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**THE INTERCULTURAL AND MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL:
INTERLEVEL INNOVATIVE PRACTICES THROUGH
TRADITIONAL SONGS**

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Abstract

The purpose of the work presented below, which forms a part of the Research and Education Project for Community Development approved by the university, is to contribute from the university level, and more specifically, from the area of music education, to the formation of an aware, responsible and committed public, since music is considered as a valuable tool for promoting and developing intercultural awareness. In order to do this, Preschool and Primary School Teaching students have collected various songs and folk and childhood dances from their various backgrounds. They had to go deeper into their own local culture asking people close to them that could have the keys to this topic and knowledge about the tradition. After an analysis of the collected songs, a series of educational proposals has been designed to focus on multiculturalism and interculturality in the classroom. And finally, a songbook has been made containing a total of seven hundred and ninety-two songs and folk dances from the different cultures cohabiting in Úbeda. The results show that students have acquired a greater knowledge about immigration in Úbeda and also indicate an approach to immigrants through their musical cultural heritage.

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1. Introduction

This article titled “The Intercultural and Multicultural School, Interlevel Innovative Practices Through the Use of Traditional Songs in Úbeda Schools” constitutes an effort in educational research-action, which falls within the Project for International Cooperation and Education for Community Development, approved by the University of Jaén and called “Temporary Immigrants in the Province of Jaén: Opportunity for Awareness and Commitment.” The main objective of this project is to contribute, starting at the university level, towards the shaping of a more aware public, responsible and committed to societal transformation.

From the University, and from a social responsibility approach, the work team that has participated in this project, formed by a group of professors from the SAFA University Center of Úbeda, immigrants and different collectives, associations and organizations involved in welcoming immigrants to Úbeda, trying to work towards the main goal based on the university’s three functions referred to by Manzano-Arroondo (2012): “the teacher, the researcher and the transformer, who should work towards the construction of a more just and more sustainable world” (p.57).

As for the roles of the SAFA University Centre professors, the action items are planned and formulated in a global and interdisciplinary way, through different classes and learning areas. Specifically, this practice in innovation forms a part of the planning behind two classes within the Primary School and Preschool Teaching degree programs. With the former, there is an obligatory “Music Education and Learning Theory” class in the first year, and with the latter, there is a similar class in the third year titled “Preschool Musical Development and Learning Theory”.

2. Problem Statement

The demographic changes that Western countries have experienced in recent years has led to a cultural heterogeneity in society, which is reflected in the classrooms. Spain has gone from being a country of emigrants during the 60s and 70s, to welcoming numerous immigrants from different parts of the world in the 21st century. Given the importance of these migratory movements and the social impact of these new populations, the phenomenon of multiculturalism has become one of the greatest urgencies to be addressed by the different institutional systems. Therefore, because of the school’s centrality and responsibility within society, it must respond to this socio-educational phenomenon.

In fact, when immigrant children began to make themselves known and visible in schools, teachers and school administrators experienced a great deal of confusion about two things: what to do and how to deal with the heterogeneity or diversity that they represented. For this reason, the Spanish educational centres have two main objectives: on the one hand, to reinforce minority groups’ cultures in order to strengthen their self-esteem and confidence and, on the other hand, to promote the knowledge of these new cultures by the host countries. In other words, both objectives and, in general, the actions that result from them, fall under what has been called intercultural, multicultural or diversity education (Franzé, 2000).

On a similar note and derived from the multicultural society in which we live, music can serve as a unifier between cultures from around the world, integrating and merging students’ cultural diversity (Schippers, 2010; Cambell, 2013). Bravo and Moya (2006) argue that because music is a language, a form

of artistic expression and a means of communication, it has a high impact in socialization because of the possibility of being created and shared by and for everyone. In this context, the student's regional musical culture and practice can be a valuable instrument for relating, communicating and appreciating; that is to say, it is the best scenario for intercultural work, since through music children get in touch with language, customs, history, and the beliefs of different cultures (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2010). Reflecting on this issue, Green (2006) and Aróstegui & Ibarrete (2016) affirm that the school musical repertoire should revolve around the cultural diversity of the students, their interests and needs.

The first and most obvious change that can be observed in the Spanish educational curriculum towards a multi and intercultural musical education is the evolution of the treatment of the term "culture" from the implementation of the LOGSE (Spain's 1990 education system law) until the instatement of the current LOMCE (Spain's 2013 education system law). In the LOGSE, reference is made, for the first time, to the treatment of intercultural competence; however, it is almost exclusive in reference to the regional music of different (Spanish) autonomous communities as a means to preserve their cultural and social identity; that is to say, there is no mention of music from other cultures. The LOE (Spain's 2006 education system law) continued to support the advancement, diffusion and attention to the culture of autonomous communities; but, unlike the educational concept behind the LOGSE which was more region-focused, this time culture had to be included within the framework of a pluralistic vision, ingrained with values and interdisciplinarity. Therefore, through the formulation of Cultural and Artistic Competence in the LOE, the diffusion, care and protection of culture acquired a more global tone with an emphasis on integration, and special attention was paid to the end-result stemming from interaction between cultures. Even with more intensity than the LOE, the LOMCE (op. Cit.) continues to promote the inclusion of culture in its curriculum from a globalized and multicultural perspective and within the framework of Spanish and universal culture. In addition, UNESCO (2003), in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, October 17, 2003) recognizes the importance of this heritage and the need to safeguard it by being part of the cultural diversity inherent in humanity. According to UNESCO, Cultural Heritage does not only refer to monuments and objects, but also includes living traditions and expressions that have been inherited from our ancestors and transmitted from generation to generation. Music and folk and traditional customs form a part of people's cultural identity and of artistic practices valued as the cultural and artistic heritage of regions and countries.

For all the reasons previously mentioned, this work is intended to help our youngest students perceive the history of art in general and music in particular as something basic and fundamental in understanding the cultural context in which they were born and where their personality developed and the cultural context in which their ancestors were raised. In other words, coming to appreciate that in order to understand the present it is necessary to know the historical and cultural past of people and nations.

3. Research Questions

This innovate project within this subject has the following objectives:

- Learn about the countries and regions of origin of preschool and primary school students enrolled in Ubeda city schools.

- Collect and analyse technically, musically and linguistically the songs and dances from the largest number of different cultures that live in Úbeda.
- Design an educational proposal as a result of our research.
- Reflect on the concepts of heritage, culture and tradition.

4. Purpose of the Study

Based on the aims outlined in the Project for International Cooperation and Education for Development, this project was aimed at designing and executing a multicultural project of a linguistic-musical nature that would cover the educational stages through preschool and primary school and, therefore, would involve students from 3 to 12 years old as well as the Sagrada Familia University students.

Through both the subjects of "Music Education and Learning Theory" and "Preschool Musical Development and and Learning Theory", the students and teachers from these classes had to involve all possible preschool and primary schools in Úbeda that were able and wanted to collaborate. The Project aimed to compile and develop a repertoire of children's folk songs and dances from the children's own cultural heritage. This repertoire had to be as complete, varied, inclusive, representative and multicultural and intercultural as possible. After this compilation of songs and dances, the university students had to design different educational proposals and analyse, from different perspectives and areas of knowledge, the text and music of one of the scores collected by each working group. Thus, it would reflect the musical tradition of each of the families that had participated and their places of origin: the songs and dances of Úbeda merge with those of other European countries, the Americans and other regions of Spain, leading to a more than accurate cultural representation of the school population that constitutes our city, a melting pot of cultures in the past and in the present. The phases of execution were the following:

Motivation phase: the university teachers began to work in class with their students, reading scientific and newspaper articles explaining that the cultural heritage of every country or region of the world is the result of overlapping cultures over time and that, precisely, this rich culture shows that we do not live in isolation. From this initial idea, the following phases were designed and developed:

Development phase: The university professors gave the representatives of each of the working groups a letter to be sent to the principals of the various schools. This letter described the objectives of the project and the manner in which they were to be carried out.

In addition, the tasks and activities that the university students had to perform were the following: arrange an interview with the school principal; design and deliver a an initial brainstorming session to motivate the school students; provide the students with a questionnaire for their subsequent completion together with their families, especially with their grandparents; collect the questionnaires on the dates agreed upon with each of the teachers involved; analyse the musical and linguistic aspect of a song and/or dance from each group member; design an integrated teaching unit by each working group, with the intention of developing a teaching material accessible to the educational community interested in it. Finally, reflect in writing and individually, to conclude regarding the evolution and results of this assignment.

Of the ten schools preschool and primary schools that were asked to collaborate, only two declined our offer, alluding to the lack of time to finish their pre-existing classroom programming. Despite this, we think it is important to highlight how the collaboration and participation of both the management teams of

the centres, teachers and families has been fundamental. All of them have been essential in achieving a coordinated, cooperative and participatory endeavour. Schools and family members, from children to grandparents, who are the bearers of knowledge and traditions, have shaped the essence of this work. The variety and quantity of material that we have been able to collect was due to their participation and enthusiasm.

5. Research Methods

As we mentioned at the beginning of this article, this exercise in innovation is of a qualitative and longitudinal nature since it falls within the Project for International Cooperation and Education for Community Development project cited above. Since this project is designed to meet the proposed objectives over the course of four years, the data and final results will be measured globally and non-specifically.

Additionally, the research method used to design and develop this exercise in innovation was called educational 'action research', a term coined by Lewin (1973). Educational action research is characterized, among other things, as a process that, as Kemmis and MacTaggart (1988) point out, is constructed from and for its use; it aims to improve implementation through its own transformation, while trying to understand it; it demands the participation of its subjects in the improvement of their own practices; it requires group action whereby the subjects involved collaborate in a coordinated way in all the phases of the research process; it implies the realization of critical analysis of situations and is configured as a spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection cycles.

6. Findings

In the long term, our aim is to produce a book, organized by semester and educational level, of songs and dances originating from the different cultures that coexist in our city, Úbeda. Alongside this, there will be a technical-linguistic-musical analysis with teaching applications that will be offered to participating schools as material that can be used to promote intercultural themes in the classroom through music and dance. However, as was mentioned previously, only the compilation, the analysis of songs and dances and the design of the programs have been completed so far.

Although survey given to students differentiates between song and dance, in most cases this distinction was not made; therefore, the quantification of the collected samples was done in a global way. In total, we have been able to collect seven hundred and ninety-two songs and dances from the following educational centres: EE.PP. Sagrada Familia, CEIP Juan Pascuau, Santo Domingo el Savio School, El Recreo Early Childhood Centre, CEIP Virgen de Guadalupe, La Milagrosa School, Ubeda's municipal daycare centre and CEIP Sebastián de Córdoba.

Although the participating families were asked to indicate if their contributions came from the cultural heritage of their family, or to the contrary, whether they became popular through the effect of media at the time that they were composed, this distinction was not made in most cases. In fact, many of the songs and/or dances that are identified as traditional, in reality, are more recent contributions. Specifically, 74% of the songs belong to some cultural heritage and the remaining 26% to record and/or television successes that today are confused with those that come from the tradition. Of all the musical pieces, only thirteen of

them come from other parts of the world: France, Denmark, Italy, Nicaragua, Holland, Colombia, Germany, Romania and the United Kingdom. It is worth noting that, although the African and Chinese communities are increasingly present in the city of Úbeda and there are students from these parts of the world enrolled in these schools, they have not participated voluntarily in this project. Additionally, most pieces are identified as having Spanish origin, they do not specify province or region. Despite this, twenty-three songs and/or dances have been generously contributed by families from Galicia, the Basque region, Cataluña, Madrid, Extremadura, Castilla la Mancha, Aragón, the Valencian region and Murcia. Also, six of the eight Andalusian provinces have been explicitly designated.

Twenty of the songs and dances come from Úbeda and its environs, and within the province of Jaén. Some of these pieces are not known nor appreciated by the majority of the population; these are songs and/or dances that have survived the test of time and are unknown by the majority of the university students, and even, by the professors.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, we can affirm that the degree of general satisfaction from this experience has been very high, since all the goals outlined for this project were met. We think it's worth noting that, after the written reflection given by the university students about the development and results of this exercise, 100% of them think that the data obtained was been very useful. The collaboration and participation of the school directive teams, as well as the teachers and families stand out.

All of the participating university students agree that the results obtained through this exercise surpass expectations; in general, students feel they acquired a greater knowledge about immigration in Úbeda and an approach to immigrants through their musical cultural heritage. At the same time, this work has helped them to reflect on education from a multi and intercultural perspective and produce useful teaching material in which the different cultures that coexist in Úbeda from their national and international origins seem to be reflected and represented.

The cultural and patrimonial value that Ubeda's cultural heritage pieces bring is also worth noting. Some of these dances and songs are being lost from the collective memory and this collection then could be used to recover their roots, from childhood, so that they continue to be transmitted from generation to generation and the culture of our ancestors is known and valued.

After this experience, the future teachers feel positively about inquiring into the student make-up of Ubeda's preschool and primary school classrooms and learning about their cultural heritage. And in this way, being able to contribute in a universal way towards recognizing that the phenomenon of cultural fusion is timeless and universal, and necessary to understand 'the other', and thus be able to better welcome the people who decide to emigrate to Úbeda for personal, political, cultural and economic reasons, or even for survival. In addition, it is generally agreed that publishing a book with the generated material would be a very useful contribution to help teachers based in Úbeda to go beyond multiculturalism and teach intercultural lessons in their classrooms.

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