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*Forward!*

*Guidance and Education System*

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This article aims to guide EPA educators with strategies related to multiculturalism and the use of images so that educational practices fit the profiles, interests and needs of each individual and to facilitate intercultural educational project.

## **GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL TEACHING MATERIALS**

Development of training materials is a daily practice in adult education: either by way of adaptation of published resources, either by way of creation of totally new materials. There is most of the times a process of creativity to adapt teaching to the individual and to the group in every moment of the learning process.

In order to do this, many aspects are usually considered: besides properly gathering the skills related to the field of work, values which are never neutral or aseptic, are reflected in materials.

It is particularly important, in the multicultural context, how the aspects of cultural diversity are reflected: the participants -teachers and students- must learn to live in a society increasingly plural and diverse, as well as to accept each other, with their similarities and differences.

The educator must help build suitable criteria which allow to cope with conflict positively, to recognize the basic rights framework, to develop critical thinking, to respect others...

The methodology and, therefore, the didactic materials in which it is given expression, are a reflection of values.

## **GENERAL ASPECTS**

We need to involve participants in the choice of content. We should try to choose a theme which is motivating, close to their world, to their needs, interests, expectations, and which encourages them to work on the proposed activity.

The materials are designed to function as teacher support, not to replace him/her.

The materials must express clearly the organization process: who does what, with whom, about what, with what resources, when, for how long, how and for what purpose.

The materials must be attractive and motivating, paying attention to presentation and content. Attractive materials are achieved through the use of letters and adapted, diverse and well finished formats, without forgetting the possibilities given by information and communication technologies.

They must be credible, with realistic and updated information, related to the real world of the participants and relevant to them. Sources of information must be mentioned.

They must provide the students with more information than that they already have, linking new information with that they previously had.

They must present objectives in a specific and concrete way. Students will learn better if they know exactly what they are expected to learn.

The presentation of the material should be organized, structured by means of internal organizers: headings, subheadings, introductory phrases ... so that a comprehensive overview of the subject matter can be obtained.

They must contain practical exercises which allow the practice of the skills addressed and they must make sense, presenting real-life situations which are resolved in the same way as in the real world.

## **IMAGES**

You learn better with training materials that combine text with illustrations, that reinforce the content and that contain comprehension and visual interpretation activities.

The illustrations must be meaningful for the participants.

They should reflect the cultural heterogeneity of the environment. People from all ethnic groups, present in the classroom in particular, and in the social environment in general, should appear with equal weight.

They must present images of ethnic minorities, although there aren't any participants who belong to them in the class.

They should be realistic and up-to-date. It is necessary that the ethnicity of the people portrayed is clearly identifiable by its specific physical attributes, neither camouflaging nor caricaturing them.

They should reflect similarities and differences between different cultures and promote equal rights and the value of diversity.

They must be a resource to promote the ethnic identity of participants belonging to ethnic minorities and/or coming from other countries. It must be perceived that society as a whole shows consideration for other customs and values, and the contributions of people of different cultures.

They should reflect lifestyles and diverse cultural elements. Diversity is not only cultural, therefore, ethnic, sexual, skills diversity... must be also taken into account.

They should reflect families from other cultures, diverse and half-breed families. It is necessary that they reflect the extended family, not just nuclear.

Graphic design must be taken care of: features must not be oversimplified or caricatured; physical attributes belonging to an ethnic group must be reflected faithfully.

They must convey positive attitudes in their content:

- Preventing people from minority groups representing negative attitudes.
- Not attributing a negative value to dark complexions.
- Representing people from different cultures working in highly qualified occupations and playing a protagonist role.
- Reflecting positive interracial relations of friendship and/or cooperation.
- Reflecting positive attitudes of the majority group towards the minority and vice versa.
- Not representing people from minorities as mere observers or isolated from the others.

We must use authentic photographs as a resource to emphasize cultural diversity and human rights. Photos reflect reality more intensively than drawings and provide credibility to the facts.

We must use photographs of ethnic groups made in their own environment.

The images must not only reflect problems of marginalization, poverty, war ... of the ethnic groups, but also show situations of everyday life.