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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES AND THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS IN EDUCATION FOR PEACE

KOMPETENCJE INTERKULTURALNE I WYZWANIA NAUCZYCIELI W EDUKACJI NA RZECZ POKOJU

Streszczenie: Artykuł porusza kwestie związane z nabywaniem kompetencji interkulturowych przez nauczycieli w dynamicznie zmieniającym się kontekście wielokulturowym. Nabywanie kompetencji wielokulturowych rozumiane jest jako twórczy wysiłek każdego nauczyciela w procesie samorozwoju, a tym samym w procesie kształtowania kultury pokoju, co jest bezpośrednio związane z jakością edukacji interkulturowej, edukacji na rzecz pokoju. Autorzy przedstawiają kompetencje i wyzwania rządzące edukacją interkulturową w kontekście wielokulturowym, analizując idee i postawy wynikające z ducha tolerancji oraz wartości przypisywanych dialogowi prowadzonemu zarówno w sferze krajowej, jak i zagranicznej. Taki stosunek pozwala na nabycie tzw. kompetencji wielokulturowych oraz odrzucenie stygmatyzacji, ksenofobii czy postaw ekstremistycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: kompetencje wielokulturowe, wyzwania, edukacja na rzecz pokoju, nauczyciele, szkoła

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Abstract: The article addresses the issues of the acquisition of intercultural competence by teachers in a dynamically changing multicultural context. The acquisition of multicultural competence is understood as a creative effort of each teacher in the process of self-development and, consequently, in the process of shaping a culture of peace, which is directly related to the quality of intercultural education, education for peace. The authors present the competences and challenges governing intercultural education in a multicultural context, analysing the ideas and attitudes stemming from the spirit of tolerance and the values attributed to the dialogue conducted both in the domestic and foreign spheres. Such an attitude allows for the acquisition of so-called multicultural competence and the rejection of stigmatisation, xenophobia or extremist attitudes.

Keywords: multicultural competence, challenges, education for peace, teachers, school

Introduction

In today's networked, interdependent society, intercultural competence is crucial for teachers working in diverse and multicultural school communities. Furthermore, these competences in many situations – for example when war migrants appear in a country, as we could and still can observe in Poland – condition the effective implementation of the teaching process and the upbringing of young people. They enable conflict mitigation and the peaceful introduction of often traumatised children and adolescents into an integrated school community.

Alongside the family, the school plays a significant role in the development of competences, teachers introducing behavioural patterns into the school's everyday life that students internalise (Szempruch 2013). This consequently – as Kwiatkowski (2018) states – leads to the formation of the same cultural competences in students that teachers possess. Therefore, social and intercultural competences of the teaching staff become so important in multicultural settings, which should be expressed not only in the knowledge of multicultural and intercultural issues, but also in the attitude of openness towards people representing a different nationality, faith and culture (Sobecki 2010; Nikitorowicz 2013).

Given stable and responsive relationships, the school is an important stimulator for the development of multicultural competence (Warren 2017; Nikitorowicz 2020) and the individual's awareness of their own value and culture, and the culture of the school. The cultural diversity of students creates a platform for many interactions, which requires teachers and educators to have the competences necessary for effective teaching and learning in a multicultural classroom where conflicts may arise. The teacher should know how to manage these conflicts, and how to reinforce positive interactions, and how to help students interact with each other (Lim et al., 2019). B. Dobrowolska (2012) points out that the socio-cultural complexity of the multicultural classroom implies a particular kind of these competences in order to be able to cope with the situations emerging in the school daily life that differ significantly from the common, culturally familiar and obvious

ones. Learning is an important part of this element and must be an ongoing process to manage the dynamic nature of the school's culture and diversity. Valuing diversity means accepting and appreciating the challenge of developing a learning community (Lim et al. 2019).

The purpose of our article is to explore and describe the challenges that teachers may face in the context of intercultural competence and to present and discuss the behaviours, strategies, knowledge and motivations that are relevant to the successful delivery of peace education in a culturally diverse society. This topic aims to highlight the importance of developing intercultural competence in educational work and to discuss the challenges that teachers may face in this process.

Schools facing challenges – education for peace in educational practice

The war in Ukraine and the wave of migration and refugees have posed extremely difficult challenges for societies, including education systems. In the context of the war in Ukraine and children from Ukraine arriving in school, education for peace has played a special role in recent years. The school, as an institution with teaching, educational and pupil welfare tasks, plays a crucial role in promoting understanding, tolerance and cooperation between heterogeneous social, ethnic, national groups.

According to the Border Guard, the number of arrivals from Ukraine to Poland amounted to (in the first half of 2022 inclusive) 5,173,515 persons, representing an increase of almost 172% higher compared to earlier period (Statistical Bulletin, 2022). Among the Ukrainian nationals entering Poland, the majority were women and children. It was highlighted that children made up more than half of all refugees and were in desperate need of safety, stability and protection – especially those who were unaccompanied or separated from their families. A report, prepared by the Centre for Analysis and Research of the Union of Polish Metropolises, showed that more than 41 million people were living in Poland for the first time in history. Before the outbreak of war in Ukraine, there were already more than 1.5 million Ukrainians over the age of 15 in Poland. The outbreak of war increased this number to nearly 3.2 million, additionally including children under 14 years of age (Górny & Kaczmarczyk 2023).

Poland during this period became the second most supportive country to Ukrainians with the amount of aid provided equivalent to EUR 2.4 billion. Educational support and care for Ukrainian children was organised by schools, youth centres, psychological and pedagogical counselling centres. Multicultural education assistants were specifically employed in these establishments. A large number of Ukrainian staff were employed in schools, where they supported parents in everyday matters related to their children's education. Both teachers and multicultural assistants helping Ukrainian pupils to find their way in the school

reality and to meet their educational needs. Additionally, free Polish language courses for adults were organised.

Almost immediately after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, teachers were engaged in Polish schools and classes were organised for children arriving from Ukraine. Non-governmental organisations, social welfare centres, cultural institutions, schools, kindergartens, hospitals, specialised facilities e.g. for people with disabilities, state and local government offices, and community centres were key service providers for more than three million Ukrainians within a few months. The role of teachers as support providers for refugees and children from war-affected regions should also not be forgotten during this important period. Training teachers in the area of intercultural competence can help them understand their specific needs and challenges and adapt their curricula and teaching methods to better meet their needs.

The first step in educating for peace in the context of the war in Ukraine and the arrival of refugees in school should be to understand and empathise with these experiences. Teachers should create safe and open spaces where students can freely express their feelings and concerns about the war and refugee situation. It is important for teachers to be sensitive to the emotional and psychological needs of students who may be directly affected by war events. As highlighted by Piejka (2017), a culture of peace is a culture of action and engagement, of citizen responsibility, of renouncing violence in favour of negotiation and dialogue.

The next step in education for peace is to provide students with objective knowledge about war and refugees. Teachers can offer historical, social and political information that helps students understand the background to these events. At the same time, it is important that teachers remain neutral and do not shy away from presenting the truth, assuring students that they can think independently and solve problems creatively. The culture of peace should be treated not only as an idea, but above all as a principle of human coexistence on the globe and a leading educational goal (Nikitorowicz 2021). A key aspect of education for peace in the context of the war in Ukraine and presence of refugees at school should be the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding. Teachers should organise projects, workshops and debates that would encourage students to share their observations, views and perspectives. This approach provides students with the opportunity to learn from each other and build bonds in a cross-cultural environment.

Intercultural challenges in a culturally diverse educational space

According to Szczurek-Boruta (2013, 157), „the interest in intercultural competence stems from the fact that it conditions respect towards otherness and awareness of one’s own identity, creates the possibility for better and more effective interaction based on dialogue, of which knowledge of one’s own and foreign culture becomes

an indispensable element. This, consequently, leads to the necessity of shaping, in the educational process, sensitivity and linguistic awareness, which play an important role in the formation of cultural identity". A common definition of intercultural competence was popularised by Deardorff (2006), who defined as the goal of intercultural competence „to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately" in intercultural situations (Deardorff 2011). An established and widely used scale for measuring such ability is the cultural intelligence scale (Van Dyne et al. 2012). Cultural intelligence is defined as the ability to function effectively in culturally diverse environments (Ang and Van Dyne 2008). Inspired by Sternberg & Detterman's (1986) model of intelligence, the construct of cultural intelligence is conceptualised as consisting of four components, namely metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural (Ang et al. 2007; Ang and Van Dyne 2008). The authors of the cultural intelligence concept focused on aspects that directly relate to cross-cultural interactions, categorised into the classical psychological dimensions of thinking, feeling and acting. The metacognitive component of the cultural intelligence model refers to the processes of acquiring knowledge about cultures. This includes awareness of one's own beliefs about cultural values and the adjustment of these beliefs during and after intercultural interactions. The cognitive component refers to knowledge about the values and practices of other cultures. The motivational component refers to devoting energy to learning about other cultures and functioning in intercultural interactions. The behavioural component refers to having the behavioural capacity to act appropriately in intercultural interactions.

Cultural intelligence refers to an individual's ability to function effectively across cultures – this can include national, ethnic and organisational cultures, as well as other types of culture (Ang & Van Dyne 2008; Earley & Ang 2003).

Shaping intercultural competence for the peaceful coexistence of representatives of many cultures/nationalities/religions is one of the most important tasks of teachers in the context of contemporary war experiences. One of the main challenges for teachers is to build cultural sensitivity in students. Teachers need to be aware of and understand cultural differences and their impact on teaching-learning processes and social interactions. They must strive to show cultural diversity as a value and promote respect for different perspectives and experiences.

Methodological assumptions of the study

The aim of the study was to explore and describe the intercultural competences declared by teachers and the challenges of having to work with children of war refugees from Ukraine. The study was carried out using a questionnaire consisting of (1) demographic, social and professional characteristics: place of residence, length of service, type of work and school establishment, (2) a challenge scale consisting of 16 statements assessed on a 5-point scale to measure the problems

that teachers declare in relation to the need to take into account the needs and capabilities of Ukrainian students in the teaching and educational process, (3) War and COVID-19 Fear Scale, as well as an assessment of understanding and coping with problem situations and an indicator of the number of people who can be counted on in case of need. The design of this part of the questions modelled on the War Anxiety Scale (WAS) and the Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S) by Ahorsu and colleagues. Additionally, The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener et al. adapted into Polish Juczyński (2001) was used, consisting of 5 statements rated on a 7-point scale to measure feelings of satisfaction with life. The scales referred to experiences over the past few weeks. Each statement is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. This was followed by (4) the Cultural Intelligence Scale; (CQS) by Ang, Van Dyne and Koh taking into account four core factors: knowledge, strategy, motivation, behaviour and the main aspects of intercultural competence: (a) metacognitive, (b) cognitive, (c) motivational, (d) behavioural. The scale consists of 20 statements to which the interviewee refers using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 means 'strongly disagree' and 7 means 'strongly agree'.

The research problems centred around the following questions:

- What challenges do teachers perceive in schools in educating for peace?
- What is the cultural attitude of the teachers surveyed?
- How are the individual constituent factors of respondents' cultural attitudes shaped?
- Does the level of intercultural competence and challenge depend on: demographic variables, seniority, place of residence?
- What is the correlation between intercultural competence and the different variables?

The survey was conducted among 180 teachers (164 women and 16 men) with an average age of 30.18 years (the youngest respondent was 21 and the oldest was 58). The sampling was purposive, and the research was conducted from March to June 2022.

Analysis of research results

The survey showed that 101 respondents resided in a large or medium-sized city, while 79 lived in a rural area; most of the respondents were employed in educational institutions located in cities. A significant portion of the respondents were relatively young, often still studying, with 88 individuals reporting less than 5 years of experience in the teaching profession. In contrast, 16 respondents had more than 5 years of experience, 39 reported more than 12 years, and 37 teachers indicated having over 20 years of work experience.

a. Teachers faced with the experience of migration – challenges

The teachers surveyed were asked what, in their opinion, are the most important challenges they face in the face of the influx of war refugees from Ukraine. The items included in this part of the questionnaire were identified based on analysis derived from netnographic covert, participatory observation in several teacher groups on social media. Sixteen indicators and individual indications were retrieved and compared. Overall, the factors explained a total of 72.84% of the variance in the scale items.

Table 1. Eigenvalues of challenge factors and percentage of variance explained

No.	Name of the factor	Own value	% of variance explained
1.	Difficult communication with students, parents	2.15	23.17
2.	Lack of teaching materials and guidelines, core curriculum	1.57	20.79
3.	Adaptation problems, experience of trauma, impedes learning	1.44	19.9
4.	There is a lack of assessment guidelines, curriculum basis	1.36	15.52
5.	Preferential treatment (evaluation) of newcomers	1.14	8.69
6.	Refugee inclusion and reception, knowledge base, cultural diversity	1.10	7.14
7.	There is a lack of support from psychologists	0.42	0.99
8.	Too many refugee pupils in a class	0.34	0.67
9.	Health status, no diagnosed learning difficulties	0.25	0.59
10.	Intercultural conflicts	0.23	0.56

The eigenvalues of the factors and the percentage of variance explained identified the following component items: Communication, Lack of teaching materials, Adaptation problems, Lack of core curriculum and guidelines, Assessment, Knowledge resources. The analysis of the collected data shows that the greatest challenge for teachers was the difficulty in communicating with Ukrainian students who do not speak Polish (mean: 3.78 on a 5-point scale). The related lack of teaching materials in Ukrainian was a further challenge for teachers (mean: 3.74).

The next factor combined beliefs about the teacher's work and the lack of available teaching resources, which were seen as closely linked to the students' learning opportunities. Adaptation is the familiarisation with the school (building, rooms, grounds), the students in the class and the teachers, the rules and customs of the school. Integration is the process of acceptance and belonging, in this case to the class, the school, the culture in which the refugees have come to function. Teachers declared that the war experience and the trauma with which Ukrainian pupils found themselves in Polish schools made it difficult

to implement the teaching-learning process (mean: 3.69). Another challenge for teachers was the excessive number of pupils in the classroom – caused by the influx of Ukrainian children and teenagers (mean: 3.24). Integrated students are those who understand the rules of the school, are accepted by teachers and peers and have built relationships with them. In a nutshell, it can be said that a measure of good integration of refugees is that they feel comfortable in the environment to which they have come. Most teachers indicated that our neighbours from Ukraine, would be able to return to their homes soon. Assimilation, on the other hand, involves the refugees' incorporation and adoption of the culture to which they have arrived, as it was their own. This aspect was not shown by the interviewed teachers as a particular challenge related to the arrival of children from Ukraine.

The challenge that received the fewest indications was related to the negative emotions Ukrainian students display towards their Polish colleagues (mean: 2.12). Additionally, few teachers participating in the survey indicated that the *health condition of Ukrainian students often prevents them from learning effectively*, although this issue was frequently raised in discussions in teachers' social media groups.

b. Cultural attitudes – multicultural competence of teachers

The cultural attitude (CQS) of the surveyed teachers and the individual factors that make up the structure of several common, interacting components were explored. The analysis of the data collected in the research process showed that the average for the cultural attitude studied among the teachers was 4.25 (max.7, min.1), indicating a moderate result. The lowest score recorded was 1.5, while the highest was 6.7. The highest awareness of necessary cultural competence was possessed by 36% of those with the shortest length of service (less than 5 years) in the teaching profession (compared to 17% of teachers with the longest length of service of over 15 years). The *Strategy*, which refers to knowing how to plan intercultural interactions, was the strongest cultural attitude factor for the majority of those surveyed (87%). In contrast, the lowest awareness was among teachers, who were more likely than other respondents to deny the need to develop knowledge as a cultural competence (40% of teachers with the longest tenure, compared to 21% of those with medium tenure and only 10% of those with the shortest tenure).

It is noteworthy that the survey was conducted in 2022, i.e. just after the outbreak of war – at that time, the chaos, and the need to take immediate action may have caused teachers additional stress and the need to address previously unknown problems. In carrying out the subsequent research, the aim was to establish possible differences and links between cultural attitudes and the challenges of teaching work, as well as the influence of variable demographic, social and professional characteristics within the study group. According to previous research, war causes

exposure to trauma not only among its participants and refugees, but also in wider communities influenced by mass media coverage of war.

The aim of the study was also to determine the assessment of fear of war and Covid-19 and adaptation to a new situation in the context of working in a multicultural environment. The results indicated that the fear of war was stronger than fear of Covid-19 for the vast majority of respondents.

Table 2 Differences between teachers according to age and length of service (N=180)

Factor	Medium		Odch. St.		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	Length of service (more than 10 years)	Length of service (less than 10 years)	Length of service (more than 10 years)	Length of service (less than 10 years)			
Covid anxiety	1.8	1.69	1.01	0.86	0.02	180	0.981
Anxiety war	2.75	2.92	1.06	1.03	-2.55	180	0.11
Strategy	3.88	4.46	1.	0.66	-13.78	180	<.001
Knowledge	3.07	3.92	1.29	1.04	-9.73	180	<.001
Motivation	3.43	4.45	1.08	1.11	-6.39	180	<.001
Behaviour	4.32	4.37	1.12	1.39	-1.09	180	0.129
Cultural attitude	3.67	4.33	0.96	1.54	-1.67	180	0.066

Cultural attitude negatively correlates with the age of the respondents – this means that the older the teacher (more seniority), the lower the score obtained in the survey. The survey observed statistically significant positive correlations of cultural competence scores with: (1) resourcefulness (2) quality of life (3) support network – the number of people you can rely on in difficult situations. At the same time, CQS was negatively correlated with: (1) age (2) fear of Covid-19 and (3) understanding and with (4) challenges.

The individual elements of cultural attitude are also correlated with the other variables highlighted in the study. Table 3 shows the significant results of the correlations: strategy as an element of cultural attitude correlates negatively with respondents' age, fear of Covid-19 and challenges. Furthermore, strategies are correlated with perceived social support (support network) as well as with the understanding the teacher receives. Furthermore, the results of the study show that the more people a teacher can count on in a problem situation, the better cultural attitude knowledge he or she adopts. Cultural attitude knowledge also correlates with the number of people a teacher can rely on in a crisis situation.

Table 3. correlations between selected variables in the study group of teachers (N=180)

	Age	Quality of life	War	Covid	Understanding	Challenges	Support network
Quality of life	-.08						
War	-.21**	-.04					
Covid	.18*	-.12	.13				
Understanding	.33**	.30**	-.28**	.01	-.17		
Support network	-.47**	.24**	.08	-.22**	.25**	-.08	
Cultural attitude	-.33**	.16*	.00	-.21**	.24**	-.23*	.37**
Strategy	-.29**	.14	.04	-.2**	.22*	-.20*	.26**
Knowledge	-.12	.05	.04	-.09	.05	-.15	.16*
Behaviour	-.44**	.14	.14	-.18*	.30**	-.24**	.4**
Motivation	-.19*	.15*	-.15*	-.18*	.15	-.13	.32**

*Correlation was significant at the 0.05 level bilaterally

**Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level bilaterally

Another cultural attitude component – behaviours – correlates negatively with age, fear of war and fear of COVID-19 contagion and challenges. In contrast, there is a strong positive correlation between behaviour and both the understanding and support network of the teachers surveyed. The last cultural attitude component, motivation is strongly positively correlated with support network. In contrast, it is similarly negatively correlated with the age of the teachers, as are the other components, as well as fear of war and contracting coronavirus, meaning that those who fear these events have higher levels of individual intercultural competence.

Discussion of the results

The development of cultural intelligence is an important developmental task for any person who comes into contact with culturally diverse people, and it is especially crucial for those working in the educational system. Cultural intelligence should be a “signpost” to understanding the norms adopted in another culture, helping individuals to use previously unknown rules of behaviour in situations that require it. It is not a question of forcing oneself to artificially imitate behaviour and attitudes, but of adjusting one’s behaviour towards a culturally different person in such a way that he or she does not feel discomfort in our presence resulting from culturally inadequate behaviour. It is assumed that students feel valued and are more engaged in the learning environment when teachers respond appropriately to their needs (cf. Gay 2010; Nieto 2017). The shaping of cultural sensitivity has been defined by Gay (2010, 31) who emphasised that “*using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse*

students to make educational encounters more relevant and effective for them” is particularly associated with increased engagement and interest in school and increased educational achievement for minority students (Aronson & Laughter 2016). While there is an abundance of research on how to improve cultural sensitivity, it has been shown that its practice in classrooms is not optimal (Lim et al., 2019). One explanation for this problem may be that certain teacher qualities are necessary to effectively build cultural sensitivity (Gay 2013).

Cultural intelligence is an important factor in interactions among different ethnic groups and backgrounds. It may be related to the work performance and social interactions of students and teachers. Despite the possible limitations of the presented CQS research tool, it should be considered a valid tool to assess cultural intelligence among teachers in a Polish setting. Importantly, during the validation studies it was possible to demonstrate that the CQS has satisfactory psychometric properties. It has high reliability; the factor structure seems to align closely with the proposed model. Theoretical and criterion validity have been well documented. The CQS correlates with instruments examining variables such as, for example, age, tenure, quality of life, support network, understanding, empathy, fear of COVID-19 and fear of war of the teachers surveyed.

The possibilities of using the CQS are extensive. The tool can be used, for example, before and after intercultural training among students of pedagogy. It can thus be used to define areas of professional competence, the development of which can contribute to the quality of work and social support (cf. Diner 2004, Sęk and Cieślak 2012, Bin 2014). Additionally, the CQS could also be used with other groups (e.g. primary, secondary school teachers) to assess their cultural intelligence when working with culturally diverse students (e.g. those representing national, ethnic or migrant minorities). Intercultural competence is extremely important for teachers working in multicultural and diverse school communities. Challenges such as understanding diversity, intercultural communication and adapting teaching methodologies require teachers to demonstrate appropriate strategies, knowledge and behaviours and motivation. A comparison of all the surveyed groups suggests that although teaching staff were reasonably motivated and aware of the need to develop new competencies in those working with foreign students, the majority of those surveyed showed the factor structure of the CQS did not seem to fully capture the challenges identified (Pyżalski 2022). This area of research needs to be explored further and developed with a wider group of respondents.

Conclusions

Education for peace in the context of the war in Ukraine and the presence of refugees at school plays an important role in building understanding, empathy, tolerance and cooperation. Teachers are tasked to create open and supportive environments that promote dialogue and mutual understanding. This approach allows students to gain

knowledge, develop empathy and learn respect for other cultures, which contributes to building peace and harmony in society. Developing intercultural competence is extremely important in today's global society, which is characterised by cultural diversity and multiculturalism. Intercultural competence enables the development of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding between different social groups.

Developing intercultural competence is a key element of education for peace. Teachers must address the challenges of cultural diversity and actively work to build dialogue, understanding and respect between different groups in society. By doing so, they can contribute to creating a more harmonious and united community. A strong action-orientation is the ability to adapt behaviour towards different cultures, including the ability to act when cultural misunderstandings arise. The lowest rated orientation was Knowledge, which refers to awareness and knowledge of cultural similarities and differences. This does not mean being an expert on each culture, but rather understanding how a culture influences people's behaviour, values, traditions and beliefs. Teachers' low awareness may be due to the fact that during their preparation for the profession, the main focus is on the methodology of subject education. Motivation, on the other hand, refers to the desire to learn about another culture and to respond to cultural diversity. It implies an interest and confidence in functioning effectively in culturally different environments.

By nurturing and strengthening intercultural competencies, teachers can create inclusive and enriching learning environments that celebrate diversity and promote intercultural understanding. Continuing to research and develop these competencies is essential to ensuring effective peace education.

Challenges and intercultural competences in the work of the teacher – pedagogical implications

Peacebuilding should drive political and civic action. Recognising its importance fosters a willingness to self-limit oneself for the sake of something beyond individual aims, something established through a compromise and is binding on everyone. This can mean that someone is a person of peace. I am a person of peace and I strive for consensus, I try to do things in such a way that people see not just how much they might be losing, but how much they are gaining. The goal of education for peace should be to appreciate the selflessness of actions and the open expression of one's beliefs, to seek to know the clear decisions and motives that justify given actions.

In the face of war in Ukraine, teachers play a key role in developing understanding, respect and integration among students coming from different places. Teachers face numerous challenges in educating for peace. However, through appropriate emotional support, curriculum adaptation, informed learning activities and education for peace, teachers can play a key role in countering the impact of war and building a society based on understanding and peace. Intercultural

competencies enable individuals to interact and cooperate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds relating to knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour. These competences are essential in promoting mutual understanding, empathy and cooperation among students from different cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The development of intercultural competence is important for learning environments that deal effectively with cultural differences to create inclusive learning groups.

Peace education is the art of fostering civic change, resolving problems that arise in interpersonal, intercultural relationships and empowering, identifying and liberating people to enrich their work, experiences and challenges.

I define intercultural education as the experience of meeting people with a unique constellation of worldviews, specific emotional sensitivities, as well as taking actions through which they achieve the values they hold dear – people of different cultures, values and meanings.

Table 4. Intercultural attitude, multidimensional plane

Dimensions	Values	Strengthening the „I”	Resources	Attitude
Cognitive	Experiences	Understanding	Cultural	Towards each other
Behavioural	Challenges	Resourcefulness	Social	Towards others
Feeling	Experiences	Making sense	Human	Global
Specialised Comprehensive	Responsibility Work	Identity	Cultural Social Human Economical	Activity Dialogue

The first level aimed at reflecting on personal and environmental factors that block the development of cultural and intercultural identity emerging stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination.

1. Dimensions: cognitive, behavioural, emotional, comprehensive. They denote methods of intercultural interdisciplinary work involving the student's learning about his own culture and other cultures in everyday life and insight into his own experiences, i.e. learning about potential opportunities and possibilities for development, cooperation, collaboration.
2. Values: this level of work involves providing students with the experience of a positive emotional connection in relation to people of another culture, a connection that positively influences how the student perceives themselves, learns about others, and experiences a world of values.
3. Strengthening the Self: the student becomes aware that life is comprehensible, reality is understandable and explainable. Life is worth the emotional investment, can mean a sense of the value of life, the will to live. The students learn to be resourceful, to have resources, to influence and protect the world

around them. The description of the third plane implies the emotional dimension of value, that effective bonding work is the foundation to rebuild, or strengthen identity. Responsibility for self and others as life wisdom (strength of identity, strong boundaries and cognitive abilities give resistance to ‘information noise’, manipulation).

4. Resources, cultural, social, human and economic factors mean that the organisation of society should be geared towards the right distribution of reinforcements between ‘me and us’, rewarding authenticity (vs. facade declarativeness). The prestige of authority representatives should be balanced by the charisma of activists, artists.
5. The last level means that activity within one’s own identity encourages reflexivity. Activity towards others can lead to philanthropy, holistic activity towards values leads to responsibility. In *global responsibility*, the subject of *responsibility* becomes the human community regardless of individual differences.

The core group should consist of no more than twenty-five people – of all genders, different ages, education and life experience. Only in such a small group is it possible for two people to work together “face to face” on common tasks, fostering a climate of caring partnership. In age-undifferentiated, single-gender (especially male) groups, competition spontaneously arises. The group must build its agenda and tasks in dialogue, which eliminates all hierarchies, relations of dominance and subordination.

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