



## INTERCULTURAL AND MEDIA EDUCATION ON ART CLASSES

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**Abstract:** Visual art, music and literature, are part of the culture. Thus art shows the interactions between different cultures. The aim of the article is to present some activities to include intercultural issues in art and mother language classes. Art classes also give the opportunity to do Media Education.

**Keywords:** visual education, language teaching, intercultural education

### Introduction

“Art in itself is very diverse and unique, but common in its themes relating to society, culture, and identity” (McFee, 2008). Literature, music, visual art belongs to arts. As regarding visual art, it contains paintings, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, drawings, photography, film, decorative art, etc. Chalmers (1987) describes art as a “powerful, pervasive force that helps to shape our attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.” Thus art is suitable for promoting interculturality.

Art shows the interactions between different cultures. Thus it is suitable for introducing interculturality. Also in art education there is important to interpret the message of an image, in language classes the message of a text. This is the reason that media education could be integrated in art or language classes. The aim of the article is to present some activities to include intercultural and media education in art and mother language classes.

### Intercultural and Media Education

**Media Education** is the process of teaching and learning about the media. Media education aims to develop both critical thinking, critical understanding, and active participation (Buckingham, 2003). In media education the teacher should create situations in which students can make their own judgment, develop the ability to analyze those judgments, and to take the responsibility about their thinking (Masterman, 1985).

The outcome is media literacy. **Media literacy** has many definitions:

“Media literacy proponents contend that the concept an active, not passive user: The media-literate person is capable recipient and creator of content, understanding sociopolitical context, and using codes and representational systems effectively to live responsibly in society and the world at large” (International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2001)

“Media literacy, the movement to expand notions of literacy to include the powerful post-print media that dominate our informational landscape, helps people understand, produce, and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words, and sounds. A media-literate person – everyone should have the opportunity to become one – can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media” (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993).

Media literacy is “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a variety of forms” (Kubey, 1997)

“Media literacy is a set of perspectives that we actively use to expose ourselves to the media to interpret the meaning of the message we encounter” (Potter, 2005)

**Intercultural Education** is „a necessary openness to the other, especially in this new context of globalization, which is specific to the new European context...” (Moldoveanu & Dumitru, 2005)

### Examples of good practices

The ICTime project aims to develop methodology to integrate different type of media in intercultural education. Some activities using photos and films in intercultural education are presented in Marchis, Ciascai & Costa, 2008; Marchis, Ciascai & Sa Pereira, 2008; Marchis, Ciascai & Saial, 2008. In this article we present four activities integrating intercultural and media education in Art and Language class, using different type of media (film, picture, slide-show). These activities were developed during the ICTime course organized in Seixal, Portugal in 2008.

#### 1. Activity: Masks

##### Objectives/Competences:

- To Understand the importance of preserving cultural traditions;
- To understand the various intercultural differences expressed in plastic and visual communication;
- To integrate the knowledge and the techniques for making masks.

**Contents:** Geometric drawing, painting, gluing, modeling; visual communications: structure, forms, textures.

**Time:** 180 minutes.

**Resources:** Laptop, videoprojector, presentation made by the teacher about masks; paper, pencils (for drawing); cloth, newspapers, wool, ink, glue, plaster bandages, various papers (for mask)

##### Steps of the activity:

- To watch a slide-show made by the teacher about “Masks”
- To observe the main cultural differences.
- To discover intercultural relation between the different masks presented.
- To draw human faces
- To construct three-dimensional form plaster masks and papier-maché masks “

#### 2. Activity: Posters

##### Objectives/Competences:

- To raise awareness of students about the problems of interculturality.
- To show the students the importance of the poster as a tool for communicating ideas in actual societies.
- To express respect for difference;
- To increase the pupils understanding of other cultures and diversity in the world.
- To understand the importance of images in visual communication;
- To use ICT in the classroom.

**Contents:** The activity will turn mainly to the following contents, illustrated by intercultural issues: the social function of a poster (intercultural message); the communication functions of the poster.

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Resources:** Laptop, video projector, movie made from images on the Internet with posters.

##### Steps of the activity:

- To preview a film about the relations between poster and the interculturality;
- To make an individual commentary about the watched film;
- To discuss, in a group, about the use of the poster as a means of dissemination ideas;
- To comment the sentence in the film “...the cultural identity is constructed in equality and in diversity.”

#### 3. Activity: “Looking at the world”

##### Objectives/Competences:

- To know different cultural realities.
- To be aware of the richness of different cultures.

- To learn to accept diversity.
- To develop the interest in new technologies.

**Contents:** Module/standard; natural module; artificial module; natural standard; artificial standard

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Resources:** presentation made by the teacher about different doors and windows in several regions of Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde, Macau, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine; laptop, videoprojector; interactive board, worksheets for the interactive board; computer network;

**Steps of the activity:**

- To watch a slideshow made by the teacher about different doors and windows in several regions of Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde, Macau, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine. While watching the slideshow, the teacher carries out a game where she asks the students to discover to what region belong those images by the meaning of the sentences.
- The teacher presents the content “Module/standard” in the interactive board with a work sheet in which the students respond to different issues.
- Each pupil selects a door/window and uses the Paint drawing program to edit the image.
- The pupils form group of four and discuss about the similarities and differences of the cultures from where the presented doors and windows are.

#### **4. Activity: “Children of the world”**

**Objectives/Competences:**

- To sensitize students to the acceptance of different cultures through the observation of children from different cultures.
- To carry out a comparative analysis of the physical characteristics among them.

**Contents:** Physical and psychological picture; the adjectives.

**Time:** 90 minutes.

**Resources:** Computer, projector, film made by the teacher about children from different cultures; blackboard, chalk, paper and pen. (For students with special educational needs, work sheet and dictionaries.)

**Steps of the activity:**

- The teacher presents the objectives of the lesson: to observe several photographs of children from different cultures and identify traits that characterize and relate to their country of origin.
- Projection of a film made by the teacher aiming at sensitizing the cultural differences.
- Dialogue with the students on the observed images oriented for the following order:
  - o Images they liked more;
  - o Oral description of these images and justification for their choice;
  - o Countries the children could be from;
  - o Characteristic features connecting them with those countries;
  - o Identification of clothes they use and justification;
  - o Social environment they belong to and justification;
  - o Possible experiences;
  - o Type of education;
- Identification, in small groups, of physical and psychological aspects.
- Speaking and writing (blackboard and diaries) activity: adjectives to characterize his/her physical and psychological portrait. (Teacher can provide a list of adjectives to the students with special educational needs, so that they choose to agreement with each image and a dictionary to identify the meaning of any word that is unknown).
- Analysis of intercultural aspects (for example the boy in Nepal with the Chicago Bulls cap).
- Writing a text in prose or verse, in small groups, whose characters are drawn from the film.  
Reading the texts

**Suggestions for the teachers:**

Continuing to tackle this theme with the students, it can be studied the text “Children of all the colours” from the Portuguese writer Luísa Ducla Soares, with possible presentation dramatized by the

students where these, in a creative way, recreate their characters being influenced in children' of other cultures portraits.

## Conclusion

The above presented activities show that it is not difficult to discuss intercultural issues on art and language classes. This is coming from the nature of these subjects, as disciplines with culture as the main topic.

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