2. Interculturalism, education and dialogue

Intercultural dialogue has emerged in the first decade of the 21st Century as a major means for managing diversity and strengthening democracy. The European Ministers of Education met in 2003 to witness and sign a declaration on intercultural education in the new European context. In the declaration the Ministers of Education reasserted the symbolic value of democracy as the underlying reference value for all states and, noting the diversity of European societies in terms of ethnicity, culture, languages, religions and education systems and the social conflicts and disagreements that result from different value systems, placed their hope in intercultural education as the means to avoid the worst excesses of globalisation, especially exclusion and marginalisation, and the problems of xenophobia and racism that afflict European societies.

The development agenda for CGSE is to build on this model and to extend it as a means for global dialogue, including theory and practices on the development of education for democracy, human rights education, the role of intercultural education in maintaining and developing the unity and diversity of societies, the recognition and promotion of biculturalism in NZ and indigenous cultures, enhancing the quality of education as a response to the challenges posed by social diversity by making democracy learning and inter-cultural education key components of educational reform.

The inspiration for this research theme developed when Professors Besley and Peters were visiting scholars at Guangzhou University, working with their colleague Professor Jiang Xiaoping in March 2010, helping to set up the Centre for Intercultural Education and Dialogue at Guangzhou University in the People’s Republic of China. A subsequent special issue in Policy Futures in Education devoted to the Council of Europe’s (2008) White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: Living Together as Equals in Dignity was an opportunity to review and critically discuss the way Europe has adopted interculturalism as a means for managing diversity in the age of globalisation.

In relation to this theme CGSE will develop new research to give impetus to a coherent vision for intercultural education that can operate as a philosophical coherent epistemological and ethical disciplinary approach to global studies in education, including the following research objectives to:

- develop conceptual research on intercultural education and an overall philosophy of intercultural education;
- in the context of globalisation introduce respect for human rights and diversity, foundations for managing diversity, openness to other cultures, inter-religious dialogue and inter-cultural dialogue;
- focus on content of learning methods and teaching aids providing examples of ways of taking the intercultural dimension of curricula into account;
- identify and disseminate examples of good practice emphasising intercultural and pluralist approaches;
• develop programs designed to encourage awareness of linguistic diversity in multicultural societies;
• research intercultural skills including communication in foreign languages, social and civic competences, and cultural awareness and expression.
• to conceptually develop the twin notions of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism as forms of global openness

Current research activity related to this theme:

The World and the Teacher: Prospects and Challenges for Teacher Education in an Age of Cosmopolitanism (Prof. Klas Roth, Stockholm University; research network funded by Sweden Research Council).
Michael Peters was Keynote at International Conference, Stockholm University, Feb 6, 2012; and at ‘Cosmopolitanism, communication and citizenship education’, Örebro University, Sweden February 2-3, 2012;
As part of this research project, Professors Peters and Besley presented at an International Workshop at 13th International Conference of ISSEI (International Society for the Study of European Ideas), the University of Cyprus, Nicosia, 2-6 July, 2012.

We would like to initiate a similar and related project in New Zealand.

Selected recent published works related to this theme:
