Preparing Educators and Researchers for Multicultural/Intercultural Education: A Greek Perspective

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1 The Challenges

Immigration is not a recent development in European societies, and the same applies to cultural diversity. Cultural pluralism and immigration are reinforced nowadays by globalization and internationalization; therefore, young people in Europe will be called upon in their adult lives to live in conditions of cultural pluralism, irrespective of population movements caused by immigration. Immigration continues to gain more attention, since it is indeed a growing phenomenon in the European arena: at least 10% of the school population at age 15 within the EU countries was either born abroad or both his/her parents were born in another country. In some countries, such as Ireland, Italy and Spain the percentage of school students born in another country has multiplied three or four times since 2000.

A further crucial challenge for the European continent is currently set by the recent refugee crisis and, at the same time, the education of refugee children constitutes a major global demand. However, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 3.5 million refugee children aged 5 to 17 were not able to attend school in 2016. In particular, about 1.5 million refugees did not go to elementary school, while 2 million adolescents did not attend secondary education (UNHCR, 2017). In other words, this clearly has a dramatic impact on their right to education, which would help them to lead fulfilling and useful lives.

In this context, imperative orientations for the European education systems include key objectives, such as the development of a young generation, which respects human rights and is well-placed to live in open, democratic and pluralistic societies. This issue is of major importance, if the challenges posed by the arrival of a large number of immigrants and refugees, along with the alarming strengthening of nationalism, intolerance and racism in recent years, are taken into consideration. Recognizing this necessity, the European Parliament recently initiated the study “Teaching Common Values in Europe”,

which focuses on the policy and practice of teaching democracy and tolerance in secondary schools of all 28 European Union Member States (Veugelers, De Groot, & Stolk, 2017). In addition, equal access to school is a legitimate act of respecting children and young people's fundamental human right to education. It is the most democratic and fair approach, but also a choice with only positive results for both children and the wider society. Otherwise, there is the danger of widening social differences, which can be transmitted from one generation to the other, exclusion on personal or community level, as well as conflicts among the ethnic groups within the wider society.

1.1 *The Concept 'Multicultural/Intercultural Education'*

The human communication, which takes place when people of different cultural capitals meet, is based on certain conditions, such as the acceptance of being different, tolerance, the ability of identification and empathy with others, the ability of comparison and adoption of "different" cultural elements. However, since it is not always easy to understand multiculturalism, the acquisition and the exercise of certain competences through an education oriented towards intercultural principles appears to be of crucial importance. In this framework, intercultural education is defined as a new conception about education, which requires differentiated practice in educational institutions. This is based on the acceptance that the narrow nationally oriented education is historically outdated and does not correspond to the reality of the 21st century (Dietrich, 1997). In the following, the main aims of intercultural education, as presented in the international bibliography, are discussed further.

According to Helmut Essinger (1991) the main principles of intercultural education are as follows: (a) *Education for empathy*. This is about learning to understand others, to put ourselves in their shoes and to regard their beliefs and problems from their own point of view. If this is to become possible, education should encourage the young to show interest in the "difference" or the problems of the "others", whether they are immigrants living next to us as neighbors or other people who live outside our borders. (b) *Education for solidarity*: this is about the students developing a collective conscience, which exceeds the boundaries of groups, countries and races, on the basis of which all people have the same value and could potentially acquire the same problems. Under these circumstances it is a reasonable expectation to support one another. (c) *Education for intercultural respect*. This respect can be achieved through us "opening up" to foreign cultures and at the same time through inviting others to participate in our own culture. (d) *Education against the nationalistic way of thinking*, which aims at the openness toward other peoples, mutual communication as well as the elimination of national stereotypes and prejudice.

Georg Auernheimer (1995) discusses a range of aspects, which intercultural education emphasizes. According to the first point, intercultural education is seen as *social learning*, whereby a person acquires social competences such as empathy, tolerance, solidarity and the ability to overcome tensions. The second aspect refers to intercultural education as the one that provides a person with the *ability for dialogue between the cultures*. A condition for the latter is the acceptance of cultural difference and the ability to deal with it. The third aspect concerns a general education, which provides *multiperspectivity*. In the case of Greece, this would mean that the knowledge provided in schools does not only refer to the world of the Greeks but also to that of the immigrant students represented in the Greek classrooms (Hodolidou, 2018). This can be applied in all subjects of the curriculum. In this way, it is possible to acknowledge the cultural similarities that unite people. This is desirable and the desideratum, if we are to establish and enforce the spirit of peaceful cooperation and multilevel understanding and interaction. Another aspect suggested by Auernheimer is intercultural education as *citizenship education* and as *antiracist education*. It is not difficult to trace the relation between intercultural and citizenship education. This would mean education against nationalistic way of thinking, and also an education aimed at intercultural respect. This would, for example, include discussion in class of phenomena such as xenophobia and the attacks against the immigrants. These are clearly important elements of civic education. The connection of intercultural and antiracist education is also apparent, since the former aims at the elimination of stereotypes, prejudice and potentially racist attitudes and behavior. The difference between the two is that antiracist education focuses mainly on the institutions and the structures in society, in the sense that the change of the attitudes of people in general and of teachers and students in particular is not enough. It is also important to try and change the educational and social structures, which are not always free of racist elements. Finally, intercultural education is directly connected with *bilingual education*. The latter is very important for the normal development of the identity of students from linguistic minorities. Therefore, it is stressed that the mother tongue/first language of all students should be represented in the educational system, both as the medium of teaching and for teaching the language. The aim is the good acquisition of the second language as well as of the mother tongue (Cummins, 2001). The emphasis on bilingual education as an aim of intercultural education does not only involve immigrant children but also linguistic minorities.

From the above it should be obvious that intercultural education is not only intended for the minority students and their education, perceiving them as an educational problem, but also involves the majority, which means the students

who come from the dominant culture (Dietrich, 1998). Another important issue is that intercultural education refers both to a “state” and an “interstate” level. The former refers to immigrants, repatriates, refugees and to other minorities living within the boundaries of a specific state, whereas the latter involves the cultural communication and interaction of people living in different states. In addition, intercultural education ultimately concerns all schools, even those without a single culturally diverse student in their school population.

From principles, which have been presented above, one can derive certain practices of intercultural education: (a) The main practice consists in the *coeducation* of children with different languages and cultural backgrounds, which means that the children from the dominant culture and the ones from minorities are educated within the same schools. In this way, the marginalizing of minority students, which can happen if the latter are educated in separate schools, can be avoided. (b) *Opening up of the school curricula towards the minority cultures* (Marburger, 1991). The above mentioned coeducation does not make sense or can even lead to cultural assimilation, if the curricula do not include the “view of the other”. The intercultural perspective can be included in all the subjects of the curriculum. Today this happens to a very limited extent. (c) The *removal of prejudice, stereotypes and images of enemies from the curricula and textbooks*. This means showing not only the cultural differences but also the similarities among peoples. This practice also applies very well to the case of the Balkan countries and is supported by the international textbook research, the results of which with regard to the Balkans are especially revealing (Xochellis & Toloudi, 2001). (d) Organization of *common projects* of students of different cultural origin using history, literature, music, etc., which allows the contact between cultures, as well as the realization among students of existent cultural similarities. This practice is particularly important, as it does not only involve the cognitive but also the affective domain of the student's personality. This is very significant if we consider that knowing and accepting certain things on the cognitive level is quite far from turning them into attitudes and actions. (e) Introduction of intercultural education principles in *teacher education and in-service training*. This is a very important need, since teachers have a special role in this procedure. The introduction of intercultural education in teacher education should aim firstly to provide teachers with particular abilities and skills (acceptance of the multicultural society, openness, acceptance of the difference, elimination of prejudice and racist views) and secondly to provide suitable educational and didactic know-how. For, it is one thing being willing to do something and another to know how to actually put it into action. In this framework the training of teachers about the aims and practices of intercultural education is currently regarded

as an indispensable part of teachers' preparation for the accomplishment/realization of their professional role.¹

2 Developing and Implementing the EDIC Course Multicultural/Intercultural Education²

Intercultural education has been an issue of importance in Greek education since the 1990s, when Greece became a receiving country for immigrants, and when educational policy and research started focusing more on minority education as a whole. After the onset of the economic crisis in 2009, as well as the dynamic appearance of an extreme-right extremist group on the political scene, it became evident that the idea of intercultural education had to be reconsidered and linked to Education for Democratic Intercultural Citizenship (Kesidou, 2017). This is in order to help fight xenophobia, racism, chauvinism and Euro-skepticism. The challenges presented to Greece and Europe by the recent refugee crisis, along with the necessity to uphold education viewed as a basic human right, to provide refugee children with equal educational opportunities and to develop inclusive schools and societies, also highlight the importance of linking Intercultural Education to Human Rights and Citizenship Education.

Intercultural education has been a part of teacher education (both at BA and MA level) in Greece during the last two decades, even though programmes offered by different universities vary in the extent to which they deal with the issue. Furthermore, relevant research has shown that the programmes are usually restricted to the provision of knowledge and do not necessarily enable student teachers to have first-hand experiences of practice-oriented work.

The issue "Multicultural/Intercultural Education" has been offered in the context of the MA Programme of the Department of Education of the School of Philosophy and Education/Aristotle University of Thessaloniki for over a decade in the Greek language and has led to extensive research. The main challenge in developing a new MA course on the same topic in the context of EDIC was to avoid having merely a similar version of the existing course in English, but to create a totally new course perspective. Indeed, the challenge of linking the main topic with democracy, citizenship and human rights and the refugee issue called for a strong *interdisciplinary* perspective. The linkage itself broadens the range of the academic field of Intercultural Education, which constitutes a novelty, as well as an innovative feature of the module. Delving into the refugee crisis in Europe involves introducing a more holistic approach, as well as a comparative perspective. In this context, the main features of the EDIC course

Multicultural/Intercultural Education are interdisciplinarity, linkage of intercultural education to the issues of democracy/citizenship and human rights, a strong consideration of the current refugee crisis in Greece and in Europe and a comparative approach to the challenges of multicultural European societies, as well as to the relevant respond of European education systems.

2.1 *Aim of the Course*

The aim of the course is for MA students to locate the challenges of “otherness” in the society, to understand in depth the philosophy of the intercultural approach in educational policy and practice and to apply the intercultural theory in basic fields of minority education in Greece and at an international level. In particular, MA students will understand the importance of the inclusion of the values of democracy, human rights and intercultural understanding in the educational policy and practice, identify main challenges and problems besetting the education of children with an immigrant or minority backgrounds, and they will familiarize themselves with effective interventions and policies that enable minority students to enjoy equal opportunities and to benefit from positive educational outcomes. The course is set to create a platform for young educators and researchers from different European countries, who will be able to gain international academic experience, work together and learn from each other in a joint effort to take full cognizance of the essentials of a positive educational change, so that the aim of an “education for all” can be realized.

2.2 *Learning Outcomes*

2.2.1 Knowledge

Students will

- understand, compare and evaluate the principles of “universalism” and “cultural relativism” of values;
- identify the main challenges and main problems that the research highlights as related to the education of children with immigrant background in Greece, Europe and internationally;
- understand the process of “negotiation of identity” for culturally diverse students in national education systems and how this is linked to their school success/failure;
- understand that the inclusion of intercultural education in educational practice is related to the adaptation of school work on multiple levels (communication in school, teaching and learning, curricula and textbooks, teacher education and training, bilingualism/multilingualism);
- understand the link between educational policy and education for democracy and human rights;

- be enabled to identify the main challenges of the education of immigrant/refugee children in a comparative perspective according to the relevant research in their countries;
- understand the challenges of the refugee crisis and the education of refugee children in Greece and in other European countries;
- realize the interdisciplinary (philosophical, sociological, legal, linguistic, etc.) character of the topic Multicultural/Intercultural education.

2.2.2 Competences

Students will

- be able to develop coherent and logical argumentation in the context of academic oral and written discourse;
- be able to formulate a research question and develop a research design in order to reach a response;
- conduct scientific research individually or in group using the international literature, official research and policy documents/reports of International Organizations and other research centers, databases, etc.;
- be able to submit a proposal for the education of different cultural/minority groups in terms of educational policy and educational practice;
- be sensitized to the challenges of Multicultural/Intercultural Education (interculturalism, democracy, citizenship, human rights, peace).

2.3 *Course Content*

The course puts special emphasis on the relationship between multiculturalism and democracy, different concepts and practices of citizenship education, the rights of immigrants and refugees, human rights and education, the status and the education of minorities in Greece, the current refugee crisis and its impact upon children, the main aims and practices in Intercultural Education, as well as Intercultural Education in Greece. Special emphasis is also placed on research and fieldwork in the area of Multicultural/Intercultural education. Specifically, apart from the lectures, students also have the opportunity to takepart in field visits and activities: for example, in spring semester 2018, in the context of the first try-out of the course, they had the opportunity to visit the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki as well as to go on the “Jewish walk” in the city and also to visit a Refugee Day Care Centre in Thessaloniki. Field visits provide first-hand experiences of the issues in the context of the local community and also to create links with the work of civil society organizations. In this way, the gap between academic knowledge/scientific research and practice-oriented work in teacher education, which was highlighted above, can be bridged.

The course also draws, among others, on the expertise and the resources of the Research Centre for Intercultural Education (KEDE) of the School of Philosophy and Education, the UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (the national coordinator of the “European Master’s Degree in Human Rights and Democratization” of the European Inter-University Center for Human Rights and Democratization/Global Campus of Human Rights) and the Hellenic Observatory for Intercultural Education (a growing community of academics, researchers, school advisers and teachers, aiming to implement intercultural education). This is an effort to combine several academic resources and initiatives of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki for the benefit of the developing EDIC course. Creating these horizontal linkages could be regarded at the same time also as a desideratum for the university; in this sense, the EDIC project and course also offer a relevant benefit to the university itself.

In detail, the course schedule for spring semester 2018 included the following content:

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki School of Philosophy and Education ‘Education for Democratic Intercultural Citizenship’ (EDIC) (Erasmus+ – KA2 Strategic Partnerships)	
Course: Multicultural/Intercultural Education Spring Semester 2018 – 7.5/10 ECTS	
Mondays 18:00–20:00, Room 111 (Old building of the Faculty of Philosophy)	
5.3.2018	Multicultural/Intercultural Education <i>Anastasia Kesidou</i> Assistant Professor, School of Philosophy and Education, AUTH
12.3.2018	Liberal Democracy: the Bare Essentials <i>Filimon Peonidis</i> Professor, School of Philosophy and Education, AUTH
19.3.2018	Different Concepts and Practices of Citizenship Education: a Plea for a Critical-Democratic Intercultural Citizenship Education <i>Wiel Veugeliers</i> Professor, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht EDIC coordinator

- 26.3.2018 The Rights of Immigrants and Refugees
Konstantinos Tsitselikis
Professor, School of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies,
University of Macedonia
Hellenic League for Human Rights
- 16.4.2018 The Current Refugee Crisis and its Impact upon Children
Eleni Hodolidou
Associate Professor, School of Philosophy and Education,
AUTH
- 30.4.2018 Human Rights and Education
Christos Tsironis
Assistant Professor, School of Theology, AUTH
- 7.5.2018 The Status and Education of Minorities in Greece
Konstantinos Tsitselikis
Professor, School of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies,
University of Macedonia
Hellenic League for Human Rights
- 4.6.2018 Intercultural Education in Greece
Eleni Hodolidou
Associate Professor, School of Philosophy and Education, AUTH
Anastasia Kesidou
Assistant Professor, School of Philosophy and Education, AUTH
- Course Evaluation

Visits during the Semester

- Wednesday 21.3.2018 Visit to the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki/'Jewish walk' in the city
10:00 <http://www.jmth.gr/>
- Tuesday 8.5.2018 Visit to the Refugee Day Center Alkyone
11:30 Orfanidou 5, 54626 Thessaloniki
<https://el-gr.facebook.com/alkyonedaycenter/>
- May 2018 Visit to Diavata Open Centre of Temporary Reception for Refugees
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Additional Lecture

Thursday 3.5.2018 14:00–16:00 A Disturbing View of Intercultural Communication: Findings of a Study into Hate Speech in Polish
Anna Szczepaniak-Kozak
 Assistant Professor, Institute of Applied Linguistics,
 Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań

Offered by the UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace, AUTH to the MA students of the Faculty of Philosophy

The course try-out was held throughout spring semester (March to June) 2018. In particular, *eight sessions* were offered in the form of seminars, which were taught by members of the faculty of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Macedonia. The effort was made to ensure participation of experts in the particular topics taught within the wider areas of Education, Philosophy, Social Science, Law, etc. Lessons were taught by Filimon Peonidis (also course co-organizer), Eleni Hodolidou,³ Christos Tsironis, Konstantinos Tsitselikis and Anastasia Kesidou (course organizer and leading teacher). Wiel Veugelaers, EDIC coordinator and critical friend for the particular module, visited Aristotle University during the semester and was also one of the course teachers. In addition, *one workshop* was offered to the students in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace under the title “A Disturbing View of Intercultural Communication: findings of a Study into Hate Speech in Polish”. The workshop was led by Anna Szczepaniak-Kozak, Institute of Applied Linguistics/Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, and focused on the research material and the results of the European project “Regulating AntiDiscrimination and AntiRacism (RADAR)”. It brought the students of the EDIC course together with MA students of Social Psychology of the Aristotle University and MA students of the European Master’s Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation (E.MA) of the UNESCO Chair, which created a stimulating interdisciplinary academic environment.

As mentioned above, field visits included the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki and important Jewish sites in the city center (with the valuable contribution of an expert guide), as well as the Refugee Day Center Alkyone. Even though permission had been secured to visit Diavata Open Centre of

Temporary Reception for Refugees, unexpected events, which affected existing conditions in the Centre, finally made the visit impossible.

At the end of the semester, there was *one last session*, which involved the *evaluation* of the course, as well as an *extensive discussion* on the final paper that the students were asked to prepare (a 2500/5000 word essay on a specific topic/research question, in which they had to take into account the relevant bibliography). Some examples of the topics of the papers were as follows:

(a) “Ronald Dworkin’s Theory of Rights as ‘Trumps’”, (b) “Using G.F.Z. Bereday’s comparative method, compare the way that two European countries deal with the education of refugee children. Focus on one level of the provided education/training. e.g. vocational education, inclusive education, primary, secondary”, (c) “The human rights universality Vs cultural relativism debate based on the argumentation of Jack Donnelly and M. Goodhart”, (d) “Social integration for immigrants and refugees in Greece”, (e) “Bilingual minority schools of Thrace: major challenges”, (f) “The participation of the Hellenic Armed Forces in resolving the refugee influx in Greece 2016 – Diavata Temporary Open Reception Center”, etc.

Students were expected to actively participate in the teaching activities and field visits throughout the semester. The bibliography and educational material of the course was uploaded on the e-platform “E-learning” of the Aristotle University, which was accessible to all participating students.

Eight Greek and five foreign students participated in the course. Six out of eight Greek students were MA and two were PhD students, either in Education or Philosophy. One of them attended the MA Programme of the School of Primary Education of the Aristotle University, which indicated that the EDIC course can attract interest also among other Schools of the University. The five foreign students were Erasmus students of Humanistic or Social Sciences (one of Geography), either from Germany (Humboldt University Berlin, University of Hamburg) or Italy (University of Padova). For students the study load was 7,5 ECTS, while in two cases it was 10 ECTS (corresponding to a 5000 word essay).

Three of the course participants also participated in the EDIC Intensive Programme (IP), which took place at the University of Tallinn and the University of Helsinki in May 2018 (two were MA students in Educational Science/International Education and one was a PhD student in Philosophy). Since the emphasis of the specific IP was on *teaching practices* in Education for Democratic Intercultural Citizenship, the research of both teachers and students, of the Aristotle University, which was presented in the IP, focused on teaching and learning in the framework of intercultural education (an expertise of Aristotle University and also the topic of the university’s EDIC course). The lectures provided by the teachers were “Teaching and Learning in Culturally

Diverse Schools and Societies”, and “Speaking about Conspiracy Theories to Students”, while the students presented their own research based on the posters that they had prepared and received useful feedback on it from the other EDIC teachers and students. The topics of their presentations were: (a) “The gender identities’ construction in the Greek language school textbooks currently used in the 6th grade of Primary Education in Greece”, (b) “Why, what and how should we teach about the Holocaust in Secondary Education” and (c) “Managing cultural diversity in compulsory education in Greece and Finland: a comparative approach”. At the same time, their group research, which they designed and conducted from February until May 2018 especially for the IP, dealt with “Teaching Practices in EDIC: the Case of Greece”.

The group presentation first focused on the analysis of the educational policy and the school curricula with regard to EDIC in Greece, then it referred to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of primary research data gathered by the students based on a questionnaire concerning the actual teaching practices used by Greek teachers. Finally, it referred to the preparation of prospective teachers in EDIC teaching practices in Greece, again on the basis of primary research on the Programmes of Studies offered by Greek universities in teacher education. The successful participation of the Greek students in IP Tallinn/Helsinki was followed by the completion of their post- IP task “How can teaching practices taught during this EDIC course, promote Education for Democratic Intercultural Citizenship in your country?” and the finalization of their learning diaries that they kept during the IP. Their detailed diaries provided a valuable contribution to the overall evaluation of the IP and the better organization of the EDIC IP to be organized in Thessaloniki in March 2019.

It should also be noted that during the academic years 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 the Aristotle University finalized bilateral Erasmus agreements with all EDIC partner universities. In winter semester 2018–2019 one of the MA students who had participated in the EDIC course on “Multicultural/Intercultural Education” spent a semester at the University of Helsinki, where she was able to also successfully participate in the respective EDIC module on “Teachers’ Moral Competence in Pedagogical Encounters”. After having completed *two* modules of the Programme, she was entitled to an “EDIC Certificate”. An additional contribution of the student’s EDIC stay at the University of Helsinki was that she was able to finalize a part of the research conducted for her MA thesis at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, under the title “Managing Cultural Diversity in Compulsory Education in Greece and in Finland: a Comparative Approach”. Thus, the EDIC Programme was able to provide the student with extended educational benefits and opportunities. In addition, at the same time several exchanges with the EDIC universities were initiated on BA level

(UvH, Bath Spa, Charles University Prague and Tallinn), which is also to be considered as a positive contribution of the Programme as a whole.

Finally, it should be noted that the EDIC course is seen positively by the School of Philosophy and Education and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, among others, due to its European and international character, which can further support and promote student exchange. The course will be offered again to MA students in spring semester 2019, taking the evaluation of the previous academic year, along with the comments of the critical friend, into consideration. Also in this new try-out, the module will be supported again by an EDIC critical friend, Maria Rosa Buxarrais, University of Barcelona. The sustainability of the EDIC course has been secured by the fact that it will constitute an integral part of the new Master's Programme of the Department of Education, School of Philosophy and Education, on "Educational Science", which is to be launched in the academic year 2019–2020.

3 Student Evaluation

As mentioned above, the evaluation of the course was conducted in June 2018. Specifically, it had the form of a focus group discussion led by one of the course organizers. The discussion followed four main questions, considering the practice followed in the evaluation of the EDIC Intensive Programmes. Four questions/statements were set to the students, which they were asked to answer/comment on:

1. One useful thing I learnt in the EDIC course this semester.
2. One thing I would change in the course.
3. Relevance of the EDIC course to my studies in my own university.
4. Any messages for teachers?

Students were encouraged to freely express their assessment and thoughts, as these were considered crucial for the improvement of the course try-out. The focus group discussion resulted in a large amount of qualitative data, the most important of which are presented as follows:

1. *One useful thing I learnt in the EDIC course this year*

The students seemed to have strongly appreciated the clarification of *academic terminology*, such as 'intercultural education', 'liberal democracy', 'hate speech', as well as the *legal aspect* of the course, especially the rights of immigrants and refugees and mostly the legal definitions discussed during the lectures, which they found very enlightening. The three types of citizenship, discussed in "Different Concepts and Practices of Citizenship Education", was found very interesting and an incentive

for more profound research and understanding, especially in terms of their application in schools. Most students stressed that the most crucial course benefit was the link created between academic knowledge and real life/issues and problems: “we were able to overcome the academic ‘bubble’ and see the importance of academic knowledge for the real world”. In this context, they stressed the importance of the study visits and the created links to civil society institutions. They also said that they appreciated very much the interdisciplinary character of the module, as well as the originality of the research-oriented workshop on hate speech.

2. *One thing I would change in the course*

The students asked for a more active role for themselves during the lectures, more sessions in the form of seminars/workshops, as well as strengthening the comparative dimension of the course. Concerning the latter, they stated that they would like to learn more about the issues in terms of their relevance with the different countries of students represented in the course (especially in the form of short individual or group presentations). Another interesting proposal was to initiate a *reflection* upon completion of the first half of the course. A visit to a Greek school would clarify even more “Intercultural Education in Greece”. Finally, the students noted that it would be helpful to have access to the educational material of the lectures at the very start of the semester.

3. *Relevance of the EDIC course to my studies in my own university*

The Greek students noted that the EDIC course was highly relevant to their studies, considering that the focus in their work was on “International Education”, including Intercultural Education, Critical Peace Education and Comparative approaches in education. A very positive feedback was that at the end of the semester they were indeed able to find links of intercultural education with citizenship education and education for human rights, which they considered as definitely one step forward in their studies. The Erasmus students also responded positively to the same question; one of them emphasized that he was going to proceed with this topic in the framework of his studies, probably even choosing to write his MA thesis on one of the aspects discussed within the EDIC course.

4. *Any messages for teachers?*

Perhaps the most important message for teachers was to add a more practical aspect to their lecture (discussion, activity, reflection or even a small workshop). This could, for example, be the case in “Human Rights and Education”, where important educational material could be used, such as “Compass” by the Council of Europe, etc. In general, students stressed

how much they appreciated the high expertise of their professors, which could be even more exploited in terms of including practical links. One student highlighted the important aspect of trying to consciously ‘find the thread’ of lectures through the semester, as well as the possible contribution of the individual teachers to it. Finally, some of them asked for a more research-oriented literature list, which would, among others, include the absolute “core research references”.⁴

In conclusion, the students were very appreciative of the opportunity to attend the EDIC course on Multicultural/Intercultural Education, which they evaluated very positively. They also appreciated the study visits and the linkages made to the course content and highlighted the positive impact of the interdisciplinarity of the course. At the same time, they also provided useful ideas for the fine-tuning of the course during the following academic year. In addition, both Greek and Erasmus students also stressed the European environment and the opportunity to take the course in the English language. Especially for Erasmus students, the existence of such a course additionally filled a need, in terms of enriching the relatively small selection of MA courses in English, currently offered at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

4 Course Literature

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Notes

- 1 For a detailed discussion of the main aim and practices of Intercultural Education, see also Kesidou (2004).
- 2 Special thanks are due to Filimon Peonidis, Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy at the School of Philosophy and Education/Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and EDIC course co-organizer, for his important contribution to the curriculum development and implementation, and also for providing his academic expertise in important aspects of the course, such as democratic theory, citizenship, tolerance and the philosophical foundations of human rights. Our joint effort in the context of this course also acted as a bridge between Education and Philosophy, which are the two academic disciplines represented at our School.
- 3 Many thanks are due to colleague Eleni Hodolidou, Associate Professor at the School of Philosophy and Education, who enriched the EDIC Course with her academic expertise in Cultural Studies and identity and also with her important work in the field of refugee education in Greece, which is a crucial aspect of the course. She also provided valuable ideas and opened doors with regard to the field visits organized and undertaken in the context of the course try-out.
- 4 The study by Veugelers et al. (2017) was mentioned here as an example of a core research reference, with regard to the topic of Citizenship Education. The students requested more references of this kind on the other topics, as well.

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