

Summary

The growth of social competence within multicultural peer groups

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In contemporary theories of democracy there are multiple views on the relationship between democracy and multiculturalism. The social equality phenomenon observes pluralism at the individual level and multiculturalism at the level of cultural and ethnic groups. However, in education it is possible, under certain conditions, to make pluralism and multiculturalism compatible. Becoming aware of similarities and differences can encourage a development of tolerance for the different. Young people are facing new social roles, relationships and situations. Peers have a key role in the acquisition and mastering of new abilities. They represent support to an adolescent in search of identity. To an adolescent, a peer group provides the sense of belonging, trust and support, emotional stability, self-confidence and a possibility of being popular and accepted. Discussions about understanding others and having a sensibility for their problems speak of social competence or social intelligence and emotional-interpersonal intelligence, as well as of empathy, social skills, social interaction, altruism, solidarity, social support, integration, perception and adjustment, indicating a rising quantity of social behaviour research and the importance of social competence. It is obviously not possible to claim that this is caused by some general factor or a characteristic, nor by a specific ability to function successfully in everyday situations. Perhaps competence is more specific to a certain role?

Keywords: multiculturalism, interculturalism, peer interaction, social competence, pro-social behaviour, morality.