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## Introduction au numéro thématique "L'éducation à l'interculturalité à l'épreuve de la formation des enseignants"

Véronique Lemoine, Stephanie Lerat, Virginie Trémion, Marie-José Gremmo

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## Introduction

This special issue of *Mélanges CRAPEL* is the fruit of many encounters. The first, several years ago, was that of the four researchers who coordinated this issue. This encounter resulted in the creation of our research group around the project DIPERLANG (*Diversité des personnes et des langues*, Diversity of persons and languages) in 2016. This research project looks at how pre-service teachers at a French Institute of Education (*Institut national supérieur du professorat et de l'éducation*, Inspé) consider intercultural issues and (re)elaborate their theoretical knowledge as well as their practical know-how. In the current context of the heterogeneity of public schools, this is essential in order to become a successful educational professional.

The DIPERLANG project has led us to various scientific and professional events dealing with the theme of Interculturality in education and training, resulting in further encounters. Our hope is that through this special issue, we will be able to continue the discussions which were started at these events with researchers with whom we felt a theoretical proximity<sup>1</sup>. With this special issue, we would like to bring to light a specific point of view on Interculturality, shared internationally, which posits the interrelationship between the theoretical framework of critical interculturality with pertinent and coherent practice in educational contexts. The questions raised in this issue are those of how instructors and teachers manage the tension of interculturality in their courses and how educators can use this theoretical framework in their course design, including promoting critical distance (Marquis, Lenel & Campehoudt, 2018)<sup>2</sup> while distancing themselves from essentializing the Other and Self.

The idea at the origin of this issue is the necessity of intercultural training for (future) teachers. Interculturality is a field where various disciplines of the humanities

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that a wide variety of conceptual frameworks were presented at these events (cf. Lemoine, Lerat, Trémion, Gremmo (2019). *L'interculturalité : de quoi parlent les chercheurs dans les colloques ?* Colloque international UPEC-Lirtes « La société inclusive à l'épreuve de l'interculturel : questions vives, terrains et pratiques » UPEC, Créteil, November 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Marquis, N., Lenel, E., & Campehoudt, L. (2018). *Pratique de la lecture critique en sciences humaines et sociales*. Paris : Dunod.

meet and contacts between people have globally multiplied and have also diversified. The education system, from nursery schools through to higher education, is faced with greater heterogeneity, as well as greater attention being paid to student needs, which leads to the question of diversity in education and that of the tensions and paradoxes the situation implies.

As early as the 90s, the question of the transfer of interculturality research results to classroom practice was raised by Martine Abdallah Pretceille (1999)<sup>3</sup>, a key figure in the development of interculturality theory in France. She observed the relative absence of the notion of interculturality in mainstream education as its reach tended to be limited to the area of migrant education. She also underlined that her proposed clarified theoretical framework could be used to consider interculturality in all educational contexts. Nowadays, intercultural education is no longer seen as only relevant for migrants. Each individual is understood as having multiple and changing identities, which are related both to the Other as well as the Self.

More than twenty years later, in France as in other countries, intercultural content is included in training programs in the field of education. Some courses feature content falling within the critical intercultural perspective which emphasizes the individual in his or her relationship with the other in a specific context, be it a potentially positive or negative interaction. However, an important question remains: how can the notion of interculturality be integrated into educational practices in the classroom as well as in other social contexts? Concretely, what can be done to keep essentialization via reduction or assignation at bay in order to allow individuals to present themselves with their diversity of identities?

The articles in this special issue question the relation between theoretical frameworks and how interculturality is put into action in education. For all the authors, it is time to move beyond a solely theoretical reflection, and to study concrete possibilities, to paraphrase a preoccupation which Verbunt (2005)<sup>4</sup> had already formulated fifteen years ago. The authors root their work in diverse disciplines:

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<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Pretceille, M. (1999). *L'éducation interculturelle*. Paris : PUF.

<sup>4</sup> Verbunt, G. (2005). Les obstacles culturels aux apprentissages. *Études de linguistique appliquée*, 4, 409-420.

linguistics, education, language teaching and learning. The variety of educational contexts represented illustrates the plurality of the points of view and possible interpretations which we have grouped together into three sections.

### **From theory to practice: the necessity of rethinking how Interculturality is put into action in education**

The first part of this issue sheds light on the challenges of Intercultural Education in pre-service teacher training. In order to appreciate the position of Interculturality in teacher training, Azaoui, Auger and Zoïa undertook a survey of instructors at the four Institutes of Education (Inspé) of the South-East of France. In their article, they show that these instructors do have theoretical knowledge concerning interculturality, however, it seems to be limited to questions of diversity. The article also underlies the relative difficulty of putting theoretical knowledge into action in class. For the authors of this first contribution, the instructors are torn between their intentions and the paradox of institutional demands which require that the special needs of each child must be both taken into account and ignored.

Lemoine-Bresson, Lerat and Gremmo take a look at a Critical Intercultural instructional design aimed at pre-service teachers in Lorraine (France). After presenting the Renewed Interculturality theoretical framework, the four founding principles of the project which aims to develop critical and reflexive practice are considered. The authors then describe the instructional design. By underlining how the interaction between practice and research has led to modifications in the planning and the course content over a period of three years, the authors show the interest of the kind of research design such as that of DIPERLANG to articulate Interculturality theory with practical professional situations.

### **Reflexive approaches in pedagogy as a means to renew relationships with the Other**

The second part of this issue deals with reflexivity as an Intercultural training tool through the presentation of two instructional designs. Trémion, in her article, looks at autoscopy as a method to contribute to a transformation of student representations

of culture. Based on the results of a survey of an Intercultural Micro-teaching Experience (IME) carried out on Bachelor of Education students (*licence de sciences de l'éducation*) in Paris, the author shows that developing and understanding of interculturality requires practical experience. Nevertheless, the IME approach must also be supported by theory, essential for the objectification of Interculturality *in situ*.

The Critical Intercultural Journal (CIJ) is presented by Alaoui as a choice tool for Intercultural Education, more specifically, for the othering of individuals. The aim is to highlight a clear disassociation from a weak form interculturality which tends to narrow, reduce and simplify the view of the individual. In order to do this the author considers the relevance of the CIJ from two angles: questioning and change. The articulation of these two principles leads Alaoui to suggest working on the processes of diversification rather than solely on the description of diversity.

### **Intercultural training: Contributions from other educational contexts**

The three articles in the final section illustrate the interest of thinking about Intercultural training in relation to the articulation of social and linguistic dynamics in interaction. In the context of English Language Learners (ELL) in the United States, Black shows that there is a strong link between teacher evaluation of student aptitudes and their perception of students as ELLs. In the case study presented, the analysis shows the influence of the teacher's representation as a social construction, through evaluative discourse and on the development of the student's English Language abilities.

Audet and Mac Andrew, in their article, study the educational inequalities in the paths of students from immigrant families in Quebec based on a meta-analysis. More specifically, the authors show that depending on the profile of the student, the social, systemic and educational dynamics in play are not the same. Through a study of qualitative and quantitative research leading to explanations about the reasons for observed inequalities, the conclusion highlights the interest of combining these two approaches, essential to account for these phenomena. The complex character of identifying explicative factors linked to academic success is underlined.

Sablé shows that the notion of intercultural competence, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) can constrain the teacher to attempting to reconcile a culturalist approach and an intercultural approach. The study carried out on language teachers in Brest (France) concerning their interpretations and their use of a grid of intercultural competences leads the researcher to observe ambiguous results. Whereas some teachers revisit their course content to reflect the insight gleaned from the content of the grid, others seem to have difficulty seizing the notion of interculturality on which it is based. These teachers choose to base their evaluations solely on linguistic criteria. The author emphasizes the importance of supporting users of this type of tool in order to prevent purely comparative and culturalist exploitations.

This collection of articles based on field studies puts the notion of Interculturality into perspective and illustrates the numerous challenges for teaching. This issue of *Mélanges CRAPEL* underlines the importance of redefining the place and role of interculturality in pre-service teacher training; Intercultural course designs are presented and analyzed in several articles, and their limits are also discussed. As the CEFRL is still struggling to define and stabilize the concept of intercultural competence in language learning and teaching, perhaps it is time to renew the questioning concerning the presence of Intercultural training in institutional texts. Schools could imagine learning to live together as an opportunity to reconsider student education. They could encourage developing a better understanding of otherness and the world that surrounds the students. Rather than focusing on objectives linked to the definition of the other, school could be a place to support attempts which aim to deconstruct clichés and to understand the processes leading to these phenomena. It is with this in mind that criticality and reflexivity are presented in several of the articles in this volume. Training future teachers is also training students as future citizens to promote living together today and tomorrow.

We decided to conclude this special issue with a succinct “subjective” bibliography. We asked the authors for contributions, to supplement the bibliographies of their articles, with references that will enable the reader to delve deeper into the reflections presented in this volume.

Coordinating Committee

Véronique Lemoine-Bresson

Stephanie Lerat

Virginie Trémion

Marie-José Gremmo