



school structure and organisation

The main aims of this module are:

- To make explicit our mental images about schools.
- To reflect about the main dimensions in school organization.
- To elaborate on the practical implications in order to build an Intercultural school.



to start thinking

Imagine a school, any school. Take, for instance, the one you knew as a student, the one you know as a teacher. What is it like? We can describe the climate, the structure of this school as a metaphor or mental image and become aware that we do not work for school systems. We work for our perception of them. These perceptions are mental models that influence the ways in which people act in the school and the ways in which they interpret what happens. We can perceive the school as a machine, a living organism, a brain, a political system, a psychic prison, a puzzle, flux and transformation, domination,... (**Morgan**, 1997).

Let us describe different schools and analyse the different mental models they represent:

School #1

Inside the building, on the school walls there are plenty of images and posters in two languages (the school is participating in an innovative bilingual programme). The building is small and full of natural light with a huge central square that is used as gymnasium and community events room. There is a large and artistic painting on the entrance level. The director's office is full of papers and posters. They display the teacher timetable, extra schooling activities, notices for parents, advertisements about lunch, catering and administrative information.

We observe many differences between classrooms when comparing the decoration, the chairs and tables distribution, the atmosphere itself. The pre-school classrooms are, generally full of paintings, organized on corner activities, the chairs are grouped. In the first grade the tables are placed around the teacher desk. In the sixth grade the classrooms are more serious and empty of decorative objects with the exception of several murals developed by students and teachers. They are about appropriate behaviour in the school, about the family pets, and Spanish maps. Every student table is isolated, placed separately and oriented toward the teachers desk.

At nine o'clock the bell sounds and sixth grade pupils come into their classrooms in line following their tutor teacher. They sit down and the teacher announces that they are going to check the last weeks exam. The teacher is answering the test questions and explaining the correct answers. This activity takes 45 minutes. At that moment the bell sounds again and the students must move to the gym class. At the same time a group of ten children (5th grade) are seated at their tables. They are going to receive an English lesson. They are the advanced students. The rest of pupils in 5th grade have remained in their own class with the Spanish teacher. Each teacher leads his/her group of children to the next activity. Every 45 minutes many groups of students are walking to the class where they are going to undertake the next

activity. I have got lost several times trying to find them , where are the 3a students at 11:30 a.m.?

School #2

The walls of the hall and corridors are completely covered with murals, pictures, different kind of works produced by the students of all levels. There is also a special place, close to the front door, to show photographs of the last events, festivals and celebrations and visits made by the students, as well as the announcements of forthcoming events. In the staff room, we meet some mothers working together with the director on different tasks. One of the mothers is making photocopies for a teacher; they used to collaborate and assist the school staff in different administrative works, not only in administrative ones.

Children are always placed in groups that vary throughout the academic year on the basis of various criteria; different academic levels are mixed, in such a way that in each group there is at least one pupil who can help the others, and personal affinities are also taken into account to try to avoid disturbing behaviour.

Inside the first grade classroom, students are working in groups of four children and one adult each: there are five groups, and five different adults. This is what are referred to as "interactive groups". One of the participating adults is the teacher of the group; the others are the mother of a student of another group, two volunteers coming from an Islamic women's association and a special support teacher whose official task is to assist one student with specific disabilities, who is also working in the interactive groups as a volunteer.

The sixth grade classroom seems to be divided into two different zones. In one of them, close to the windows and just in front of the teacher's table -that is one step up-, there are two rows of single students. These students are supposed not to be able to share a bench, because of their disturbing behaviour or their lack of attention. The classroom looks clean and tidy, all the rows are perfectly arranged. In from the wall, above the blackboard, there are some notices with advice such as: "Silence is the best ally of study", "Do not disturb your colleagues", "Ask your turn before speaking".



information

When we think of an intercultural school, which is the mental model, which is the metaphor we are thinking about? To us, the intercultural school is a live organism functioning as a system, as a complex system, led by a brain and characterized by the flux and transformation of the processes involved in its growth. What does this mean? This means that the school is a complex system where different organs interact to deliver a function (to teach, to learn) , to keep the school alive. The school is a brain, an organ that thinks, and learns, that analyses and makes decisions. The school is in a state of flux and transformation, it is not static, it is oriented toward change and learning (see the concept of learning on module 4).

This metaphor of school structure is the one underlying the so called “democratic schools” and “inclusive schools” (See “inclusive education” in the Glossary). The overlapping between democratic, inclusive and intercultural are evident and are explicit across this guide. At this moment, is important to point out that the school organization is affected by factors from outside the school: the legal framework, the educational system, the role of teachers in applying these regulations, EU networking and local initiatives and continuous teacher training. The former modules have been dedicated to analyse these questions.

Now we are focusing on becoming aware of our own mental image or metaphor about school as an organization. Let us consider whether our school image exacerbates, or not, the inequalities that exist in society; whether or not it fits the needs of all our students. The next step is to move from vision to vision toward the one we like to accomplish in our school. Every organizational decision we make influences the whole school system. Every decision influences the complete school image we are building.

The following discussion is not meant to be all-inclusive but rather to provide examples of school structural dimensions that may contribute to build an intercultural school. We will focus on four dimensions: a) classification and grouping ; b) physical and timing structure; c) disciplinary policies; d) participation and roles.

Classification and grouping

The main idea that should justify our decisions about how to group students is to guarantee their learning, to guarantee that every pupil reaches the school educational objectives. Module 1 has reflected about those objectives, which deal with developing personal competencies and guarantee a real equality of opportunity for all the students. Think about the criteria applied by school to group their students. Usually, the students are placed in different groups or classes by the family name in alphabetical order and their chronological age. Why are these criteria to group the pupils used so frequently? What are the assumptions underlying these criteria to group students? How do they meet the different needs of the students? What kind of needs? How does this criteria of grouping take into account cultural differences?

In order to respond to individual (intellectual, cultural) differences, a common practice is tracking. Tracking is the placement of students in groups of matched ability, or homogeneous groups, within classes (e. g., school language learning groups, compensatory classes, complementary groups of teaching), or even specific programmes e.g. academic or vocational programmes at the secondary school level (e. g., special programmes for student who have failed at the “official” curriculum and are directed toward low level jobs – See Module 5). In most schools, tracking is as much a part of school as are bells and holidays. Tracking may help some high-achieving students, although the evidence is mixed (Nieto, 1992). The point being that the parents of high-achieving students are often the most reluctant to give up or challenge the policy of tracking because they perceive it as beneficial to their children.

Oakes has reported the almost exclusively negative results of this practice. She concluded that it has especially adverse effects on students already alienated by the school experience i.e. poor children, and those from linguistically and culturally diverse families. Despite the overwhelming evidence that it does not work in terms to meet the needs of diverse students, tracking is shaping the policy in most schools throughout European countries. The official policy in most countries promotes special programmes, compensatory classes for specific students.

An additional problem is the criteria used to select the students who are involved in those special programmes. Most schools do not have adequate staff to decide which students must attend the special classes. Frequently, the decision is taken which depends upon the linguistic level of the student or his/her social or cultural background (immigrant, low incomes family). As an example of this, a teacher in charge of a compensatory programme in a Spanish school told us:

In this group there are eight students, most of whom are gypsies, there is only one non-gypsy. The main advantage is that I have less number of students, and the class is more manageable. The major disadvantage is that the students in this classroom see themselves as deficient and silly.

Compensatory programmes in Spain are officially dedicated to teach basic school skills (reading, writing, maths) to the pupils who enter school with a low level in these areas. In fact, compensatory classes are full of immigrants and gypsies, as well as pupils from the lowest social class. The Czech experience is similar: additional learning help for specific students, mentoring pupils in special classes.

We propose to develop a learning environment within the mainstream class where all children fit and are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential. If separation nonetheless occurs, opportunities for interaction with the mainstream group should be ensured. We propose to delay any decision about tracking until at least the student has spent a complete academic year at school. We propose to group students in order to guarantee their learning and the recommendations exposed in module 8.

Physical and timing structure

At the beginning of the module we have described different school scenarios including references to time and space organisation. What comments do you make about them? What mental image is proposed in those descriptions in terms of physical and timing structure? Which changes would you introduce about space and time organization? Why?

The major problem with the physical environment of many schools is that it provides a stark contrast to the stated purposes of teaching and learning. When schools are not cared for, when they become fortresses rather than an integral part of the community they serve, and when they are “holding places” instead of learning environments, the contradiction between goals and realities is a vivid one. The resemblance of some schools to factories or prisons has been mentioned more than once (Oury and Pain, 1972). This is not true of all schools, of course. The distance between some suburban schools and rural schools is sometimes clear. Can you visualise both of them? What are they like?

In 1979, **Oury** and **Pain** wrote:

Who defines the school building? The Ministry of National Education establishes some general prescriptions, several norms and some standard plans. Who has established these norms? Are they adequate to the user demands?...But, the users (teachers, students, parents) only appear when the school is finished....The school building is never a unique school, but the representations of a national and standard school...The architects respond to an image of school without relations with the real needs of the users....So that, what do they make? They apply the norm. The results satisfy completely to the building master. That is all.

A school perceived as a living organism, with a brain and able to promote learning by continuing flux and transformation requires adequate time and space management. It is required to respond to the needs of students and teachers. It needs to be designed and built as a place to learn and teach. At the same time, it must be seen to assume that every place at the school is a teaching – learning space: facilities to practice different sports or to engage in extracurricular activities, laboratories, study corners, or areas for informal gatherings.

The same time every moment and activity are teaching and learning moments, even in a non-conscious way. Schedules should be flexible enough to take into account the needs, routines or habits of diverse students. It is important teachers have enough time to plan different learning activities and to collaborate with colleagues, or meet and talk. Time, in particular, is the most precious of all school resources. Substantial and regularly scheduled blocks of time are needed for educators to work as small groups with common interests.

Consider the critical incident included at the beginning of this module. What comments do you wish to make about them? What mental image is promoted in those descriptions in terms of physical and timing structure? What changes would you introduce with regard to space and time organization? Why?

Disciplinary policies

Disciplinary policies often discriminate against particular students, especially in middle and secondary schools, where they may be at odds with the developmental level of students and where they are imposed rather than negotiated. We should differentiate between the official and explicit norms and the hidden ones. The first ones use to be written in the “school behaviour code”. The second one can be made explicit by asking students: “When have you been punished/rewarded by your teachers?” Why? What form did the of punishment/reward take?

Further aggravating the problem of disciplinary policies, interpretations of student behaviour may be culturally or class biased. For example, students who keep a pick in their hair may not be doing so out of rebelliousness but simply for style or fashion. Some other children who cast

their eyes downward when being scolded are not being defiant but simply behaving out of respect for their teachers, as they were taught at home. A lack of awareness of these cultural and social factors leads time and again to misinterpretations and faulty conclusions (Nieto, 1992). One of the major problems is the vague terms used in suspensions. In some schools, it was found that a disproportionate number of students suspended for being “disruptive” in class are gypsies, or black, or poor.

Participation

Participation refers to the implication of teachers, students and their families in the developing of norms and rules regulating behaviour and discipline, as well as in other major decisions affecting school structure and processes.

a) Students participation

Usually schools are not organized to encourage student involvement. Although students are nominally represented in the governance structure of many schools (school council, “consejo escolar”), this representation is often window dressing, which has little to do with the actual running of the school. To prepare students for a democratic life, requires that school promotes collaboration or consultation.

The fact is that students are often not involved in their own learning. What they learn is decided, designed, and executed by others. Often, it is not the teacher or the school that determines the content but the text book or something mythical... “administration”, “official curriculum”. Can you find examples in your own experience? In module 4 there are some comments about what Freire calls “banking” education, that is, a process which teachers “deposit” knowledge into students, who are seen as empty receptacles: the teacher teaches and the students are taught, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, the teacher thinks and the students are thought about, the teacher talks and the students listen, the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined...

One of the major consequences, especially with low-income and devalued students, is that they were further alienated from their educational experience because their heritage, home backgrounds, and life experiences were excluded from school talk. Students from non-dominant cultural backgrounds perceive that their traditions, language and life experiences are frequently excluded from school.

b) Teachers participation

Exclusion also affects the teachers. The limited role that teachers play in the life of the school is another structural problem and is connected with the idea about teachers as technicians. What do we mean? We mean teachers are thinkers, and intellectuals, who must reflect seriously on their work, that they are concerned firstly with their own individual achievement and perhaps secondly with advancing students along career ladders.

Teachers in an intercultural school should show curiosity and interest in very different ways. The role of teachers is not limited to individual commitments, but to social engagements. We should be ready and able to work with others (colleagues, parents, students, experts, administration officers, volunteers). We should be ready to take the risk of changing our own and personal vision about students and school structure.

The role assigned to teachers is made explicit in the administrative norms which are used to evaluate and promote teachers. For instance, to obtain the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS, England, 2003) the Standards applied include the following professional values and practice:

1. High expectations of all pupils; respect their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds; and are committed to raising their educational achievement.
2. Treat pupils consistently, with respect and consideration, and are concerned for their development as learners.
3. Demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour that they expect from their pupils.
4. Communicate sensitively and effectively with parents and carers, recognising their roles in pupils' learning.
5. Can contribute to, and share responsibly in, the corporate life of schools.

Which practices do you consider adequate to exemplify these statements?

We think that teacher disempowerment correlates highly with disparaging attitudes toward students; that is, the more powerless teachers feel, the more negative they feel toward their students as well. In contrast, teachers who feel that they have autonomy in their classrooms and with their curriculum generally also have high expectations of their students. The undesirable effect we should avoid is to make teaching an isolated activity. This must be possible and interaction common among teachers, even sharing a group of students or observing each other, analysing their teaching strategies and communication skills.

c) Parents participation

In schools with a strong component of parental involvement, students are consistently better achievers than in otherwise identical schools with less parental involvement. Why? What are the reasons that justify this effect?

What is meant by parental involvement is not always clear. It includes meetings, participation in parent-teacher association, conferences, collaboration in administration or teaching activities. In general, parents' involvement in school activities is very scarce, and links with the students' communities are rarely established. This is not strange considering that their contributions to the education of their children are seldom valued. Furthermore, not all parents perceive schools as welcoming environments, due to language differences or socio-cultural customs which make schools alienating and intimidating, among other reasons.

More explicit recommendations have been included in Module 6 that specifically deal with the analysis of the relationships between school, family and community.



activities and suggestions

Activity 1

Analyse the weekly timetable of a class in a primary and a secondary school. If possible, present it in a graphic way. Consider critically this time distribution taking into account: the relevance attributed to specific contents and activities; flexibility or rigidity to adapt to individual needs and interests; human resources and collaboration among teachers and community, etc.

Activity 2

The physical structure of schools has been criticized for not being an appropriate environment for learning. Design a school for either the primary or secondary level that might meet this requirement. State the primary objectives you would have for this school (consider the objectives proposed in module 1).

Activity 3

Compare the following standard document regulating the behaviour, rules and relations among students, teachers, families and community. The documents do not contain the whole code. Selected items have been chosen in order to exemplify them.

a) Primary School Resslova in Prague 2003/2004

CODE OF CONDUCT

1.- School attendance

- It is the basic responsibility of every student to attend the school regularly and on time according to the set timetable and to participate in all compulsory and voluntary subjects he/she has chosen.
- If a student cannot attend classes because of prior known reasons, parents or guardians must seek the pupil's teacher for permission for the student to be excused
- Absences during lessons must be explained by the student's parents or guardians according to the school regulations

- Regulations concerning excusable absences and releasing students from lessons:
- If a student misses one lesson and he/she is released by a teacher, who is leading the lesson the student's absence is recorded in the class register

2.- Student's rights

- A student has the right to be educated and to participate in lessons according to the set timetable
- A student has the right to relax and have free time during breaks and the midday break
- A student has the right to have access to information, especially that which encourages his/her spiritual and social development.
- S/He has the right to be protected from information that could prevent his/her positive development and inappropriately affect his/her ethics

3. Student's duties

- A student has to comply with the social regulations concerning appropriate behaviour (for example, stand up when a teacher enters or leaves the class and acknowledge all adult persons in the school building)
- A student has to arrive at school early enough in order to be at the classroom/workroom/gym before the lesson starts and to be prepared for the lesson (tools, text books, exercise books, sports suit, etc...); late arrivals are recorded by the teacher in the class book
- Student has to change his/her shoes and his/her clothing in order to comply with the hygienic and security regulations
- A student has to behave in a considerate way towards other students at all times in the school in order to protect their safekeeping and to avoid any material damage
- A student has to comply with the school regulations in classes where lessons might require higher security measures

4. Rules for classification

- The performance of a student in individual subjects, his/her behaviour and overall achievements are classified according to common grades set by the regulations proposed by the MŠMT (The Department of Education, Youth and Physical training) for primary schools
 - The basic data and records for classifying and assessing student's achievements are obtained according to the student's results received on the basis of different examination methods, written exams, and observing the student's overall performance during lessons
 - When assessing the behaviour of a student a teacher acts autonomously and assesses the overall performance of the student
 - In the case of recurring small misdemeanours (such as late arrivals or not changing shoes) or in case of serious contravention of the school code of conduct, a student is assessed by a reduced grade in terms of behaviour. The reduced grade does not have to be preceded by an educational measure
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b) Furuset School (Norway), 2003/2004

FURUSET SCHOOL (NORWAY)

We have a common responsibility for creating an environment for learning and well-being.

Therefore:

Behave towards others the way you want others to behave towards you.

Respect and consideration

Therefore we expect you to follow certain golden rules:

- Show consideration and respect for others,
- Do not use utterances or behave in a way that others may consider as racism,
- Do not bully others, but help to make Furuset school a place free from harassment,
- Do not tease others because of religion or view of life different from yours,
- Talk in a pleasant way to others, do not swear or use offensive or pestering remarks,
- Do not exclude fellow pupils from play and common activities, indoors or outdoors,
- Do not trip anybody up, fight or disturb others when they are playing.

Co-operation and co-responsibility

We have a common responsibility for the entire school day

(the substance of the classes)

Therefore:

- You do your homework on time,
 - You attend on time for classes and appointments,
 - You bring what you need at any time,
 - You play ball on the fields as agreed upon,
 - You may leave the school area only by special agreements,
 - You take good care of your personal belongings. Avoid bringing personal valuables to school. The school will not refund such valuables.
 - You are positive and attentive. You do your best in class work and show respect for the teaching and the need of your peers to work in peace,
 - You do not use your mobile phone (cell phone) in the area of the school (that also includes excursions organised by the school),
 - You take good care of your study books,
 - You take good care of everything that belongs to the school, indoors and outdoors,
 - You keep your things tidy,
 - You use the school yard entrances,
 - You stick the school's Internet arrangements,
 - We expect you to take responsibility for your person
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c) Primary Spanish School, 2003/2004

REGLAMENTO DE RÉGIMEN INTERNO
(Internal norms regulations)

The students should (to themselves) :

- Be punctual, it is not permitted to enter the centre ten minutes after the start time.
- Keep their belongings in order.
- Be responsible in class and when making activities.
- Bring the required materials

The students should (in relation to their fellow pupils):

- Respect others belongings.
- Not humiliate, fight, bully or call names.
- Respect their work.

The students should (in relation to their teachers):

- Be honest with them
 - Converse in order to solve any problems or difficulties
 - Respect and obey them
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Activity 4

Read the different scenarios described at the first section. They show diverse kind of school models. Consider and answer the following questions:

- What are the implications of each of them in order to achieve the intercultural objectives in education?
 - What are the implications of each scenario concerning participation, people roles, space and time organisation?
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proposals for collaboration

PROPOSAL 1

Here is an activity to undertake in order to explore the mental image we have about our school as an institution. The activity consists of 5 steps:

1. To canvass a group of students, ask them a question and to discuss it: What is your school about? Describe it,...spaces, timetable, common activities, participation... What kind of changes would you introduce to improve it?
2. Meet with a group of parents. Ask them the same questions about school.
3. Now reveal the student opinions to parents. It will show their different images and expectations.
4. Show the answer given by directors, teachers, or yourself about the questions proposed.
5. Finally, we should make connections and suggest proposals for change and improvement.

PROPOSAL 2

Select one of the recommended pictures or books included in the resources section. Read or observe it (partially or completely, according to the time available) and discuss the school structure and organisation shown on it.

PROPOSAL 3

The limited roles of both students and teachers have been cited as a fundamental problem of schools. Specifically, the criticism has been that because schools do not provide opportunities for either teachers or students to exercise critical thinking or leadership, they subvert the very purpose of education as preparation for democratic participation. Discuss with your colleagues how schools might provide more opportunities for both teachers and students to be more fully engaged.

Watch the movie titled **"Abigail's Story"**

Abigail is a young woman separated from her husband by a big river. In order to cross the river, she needs to take the ferry. Unfortunately, she does not have the money to pay the ferryman. But he offers to take her over the river if she sleeps with him. Abigail does not know what to do and goes to her mother asking her what to do. Her mother says "This is none of my business, I will not say anything." – Abigail, so deeply in love decides to sleep with the ferryman and therefore can cross the river. When her husband realises what she has done, he expels her.

Gather in groups of 4 to 6 persons and make a list in rank order of who acted in the most moral way (Abigail, Husband, Mother, Ferryman). Everybody has to agree on the list, no double-ranking is possible. Time: 30 to 50 minutes.



planning and adapting curriculum

1. Visit a school and select three different locations to observe. For example, the teachers room, a classroom, the entrance to the director office. Stay there to observe for at least 20 minutes. Write down about the people passing, the activities or tasks they are doing, the kind of interactions they establish.

Reflect about the observation and how the space organisation and architectural conditions influence the relations and activities at school.

What changes would you introduce at the school concerning the information you have gathered?

2. Look at the pictures, they correspond to different schools. What can you say about space organization? Which could correspond to the one (#1) described in the critical incident section?





3.- The following items refer to some specific practices that describe an intercultural school climate. Consider them and write examples of "good practices" for each of them. Write an example appropriate to a primary school (6-12 years old) and another to a secondary school (13-16 years old):

- Respect and attention to cultural pluralism present in the centre affects the school environment in its entirety and are addressed in all educational decisions, not in a sporadic or isolated way
- Opportunities are provided to develop a positive self-concept and self-esteem in the students
- Opportunities are provided to develop a positive self-concept and self-esteem in the students
- All those involved (teachers, parents, students, other) are helped in order to understand the personal and academic experiences of the diverse cultural groups
- Cultural options present in society are analysed and explored (diverse lifestyles, values, beliefs, etc.)
- A comparative approach is adopted in the study of different cultural groups in order to avoid exposing any of them as a reference model
- The events, situations and conflicts are interpreted from the different perspectives and interests of the implied groups

4.- Connect to <http://www.unesco.cl/pdf/actyeven/ppe/boletin/artesp/33-10.pdf>
Read the explanation about teaching in flexible groups. Discuss with your colleagues (personally or in a virtual conference) about its possibilities and the best way to use it in a primary school.

5.- Watch the INTER video and analyse the diverse scenarios exposed on it. Focus your attention on the main dimensions considered in this module.

6.- Read the following story. Does it have anything to do with the curriculum and the school you know?

Over the past 20 years, JANE ELLIOTT, a former teacher in the mid west USA, has committed herself to leading a fight against prejudice, ignorance and racism in society. She continues to practise the same philosophy which she began with her school class after Martin Luther King jun.'s death in 1968. Today her audience is much broader including teachers, students, firemen, prison officers, and even the complete staff of a Bank. In her workshops she divides people on the basis of two arbitrary physical properties - BLUE or BROWN EYES. She declares the latter to be better and more intelligent and grants them privileges, privileges she denies to the blue eyed, deemed to be worse, less intelligent and lower qualified. For the first time, many white people become acquainted with the feeling of belonging to a condemned group which can never win. They experience the feeling of being discriminated against, in the same way that society today discriminates against women, people with a different skin colour or the disabled. In only 15 minutes, Jane Elliott manages to build up a realistic microcosmos of society today with all its phenomena and feelings. As already known from the ill reputed Milgram experiment, even participants who knew the "rules" are unable to remain uninvolved. What starts as a game turns into cruel reality which causes some participants' emotions to erupt with unforeseen intensity.

7.- You have been selected to organize a new primary school. There are 6 groups, one for each level (from first to sixth). You should make decisions about every structural dimensions we have developed in the information section. Please, describe what the school would be like. Discuss your suggestions with other colleagues. Write down the final description.



specific resources and additional links

Books

Nieto, Sonia (1992). *Affirming diversity. The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman. The book explores the meaning, necessity and benefits of multicultural education for students from all backgrounds. The author shows the impact on learning of racism, discrimination, teacher expectations, language, social class, and school policies and practices. Every chapter includes a case study, a personal story about the main questions she proposes to discuss.

Senge, Peter (2000). *Schools that learn*. Doubleday, Toronto. The main objective of the author is to improve schools as organizations. School should be a democratic, complex and inclusive system. Usually, teachers are taught to work as individuals, so staff development has to help them learn to work together. This is an ongoing process, with enough time to learn new ways of teaching in order to build a school perceived as a living organism, with a brain and promoting transformation.

Oury, Fernand and Pain, Jacques (1972). *Cronique de l'école caserne*. Paris: François Maspero. The military headquarters school exists. It is a school where teachers, students, parents, supervisors, are prisoners of bureaucratic structures. It is a school where the major concern is controlling everything: student behaviour, the official curriculum, the schedule and spaces. It is a school with huge buildings, locked, isolated, with long lines of pupils, and special classes, special times and special teachers for special (handicapped, retarded, diverse) students.

Caldwell, J. & Ford, M.P. *Where have all the bluebirds gone! How to soar with flexible grouping*. (Heinemann, 2002). It is an interesting book about practical cases describing how to establish flexible groups at primary and secondary schools.

Observation scale. Needs Assessment Report INTER Project (2003). It is a document developed to analyse the intercultural climate at school. It contains a guideline for observation, a description of practices adjusted to the intercultural school requirements. It has been included as an annex of the Needs Assessment Report (Inter Project, 2003). <http://www.uned.es/interproject>

Websites

<http://www.proyecto-atlantida.org> It is the web site of a group of education professionals of diverse areas and levels who trying to reflect together about public school in the Spanish

context. They propose resources and practices to improve educational quality. The main objective is to build a democratic school for all the pupils. At the web site there are documents, resources, experiences on concrete schools and a useful network to keep in contact can be found.

Movies

"The Wave", a movie based on a true incident that occurred in a high school history class in Palo Alto, California, in 1969. The powerful forces of group pressure that pervaded many historic movements such as Nazism are recreated in the classroom when history teacher Burt Ross introduces a "new" system to his students. And before long "The Wave," with its rules of "strength through discipline, community, and action, " sweeps from the classroom through the entire school. And as most of the students join the movement, Laurie Saunders and David Collins recognize the frightening momentum of "The Wave" and realize they must stop it before it's too late."

"Today starts everything". It is a French movie about a primary school at a "banlieu". It describes the school and the students live in a low income and middle class environment. It is excellent in describing the small incidents and events of the school and the milieu.



reflective questions and evaluation

Which is the mental image that describes the school we know, as teachers or students? Let us think about this and become aware of our own mental image or metaphor about school as an organization. Let's consider its characteristics concerning:

- grouping students: tracking and testing
- space and time organization
- disciplinary policies
- participation and roles of student, teachers and parents.

When we think of an intercultural school, which is the mental model, the metaphor we are thinking about?

To us, the intercultural school is a living organism functioning as a system, as a complex system, led by a brain and characterized by the flux and transformation of the processes involved in its growth. What does this mean? This means that the school is a complex system where different organs interact to make a function (to teach, to learn), to keep alive the school. The school is a brain, it thinks, and learns, that analyses and makes decisions. The school is flux and transformation, it is not static, it is oriented toward change and learning.

What are the changes we have to make in our school image in order to fit the intercultural school metaphor?

To answer these questions we can use the information presented in the module as well as the reflection accumulated by preparing the activities and consulting the directory of resources.