Designing Pedagogical Practices for Teaching in Educational Spaces Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
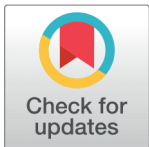
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ABSTRACT

Israel is a multi-cultural migration country and its education system face the challenges of equality and inclusion. This is comparative qualitative research based on a model that evaluates the development of intercultural competence. The purpose of the study is to examine the perceptions and attitudes of inter-cultural competence development in two groups of students, in which only one of them was involved in extra-curricular learning. The findings show differences between the two groups. Group A, had gained new knowledge in broader cultural contexts and had a deeper insight on creating a pluralistic professional identity, cultural-emotional commitment and strengthens the relationship between teaching and culture than the Group B. Moreover, the students in group A were more practical and dynamic and created a link between the content of the lesson and the children's origin culture. They allow discussion of controversial issues and encourage the children to share personal stories.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Migration in Israel

Almost every school in Israel has immigrant, new or veteran children, migrants who belong to diverse ethno-linguistic. Teter (2004) examined the teachers' attitudes toward integration and inclusion, and found that on the one hand they hold pluralistic views and believe that migrant children should be allowed to express their cultural uniqueness, but on the other hand while teaching in the classroom teachers reveal a perception that all immigrants must become similar to Israelis. It is therefore possible to conclude that there is a gap between the declarative level of teachers and the practical level, and under the cloak of pluralistic discourse lies a rather assimilative demand. This gap prevents immigrants from being treated with openness and tolerance towards the ethnic traditions and customs they represent.

In this reality, teacher training programs are required to act responsibly to develop intercultural competence among preservice teachers. These preservice teachers will in the future become teachers with the ability to create meaningful encounters between people from different cultures, to conduct dialogue on worldviews, beliefs and values and to create a sense of mutual enrichment and growth among all partners (Marx & Moss, 2011; Phillion & Malewski, 2011).

1.2 Intercultural competence

One of the complex questions facing the teacher training system during a time of demographic change is how to train teachers with intercultural ability who are open to different thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and behaviors while showing respect to minority groups (Agmon-Snir & Shemer, 2016; Deardorff, 2011; Fantini, 2007; Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012; Stephan & Stephan, 2013).

Studies in education indicate that there has been very little preparation in the teacher training process for learning the intercultural dimension, developing intercultural communication skills, and enriching cultural knowledge (Byram, 2014; Gorski, 2012; Lázár, 2011). However, other researchers (Bringle, Hatcher, & Jones, 2011; Leeman & Koeven, 2018; Schutte, 2018) found that educators who met directly with people from (Agmon-Snir & Shemer, 2016; Deardorff, 2006, 2011; Fantini, 2007; Malewski et al., 2012; Stephan & Stephan, 2013) other cultures and were exposed to an ethnically-culturally diverse environment opened their eyes and developed cultural sensitivity and emotion.

Bradford, Allen, and Beisser (2000) have indicated that the concept of "intercultural competence" is defined as knowledge, skills, attitudes and policies developed by professionals in ongoing learning processes in order to create effective work with people from different cultures in various fields, such as communication, psychology, linguistics, anthropology and education. Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) defined intercultural competence as appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to one degree or another, represent different or different positive, cognitive and behavioral orientations toward the world.

Other several studies (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Irvine, 2003; Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001; Villegas, 2007) have reported that educators without an intercultural competent are not aware to patterns of behavior, beliefs, values, history and cultures of children's country of origin. Therefore, in the case of a conflict educators tend to perceive the cultural diversity and differences in appearance, such as dark skin color, as the source of the problem. Thus, it is important for educators to develop their own emotional self-awareness, interpersonal skills, ability to use teaching considerations and cross-cultural competence.

1.2.1 Intercultural competency in the teaching process

Deardorff (2006, 2009) presents a model for intercultural competence that has been accepted by many educational researchers. The model presents three requirements for cultural competence: (1) openness to a variety of cultures without dealing with unfounded

assumptions; (2) self-awareness of the other culture and knowledge about a variety of cultures; (3) the ability to think reflexively about the interrelationship between people from a variety of cultures through self-inquiry.

This study is based on the model of Landa, Odòna-Holm, and Shi (2017) who adapted Deardorff's model to the language of teacher training.

- **Level 1 - Requisite Attitudes** - Take an interest in backgrounds, histories, and socio-cultural practices: curiosity, openness, respect.
- **Level 2 - Knowledge & Comprehension** - Build awareness and understanding of the form and function of sociolinguistic practices in intercultural contexts: sociolinguistic awareness, culture-specific information, deep understanding and knowledge of culture, cultural self-awareness.
- **Level 3 - Desired Internal Outcome** - Develop Internal Outcome for children from varying cultural norms: empathy, ethno-relative view, flexibility, adaptability.
- **Level 4 - Desired External Outcome** - Educational Activism that perform proactively as an educator in nested intercultural contexts and sustain positive relationships with families and the community.

2 METHOD

The research is comparative qualitative and interpretive, which combines description, analysis, interpretation and understanding. Shalsky and Arieli (2016) reported that the focus of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the complex world of preservice teachers' experiences from their point of view, while looking holistically at the processes that take place through experience at school, multicultural encounters and daily life.

Twenty-five teaching students aged 25 and over participated in the study: three men and seventeen women. Everyone has a B.A. or M.A from diverse fields: citizenship, communication, literature and more. The participants' ethnic identity is varied: four of them immigrated to Israel at a young age from Ethiopia, Russia, France, and Argentina, the others were born and raised in Israel. Once a week, they practice teaching at a multicultural and multilingual school based on values of equal rights, tolerance, and dignity. The practice includes observations, group work and classroom instruction accompanied by a teacher and a pedagogical instructor.

Ten preservice teachers were also involved in extra-curricular learning: visited the neighborhood, met volunteers and counselors who operate educational programs in the neighborhood, heard a lecture by cultural mediators and held a dialogue with community leaders working with refugees and asylum seekers. They participated in religious events and conversed directly with preservice teachers from other cultures.

The data were collected during one-year of practice from a digital portfolio by the two groups of preservice teachers: Group A - ten preservice teachers who participated in regular school practice and also were involved in extra-curricular learning; Group B - ten preservice teachers who participated only in regular school practice. The content analysis was based on Landa et al. (2017).

At the analysis each researcher independently read the passages of the portfolio and set the passages adjustment to the level of the intercultural competence model. In the next stage of the analysis, the triangulation between researchers was conducted in order to determine the reliability of matching the content to the model levels. The reliability among the researchers is 86%.

The purpose of the study is to examine perceptions and attitudes of intercultural competence development in two groups of preservice teachers, which only one of them was involved in extra-curricular learning.

In the study, the ethical rules were carefully observed: maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents and the data, avoiding harmful questions and giving preservice teachers a choice whether to participating in the study or not.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings will be presented according to levels of a model for the development of intercultural competence. At each stage, we will present the findings and changes in the preservice teachers' perceptions and actions in the classroom, school and community.

3.1 Level 1 - Requisite Attitudes

In the documentation and reflections of all the participants we found that they were curious and interested in the children' historical-cultural-social background, kept an open mind about the differences between cultures and heritages and respected new norms of behavior.

3.1.1 Curiosity

Group A - the preservice teachers met the children after watching a play about a new child in school who found it difficult to integrate in class:

> I was curious to learn new things about the children culture, I was interested in the ways they use to get a new child that doesn't know the language and the local rules. Are they sensitive? Will they help him and play with him? Do they ignore him and make him a hard time?
>
> *S.*

S's reaction after the show demonstrates curiosity to learn more about how children from another culture behave in his class. Moreover, S's curiosity, his questions and reactions aroused an interesting and communicative discourse about new social environments in the classroom. Hamm and Perry (2002) indicated that teachers' reactions to what the children say in the classroom dialogue are more important than the questions themselves. According to them, curious responses by teachers may develop an environment of inquiry among children. Knuth (2002) adds that a curious teacher offers opportunities for teachers to share new knowledge, ask questions, and look for answers.

Also A. showed curiosity about other cultures. She expected to find colorful walls that will tell her about new places and cultures which the children came from:

> When I came to school for the first time I realized that it was a special school because there are so many children from all over the world. I was curious to know who the children came from and what was special about them. I walked around the corridors of the school and in the courtyard, looking for expression and visibility of multiculturalism.
>
> *A.*

Group B - in Hebrew classes they learned about the Ethiopian Jews migration to Israel. The preservice teachers presented a video about rescue Ethiopian Jews. He showed sensitivity, respect and curiosity to know about the children's lives:

> In this lesson A. participated a lot and had a nice answers despite the fact that usually he is silent. I compliment him especially when he used the phrase "Touching Heart" to describe his experiences after watching the film. I wanted to know why he chose the phrase "Touching Heart" and if it was related to his personal-family story from Eritrea. He told us that they were caught by Egyptian soldiers were put tin some house.
>
> *O.*

It is possible that the curiosity of the two groups of preservice teachers is a result from the cultural differences between them and the children. The difference is expressed in the preservice teachers' choice to use the children's description as "they" which distinguishes them from the dominant social group "we." The distinction between 'us' as the majority and 'they' as the minority aroused awareness among the preservice teachers about the gap between what they knew and what they did not know about the children's culture. Similarity to Loewenstein (1994), curiosity arise from discomfort situation where we have information gap. In order to cope the difficulty, curiosity is aroused to new knowledge that will a bridge the gap.

Curiosity led them to act in a different way than what is common in schools where children from minority groups in the society do not attend. Curiosity encouraged them to bring the foreign culture into the dialogue in the classroom and to work to promote the positive visibility of minorities in the school space. This is similar to Opdal (2001), which claims that curiosity is a motive that can inspire a person to engage in educational inquiry and to encourage activism in teaching.

3.1.2 Openness

Group A – V. showed openness towards to the children's lack of knowledge:

> In a Hebrew class we read a text about "Countries in the World" and one of the children mentioned Eritrea and told us about his father's memories from school

there. I and other children in class were really interested, we asked him questions and he did not know all the answers, so he said that he would ask his father and come back next lesson with answers.

V.

he text invited the preservice teacher opportunity to encourage the child to share a personal-cultural story. She listened patiently to all the children's question and expanded the dialogue in the next lesson. The Openness in a multicultural educational environment according to Banks and Banks (2010) and Schwartz et al. (2012) is a universal value expressing a desire to understand and accept others in an effort to offer equal education and opportunities for all children regardless of ethnicity, ethnicity or culture.

The example illustrates the concept of Kramsch (1995) and Kramsch (1998) and Byram and his colleagues perception (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). According to them, the text is a powerful tool for fostering understanding between different cultures. Reading the text offers children the opportunity to express their opinions and feelings and share experiences from their own world. It is possible that following this experience they will be able in the future to deal with situations of conflict and tension.

Another preservice teacher wrote in her reflections after a visit "Abogida" a private infor-mal, educational framework where children from Eritrea study in the afternoon: Tigrinya, English and Math:

During the visit to "Abogida" I discovered a new initiative by Eritrean migrants. Only there that I realized how it is important for migrants to maintain their mother tongue as part of their culture and tradition. The language reflects their original place and strength the connection between children and parents. I got excited to hear the children singing the national anthem.

M.

Her words reveal a positive attitude towards the Eritrean culture: anthem, symbols, flag, customs and language. In addition, M's statements are in connection with Guardado (2008) and Parker and Buriel (2006) that emphasized the preservation of the mother tongue to strengthen family relationships, saying that intergenerational communication reinforces an emotion, family tradition, and openness among family members because this language represents identity Cultural heritage accompanied by humor, emotion, songs and stories.

The Hebrew lessons as an additional language, similar to Alred and Byram (2002) and Byram (2009) focused not only on teaching Hebrew as the dominant language, but also on interculturalism lessons where the preservice teachers played role of cultural mediators. Here is an example of a case in which the Y. didn't show an openness:

In the lesson on "Heroes" I presented the character of Martin Luther King. I focused the contents and ignored the children's feelings. It made the children angry, upset and not cooperate. They barricaded themselves as a bunker and didn't want to talk about racism and discrimination because, according to them, we

> Israelis don't respect their culture. The subject was very personal and exposed
> sensitive places. wasn't open and sensitive.
>
> *Y.*

Y. thought that a dialogue with the children about Martin Luther King will encourage them to express their views on their lives as a minority in Israeli society involving racism, violence and exclusion. It is possible to conclude that there is a gap between her perceptions and the children's perceptions, and therefore she must make a difference and act in a different way.

Group B - preservice teacher A. enabled the children to tell the story of their journey to Israel:

> One of the children told about the journey from Eritrean to Israel at the age of three. He remembers sleeping in a refugee camp, everyone scratched because of the lice and he climbed up on his mother to sleep at night [...]. I would like to hear from him further and incorporate the new knowledge into the lesson.
>
> *A.*

A. allowed the new knowledge to be part of the learning process in the classroom while engaging in dialogue with the other children. This is similar to Aloni (2008) that openness in dialogue between educators and children from other cultures is an important component that creates trust between them and promotes a better understanding between them without power struggles or differences in their status.

From the comparison we found that the extra-curricular learning exposed Group A to broad contexts of the children's lives and encouraged them to integrate the new knowledge into the teaching-learning process classroom. Previous studies (Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pedersen, 2006) have shown that openness is a personality factor that influences multicultural perceptions and may lead to a better understanding of the complexity of reality and the development of navigational capabilities in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

3.1.3 Respect

Group A - in the acquaintance sessions, the children told a story related to an object from home connected to their culture:

> I was excited to see the enthusiasm and participation of the children, they spoke with confidence, they were interested in the stories of friends from Ethiopia, Sudan, Russia, Eritrea, the Philippines, asking questions and giving feedback to each other, it was amazing.
>
> *G.*

G. expressed respect and acceptance to cultures and people. Her decision to allow dialogue on the cultural tradition attests to respect for multiculturalism. However, in her documentation she chose to use the words "they" and "us". These words may reflect a paternalistic

perception that the culture of the majority is more important than the minority culture. Nevertheless, we emphasize that it did not try to impose the values of dominant culture and described the activity in words with a positive connotation: Enthusiasm, security, diversity, amazing.

Group B - D. presented a respect approach and wrote in her reflections:

> I see every person as he is and I would like to think that I live in a country that respects migrants as they are regardless their religion or where they came from.
>
> *D.*

D. showed deep respect to every person without criticize his race, nationality, religion or color. A comparison shows that both groups expressed respect, curiosity and openness to learning about the other culture, and the first hints of intercultural competence development. These findings are consistent with the studies of Corenblum and Stephan (2001) and Geel and Vedder (2011), who argued that those exposed to ethnically heterogeneous environments tend to cooperate, express opinions and thoughts openly and are not afraid of the intercultural encounter between majority group for minority groups.

In spite of that, we found differences: (a) The expression of respect - Group A expressed particular and personal respect for children in their class, while Group B expressed a general view of respect for minorities. (b) In the context of responses - Group A showed curiosity in a broader context of the unique characteristics of mother tongue, tradition and social norms, whereas Group B was focused on a limited context of school and classroom routine.

3.2 Level 2 - Knowledge & Comprehension

From the documentation and reflections we found that all the participants understood the cultural complexity and wanted to expand their knowledge on other social and cultural norms.

3.2.1 Specific cultural information

Group A - after a language lesson in which they read a story describing a meeting between children from different countries in the world, L. described the course of the lesson and her thoughts:

> One of the Eritrean children told me that 'Injera' is the traditional food in his home. I told him that the "Injera' is also traditional food in my Ethiopian community […] Another child said that Eritrea has more than 70 languages and most of the people speak Amharic. I was surprised to find that there is much in common between Eritrea and Ethiopia.
>
> *L.*

The dialogue about children around the world encouraged collaboration among children in the classroom and enabled minority children to enrich others with new information and

to deepen understanding of the relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia and other differences between the ethnic groups in the class. Teter (2004) also indicated that educators have a responsibility to empower migrant children and to strengthen the interrelationship and dialogue between cultures.

Group B - the preservice teachers expressed a desire to deepen his knowledge of the children's historical background and heritage:

> The children were interested in the ancient maps of Jerusalem and spoke to each other in their mother tongue. It was interesting to hear an opinion I did not expect to hear - that Jerusalem is described as a link between continents and religions, or that every continent symbolizes another religion connected to Jerusalem. I understood that migrant children related Jerusalem as a cultural value. It's new to me.
>
> *K.*

A comparison revealed that group A felt uncomfortable with the lack of knowledge and took action to bridge the gaps. It is possible that the new knowledge contributed to the formation of a multicultural perception vis-a-vis the family contexts of the children. In contrast, Group B were satisfied with information about the other culture provided by the children.

3.2.2 Cultural self-awareness

Group A - here is an example illustrating how a lack of knowledge about the other culture may create difficulty in conducting a dialogue in the classroom and how necessary it is for the teacher to recognize the identity of the children and their heritage and formulate an intercultural competence that will assist him in the teaching process:

> My task in the class was to create a personal dialogue, but I could not, the strategy failed, I had to invent examples of the concepts of discrimination and racism, and I had no examples in my head that I could draw. A center for the periphery, I behaved insensitively, and the children justifiably did not cooperate.
>
> *H.*

This example reinforces Agmon-Snir and Shemer (2016) perception that teachers should learn about minority culture in society, strengthen their pedagogical skills, and be able to talk with children about social issues that create tensions not from the place of dominant culture paternalism but as a personal dialogue between cultural. It should be indicated that we did not find an example of expressions of cultural self-awareness from group B. It is possible that the absence of expressions means that preservice teachers are concentrated in the content of the lesson and its management and less in the family, socio-cultural context.

3.3 Desired Internal Outcome

We found that all the preservice teachers showed empathy and the ability to understand and share other feelings, without criticized in terms of good and bad.

3.3.1 Empathy

Group A - as part of the extra-curricular learning they visited the youth center and read an article about the volunteers who work with the children. She saw the migrant children coming from school, hugging the volunteers and running into the youth center:

> In the article I discovered the opinions and feelings of boys from migrant families, and I was sad when one of the boys said that at the end of his birthday party his mother took the gifts he had received to buy basic things for their house. At a meeting at the youth center, I understood that the migrants live in a complex reality that I did not know before. I have no doubt that this reality will affect children in the future when they are older people.
>
> *M.*

The direct encounter with the children, the volunteers and the director of the youth center caused M. to express feelings of empathy, sadness and solidarity. For the first time, she was exposed to the harsh reality of migrant children and to the informal, supportive educational environment created by the volunteers. Similar to the expressions of empathy of the volunteers, Kaniel (2013) and Rosenthal, Gat, and Zur (2009) emphasize that in multicultural education it is desirable to express empathy towards children from the minority group, to develop a personal and good relationship of listening, to adapt the activity to multicultural contexts.

It should be noted that we did not find an example of expressions of empathy in group B. In our view, outside curricular learning outside the school, the direct encounter with the authentic environment flooded them with feelings of sadness and frustration and empathy for children.

3.3.2 Ethno-relative view

Group A - after visiting the neighborhood near the school G. wrote:

> I saw stores of products and food from other cultures in the neighborhood, for example, a store of authentic Eritrean dresses, I think they wear these dresses for ceremonies [...] I also saw Ethiopian and Indian food stores and an internet store where Filipino immigrants communicate with their families [...] I felt I was in a strange unfamiliar place. I was surprised to see that everyone in the neighborhood tries hard to preserve his culture and tradition. They have the right to live as they please, and they do not have to be like us.
>
> *G.*

G. describes the visit to the neighborhood as a source of learning about the lives of migrants who face difficult conditions of neglect, poverty and stench, and yet try to lead a normative life. The neighborhoods according to Schnell (2007) are cosmopolitan enclaves in which they conduct simple and improvised commerce: hairdressing, kiosks, used clothes, booths of cheap bags, beads and ornaments.

Visiting "Abogida" made them understand the relationship between cultures. Her words illustrate the studies of Bennett (1993, 2004) that examined the orientation against the other culture. According to him, this is a developmental process in which one recognizes the existence of differences between cultures, accepts them while avoiding descriptions in terms of the highest and inferior and has the ability to change perspectives cognitively and behaviorally.

Group B – C. taught the topic "Multiculturalism in the State of Israel". Each of them taught at a lesson about the country from which his parents had arrived in Israel and at the end of the lesson they prepared an online game. At the end of the day she gave the children a typical tradition food from their culture:

> I was able to interest the children in my culture. The children cooperated, agreed to taste the food I brought, talked to me about similar foods in their community. I learned a few things from the children, and they told me stories that made me think differently.
>
> *C.*

C. chose activities focused on migration and integration from the personal, multicultural experience in Israeli society from a place of sharing rather than a place of comparison. She wanted to explain and to teach about other cultures that are unfamiliar to children.

Also in this level we found that preservice teachers from group A expressed a relatively ethnic perspective. They expressed an open opinion on the right of migrants to preserve the culture and traditions of the country of origin in the public sphere and in school space. In contrast group B were unable to see the differences between culture from a broader perspective.

3.3.3 Flexibility

Group A - R. asked that each children bring a picture related to a family event. He divided the class into groups to allow all the children to speak and present the family event in the photo, and so they were all exposed to new knowledge about other cultures. One of the girls was unable to tell the incident in the picture:

> The girl did not want to tell the story in the picture, so I invited her to sit next to me, asked her questions about the picture she had brought in. She told about her grandfather who immigrated to Israel from Russia and died before she celebrated her Bat Mitzvah. As a result the family collapsed and were not celebrated according to family tradition. We talked about the connection to the grandfather, the

family culture and the preservation of tradition. I felt that this was the first time anyone from the school was interested in the child's cultural-family background. Following the conversation she continued to write, expressed feelings of farewell and also told the story to the group members. Today I understand that the way of teaching must be adapted so that the educational framework will bridge the gap between cultures and perhaps narrow the gaps between them.

R.

This example demonstrates the pedagogical flexibility and understanding and the complexity of the intercultural encounter in the classroom. R. was aware of the child's emotional distress, realized that personal dialogue and patience would make her feel comfortable and share her family story. With pedagogical flexibility R. managed to help her overcome the barriers and participate in the lesson. Previous Studies (Wang & Eccles, 2013; Watkins & Zhang, 2006) show that personal contact, listening and pedagogical flexibility on the part of the teacher helps children in the educational framework cope with social tensions and promotes a positive attitude towards society at large. Building a personal relationship according to Makarova and Herzog (2013) is one of the ways that schools can be transformed into a supportive and flexible environment for children who are aware of the help available to them.

> The girls were late for class, and it turned out that they were going to shower because the previous lesson was a gym class. This is a great example of the cultural differences that may create disciplinary problems and objections. The girls are used to showering after sports and there is time in the system, whereas in our school it is not acceptable, and therefore there is a problem.

B.

Group B – the preservice teacher showed flexibility when the children were late for the lesson and with previous cultural knowledge she understood the reasons:

The findings of the third stage of the model show that all the preservice teachers showed flexibility and the ability to understand the feelings of the other.

3.4 Level 4 - Desired External Outcome - Educational Activism

Group A - this level includes one category - activism from the responsibility to strengthen the relationship between the school and cultural communities and to promote social integration. In the documentation and reflections of seven participants we found that they acted and initiated joint projects with parents and emphasized the cultural aspects. The children's parents and other activists from the neighborhood were invited to a meeting with the preservice teachers, the children and the school teachers. They held around tables conversations and learn together about the complexity of the neighborhood and the unique cultural characteristics.

Following the round table discourse:

> I told the parents that I want to document different people from different cultures, to put soma pictures and stories on the wall of the school, and so we will reveal the beauty of the neighborhood and the uniqueness of each heritage. The parents liked the idea. In the first stage I collected the personal details in order to receive information from them. Then each child received a task that he had to prepare together with the family members. The aim was to gather stories and images that would illustrate the family heritage. The parents consulted with me, sent pictures, cooperated and wrote the story together. Now I am in the third stage and together with the children we are building the multi-cultural wall in the school, we are all very excited.
>
> *B.*

The round table sessions were a new intercultural encounter. The preservice teachers opened channels of positive interpersonal communication between them, the children and parents. They encouraged the parents to promote multicultural visibility and to think creatively about the integration in school. The parents and children together created a short story accompanied by pictures, the flag of the country of origin and designed it to be part of the "We and the World" project. In addition, B. and the children worked together in the "We and the World" project and created a display on a central wall in the school's yard with family products.

Another initiative was to establish a Hebrew 'Ulpan' class for the parents:

> I decided that I wanted to initiate and influence the field of the Hebrew language. I spoke with one of the leading parents. I suggested to open a Hebrew 'Ulpan' class for the parents and I will be the teacher [...]. Indeed, twelve parents signed up for and we already had two classes. Parents are serious, cooperative and thankful. When I meet the children, I send them regards from the parents who studied with me in the evening [...]. I was surprised by the fact that there are parents who speak several languages. At the end of the lesson I created a table with the parent's name the languages he speaks. This will make it easier for other teachers at school to contact the parents.
>
> *W.*

The examples reflect a pedagogical perception that school and educators can act as a bridge between the two cultures. Wells (2009) indicated that schools can promote visibility and understanding of family values as well as the process of learning new values and norms of the dominant majority.In this way teachers, children and parents may have a new perspective on outside reality.

No examples of a desirable external outcome were found in group B. The findings indicate that social activism developed among group A as a result of extra-curriculum learning.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study examined perceptions and attitudes in the process of developing intercultural competency among two groups of preservice teachers who were trained to teach in a Hebrew teaching program, and only one of them had extra-curriculum learning.

In examining the first three levels in the model we found responses (perceptions and attitudes) in both groups. An explanation may be related to the preservice teachers' familiarity and early experience in teaching Hebrew with other languages, cultures from other countries. This fact is also related to the characteristics of the participants as having a diverse ethnic identity: Israel, Ethiopia, India, Russia, Poland, Iran and France who chose the teaching profession. Moreover, the fact that the field of knowledge is the Hebrew language invites encounters with texts on other cultures, while addressing cultural, civil, historical issues and paying attention to the ability of intercultural communication.

However, differences were found between the two groups. Group A gained new knowledge in wider cultural contexts, reached deeper insights and their response was more practical and dynamic. In addition they encourage the children to share personal stories about objects they have brought home, and together with parents and children, they brought up the culture of origin in the school space.

In the fourth level, we found responses only among group A. This finding indicates the significant difference between the two groups and the first three levels and the final level in the model. Furthermore to the difference between the two groups, we found that most of the responses in group A were written as a result of extra-curricular learning. In contrast, in the responses of group B we can only the beginning of building an intercultural competence. They expressed a desire to learn about the other culture of the children showed positive attitudes toward the other culture and language, but their teaching-learning concepts didn't reflect broad-based vision and meaningful expression to cultural-social contexts.

It appears that innovation, extra-curricular learning and uniqueness of social and community interactions outside of school played an important role in shaping intercultural competence and significantly contributed to the traditional experience in school. Following their exposure to the reality of authentic children life and the socio-cultural aspects the preservice teachers increased the abilities of honor, curiosity, knowledge and empathy with children and parents from other cultures. Moreover, we also found an effect in the lesson planning stage. They adapted the content of the lesson to the children's culture, spoke to the children about controversial subjects and were sensitive to the children's unique needs. Therefore, it is important that the curriculum includes unique activities outside school to encourage them to social-educational activism.

Regarding the difference between the first three levels and the last level in the model, we found that in group B there was no expression of desired external outcome, whereas in group A seven preservice teachers expressed responses reflecting this stage in the model. The first three levels seem to focus on emotion, knowledge and perceptions, while the last one emphasizes action and initiative. It is also more complex because it goes beyond the classroom and school and includes the existence of closer relation between educators, children, families and community and it's raise the importance of complex interpersonal com-

munication with minority group. It is possible that both groups are still in the process of professional development and identity shape and they need more experiences to reach the level of activism.

Thus, in the process of teacher training in general and in programs for teaching additional languages in particular, it is important to emphasize the development of intercultural competence while emphasizing practical and operational components. In previous studies (Agmon-Snir & Shemer, 2016; Fantini, 2007; Stephan & Stephan, 2013; Wächter, 2003) it was indicated that intercultural competence helps in training teachers to different thoughts, feelings, beliefs and behaviors than those familiar with them.

In our opinion, all educators in various fields of knowledge are required for intercultural competence. A similar concept is expressed in (Byram, 2009, 2014), who believes that the role of educators is to shape dynamic and heterogeneous perceptions of a culture that includes emotional, behavioral and cognitive aspects. Such educators will pay attention to the dominant culture and other cultures while showing empathy and openness towards all children.

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