

Attitudes of future teachers towards members of minorities and migrants



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Education for social and cultural diversity

Number of the paper: 78

Abstract

Globalization processes, migration, and increased mobility of individuals make countries around the world more and more culturally diverse. These social changes are directly reflected in educational systems where teachers are challenged to successfully deal with diversity in their teaching (Knežević 2023). To achieve this goal, the intercultural competence of the teacher, which includes specific knowledge, positive attitudes towards others, as well as the constant development of skills for successfully navigating different communication situations, is crucial (Šenjug Krleža 2020). In scientific literature, attitudes are often emphasized as the fundamental dimension of intercultural competence, and openness and tolerance are cited as the basic characteristics of a desirable attitude (Deardorff, 2006; Knapp, 2008; Bolten, 2007; Byram, 1997). To gain insight into the attitudes of future teachers towards their potential future pupils, we used the Bogardus scale to examine the social distance of students in their final years of teacher studies at the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Zagreb (N=122) towards members of minorities and migrants in the Republic of Croatia. We also conducted interviews with focus groups of students (N=12) in which we investigated stereotypes and prejudices that future teachers hold towards migrant and minority cultures. The results show a greater social distance of students towards members of cultures that they perceive as less close to their own, as well as pronounced prejudices and stereotypes of students towards all cultures different from their culture. These results point to the need for a stronger development of teachers' intercultural competence during their initial education.

Key words

intercultural competence, prejudices, social distance, stereotypes

Revizija #2

Stvoreno 12 rujna 2024 18:14:37 od Marijana Kardum

Ažurirano 21 rujna 2024 11:31:20 od Martina Gajšek