

Training of P'urépecha Elementary School Teachers in Interculturality

María de Lourdes VARGAS GARDUÑO,
Ana María MÉNDEZ PUGA & Nelva Denise FLORES MANZANO
Michoacán University in San Nicolas de Hidalgo
State of Michoacán, México

Rosalba GONZÁLEZ TAIPA
“Vasco de Quiroga” Elementary School in Arantepacua
Municipality of Nahuatzen, State of Michoacán, México

Translated from Spanish by
Monica SANDOVAL BARRAZA &
Diana CABARCAS HURTADO

Abstract: In the year 2010 there was a diagnostic project done in the P'urépecha community of Arantepacua (Municipality of Nahuatzen, State of Michoacán), which showed that Bilingual Intercultural Elementary Schools have been unable to train their students in the process of interculturality. In most cases, this has happened because of their inability to understand fully what interculturality is all about, and therefore, they haven't had the appropriate tools in pedagogy that allow them to teach their school material from an intercultural focus.

Because of these results, a process of Research-Action-Participation (*Investigación-Acción-Participativa, IAP, for its initials in Spanish*) has been designed, based on the Intercultural Inductive Model generated by Jorge Gasché (2008) and María Bertely (2009). This model is being used at this time with 30 teachers that work with the two elementary schools of Arantepacua. The general objective of the project consists in *developing among the elementary school teachers in Arantepacua, the intercultural practice, discourse, and attitudes necessary, so that they, in turn, can implement the strategies that promote interculturality among their students*. The IAP process is operated using two complementary strategies: a formal training in teaching education in interculturality and an instructor tutorial program.

Keywords: Teacher's training, interculturality, educational practices

1. Introduction

During the last three decades approximately, Bilingual Intercultural Education (*Educación Intercultural Bilingüe, EIB*) has become a general issue in Latin America, particularly focused on indigenous education. There are two reasons for the introduction of these different educational procedures: the tendency to develop practices that show respect and equality in the relationship among the various cultures, as well as the concern for the knowledge, values and everyday rules of conduct of each culture. EIB also includes education in respectful practices,

dialogue, negotiation, and critical evaluation of both one's own property and others' (Berumen & Rodríguez, 2009).

Notwithstanding these advances, formal education within the indigenous context continues to characterize itself with a very low academic level, little attention from the official authorities to its problems, limited training for teachers, and little access to teaching material. All of these, along with a reduced budget from the government and the experience of constant union problems, show evidence that the intercultural education process continues to stall at the discourse level. In actual practice, the dominating factor within the indigenous population in Mexico is the homogenizing and universalizing tendency that has been used in the training of most of the basic education teachers, with which they have assimilated a vision of the world which comes from the occidental *mestizo* (mixed race) culture (López & Küper, 1999). Therefore, there is a dissociation between what the EIB should be and its practice in the classroom.

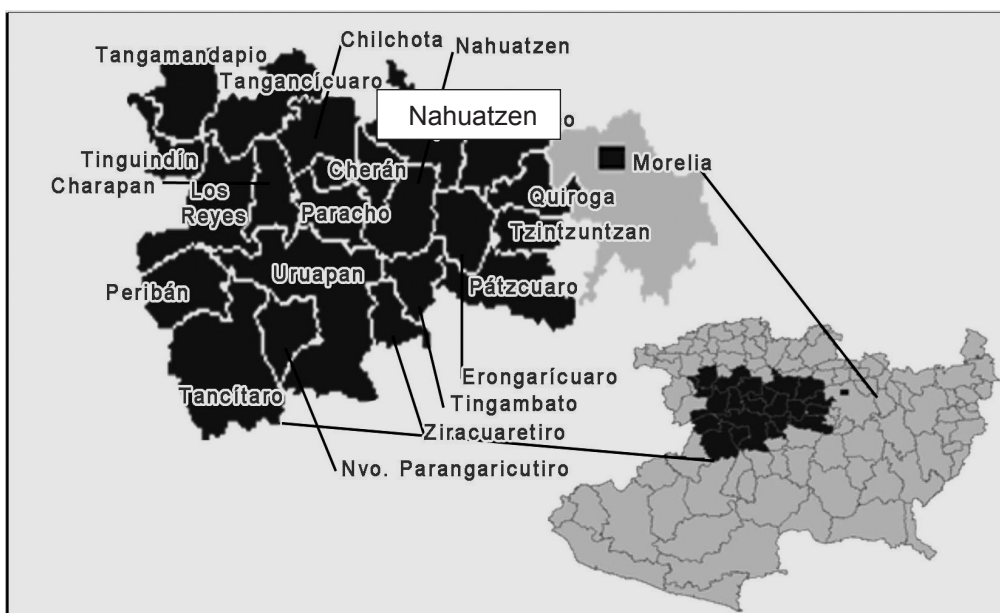
Here is some descriptive information presented below about the location where the process of the training in interculturality with P'urépecha teachers is taking place in some regions of Mexico.

Arantepacua is a P'urépecha community located in the State of Michoacán, in the West / Central area of México (see Map 1).



Map 1. Location of Arantepacua (Source: <http://maps.google.com.mx>)

This indigenous community is part of a region known as the “P'urhépecha Plateau” or “Region of the Sierra”, which belongs to the Municipality of Nahuatzen, and has a P'urépecha indigenous population of 40.5% (see Map 2).



Map 2. Area Showing the P'urépecha Regions (Source: Department of Indigenous Populations, 2010)

According to the oral tradition of this community, Nahuatzen already existed when the Spaniards occupied Mexico in the year 1521. The town of Arantepacua has a population of 2,730, who are mainly dedicated to working the land and building wooden furniture. Approximately 80% of the population is bilingual (P'urépecha-Spanish), and many of the adults within the families migrate to the United States or to the north of Mexico in Tijuana. Their homes are built predominantly with concrete and have regular services of electricity and drinking water (from a well), but don't have sewer services and normally use latrines in their homes. As far as education is concerned, the Department of Public Education in Mexico offers initial education (for children from 0 to 4 years of age), preschool education (for children between 4 and 5), two elementary schools, both bilingual and intercultural, one secondary school offered through television, and one preparatory school. All of the teachers in the elementary schools are P'urépecha. One of the authors of this article (Vargas, 2010) has done three research projects since the year 2004 on related topics. They are: "Analysis of the Teaching Practice and Generation of Training Processes in Bilingual Schools, from the Production of Argumentative Texts" (2004 to 2006), "P'urhépecha Boys and Girls as Learners, Readers and Writers" (2007-2008), "Bilingual Intercultural Education and the Practicum of Interculturality within the P'urépecha Family: The Case of Arantepacua, Municipality of Nahuatzen, Michoacán" (2007-2010).

Some information generated from this last project and diagnostic research done in the P'urépecha community of Arantepacua on how the supposed intercultural education taught at

the elementary school had affected family life, found that, in reality, the interculturality that was experienced within the families was not necessarily learned at school, but rather it was learned from other various sources, television and migration being some of the most relevant (Vargas, 2010).

Based on the above statement, it is important to generate educational procedures that originate from “the bottom”, as stated by Bertely (2009), and utilize the various social agents (teachers and members of the community), so that these procedures interact with their reality and can respond to the needs and concerns of the indigenous communities.

Using this perspective, the Training in Interculturality reported in this paper has been designed, and is being taught to teachers of the two elementary schools in the community of Arantepacua. Its goal is to analyze the objectives of the EIB, compare the advantages and disadvantages of interculturality, and experience the actual practical strategies that have a tendency to generate intercultural discourse and attitudes among the children.

This is a perspective where both parts approach the world with an open mind and an open heart to be able to understand each other. However, interculturality does not lose sight of the fact that this process is not foreign to conflict. In fact, the intercultural dialogue assumes that there will be initial conflict and does not assume that it will be solved; often, the results arrive with profound disagreements. Notwithstanding disagreement, the conflict is a positive aspect because it breaks down the establishment and forces questions and arguments, consolidates convictions, or creates new possibilities. Interculturality strives to avoid conflict that produces violence, since it is itself the mechanism that searches for the minimal agreement in situations of disagreement with the intention of achieving coexistence (Schmelkes, 2009). Let us look at how this idea has influenced education.

Although the general educational tendencies in Latin American countries have been that of *castilianizing* the indigenous populations (i.e., assimilating them to Spanish-speaking culture), little by little the members of the communities have recognized that the official system, which is homogenizing and monolingual, did not satisfy their needs, did not contribute to the reproduction of their own culture, and did not facilitate the expected social changes or the progress that had been promised by their respective governments. As stated by López & Küper (1999, section 3.9, paragraph 4), they ascertained “that reading, writing and speaking the dominant language wasn’t enough, since the exclusion mechanisms were stronger, and discrimination and racism continued, even within indigenous populations that were educated and spoke Castilian [Spanish]”. All of this drove the indigenous populations to demand, from their respective governments, the use of their vernacular language in the educational process, as well as the presence of various elements of their culture in their formal education.

In Mexico, after the uprising of the National Liberation Zapatista Army (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN*), various indigenous groups began demanding that the educational system must allow them real access to the “national” culture, through the learning of the Spanish language, but that, at the same time, their own culture and language must be recognized and valued. To achieve this, several communities in the state of Chiapas fired “official” elementary school teachers because the members of the community were not in agreement with the system that was being used, a system with assimilationist and *castilianizing* tendencies that disqualified and minimized the town’s own culture. After that, they selected a

group of young people within the community so that they could be the teachers of the children and they could teach them in their own language, respecting their own culture. Those young people began training with such institutions as the Social Anthropology Center for Research and Higher Education (*Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, CIESAS*), among others (Bertely, 2009).

This local action created a gradual change in the national educational policies, although it did not totally solve the problem, since the manner in which the teachers worked was not modified substantially. They began utilizing the vernacular language in the classroom simply as a tool to facilitate the comprehension of educational contents, but without a deeper vision aimed at educating bilingual children.

On the other hand, the efforts to develop intercultural discourse, practices and attitudes had been left behind, and it was not until the last two decades that it has been given more importance. In Mexico, the General Department of Indigenous Education (*Dirección General de Educación Indígena DGEI*), has implemented the EIB model for all indigenous schools, which is also supported by the General Coordination of Bilingual Intercultural Education. However, in most cases, the proposed Bilingual Intercultural Education model still remains at the level of “should be”, without any congruency with the mechanisms that should facilitate its implementation in the daily school systems. The most successful cases of local implementation are usually not those produced within the official sector, but those that have resulted from various projects funded by international organizations, universities and Non-Governmental Organizations, although with the disadvantage that many of them are temporary and do not create continuity.

Therefore, to clarify the understanding of EIB within the school context, López & Küper (1999, section 4.18) have established the following criteria:

The intercultural dimension in the educational field refers both to the curricular relationship established among the know how, the knowledge and the values that are owned or that have been appropriated by the indigenous societies, and those that are unknown and foreign, and to the search for a dialogue and a permanent complement of sorts between the traditional culture and that which comes from the West, to fulfill the needs of the indigenous populations, and to contribute to the search for better living conditions.

To be able to achieve this understanding, it is fundamental to see the conviction of parents and teachers within the communities, especially those teachers in basic education, since their personal opinions on the value of their own culture, and in turn of the EIB, will influence children in their daily life, both at home and at school. On the other hand, it must be recognized that the observations about interculturality and its pedagogical applications, must not circumscribe the indigenous environment, but must imbue society as a whole (Moya, 1998; López, 1996, quoted by López & Küper, 1999). To be able to initiate a process of interculturality in a certain society, all the actors/agents involved in the process must participate.

It is true that all members of a society are responsible for the creation of conditions of possibility to build intercultural processes, and the work of the teachers is always a priority

because of their role as leaders who promote community development. It is the teachers who are able to more easily influence the strengthening of ties between the school and the community, as they participate in the daily life of the community, and promote the participation of communities in the school. They also share experiences, develop initiatives in local resource management, both in the teaching process, as well as in the learning process; they unify the contents of different material that works for the needs of the community and, within this context, they manage the language of the community, especially with the children.

Likewise, the disposition of the teachers towards children's learning becomes a determining factor in the academic quality, but also in ethnic education, since it also influences the way the indigenous parents and children view their own reality. In this way, and with an open and flexible attitude, teachers can contribute so that the community can perceive the usefulness of the school and its methods, contents, and knowledge for community life. In doing so, the community can feel motivated to participate in the educational process, but in order to achieve this, teachers have to be able to train continuously. Thus, it is of paramount importance to provide training courses and workshops in interculturality for indigenous teachers, like the ones described in this article, and like those organized by other researchers and social and educational developers.

2. Method

The work that has been done since September 2010 with the elementary school teachers in Arantepacua, has been done as a qualitative research, of the type of research-action-participation, that, in its operative phase, has been based in the Intercultural Inductive Method created by Jorge Gasché and María Bertely (Gasché, 2008). This method, as explained by Sartorello (2009), consists basically in "integrating the conventional scholarship knowledge of the indigenous communities that is implicit in the social, productive, ritual, and recreational activities that take place in their communities" (p. 86)." In this project there have been 30 teachers participating from the two bilingual intercultural elementary schools in Arantepacua, although at the meetings 90% of teachers and administrators of both schools have participated.

The IAP comes from an epistemological perspective opposed to the positivist conception. This methodology defines the link between the researcher and the one being researched, which creates a community perspective that requires the participation of the group. The decision-making process then is done together since it must create self-critical communities that will transform their social context (Rodríguez, 1999). The IAP is a cyclical process that has essentially three moments: exploration (diagnosis), actuation (application) and value of results (evaluation), in such a way that the evaluation of a process constitutes the diagnosis of the following, and closes with a global evaluation of the various stages of the general process.

In the particular case mentioned in this paper, the process that has been followed consists of two parts: 1) training in interculturality and 2) personal tutoring that has been given to some of the teachers who have demonstrated a greater commitment to the project. The training was done in five bi-monthly classes (see Table 1), which were given to each school separately, since they presented different problem situations. Each one of these trainings has followed the process of Diagnosis, Application and Evaluation mentioned above. The tutoring has been

done on a monthly basis. Both activities were done in the community of Arantepacua; only the beginning and final workshops were done in the city of Pátzcuaro, state of Michoacán.

Table 1. General Structure of the Training in Interculturality

Training in Interculturality
Introductory class: Analysis of the importance in linking school learning to P'urépecha culture. Outcome: Proposals to incorporate interculturality into the teaching practice.
Workshop on the analysis of the advances in implementation of planned proposals and modifications to the initial planning process, all from the viewpoint of comprehensive education. Outcome: Re-formulation of the initial proposals to facilitate their application in the classroom.
Workshop on the analysis about difficulties in teaching and the intercultural learning process and implementation of improvement strategies. Outcome: Modifications to the project, placing emphasis on teaching techniques and the intercultural learning process.
Workshop on the improvement of evaluation strategies. Outcome: Modifications to the project, placing emphasis on evaluation techniques from an intercultural logic.
Workshop on the evaluation. Outcome: Working proposal for the following school year, from the critical analysis of the whole process and its practical application.

3. Results

The participation in these workshops has been very productive for the teachers, although just a few of them have been able to put into practice the agreements that were taken collectively to apply the Intercultural Inductive Method (Sartorello, 2009) in the classroom. There is a main subject that is reviewed during classes and the planning of the following month/two months is defined, and then it is the responsibility of the teacher to put it in practice during the specified period of time.

There are three female teachers that have become interested in the project and who have made an effort to modify their teaching practice around what has been presented in the research. Several teachers have done other activities related to the way of life or celebrations in the community, but they don't try to relate those experiences with the school context and, especially, do not relate them to their teaching program they must cover.

As a sample, here are some excerpts from the field notebook of teacher RGT, who is in charge of a third grade class, group A, where she shares one of her experiences in the application of the Intercultural Inductive Method.

Topic: The Interview about Traditional Games

Purpose

To value the elements of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity that characterizes our country, as we become sensitive and feel integrated with it, while recognizing the traditions of our community and its personal and global changes.

We are also trying to explain that the forms of life are cultural expressions of a society in a certain historical moment and they are related to the activities of the people, their dress, their food, their homes, and their beliefs and customs. This is part of the cultural inheritance of the societies of the past to the present.

Development

First we talked about the past; the topic of the book is the measurement of time and what happens to time as time passes? Later on, we wrote a list about the topic that we want to research, which looks like this:

- Traditional games
- Houses
- Dress
- Food
- Language
- Dances
- Stories
- Work
- Medicine

Following this list, we had a discussion so that we could reach an agreement as to who was going to be interviewed. It was decided that it would be the grandfathers of some of the children. Then we wrote the questions that we were going to use during the interview.

The next day, every student gave an opinion about the things that have changed, and the teachers wrote down everything the students said. Then we talked about the advantages and disadvantages of those changes.

At the end of the comments, we went to visit and interview Mr. Juan Campos. We arrived at his house and he invited us into his small shop. There he started showing us the tools that he uses for work. The children asked about his name and how long he had been a carpenter and who taught him his skill, etc. He gave us a demonstration with a traditional toy (spinning top) where he was explaining every detail and the children were asking questions about what they wanted to know. Many children didn't know how a top was made, therefore, they were very interested in observing, and others started to make comments like: "My grandpa knows how to do it and also my father". The children also asked how much money he made and how long it took to build a chair, how he invests his earnings, and the amount of materials he needs.

The students also asked about traditional games and toys and the disadvantages of not

being able to play certain games, and the construction of wooden toys. At the end, we thanked him and we left.

Then we went to somebody else's house where the students asked the same questions, they chatted with him for a while. Many children were already restless and they didn't pay much attention, so we thanked him and we returned to school to continue talking about what we saw and what we learned.

We solved some math problems with respect to the information that we were given. "How much he earns if he sells five stools." Everyone chose their own procedure. And then we compared answers. They also made up their own questions.

The students formed teams to talk and to work on the topic of time and toys, and then later on, they presented it to the group. This was done as a means of having them lose the fear of participating. And they can also learn to write their own ideas.

We also compared the research done with the lesson of the book about how time is measured in weeks, days, months and years. But time doesn't pass just because things change.

Homework Related to the Topic

Math – problem solving with addition and multiplication.

Natural Science – the process of wood until it becomes a piece of furniture and the use of each tool.

History – analysis of the things that change with time.

Spanish – the interview (composition, use of question marks).

As it can be seen in the work that this teacher has done, there is an intention to define, during her daily practice, the link between school context and community life. She chose as her main topic the traditional games and planned an extracurricular activity that allowed her children to be in direct contact with the work that is done within the community. From the experience that the children had, she was able to address the school activities that her program presented. The children were motivated to do the exercises that she requested of them in class, and their learning became more significant. In fact, as she uses the P'urépecha language in various circumstances in the classroom, the children have agreed to speak more P'urépecha themselves, since the predominant language at school is Spanish.

4. Discussion:

It is quite relevant that some teachers have tried to put children in contact with the members

of their community and what they do, because the message that the children are getting is that the traditional activities in their community have value, and are not totally disassociated with their learning at school. This happens in contrast with the fact that, in the community, the adults often instill in the children the idea that the information they learn at school belongs to a “superior” culture that many of their parents and grandparents have not been able to reach. The reasoning for staying away from all things traditional is because they do not have any value, including the vernacular language.

Evidence shows that in Arantepacua they have experienced a phenomenon that is contrary to many other communities from the state of Chiapas and other countries, where the members of the communities have demanded the respect for their culture, as it was mentioned before.

In Arantepacua, however, they are more interested in learning the “national” language and culture, because they believe that, in doing so, they “will overcome their backward state”, and therefore, they won’t be discriminated. Many parents in the community, instead of defending their culture and their language, will not teach their children to speak the P’urépecha language. They make it a prohibition for their wives and their elders to speak their language to the children, because they believe that children will have no use for their language or their culture in the outside world. They believe it is better to leave their indigenous ways behind and to access the advantages of the modern world, of the *turisi* world. That is the word they use to refer to the *mestizo* population.

Although many teachers feel that it is an interesting proposal to practice this method and they participate fully in the training, approximately half of them express a resistance that becomes clearer all the time: they feel that as they give value to the traditional culture of their ancestors, they fall “back” in their progress and they really do not need to do this because they have already “overcome” it; they already have gotten a degree and they do not see the point of practicing their original culture. They are not even convinced of the advantages of using and teaching in their vernacular language. This attitude shows that they themselves have not been able to understand, much less experience, interculturality as a thing of value. It continues being a foreign discourse to their teaching practice and to their daily life, even though they were professionally prepared to work in intercultural schools.

On the same topic, many of the parents in the community, especially those who have been able to attain a higher education, have a tendency to educate their children more in the *turisi* ways, because like some of the teachers, they believe that the “national” culture has more value than the one in which they live. The Bilingual Intercultural Education that the two elementary schools in the community offer, has not been able to achieve, along more than ten years of work, the discourse development, the practices or intercultural attitudes within the families (Vargas, 2010).

The teachers who have discovered the value of interculturality through this project and through their own process of reflection, have been participating more and more in a transformation process that motivates them to continue their teaching practice more creatively, based on projects centered in their own P’urépecha culture, just as they experience them in Arantepacua. To achieve this, they have looked for support with the grandparents of their students. These elders have expressed feeling important for being considered by the teachers in sharing of their own knowledge, whether it is that of their traditional skills or that related

to their town holidays and way of life. Children, on the other hand, have shown enthusiasm participating in the programmed activities. They have been able to achieve more significant learning and they understand the reasoning behind certain practices that in the past they have seen the adults perform without understanding.

Little by little, through dialogue and reflection with the two groups of teachers in this P'urépecha community, we have built together an incipient experience of intercultural educational practice between the indigenous and non-indigenous population, based on the respect of the personal process and on the decisions of each teacher to participate or not participate in the project that we have proposed. Nevertheless, the learning process has also reached those of us who are not considered part of the indigenous population: we are learning P'urépecha values, such as reciprocity, the search for the common good over the individual, and the relationship between the living and the dead, to name a few.

We believe that, as we learn and live the interculturality process, both indigenous and non-indigenous, we can gradually build better conditions for improved relationships, respecting our differences and searching for the common ground.

References:

- Bertely, María; Unión de Maestros de la Nueva Educación para México & Educadores Independientes. (2009). *Sembrando nuestra educación como derecho. La nueva escuela intercultural en Chiapas* [Union of professors in the new education for Mexico and independent educators. (2009). *Sowing our education as a right. The new Intercultural School in Chiapas*]. México: CIESAS.
- Berumen, Gerardo & Rodríguez Beatriz. (2009). *Líneas de investigación en educación intercultural*. México: Coordinación General de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe. [Research lines in intercultural education. Mexico: General Coordination of Bilingual Intercultural Education].
- Gasché, Jorge. (2008). Niños, maestros, comuneros y escritos antropológicos como fuentes de contenidos indígenas escolares y la actividad como punto de partida de los procesos pedagógicos interculturales: Un modelo sintáctico de cultura [Children, teachers, community members, and anthropological writings as sources of indigenous school contents and activity as a point of departure of the pedagogical intercultural processes: A syntactic model of culture]. In: María Bertely, Jorge Gasché and Rosanna Podestá (Eds.) *Educando en la diversidad. Investigaciones y experiencias educativas interculturales y bilingües* [Educating in diversity. Research and intercultural bilingual educational experiences]. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala [Quito, Ecuador: Abya-Yala Publications].
- González Tapia, Rosalba. (2010-2011). *Diario de campo*. Documento inédito. Arantepacua, México. [Field notebook. Unpublished. Arantepacua, Mexico].
- Lewin, Kurt. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues* 2 (4), 34-46.
- López, Luis Enrique. (1996). La diversidad lingüística, étnica y cultural latinoamericana y los recursos humanos que la educación requiere [The linguistic, ethnic and cultural Latin

- American diversity and the human resources required in education]. In H. Muñoz and P. Lewin (Eds.) *El significado de la diversidad lingüística y cultural* [*The meaning of linguistic and cultural diversity*] (pp. 279-330). México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. [Autonomous Metropolitan University, National Institute of Anthropology and History].
- López, Luis Enrique & Wolfgang Küper. (1999, May-July). La Educación Intercultural Bilingüe en América Latina: Balance y perspectivas [Intercultural Bilingual Education in Latin America: Balance and perspectives]. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* 20. Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos [*Iberoamerican Journal of Education* 20. Organization of Iberoamerican States]. Retrieved on May 3, 2011 from <http://www.rieoei.org/rie20a02.htm>
- López, Luis Enrique. (2006). Interculturalidad y educación en América Latina: Génesis y complejidades en esta relación. In *Coloquio [re] pensar la relación cultura-Educación*. México: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional [Interculturality and education in Latin America: Genesis and complexities in this relationship. In *Coloquio [re] thinking the relationship culture-education*. Mexico: National Pedagogical University] (electronic document from a cd-rom).
- Medina, Daniela. (2006). *Los saberes docentes*. Unpublished Bachelor's Degree Thesis in Psychology. Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo. [*The teaching knowledge*. Michoacan University of San Nicolas de Hidalgo].
- Moya, Ruth. (1998). Reformas educativas e interculturalidad en América Latina [*Educational reforms and interculturality in Latin America*]. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* [*Iberoamerican Journal of Education*], 17, 105-187.
- Rodríguez, Gregorio; Gil, Javier & García, Eduardo. (1999). *Metodología de la investigación cualitativa* [*Methodology of qualitative research*]. España: Ediciones Aljibe. [Spain: Aljibe Publications].
- Sartorello, Stefano. (2009). Una perspectiva crítica sobre interculturalidad y Educación Intercultural Bilingüe: El caso de la Unión de Maestros de la Nueva Educación para México (UNEM) y educadores independientes en Chiapas [A Critical Perspective on interculturality and Intercultural Bilingual Education: The case of the Union of Teachers of the New Education for Mexico (UNEM) and independent educators in Chiapas]. *Revista Latinoamericana de Educación Inclusiva* [*Latin American Journal of Inclusive Education*], 3(2), 77-90. Retrieved from <http://www.rinace.net/rlei/numeros/ vol3-num2/art5.pdf>
- Schmelkes, Sylvia (2009). Educación y diversidad cultural. [Education and cultural diversity]. In De Alba, A. and Glazman, R. (Coordinators) *Qué dice la investigación educativa?* [*What does educational research say?*] (pp. 437-468). México: Consejo Mexicano de Investigación Educativa [Mexico: Mexican Council for Educational Research].
- Vargas, María de Lourdes (2010). *La educación intercultural bilingüe y la vivencia de la interculturalidad en las familias P'urépecha. El caso de Arantepacua, municipio de Nahuatzen, Michoacán* [Intercultural bilingual education and living interculturality within the P'urépecha family]. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco [Autonomous Metropolitan University, Xochimilco Campus].

- Vergara, Martha & Bernache, Gerardo. (2008). *Educación intercultural. Un estudio de las comunidades indígenas en Jalisco* [Intercultural education. A study of the indigenous communities in Jalisco]. México: Secretaría de Educación Pública/Subsecretaría de Educación Básica y Normal/Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología. SEP/SEBYN-CONACYT. [Department of Public Education/Sub-department of Basic Education and Teaching/National Council of Science and Technology].
- Villoro, Luis. (1998). *Estado plural, pluralidad de culturas*. México: Paidós. [Plural state, plurality of cultures].

Author Note

María de Lourdes Vargas Garduño is a Doctor of Social Sciences, with a specialization in Social Psychology. She is a professor and researcher at the School of Psychology with the Michoacan University in San Nicolas de Hidalgo. She works with the research group Education, Culture and the Learning Processes. Her research interests include interculturality, teacher training, identity processes, and literacy. She has published the book *The Mexican National Identity from the Thought of Luis Villoro* (2006), and edited two books, along with Dr. Ana María Méndez Puga, *Texts on P'urhépecha Community Life* (2006) and *Basic Education in P'urhépecha Communities: Notes from a Variety of Perspectives* (2007). She is the director of the magazine *Uaricha*, which publishes topics related to various fields of psychology, and has written four articles related to multiculturalism in indexed journals.

Ana María Méndez Puga is a Doctor of Philosophy and Educational Sciences at the University of Distance Education in Spain. She is currently the Director of the School of Psychology at the Michoacan University in San Nicolas de Hidalgo. She is the faculty coordinator for Education, Culture and the Learning Processes. She has done research for the design of proposals in areas of written culture in contexts of poverty and exclusion, particularly in migrant farm working camps. She works with the indigenous communities on the P'urhépecha Plateau in teacher training and observation and transformation of the teaching practice relevant to a more pertinent work in context. Among her recent publications are three books: *Texts on P'urhépecha Community Life* (2006) and *Basic Education in P'urhépecha Communities: Notes from a Variety of Perspectives* (2007), edited in collaboration with Dr. María Lourdes Vargas Garduño, as well as the release of *The Mexico that I Live: Glances and Readings on Children's Drawings* (2011), which analyzes the drawing patterns of Michoacan children from different perspectives.

Nelva Denise Flores Manzano is a Professor of Clinical Psychology and Education at the Michoacan University in San Nicolas de Hidalgo, where she works with the research group Education, Culture and the Learning Processes. She has published in the area of education and development and is currently working with the project *Children who don't learn: Thinking Processes and Libidinal Ways of the School*. Her publications include three books chapters: Flores, N., Blum, B. & Vázquez, A. (2010). *Juanito says he doesn't want to be a baby: Analysis of a Clinical case*. In Luz María Lepe & Adriana Sánchez (Coord). *Perspective critics of psychology*. México: Morevallado, UAQ-UMSNH; Méndez, A., De la Vega, R. & Flores, N.

(2010). *So that when we get older it can teach us to work: The School Written by the Children*. In Luz Lepe, Lourdes Vargas & Mario Orozco (Coord). *Horizons of psychology. Ten years of academic work in the UMSNH*. México: UMSNH; Flores, N., Méndez, A. (2009). *The Clinical-Educative Research in the Field of Health (2009)*. In Jennifer Lira (Comp.). *Contributions of the psychology of the health*. México: UMSNH.

Rosalba González Tapia is a teacher at the Vasco de Quiroga Elementary School in Arantepacua, Municipality of Nahuatzen, State of Michoacan, in Mexico. She is a P'urhépecha indigenous woman originally from this area, and a Master's student at the National Pedagogical University in Uruapan, Michoacan. She has 15 years of teaching experience in elementary schools within the intercultural bilingual system. She has published an article titled *Intercultural Bilingual Education from the Classroom Perspective* (Méndez & Vargas, 2006) and has presented various conference papers.

Monica Sandoval Barraza is originally from Chihuahua in Mexico and holds a Master's Degree in Spanish Language and English Linguistics from the University of Nevada in Reno where she lived for 15 years. She is a professional translator and recently moved back to her hometown after living in the United States for over 25 years.

Diana Cabarcas Hurtado holds a Master's Degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Students of Other Languages) from the University of Nevada in Reno. She was born in Colombia and has lived in the United States for 25 years. She has been a translator and a teacher of English and Spanish for the last 20 years and considers teaching her true vocation in life.

This article was translated by Monica Sandoval Barraza and Diana Cabarcas Hurtado.