

## THE VALUES OF TOLERANCE EDUCATION. A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### Abstract

*Our paper aims to identify and systematize the values associated with the concept of ‘tolerance’ in the field of education. The main method used was the literature review. The literature review aims to highlight the values associated with tolerance education at a global level. Our results consist of the identification and systematization of a series of values associated with the concept of ‘tolerance’, as well as the highlighting of the need to include preparation of teachers to work/teach in multicultural environments as one of the finalities of initial teacher training. Our paper is part of a doctoral project that aims to identify ways to increase tolerance at teachers and students by introducing intercultural education modules at various disciplines.*

**Key words:** intercultural education, multiculturalism, teacher training, tolerance, value

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### Conceptual framework

#### *Tolerance education*

Our present study is part of our wider research project which aims to see whether and in what way intercultural education may be used to build and promote the values associated with tolerance. Regarding the concept of tolerance, we have already briefly presented the semantic field of the concept of tolerance and the fields and main theories associated with it in our previous article: tolerance as a social, ethical and religious notion denoting respect of the freedom of others, their way of thinking, behaviour, and opinions of any kind (political, religious, etc.); the current paradigm of the pedagogy of tolerance has been supported in the last decade by the active

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promotion of the values of the culture of tolerance: humanistic coexistence, respect for differences, free choice of value orientations and nonconflictual acceptance of the rights of others; the actuality of the theme determined by the contemporary social processes characterized by confrontational and disintegration tendencies, in the context of society's spiritual crisis, also reflected in education; our findings revealed that tolerance is both a *value* of the contemporary world and an *effect* of education; tolerance from a historical, sociological, axiological perspective (Boghian, 2017).

An important distinction should be made between toleration and tolerance: “*toleration* is a word often used for deliberate forbearance from interfering with something that is disapproved of; *tolerance* can be the name of an attitude, which for many liberals will be a virtue in its own right” (Haydon, 2007). Also, in another study we have identified teachers' perspectives on tolerance education: quite a relevant number of studies, reports and books associate tolerance education with intercultural education; enhanced tolerance capacity is a means as well as a goal of intercultural education; (in)tolerance examples should be used as teaching material to support the building of awareness of the various dimensions and meanings of tolerance; tolerance is a central value of the 21<sup>st</sup> - century education; tolerant attitude and behaviour is acquired based on models from the earliest ages; the school is a small society, appropriate for raising awareness of the phenomenon of tolerance and practicing it in multiple circumstances and relationships; tolerance is not a feeling inherited by birth, it is acquired through education, but for this we need an impressive arsenal of knowledge and the formation of new mentalities; different types of diversity: positive, negative and controversial diversity; one of the issues related to implementing and conducting tolerance education is the fact that there are people (teachers, parents, students, other agents involved in the educational act and process) who do not have a clear picture of the goals, principles and utility of teaching tolerance; insufficient and/or partial understanding of tolerance education was also a conclusion of our study (Boghian, 2016).

### **Value**

Etymologically, the word ‘value’ comes from the Latin *valere*, meaning “to be strong, to be well, to be of value, to be worth”<sup>2</sup>. In ethics, value designates the object of moral preferences or choices, or criterion supporting a moral conduct; in moral philosophy, the use of the concept of value is quite recent and is based on the Kantian distinction between what is and what should be; based on this distinction, Kant separates lives that have a price from lives that have dignity, the later with an intrinsic absolute value, as a result of the fact that they cannot be traded; in

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<sup>2</sup> Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/value> , accessed December 12<sup>th</sup> 2017.

sociology, the social value represents the ethical content of a (social) norm that regulates social cohabitation (Drago & Boroli, 2004, p. 1152). Weber defined value as a way of being or acting that a person or community acknowledges as ideal and that makes the persons, groups or behaviours to which it is attributed be regarded as good or respectable; values may be influenced by age, historical moment or generation; although people aim for solidarity, integration and unification of life styles, the consensus of values is never complete, as tensions, conflicts and alternatives may occur; the issue of the relativism of values is central and the search for universalies should be neither overlooked nor disqualified; denial of this transcendence would mean glorification of the worst servitudes, since our world is not made of small cultural islands, but of units that overlap at least partially and are often in a process of fusion (Ferréol & Jucquois, 2005, p. 660).

The concept of *value* is the object of study of the theory of values. Great thinkers in philosophy and ethics approached values in relation to the human being, society, and presented their role in education. Values are classified according to traditional representations in the spheres of social life. There are, first and foremost, material and spiritual values, the values of production-consumption, social values, political, moral, cognitive, aesthetic, religious values. However, under the circumstances in which society becomes a huge illusions market, it is all the more difficult to talk about the hierarchy of values. There are several criteria for classifying values: validity, quality, the subject of the value, the reasons that determined the values, the object of the value, the psychic faculty from which the values come forth, the scope of the values. According to the value validity criterion we may distinguish between relative, absolute, subjective and objective values. The quality criterion for classifying values supports differentiation between positive values, negative values, personal values and effects values. According to their subject, the values can be autopathic (when the subject centres on itself), heteropathic (goals for other people), ergopathic (something not personal). H. Schwartz (2012) proposed to distinguish the values based on the reasons that determine them, namely: accidental-transient values and values of the person. According to their object, values may be: economic, ethical, legal, political. Based on the psychic faculty from which they arise, values may be sensitive, sentimental and cognitive; according to their scope, values may be individual, social, cosmic, elementary and ideal.

### ***Intercultural education***

The new educations are the most relevant and useful response of educational systems to the problems of the contemporary world; intercultural education, centred on the value of tolerance, is one of the new educations able to empower people to deal with everyday challenges, one of the most relevant ways to promote a tolerant attitude and build tolerance as a key value to wider

groups of people. Intercultural education proposes a pedagogical approach to cultural differences, a strategy that takes into account spiritual (cultural differences) or other specificities (gender, social or economic differences), avoiding, as far as possible, the risks that stem from unequal exchanges between cultures or, even more seriously, culture atomization tendencies. The intercultural approach is not a new science or a new discipline, but a new methodology that seeks to integrate the data of psychology, anthropology, social science, politics, culture, history into the interrogation on the educational space (Cucoş, 2000). Intercultural education refers to topics such as acceptance and participation, learning cohabitation – learning to live together, avoiding stereotypes and prejudices, and proposing solutions for promoting the values of democracy and interculturality/multiculturalism. The development of intercultural communication skills presupposes learning these skills both in the organized framework (formal education) as well as in and through non-formal and informal educational activities. Developing the skills to interact effectively in intercultural contexts, even in an environment dominated by apparent cultural homogeneity, is achieved by learning specific behaviours within educational, formal, non-formal or informal influences.

Intercultural education has been either associated with or defined as equivalent to peace education, education for tolerance, education for non-discrimination. Tolerance education aims, first and foremost, at teaching human and individual rights and freedoms to each person, in order to make sure that these are respected, as well as promoting the will to protect the rights and freedoms of others. Mishra & Kereluik defined cultural awareness and intercultural competence as “cultural competence”, a sub-category of the “humanistic knowledge” category of skills that also includes life/ job skills, and ethical and emotional awareness (Mishra & Kereluik, 2011: 10). Cultural competence is one of the requirements for social and economic success in nowadays’ world of globalization and cultural diversity; it is “appreciation of the creative expression of ideas and emotions by all types of individuals”, including aspects of person, interpersonal and intercultural competence “evidenced through effective communication and collaboration” (Mishra & Kereluik, 2011: 11). The literature refers to cultural competence as related to these key concepts: intercultural knowledge, civic knowledge and engagement, knowledge of culture and physical world, skills for a global world (Zhao, 2009), communication in foreign language, social civic competence, cultural awareness and expression (*CEFR*, 2011), global awareness (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007).

## **Method**

### ***Searching and selection procedure***

The key words for our search included the terms “tolerance”, “value”, “tolerance education” and “intercultural education”. Documentation was conducted in Romanian libraries and online electronic databases (PsycARTICLES, ERIC, EdITLib Digital Library and Academic Search Premier). Our search yielded a large number of books, dictionary entries and articles on themes related to our key concepts. From these, we have selected the works that support us not only in defining our key concepts, but also in highlighting the connection between them.

### ***Data analysis***

The literature review may enable us to summarize the accumulated knowledge on a topic of interest and highlight aspects that have not been sufficiently studied or that still need further clarification (Creswell, 1994). Our literature reviews aims to identify and highlight the values associated with the concept of tolerance and tolerance education, as well as the need to include training of teachers to work/teach in multicultural environments as one of the finalities of initial teacher training.

## **Findings and discussions**

### ***General human values***

The basic values of mankind (Good, Beautiful, Truth, Justice, Freedom and Sacredness) embody both a positive principle in education, but also a source of difficulties for educators: these values, although widespread, are subject to different interpretations, and parents often perceive the values of education as a threat to the values they strive to form for their children (Pâslaru, 2003, p. 105). Good is the highest value pursued by the human being and, at the same time, the criterion for assessing the quality of man (Aiftinică, 1994, p. 40).

The German philosopher Fr. Nietzsche believed that the development of personality is a supreme value, the purpose of education being to form a man able to create new values; for this, hereditary factors, the potential of one’s personality, one’s tendency towards self-development should be taken into consideration; the idea that values are, in fact, good qualities of man that should be exploited and developed was first discussed by Plato; for the Greek philosopher, Good is the supreme value pursued by man, as well as a measure for man’s worth; Aristotle highlighted the importance of education in man’s life: the physical, volitional and intellectual dimensions of the soul should be educated to make a virtuous man (Cristea, 2004, p. 49).

The Romanian philosopher Petre Andrei, the author of the first axiological system created in Romania, acknowledged the existence of transient and variable ideals and also recognized the

existence of a supreme, invariable ideal, with absolute value, in relation to which we may evaluate the other values towards which we aim (Aiftinică, 2001, p. 62). For Andrei, the supreme cultural value is humanity, meaning the achievement of the utmost morality and consciousness/awareness of humanity (Andrei, 1945, p. 160). Humanity could be the socio-cultural ideal, the value-purpose that may guide and give meaning to all the other values circulated within the axiological field of today's society.

The first coordinate that the Romanian philosopher Tudor Vianu exploits is the *support* of values. This may take different forms: real or personal, material or spiritual. These distinctions are very important because real values are not always material and personal values are not always spiritual. For example, vital values, like health, power or physical prosperity are personal values, but they are not spiritual values, they belong to the sphere of material values, since they belong to people taken as simple biological material organisms: "the value is in a relation of connection or freedom to the personal things, be they material or spiritual, to which we attribute it" (Vianu, 1998, p. 91). Values exist in a complex process of intercommunication, which structure the axiological world; thus, one value (value-means) may contribute to achieving another value (value-purpose): for example, economic values are means for achieving certain goals, such as political or aesthetic values. A value-means may communicate directly not only with a single value-purpose, but also with some values that may be values-purpose in relation to it, and, at the same time, values-means in relation to other, higher values. For example, the political value may be the purpose of the economic value and, at the same time, the means for other values-purposes, such as moral values. These relationships between values generates values-means and values-purposes, which supports the distinction between relative and absolute values-purposes; thus, the political value that sometimes appears as a means and sometimes as a purpose is, in fact, a relative goal, whereas theoretical, aesthetic, moral and religious values are absolute goals, since conscience never views these as means for reaching higher goals. T. Vianu classified and hierarchized the dominant values of education at certain ages: the vital values - at the age of toddlerhood; vital and moral values - during early childhood; vital, moral and religious values - during middle childhood; vital, moral, religious and theoretical values - early adolescence; vital, moral, religious, theoretical and aesthetic values - mature adolescence; vital, moral, religious, theoretical, aesthetic, legal, political and economic values - maturity (Vianu, 1998, p. 132).

Another Romanian philosopher, Lucian Blaga proposes and analyses two types of values: type I values and type II values. These two types of values correspond to the two horizons of man: the limitless horizon of the concrete world and the unknown horizon. The first type of value satisfies the physical and elementary needs of man, being also called man's material food, while

the second type of values generates man's spiritual food. Type I values are dominated by fundamental-pragmatic goals, Type II values are put into motion and highlighted by essentially spiritual purposes (Blaga, 1996, p. 120).

The theoretical approaches to values elaborated by Romanian thinkers (Petre Andrei, Tudor Vianu, Lucian Blaga, Eugen Lovinescu, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Mircea Florian, Eugeniu Sperantia, Mihai Ralea) are in accordance with theories of values elaborated all over the world: all these theories converge towards highlighting the value of Good understood as an individual state of well-being, a state of well-being of a community and the action of doing good to others. As understood by Petre Andrei, value is "a characteristic neither of the subject, nor of the object, but is a functional relation in which the two factors cooperate" (Călin & Dumitrana, 1999, p. 85).

### ***Tolerance as value***

From an axiological perspective, tolerance is discussed as a general human value: 'value' refers to all the things relevant and personally related to man (Reardon, 1997, p. 103). Tolerance materializes in the process of human interaction and the values associated with it support the evolution of society. The values of education are, in fact, values related to the finalities, content, methodology, and epistemology of education (Pâslaru, 2003, p. 104). Clarification of the origin and content of values, selection criteria and the strategies of interiorization into individual consciousness and behaviour is relevant to building educational strategies focused on forming and promoting values, particularly given that young people are constantly faced with alternatives and have to choose responsibly (Pichiu & Albuț, 1994, p. 68). Tolerance is acquired through education, therefore it should be included in the finalities of education as the ability to "recognize and respect the dignity and integrity of all human beings" (Cristea, 2004, p. 19). Any educational act related to peace, human rights and democracy means, in fact, education for values/axiological education. The aims of tolerance education include the development and maintenance of positive relationships, social responsibility and ethical maturity (Reardon, 1997, p. 26). Values support a positive existence and evolution of humankind.

### ***Values associated with tolerance education***

Petre Andrei's axiological system includes modern concepts that support a Romanian perspective on the relation between values and education; according to him, philosophy tries to explain the world by logical values and attempts to transform it based on ethical ideals; in other words, the theoretical dimension of values represents an explanation of reality, whereas the practical dimension of values represents the transformation of reality; value is not only some metaphysical abstraction, but also something that can be manifested tangibly in society and reality (Călin & Dumitrana, 1999, p. 83). The Romanian thinker was the first philosopher (in Romanian and

possibly in the entire world) who distinguished between two processes involved in the study of values:

- processes of *knowledge of values* (a logical process that leads to theoretical, explanatory values, constituting the theoretical foundation of values);
- processes of the *recognition of values* (a practical process that leads to the appreciation of values and their operation in society, which is the object of the sociology of values).

Andrei's view illustrates more accurately the appearance of the philosophy of values in the educational system; *knowledge of values* ensures their theoretical substantiation; facilitating access to values is connected to the cognitive component of the educational process; knowledge does not mean only discovering the essence of objects and phenomena and, by this, of theoretical values, but also "actualization and learning of other values present in the fundamental works which make up the treasury of national and worldwide culture and civilization" (idem, p. 84). This type of knowledge, which is one of the most important objectives of education, promotes changes in personality towards improving one's level of creativity and overall behaviour. *Recognition of values*, in other words appreciation of values, "leads to their operation in society, which coincides with their formative aspect – the second fundamental objective of education" (idem, p. 85). Appreciating values based on acquired knowledge, judgement and sensitivity and experiencing values, transforming some values into individual and social ideals represents one of the rules governing education, as well as the practical dimension of axiology.

Researchers in the field of education combine their efforts to demonstrate that tolerance is a universal value and axiological form of human coexistence and, at the same time, one of the conflicting values of the contemporary world (interpreted as patience and self-sacrifice). Their attempts materialize in descriptions of tolerant consciousness, thought, action and mentality. The Declaration of Principles on Tolerance of the UN member states (1995, 2004, 2008, 2010) approaches tolerance as "a necessary condition for peace, economic and social progress of all peoples", clarifying the signification of tolerance, the role of the welfare state in promoting it, as well as the socio-educational and action engagements in approaches to education (Boghian, 2017 b, p. 8).

At the end of another century and millennium, at the end of a long period of searching and attempts, 'at war' with our own uncertainties and anxieties, we are also trying to put an end to short-term vision, with the prevalence of the left hemisphere, with absolute truths, with simplistic and reductionist views: "we are struggling to put an end to the traditional paradigm of becoming, to the generalization of competition and rivalry, to intolerance, routine and mere adaptation; we are struggling to relinquish the theory that future should be built by following past models; we are

attempting to put an end to absolute dichotomies – East/West, past/future, continuity/discontinuity, entropy/homeostasis, necessity/freedom, changing the school to change society/changing society to change the school –, we are continuing our fight against pseudo-values, we keep on believing that something is changing; something should indeed change, but we must put an end to enclosures (Cojocariu, 2003, p. 8). The contemporary education crisis is characterized by lack of meaning, absence of ideal; values such as peace, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, participation, creativity are able to support educational efforts and their optimism, even under the most restrictive circumstance (idem, p. 48). Cultural dialogue is a phenomenon as natural as inter-human dialogue, being in fact an elaborate and highly axiologically and socially shaped form of it. What was often labelled as inferior (black art elements, for example) is now accepted as “something else” (by some) or “valuable” by others. Whenever there is a problem of the dialogue of cultures, it is a face-to-face meeting of two (or more) identities: the more different the cultures, the more difficult the dialogue, but also the more potentially interesting. What makes communication difficult is the exit - entering from / into the cultural matrix of the other, the effort to correctly de-signify and re-signify the other; education for change by cultivating tolerance, openness to others, acceptance of diversity and alterity creates optimal conditions for this dialogue (idem, pp. 139-140). We believe that in order for this dialogue among cultures to work, we need tolerance.

Intercultural education, which focuses on raising intercultural awareness, builds moral values (honesty, respect for others, tolerance, responsibility for one’s actions, kindness and generosity) and spiritual values (compassion and wisdom). Learning about different cultures contributes to eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, making people more tolerant towards others and approach foreigners with an open mind and positive view. Intercultural awareness builds responsibility for one’s actions as a result of the knowledge achieved about different cultures: greetings, paying visits, leisure time, eating or dressing codes; cultural issues should be taught in schools to promote and develop understanding and tolerance among children and youth, as well as diminish international conflicts, nationalism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia (Komorowska, 2006, p. 63).

### ***Teacher training***

The current paradigm of the pedagogy of tolerance is asserted in contemporary society by the active promotion of the *values* of the culture of tolerance in the last decade: *humanistic coexistence, respect for differences, free choice of value orientations* and *nonconflictual acceptance of the rights of others* in the context of the *Declaration on the principles of tolerance* (Boghian, 2017 a, p. 97).

The teacher training system is a space of moral-spiritual formation through the values of tolerance with the aim of strengthening the system of existential values of educational agents. From this perspective, the tolerant vision of teacher training involves the formation of a deontological behaviour oriented towards communication based on the values of the culture of tolerance as an expression of empathy, compassion, self-esteem and respect for others, accepting compromises in tense professional situations. These trends update the need for tolerance education to respond adequately to conflicting and destructive challenges in human interactions.

In Romania, teacher training is provided through a study programme called the Psycho-Pedagogical Module, provided by the Pre- and In-service Teacher Training Departments that are part of the academic structure of Romanian universities. The Psycho-Pedagogical Module comprises two levels of training for prospective teachers in Romania: Psycho-Pedagogical Training Courses for B.A/ B.Sc. Students (graduation certificate – level 1 that enables students to become teachers for grades 1-8) and Psycho-Pedagogical Training Courses for M.A/ M.Sc. Students (graduation certificate – level 2 that enables students to become teachers for grades 9-12/13). Enrolment in and attendance to the level 2 of the psycho-pedagogical training courses requires covering and graduation of the 1st level. The disciplines included in the curriculum of the levels of psycho-pedagogical training mentioned above include: Psychology of Education; Pedagogy (curriculum theory and methodology; teaching and evaluation); Classroom Management; Computer-assisted Learning; Specialization Didactics (which differs according to the students' faculty specialization and covers teaching methods, teaching aids, evaluation and assessment, class management, types of classroom interaction, the student's needs, various approaches to the educational process, conflict resolution in educational settings (Boghian, 2017 b, p. 55). There is no compulsory discipline of Intercultural Education in the teacher training study programme; some universities provide this course as optional.

The absence of cross-cultural courses in teacher training has been highlighted by other authors, too: the teacher “recognizes the vast diversity in her class, but is unsure how to deal with it. The one cultural studies course she took in college focused on the history of African Americans. Although interesting, the course did not provide Ms. Young with the skills needed to teach in a culturally diverse classroom” (Powell & Caseau, 2004, p. 45). Culture has been shown to play a certain role in learning preferences (Guild, 1994, p. 23). White students have been found to value independence, analytical thinking and objectivity, whereas students from minority groups tend to process information holistically, pay more attention to the social context and are more intuitive (Powell & Caseau, 2004, p. 54). However, there has not yet been drawn a clear connection between culture and learning style. Teachers have acknowledged a relationship

between culture and learning; however, recommendations on how to integrate culture into classroom practice have been scarce. One great model in this respect is Claxton's *connected teaching model* comprising four central features (Claxton, 1990, pp. 33-35):

1. the teacher is a 'midwife' – helps students build their own knowledge – rather than a 'banker' – a deposit of knowledge;
2. the focus is on problem posing and problem solving;
3. dialogue is a two-way communication: knowledge is not transmitted by the teacher to the student, but is built and negotiated through the interaction between and among learners; this promotes collaboration and community rather than competition and individualism;
4. disciplined subjectivity: the emphasis is on the student and the teacher tries to view the learning content from the student's position.

Culturally responsive teaching occurs "where there is equal respect for the backgrounds of all learners, regardless of individual status and power, the learning processes embrace the range of needs, interests, and orientations to be found among learners" (Wlodkowski, & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 17). The essential features of culturally responsive teaching are (Gay, 2000, pp. 30-32):

1. culturally responsive teaching validates the cultural knowledge, traditions and styles of diverse students, incorporating multicultural information into the instruction of all subjects and using a variety of teaching strategies;
2. it is comprehensive: teachers convey knowledge by using cultural referents; teachers are willing to learn about the different cultural and historical background of the students in the classroom;
3. it is multidimensional: a topic can be approached from several perspectives (e.g. teachers could collaborate in order to teach the concept of protest, by resorting to literature, music, art, interviews and historical records; students discover how different groups express and deal with protest);
4. it is empowering: students are successful because culturally responsive teaching celebrates individual and collective achievements, boosts the students' morale and motivation, supports students with resources and personal assistance;
5. it is transformative by building at students the ability to recognize discrimination and prejudice as well as skills to combat them;
6. it is emancipatory: students are given the freedom to explore new ways of knowing, to argue, question and understand that there is no total and permanent truth.

7. it is productive: by incorporating the students' interests and experiences into the classroom, all the students benefit from an enhanced 'fund of knowledge' in reading, writing, mathematics or other different subjects (Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999, p. 14).

Culturally responsive teaching may be achieved through the following stages (Gay, 2000, p. 111):

a. developing a cultural knowledge base relying on the cultural characteristics of different cultural groups and thus establishing a context for learning;

b. converting cultural knowledge into relevant curricula by means of images displayed on bulletin boards, pictures of heroes, statements about social etiquette, images about cultural groups as reflected in the media that are to be discussed with the students;

c. displaying cultural care: teachers should exploit the communication styles (discourse features, logic, rhythm, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures, body movements) of various ethnic groups and build on the students' experiences, widening their intellectual horizon; the teacher's failure to understand differences in the students' communication styles may generate serious classroom management problems;

d. delivering instruction through multiculturalized practice: for example, cooperative learning strategies derived from the teacher's knowledge that some ethnic groups prefer group-work tasks.

Teacher training and the design of teaching materials should be changed in order to support the building of intercultural competence and cultural awareness in school. Pre-service teachers should be provided with special courses and in-service teachers may attend training courses and workshops on this topic. The basic teaching materials (e.g. foreign language course books) should include more intercultural topics related not only to the country to which the respective foreign language is directly and clearly related (for example, the UK, the USA and France), but also to other anglophone and francophone countries, as well as countries that may have no connection whatsoever with the English and French languages. The future language teacher is one of the "catalysts for an ever-widening critical cultural competence ... an agent of social change" (Kramsch, 1996, p. p. 8). Foreign languages are, in fact, tools that facilitate the widening of the students' horizon and general knowledge and, through them, students are taught moral values (honesty, respect for others, tolerance, responsibility for one's actions, kindness and generosity) and spiritual values (compassion and wisdom).

Educators, syllabus writers and teachers should direct their activity towards supporting students identify with their own culture and approach the difference and apparent strangeness related to another culture with openness and curiosity.

## Conclusions

Education has an undeniable social determination, being put into practice by each society in such a way as to suit its needs and possibilities, based on its demands and circumstances. The analysis of contemporary education should consider the characteristics of the global society as well as those of the particular societies in which it is conducted. Reflecting on the peculiarities of today's society, the Club of Rome has synthesized and introduced the concept of the contemporary world problems. It refers to a set of aspects defined by features such as emergence, complexity, contradiction, interdisciplinarity, gravity and planetary scale, an area that keeps expanding to include more and more problems. These dilemmatic "nodes" were called global problems of humanity and the very fabric of their relations defines the contemporary world issues, including aspects such as environmental degradation, limited resources, food crisis, population boom, amplifying conflicts, proliferation of sophisticated weapons, moral crises, intolerance. The concept of contemporary world problems raises interrogations regarding the current and future capacity of human beings to cope with the challenges enumerated above. "How should education be achieved today in order to prepare individuals appropriately for successful handling of this problematic context?" is just one of the implied or explicit questions occurring increasingly often among the concerns of educators, precisely as an expression of such preoccupations. The educational solutions outlined in the context of increasingly intense discussions about a "moral crisis of education" that seek possible remedies can be summarized as follows (Cojocariu, 2004):

- changing the educational paradigm, of the general ways of understanding, designing and achieving education;
- broadening the scope and content of education through the emergence and implementation of the new educations;
- innovations in the design and implementation of education – permanent education and self-education.

The new educations represent the most relevant and useful response of educational systems to the imperatives arising from the problems of the contemporary world. Articulated around the value of tolerance, intercultural education is considered as one of these new educations able to empower people to deal with everyday challenges.

All the studies analysed in our previous literature review (Boghian, 2016) have supported us in concluding that teachers are aware of the need for a type of education that promotes openness, collaboration, acceptance of difference and diversity, whether we refer to it as intercultural, peace or tolerance education (Afdal, 2004; Albu & Cojocariu, 2015; Polat & al., 2016; Şahin, 2011; Țurcan, 2015). Tolerance education is seen as the solution to handling

conflicts in a peaceful and constructive way, by forming skills of cooperation and compromise or, at least awareness of the fact that adopting a positive attitude of acceptance of difference and diversity may constitute a valuable resource for concrete solutions to professional, and even personal issues (Afdal, 2004; Albu & Cojocariu, 201; Polat & al., 2016; Şahin, 2011; Țurcan, 2015).

By building cooperation, compromise, empathy, openness and acceptance of diversity and difference, the resulting effect of a positive, constructive approach expands, from the personal and professional level, to the national and international level, resulting in diminished risks of conflicts that transcend state borders and that are based on or fuelled by various types of difference (religious, ethnic, political, regional, social, economic etc.). Tolerance education helps establish social peace and welfare, builds an understanding and creative classroom atmosphere with harmony between students, promotes development in developing countries, highlights the relevance and value of difference and diversity, contributes to solving disputes and to the avoidance of jealousy generated by a competitive examination system (Şahin, 2011, p. 81). The two main values associated with tolerance education are *Good* and *Humanity*; from these, there derive the values of *tolerance* understood as humanistic and peaceful coexistence, *respect* for differences and the rights of others, and *mutual help*.

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