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PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY(IES) WITH CHILDREN: ACCOUNTS OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN THE EDUCATION CONTEXT

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Abstract:

We live in a heterogeneous world, where there are different cultures, with which it is imminent to learn to live together (Delors et al., 1997). Learning to live together means respect and openness towards human relationships, it means getting closer to the other and not pushing him away, through respect, dialogue, sharing interests, always based on the involvement with the difference without any kind of prejudice. To live together in a multicultural environment is to make interactions with others a source of experience (Gimeno Sacristán, 2001). Schools today are multicultural, this is largely due to migration driven by economic and social markers from more affluent countries. It is therefore necessary, especially in schools, to act to integrate and enhance the positivity of diversity(ies), as well as to promote opportunity(ies) for all. Therefore, this study aims at finding out the children's perceptions on cultural diversity, specifically on what they think of themselves, of the other and how they understand the cultural differences they experience. The methodology followed is part of a qualitative approach and the study was carried out with a 1st cycle class of 7- and 8-year-old children from a state school in the North of Portugal. Data were collected using the interview survey technique and, for data analysis, since the questions were open-ended, the content analysis technique was used (Bardin, 2018). The results show that children are open when approaching the topic under study, as well as curious to learn more about different cultures from their own, showing a non-stereotyped view of the topic. The analysis of the data also reveals positive and favourable attitudes towards intercultural relations. The results as well show that pedagogical activities on cultural diversity in the classroom stimulate children's learning and contribute to promote respect for themselves and for others.

Keywords:

Cultural diversity, multiculturalism, primary school.