculturality is an important dimension of his school and classroom reality, but he is not used to setting up specific pedagogical activities about intercultural communication.

When we asked the teachers about their understanding of "cultural issues" at school, the majority of them responded that they did not face any problem of that kind in their own class (racism or intergroup violence) even though the majority of their students do not have a Swiss passport. The teachers considered cultural heterogeneity as a reality. The only problem that was perceived concerned linguistic difficulties (some students did not speak French at home and their parents sometimes faced difficulties to understand what is expected by the school). In their opinion, this might explain the lower level of some students in terms of school achievement. All teachers said they had a personal concern about this domain. They generally showed a positive attitude towards diversity considered as a resource rather than as a problem.

Concerning the concrete "intercultural" actions the teachers are used to setting up, we can note three different ways of dealing with these issues (these perspectives were sometimes combined within a single person):

1. A reluctance to teach these topics and to organize specific activities as they fear creating a problem that does not exist as such and which might contribute to creating and maintaining stereotypes (Emy, for instance, wondered if the "problem" did not come more from the adults rather than the children themselves);
2. Cultural diversity occasionally becomes a topic of discussion when the teachers take the opportunity, for example the holy days in different countries or religions or the nationalities and languages of the students;
3. An integrated perspective in which intercultural dimensions are part of education as a whole: teaching focuses on communication skills, for instance, in order to make the students able to interact with each other and understand various points of view. For instance, Charles said: "integrating intercultural

topics like migration and diversity in school is very important as it should allow us to shed light on contributions from each member of the group and stimulate the exchanges of points of view."

The teachers thus showed not only their interest for cultural dimensions but also their awareness of some of the "traps" of these topics: how to take into account important issues like "cultural diversity" without constructing them in terms of "problems"? They also demonstrated a willingness to focus attention towards the "interactional" aspects of this education. How did they make this awareness concrete in the pedagogical activities?

4.2 The Pedagogical Activities

It is interesting to observe that to some extent all teachers set up activities in which the dimensions of students' emotions and communicative competences were called upon. Here are some examples of the way they designed the lessons and the topics they choose.

Example 1

A teacher, Charles, used a pedagogical material called "Humanity on the move" that consists of pictures which evocates migration and demography issues. In a first step, he invited each of his students to choose one picture among about twenty that were laid on a table and asked them to write down one word they associated with the picture. One after another they had then to tell to the group the reasons why they chose the picture and then the word they wrote. The teacher explicitly tried to allow students to express their "internal state", like in this extract:

Extract 1

The teacher: I asked you the question, you said: "it [the picture] made me think to my cousin", ok, and when you think to your cousin how do you feel ["ça te met dans quel état?"]?

Example 2

With her young students of 4–6 years old, Karoline chose a child's book called "This place is mine" [Icic'est chez moi], telling the story of a boy who draws a circle on the floor all around him: he looks angry when a cloud, a rabbit or a leaf enter his circle. But when another little boy is approaching, sees the line and turns away, he feels sad and finally he invites the newcomer to enter into his "place." This story is meant by the teacher to be an opportunity to discuss borders and their functions. Karoline started the activity by asking her students to experiment "bodily" what a border means: in the gymnastic hall the children had to run around and to enter hoops as faster as they can when music stopped, in order to "be protected from the storm;" she then helped students who did not find their "home" to negotiate a space in

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their mates' hoops. The following activities focused on discussions about the feelings they had when they played with the hoops, and about the feeling of the little boy of the story. In the following extract, Karoline tries to allow her students to explicitly show their feelings when they were not able to enter a hoop:

Extract 2
The teacher: So, you stayed alone out of the hoop? (...) And how was it? Did you feel at ease or not?

Later on, as she read the child's book and showed the drawings in the book, she asked the students' group about the boy's feelings on several occasions:

Extract 3
The teacher: does he look happy?
One child: no
The teacher: how does he look?
The child: angry
The teacher: let's all do the same like him, let's find the same position like him.

Example 3
With his 10–12 years old students, Emy reads a book of novels, The Camel in the snow, written by men and women active in the political and cultural life in Switzerland who describe their own experience of immigration. In this book, the authors explain the reasons why they had to leave their country or region, the feelings they had, and the challenges they faced in the process of integrating in a new world. Some of the stories are funny, others sad. All are about the way immigration affects a person. The novels show not only the process of acculturation but also the resources the authors found to go through the difficulties of this experience. Emy asked the students to read and sum up some of the novels and invited them to interview a teacher who used to work in their school about her own experience when she arrived in Switzerland from Poland a few years ago.

The above examples show that the teachers set up intercultural activities as opportunities to work on "relational issues" where feelings (their expression and their recognition) took a significant place: migration, for instance, became an object of study as a subjective experience with its difficulties, surprises and joys. The students' attention was focused on the characters' point of view to which they might connect their own personal experiences. When the issue of "crossing borders," for example, was discussed with the children it was from the perspective of the various actors of the situation, those who were "inside," the others who stayed "outside" of the borders, and the feelings it generated. Teachers' hypothesis (which was more or less explicit in the interviews) was that making their students able to recognize the others' feelings and allowing them to express their emotions are

all powerful tools that might facilitate (intercultural) communication.

5.   The Students' Point of View
5.1 Meaning-Making Processes
Up to this point the pedagogical representations and intentions of the teachers when they designed intercultural activities were examined. We can guess how unusual these kinds of practices may be for the students who are used to focusing on objects of learning which are well defined through textbooks. In such a context, how do they interpret these activities? How do they enter this specific game? In this section, let us examine the students' meaning-making processes and show some examples from interviews and observations.

When we asked Emy's 24 students about what they think they learned by engaging in the activity about the novels, 17 responded that they learned a lot: "it allows us to better understand people who leave their countries and have to move here;" "it is useful to know these things in order to behave more respectfully towards immigrants;" "we'll be more open minded and kind towards foreigners because it is really hard." The teacher's intention seems to be properly reached: students are able to take into account another point of view and experience. However, we have to be aware that these responses may also be consensual and normative responses, as no other data have been gathered about the possible attitude changes of the children. At the question about how familiar they were with these kinds of topics at school, only 5 among 24 said that intercultural topics have been discussed in school yet. We were also interested in how comfortable the students felt about a discussion about "private" topics in the public space of the classroom. Only 2 students responded they were used to talking about personal topics at school ("to talk about my life, my family, my personal experiences.") A result which is even more appealing: only 7 responded that they liked it. Some of the students said that they prefer learning the names of country's capitals "because it is more useful." And others said they liked the activities, as it was "something different," and they could go out of the classroom or avoid the usual lesson.

5.2 Difficulty to Share a Definition of the Situation
Some observations show another interesting aspect of the students' perspective: the difficulty they felt to understand what exactly was expected from them.

Example 4
During the activity about the borders with the hoops for instance, it seemed to be difficult for the young children to understand that Karoline was trying to let them express "what they felt":

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Extract 4

Karoline: You had to be 5, 6, 7 maybe 8 in the same hoop, and what was difficult?
A child: When, when we are in the hoop a lot

Or later during the same activity:

Extract 5

A child (Jane): I wanted to go inside a red hoop but Mary did not let me in
Karo: so what did it make you feel? ["qu'est-ce que ça t'a fait ?" – a question that usually leads to an answer in terms of emotion, like for example: "I felt sad" or "angry", etc.]
Jane: and there were no room
Karo: so what did it make you feel when there is no room?
Jane: err one has to go in another hoop...

Example 5

In a class with older children, a funny interaction occurred which shows that the school "routine" frames the interpretation and leads the students to provide answers that are not relevant, in the eyes of the teacher at least. Tick, who chose the material "Humanity on the move," decided to initiate his 10-12 year old students to analysis of the pictures. He explained that the photographer has intentions that might explain the choice of the topic, the framing and the structure of the picture: to some extent, the reality is "constructed." He also sought to make his students aware of the feelings an image can produce. At a point of the lesson, he asked a student about what she thought when she looked at a picture showing a group of African children. She responded: "they are cute." At his question about what she meant by "they are cute" she responded by spelling the word, interpreting the question as focused on a grammatical problem.

6. Discussion

In the aftermath of the events of September 11, the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs made a "Declaration on cultural diversity." They claimed the relevance of promoting an "intercultural dialogue" which should straddle all aspects of the society, including education. In this line, the Council of Europe published a White Paper in 2008 that argues: "Intercultural dialogue can only thrive if certain preconditions are met. To advance intercultural dialogue (...), the democratic governance of cultural diversity should be adapted in many aspects; democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened; intercultural competences should be taught and learned; spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened; and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level" (Council of Europe 2008). In Switzerland, like in many European countries, school authorities have introduced "inclusive" intercultural education in the teachers' training and in the curricula in order to prepare the young generation for the challenges of societies becoming more and more multicultural and multi-linguistic and to prevent violence and contribute to social equity. To a certain extent, the teachers who participated with the study echo these concerns by their choice to implement intercultural lessons in their own classrooms.

The research I have presented above aimed at documenting existing pedagogical activities teachers set up with their students. It focused on the psychosocial issues of these "new" topics when they enter classrooms, in particular when otherness becomes an object of study from the point of view of both teachers and students.

Let us discuss some points that highlight what can be called the "tensions" of intercultural education: tensions between, on the one hand, the official discourse - the idealized project of an intercultural education which would promote equality and peace - and on the other, the intercultural education as it is actualized and interpreted by its main actors.

When they design intercultural education lessons, the teachers seem sensitive and aware of the risk of contributing to a "culturalization" of the interpersonal relations and the reinforcement of stereotypes and prejudices. In their eyes, it is as if to speak about them could make them exist. This "paradoxical effect" of intercultural education has also been reported in other studies and addressed in theoretical works (Grossen, Muller Mirza 2010; Ogay, Edelmann 2011). In order to avoid this possible effect, the teachers choose not to teach about "cultures" as if they were pre-existing entities, but merely to address the interactional dimension of culture, i.e., the relationship one might construct toward "the others." This ethical and epistemological perspective has two important practical consequences: teachers set up activities that focus either on the processes of "producing otherness" (for example, the activity about the functions of the borders), of "constructing reality" (for example, the activity about the way a picture re-presents the world), or on the subjective and emotional experience of the students themselves or of other characters (the activities focusing on the expression of emotions felt by the students related to pictures for instance, or about the feeling immigrants might have when they leave their country and move in a new environment).

This shift is interesting and echoes what is meant by an "intercultural approach" from the Council of Europe, for example (Rey 2006). However other questions are raised, and the way some students react to these lessons might lead us to open new reflections.

Students' reluctance towards evocation of personal experiences at school is an interesting aspect to take into consideration. It poses the question of the rela-

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tionship between private and public spheres at school: is school the place in which raising topics that might perhaps belong in the family and the private individual sphere? What could the psychological cost of crossing the borders be? It can be interesting to listen to the students and their own expectations. For example, in another study a girl responded to a researcher and said: "hopefully school exists!" (Rochex, Kherroubi 2004), as if she could find a refuge there where nobody asks her for any explanation about what life she lives out of school, her cultural or national backgrounds. The question raised does not suppose normative or simple answers. Instead, it leads us to pay attention to the way the students experience the relationships between the different contexts, inside and outside school, and the meaning they attribute to a given object of knowledge within these contexts (César, Kumpulainen 2009; Grossen, Zittoun, Ros 2011; Zittoun 2007).

Another issue concerns the relationship between emotions and cognition or consciousness. Following a sociocultural perspective, emotion and cognition are not separated entities (Audigier 2005; Muller Mirza forthcoming), and should be understood as deeply embedded within the "dynamic of human life" (Vygotsky 1987, 333). In his theory of development, Lev Vygotsky claims that, like other psychological functions, emotions develop in an interpersonal and social level first and then move towards an intrapersonal level. He stressed the idea of a process of "socialization of emotions" and wrote: "the knowledge of an emotion changes this emotion and changes it from a passive into an active state. That I think about things outside of myself does not change anything in them, but that I think about emotions, that I place them in other relationships to my intellect and other instances will change much in my psychological life. To say it more simply, our emotions act in a complex system with our concepts" (Vygotski 1987, 125). In this perspective, emotions are dynamic psychological and social processes that are connected to thinking and learning. Vygotsky highlights the reflexive move of the emotion when it becomes an object of attention which affects and changes the "psychological life." This perspective can be related to the notion of "secondarisation," this dialectical process of reconfiguration of everyday experience into a form of conceptualized knowledge that places it within a broader framework and takes it as an object of reflection (Grossen 2009; Jaubert, RebieRebière 2001; Rochex 1995, Valsiner 2002, Zittoun 2007). We can therefore easily understand that engaging the students to express their personal emotions is not enough and that a specific interactive work that leads to secondarisation would be important, but maybe particularly difficult due to the nature of the topics at stake (Muller Mirza, Grossen, Grand 2011). It seems also that the elaboration of a "frame" is important, in which rules, finalities and actors' positions are well defined. In the observations of

intercultural activities, it was fascinating for example to see how a teacher, Charles, introduced the activity about the pictures to his students. He took five minutes at the beginning of the lesson and explained the instructions, the communication rules, the attitudes he expected. He showed a strong awareness of the difficulty of the activity in which the students were invited to express personal experiences and affects: it was important to him that all of them might speak if they wanted, listen to the others and did not make jokes or personal judgments. In such a "thinking space" (Perret-Clermont 2004, 2009), the students had been able to not only share personal narratives and emotions to the group but also construct knowledge that had a collective relevance. This observation sheds light on the importance of mediational resources that allow personal experiences and emotions to be reconfigured in a way that can be elaborated as shared knowledge.

The observations in classrooms show another tension. It is interesting to observe that the students are so familiar with the usual "school form" that they look surprised when teachers' expectations are not oriented toward the body of knowledge of a discipline. The didactic and communicative contracts that usually affect the relationship between teachers and students and define their status and roles might be challenged in the pedagogical settings of intercultural lessons. However, these new objects and the interpersonal reconfiguration that entail might face the traditional school form which stays largely "monological" and discipline-oriented (Chronaki, 2009).

All these points have to be discussed and examined in the light of other observations. Accounting, describing and analyzing teachers' practices (in a close collaboration between teachers and researchers) are necessary in order to think together about the psychosocial and institutional issues of educating for diversity. Providing children with such tools that allow them to create reflexive and dialogical identities are part of the school agenda and this effort has to be supported.

Acknowledgments

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