

CULTURAL MYOPIA: A CHALLENGE TO SPANISH EDUCATION

BRYAN J. COWAN
SERVANDO PÉREZ-DOMÍNGUEZ

Abstract – *This paper considers current thinking about intercultural attitudes in Spain. It attempts to demonstrate reasons why the Spanish approach to interculturalism, particularly in schools, has not been at the forefront of societal, governmental, or educational thinking. Until the 1980s Spain's emigration exceeded those entering the country. Today, trends have changed. Following a brief historical account of Spain's pluralistic cultural roots, contemporary views are debated concerning the impact of recent immigration, signalling the dangers of ignoring immigrants' needs and abilities within the community. It is argued by the writers that opportunities are being missed in education (and elsewhere) by the cultural myopia influencing Spanish schools and society. The increasing inspection, linguistically and culturally, is diminishing opportunities for the celebration of the wider cultural diversity that exists. This paper seeks to rouse those in education, whose predispositions lie in societal hierarchy and cultural introversion.*

Introduction

The unification of any country provides opportunities for both cultural enhancement and collision. Spain, through its assimilation of ancient kingdoms has created, for itself, a fusion of cultural and linguistic elements which, as in other states, embrace forces of a centripetal and centrifugal nature. Such forces motivate the evolution of original, native traditions, despite fervent resistance, to newly established cultural mores. Problems within the European Union frequently occur because of misunderstandings in member states, cultural traditions and a lack of commitment to listen or accept such differences. Celebrating diversity is not a universally accepted process. Hierarchical cultural positioning is preferred. As history demonstrates, it takes generations for imposed cultures to assimilate as an accepted part of native traditions.

In this century, despite the increase in immigration and emigration in many countries, there is still considerable impatience at the rate of assimilation. Fear, a colonial legacy, and cultural arrogance manifest themselves in a rejection of unfamiliar behaviour and beliefs. According to Esteve (1992:255), attempts to create artificial unity in Spain failed because realities concerned with pluricultural and plurilinguistic ideologies, on which the Spanish state is based, were largely

ignored. He does note, however, that recently each of the seventeen Spanish Autonomous Communities designed an educational policy in order to develop the immense educational value of their cultural, linguistic, geographical and economical uniqueness. Is this tokenism or a firm gesture of intercultural commitment?

To understand current attitudes of a country, in terms of accepting cultural diversity, it is necessary to appreciate its history of invasion and attack. This paper seeks to provide a brief history of Spain so that current attitudes towards the acceptance of other ethnic groups can be appreciated. It is argued that the current 'bolt-on' approach to cultural acquisition in Spain is not only unsatisfactory but could result in the events that plagued inner cities in the early eighties in the UK. Esteve (ibid:255) comments in a positive vein that both politicians and educationists have looked again at Spain's history and with great insight have sensed that, "far from being incompatible, the cultural pluralities could form not only the foundation stones, but also important structural elements of the figurative edifice of our modern State". There is then a conflict between the insights of writers and the policies of practitioners.

It is posited in this paper that educational reforms in Spain could make important contributions to increasing cultural awareness and equity. Such measures can only succeed with government back-up. De Vreede (1990:137) points out that "the problems that pluralistic education tries to resolve are, ultimately, political problems, and it is very doubtful if education can resolve them alone". Current moves to give more power to the autonomous regions in Spain are leading to an increasing motivation to enhance regional languages and the inherent traditions of each area. Those moving into such communities from outside, and even from within Spain, are impelled to learn local languages and customs (especially in schools). Such measures have created conflict between existing and incoming groups. This paper, then, seeks to present current attitudes towards an intercultural commitment in Spain, both in society as a whole and in schools, which may be seen as a microcosm and reflection of that society.

Retrospect

The occupation of Romans, Visigoths, and the Moors in Spain lasted several centuries leaving a fertile though, at times, conflicting culturalisation. Prior to the reign of Isabel I, Queen of Castille, and Fernando II, King of Aragón (1479-1515) Spain was signified by its disparate medieval kingdoms in which religious and traditional diversification existed comfortably together. Isabel and Fernando

attempted national unification of these ancient kingdoms: a process that was reflected in other European countries. The outcome of the unification in Spain was an expansion of the power of the throne and this imposed severe restrictions on language and cultural behaviour in the previous autonomous kingdoms. Because Isabel and Fernando were Castillian and Catholic, the country had to adopt both that language and the newly imposed state religion (Esteve; *ibid*).

Reglá (1963:269) maintains that the greatest social problems at this time emanated from the Jews and the Mudejars (Moorish Mohammedan subjects of the Crown) who pretended to adhere to the Catholic faith, but in private continued to practise their own faith. In 1492, on discovery of such disobedience, the Jews were exiled, while the same fate awaited the Mudejars of Granada in 1502. This launched the infamous 'Spanish Inquisition' which sought, by every means, to secure the unity of the Catholic church.

Diversity of tradition was abolished by decree. Despite such legislation, the citizens of the ancient Kingdoms struggled to preserve their traditions and identities, as well as their special laws. The arrival of Gypsies in Spain, in 1417, injected further cultural inputs into rooted Spanish traditions.

Isabel and Fernando sowed seeds of rebellion in their decrees, which were to have long-term implications for future monarchs. The entrenched spirit of diversity exploded into insurrection from the time of Carlos I (1520-1522). Wars against King Felipe V (1704-1717), and the Carlist Wars (1833-1840, 1846-1849, 1872-1876) are noted aspects of Spanish history. Such hostility lasted until this century (Esteve; *ibid*).

Between 1931 and 1936 the Second Republic encouraged the rebirth of the autonomous regions. The Civil War (1936-1939), and Franco's subsequent military dictatorship (1939-1975), reverted back to nationally unifying ideologies. Regionalisation was discouraged because of Franco's fear that subversion and rebellion would more likely take place within these areas if power was delegated.

In 1978, the Democratic Constitution formally acknowledged the Autonomous Communities. Despite attempts throughout history to suffocate regional identities, it was immediately clear that local languages and traditions had survived continuous threats throughout these centuries. Today, the notion of regionalisation is still a controversial issue. Some regions (The Basque Country, Galicia and Catalonia, for instance) welcome opportunities to develop indigenous customs and languages, while others are ambivalent in their attitudes. The current Socialist government in Spain, afraid of unpopularity, strives to satisfy all convictions: supporting, on the one hand, the unification of Spain, while encouraging measures which enhance the autonomic and specialist practices of certain regions. How this situation relates to recent immigrants settling in Spain will be examined later.

Intercultural awareness in Spain

Husén and Opper (1984) published the first book in Spain, concerning multicultural issues. At that time Spanish society did not respond. During the past twelve years, however, multi/intercultural thinking has developed, especially since the early nineties, with important innovations and programmes introduced in some areas. Books and articles have increasingly been published and the area of intercultural education has become a focus for intellectual debate.

It is a popular Spanish perception that there are as many foreign workers currently living in Spain as there are in France and Germany (Fernández Enguita, M., 1993). Statistics disclaim such reports. C.I.S. (1993) figures show that in 1992 there were four hundred thousand immigrants. Of that number half derive from European roots (E.C. countries in particular) and constitute 1.5% of the whole population. The greatest influx of immigrants (80%) to Spain occurred during the past ten to fifteen years. The remaining 20% arrived from Cuba in 1960 after Castro's revolution. The largest number of immigrants come from Morocco (54,000) and Britain (53,000). The rest come from Latin America, Portugal, other parts of Africa, Italy, or are refugees from countries in civil conflict, such as the former Yugoslavia. According to Izquierdo Escribano (1993) Madrid is currently the main destination for both legal and illegal immigrants. Between 1987 and 1991 the number of foreign workers tripled in the capital and in 1992 represented 5% of the work-force. Current figures (Amani, 1994) indicate that 180,000 immigrants live in the capital city of Spain. In Spain, those moving from one region to another, also have the status of immigrants. It is interesting to note that the number of those having left Spain to live in other countries is indeed greater than those entering the country. For example, 700,000 Spanish now live in France and Argentina.

Spanish society is concerned to have greater control over all immigrants. Izquierdo Escribano (1993) notes that 45% of Spanish people perceive immigrants as male workers, staying only for a limited period, without their families. Only 36% prefer a permanent immigration which would include families. A temporary immigration, then, is the chosen option by the majority of the Spanish people.

Izquierdo Escribano (*ibid*) claims that temporary immigration (as in Germany) tends to lead to a negative acceptance of different cultural values and a ghettoisation of the ethnic groups. The home country misses opportunities for exchange of ideas and experiences, while the visiting immigrants are marginalised. Such polarisation leads to negative impressions of the new society and can result in insecurity, aggression or withdrawal into self-inflicted ghettoisation. In short, a cross-cultural interchange and fertilisation fails to take place.

In Spain there are two distinct types of immigration: internal and external. In Catalonia, for instance, the arrival of more than two million immigrants between 1950 and 1975 (mainly from poor agricultural areas of Andalusia) created serious problems in housing, health and education (Jutglar 1968).

From the sixties a significant number of Moroccans began to arrive in Spain, particularly in Catalonia, to seek work (Lluch 1966). Such an influx was due mainly to the decision of the French government to close their borders to immigrants in 1967 and to the economic development of Spain, which appeared to provide more job opportunities. Until 1972, immigrants were mainly non-married men. It was not until 1986 that family groups began to arrive (Caritas 1987; Losada 1988). Official figures provided in 1986 showed that there were 293,208 immigrants living in Spain. Caritas (1987) contested this number, however, maintaining that the figure should be 720,000, with 73% (526,000) coming from developing countries. There were further claims that half of the number of immigrants are illegal. It would appear that none of these figures can be trusted, as La Serna (1989) questions certain statistical errors in Caritas' research and affirms that the figure is more likely to be 360,000. It is of course important to complement these figures with those depicting Spanish emigration. From 1962 to 1976 1,063,380 Spanish workers went to other parts of Europe (398,841 to Switzerland, 377,528 to Germany, 224,084 to France, 41,037 to The Netherlands and 13,283 to the UK) (Izquierdo Escribano, *ibid.*).

Perhaps more important are the perceived problems caused by immigrants. For instance, the increase in numbers of women and children in 1989 caused considerable ill-feeling in Catalonia. The general opinion was that they would not contribute anything to the economy, but increase the demand for additional resources to meet health, education and housing needs (El País, 1989:19).

As hinted above, one reaction to Franco's dictatorial ideologies has been the increase of support for regional languages; especially in Catalonia, Galicia and The Basque Country (Arnau & Boada 1975). The search after identity has led to an expansion of local cultural consciousness, at the expense of incoming cultures. Assimilationism is considered the pathway for new comers, with little regard for the celebration of cultural diversity in its broadest and most significant sense. The pursuit for linguistic independence is seen as "symbols of resistance to the authoritarian, centralist policies of the Madrid government" (Hoffman 1995). Nowadays in Catalonia, following the introduction of the 'Ley de Normalización Lingüística' (1983), the Catalan language must be used by students as a language-vehicle for learning. There is then, a bilingual element in Catalan education, rather reminiscent of Luxemburg and the French speaking area of Canada (Arnau, Comet, Serra & Vila 1992:74). Woolard (1989) states, "*The supposed imposition of one's language on others may be taken as an unwelcome*

claim to power, but the presumption or demonstration of greater multilingual proficiency can also be a display of superiority that discomfits the addressee".

Arnau and Boada (1975) undertook interesting research in Barcelona with a thousand children aged twelve years old, making reference to the census of 1965/66. The purpose of the research was to determine the composition of the different linguistic groups within the school population of Barcelona, to ascertain their cultural background and social class and thirdly to assess levels of bilingualism and knowledge of their second language. Conclusions, in short, manifested that those children emanating from Catalan-speaking groups derived from families economically more solid and of a higher social class, than those who spoke only Castillian (Spanish) or external languages. Those children deriving from monolingual families came from lower social groups. Arnau and Boada implied, because Catalan speakers hold power in the area, assimilationism dominated.

Despite the Spanish Constitution (27th December 1978) and the Ley de Extranjería (1985), the 'Human Fundamental Rights of Foreigners Association' (1987) published a document claiming that levels of racism in Spain were high and that Spanish people were considerably more racist than they realised. The survey showed that it was the negro-Africans and gypsies who suffered from the greatest prejudice. Philipinos and South Americans expressed little dissatisfaction. In Spain today there are about 500,000 gypsies. Despite arriving in Spain in 1417, they still have little social or political credibility. Public interest lies in their music and dance. Negro-Africans in Spain have recently been discovered to be living in pigsties, huts in woods and, despite complaining of mistreatment, have received little consideration (Cáritas Española 1987). In an industrial area of Barcelona six hundred Moroccans were in a similar position. Living conditions were appalling, yet little attention was given (Bandres 1994).

The distribution of immigrants to Spain is largely to six of the seventeen Spanish regions (The Canary Islands and Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Valencia, Andalusia and Madrid) which also houses 61.6% of the native population of Spain. Half of the immigrant population (52.8%) is concentrated in Madrid, Barcelona, Alicante and Malaga. There is a further distinction between places of settlement by immigrants from the First and Third world. The French, for instance, head for Catalonia, Valencia and Madrid, while Americans prefer Madrid and Andalusia. Italians make for Catalonia and Madrid, while those from Northern Europe (Danish, British, Swedish and Belgian, seeking retirement homes), are attracted by well-known tourist areas in Andalusia and The Canary and Balearic Islands. The Portuguese, on the other hand, show a little more imagination, and settle in Galicia, Castille-Leon, Madrid and the Basque Region (Contreras 1994).

Those from the developing world currently head for three different regions. Madrid, for instance, attracts the majority of groupings already noted, plus, 66% of Poles, 54% of Peruvians, 49% Venezuelans and Philipinos with the broader area of Catalonia popular with Columbians, Chileans, Chinese and Argentinians. The Canary Islands are particularly attractive to Indian immigrants. The majority of Moroccans (70%) settle in the three areas of Andalusia, Madrid and Catalonia (Contreras 1994).

One purpose of this paper is to take education as the driving force for promoting equity for those living and working in another country. Before such commitment can take place, there must be a general acceptance that minorities/immigrants have both the right to an equality of opportunity in their new country and that their culture and beliefs are of sufficient value to be recognised as an integral part of society's indigenous mores. Spain's attitude to the education of immigrants is similar to that of the UK in the 1970s and 1980s, when white parents withdrew their children from those schools which were increasing their ethnic mix.

As Pumares Fernández (1993) states: "*we can't close our eyes to the increase in immigration and to the social problems that immigration causes, because if we do so the problems will grow until they explode violently*". Pumares wants all political parties to achieve consensus from which a declaration of fundamental principles concerning the rights and obligations of immigrants will be established. This is the starting point for any country and will have considerable ramifications and encouragement for those working in schools. There is no specific law in Spain which deals with the rights of immigrant pupils in schools. The failure of governments to provide positive directions perpetuates inertia and prejudice.

A conflict exists in Spain, particularly in the autonomous regions. On the one hand, there is a current trend to consolidate the identities of the original communities (culturally and linguistically), while on the other, there is the increase of population through immigration and internal mobility (Arnau *et al*, op.cit.).

Although in Catalonia, Madrid and other areas of Spain some programmes of multicultural education have begun to be prepared, a general commitment to intercultural education does not exist as a national priority. This is despite the recommendations of The Solemn Declaration of Intent for Unity signed by Heads of State and Governments in Stuttgart in 1983 and the Maastrich Treaty (1993), which promoted greater ease of intercountry movement and equality of treatment and cultural respect.

In view of the above, the writers would like to encourage teachers, politicians and educationists to work together in overcoming constraints in policy-making and funding for relevant research. As Nieto (1992) states "*bilingual and*

multicultural programmes for all students have to be comprehensively defined, adequately and strongly supported”.

Current problems in education

Problems associated with the increasing numbers of pupils in certain areas of Spain, deriving from Third World backgrounds are well publicised (e.g. Carbonell and Parra, 1991a, 1991b; Sepa Bonaba, 1993). In the industrial areas of Barcelona, Vizcaya, Madrid and South Spain cultural diversity is well pronounced. Teachers in schools feel unprepared and inadequately trained to cope with such challenges. Because many immigrants dwell in slum areas of large cities, problems are not only cultural and linguistic, but also social (Bartolomé Pina 1995; Merino, Muñoz and Sánchez 1994; Vázquez 1994).

Provision in teacher education in Spain for the promotion of intercultural education is an *ad hoc* procedure. Research carried out in 1989 by Cueva and Tarrow, among third year students at the University of Barcelona, showed that students felt unprepared to teach in a multicultural setting. Rey (1986) contends that teacher training is the key to intercultural education. She believes that it is important to prepare teachers to understand pupils, their families and colleagues from all over the world through a respect for “*the diversity of languages, life styles, projects, behaviour and religions, to confront conflicts and resolve them in order to maintain the cultural enrichment of everybody*”. This view is supported in Spain by, for example, San Román (1992 1993) and Merino (1994) who claims that institutions have the potential to develop intercultural programmes and projects along with processes for positive orientation. However, if teachers are not involved, are perhaps insensitive to intercultural issues, are not credited with creative ideas or fail to receive appropriate training, any institutional policy/programme will fail. Merino contends that teachers are a key element in the change process.

An increasing number of teachers are gaining direct experience of different models of social behaviour within the society in which they operate. The experience of teachers in Spain, working on the outskirts of large cities, is mirrored in the majority of other European countries. The challenge of intercultural thinking is not only to encourage the acceptance of different cultures but also to promote, positively, the quintessential differences of each culture so that it is not only immigrant children who learn about the beliefs and social practices of others (Fermoso 1992).

The conflict between home and school languages, social mores, attitudes and behaviour create the need for teachers to understand the very essence of what

education is about. Initial teacher training, therefore, should encourage a continuing programme for the exploration of interculturalisation enhanced by a comprehensive and systematic support network to enable teachers to express fears and gain confidence (García Parejo 1994).

A restructuring of values is imperative if teachers are going to enforce anti-racist attitudes and practices. First it is a personal commitment on the part of the teacher. Opportunities must be provided for honest reflection and expression of personal beliefs: an openness to prejudice. Understanding the needs of both teachers and pupils (as individuals and as part of a community) is necessary. Esteve (ibid:262) claims that these needs are related to the diversity of pupil populations and depend upon a combination of four factors:

1. the presence of original minority groups;
2. the presence of small or large number of immigrant citizens of other territories who have established themselves permanently in the host country;
3. the presence of transient immigrants, temporary residents of the host society, with a strongly-felt distinctive identity deeply rooted in their original culture to which they hope to return;
4. a strengthening of awareness of distinctive identity in diverse groups resulting from divergent socialisation in different subcultures.

The problems in inner city schools are not limited to race or cultural diversity. Young people create their own traditions which are manifested in groups/gangs characterised by their distinct exclusivity (García Castaño 1995). Esteve (ibid) notes that as well as coping with original ethnic or cultural minorities and massive arrivals of immigrants, teachers in city secondary schools will come across members of the most varied urban tribes: rockers, punks, skin-heads, squatters, junkies, raptas, new romantics, etc. While conflict may occur between such groups there is a marked resemblance in the behaviour of such tribal, ethnic and social groupings in that they seek isolation for a number of reasons. In consequence, their language and behaviour excludes others, sometimes leading to violence.

The approach to pupil learning in Spain should be reexamined in the light of social changes. Too often teachers operate in the context of previous decades when social priorities and traditional values have changed (Actis, De Prada and Pereda 1995). Methodologies appropriate for today's young people should be revised so that they embrace cultural diversification and current social pressures on young people. Uniformity of educational policies and practices is unrealistic in that it is inflexible and offers inequitable opportunities to learn. Teachers should examine and rethink current demands in Spanish education. This will require an understanding of societal demands within the context of equality of opportunity. A change of attitudes and the acceptance that classrooms now contain children

with very disparate types of early primary socialisation is essential for the success of appropriate programmes for pupil learning. Teachers must be able to evaluate ethical issues in the light of equal opportunity motives, with an impartiality and insight that enables a versatility of skills and a listening ear (Díaz Aguado and Baraja 1993).

Schools are microcosms of society and education should give the lead to positive attitudes concerning cultural diversity. Through education, mass media interpretations of ethnic issues can be confronted and help to evaluate trends and general mass thinking. As Toffler (1990:295) states, "Today, our society is changing direction sharply from the idea of the 'mass society' and heading towards the 'mosaic society'".

For Esteve (ibid), linguistic anomalies and misunderstandings are central to creating intercultural tensions. Nieto (1992) also supports this statement, from a different perspective:

Given recent trends in immigration, the shrinking of our world, and the subsequent necessity to learn to communicate with large numbers of people, it is clear that a reconceptualization of the role of languages, other than English, within our schools and society in general has to take place.

For Nieto such a reconceptualization requires a positive redefinition of linguistic diversity, building on students' strengths, embracing their own language and culture in the educational process, actively seeking involvement of parents and the community, a greater understanding of bilingualism and the development of the awareness that students can benefit from linguistic diversity.

In every country teachers fall into gender or racial traps which can explode unintentionally, offending and undoing months of positive work. Racist expressions and images are still contained in many text books. As yet policies do not exist which might encourage scrutiny of books in Spanish schools for discriminatory or ambiguous comments (Buxarrais et al 1990).

Curriculum change, which embodies cultural diversity is essential. The introduction of Spain's National Curriculum in the *Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo* (LOGSE: 1990) has done little to encourage intercultural initiatives in schools. Despite the involvement of a broad base of people in discussing ideas for the new curriculum the completed document is criticised as being theoretical rather than practical. Izquierdo Escribano (ibid) believes that within the National Curriculum the only gesture towards intercultural education in schools is a recommendation for all those involved in education to respect diversity of traditions and to treat cultural differences in a cross-curricular way. Terms such as 'equal rights', 'tolerance', 'discrimination', 'peace', 'co-operation', 'solidarity among peoples' and 'respect' are included, but LOGSE fails to provide specific guidelines on how immigrant children should be educated.

Alkan (1990:114) promotes the idea of listing choices of curriculum and multicultural arguments as political objectives. He advocates that multicultural curriculum projects be relevant, practical and reinforced by specific operational programmes. For Alkan, pluralistic education should be signified by:

1. the choice of values, experiences and knowledge which form the curriculum;
2. the sequential organisation of curriculum development; and
3. the cultural transmission carried out by schools and colleges in their educational activities.

There is clearly a need to expand such vision to workable objectives from which teachers can produce practical schemes of work. In education, there is no time for luxuriating in balancing the outpourings of different philosophies. If change is to take place, if mind-sets are to be transformed, then teachers must be challenged by government directives, emanating from the vision of those most closely involved in the situation. A set of core values, established through consultation with those most concerned with intercultural work, is crucial. Commitment to, and interpretation of these core values into tangible practice is, however, most important. Jordán (1992 1994) claims that defining pluralism, within the context of education, should be seen as a positive and creative experience rather than a way of avoiding conflict and tension. Whatever measures are taken, little will be achieved without the support of ethnic groups, educationists and the government. Lessons learned in other countries show that moving towards intercultural thinking is a slow and painful process. It takes time and patience.

It is important to note that educational programmes for immigrant children do exist. García Castaño and Pulido Moyano (1993) highlight two, promoted by government departments, under the category of compensatory education: the MEC (the national Ministry of Education and Science) & DEGC (The Ministry of Education and Science, within the Catalanian region). One programme is directed towards Portuguese children, the other is designed to help immigrant students in Catalonia. The writers recommend the first for encouraging the participation of Portuguese institutions, while in the second, they commend the fact that a regional government has responded, at last, to particular ethnic needs.

Spain: The way forward

It is argued in this paper that intercultural development in Spain should take note of the fact that by concentrating on immigration issues alone more important matters, such as cultural interchange, will be lost. Furthermore, it is essential that

all immigrants should not be treated in the same way. They are individuals with diverse histories, experiences and hopes. While there will be certain groups with particular needs and problems, there is no necessity for a generic and negative categorisation of all immigrants. Positive support systems for groups with special needs and abilities (all too frequently defined as 'disabilities') should be set up in order to facilitate their better introduction (not assimilation or integration) into an unfamiliar society (Abad, Cucó and Izquierdo 1993).

Such thinking may be considered simplistic. The whole question of reconciling immigrants with their new home country is fraught with danger. The range of opinions and attitudes is virtually limitless and the positive acceptance of an unfamiliar culture into one's own context demands a sacrificing of the secure parameters within which one has always existed.

It should be possible to view the arrival of another culture as an opportunity to reflect on those factors in society which create a narrow vision or which leads to bigotry and rejection of certain groups. Diversity should result in an enhancement of cultural possibilities, not a blinkered defence of native customs. Positive discrimination is not an easy idea to accept. Antipathy towards those who are immigrants will not enrich the society but create negative forces which will limit the development of that country and produce more problems in the future (Woolard 1989).

There needs to be a commitment at both national and local levels, manifested in the supply of appropriate resources (human and financial) and systematic policies supported by government legislation. Immigrants need to be given responsibility for their own actions and opportunities for their voice to be heard, through the setting up of support centres and representation on committees (school, community, etc.). Issues related to education, which extend into the community, employment areas, access to information and opportunity for feedback, need to be initiated. Representation of immigrants in policy-making procedures is essential to create a sense of ownership and commitment. In areas of Spain, Catalonia, for instance, such measures are beginning to take place. As yet, however, such procedures are *ad hoc* and not formally acknowledged by the government.

Woolard's (1989:139) following metaphor is a useful description of current Catalanian practice,

An image that captures the situation of Catalonia (...) is that of the seam created by a sewing machine, joining two pieces of cloth and demarcating the boundary between them at the same time (...). But when we look closer, or if we are able to watch the machine as it constructs the seam, we know that this single boundary is in fact made up of two separate threads that cross each other and interlock, one fed through the mechanisms of the bobbin and one fed from the needle.

We are all familiar with the fact that change, especially in education, does not occur overnight. It takes a painful modification of behaviour, attitudes and beliefs and a confrontation of the fears and misconceptions established over generations. The continuing demand for greater autonomy by some regions of Spain is seen as creating problems with the preservation of their inherent culture. Other cultures, from within and outside Spain, are finding it hard to be accepted and to cope in certain regions, especially in relation to the language of the community. Woolard, referring to this matter, stresses that *"The language in which people actually talk with each other is a relevant sign of identity and a symbol of competing orientations and interests within Catalan society. It therefore becomes a major point of contention in the elaboration of new social policies by the Catalan government"*.

When change involves a transmogrification of cultural mores, embodying a long history and tradition, then systems for implementation can not be rushed. This is no excuse for inertia and there is much direct exchange that can take place prior to the production of goals and policies. The groundwork requires a breakdown of personal prejudice in a positive environment. Work should also begin through an examination of the school's curriculum, the books and resources used in order to determine to what extent negative images of other cultures are presented. This is a challenge facing all countries.

Within the close educational climate of the school the needs of pupils are paramount. Within Spain, over the past twenty years, priorities have centred on education for all. Now it is time to address the dilemmas facing teachers, as stated above. An adjustment of pedagogic ideology and practice is necessary. De Vreede (1990) claims it is essential that changes of attitude towards pluralistic education should involve a critical revision of all the curriculum.

Bartolomé Pina (1995) shows, in his research project, that in Spain perceptions of teachers, involved in multicultural education, have narrowly restricted perspectives towards cultural and ethnic diversity. Outcomes showed that the majority of teachers focused on areas of teaching effectiveness and language, rather than acknowledging the need to study more comprehensively, cultural differences.

The positive transformation of one child's attitude towards another can be seen as a microcosmic movement towards a global understanding of human rights. It is of course naive to consider that this is enough. The introduction of intercultural thinking demands a knowledge of conflict resolution (internal and external), of how to address prejudice and discrimination and ways of promoting the advantages of cultural reciprocity. Commitment from those wielding political power must secure change through legislation, embodying opportunities for the liberation of cultural expression and individual rights. Policy is important only

if it is translated into practice and is evaluated within the appropriate context. 'Education for all' means challenging current practice and attitudes with an openness of mind and a personal willingness to learn. It is somewhat ironic that in a system which, in ideal terms, should promote flexibility, creativity and adaptability to ensure a breadth of worthwhile learning experiences, national education is often guilty of cementing indecision, prejudice and rigidity into the minds of its recipients. Interculturalism is an evolutionary process and not a sudden conversion. The fire-breathing radical approach, while at times necessary to jettison action, often dislocates progress and creates fear. Enlightenment through intimacy of broader cultural experiences builds secure bridges which last.

Intercultural education means education for all children in all schools. Hesary and Hill (1989:3) encapsulate the feelings of the writers claiming that it is necessary "to ensure that children develop, as they grow towards maturity, the capacity to recognise inequality, justice, racism, the common stereotypes, the prejudices and distorted, biased information ...".

If this paper has created a climate for a broader debate about the nature and purpose of multi/intercultural education in Spain, then it has achieved its primary objective.

Bryan J. Cowan works at the University of Reading running Masters' courses on educational management and planning for both U.K. and overseas students. He is, at present, working on two research projects: the first, assessing current attitudes towards intercultural education in Spain and the second, assessing the impact of Headteacher training in South Africa, funded by the British Council. Dr Cowan is also Director of Staff Development at his University. Contact address: The University of Reading, Faculty of Education and Community Studies, Bulmershe Court, Earley, Reading RG6 1HY, UK. Tel. (01734)318337; Fax. (10734)316563.

Servando Pérez-Domínguez has been a researcher at the University of Santiago de Compostela (Galicia) for a number of years. His particular interest lies in the prevailing attitudes of Spanish people towards multi/intercultural education and the reassimilation of immigrants from South and Central America. He is currently undertaking research in multi/intercultural education for his doctorate in both Spain and the U.K. Contact address: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Facultade de Filosofía e Ciencias da Educación, Departamento de Teoría e Historia da Educación, Campus Universitario, 15706 Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Tel. +34.81.563100 (Ext. 3753); Fax. +34.81.521581; Email <uscplspd@cesga.es>

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