RECOdE
Reflecting Cultures of Education in Early Childhood

Educational Equity in Migration Societies

Critical Cultural Awareness in ECEC Higher Education Programmes

- **Part D:** Toolkit: Enhancing Critical Cultural Awareness in ECEC Higher Education Institutions

Project: Reflecting Cultures of Education. Transnationality and Cultural Awareness in Early Childhood Education Programs (RECOdE)

The project group consists of three universities: University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd (Germany), the University of Stavanger (Norway), and the Dublin City University (Ireland).

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Schwäbisch Gmünd, Dublin, Stavanger
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Foreword

Issues of diversity, along with the powerful social and cultural dynamics of a globalized world, are visible in national discourses in the field of education. Against this backdrop, processes of harmonization and universalization can also be observed in many countries around the world; especially in the European Union. Such developments, on the one hand, represent an opportunity for mutual understanding, partnership, cooperation and mobility, as education systems are becoming increasingly congruent. On the other hand, societies are shaped by different cultural milieus with their own educational values and practices. Due to recent processes of migration and globalization, educational and learning cultures have become more diverse. Institutions of early childhood education have to meet increasing challenges with the effect that education systems need professionals with broad cultural, as well as diversity and equity competences. Furthermore, a growing number of students in ECEC courses have diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. The major challenge of societies is not only to accept these educational differences but to further develop the educational system by including different cultural views in order to create a new common basis of collaboration in education, with inclusion, diversity, and equity as priority.

Against this background, the project **"Reflecting Cultures of Education - Transnationality and Cultural Awareness in Early Childhood Education Programmes (RECOdE)"** partially funded by the Erasmus+ programme "Cooperation Partnerships" of the European Union represented by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), was carried out from 2022 - 2025. The project aims to further develop ECEC study programmes of the project partners: University of Education Schwäbisch-Gmünd (Germany), the University of Stavanger (Norway), and the Dublin City University (Ireland). Our collaboration was founded in 2017 in the context of the international research network 'Cultures of Early Childhood Education and Care (CECEC)' that focuses on ECEC cultural conditions.

The objectives of the project were the development of a set of tools that takes critically into account 'cultures of education' in the ECEC programmes of the project partners as a sustainable cross-cutting theme. The project had set itself four tasks. The first task was to develop a framework (RECOdE 2025b) for reflecting on one's own organizational development at the university level, the curriculum level and the classroom level. Building on this, the second task was to develop a BA module (RECOdE 2025c) and an MA module on critical cultural awareness (RECOdE 2025d). The MA module was tested in a Spring School with students from all project partners as well as from other collaborating universities in 2024.

In this document, the RECOdE team presents the **'Enhancing Critical Cultural Awareness in ECEC Higher Education Institutions: Toolkit'** (RECOdE 2025e). The Toolkit connects relevant didactical materials created by the RECOdE team in the context of the project and those presented by our network partners and colleagues at the Multiplier Events. It was also supplemented by a structured guide for critical reflection on cultural awareness based on the anti-bias approach, which builds on the framework for reflection mentioned above (RECOdE 2025b). The Anti-Bias Curriculum was developed by Louise Derman-Sparks in the US (Derman-Sparks, 1989) as a transformative approach aiming at empowering early childhood educators to proactively address bias, discrimination, and racism in their work with young children in early childhood education and care. It centres around a set of four Anti-bias goals for children and adults. The goals for adults are listed below:

1. IDENTITY:
To be conscious of one's own culture, attitudes and values and how they influence practice

2. DIVERSITY:
To be comfortable with difference and engage effectively with families

3. JUSTICE:
To critically think about bias and discrimination

4. ACTIVISM:
To confidently engage in dialogue around issues of bias and discrimination.

The anti-bias approach is widely used in ECEC in Europe and internationally; it has been adapted to the European context by the European network Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training (DECET), and in various national contexts, e.g. by the German Kinderwelten project (https://www.kinderwelten.net/), and the Irish Éist project (Murray & O'Doherty, 2001). The Anti-bias is already well-established in ECEC pedagogical practice. In RECOdE we build on this work. The goals of the anti-bias approach have been incorporated into the framework for reflection (RECOdE 2025b) and have been adapted for the context of higher education institutions and programmes preparing future kindergarten teachers for their work with young children. An extended version of the four objectives forms the framework for the critical reflection questions. The structured guide to critical reflection presented here relates in particular to the teaching level.

The main goal of this material is to provide a resource box to support educators in develop-

ing and delivering content that is relevant in the context of raising critical cultural awareness in ECEC programmes in higher education in Europe. This teaching material is made freely available to a broad university public as OER (https://recode-erasmus.com/; distribution platform (Erasmus+ Project Results Platform: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/). With this material, we expect to support and empower HEI and their students – who will work or are already working in the ECEC sector – to explore, reflect, and develop critical cultural awareness practices to benefit children, their families, their communities and the wider society.

Finally, we would like to thank all our colleagues who took part in the Multiplier Events and whose contributions and thoughts have enriched our discussions. On behalf of all of them, we would particularly like to thank the colleagues with contributions are part of this Toolkit:

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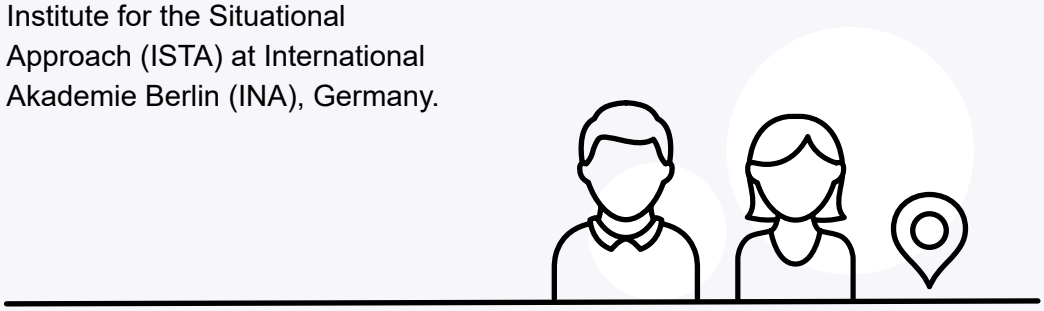

List of acronyms

CCA:
Critical Cultural Awareness

ECEC:
Early Childhood Education and Care

HEI:
Higher Education Institutions

RECOdE:
Reflecting Cultures of Education - Transnationalityand Cultural Awareness in Early Childhood Education programmes

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Reflecting Cultures of Education in Early Childhood

Introduction

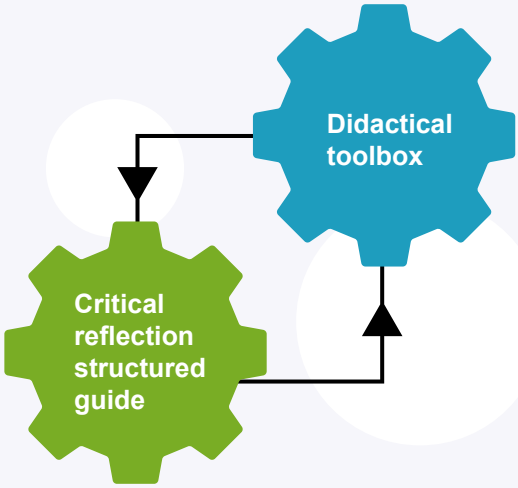
The main goal of this material is to provide a resource box to support educators in developing and delivering relevant content in the context of raising Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA) in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programmes in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Europe. With this material, we expect to support and empower HEI and their students – who will work or are already working in the ECEC sector – to **explore, reflect, and develop critical cultural awareness practices to benefit children, their families, their communities and the wider society.**

CCA in the context of HEI should not be a matter of 'accepting and integrating cultural lines of difference'. It is about **professionally shaping transformation processes of educational institutions in the direction of more equal opportunities and inclusion at all levels of university life.** Although the focus of this project is on ECEC programmes, we believe that our considerations can be applied to other programmes as well. Likewise, we do not consider our project to be an "island of bliss", but rather we consider the challenge to be one that affects all levels of higher education. In this respect, the most important question that remains to be addressed in this Toolkit is

How do we enhance critical cultural awareness in our institutions?

The Tookit has been created for HEI and their actors (teachers, students, staff). We expect that this material will provide ideas for the design of higher education courses in the context described. For this purpose, the Toolkit and the media library are freely available to all interested actors on the RECOdE official website (https://recode-erasmus.com/).

The **Toolkit** consists of two interconnected elements:



The **Critical reflection structured** guide provides a set of critical reflection questions to develop CCA within ECEC higher education contexts. It is based on an adaptation of the Anti-Bias approach developed for ECEC by Derman-Sparks (1989, 2001). For this purpose, the RECOdE team has extended the existing Anti-Bias Goals for Children and Adults with a set of Anti-bias Goals for HE Institutions (RECOdE 2025b).

The **Didactical toolbox** is a resource bank that connects the didactical materials created through the project's development (lesson plans, relevant documents and other materials) and the ones presented by our network partners and colleagues at the Multiplier Events (Dublin, February 2023 and Stavanger, February 2024). The Didactical Toolbox has two main components: (1) Educational practices, and (2) Documents and multimedia materials.

Finally, we need to add a note of caution. **Neither the Anti-bias approach nor the Toolkit are meant to be recipes, ready for simple implementation in practice. Instead, they offer a framework, a starting point, and an orientation for the reflective and transformative processes each institution will have to initiate and engage with.** Similarly, the Didactical Toolbox does not present ready-made solutions, to be copied and pasted into your own practice. It does, however, offer examples of inspiring practices, resources and definitions that colleagues have developed in their specific contexts.

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Enhancing Critical Cultural Awareness in Higher Education Institutions

> **The university is a critical institution or it is nothing**
>
> Stuart Hall

Higher education institutions are not just neutral containers of the multiple and intersecting identities of their students, staff, and stakeholders. They are, as critical theorists maintain, active contributors to the formation of society. That means they are inextricably embedded in the struggle over what designates the 'good' society'. Inevitably, any attempt at transforming educational institutions requires critical and purposeful positioning of that attempt in a much wider imaginary of a transformed society, or, as Paulo Freire (1978) reminds us, it requires a political decision coherent with the plan for the society to be created, and must be based on certain material conditions that also offer incentives for change.

Introducing critical cultural awareness into the university is therefore a multi-faceted task. It requires a commitment to internal, institutional transformation as well as positioning the university in–against–a neoliberal discourse that equally dismisses criticality and the very idea of society. Critical theorist Henry Giroux emphasises the connection between societal and institutional degradation:

> This loss of faith in the power of public dialogue and dissent is not unrelated to the diminished belief in higher education as central to producing critical citizens and a crucial democratic public sphere in its own right. At stake here is not only the meaning and purpose of higher education, but also civil society, politics, and the fate of democracy itself. (Giroux, 2016, p.3)

He goes on to argue that in neoliberal contexts educational institutions are both exposed to, and active in 'a form of depoliticization' that removes 'social relations from the configurations of power that shape them' (ibid, p.4). The result, that many critical educators experience in their daily practice, is that 'it becomes difficult for young people too often bereft of a critical education to translate private troubles into public concerns' (ibid).

Approached from this perspective, fostering critical cultural awareness in higher education becomes a res publica, a ‘matter of concern’ (Latour) for the entire polis of which the university is an institutional citizen. RECOdE recognises the complexity and urgency of the challenge, and understands that the **recognition of diversity as the fundamental condition of higher education requires an anchoring in active citizenship at institutional, collective, and individual levels, and a value-orientation towards equity, freedom, and solidarity** (RECOdE 2025b).

Following this perspective, to ensure CCA, HEI and their actors need to reflect on all elements of practice, including how students/children relate to each other, how staff relate to minority and majority students/children, how language is used, how and what discussions take place, and what activities are undertaken. The Toolkit emphasises the importance of critical reflection. What do we mean by that? **Transforming higher education institutions and programmes oriented by fundamental values–equity, freedom, solidarity–requires interrogation not only of the existing practices, but of the relation between these practices and the context–social, political, economic–the institution operates in.** This includes a critical awareness that this context is never static; indeed, it might be changing dramatically and rapidly! In conceptual terms, this necessary shift has been described as ‘double-loop learning’ (e.g. Argyris, 2004). In practical terms, it requires moving the reflection from the question

In the following section, we present the structured guide, which systematises a selection of critical and reflective questions from the Reflection Framework (cf. RECOdE 2025b) along the four anti-bias objectives.

Critical reflection and Anti-bias – a transformative approach

As mentioned in the introduction, and elaborated in more detail in the RECOdE Framework (2025b), we have underpinned the work of the RECOdE project on a set of principles based on human rights, and a critical understanding of culture as a set and a complex of shared values and practices as well a process of co-construction and (re-)production of making sense of the world (https://recode-erasmus.com/).

Such an understanding, we believe, lends itself to adopting an inclusive approach to transforming practices and structures in higher education. The Anti-bias approach is widely adopted in early childhood education and care practice, as well as in professional development. Introducing it into the RECOdE instrumentarium, it offers a productive connection between early childhood pedagogical practice, professional learning, and institutional development.

Human Rights perspective: guiding principles

Human rights-based ECEC represents not only the basic consensus of a human rights-based approach under international law but also the minimal consensus between different ideas of education. This perspective is based on the fundamental axioms of Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (United Nations, 1948). As further developed in the RECOdE Framework (2025b), freedom, equity and solid solidarity can be therefore understood as three guiding principles to promote an inclusion-oriented pedagogy of diversity (Prengel, 2015).

Based on these considerations, the RECOdE team's adaptation of the Anti-bias approach aims to work towards the development of institutions that guarantee equity, freedom, and solidarity for and among all their members.

Anti-bias approach in higher education: a structured guide to human rights-based critical reflection

> **In a society in which institutional structures create and maintain sexism, racism, and handicapism, it is not sufficient to be non-biased (and also highly unlikely), nor is it sufficient to be an observer. It is necessary for each individual to actively intervene, to challenge and counter the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression.**
>
> Derman-Sparks (1989, p. 3)

Anti-bias is an inclusive approach that respects and recognises all children and adults. It was developed specifically for early childhood education and care, not only to **celebrate differences** but also to **challenge the effects of inequality in society and to work proactively in order to support meaningful inclusion** (Murray and Urban, 2012).

Anti-bias education is based on Paulo Freire's notion of the "practice of freedom" For this Latin American critical pedagogue, the practice of freedom is the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (Freire, 2000). As Lin et al. (2008) describe accurately, Freire believes that freedom can only occur when the oppressed reject the images and fears they have adopted from their oppressors and replace them with autonomy and responsibility. As explained by these authors, **developing CCA and an understanding that we have the power to transform reality must begin at the earliest stages of education.**

As further explained by Murray and Urban (2012), the Anti-bias approach helps adults working with young children to critically reflect on their attitudes to difference, and to proactively and consciously create an inclusive environment for all children. To make this possible, the Anti-bias approach establishes four goals for adults and children, which are based on what is known about how children construct identity and attitudes, and support educators to create a supportive community for children and their families and communities.

> **Differences do not create bias. Children learn prejudice from prejudice — not from learning about human diversity. It is how people respond to differences that teaches bias and fear.**
>
> (Derman-Sparks, 1989)

Critical Reflection Structured Guide

The Critical Reflection Structured Guide presented below provides a set of critical questions and pointers to inspire higher education actors to begin a process of critical reflection, awareness raising, and transformation. This Structure Guide offers a starting point and an orientation for the reflective and transformative processes each institution will have to initiate and engage with.

Critical Reflection Structured Guide

for Critical Cultural Awareness in ECEC Higher Education Institutions

Human Rights Guiding principles	ANTI-BIAS GOALS	
	GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMMES AND ACTORS	GOALS FOR STUDENTS/ FUTURE ECEC PROFES-SIONALS
	IDENTITY: To be conscious of one's own culture, attitudes and values, and how they influence practice.	IDENTITY: To support each student's identity (individual and group) and their sense of belonging.
Equity	• What measures and safeguards are in place to protect the freedom of expression and the individual development of diverse personal identities? • How do the classroom management support the unhindered expression of personal and cultural identities in everyday academic and professional life?	
Freedom	• To what extent do students and teachers actively encourage and support one another's expression of personal identity in daily university life? • How are processes of personal identity construction addressed within course content and learning objectives?	
Solidarity	• How does the selection of teaching materials ensure that diversity is valued, and that representations of non-dominant cultures are accurate and affirming? • To what extent does the teacher cultivate a learning community that respects and values the unique expressions of each individual? • How are discussions of diverse values actively encouraged and developed within the classroom? • Is there space in classroom discussions to question traditional binary understandings of identity and systems of oppression (e.g., black/white, wealthy/poor, male/female), thereby addressing interrelated forms of discrimination such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism, and ableism?	

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Human Rights Guiding principles	ANTI-BIAS GOALS	
	GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMMES AND ACTORS	GOALS FOR STUDENTS/ FUTURE ECEC PROFESSIONALS
	DIVERSITY: To be comfortable with difference, have empathy and form deep, caring connections across all dimensions of human diversity.	IDIVERSITY: To foster student's empathy, and support them to be comfortable with difference.
Equity	• What mechanisms ensure that equity, freedom, and solidarity are reflected in classroom management and university policies and decision-making structures? • To what extent do institutional policies actively promote ethnic and cultural diversity among students and staff?	
Freedom	• How does the curriculum incorporate counterstories to foster awareness of cultural diversity and challenge dominant narratives? • To what extent are study programs and learning opportunities adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students?	
Solidarity	• To what extent do examination formats consider the diverse backgrounds of students, including linguistic and cultural diversity? • Is there space in classroom discussions to question traditional binary understandings of identity and systems of oppression (e.g., black/white, wealthy/poor, male/female), thereby addressing interrelated forms of discrimination such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism, and ableism? • To what extent do institutional communications—such as marketing for study programs—accurately reflect and represent a broad spectrum of human expressions and identities?	

Human Rights Guiding principles	ANTI-BIAS GOALS	
	GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMMES AND ACTORS	GOALS FOR STUDENTS/ FUTURE ECEC PROFESSIONALS
	JUSTICE: To critically think about diversity, bias and discrimination.	JUSTICE: To encourage students to critically think a bout diversity, bias and discrimination.
Equity Freedom Solidarity	• What formal complaint procedures are in place to address discrimination matters affecting personal identities? To what extent do these complaint procedures provide a protected space for vulnerable individuals? • How is the institution prepared to handle complex dilemmas where freedom of speech might conflict with the need to prevent the dissemination of discriminatory ideas and practices? • How is a culture of human rights and social justice institutionally embedded and continuously developed? How are institutional audits and evaluations aligned with human rights principles and commitments to equity? • To what extent does the curriculum address the historical causes of social injustice and foster critical reflection—for example, through memory work? • To what extent is dominance-free dialogue established as a core ideal within the curriculum? • What competencies and learning objectives are specified to promote educational equity and foster critical cultural awareness? • How critically are social power dynamics, domination relations, and discriminatory structures examined within classroom discourse? • Are materials designed to challenge dominant narratives and encourage critical engagement with issues of equity and inclusion? • Does the teacher introduce justice-related vocabulary — including concepts for discussing social inequalities, intersectionality, and critiques of dominant discourses? • Does the curriculum actively encourage critical engagement with issues of power, privilege, and discrimination?	

Human Rights Guiding principles

ANTI-BIAS GOALS

	GOALS FOR ECEC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMMES AND ACTORS	GOALS FOR STUDENTS/ FUTURE ECEC PROFESSIONALS
	ACTIVISM: To confidently engage in dialogue about issues of diversity, bias and discrimination. Work to challenge individual and institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination.	ACTIVISM: To empower students to stand up for themselves and others in difficult situations
Equity Freedom Solidarity	• How is meaningful participation and influence ensured for students, faculty, and staff across all levels of governance? What measures are being pursued to increase the participation of all community members, including intersectional perspectives and marginalized groups, in decision-making processes and academic activities among both students and staff? • How are students, faculty, and employees actively encouraged to act in solidarity with one another? • To what extent are students encouraged and trained to express their freedom of thought within coursework and assessments? • How is freedom and solidarity balanced against each other in the curriculum? • How does the teacher support students in engaging in reflective work on their own identities, including the exploration of advantage and privilege? • How are students equipped to think critically about differences of opinion and cultural expressions, and to what extent is a climate created that fosters respect and enjoyment of cultural diversity? • How does the teacher balance students' need for safe spaces to explore new and potentially oppositional or uncomfortable subject positions? • How are the challenges posed by the presence of systematically marginalized members — due to historical inequalities or colonial legacies — addressed in classroom practices?	

Didactical Toolbox

> **If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail**
>
> (Abraham Maslow)

> **The Master's tools will never dismantle the master's house**
>
> (Audre Lorde)

The purpose of the resources gathered in this Toolkit is to inspire you to engage in critical reflection and transformative action in your own, specific, higher education and programme context. Doing this work is your task–it cannot be delegated. The structured guide to critical reflection, supported by the extended Anti-bias goals, are our invitation to begin your process.

However, it helps to have some resources at hand that can inform your engagement. It can also be inspiring to see how others, in higher education institutions in diverse contexts have approached their task to critically reflect, raise critical cultural awareness, and transform their practices.

RECOdE has invited partners from several European locations to share examples of their own inspiring educational practices at the RECOdE Multiplier Event held at Dublin City University (DCU) in February 2023. Presented below, together with the materials that have been developed by the RECOdE team for the Spring School, they form the first compartment of the toolbox. We hope they will inspire you as much as they inspire us!

The second compartment of the box contains further resources to help you guide your own reflective processes: relevant documents, media sources, networking possibilities. The selection of these materials was carried out with colleagues from different countries and universities during the RECOdE Multiplier Event held at the University of Stavanger (Norway) in February 2024.

Didactical Toolbox

PART I

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

- Educational practices for HE and ECEC institutions

PART II

DOCUMENTS

- International agreements and policy documents
- Countries' legislation and national policy documents
- Reports and grey literature
- Conceptual books and articles
- Toolkits and guidelines
- Infants and Toddlers Literature

MULTIMEDIA MATERIAL

- Films and documentaries
- Podcast

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKS

- Social media profiles
- Networks and platforms

RECOdE Media Library

The materials listed below are freely available in the RECOdE media library (https://recode-erasmus.com/) and on the dissemination platform Erasmus+ Project Results Platform (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/).

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PART I. EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Title	Reflecting everyday life practices in a critical cultural perspective

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Context

RECOdE Spring School at the University of Stavanger (UiS) for ECEC Doctoral & Master students (UiS, DCU, PHSG)- April 2024

Type

Postgraduate module

Summary

This course equips students with the ability to critically analyze and reflect on pedagogical actions in daycare settings, using theoretical approaches rooted in critical cultural perspectives. Students will also become familiar with non-discriminatory action concepts and learn to apply them in practice.

Key topics include power and inequality relations, cultural and ethnic discourses, and the analytical concept of "doing difference," along with practice-oriented situational approaches. Through various working groups, students engage with case studies, prepare for kindergarten observation visits, and reflect on their experiences. They will also develop concept and reflection cards centered on key theories aimed at fostering deeper self-reflection and practical application.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this session, the students will be able to:

- Recognize, analyze, interpret, and reflect on pedagogical actions they encounter in the everyday life of a daycare center from the perspective of selected theoretical approaches to critical cultural perspectives
- Be familiar with selected non-discriminatory action concepts and can apply them in practice

Indicative topics

- Reflecting power and inequality relations in everyday practices
- Theoretical discourses around culture and ethnicity
- Analytical concept of doing difference
- Practice oriented situational approach

Activities

Working group I: Case studies – Power and inequality relations in everyday practices - practices between children, practices between professionals and children, cooperation between parents and team, space/material

Guiding questions:

- What differences are being established and how?
- What categorizations as well as self and other positionings are made?
- What societal norms and power dynamics become evident?
- Which of my personal values and norms are addressed here?

Working group II: Preparation kindergarten visit

- Development of (interview and observation) questions with a special focus on practices in working with children, practices in working with parents, practices in spatial design and material utilization

Working group III: Reflection of the kindergarten visit: Gallery walk with reflection questions and discussion.

From theory to action

- Input on the theoretical and analytical concepts “doing difference” and “eth nicity/culture”, presented by the students and the lecturers
- Input on the practice-oriented concept “situational approach”

Working group IV: Development of concept and reflection cards

- Concepts: Capability Approach, Social Construct, Discourse, Knowledge, Epistemic exclusion, Ethnicity, Culture, Doing difference, Belonging
- Description of the concept and questions for self-reflection and to reflect the practice

Suggested materials

Reading list

Kasüschke, Dagmar & Trninic, Violeta (2019). Doing Ethnicity? The Representation and Negotiation of Cultures in ECEC as an Unexplained Research Task. In S. Faas, D. Kasüschke, E. Nitecki, M. Urban, & H. Wasmuth (Eds.), Globalisation, Transformation, and Cultures in Early Childhood Education and Care (pp. 119-133). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Macha, K. (2022). Situationsansatz. https://www.socialnet.de/lexikon/Situationsansatz

West, C., & Fenstermaker, S. (2002). Doing difference. In S. Fenstermaker & C. West (Eds.), Doing Gender, Doing Difference. Inequality, Power, and Institutional Chance (pp. 55-80). New York: Rouledge

Title	Interethnic Play and the Sense of Belonging in Early Childhood Setting
Authors	**Sara Esmaeeli** University of Stavanger (UiS), Norway.
Context	RECOdE Spring School at the University of Stavanger (UiS) for ECEC Doctoral & Master students (UiS, DCU, PHSG)- April 2024
Type	Postgraduate module
Summary	Fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion in early childhood education (ECEC) settings is essential for children's social and emotional development. For many children, ECEC setting is often the first place where they encounter diversity, making ECEC critical spaces for building foundations of empathy, respect, and collaboration. Belonging is a fundamental human need, deeply tied to children's emotional well-being and their ability to thrive. However, research highlights that simply placing children in diverse groups does not automatically lead to meaningful interactions or relationships. It is indeed the responsibility of educators to create environments where every child feels respected and valued, regardless of their background. This session will explore key themes of interethnic play and belonging and introduce activities like collaborative play designs and story circles to promote interethnic play, shared goals and inclusive practices. These approaches empower educators to create vibrant, supportive spaces where all children can flourish.
Learning outcomes	By the end of these sessions, participants will be able to: • Understand the Role of Interethnic Play: Recognize how play in ethnically diverse preschool settings serves as a foundation for children to explore democracy, equality, and cultural diversity. • Facilitate Inclusive Play: Identify strategies for creating equitable and inclusive play environments where all children, regardless of their ethnic background, can equally participate and lead. • Foster a Sense of Belonging: Understand the importance of fostering a sense of belonging among children from diverse backgrounds and how this contributes to their emotional and social development

Indicative topics

- Interethnic Play and its Challenges: Defining Interethnic Play and exploring the complexity of cross-cultural interactions in preschool settings.
- The Importance of Belonging: Understanding belonging as a fundamental human need and a democratic right.
- Strategies for Facilitating Inclusive Play: The role of the educator in guiding interethnic play and ensuring respectful relationships.

Activities

The activities in this session include a combination of engaging lectures and dynamic interactive group work designed to deepen understanding and provide practical strategies for fostering belonging and inclusion in the ECEC setting.

- The lecture will lay the foundation by exploring key concepts, such as interethnic play, belonging, and the educator's role in promoting inclusion and equity in diverse classroom settings. Through real-life examples and research-based insights, students will gain a theoretical understanding of the importance of creating environments where all children feel respected, valued, and included.
- The interactive group work is designed to apply these concepts in practical, meaningful ways, ensuring students leave the session with tools they can implement in their own educational settings. Examples of group work activities include story circle, collaborative play design and role-playing scenario.

Suggested materials

Mandatory readings

Brooker, L., Einarsdottir, J., & Garvey, D. (2014). Children's perspectives about belonging in educational settings in five European countries. The Open University.

Zachrisen, B. (2013). Play in an ethnically diverse preschool: Conditions for belonging. In P. K. Smith (Ed.), Values education in Nordic preschools: Basis of education for tomorrow (pp. 133-146). NordForsk.

Suggested readings

Brooker, L., & Garvey, D. (2010). Recognizing children's diverse backgrounds: Reflections from European preschool settings. Open University Press.

Zachrisen, B. (2016). The contribution of different patterns of teachers' interactions to young children's experiences of democratic values during play. International Journal of Early Childhood, 48(2), 179-192. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-016-0166-0

Title	Ethnic minorities - inclusion and exclusion processes

Authors

Lena Knudsmark
University College UC SYD, Denmark.

Context

RECOdE Spring School at the University of Stavanger (UiS) for ECEC Doctoral & Master students (UiS, DCU, PHSG)- April 2024

Type

Postgraduate module

Summary

This module is based on a research project from 2018 (Knudsmark, Ditlevsen & Jacobsen) that highlight how girls, with other ethnic origins than Danish, handle their experience of inequality of opportunity by expressing themselves as foreigners, and how this expression enhances the experience of being part of a parallel society. The concept of narrative resistance is introduced, which covers the socially constructed narratives that the girls use, as a strategy, to deal with inequality of opportunity. Narrative resistance, as a concept, is relevant in both social and pedagogical work, as a theoretical perspective on the handling of the inclusion and exclusion processes that take place in e.g. ethnic minorities.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this session, the students will be able to:

- Analyze and apply concepts of diversity, inclusion, and belonging within ECEC settings.
- Critically examine cultural and socio-economic factors affecting ECEC practices in migration societies.
- Develop culturally sensitive communication and strategies for fostering inclusive learning environments.
- Reflect on their role in promoting equitable and inclusive practices for children and families of diverse backgrounds.
- Engage with and implement narrative resistance frameworks to understand inclusion and exclusion dynamics in educational contexts.

Indicative topics

- Disidentification
- Inequality of opportunity
- Narrative resistance as a coping strategy
- Reinforcement of parallel society

Activities

Overall Purpose of Activities: The activities aimed to deepen students' understanding of how narratives and social constructs influence identity and belonging in multicultural ECEC settings. By engaging in critical reflection and applying theoretical knowledge, students developed a nuanced perspective on promoting inclusivity and addressing societal inequalities.

1. **Group Brainstorming and Buzz Group Exercise:**

- Prompt: The session began with a thought-provoking question, "If 'critical cultural awareness' is the answer, what is the question?"
- Activity: Students formed small buzz groups to brainstorm unique ideas, which they wrote on a communal board. The task encouraged deeper engagement and critical thinking, as each group had to propose original suggestions that hadn't been presented yet.

2. **Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives:**

- Concepts Covered: Students were introduced to Kenneth Gergen's social constructionist framework, emphasizing the importance of questioning knowledge, understanding its cultural and historical specificity, and recognizing how knowledge is created in social contexts.
- Discussion: Students reflected on how these theoretical perspectives could apply to their future work in ECEC, particularly in promoting culturally sensitive and inclusive practices.

3. **Reflection on Identity and Narrative Construction:**

- Examples Provided: The lecture presented real-life statements from ethnic minority girls who articulated their experiences of being "not Danes," illustrating the concept of narrative resistance.
- Interactive Reflection: Students were asked to think about how identities are socially constructed and to consider how these narratives impact inclusion and belonging in educational settings. A reflection prompt invited them to discuss what it means to have multiple versions of one's identity perceived by different people (e.g., as a student, artist, or parent).

4. **Exploration of Dominant Discourse and Discursive Constraints:**

- Discussion on Discourses: Students explored how dominant cultural discourses shape perceptions and behaviors. Examples from political statements and media narratives highlighted how these discourses can influence societal expectations and integration policies.
- Ethical Reflections: Students considered ethical implications, such as how discursive constraints could affect marginalized groups in ECEC environments.

5. **Practical Applications and Reflection on Expectations:**

- Expectation Poverty: The concept of expectation poverty was discussed, with students reflecting on whether this phenomenon exists in their field. They were asked to explore strategies to support children facing such challenges.
- Narrative Resistance in Practice: Students debated whether there was a need for narrative resistance in their field and brainstormed ways to foster alternative narratives that empower children and families from marginalized backgrounds.

6. **Case Studies and Real-Life Implications:**

- Examples of Narrative Resistance: The lecture shared cases like disidentification among girls who felt the impact of societal expectations and the reinforcement of parallel societies. Students analyzed these examples and discussed their implications for professional practice.
- Reflection Prompts: Students reflected on questions such as: How can professionals assist in narrative resistance? What are the ethical implications of reinforcing or resisting discursive constraints?

Suggested materials

Mandatory reading

Gergen, K. J. (1985): The Social Constructionist Movement in Modern Psychology. American Psychologist 40(3), s. 266-275. Retrieved from: (PDF) The Social Constructivist Movement in Modern Psychology (researchgate.net)

Elective reading

Knudsmark, L. (2018). Narrativ modstand: - etniske minoritetspigers svar på diskursiv begrænsning. Social Kritik, (156), 12-19

Title	Critical cultural awareness and decolonizing theory and practice
Authors	**Mathias Urban** **Carolina Semmoloni** Early Childhood Research Center, Dublin City University (ECRC-DCU). Ireland.
Context	RECOdE Spring School at the University of Stavanger (UiS) for ECEC Doctoral & Master students (UiS, DCU, PHSG)- April 2024
Type	Postgraduate module
Summary	This module aims to problematise some existing and emerging issues that are relevant to develop ECEC cultural awareness from a range of critical perspectives. Particularly, this session expects to critically approach ECEC epistemic exclusion, and is built on the premise that without an examination of the epistemic exclusion, dominant theories and practices potentially silence voices and narrow thinking. For this purpose, this session will introduce students to new ways of thinking about Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as a political and ethical phenomenon. Recognising that ECEC theory rely heavily on research from the Euro-American middle class — a minority of the world's population — and research in or from the majority world is severely under-represented (Scheidecker et al, 2024). Through this session, we expect to find with students new ways to decolonizing ECEC research and practice.
Learning outcomes	Upon successful completion of this session, the students will be able to: • Develop a critical stance in recognizing and examining the epistemic exclusion in ECEC theory and practice. • Apply and integrate principles of social justice, human rights, ethical citizenship and inclusive practice, as intrinsic and integrated elements, to early childhood critical cultural awareness. • Develop a critical appreciation of the broad societal, cultural, economic and political factors affecting children and families within local and global context

Indicative topics

- ECEC as a political and ethical endeavour. This theme introduces the student to new ways of thinking about education and care, as political and ethical phenomena.
- ECEC critical cultural awareness and epistemic exclusion. This theme invites the student to engage with critical perspectives on educational institutions and their potential to maintain or change the societal status quo.
- Decolonising ECEC theory and practice. This theme supports students to identify possibilities for change and for taking concrete action in their respective institutional contexts

Activities

Working groups I
ECEC critical cultural awareness and epistemic exclusion

The overall aim of the activity is for students to recognise and examine epistemic exclusion in ECEC theory and practice. To this end, students are invited to work in small groups and discuss the following guiding questions:

- How much of your institutional environment/curriculums/pedagogical practices are built on principles of epistemic exclusion?
- Can you identify examples?
- What are the effects?

Each group is then invited to share a summary of their discussions and main reflections.

Working groups II
Decolonising practices: moving from analysis to doing things differently

The overall aim of the activity is for students to recognise and examine epistemic exclusion in ECEC theory and practice. To this end, students are invited to work in small groups and discuss the following guiding questions:

- How much of your institutional environment/curriculums/pedagogical practices are built on principles of epistemic exclusion?
- Can you identify examples?
- What are the effects?

Each group is then invited to share a summary of their discussions and main reflections.

Suggested materials

Reading list

Cannella, G. & Viruru, R. (2004). Childhood and Colonization: Constructing Objects of Empire. Childhood and postcolonization: Power, education, and contemporary practice. Routledge-Falme.

Draper CE, Barnett LM, Cook CJ, et al. Publishing child development research from around the world: an unfair playing field resulting in most of the world's child population under-represented in research. Infant Child Dev 2022; e2375.

García Palacios, M., Hecht, A. C., & Enriz, N. (2020). Indigenous childhood in Argentina: Parenting, care and formative experiences of Qom and Mbyá Childhood. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610620959681

Scheidecker, G., Tekola, B., Rasheed, M., Oppong, S., Mezzenzana, F., Keller, H., & Chaudhary, N. (2024). Ending epistemic exclusion: toward a truly global science and practice of early childhood development. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 8(1), 3-5. Doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(23)00292-

Rico Montoya, A. (2021). Ser zapatista a los 4 años. Socialización y subjetivación de niños tseltales. Linhas Críticas, 27.

Robinson, K. H. (2005). 'Queerying Gender: Heteronormativity in early childhood education. Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 30(2), 19-28

Pérez Salazar, M. and Cinthya M. Saavedra (2017) "A call for onto-epistemological diversity in early childhood education and care: Centering global south conceptualizations of childhood/s." Review of Research in Education 41(1), 1-29.

Timothy Kinard, Jesse Gainer, Nancy Valdez-Gainer, Dinah Volk & Susi Long (2021) Interrogating the "gold standard": Play-based early childhood education and perpetuating white supremacy, Theory Into Practice, 60:3, 322-332. Doi: 10.1080/00405841.2021.1911587

Title	What do professionals need to know in the context of critical cultural awareness?
Authors	**Stefan Faas.** University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany. **Steffen Geiger.** University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany.
Context	RECOdE Spring School at the University of Stavanger (UiS) for ECEC Doctoral & Master students (UiS, DCU, PHSG)- April 2024
Type	Postgraduate module
Summary	Educational professionals are confronted with several requirements and specific skills and knowledge to arrange cultural aware pedagogical settings. To define knowledge and skills, the concept of competence is strongly promoted and, in the meanwhile, a common approach to organize education systems world-wide. Thus, this session will, firstly, introduce and critically reflect different perspectives on this concept. In addition to the dominant economic and functionalist perspective of the OECD, philosophical, sociological, and educational perspectives will be introduced and reflected. Since these approaches have different limitations, the Capability Approach as a human rights-based concept will be introduced and discussed. The focus of this part will be on the implications of the capability approach for a critical cultural aware practice. The conclusion of the session describes educational action with regard to critical cultural awareness in a field of tension between system-related / political and educational / theoretical requirements.
Learning outcomes	Upon successful completion of this session, the students will be able to: • identify, critically reflect, and evaluate different perspectives on dominant political and educational discourses on competences and capabilities. • reflect the capability approach in the context of critical cultural awareness. • position themselves to discourses on competences and capabilities. • reflect the requirements for pedagogical practice and educational action in the context of critical awareness

Indicative topics

- The competence discourse as theoretical frame: This topic will introduce the competence discourse in the context of (international) educational policy and educational science. Different perspectives on the concept competence will be discussed and critically reflected.
- Capabilities as an alternative concept to address critical cultural awareness: This topic will discuss the capability approach and its potential in the context of critical cultural awareness.
- The relation of competences, capabilities and critical cultural awareness: This topic supports students to identify different perspectives on dominant political and educational discourses and to position themselves to these discourses. Furthermore, fields of tension of pedagogical practice in the context of critical cultural awareness will be discussed.

Activities

1. Discussion Round about the concept critical cultural awareness and requirements for educational professionals in this context;
2. Input on the concept competence;
3. Working groups and discussion round to critically reflect competence discourses;
4. Input on the capability approach;
5. Working groups and discussion round to critically reflect the capabilities approach;
6. Concluding discussion about the relation of competences, capabilities and critical cultural awareness

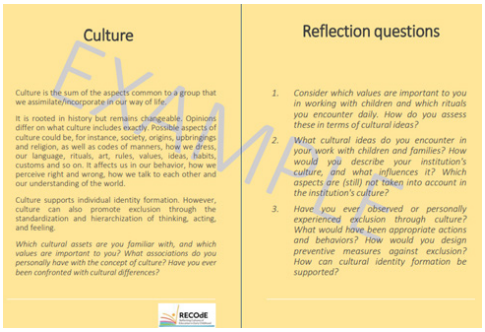
Suggested materials

Mandatory readings

Nussbaum, M. (1999). Women and Equality: The Capability Approach. International Labour Review 138(3), 227-245.

Elective readings

Wiseman, A.W. (2014). The Culture of Competency-based Qualification Frameworks in National Education Systems Worldwide. In: S. Faas, P. Bauer, & R. Treptow (Eds.), Kompetenz, Performaz, soziale Teilhabe (pp.199-219). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Title	Critical Cultural Awareness: concept and reflection cards
Authors	**Karin Kämpfe.** University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany.
Context	RECOdE Spring School at the University of Stavanger (UiS) for ECEC Doctoral & Master students (UiS, DCU, PHSG)- April 2024
Type	Activity
Short description	Concept and reflection cards present a brief definition of a key concept as well as reflection questions that help students to examine educational practice from a theory-based perspective.
Learning outcomes	The aims of the activity are: • To explore, consolidate and reflect on Critical Cultural Awareness key concepts • To identify the practical relevance of Critical Cultural Awareness key concepts
Activity	▸ In small groups, students prepare a short definition of a key concept based on the academic literature presented in the seminar. Based on these inputs, each working group of students develop a concept and reflection card. Key concepts in CCA include, for example, culture/ ethnicity, belonging, epistemic exclusion, doing difference.  ▸ In the following sessions, the groups are invited to present their cards. ▸ During the sessions, concept and reflection cards can also be applied using concrete examples, for example, as sensitizing concepts for pedagogical practice. ▸ At the end of the course, it is suggested to invite the students to review the cards and present an updated version.
Suggested materials	**Bollig, S. (2023).** Children in daycare centres and society. 105 reflection cards for early childhood education practice. Beltz Juventa.

RECOdE
Reflecting Cultures of Education in Early Childhood

Title	Developing intercultural awareness in teacher training programmes through Maths

Authors

Dr Montserrat Prat,
Department of Maths Didactics GR GREDA - FPCEE Blanquerna - University Ramon Llull

Context

Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education (3rd year) - GR GREDA - FPCEE Blanquerna - University Ramon Llull

Type

Activity

Purpose

This activity aims to enable students and children to recognize intercultural awareness and mathematics as a two-way path:

- Mathematics is a cultural knowledge that all cultures generate but does not need to “look” the same, it can differ from one cultural group to another (Bishop, 1988).
- Mathematics is universal (e.g. the idea of measurement -length for instance) but every culture has a way of understanding or communicating each mathematical concept (e.g. can measure a length using meters or feet).
- Mathematics and intercultural awareness offer children the opportunity to understand mathematical concepts as “not one-way” ideas.

Summary

Mathematics is a cultural knowledge that all cultures generate but which does not necessarily “look” the same from one cultural group to another (Bishop, 1988). Mathematics is universal but each culture has its own way of communicating, using, or understanding mathematics. In this sense, mathematics offers an opportunity for developing intercultural awareness, when we realise that there exists more than one mathematical culture. For instance, even in the Western Mathematics Culture, some countries measure with the Decimal Metric System while others do it with the Imperial System.

Through the use of a series of storybooks, our aim is to show the richness that different cultures offer us. For instance, not all cultures use the same units of length, or express the quantity of 90 equally, or tell the time in the same way. Mathematical diversity, therefore, entails cultural diversity and offers a way to develop intercultural awareness in the classroom. Specifically, the storybooks chosen let the children (and adults) realise that there is not only one length unit. On the contrary, the books show that it is possible to measure using different length units: feet, inch, centimetres... and that they are all good ways to communicate a length. Therefore by using storybooks with young children you can develop cultural diversity by experimenting with it in a daily context.

RECOdE
Reflecting Cultures of Education in Early Childhood

Suggested materials

‘Inch by inch’ - Leo Liono

‘Inch by inch - Youtube video

What does the book offer?

- Inch is a part of the body but also a unit of measurement.
- Anthropometric units along the history are the first step to standard units.
- Other anthropometric units: foot (UK), palm of a hand (our culture).
- Measurement involves a comparison with some known quantity of the same kind (eg. a worm can measure a tail but can’t measure a sound).
- The importance of end-to-end length measuring.

‘How big is a foot?’ - Rolf Miller

‘How big is a foot’ - Youtube video

What does the book offer?

- The foot is a part of the body but also a unit of measurement.
- Anthropometric units along the history are the first step to standard units.
- Other anthropometric units: foot (UK), palm of a hand (our culture).
- Every unit of measurement has a different length.
- The importance of having a standard measurement unit. It facilitates com munication in terms of measurements.

Title	Developing intercultural awareness in teacher training programmes through plurilingual competence
Authors	**Dr Caterina Sugranyes,** Department of GR GREDA - FPCEE Blanquerna - University Ramon Llull
Context	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education (3rd year) - GR GREDA - FPCEE Blanquerna - University Ramon Llull
Type	Activity
Purpose	This activity aims to enable students and children to develop intercultural and plurilingual competences through literature.
Summary	Creating storybooks in English for developing intercultural competence. The aim of this proposal is for children to develop intercultural and plurilingual competencies by writing a story book using English and translation. Here, English is used as a facilitator language of communication and in many contexts, as the additional school language. It is also an opportunity language (Pennycook, 2014) especially in contexts where many languages coexist, English may be the only language that most pupils have some knowledge of. The use of translation here is defined as a way to acquire linguistic mediation skills and intercultural competence in contexts other than professional translator training (González Davies, 2014). This means that translation is used as a pedagogical tool for bringing the pupils' own languages in the classroom and using them purposefully for learning. Finally, why stories? Stories are, in essence, culturally based and students have experience of stories, children like stories, they like being read to. Based on this, story creation and using translation for intercultural experience / sensitivity as an opportunity for bringing languages into the learning context and using them beneficially for learning. Literary translation is an intercultural experience (Hélot and Laoire, 2011). A plural approach to children's literature through translation can also promote plurilingual and intercultural competences among pupils as a means of encouraging language visibility, use and awareness, and of improving additional language skills.

Suggested activities and materials

This is a proposal of the didactic sequence that can be followed and the materials used (Sugranyes, 2021)

Session 1: Initial book reading, vocabulary spotting and the plurilingual guessing game

- **„Mr. McGee and the big bag of bread“ (**Allen, 2004)
- **„How do you feel?“** (Browne, 2011).

The initial book reading is intended, on the one hand, as a brainstorming activity to draw attention to language, format and content and to make pupils aware of vocabulary used, simple structures and format. It is also perceived as a relaxing moment where both teacher and pupils actually enjoy reading and being read to.

An English collage of vocabulary related to the two stories is written on the whiteboard. The teacher then asks pupils to choose a word or expression that they find interesting, they like or did not know and asks them to say it in their own language(s). The teacher commences by choosing a word herself and translating into her own language, in this case Catalan. This is done for two reasons: on the one hand as a modelling strategy for pupils to then copy. On the other hand, pupils become aware that the English teacher also has an own language which, by using it in the English class, places all languages at the same level. At this stage, all reference to pupils' own languages is oral, the only written support pupils have is the vocabulary on the whiteboard.

One pupil chooses a word from the whiteboard, says it in her own language and asks her partner to say that word in the languages she speaks at home. By doing this, the pupil is reading in English and translating the word automatically into a language they speak at home which in turn is used as a source word, subject to be translated into another language.

Session 2: The plurilingual collage

Students play the plurilingual guessing game again. They are then asked to write the words and their translation into their own languages on the yellow paper.

Session 3: Drafting stories

The aim of this session is to initiate their own story creation. Firstly, pupils are put into groups of four or five and are grouped according to: Languages they know, English proficiency. Pupils are then explained that they are going to create a story in groups in English and that the potential readers of their stories will be children aged 3–5 from infant education.

Session 4 & 5: Writing stories

An initial brainstorming activity is encouraged in order to help pupils pinpoint the general characteristics of a story intended for young children

Session 6: What is translation?

The aim of this session is to introduce pupils to what translation is and give them strategies for translating their texts.

Reading in English, speaking in our own languages: As a concluding activity for the session, pupils are asked to attempt to say the written sentences of their stories in their own language, therefore reading in English and speaking in their own language.

Session 7: Translating stories

The pupils are asked to translate their English stories into their own languages by taking into account the previous session. They are encouraged to find out who can do what in the different languages of the class and help each other: groups must therefore split and other language groups must be formed.

Session 8: Illustrating the stories and Reading practice

Each group is given a blank paper for writing the stories and for the illustrations and the final layout is set. The story in English is written on the front and the translations in the different languages are written on the back. In pairs, pupils are summoned from the English class to practice reading the story in English with the English teacher Pupils read in English and in their own languages. Pairs who speak the same languages are organized in order to encourage linguistic peer assessment.

Session 9: Final stories

The English teacher brings the final stories to the class for the pupils to look at and enjoy

Session 10: The pupils read their stories to the younger children in English and in all the languages of the class.

Title	Meeting across cultures
Authors	**Lena Knudsmark** University College UC SYD, Denmark
Context	Bachelor's Degree programme in Social Education - University College UC SYD, Denmark
Type	Activity
Purpose	The purpose is to develop a shared activity that allows students to create a common ground and equal power positions. This initiative fosters empathy and cultural understanding by promoting collaboration between diverse groups of students, breaking down social and cultural barriers, and encouraging mutual respect and inclusivity.
Summary	The "Meeting Across Cultures" activity aims to facilitate cultural exchanges between pedagogic students specializing in cultural meetings and a bilingual class of young refugees and immigrants (ages 16–25). The activity involves a collaborative and engaging outdoor experience across the landscape of Varde. By working together to find the most direct route as the crow flies, participants are challenged to navigate fields, forests, houses, hedges, and fences. The activity's primary goals are to create shared experiences, promote equal power dynamics, and build a foundation of mutual understanding. Participants use tracking apps, such as Runkeeper – GPS Track Run Walk, to monitor their routes and compare results, fostering a spirit of friendly competition and shared achievement. The outdoor setting removes traditional hierarchies and allows students to engage with each other more equally, enhancing the effectiveness of the cultural encounter.

Activity

Who Will Find the Shortest Route?

1. **Group Formation:** Divide pupils and students into mixed teams that span different courses and backgrounds.
2. **Objective:** Teams must work together to find the most direct route across the town of Varde. The landscape includes various obstacles, such as fields, forests, houses, hedges, and fences, which they can choose to navigate through or around.
3. **Tools:** Participants use the free tracking app Runkeeper – GPS Track Run Walk to track their progress. The app helps document the paths taken and facilitates a review and comparison of the different routes.
4. **Experience:** The activity is designed to be more than a physical challenge; it emphasizes creating shared experiences and breaking down social boundaries.
5. **Reflection:** At the end of the activity, groups discuss the strategies they used, the cultural dynamics they observed, and the insights gained from working in diverse teams. This reflection deepens their understanding of cultural differences and the importance of equality and inclusivity.

Suggested materials

Knudsmark, L. (2018). Narrativ modstand: - etniske minoritetspigers svar på diskursiv begrænsning. Social Kritik, (156), 12-19

Title	What do you have for breakfast? Working on diversity with pedagogues
Authors	**Katrin Macha.** Institute for the Situational Approach (ISTA) at the International Academy Berlin (INA)
Context	This activity has been carried out with pedagoges from different ECEC in Berlin, in the context of the Institute for the Situational Approach (ISTA) at the International Academy Berlin (INA).
Type	Workshop
Purpose	The purpose is to encourage educators to become aware of their p rejudices and biases. As a result, they will be able to support children, parents, and themselves in the goals: • to develop a sense of their uniqueness and self-identity – including their belonging to different groups and body characteristics. • to get to know the diversity of life forms and styles - on the basis of similarities. • to recognize unfair behavior and one-sidedness. • to take a stand against it.
Summary	During the workshop, participants: • only share what they want to talk about • find their own understanding of the topic • reflect their own identity and groups they belong to • learn about others perceptions and self-understandings • reflect practice

Activity Workshop

'What do you have for breakfast'

Workshop dayplan and methods. 4 hours

Get started	Who am I (my name)? Where do I belong (my work place)? What do we have for breakfast in my family? Why? |
Quotes dorm the Decet broschure are lying on the floor, people walk around and read	Which quote is talking to you? Why? What is your connection to it?
Reading in the curriculum on diversity	What are the main topics and terms? What do they mean? Develop a definition
Break	
Four ghouls of Anti-bias approach in practice.	How can you realise the goals in the children's centre?
Gallery walk	Groups contribute to the results other groups made
Learnings	What did I learn today?

Workshop activity

GOALS	Interaction between adults and children	Rooms and materials	Working with families	Working as a team
To develop a sense of their uniqueness and self-identity				
To get know the diverse of life forms and styles- on the basis of similarities				
To recognize unfair behaviour and one-sidedness				
To take a stand against it				

Reflection

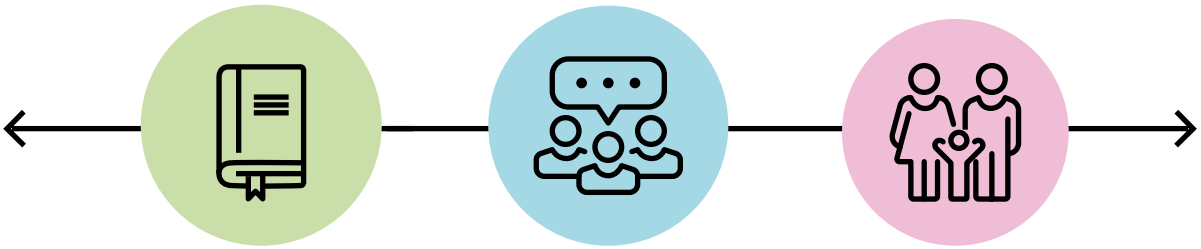
Reflection on our roles as facilitators and people. For example, in my case, being aware that I am white, female, academic background, grew up in western Germany…

- Are there power relations that have been recreated during the workshop?
- How have the relationships between participants been developed?

Title	A Framework for inclusion
Authors	**Anette Walde Dambo.** Jåttå kindergarten, Norway. **Meron Haile Barka.** Jåttå kindergarten, Norway. **Bjørghild Hamre.** Jåttå kindergarten, Norway.
Context	**Jåttå kindergarten.** Municipal kindergarten located in Stavanger - Norway. 6 sections with a total of 217 children. Around 70 employees. 54 children have another mother tongue than Norwegian - 25 different languages (without Scandinavian languages)
Type of material	Framework for kindergartens
Summary	This framework was developed after a project we had in our kindergarten. We notice that minorities did not have access to play and fell on the outside and often played alone. Children from different minorities found each other across language and culture. Beri Zachrissen from the University of Stavanger confirmed our observations while developing her PhD thesis. In this context, with her support as our professional supervisor, we develop this framework to reach our goal for intereth-nic play. Our purpose is to include all children in play.

A framework for inclusion

We take responsebility for a socially just education for the kindergarten

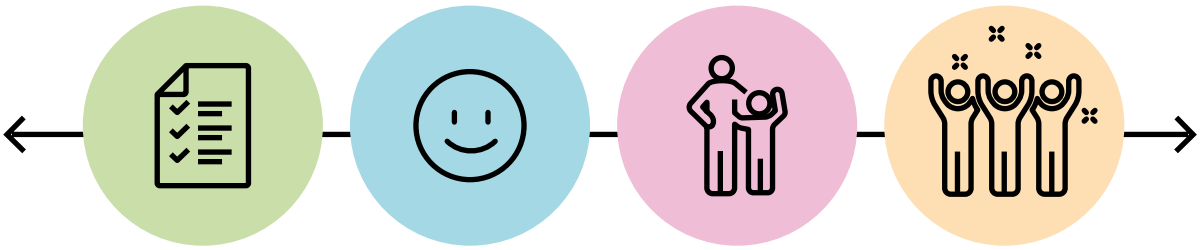


COMPETENCE:
Intercultural competence: knowledge, attitudes, values and critical reflection

Competence in interethnic play

CONDITIONS:
clear structur, predictebility, clear leadership

COOPERATION WITH PARENTS:
Seek and acknowledge the child's capital and take this into the group



PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP:

Plan A and Plan B Ensure preunderstanding, success, real cooperation and joint goal

CREATE A FEELING OF US:

Sharing Positive experiences

Share joy, wonder, delight and excitement

Music

Fysical play

VISUALIZE DIVERSITY:

Confirme identities and extend the perspecitve

Highlighting (all) the children's knowledge and capacities

Proactive recognition og diversity

PLAYGROUPS:

Small and same group over time active and paticipating adults with playful attitude

Open-ended play materials

From play with clearly defined rules to more open-ended and creative play

Group collaboration

Flow

Change of positions

Purpose

- Take responsibility for a social just education for the kindergarten
- To include all children in play

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Reflecting Cultures of Education in Early Childhood

Activity

‘Creating a felling of us’

At Jåttå kindergarten we develop different activities to create a feeling of us. From our perspective and experience, physical play and music are great strategies for enabling children to share positive experiences, joy, wonder, delight and excitement.

Which activities can be developed with Toddlers?

- Music. We use music from each child's culture as a way of giving them a sense of recognition and belonging. Music is a universal language that allows everyone to participate.
- Soap bubbles. We use soap bubbles as a way to share positive experiences all together.

Which activities can be developed with little children (3-5 years)?

- Physical play with defined rules. We propose a physical play where all children can participate with the same premises. When children participate in physical play with clearly defined rules, such as red light and other ring games, it is easier for them to participate despite different mother tongues. Let the children feel coping experiences together in the group.

‘Playgroups’

How do we use playgroups? Group of collaboration.
Follow. Change of position.

Which activities can be developed with Toddlers?

- Small and the same group over time. Having the same groups over time makes it easier for the children to build relationships.
- Open – ended play materials. From play with clearly defined rules to more open-ended and creative play.
- Play with clearly defined rules. For example, as song with movements (hodeskulder kne og tå prakisfortelling)

PART II. DOCUMENTS, MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS AND NETWORKS

The documents and resources listed in this section are ones that have informed our discussion and work in the RECOdE project. By no means do they represent an exhaustive compilation. Moreover, we urge you to read the material with a critical eye, and evaluate the relevance for your own work as you progress. Being listed here does not mean we, the RECOdE team–or you–have to agree with everything the authors of the resources propose

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How to select books that promote critical cultural awareness?

- **Derman-Sparks, L. (2016).** Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books. https://socialjusticebooks.org/guide-for-selecting-anti-bias-childrens-books/
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- **Social Justice Books** - Critically reviewed selection of multicultural and social justice books for children, young adults, and educators https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/
- **Social Justice Books** - Early Childhood Anti-bias Education Booklist https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/early-childhood/

MULTIMEDIA MATERIAL

Films, documentaries and series

- Documentary - Babies (2010)
- Film - Reflecting on Anti-Bias Education in Action: the Early Years
- Film - On the Way to School (2013)
- Serie - Freedom Reads: Anti-Bias Book Talk Series (2020)

Podcast

- Becoming a Good Ancestor
- The Cult of Pedagogy: Uncovering Your Implicit Biases: An Exercise for Teachers - Podcast Episode
- Fresh Ed

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKS

Social media profiles

- The Anti-Bias Educator (Instagram)
- Rethinking literacy (Instagram)
- Teaching for Change (YouTube)

Networks and platforms

- Network - European Network Against Racism (ENAR): https://www.enar-eu.org/
- Network - Equality & Diversity Early Childhood National (Edenn): https://edenn.org/
- Network - Irish Network Against Racism (INAR): https://inar.ie/
- Network - Network of Migrant Women living in Ireland (AkiDwA): https://akidwa.ie/
- Network - RECE (Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education) https://receinternational.org/
- Platform - Ragnhild Laird Iversen: https://www.religionsundervisning.no/
- Platform - Viviane Juguero: https://www.vivianejuguero.com/
- Platform - Supported research-based learning in early childhood education (PForLe) https://www.uni-hildesheim.de/kompetenzzentrum-fruehe-kindheit/aktuelle-forschungsprojekte/plattformgestuetztes-forschendes-lernen-in-der-kindheitspaedagogischen-qualifizierung-pforle/
- Platform - Anti-bias Education, Teaching for Change: https://www.teachingforchange.org/educator-resources/anti-bias-education
- Platform - Social Justice Books: https://socialjusticebooks.org/about/

Glossary

The following glossary is from the ¨Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for ECEC¨ (Irish Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2016). Based on the RECOdE Framework (2025) and the Anti-bias approach (Derman-Sparks, 1989), we present this glossary to proactively address prejudice, discrimination and racism in HEI, with a particular focus on ECEC. However, these terms and definitions have been developed by colleagues in their specific contexts. We hope that this material will inspire you to create your own glossary and transformative journey!

Anti-racism.	An activist approach or policy that aims to challenge and combat racism in all its forms: institutional, individual, behavioural and attitudinal.
Assimilation.	Assimilationist approaches are based on the assumption that it is natural and/or desirable for the minority group or subordinate group to adjust to the values and norms of the majority or dominant group. The culture of the minority/subordinate group is denied and is viewed as inferior
Asylum seeker.	An asylum seeker is an immigrant who has applied for refugee status on the grounds that they fear persecution in their country of origin, or because their life and liberty is threatened by armed conflict or violence. Asylum seeker status is temporary while a claim for refugee status is being processed. Asylum seekers have limited rights. They are not illegal immigrants.
Bias.	Having a preferred point of view, attitude or feeling about a person or group. Can be positive or negative.
Black.	A term chosen by people from many African, African-Caribbean, and Asian/South-Asian people to describe and distinguish themselves in terms of solidarity against racism. The term ‘people of color’ is used in the US and Europe to refer to people who experience discrimination and racism on the basis of visible skin colour.
‘Coloured’.	‘Coloured’ is an outdated term that should be avoided as it is generally viewed as offensive to many Black people. The terms Black or mixed heritage, where appropriate, are preferred.
Critical cultural awareness.	Describes an approach to childcare practices/materials/resources that are designed or used to minimise exclusion, support individual children’s identity, promote respect and foster inclusive practice.
Civil status.	Individuals are entitled to equal treatment whether you are single, married, separated, divorced or widowed, in a civil partnership or previously in a civil partnership.
Diversity.	Describes the diverse nature of society. It includes, for example, social class, gender, family status, returned Irish emigrants, the many minority groups as well as the majority group.

Discrimination.	Policy, practice or behaviour that leads to unfair treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of their identity or perceived identity. It can be intentional or unintentional, and may be direct or indirect.
Early Childhood Education and Care.	Refers to the Education and Care sector as a whole.
Early Childhood practitioners.	Refers to those working with children in the sector.
Early Childhood services.	Refers to all the places where children are cared for and educated.
Emigrant.	A person who has left their country of origin (e.g. Ireland) to live and work abroad.
Equality.	The importance of recognising different individual needs and ensuring equity in terms of access, participation and outcomes for all children and their families. It is not about treating all children the same.
Equal opportunity.	The right of access for every child and family to full participation in early childhood services and equitable outcomes between groups.
Ethnic.	This term is used to describe minority ethnic people or things (e.g. in the context of traditional dress, food, shops, hair products, etc.) and when used in this context, it may fail to acknowledge that we all have ethnicity.
Ethnic group.	"An involuntary group which shares a common ancestry, culture, history, tradition and sense of belonging or peoplehood and that is a political and economic interest group. Ethnicity is a way of categorising people on the basis of self-identification and ascription by others." (Platform against Racism: Glossary of terms). The term 'ethnic group' may refer to those from minority or majority groups in society.
Gender.	Individuals are entitled to equal treatment whether you are a man, a woman or a transgender person.
Gender bias.	Attitudes, opinions, messages, encouragement, organised activities, or design of play materials, that, being unequal for boys and girls, influences unequal preferences, use or participation between boys and girls.
Identity.	An internal concept of who you are, how you regard yourself and how others see you. It involves what you have in common with others and what makes you different.
Immigrant.	Describes someone who has left their home country and arrived in another country to live or work.
Inclusion.	A process involving a programme, curriculum or educational environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to achieve his/her full potential in all areas of development.

Indigenous.	Describes people who are native to the country in which they are living (e.g. Aborigines in Australia; Native American Indians in the USA).
Institutional racism.	Racial discrimination which has been incorporated into the structures, processes or procedures of organisations, either because of racial prejudice or due to a failure to take into account the particular needs of Black and minority ethnic people. Institutions have the power to sustain and promote racial injustice by providing opportunities for some people and not others, by providing career advancement, training, influence, promoting self-respect, etc. Institutional racism occurs where the activities, practices, policies or laws of an institution lead, intentionally or unintentionally, to less favourable outcomes for minority ethnic groups.
Minoring group.	Any minority community or culture within society, such as Traveller, Jewish, disabled, etc.
Majority group.	The predominant culture in society (e.g. white, settled, Catholic, able-bodied, etc.)
Mixed heritage.	Refers to a person whose parents or family identify with more than one cultural heritage.
Multicultural.	A recognition of the many minority cultures within a society. Also refers to an educational approach that includes looking at minority cultural experience.
[persons with a] disability.	those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Parents.	Parents. A parent, guardian or carer.
Participation.	Being involved at all levels of a process, and at all stages, from inception to evaluation. Being consulted as to your views, and ensuring that all views are heard and given due consideration. Effective participation is a process through which stakeholders influence initiatives, resources and decisions that will affect them.
Race.	A socio-political concept which categorises people into biologically distinct, superior or inferior species or races, and has been used to justify cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, but in fact has no scientific basis. There is only one human race.
Racism.	“Any theory which involves the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior, thus implying that some would be entitled to dominate or eliminate others presumed to be inferior, or which bases value judgements on racial differentiation, has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity.” (UNESCO General Conference, 27 November 1978, Declaration on race and racial prejudice).
Religion.	Individuals are entitled to equal treatment no matter what their religious beliefs are or if they do not hold any religious beliefs.

Refugee.	A person outside of his or her country of origin, who, on the basis of personal circumstances, including fear of persecution, has attained the legal status 'refugee' as stipulated in the 1951 Geneva Convention.
Sexism.	Any attitude, action or institutional practice that oppresses or undermines people because of their gender.
Sexual orientation.	Sexual orientation. Individuals are entitled to equal treatment whether they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual (straight).
Special educational needs.	A child has special educational needs (SENs) if he or she has a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child has a learning difficulty if he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or has a condition or impairment that prevents or hinders the child from using educational facilities or materials.
Stereotype.	An oversimplified generalisation about a particular group, race or sex, based on widely held assumptions, presenting a rigid view that can be difficult to change.
Traveller.	Member of the Traveller community, which is a minority group with a shared language, heritage and nomadic culture.
Values.	Qualities that an individual or group believes to be important and worthwhile for themselves and for others. Values guide your goals, choices and how you live and work. Values are personal; you acquire your values growing up within your home culture, and they will be different depending on that culture.
Xenophobia.	Describes extreme feelings of fear or hostility towards outsiders, expressed through attitudes, views or actions in response to individuals or groups from a different national, ethnic, religious or cultural background.

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