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## Action Research in Integration of Immigrant Students in the Classrooms of Torreblanca Secondary School\*

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### ABSTRACT

Thanks to the intercultural training of secondary school teachers, it has been possible to improve the inclusion of immigrant students in school classrooms. Reality shows that greater attention to this type of student by teachers, as well as by other colleagues, considerably improves their academic success. It also favours greater personal development within the socio-environmental context in which they live. The Erasmus + Quammelot project, after planning and executing a specific training course for Secondary Education teachers, includes the results obtained in several Spanish schools, among them the IES Torreblanca. These results have been obtained attending to the personal and academic needs of immigrant students. This work gathers the main results obtained in three of the didactic interventions developed along the eight modules that compose the training of the participating teachers. Throughout these three didactic proposals, information units have been collected referring to the learning of the attitudinal dimension at an initial moment (M1) and at the end of each proposal (M2). After the analysis of the information obtained, it has been possible to verify that the motivation, interest and participation of the students improves notably, regardless of whether or not they are immigrant students.

Keywords:

Immigrant students, proposals for didactic intervention, secondary education, teacher training.

### 1. Introduction

The Erasmus+ Project called "Online Training of Secondary School Teachers as Educators and Tutors of Immigrant Students" (Qualification for Minor Migrants Education and Learning Open Access - On-line Teacher-training / Reference: 2017-1-IT02-KA201-036610) which responds to the acronym of QUAMMELOT, is a European project located within the school sector and its main objective is to work to improve the educational and social inclusion of immigrant minors in general and unaccompanied minors (MENA) in particular. One of the specific strategies chosen to achieve this objective has been to design, apply, evaluate and propose in a sustainable way, an online course addressed to secondary education teachers, training them as educators and teachers of reception and inclusion of foreign minors and MENAs in secondary schools in the four countries participating in the project, Italy, Spain, Greece and Denmark. This course has promoted training with a view to reconciling teachers' regular work in schools with the time devoted to this new training. As teachers have access to the platform where the content of the modules, the materials and resources designed, as well as various documents and videos are hosted, they have been able to tackle this training progressively and with the necessary flexibility. Moreover, at all times, they have had the support

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and advice of tutors specialized in the subjects they have worked on (Moreno-Fernández, Ferreras-Listán, Guichot-Muñoz & Puig-Gutiérrez, 2019).

From this training received and the activities developed during it, research has been developed within the so-called Action Research paradigm (Ander-Egg, 2003). Some of the principles that govern this research methodology are that the ultimate goal of the study is the transformation of the problem-situation, which in our case is to improve the attention of immigrant students as well as to improve their integration in the classroom. In addition, a dialectic between knowledge and action must be established, promoting the active participation of the population involved, as well as demanding forms of communication between equals. That is why teachers must put into practice the training received in their own classrooms, with their students. To this end, in our case, activities are proposed where all participants have an active and shared role. In addition, it implies an elective and declared commitment of the researcher with the people involved in the program and who participate in the study and transformation of their own reality (Ander-Egg, 2003; Fredericks, 2011; Johnson, & West, 2018).

Studies and research on curriculum integration have provided a wealth of scientific literature that has highlighted the benefits of working with topics close to the needs and interests of students (Beane, 2013). These topics make it possible to open up an overly closed curriculum around academic issues and provide benefits in terms of learning of all kinds, both for students and for the professional development of the teacher.

On the other hand, Etxeberria & Elosegui (2010), point out that the discourse on intercultural education tends to be more optimistic than the reality represented by trends, attitudes, legislation or the academic results of immigrant students. Teachers and educators face the difficult task of solving problems that are much more complex than mere schooling seems to imply. Thus, immigrant students encounter obstacles related to learning the host language, academic performance, social acceptance by their peers, or active participation in activities inside and outside the classroom (Steinbach, 2010; Etxeberria & Elosegui, 2010; Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014). Difficulties in establishing friendships with classmates and experiences of social isolation according to Steinbach, (2010) generate a lack of authenticity in the learning of the host language and therefore an increase in school failure.

Classes and tutoring programmes have been set up in secondary schools, and many proposals have even been put forward to encourage intercultural school relations. However, no systematic attempts have been made to approximate how this change occurs to the intercultural awareness of students and their perceptions of immigrant colleagues through a participatory methodology. Therefore, the main objective of the research was to understand the extent to which a change in attitude towards tolerance and acceptance of peers from other cultures and nationalities was generated. In this regard, the research aimed to obtain some evidence of how attitudes and values can be worked on through participatory activities. These activities are based on the students' own interests, so that they become more meaningful and more positive results can be obtained with regard to attitudinal change. In this way, the study sheds some light on students' perception of the process of changing attitudes towards their peers with an immigrant background.

Torreblanca Secondary School is a secondary education centre located in a suburban area of the city of Seville. In this neighbourhood, we find certain problems of marginalization and social exclusion that are attended to by different entities such as the "Blas Infante" Civic Centre, with a large assembly hall, library and activity rooms, the neighbourhood health centre, or the primary and secondary education centres.

Torreblanca Secondary School is a "Preferential Attention Centre" that receives both students from the neighbourhood and from a refugee reception centre located nearby. The educational offer is very diverse, since in addition to teaching Compulsory Secondary Education (minors aged between 13 and 16), there are also classes in Baccalaureate (Science, Humanities and Social Sciences), and various modules of Vocational Training related to the family of personal image (hairdressing, aesthetics, cosmetics, etc.), the family of transport and vehicle maintenance (bodywork, electro mechanics, vehicle maintenance, etc.), and the family of administration and management (administrative management technician). This educational mix means that the school's students come from very different social and economic backgrounds in the neighbourhood and surrounding areas.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Model

After the experimentation of the activities described, data were recorded for a research and evaluation follow-up of the intervention. In this way, we can say that the study took the form of an action research in which the teacher was both an observer and a participant in the events. He recorded, with a series of instruments that will be describe later, the results in terms of learning from the experimentation of activities. This strategy is also consistent with a long tradition of research to improve teaching practice itself (Pareja y Pedrosa, 2012; McCoy, 2013; Oolbekkink-Marchand, van der Steen & Nijveld, 2014; Pineda-Alfonso, 2017)

### 2.2. Participants

The participants were two groups of 2nd year students (n=53) from Torreblanca High School in Seville, a preferential attention centre located in a neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city of Seville (Spain) with problems of coexistence and social exclusion. These are adolescent students who in some cases showed attitudes contrary to the integration of their immigrant peers, some of them coming from a refugee reception centre that the municipal authorities have located in the vicinity of the neighbourhood. The participants were coded as follows: T(eacher) and S(tudents) following the order of the class list S1, S2, S3 etc.

### 2.3. Organization of data: category system Data Collection Tool

From a methodological point of view, although our research is situated within the field of qualitative studies, we have incorporated certain elements and techniques more typical of the rationalist paradigm. This category system is an adaptation of another used in previous research on attitudinal change in high school students (Pineda-Alfonso, 2017). In addition, it has been validated by 3 experts from the Department of Educational Research Methodology (MIDE) of the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Seville.

Thus, we have established a system of categories (Heiman, 2011) and a hypothesis of learning progression. We thus place ourselves in a strategy of complementation and in a multi-methodological perspective that characterizes many of the investigations in education (Creswell, 2012). There are three dimensions of analysis or categories covered by this study. These dimensions refer to conceptual change, procedural change, and attitudinal change as part of comprehensive student learning. In this work we focus on the dimension referring to the change of attitudes with respect to tolerance and to the coexistence with other cultures. With respect to the progression in *learning in the attitudinal dimension* (LAD), we have established a hypothesis of progression with three values (LAD1, LAD2 and LAD 3).

We should point out that the progression hypothesis is a proposal regarding the possible evolution in the construction of student knowledge on a given subject. In this way it is possible to establish different levels of formulation of this knowledge following a gradual progression from the simplest to the most complex of it (García-Pérez & Porlán, 2000). In the attached table (Table 1), the descriptors for each of the values are specified.

**Table 1.** Categories, Levels of Progression, Variables and Descriptors of the LAD Dimension

Levels	Variables	Descriptors
LAD1:	Attitude of rejection towards other cultures	The different is conceived as a danger, they show behaviours of avoidance to work with the immigrant partners and even of frank rejection.
LAD2:	Attitude of supreme tolerance	Other cultures are tolerated while maintaining a Eurocentric and supremacist conception of Western culture. They work with their immigrant colleagues with a certain amount of mistrust.
LAD3:	Differentiation as an opportunity to learn	Interaction with other cultures is seen as an opportunity to learn

## 2.4. Data Collection Tool

The following instruments have been used to carry out the data collection:

- 1) Investigator's diary (ID)
- 2) Students' productions (SP)
- 3) Open questionnaire passed in two moments, at the beginning (IQ) and at the end of the intervention (FQ)

Data collection was carried out in two methodological stages, following the technique of quasi-experimental designs with pre-test and post-test. The first moment of data collection has been called "M1" and was previous to the intervention. The second moment of data collection was called "M2" and was carried out at the end of the intervention.

The information obtained through the various data collection instruments has been processed using "content analysis" techniques (Krippendorff, 2013). These data have been codified and converted into information units using the values of the LAD category

Finally, it has been possible to code 750 information units that were managed with the Atlas.Ti program, in order to obtain a classification of these units that will allow us to respond to the problem under investigation. The statistical treatment for the correlation analysis between the progressions in attitudinal learning was carried out using the SPSSV24.0 software.

## 2.5. Activities Carried Out

Below are some of the activities carried out with the students of Torreblanca Secondary School, with the intention of responding to the problems of integration and welcoming immigrant students, following the procedures, guidelines and learning acquired during the development of the training received through the Quammelot project.

**2.5.1. Activity 1- Artistic exhibition in the educational centre itself.** The aim of this activity is to explore the forms of artistic and creative expression, as an expression of feelings, moods and worldviews that make up our culture. In addition to trying to teach students how to express themselves creatively, we have tried to work as a team and develop citizenship skills related to the integration of people. To this end, new colleagues from other countries were added to each work group, thus enhancing their socialization.

We also tried to work on new concepts and words related to artistic expression and digital skills, since some of the murals, collages and compositions made were treated digitally.

Thus, to the extent that students carry out creative work with autonomy, thus making their own decisions, we are fostering a sense of commitment and responsibility, both to ourselves and to others.

With regard to the development of this activity, they focused on pop art and urban street art, graffiti, collage, photographic composition, etc. The integration of "the word" in artistic composition was expressly sought through slogans and phrases related to the theme of composition. This also served to give students who had recently arrived in Spain the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary. An exhibition of contemporary art was visited in the neighbourhood's Civic Centre, which has a specific room for temporary exhibitions. We also carried out an urban inventory in the neighbourhood to study urban art and especially graffiti, which is the most attractive form of plastic art for students, and we even had some graffiti artists among them. Then, five working subgroups were formed, in which the newly arrived foreign students were integrated. Some classmates were appointed as assistants and tutors to the newcomers, using peer support as a resource for the integration of these new students. Each group gave one or more previous sketches of the work that they were going to develop to the teacher, to agree among all, the definitive subject of the same one as well as the best way to develop and to execute the definitive version of the work. Finally, it was decided that the exhibition of the works would be held throughout the centre: corridors, hall, stairs, etc. The exhibition has become part of the decoration of the school, in addition, some students have become guides for other colleagues from other courses to show and explain the work done (see image 1).

With regard to the themes addressed, two of the groups, in collaboration with the Department of Coeducation, have worked on an exhibition on women's rights and against gender violence. The other two groups, in collaboration with the Department of Plastic Education, have worked on environmental care and recycling.

The debate on the choice of art forms was intense, although many students wanted to have made graffiti, the school management did not authorize it and it was necessary to opt for the elaboration of posters. The formation of work groups did not present any difficulties, although the preparation required numerous meetings with the groups to establish coordination between them, the distribution of work, and actions to favour the newly arrived students, who did not speak Spanish well.

It should be noted that, given the playful and participatory atmosphere of the activity, coordination was generally very good and attitudes towards the new colleagues from different countries were also very positive. With regard to productions that have resulted from the activity, we would like to highlight some interesting creations, such as the use of elements of the building to construct metaphors, as in the case of the staircase decorated with slogans.



**Picture 1.** Photographs of the art Exhibition of the Posters and Slogans of the Art Workshop in the Facilities of Torreblanca Secondary School.

**2.5.2. Activity 2- Chess workshop in the Torreblanca Secondary School.** Chess has in its practice a set of values that give it a very appropriate field of action to learn the equality of opportunities, respect, friendship, justice, autonomy, critical thinking, responsibility, perseverance, effort, passion, illusion, etc.

There are scientific foundations that recommend the practice of chess to everyone, especially to children, also to older people, and even to promote inclusive education, as attested by the study entitled "The benefits of chess for the intellectual and socio-emotional enrichment in schoolchildren" (Aciego, García and Betancort, 2012). Everything researched in relation to its positive repercussions shows that it favours the capacity to understand situations and to solve problems, increase attention, perception, speed, concentration, approach

and foresight, improve the creativity and the critical sense of the student, the verbal aptitudes, the spatial and numerical abilities, develop the reading comprehension and for all the above mentioned the academic performance.

Therefore, in the Torreblanca Secondary School it was decided to create a chess club, with the intention of teaching any member of the educational community (students, teachers, PAS, families) to play chess, developing the basic knowledge in the rules, techniques and strategies that are typical in the different phases of the game. In addition, the aim was to develop logical-mathematical skills and the vocabulary associated with the game of chess, as well as to encourage collaborative work and mutual help, thus working on social and civic competence. For this purpose, a stable group of students was formed who found in chess a reason to feel linked to the educational centre, developing the sense of belonging that so many benefits bring to coexistence and academic performance. Furthermore, the fact of facilitating the constitution of a chess club, aims to provide the participation in chess competitions and the organization of these in the educational centre itself, thus giving a greater projection of the students of the educational centre.

From a methodological perspective, the activities of the Chess workshop were conceived as a process of participation that is structured around a driving group that acts as a catalyst for the initiatives, ideas and proposals of the educational community. The learning of the community through its own transforming action generates a space of permanent formation for the participants, achieving a greater integration on the part of the students who feel excluded because of the language or have different customs, since the game is independent of the mother tongue or the political, religious beliefs, etc.

The workshop is aimed at the entire educational community and participation is voluntary, but we have used it specially to encourage the integration of foreign students who have recently arrived at the centre. The previous school experiences of these students is very heterogeneous, as some come from Eastern Europe and have experience in mathematical calculation and logic, and even have a good level as chess players. Others, however, have only very rudimentary knowledge and skills in mathematical calculation and logic, and some do not know the rules of the game.

The Chess workshop has had a very positive impact on the integration of the school's immigrant students and the peer tutoring has been very positive. It has improved relations between the students and has favoured interactions both during the playing sessions and in the rest of the class time. The participation in an activity that, although within the school schedule, has had a recreational component, has been another element to consider for the integration of the newcomers (see image 2).

In addition, the situations during the game have made it possible to use new words and expressions related to it that have improved linguistic competence in the new language, Spanish. We also consider that the chess sessions have had a positive impact on the development of the logical-mathematical competences, both of the immigrant pupils and of the Spanish ones. In particular we have put special emphasis on the calculation of variants of the game, that is to say, given a determined position the capacity to mentally calculate the possible movements of the opponent and the best possibilities of response.



*Picture 2.* Photographs of the chess club at Torreblanca Secondary School.

**2.5.3. Activity 3- Debate club in the Torreblanca Secondary School.** Another of the activities developed in the centre has consisted of a debate club developed during the month of October. The main objective of this club is to achieve the collaboration and cooperation among the students when it comes to reaching a consensus and elaborating the arguments that will later be presented during the debates. It has also greatly facilitated working on language, as the main vehicle for arguing the theses of the discussion groups.

In a first phase, during three working sessions the debate was prepared, deciding in those sessions the rules of the game and the possible topics to be discussed. Finally, most of the students voted that they wanted to discuss the rules of organization and functioning of the Secondary School itself. They wanted to discuss which ones they thought were fair and which ones were unfair, how the rules had been broken, whether they agreed with the method used, etc. They were especially concerned about the question of entering and leaving the centre and the strict control to which they felt subjected, as well as some prohibitions that seemed absurd to them, such as not taking mobile phones to school.

Subsequently, the class group was organized into two working subgroups, one in favour of the rules that the centre has already established and the other against them. Each subgroup was placed to one side of the classroom according to their initial position and two students were placed in the centre of the case to act as referees and moderators of the debate, managing the rules that had been previously agreed in the preparatory sessions.

The debate took place with a remarkable degree of participation, since the topic chosen is of great interest to the students. As for the management of participation (interruptions and compliance with the rules of the debate), we can say that the preparatory sessions were quite disorganized, with constant interruptions and murmurs that made it very difficult to follow the discussions. However, in the final session, which was recorded on audio and video, the compliance with the rules of debate and conflict management and the discrepancy in it has been much more positive. The experience has been very rewarding, both for the students and the teacher. In fact, the intention is to adopt this discussion procedure more regularly in the classroom. The activity allows a subgroup to become the "devil's advocate", which can be a difficulty at first. If this circumstance is managed correctly, it becomes a potential that provides students with perspective to understand different opinions.

The arguments presented by the working groups are as follows:

In favour:

- 1) Young people need rules to be sociable. Limits are necessary to be managed in a social context.
- 2) If there were no rules it would be chaotic, you could not keep up with the activities of the class.
- 3) As far as mobiles are concerned, prohibition is good as it prevents harassment and also avoids cheating on exams. Another problem generated by the mobile phone is the photos without permission of people who then upload to the Internet.

Against:

- 1) We are tired of such strict rules, we must count on the students, because without participation we don't feel connected to them. These are rules that are made by an authority in an arbitrary way without counting on us.
- 2) For example, the use of the mobile phone is necessary in many cases as a tool in the classroom, not everyone misuses mobile phones. Moreover, new technologies are already present in all areas of life and we have to learn how to use them.

In the videos obtained during the debates, the strategy of conflict management through debate and democratic deliberation is highlighted. We can distinguish a first moment of emergency from the conflict; the teacher deliberately provokes it by threatening the students not to leave the classroom if they do not agree on the sport they are going to play. This invites students to express their conflicting and sometimes selfish interests, since they do not take into account the interests and play possibilities of other people. The teacher sets as a condition for playing the game that everyone agrees on an integrated game that excludes no one and this leads them to engage in discussion. Some children conceive the game as something that inevitably forces them to win; however, the teacher points out that it is not about winning but about developing a game that involves them all.

Some of the educational potentialities observed by the teacher during the development of this activity have been:

- 1) The development of citizenship skills related to the handling of discrepancies, respect for all opinions and learning to listen to different opinions.

- 2) Argumentation: Not only does an opinion exist, the groups have worked prior to the debate to construct arguments and develop a rigid opinion based on evidence.
- 3) The value of diversity. The groups have experienced how we can learn if we are able to work collaboratively, as each brings different perspectives on the same topic that enrich the whole.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Quantitative Analysis

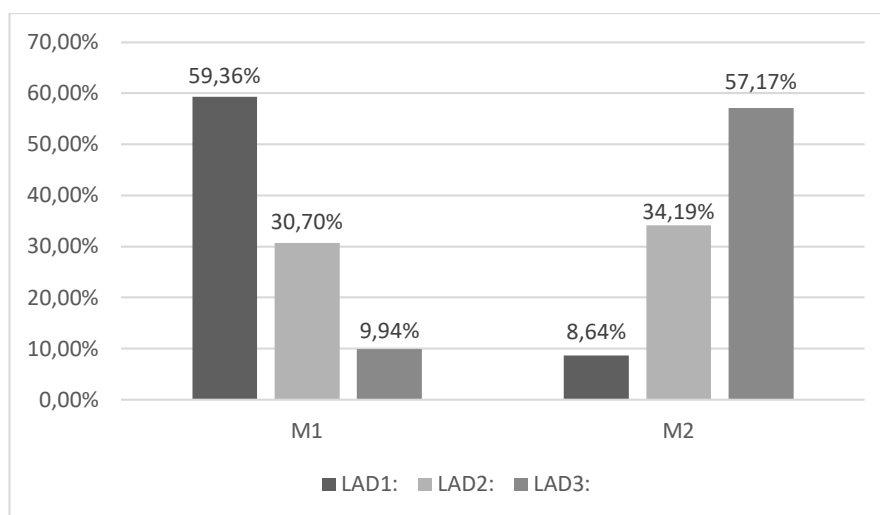
To manage the mass of data we have used 886 information units, which have been processed with the program in Atlas.Ti. We offer below the count of these information units in each of the three values of the progression hypothesis and in the two moments of data collection in absolute values (table 2). The Table 3 shows the percentages of the information units referred to the times of collection. Finally, Figure 1 shows the percentages of appearance of the information units according to the values of the category and the time at which they were issued

**Table 2.** Attitudinal Information Units in Absolute Values

Levels	M1	M2	cumulated value
LAD1:	203	47	250
LAD2:	105	186	291
LAD3:	34	311	345
TOTAL	342	544	886

**Table 3.** Attitudinal Information Units in Percentages

Levels	M1	cumulated percentages	M2	cumulated percentages
LAD1:	59,36%	59,36%	08,64%	08,64%
LAD2:	30,70%	90,06%	34,19%	42,83%
LAD3:	9,94%	100,00%	57,17%	100,00%
TOTAL	100,00%		100,00%	



**Figure 1.** Longitudinal Evolution of Attitudinal Learning (LAD).

As we can see in the previous figure (Figure 1) at the initial moment (M1) the information units corresponding to the learning in the attitudinal dimension of LAD1 value - those with a lower level of complexity and related to the rejection of other cultures -, are predominant reaching 59.36%. At the same

time, a small number of information units of LAD3 value (9.94%) appear, since they represent a level of evolution and complexity that is incompatible and opposite to the predominant attitudes in the initial repertoire of our students. However, in the final moment (M2) the amount of information units of both values shows an inverse trend which indicates a great change in the learning in the attitudinal dimension (LAD1= 8.64 vs LAD3=57.17).

### **3.2 Qualitative Analysis**

**3.2.1. The initial state of attitudinal learning (LAD1).** In what follows, we present the characterization of our students' attitudes illustrated with examples of prototypical information units. In value 1 of the progression (LAD1), the one with the lowest level of complexity, we observe attitudes and behaviours in the students that are not very favourable to the integration of immigrant colleagues.

[During the realization of the Artistic Exhibition]

T(eacher): Try to get M. to join your working group

S(student)12: He doesn't do much to integrate

T: He doesn't understand our language very well and feels excluded

S33: Well, that's not our problem. [DI-3-11-2019]

These behaviours and attitudes correlate with some of the responses to the initial questionnaire that indicate prejudices towards other cultures: What do you think students from other cultures can bring to our community?

S25: I think that here we already have what we need, in fact we are the ones who can contribute something to them, and rather they can be a competence at work (IQ).

[During a chess session]

S29: Teacher, this is a waste of time, I don't think these people are interested in chess; they just come here running away from their country (DI-12-12-2019)

**3.2.2. Transition attitudes and behaviours (LAD2).** These values of progression indicate that a certain disposition to understand the other and a certain tolerance are beginning to occur, while maintaining a supremacist and paternalistic idea. The immigrant is no longer perceived as a danger, but rather attitudes are shown in favour of condescending help. In this value, there is no open rejection behaviour; the students are in favour of collaborative work, although with a certain distrust.

(What do you think students from other cultures can contribute to our community?)

S7: I don't think they can contribute anything at the moment, what they need is our help.

S18: I think that rather than thinking about what they can contribute, we should consider what we can do for them. They come here because their countries are poor and backward and we have a duty to help them.

S48: Our immigrant colleagues really contribute little in the group work, they are more of a weight, but it is our obligation to help them and maybe later they can contribute something.

**3.2.3. The progression of students' attitudes towards desirable goals (LAD3).** The most valuable and complex attitudinal information units indicate that not only is tolerance shown towards other cultures, but that interaction between cultures is conceived with a certain cultural relativism. This opens up the possibility of a new appreciation of diversity that makes it possible to learn from others and to learn from what is different.

[During a Discussion session]

S45: I must admit that I have learned a lot from our colleague K., I could not imagine that a lifestyle so different from ours would have such interesting things and would bring me new ways of understanding others (D.I. 15-12-2019).

S36: Although I have been very angry all these months because I was forced to share a table and work with H., in the end we have become friends and he is a very nice and intelligent guy. I think he has learned things here with us, but he has also taught us other values, to live with little, friendship, sincerity.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

Firstly, it should be noted that the three activities described above were not the only classroom interventions developed by teachers as a result of their training in the care and treatment of immigrant students, whether accompanied or unaccompanied. In fact, several activities have been carried out for each one of the modules contained in the Quammelot project training course, but these three interactions have been selected, as they are the ones that have aroused more interest in the students. It is also important to highlight that all the actions undertaken were worked on by the whole class group, although they were initially designed with the aim of improving the integration, involvement and participation of immigrant students. After understanding and verifying the didactic potential of the designed proposals, it was decided to dedicate a greater time in class to this type of activities, in detriment of the habitual hours of diverse school disciplines. Contrary to other studies (Poblete Melis, 2018) that find the little flexibility of the curriculum as a difficulty in the inclusion process. It has been possible to verify that the students have shown a greater motivation and a greater interest in the tasks carried out within the context of the Quammelot project. All this, apart from improving the integration of students from other nationalities, has improved the willingness of the class group to face tasks from other subjects. This is due to the fact that the feeling of cordiality and comradeship generated during the debate club, or the chess workshop, or the artistic exhibition, lasted during the whole school day, achieving a greater attention and participation in the rest of the subjects by the students.

We can also point out that not only have students benefited from these activities, but also that the teachers involved in these activities have indicated that they have felt more motivated and committed to their professional work. They already point out that they have perceived a high degree of complicity with their own students, who asked them pertinent questions on the subject. They also say that they were actively involved rather than facing the tasks with laziness and indolence. Even as the activity progressed, they were grateful to their classmates for the tasks they had done, even though they sometimes had to be "encouraged" a little, these facts support the contributions of other studies (Santos, Araújo, & Simões, 2012; 2014). As several authors have pointed out, teachers have not received, either in their initial training or in their continuing education, the foundations that would have prepared them to face interculturality in the classroom (Marcelo, 1992; Peñalva & Soriano, 2010; Pedrero-García, Moreno-Fernández, & Moreno-Crespo, 2017) and reflect the lack of technical and methodological skills of teachers to adapt the curriculum for the benefit of students (Poblete Melis, 2018). However, we have seen the usefulness of this experience, not only for teachers, but also for students in all subjects.

In general, the objectives set regarding the improvement of the defenceless situation and/or exclusion of immigrant students in the classroom have been satisfactorily achieved, with the teachers perceiving an improvement and positive evolution both in academic tasks and in the collaborative work of immigrant students. In addition, the teaching staff has rethought the tasks proposed in the heart of the project for the rest of the school disciplines, adapting them to the content that they must work on, as it happens with the case of the debates in the classroom.

Evidence also emerges from our research that action research is not only a strategy for transforming and improving problem situations (Ander-Egg, 2003), but also, as Ander-Egg (2003), Fredericks (2011) and Johnson and West (2018) point out, a form of professional development for teachers linked to research on their own practice. This process can also become a way of addressing the educational shortcomings of the teaching staff in dealing with interculturality in the classroom (Marcelo, 1992; Peñalva & Soriano, 2010; Pedrero-García, Moreno-Fernández, & Moreno-Crespo, 2017).

Although some authors (Etxeberria & Elosegui, 2010, GarretRucks, 2016; Wagner, Perugini & Byram, 2017), have noted some inconsistency between the theoretical discourse and the practical results of intercultural education, our study shows some results that indicate improvements in coexistence and some change in attitudes among students. We understand that this change can be a way to combat school failure in immigrant students linked to social isolation (Steinbach, 2010, Fuentes & Parra-González, 2020).

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