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Cultural Diversity as a Part of Sustainable Development and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Extended summary

Cultural diversity is a given of the society that we live in and it is necessary that this society, and education system as its integral part, define their attitude towards cultural diversity in the age of globalization. Globalization is often viewed as a linear process of the economic market expansion, despite the fact that it is a multidimensional process in the economic, social, political and technological spheres. Preserving and promoting cultural diversity is a basic condition for sustainable development that is in the interest of the present and future generations. Cultural diversity is one of the most significant legacies of humanity and it is a product that has been created through joint actions of people over thousands of years. Furthermore, cultural diversity is a fact, because there is a huge number of different cultures in the world that can be identified easily by ethnographic observations. In its publications, UNESCO defined the preservation of cultural diversity as an integral and indispensable part of sustainable development, and this is particularly emphasized in The UNESCO Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity from 2001 and The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions from 2005. Education is viewed in these documents as a key process for conveying and preserving different cultural values, both national and universal. Education does not imply only regular schooling and formal education. Non-formal education and informal education are also recognized as active parts of sustainability education. Education is the basis of sustainability, while education for sustainability refers to an awareness that a particular society is not only environmentally, but also socially, economically and politically sustainable. School and

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education are the key elements of education for sustainability and they contribute to the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of skills for sustainable development.

The increased awareness of cultural differences and of the necessity of their nurturing has brought about the new ideas regarding the culturally responsible pedagogy. Culturally responsible pedagogy has gained momentum globally in the last decade. It examines critically the existing educational practices and tries to improve them. Culturally responsible pedagogy starts with the need to preserve cultural heritage and traditions, while students have maximum academic achievement. It focuses not only on the teaching process, but also on broader social elements that lead to the liberalization of teaching to culturally diverse students. The aim of the paper is to look at cultural diversity through all the documents and to consider the presumption of culturally responsible pedagogy as a response to cultural diversity, the sustainability of which is a part of sustainable development.

Keywords: cultural diversity, sustainable development, culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching.

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