The intercultural dimension of higher education: Opening new educational pathways

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Abstract

In light of the reality that the internationalisation of universities leads to the development of greater intercultural sensitivity, the University of Santiago de Compostela has recently created a program of intercultural education known as TRIBUS IBERICAS. The description and evaluation of this program are the main objectives of the study.

Our paper explains the theoretical and practical foundations of a pioneer program in Spanish universities called Iberian Tribes, designed, implemented, and evaluated at the University of Santiago de Compostela, with about a hundred students from various fields of study, from social sciences to technology. The program provides encounters between professors and students and artists, writers, and professionals from the local community as well as from abroad, focusing on issues relevant to Intercultural Education, such as immigration and social development, immigration and education, women and present-day immigration. Results demonstrate that students are highly satisfied with the program and are motivated to incorporate innovations in their teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Intercultural learning, higher education, intercultural competence, internationalisation, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural dialogue.

Introduction: Thinking of the university as a framework for intercultural education

The last decade has seen an intense migratory flow into the European Union, and specifically into Spain, contributing to considerable demographic change and social transformation. Accordingly, a great emphasis has been placed on the educational treatment of cultural diversity within as well as outside of the institution of schooling (Santos Rego & Pérez, 2001).

This issue has received considerable attention from national agencies (through public policy and academia and social programs) as well as multinational organisations, such as the European Parliament, UNESCO, and the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). This is not to mention all the important agencies, consortia, and foundations that publish reports publicising the enormous importance of taking this issue seriously and acting with political acumen and civic responsibility in the public spheres of civil society (Banks & Banks, 1995; Coulby, Gundara, & Jones, 1997). The preparation of global citizens for a global society calls for, *hic et nunc,* purposeful widespread social response to the necessity of intercultural cooperation.

Cultural diversity demands of our modern and rewoven social tapestry timely education-based responses for a change in perspective concerning "the others" and "ourselves," considering identity in terms of linkages and reconceptualising foci and hegemonic practices in the conformist spaces of public life, an area where educational institutions occupy a preferential position. It is for this reason that the focus of education intended for participation in a global civil society must in some way transcend the moral exclusion that feeds ethnocentrism and the most radical forms of nationalism. This is when education about and for human rights becomes a vehicle for intercultural education and cooperation (Reardon, 2003).

It is no surprise, then, that there is a call for more and better teacher training. This training must take into account the need demonstrated by the instances of considerable "culture shock" in quite a few educational centres as unanticipated aspects and factors are becoming apparent in the daily routine, such as the introduction of new technologies, increase of school conflict, and the growth of immigration within the centres themselves (Santos Rego & Lorenzo Moledo, 2003). Given this new panorama, the scarcity of adaptive dynamics has given rise to states of uncertainty and perplexity, certainly understandable in the face of instrumental shortages and diminishing readiness to confront the situation and to heed the organised call for responses that go beyond the conventional.

The huge number of both initial and continuous teacher education projects training programs that have been implemented recently, along with greater attention in local policy to the phenomenon of multi-interculturality, has to some extent improved the prospects of a progressive association between this issue and the need for citizenship education for those around us. Nevertheless, we still eagerly await more optimistic results than those that have so far emerged from an exclusive focus on teacher education courses (Campbell, 2000). At the same time, respect for cultural diversity also has to reach the education or accreditation of professors from diverse ethno-cultural origins (see Cruickshank, 2004).

However, the appropriateness of contemplating and effecting a more intercultural education does not stop at the doors of the primary nor of the secondary schools. The notion of a greater sensitivity toward the cultural diversity present not only in society but also within our very classrooms has also been creeping into higher education. Traditionally campuses have taken in professors and even more so students from other countries with both similar and different linguistic backgrounds. They bring with them different ways of representing reality enriching interpersonal relations and learning styles and strategies that do not always correspond to those expected in the given context. Briefly stated, the internationalisation and the exchange among teachers and learners have enabled universities to transform themselves into privileged spaces for dialogue and intercultural coexistence. What is still missing is the general conviction that, just as it is essential to teach understanding and pedagogical skills to early childhood, primary, and secondary educators, the same must be done in higher education. We, the writers of this study, work in an institution that, after all, does more than teach and research. It is also a community and, as such, a cultural entity (Santos Rego et al., 2000, 2001; Vogel, 2001).

University and preparation for a global world

In the last decades, the flexibility, if not ambiguity, of borders has extended to the university terrain, now much more oriented toward the rest of the world than before. The classic education abroad programs, very common in the US and moderately emulated by European institutions, are experiencing a notable emphasis on trans-nationalisation, that is, the desire to become global education agencies. The sustained tendency of some important universities to open delegations or branches of themselves in other countries, on the same or different continents, is widely known.

It is more than evident what this demonstrates: universities have entered a phase of open competition for the conquest of global spaces. And this is most apparent in the frenetic publicity they generate using all the media at their disposal, not only whole universities but particularly the large professional schools in diverse fields, with business and engineering leading the trend (Ong, 2004). Naturally, such a dynamic of exportation entails an argument for a flexible citizenry, bearing values and ways of representing reality that are aligned with cultural opportunities as well as risks.

We have to accept, therefore, that the university carries out a civic mission. In doing so we also accept that university education must have, following Bara's perspective (2004), an integral and situated nature; integral, because we have to educate professionals and citizens at the same time; and situated because all that is proposed must be embodied in a context, in real situations where the meaning and the relevance of the contents taught and learned can be developed together among the participants.

Nor can we lose sight of the competitive demand to prepare for a global world, whose evident expression in the university realm points to internationalisation, a strategy of sustained progress and quality in the digitalised information era. Without an active participation in networks of understanding, universities become culturally stalled, reducing their competitiveness and prestige in the community, even reducing the motivational gradient of their human resources (upon which – within as well as outside the university – all curricular change relies) and the cultivation of abilities generating an added value for academics and for the universities themselves.

In this sense, as Vogel (2001) has demonstrated, universities can design and carry out, without much problem, more "international life experiences" without leaving their designated territory. A good internationalisation strategy should always translate into a fortunate domestic intra-campus cosmopolitanism. The presence of professors and students from other countries, with disparate languages, styles of thinking and ways of life, fosters better intercultural communication that can not be reduced to classroom activities, but extends to the daily life shared among individuals of various ethno-biographical registers.

Here and now, it would not be naive to posit an education of a global and international nature, that prepares our university students to access understandings, develop skills, and foster attitudes that fit well within the networked world in which we live.

From a global education perspective, a relevant curriculum is one that helps university students to be able to examine a wide spectrum of social questions from different points of view. This is something that may help them in the acquisition of a new identity, always complementary to that which they already possess, and independent of the trait or factor prioritised by each in his/her own personal identification framework (in terms of ethnic, national, religious, gender, etc.). It is now, when university education must necessarily begin systematically and seriously to confront the educational challenge to advance the shaping of a human global identity, when this process must be based on the understanding of human diversity and on the fundamental relations that unite the destinies of all the world's people.

As much as multi/intercultural education and global/international education have developed as separate fields of study, it is clear that there are in fact many aspects that connect them and many goals that link them, including the following (see Morey, 2000; McFadden et al., 1997): promotion of equity and social justice; improvement of inter-group relations and the promotion of intercultural competence; reduction of prejudices, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices; acquisition and sharing of an understanding of human diversity; acquisition of a conscious understanding of both one's own culture and of the cultures of others; and development of skills related to a critical understanding of knowledge construction practices.

Overall, these lines of focus are those that call into question a Western cultural paradigm based on the universality of knowledge, a paradigm that fails to recognise the limits of objectivity. The important thing, both in the long and short run, is whether students know and understand the world from epistemologies that do not necessarily coincide, and whether or not they are conscious of the fact that their view of reality affects their beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours. The challenge calls for, naturally, systemic change in the university network (see Morey & Kitano, 1997; Morey, 2000), whose social utility, as much in the case of individuals and immigrant collectives as in general, will be greater or lesser "as a function of the quality of a humane relationship that allows the understanding of cultural variety, of its critical potential, and of its capacity for theoretical prediction" (Sanromán, 1998, pp. 269–270).

Sooner rather than later we must redefine the university curricula with the goal of making more explicit the students' learning strategies, along with fundamental skills such as the guarantee of their professional development and of their civic competence to adequately manage their lives and to help others do the same. These developments must take place in an increasingly intercultural context, where social skillfulness is also understood as progress along increasingly intercultural coordinates. We believe that the construction of a European space for higher education is a path filled with promise.

Therefore, it would be a good idea to consider plans for international cooperation in higher education that would be capable of reinforcing global perspectives in the preparation of professors themselves. In this way we might be able to create better student and teacher awareness in understanding others' problems.

While they may be few, it is not as if we are living in a desert with respect to tact and increased sensitivity to the difficulties of others, beginning with our own ideas of this nature. There is, for example, the *International Institute on Peace Education* (IIPE), operating since 1982 within the *Teachers College* of the University of Columbia in New York. This institute has been the source of numerous networks

and projects throughout the world. In Europe, among others, the teacher training and curriculum development initiative known as EURED deserves mentioning. Working as a university consortium, this project has been able to establish common content and conceptual frameworks in the area of peace and human rights in the complex and diverse terrain that we share in this part of the world.

What we hope to accomplish in our project is a university pedagogy based on the intercultural development that we recommend, ethics-oriented and imbued with moral values, that is essential to the function of our institutions, but without abandoning development that is more strategically oriented toward epistemic growth. The implementation has taken the form of an endeavour that operates, empirically speaking, based on a process new to the European realm of institutions of higher learning.

The foundations of the "Iberian Tribes" program at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC)

The "Iberian Tribes" Program that the University has been running since 1999 is a clear example of the important work of social innovation that can be carried out by a higher education institution. This program, initially centred on music rooted in the Iberian Peninsula, has taken on a new direction since the 2004–05 academic year as a response to the significant increase in the immigrant population of Galicia, primarily originating from Latin American countries. From these demographic shifts emerged the need to program activities from and for the university that facilitate multicultural coexistence and tolerance, ensuring the development of cultural values that prevent any signs of minority exclusion in Galician society.

At the same time, the University's external policy has strengthened the establishment of relations with its Latin American counterparts, providing a significant presence in Santiago of students from these universities and also developing studies and investigations of their different social, economic, and educational realities.

The links between the USC and Latin American countries, while they seem to be fostered by today's immigration, can actually be traced back to other important historical moments defined by Spanish transatlantic emigration.

The fifth cycle of "Iberian Tribes" was introduced in the 2004–05 academic year, entitled on this occasion "The New Iberian Tribes." It was born of the idea to develop an interdisciplinary program, supplementing education with activities that would address from within different disciplines the development of cultural communication with Latin America, the sociocultural movements in both directions, and the issue of immigration.

In designing the program we took into account not only the objectives we intended to meet and the activities to be conducted, but also the context in which it would be carried out and the characteristics of the intended audience, since both of these variables could impact the possibility of success. Therefore, we started with seven basic premises:

1. To be an interdisciplinary program that approaches cultural diversity from different circumstances.

2. To combine diverse perspectives, teaching formats and representational practices in its enactment.

3. To be a program open to the entire university community, understood as an educational and cultural extension activity.

4. To recognise the program as a developmental and even instructional activity in the curriculum.

5. To promote the involvement of students from all major courses of study, especially those subjects and academic areas most sensitive to benefiting from the cultural diversity of today's world.

6. To be incorporated flexibly in terms of space and time into the academic calendar.

7. To link the program with the development of students' social competencies and with their participation in community service projects.

To this end, we planned a program structured around two principal nuclei where two fundamental lines of any university's cultural policy converge: education and dissemination. One of these nuclei was of an academic-educational nature. There were five sessions, each associated with a different centre of cultural interest, but with a common axis: the possibility of horizontal and interactive processes among participants, independent of their role in each session. The other nucleus had a recreational-musical orientation, with an epicentre situated around the celebration of the same number of didactic concerts.

Evaluating the program

The fifth cycle of "Iberian Tribes" was carried out at the University de Santiago de Compostela throughout the 2004–05 academic year, with 100 first- through fifth-year students enrolled in the educational program. This involved the obligatory attendance of the scheduled didactic concerts, which were open to the public.

We all agreed that the design and implementation of a program should culminate in its evaluation by the population it served. With this idea, at the last session belonging to each of the two nuclei mentioned (academic-educational and recreational-musical), the students had to fill out a small questionnaire generally evaluating the program. The instrument included fourteen items, twelve closed-response and two open-response, that was completed by 56 students (just over 56% of the population studied).

Awareness of the basic characteristics of the participating students will allow us to better analyse their motives for participation in these kinds of activities, enabling us to adjust the future program content. The defining traits of the student sample are influenced by two conditions: the target population of the program and the characteristics of the university itself.

The first aspect to be taken into consideration is the age of the students participating in the fifth cycle of the "Iberian Tribes" Program. Predictably, 41.1% were young adults between 18 and 21 years old. Half (50%) were in the 22–25 year-old range, and only 8.9% were in the 26–29 range. These percentages are congruent with the typical age range for university students and also, as we will see later, with the year of study in which they were enrolled in their respective Faculties and University Schools.

A great majority of these students were women, specifically 87.5%, while men participated to a much lesser extent (12.5%). It may be explained by looking at the reality expressed in our classrooms, where the female presence clearly exceeds the male. The academic institution's statistics for the year 2003–04 confirm this impression: 64.4% of students enrolled at both University of Santiago campuses were women and only the remaining 35.6% were men. Nevertheless, to explain the higher representation of women in this program, we should go beyond institutional enrolment levels to analyse men's and women's participation in other university programs and social initiatives. Consider, as an example, the participation figures in the University Volunteer Program at the Compostela campus during the 2003–4 academic year. Specifically, 86.6% of the volunteers were women, while only 13.4% were men. These statistics indicate that 1.3% of female students participate in these kinds of programs, while only 0.35% of male students do the same. It seems that our university women are more likely to get involved in social projects and programs than their male counterparts.

For this sort of program, it is also useful to know the areas of knowledge, more specifically, the degrees of study, of those directly involved in the program. We often believe that these kinds of programs are too strongly oriented toward the theoretical preferences of those students studying Humanities and Social Sciences and so are much less attractive for students with other academic or even intellectual preferences.

In fact, the data confirm the expected tendency that students will primarily come from the Humanities (39.3%) and Social Sciences (32.2%). Nevertheless, we should not overlook the high level of representation from the Experimental Sciences (23.3%). Finally, 5.4% of participants came from the Health Sciences.

Thus, students studying degrees within the general area of Technology did not sign up for this edition of the program. This may be due to the low presence of this overall area of study on the Santiago campus, since out of the dozen degree study programs falling within the overall category of technical studies offered by the University, only two are offered at main campus (Chemical Engineering and Technical Engineering of Information Systems). The rest are all located at the Lugo campus, a hundred kilometres away.

Among the causes of the relatively low participation of those from certain areas of study in our program, we have to consider three related aspects:

1. The structure of the program itself, with activities throughout the year and mandatory student attendance. The academic program content includes topics closer to particular areas (Social Sciences and Humanities) than others. In addition, academic content is imparted in many cases by professors and investigators in these particular areas, which facilitates and motivates participation of their students (especially considering the enrolment limit of 100 students).

2. The design of degree programs that require students to attend a full-time schedule of activities in their respective centres to complete theoretical as well as practical requirements. In particular, the schedule of practicum hours that students in Technical studies and Experimental and Health Sciences must attend throughout the academic year makes their continued attendance in these kinds of programs very difficult, if not impossible.

3. The degree programs offered from within each area of study at USC, with a clear prevalence of those falling within Social and Legal Sciences (22 Bachelor's degrees and Certificates) and Humanities (17 Bachelor's).

More than half of the students (67.2%) who attended the various program sessions and activities were in the third or fourth year of their respective five-year degree programs. Fifth-year students comprised 18.2% of the participants, while first or second year students together only made up 14.5% of the survey sample. It is apparent that students with more experience at the university were more likely to demand this type of program.

As with any educational program, but perhaps even more important for a cultural extension program emphasising intercultural sensitisation, we were interested in understanding the motives that inspired these students with such diverse characteristics to wish to participate in activities of this particular nature.

The principle motive offered by students as they enrolled in this program was, in 50% of the cases, the free election credit awarded by the institution upon successful completion of the course. Only 19.6% declared that their enrolment resulted from interest in the subject, followed by 12.5% who took into consideration the possibility of participating in a new activity. Finally, almost 9% (8.9%, to be exact) indicated the diversity of issues approached and also the parallel offer of musical concerts as their reason for participating.

The first thing that should be pointed out is that half of the sample did not consider the concession of free elective credit necessary for encouraging their participation, locating their interest in the topic addressed or the activity itself. The concession of credits for participation in cultural activities is an issue that has been raised some controversy within the University. For some, these kinds of activities should not be limited or tied to the possibility of earning credits, but should be rather free and spontaneous. Actually, we believe that participation in cultural activities should not be induced by accreditation, but that they should be academically supported by the institution. This institutional commitment reflects the attitude promulgated by the European Convergence in that, as this treaty advocates, what we aspire to is nothing less than the fundamental development of the university student. For this reason we refer to a type of activity that should be recognised as part of the academic program requirements of a University education.

Second, we suspect that those students who indicated the free elective credit as their primary motivation were not revealing other kinds of reasons. The participation in such a structured and prescribed annual program as the one we are describing here is awarded with just a single credit. It should be kept in mind that this single credit requires students to add significantly to their existing load of obligations, a process that demands considerable efficiency and schedule adjustment. It would not be difficult to earn the same credit by engaging in a different and less demanding activity.

Third, the program structure allows it to be open to the rest of the university community through the didactic concerts, which are more generally oriented

toward cultural diffusion. It would not be possible to receive any kind of academic recognition attendance alone, since this would lack the necessary formalised instruction.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the fifth cycle of "Iberian Tribes" was comprised of two subprograms with different objectives and target audiences. There was, on the one hand, the concert program "New Iberian Tribes," centred on a didactic concert cycle and open to the public. On the other hand was the academic program entitled "Immigration and the Representation of Cultural Diversity from Galicia", which required students enrolled to also attend the concert cycle. Students who participated in the educational sessions and in the scheduled concerts evaluated the two subprograms.
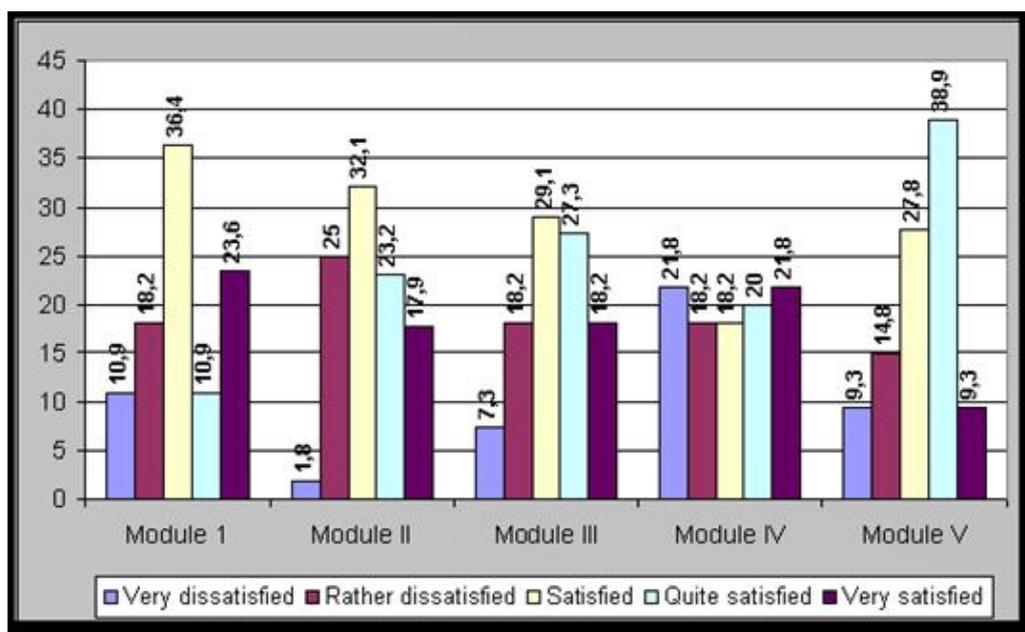
(A) The Academic Program

This Program was organised into five content modules offering different perspectives on immigration as a proponent of cultural diversity. In this sense, we asked that student participants express their degree of satisfaction with respect to each module.

The results demonstrate that, on a global level, the evaluation is very positive. More specifically, the last module (V) about the photography received the highest scores from the students, in that 76% of those surveyed assigned it a score ranging from "satisfactory" to "very satisfactory." On the other end of the scale, it was module IV, about painting, where the degree of positive evaluation represented by these two ratings reached the lowest percentage (60%).

The USC students' evaluation of these two modules calls for a brief reflection. Photography occupies a prominent place in the University's expository program, capturing the attention of the youngest members of the University community. For this reason it is not surprising that our students are familiar with the precursors of Galician photography, along with its recent tendencies. Concerning the specific case of painting, it is true that art education has not necessarily received adequate attention in our school curriculum, and so it is not surprising that students lack the basic resources needed for the analysis and interpretation of these artistic languages, which they also may tend to consider far removed from their own interests.

If we conduct a module-by-module analysis, responses indicate that the first module, dedicated to the music of immigrants, was positively evaluated by 70.9% of those surveyed, and only 29.1% gave a negative evaluation. We must point out that this module was reinforced by the didactic concert program. Percentages were similar for module II, on literature and immigration, which was positively evaluated by 73.2% of our respondents and negatively by 26.8%. With respect to module III, cinema and immigration, 74.5% of the participants responded using the most positive values on the scale ("satisfactory" and "very satisfactory"), while 25.5% situated their responses at the opposite pole ("very unsatisfactory" and "rather unsatisfactory") (see diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Degree of satisfaction with respect to the Academic Program modules

In addition, student participants provided a global evaluation of the academic program offered, with 78.6% rating it as quite or very interesting. Only 21.4% stated that they found the activity not very interesting (see diagram 2).

*Diagram 2: Overall value of the Academic Program*
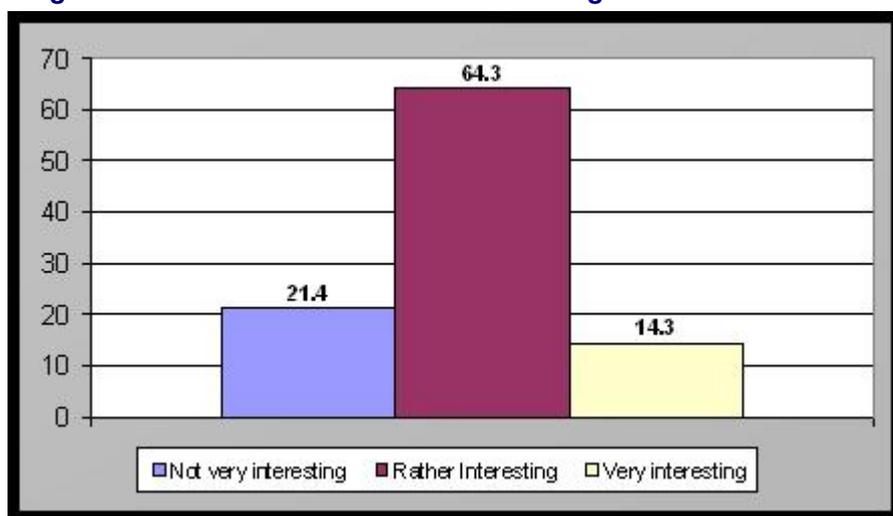
(B) The Didactic Concert Program

In the same way, we asked students to rate their degree of satisfaction with respect to the "Iberian Tribes" Program related to music, specifically the four scheduled performances of musical groups residing in our country but originating from Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Uruguay.

The first concert, that of the Brazilian group, obtained a positive rating from almost all of the students (98.2%), while only 1.8% reported feeling "very unsatisfied" with their performance. This group was the most well-received among those registered for the Program. Moving in order of rating from highest to lowest, this group was followed by the Colombian group, where 93% of the attendees reported

feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the performance of these musicians. In the case of the group, which was formed by Venezuelan immigrants, 84% demonstrated satisfaction and 16% offered a negative rating. The rhythms of Uruguay received the highest scores in the negative values of the scale, with the percentage of those who expressed dissatisfaction reaching 30.4% (see diagram 3). The high evaluation of the Brazilian group, despite the fact that they were first in the didactic concert program, should be examined in light of the higher level of familiarity people from our culture have with the music and culture of Brazil and the higher capacity for audience interaction demonstrated by this group. Our plan was to proceed from the more familiar to delve into, by means of the music, the culture of other countries that have formed (emigration) and form (immigration) part of our social and cultural history, as in the case of Colombia, Venezuela, and Uruguay.

Diagram 3: Degree of satisfaction with respect to the Concert Programs
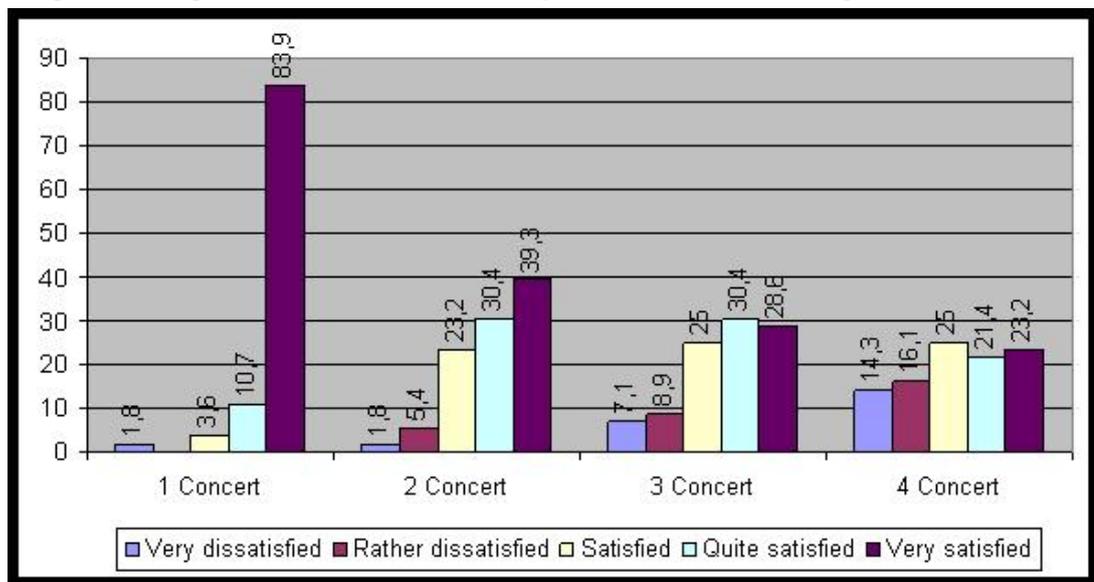
In addition, students were requested to indicate in what way their participation in the "Iberian Tribes" Cycle had most contributed to their development. Regarding this question, 37.3% stated that they were offered an understanding of cultural diversity. The same number of students (19.6%) identified the complementary enrichment of their academic training and greater understanding of Galician culture as fundamental benefits, and 17.6% reported that the program allowed them to analyse the phenomenon of immigration.

Program evaluation must stimulate reflection on mistakes detected and gaps encountered. What is important is that deficiencies are discovered that can facilitate whatever changes are needed for improvement. In this sense, it is of vital importance to solicit the opinion of those most involved as to the importance of continuing to offer the program and also concerning the subjects for analysis in future versions.

While almost a third of the participants indicated problems or difficulties with information and coordination, practically the entire group (98.2%) believed that the University should continue to provide this intercultural educational program as part of its general programming. The number of those who would like the program to disappear (1.8%) is negligible.

Conclusion

This phenomenon of immigration is designing a new site for educational action, providing special attention, from early childhood to higher education, to a series of essential elements associated with the construction of a more intercultural society, recognising that diversity enriches social development. This implies that one of the objectives of university education must be that students acquire a type of competence (what we refer to as "intercultural competence") that can be conceptualised as the set of understandings, dispositions, abilities, and attitudes preparing for the encounter with, or communication with, "the other". All of this will not be possible if we don't manifest more tact and better pedagogical sensitivity concerning the learning of the university students that we teach.

Therefore, after the great emphasis that has been and continues to be placed on primary and secondary education to promote better pedagogical management of cultural diversity in the schools, it seems that higher education's turn has come. It would be advisable to begin to practice something of what we preach along these lines, but understanding that the educational treatment of cultural diversity is not a politically correct gesture, but rather a necessity of effective education at this historical juncture.

In consequence, what the university must set out to provide is a fundamental education that transcends the realm of mere qualification to incorporate social competence, necessarily mediated by the civil formation of the students. Quite a few scholars are convinced that to accomplish its function, the institution must foster an education based on the development of democracy, the defence of peace, and human rights.

It's evident that the university must actively contribute to a new social reality, promoting an active policy of intercultural education that may influence teaching, research, and social life. University classrooms should be learning sites where it would not be mere fantasy to aspire toward achieving the competencies essential for citizens of and for participatory democracy, but without ignoring the possibility of designing sociocultural programs aimed at understanding other realities and promoting the university community's participation in integrative activities. At the same time, it seems to us that the institution's external policy should reinforce the establishment of genuine contexts of collaboration and exchange with other universities throughout the world.

The program constitutes an experiential demonstration of the educational value that we can offer, at the level of higher education, to courses of this nature that are oriented toward intercultural sensitisation, reinforcing the encounter among professors and students of heterogeneous disciplinary backgrounds with artists, writers, and professionals from abroad.

The combination of perspectives, instructional formats and practical representations of their staging (the dynamic of short academic followed by recreational-musical act), comprises the sum of ingredients that almost always results in a pedagogically attractive product. The evaluation we conducted supports this idea and so permits us to recommend it, with this design or another, depending on the focus and possibilities of each university. This work helps us to consider a higher education that is not afraid of changing curricula and instructive strategies to begin to satisfy, gradually but decidedly, the need students have to learn about and know how to function in a culturally diverse society.

In this interconnected world, university authorities can not and must not renounce their important role of dynamic leaders in the cultural arena, a potential site of noble educational policy on campus if carefully planned. For this reason we find it necessary to stress how important it is for universities to be equipped with Cultural Extension Agencies. These agencies employ people on the vanguard of the discourse and cultural practices beneficial for the institution, leading as well communication with other groups, particularly local powers, with the goal of advancing together proposal designs and action plans.

This initiative from Santiago not only endorses the university's power as classical agent of cultural creation and change in the service of the community, but also calls for this critical power to recast itself in a dynamic renovation of its own goals and educative ends. If the time is right, it is well worth taking the initiative, so that the university can remain true to its moral imperative, now and always.

We believe then, that universities should begin to make appropriate and pragmatic preparations for what can be called a fully and intentionally intercultural education, which can advance in parallel with the promotion and development of the singular institutional culture. What we propose is a kind of intercultural cooperation that is perfectly clear and adoptable from a practical perspective. This process must begin with the preparation of groups of educators and academics, willing and able to carry out the cooperative efforts needed to conceive a pedagogy and design curricula that can introduce students to ways of thinking that may broaden their academic concepts and cognitive horizons.

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