



EDUCATION OF INTERNATIONAL NEWLY ARRIVED
MIGRANT PUPILS

Utrecht University
MA Intercultural Communication
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Internship Research Report

Recommendation and advice

“The ongoing process of differentiation and intercultural competences applied to distance education for newly arrived migrant pupils during the Coronavirus crisis.”

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To understand the continuity of differentiation and intercultural competences applied when dealing with online education for newly arrived migrant pupils¹ during the Coronavirus pandemic, the authors conducted research that approached differentiation and intercultural competence. The aim of this research is to formulate recommendations and advice for teachers when facing an abrupt transition from traditional to online teaching.

It is important that teachers have access to the right digital tools that block translation programs, so students do not cheat. In addition, it would be helpful to track individual progress automatically. As a first recommendation, we would suggest teachers to use games. Games create a positive attitude towards learning and are suitable for the learning of languages, as well as other subjects. Also, all students would require a laptop and stable internet connection, which is currently not the case, and both teacher and student would need to improve their digital skills. Additionally, it could be useful to combine online and physical classes with small groups of children. It could also help to use Microsoft Teams for subgroups, so that students are able to work in groups and learn together. Teachers can use social media and news outlets to provide context in lessons, or to give students assignments in which they have to look for context themselves. Our research established that teachers can differentiate lessons in three different areas: content,

¹ Newly arrived migrant pupils= *NAM*

process, and product. Teachers could make use of their online environment in a more optimal way by trying to differentiate in these three areas. All the areas that were most affected by online teaching, namely convergent differentiation, the ability to monitor the readiness of students, monitor their learning profile and their different interests, and to provide context in lessons, could benefit from this approach. Teachers can adjust the content to each student by varying in degrees of complexity. Also, there is space to adjust the process by using flexible grouping in online teaching and organising group exercises. It is possible to group students by their readiness levels, interests or learning profile. This would make the lessons less individual and more convergent. Lastly, teachers can differentiate in the products by giving students options they can choose from to demonstrate what they have learnt, for example a (video) presentation, report or online discussion.

Another recommendation would be directed at schools (teachers, stakeholders and all bodies involved) in the Netherlands to create and reinforce a safe, inclusive, and inspiring learning environment for *NAM* students. An environment that promotes a sense of togetherness and belonging. This can only be achieved through strong school policies, promoted, and supported by the municipalities and the government.

This can be achieved if schools supplied the necessary material (laptops, internet connection and respective and relevant apps) for students to benefit from online education when needed. As previously discussed, not all students have access to these materials, and this create a sense of isolation as well as discrimination. Moreover, since Corona measures are being lifted, schools are now

re-implementing in-person classes. In this context, *NAM* pupils should have additional classes to “catch up” on their work and clarify any doubts related to homework or projects during the online educational process. In situations where this is not possible, it would be beneficial to create online sub-groups via Microsoft Teams for *NAM* students in order to create agency to clarify and work on their doubts or concerns.

Although this point might be time consuming and perhaps challenging for teachers, it would be beneficial for the student if either the school or the teacher could talk to the children’s parents at least once a week for a few minutes where teachers and parents or family members could discuss the student’s progress and what can be done to improve the development when and if needed. In this scenario, having an interpreter would benefit the communication process between teachers and parents and would contribute to optimise and strengthen the relationship between teachers and *NAM* students.

To promote togetherness and engagement, teachers could create more group exercises during online classes for students to be as exposed to a personal/face-to-face class and group work scenario as much as possible. This would not only promote more interaction, engagement, and motivation in participating in online classes.

Concerning intercultural competences, in the broader sense each school should revise its intercultural competences policy. Given the findings of this research, it would be beneficial to create interactive workshops for teachers and for students

separately to revive or emphasise the importance of intercultural competences and how these can be applied at schooling, personal and social levels.