

PIRJO LAHDENPERÄ

Intercultural Leadership in School Environments

Intercultural Leadership in School Environments

Pirjo Lahdenperä

Södertörns högskola
Huddinge 2006

Working Paper 2006:1
ISSN 1404-1480

Abstract

Pirjo Lahdenperä: *Intercultural leadership in school environments*

In order to develop schools as intercultural learning environments, studies about the organisational culture of schools and leadership in a cultural context, are required. This article highlights the work of head teachers in multicultural schools and the development of new theories with regard to intercultural leadership. The study is based on interviews with head teachers in multiethnic schools and other leaders of multicultural organisations in Sweden. Based on the responses of the interviewees, I have identified three components of leadership: (1) an understanding of multiculturalism and an awareness of the need for developing multicultural schools; (2) the actions/behaviour of the head teacher as a leader; (3) the head teacher's personal abilities, qualities or shortcomings with regard to intercultural work. All these factors are interdependent, so a head teacher cannot achieve more than his/her staff understands and allows, and the surroundings permit, and can only pursue issues that are considered problems in school. To actively lead multicultural school development, requires both an acceptance of one's own ethnocentrism and a certain multicultural maturity among the staff. My conclusion is that intercultural leaders need to promote organisational learning: the whole organisation needs to share the goal of developing an intercultural learning environment.

Address for correspondence:

Professor Pirjo Lahdenperä, Head of Center for Intercultural School Research, Södertörn University College, 141 89 Huddinge, Sweden

e-mail: pirjo.lahdenpera@sh.se

Monocultural, multicultural and intercultural organisations

When discussing leadership, we generally refer to culture as an aspect of an organisation. Alvesson (2001) uses “organisational culture” as an umbrella term for a perspective that focuses on cultural and symbolic phenomena. He sees culture as a system of common symbols and meanings, making it the key to understanding behaviour, social phenomena, institutions and processes and the framework in which these phenomena become understandable and meaningful (Alvesson 2001; 12).

Schein (1992) divides organisations into three cultural levels. The first level, artifacts, includes observable daily features of organisational life and corresponds to the ‘visible’ level of organisation theory. The second level, values and beliefs, includes an organisation’s espoused judgements and this is reflected in official regulatory and policy documents including curricula and syllabi in schools. The third level, basic assumptions, includes our conscious and unconscious perceptions, ideas, beliefs and so on. Nilsson Fägerlind (2004) refers to Norton (1997), who states that the culture of an organisation can also be defined as a visible part, a written part and an unspoken part; see the figure below. She states that since the unspoken part is not written down, it is rarely, if ever, challenged. New employees have to learn the unspoken rules to fit in. The unspoken rules affect the visible and written parts of an organisation’s culture. Written rules are easy to change, but this does not necessarily change an organisation’s culture in reality. To truly change an organisation’s culture, the unspoken rules need to be changed.

In their book, *How We Meet Diversity in the Workplace*, Mlekov and Widell (2003) describe two types of organisational cultures: monocultural and multicultural. The primary characteristic of monocultural organisations is their focus on homogeneity, which excludes people with other views and often leads to an almost uniform staff. Monocultural organisations are often segregated where women and ethnic minorities are relegated to low-status occupations. They may also be dominated by one particular nationality, age, gender and social or political background. Such organisations are devoid of people who represent human differences or people who differ from the majority in an organisation, in general, and from the executive management, in particular. The norms and values of such organisations are homogeneous as they have been established by the people holding the formal or informal power. This creates a monocultural perspective where the dominating culture (unconsciously) becomes normative and a yardstick by which other cultures are judged. Diversity is perceived as a problem to be ignored or actively countered. Similarity and cultural homogeneity are the goal, particularly with regard to recruitment. New employees are expected to adapt quickly to and be assimilated into the organisation; for example, yes-men are rewarded and those saying no are punished.

In this way, a company safeguards its existing structures, norms and values. However, this hampers change and growth. Leaders and managers are often recruited from an existing circle of colleagues, for example when promoting staff. These promotions often occur because superiors take note of employees who are in tune with an organisation's culture. When promoted, these employees tend to continue the same patterns of management (Alvesson 2001). Leadership is characterised as management by control, budgeting, planning and organising i.e. bureaucratisation, rather than by efforts to change.

In contrast, a multicultural organisation, is characterised by a heterogeneous staff and a culture where diversity is valued on all levels. Diversity is viewed as an advantage for an organisation, rather than as a threat or a problem. Individual differences are appreciated and valued (Mlekov & Widell 2003). Nilsson Fägerlind (2004) states that in a multicultural organisation, based on heterogeneity, there is no connection between background and status/hierarchical level. No particular background is favoured when making appointments and giving out assignments. Influence is a two-way process: new recruits (such as minorities and people with foreign backgrounds) start work at a company, embrace the norms and values of the existing culture, and also influence and change them. The core values of quality, security, honesty, ethics, equality etc. apply to everyone but the organisational culture does not demand conformity to peripheral norms, values, behaviour, approaches, perspectives, working styles and so on.

A key factor in striving towards a multicultural organisation is the ability of the managers to lead people who are different. Such leadership must also observe the invisible parts of a culture, such as attitudes, values, norms and relationships.

Literature in this field includes various definitions and descriptions of monocultural and multicultural organisations, but it is difficult to find descriptions of intercultural organisations. Interculturalism consists of two parts: inter, meaning reciprocal action, or action between people, and culture, meaning "a system of attitudes that provide order and focus in people's lives". The term itself implies a process, a crossing of boundaries, an interaction and mutuality. It also focuses on quality and cultural values. Mutual respect, tolerance, equality and social justice are some of the ethical values that are often expressed as goals of interculturalism. These aspects, both normative and moral, are rooted in the belief that diversity can be promoted through the democratic values of equality and respect for the needs and values of others, including minorities. To promote diversity, we must therefore learn about stereotypes, prejudices, racism, sexism, discrimination and social inequality and how they affect our communication and social relationships (Lahdenperä 2004).

Consequently, an intercultural organisational culture means that its members and leaders are aware of phenomena that hinder interculturalism and mutual communication. It is crucial to develop systems for analysing and evaluating an organisational culture, for example regarding inequalities between employees and groups of employees. In this way, an organisation is able to eliminate institutional obstacles such as gender, race, ethnicity or social background with regard to recruitment and professional development. In contrast to monocultural organisations, intercultural organisations are open to questioning of old bureaucratic methods, hierarchies, categorisations and existing structures and this results in new skills being brought into an organisation, including the ability to understand the world outside the organisation.

Interculturalism requires a form of leadership that stimulates learning. It demands that a time and place be set aside for communication and an exchange of ideas between groups in an organisation. An organisation and its activities are not etched in stone but are in a constant state of change and development. Leadership means influencing and changing the deeper levels or unspoken parts of an organisation's culture. Alvesson (2001/164) defines leadership as a culture-influencing activity. He sees leadership as "inclusive and affecting important goals and strategies, influencing group cohesion and identification as well as values, ideas and emotions".

The central core of leadership is communication, since a leader has to convey messages with regard to goals, work distribution, attitudes, values, visions, strategies and so on, and make these understandable to staff. A common system of attitudes, a culture, makes this easier. Since much of an organisation's culture is unconscious and taken for granted, it is difficult for its members to understand, analyse and describe their own culture. An intercultural approach means that a manager is aware that his or her own cultural background and experiences from a certain country or business have created cultural filters that may limit contact with people from a different culture and with different experiences.

In a leadership context, a leader's system of values, prejudices and cultural background are crucial to the creation of a good working environment and the recruitment of staff. People who are subjected to negative ethnic prejudices feel degraded and discriminated against. A leader's ethnocentrism and prejudices can be a major obstacle to the development of a multi-cultural or intercultural organisation.

National organisations and institutions are primarily based on a country's values and norms and are, therefore, monocultural. To highlight and target discrimination, it is important to study institutions such as schools as organisations with inherent cultures, values, norms and attitudes. In her book, *Diversity in Practice*, Nilsson Fägerlind (2004; 13) states that Swedish organisations focus more on training staff than on developing organisational support for diversity. Furthermore, Hofstede (1991) states that leaders, managers, union representatives and so on are rarely good at promoting intercultural issues because specific financial matters take up all their attention.

A study about the work of head teachers in multicultural schools

Developing schools as intercultural learning environments involves studying the organisational culture of schools and looking at leadership in a cultural context. The head of a school is a key person in society, and vital to the development of a school, its organisation and culture. For this reason, my study is about the leadership of head teachers in multicultural environments. I hope that this study will contribute to the knowledge base regarding intercultural qualities of leadership and the school as a learning environment.

Leaders in multicultural environments who are practitioners possess invaluable experiences and knowledge. Since these leaders are required to resolve various types of problems in schools, I applied a narrative methodological perspective in my study, based on 40 head teachers' own stories about working in multicultural environments and what this meant for their leadership. I interviewed many school heads who had been pointed out as good leaders in terms of 'dealing with diversity', usually by a staff member. My assumption was that these leaders had vital practical knowledge and I wanted to elicit this during in-depth interviews.

I used a semi-structured interview form with questions about work in multicultural and multi-ethnic environments, including areas the leaders considered problematic and how they dealt with such situations. I wanted to find out if outside influences affected their leadership e.g. their upbringing, social problems, private life and experiences from working life. In order to gain an insight into the personal skills required for leadership and the motivation necessary to work with multicultural issues, I asked about personal attitudes towards multicultural environments, and the benefits and drawbacks of being a leader in such environments.

To limit my work to a single field of activity, I only interviewed head teachers of multiethnic schools and leaders of other multicultural school organisations in Sweden. All worked in upper-secondary or secondary schools, or were responsible for mother-tongue instruction or resource allocation in the local authority. It was important to interview people with non-Swedish (immigrant) or minority backgrounds as well as ethnic Swedes, to learn whether a leader's background was significant in their work with diversity and their thinking about interculturalism. I was careful to ensure that exactly half of the interviewees were male and half female. I also interviewed other leaders in the school system in order to gain a deeper understanding of the organisational culture.

Based on the responses of the interviewees, I identified three components of leadership: (1) an understanding of multiculturalism and an awareness of the need for developing multicultural schools; (2) the actions/behaviour of the head teacher as a leader; (3) the head teacher's personal abilities, qualities or shortcomings with regard to intercultural work. Using these components, I tried to answer the question of what characterises intercultural leadership in multicultural schools. This study does not claim to be exhaustive, but is a preliminary approach to

the topic. It has, however, provided a great deal of information and insight into the work of school heads in multiethnic and multicultural areas in present day Sweden.

(1) Understanding multiculturalism

In the opening chapter, I described monocultural, multicultural and intercultural organisations. I stated that a national school is generally a monocultural institution that promotes 'Swedishness' and treats pupils with immigrant backgrounds as 'others', who need special measures and resources. However, the school heads in this study worked in multiethnic schools, where more than half of the pupils had foreign or minority backgrounds. Naturally, it could be expected that this would lead to these schools operating in different ways from 'standard' Swedish schools, and heads observing ethical difference in their activities. If we define a school as multiethnic and multicultural in its activities, this ought to mean that it has a different educational content, methods of working, and organisation that are based on the different cultures and languages in the school (Lahdenperä 2002).

However, it is not easy to define whether operations are monocultural, multicultural or intercultural without resorting to stereotypes. These descriptions are more an instrument for analysing an awareness in a school head's approach rather than for defining a school's culture. Attempting to do the latter, with a handful of essential values and concepts, can lead to an oversimplification of a multi-faceted school culture. Instead, I intend to explain the areas of school activities mentioned by the interviewees which they felt were problematic or needed action. This indicates something of the head teachers' awareness of the need for multicultural school development.

According to the respondents' answers, with regard to the pupils, the basis of multiculturalism was the different languages used. However, the parents were referred to according to many different aspects including nationality, country, language, religion, socioeconomic or educational background, and sexual preference. The terms ethnicity and national minority were not used, which may indicate that these school heads were not aware that Romanies, Samis, Sweden-Finns, Tornedal Finns and Jews have been recognised as national minorities in Sweden since 2000.

The school heads interviewed felt it was difficult for them to be stereotype 'middle managers' because the higher up in the hierarchy one went, the more homogeneous and monocultural the organisation became. This applied not only to Swedish values in general, but also to the fact that a certain group e.g. a group of women was in power and wanted everyone to act in the same way and share the same values. A man could have difficulty fitting into this feminine management culture. The administrative management in general was Swedish. Further up in the hierarchy, the diversity among the staff and values decreased: a pyramid organisation. There was a gap between the exercise of authority and the multiethnic, multicultural population.

The head teachers described the administrators in local and central government as both ignorant of and disinterested in multicultural issues. Similarly, both school staff and parents were often opposed to, for example, mother tongue instruction and the recruitment of teachers with foreign backgrounds. The fact that several affected schools were in segregated areas led to severe socio-economic problems, with frequent changes of schools for pupils and social problems among both pupils and parents. The number of residents with foreign backgrounds was

related to segregation, and it was difficult to determine which difficulties stemmed from ethnic differences and which were the result of a school's socio-economic situation. As the parents with better resources tended to move away, the area became even more ethnically and socio-economically segregated. This problem obviously overshadowed other activities at school.

Difficulties in communicating with parents due to different cultural codes and linguistic problems were described in detail in the interviews. The respondents were well aware that they and the parents might have different views on teaching methods, learning and knowledge, the need for mother-tongue instruction, values, religion, disabilities and so on. Descriptions of these conflicts were the most extensive in the study, which leads me to conclude that parents with a foreign background pose the greatest problems to a school's activities. This is a finding I have previously stated in my thesis, *Immigrant Background or Difficulties in School* (Lahdenperä 1997); that the teachers felt that their biggest problem in school was parents with an immigrant background. But it is not easy for a head teacher, as a representative of Swedish authority, to handle dilemmas as an official while respecting both Swedish legislation and a family's cultural tradition. Based on the interviews, I could not understand how and from where these leaders received help to handle such ethical situations. But only a few respondents expressed this as an actual dilemma.

Racism, hidden racism, xenophobia and ethnic prejudices were found in the staff and among pupils and parents. Leaders with foreign backgrounds had experienced these prejudices themselves in their work, and felt that their pupils or parents had experienced them too. The respondents specified several aspects of school activities that needed developing, including staff recruitment policies, work on the values held by staff and pupils, and school collaboration with various ethnic groups.

In summary, few of these leaders presented a well thought-out plan for diversity in schools. The analyses and measures presented were in line with the fact that, based on the problems of multiethnic pupils, certain aspects of schools' overall operations were desperately in need of change and development.

(2) From monocultural to multicultural development

To lead a school's organisation from being monocultural to being multicultural or intercultural requires an analysis of the conditions existing in a school and the leader's acceptance of the responsibility. A head teacher is responsible for a school's entire activities, and naturally also for its organisation and organisational culture. Therefore, I chose to analyse whether head teachers were involved in all aspects of activities: teaching, assessment, administration, planning, curricula, staff recruitment, staff training, teacher and pupil groups, co-operation with the parents and teaching assistants, and how any action taken reflected the multiethnic pupil groups. Working with the ethos of a school involves various perspectives: attitudes, values and cultural perceptions when adopting measures to develop a school as an intercultural learning environment. The intercultural aspect consists of a method as well as an approach, with the aim of basing a school's organisation and operations on diversity.

Nilsson Fägerlind (2001) describes the general tools for changing an organisation's culture into a multicultural, inclusive one: planned recruitment, a change in the evaluation and reward system, ongoing training, and establishing diversity in key work groups and committees.

However, it is difficult to compare schools with the corporate world, since schools are already multicultural and multiethnic because of the pupil groups and the parents. This itself may be problematic because of the role of schools as 'Swedish' and promoters of integration. The goal in schools is to increase 'Swedishness' and teachers and other staff are generally Swedish. Only in a few cases, was there a staff recruitment policy or a will to increase the number of mother-tongue teachers. In the cases where the leader had an immigrant background, the importance of recruiting people with an immigrant background was emphasised: they would be a good example for the pupils and show that it was possible to study and reach various positions in Swedish society.

Several of the leaders spoke of planned recruitment of key staff, for example special needs teachers and counsellors. The schools that I felt put the most effort into developing diversity had chosen to hire people with foreign backgrounds as teachers or cultural interpreters, with responsibility for helping to integrate the pupils and their parents into the school system.

In an article entitled, *On the Art of Reflecting the Society of Today. Experiences from Denmark*, Plisch (2004: 137) created analytical instruments that institutions could use to help promote cultural diversity: *for*, *with*, *by* and *about*. Plisch states that the goal is not just to produce something *for* or *about* ethnic minorities – a common approach in the past decades that has dominated much of the thinking and actions of Swedish cultural institutions towards multicultural issues – but also *with* and *by* ethnic minorities.

Using these analytical tools to describe the measures discussed in the study, much was done *for* pupils with an immigrant background, or to reach out to the parents. Working on attitudes and values and gaining more understanding *about* various ethnic groups through various educational and training measures was the most common strategy for taking care of problems and expanding teachers' intercultural skills. This study does not indicate whether any measures were taken *by* people with different ethnic backgrounds.

Most of the head teachers in the study had no plans to involve or integrate parents from different backgrounds into the work of their schools, except in two cases where parent-teacher associations were heavily focused on. The measures and management documents that appeared in the study were mainly concerned with building bridges and getting the parents to come into school.

The head teachers differed greatly with regard to their awareness of the varying needs and backgrounds of their pupils and their parents. Their thinking about their school's organisation and structure was based on Swedish tradition, except in a few cases where the head had organised everything from breakfasts to leadership courses for assistant heads. He used the school's organisation and various groups to integrate, involve and create an intercultural learning environment.

However, based on the interviews, it is difficult to say what these leaders did or did not do in practice, or to evaluate their ability or intention to communicate and socialise. This would require a completely different study that investigated the daily operations of the school heads. However, the study provided collective knowledge and examples of what a leader could do in a multicultural school. I have summarised some of these in the article: *Developing the School as an Intercultural Learning Environment* (Lahdenperä 2004).

(3) A head teacher's intercultural qualities and learning organisations

General literature about leadership contains detailed descriptions about desired leadership characteristics, qualities and skills. This literature also describes undesirable characteristics for working in multicultural organisations. According to Hofstede (1991:285), people with excessively large egos, low tolerance for uncertainty, emotional instability and known racist or politically extremist sympathies are poor candidates. The respondents in this study also pointed out that people with racist ideas were not suitable as heads or teachers in multiethnic schools. The qualities they considered vital for leaders in multiethnic schools were being committed and compassionate understanding with a strong sense of social responsibility and a genuine interest in people.

The school heads in the study gave tips and ideas about how their successors should approach multiculturalism, and what qualities they saw in themselves that they felt were important for this work. Their responses indicate that the most important feature was *intercultural communication skills*, since they had to listen to the culture of the people they came in contact with, keep an open mind without prejudice, give information about the Swedish school system etc. Lundgren (2002) defines intercultural communication skills as a cognitive and intellectual ability to understand conditions through presented facts and information, on the one hand, and attitudes and an ability to remain open to differences, on the other hand. Skills include an ability to interact and to interpret documents or events from another culture, explaining them and placing them in relation to one's own culture.

Hofstede (1991) states that intercultural communication skills have three different phases: awareness, knowledge and skills: Awareness means an insight that different people have grown up in different environments and therefore have different mental programming. This awareness is about realising that there are different schools of thought, feelings, values, patterns of action and so on. Knowledge follows on from awareness. If we have to interact with certain cultures, we need to learn what those cultures are like. We must learn their symbols, heroes and rituals. These skills help us to solve the simplest problems first, and then more complex ones, with people from other cultures.

This skill in communicating manifested itself in various ways in the responses from the interviewees: as a need to know something about other cultures, or ethnic groups on the local level, not jumping to conclusions based on one's own background, listening and so on. The responses indicated that experience leads to knowledge: that it takes time to understand and improve intercultural communication. In order to work in multiethnic environments, one needs a sensitivity to cultural differences and the symbols that are important to people from different cultural background. One head teacher gave the example that he had both the Koran and the Bible in his bookcase to indicate his interest in the question of values. Wearing respectful, neat clothing was another way to express an understanding of parental values. Literature in this field refers to this as intercultural sensitivity, which Kaikkonen (1999) states is an ability to bridge various perspectives, interpret, understand and respect other perspectives, and question one's own ethnocentrism. Intercultural sensitivity also means an ability to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity regarding different interpretations, and the responses in this study reflected this.

The respondents stated that having lived in another country, having experienced alienation or having gone through life crises also provided intercultural leadership qualities. Being an im-

migrant created a commitment to working with equality, for the equal value of all people, for social justice and against discrimination. Having moved between various countries and places also created a familiarity with and ability to interact with people from different social classes and cultures. Mediating between Swedish conditions and those of other cultures was easier if one had an immigrant background. The study found that working in multiethnic schools required an ability to change perspectives and validate those of parents or pupils.

The responses in my study give me the impression that school is an arena for many varying conflicts among both adults and pupils. Therefore, it is important that a leader is unafraid and is able to handle and solve conflicts. A multiethnic school also has a different perspective on what is and what is not a conflict, and how to solve a conflict or make it worse. The school heads said that learning to handle conflicts was an experience-based skill that took time to acquire. For example, having a sense of humour and using it in one's leadership was a way to reach out to many and defuse conflicts. One way of preventing conflicts and uncertainty was for a leader to be clear in his or her leadership and aims. Another vital aspect of bicultural or multicultural leadership was an ability to make decisions and organise things. The interviewees pointed out that an immigrant background could help create bicultural leadership.

Being a leader in a multiethnic context is very demanding. The respondents found it exciting and enriching to work in multicultural areas, but also hard work and tiring. It is easy to 'give it your all and get burned out'. The cultural conflicts and dilemmas that often came with the job were considered as hard and stressful at times. It was difficult to let go of the job when they went home, so their leisure time was affected negatively. The respondents recommended hobbies such as fishing, hunting, reading, art and music.

Many pointed out the importance of not being afraid, being willing to change and daring to try unconventional solutions. Only one of the head teachers described himself as being creative, a driving force, and an initiative-taker.

These characteristics could also be ascribed to a person with an open mind and an ability to learn new things, a person who can challenge his or her own attitudes and can, therefore, continually learn new things.

In general, the school heads in my study worked in complex cognitive, social and emotional environments. They had to quickly be able to analyse and process information, emotions, attitudes and values, draw conclusions, make discoveries and plan courses of action. All this necessitated a continual learning process, which could sometimes be trying and stressful for individuals. Therefore, becoming more intercultural in one's leadership involves experience-based learning, which cannot be mastered only through theoretical studies. While theoretical studies can help a leader develop his or her understanding of multicultural situations and provide analytical concepts that can be used in a process of change, intercultural skills in communication and leadership have to be acquired and developed.

I have stated that intercultural leadership can be described and studied from three angles: 1) a leader's understanding of multicultural situations; 2) a leader's actions and behaviour; 3) a leader's personal abilities, qualities or shortcomings when working in multicultural/intercultural situations. All of these factors are interdependent, so a head teacher cannot achieve more than his/her staff understands and allows, and the surroundings permit, and can only pursue issues that are considered as problems in school. In the same way, a head teacher

cannot do more than his or her cultural horizon allows i.e. the head's own unprocessed ethnocentrism gets in the way. If we want to understand leadership, we cannot only consider behaviour, we must also consider the absence of ideas and aims. To actively lead multicultural school development, requires both an acceptance of one's own ethnocentrism and a certain multicultural maturity among the staff. Sometimes the reverse is true: the staff exhibits multicultural maturity, but the school head's understanding of the problem lags behind. Sometimes, despite knowledgeable teachers who are enthusiastic about intercultural issues, not much happens because the school, as the knowledge is not spread to other staff members and important issues remain as pet projects.

Mlekov and Widell (2003) state that successful diversity work, like all processes of change, has a clear vision and the support of the top management (and managers must practise what they preach), encompasses current status analyses, has clear aims, clear allocation of responsibility, effective communication and evaluation. But, they point out, there are differences. Diversity must be conquered each day: new patterns for human relations, communication and socialisation, how we listen and talk to each other, and turn people's differences into assets in the work place. All this demands endless creativity and awareness, which is why intercultural leaders need to promote organisational learning: the whole organisation needs to share the goal of developing as an intercultural learning environment.

References

- Alvesson, Mats (2001). *Organisationskultur och ledning*, Malmö: Liber.
- Brantefors, Lotta (1999). Mångkulturalismer – föreställningar om mångkulturalism och skola. I *Utbildning & Demokrati. Tidskrift för didaktik och utbildningspolitik*. Volume 8 No. 3/99.
- Bunar, Nihad (1999). Multikulturalism är död, leve multikulturalism! Om den svenska skolans (multikulturella) möjligheter och begränsningar. In *Utbildning & Demokrati. Tidskrift för didaktik och utbildningspolitik*. Volume 8 No. 3/99.
- Fägerlind, Gabriella Nilsson (2004). *Mångfald i praktiken – handbok för verksamhetsutveckling*, Uppsala: Konsultförlaget.
- Hedin, Christer & Lahdenperä, Pirjo (2000). *Värdegrund och samhällsutveckling*. Stockholm: HLS Förlag.
- Hofstede, Geert (1991). *Organisationer och kulturer – om interkulturell förståelse*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Kaikkonen (1999). Kulttuurien välinen oppiminen ja kasvatus. I Kaija Matinheikki-Kokko (ed.) *Monikulttuurinen koulutus – perusteita ja kokemuksia*. Opetushallitus: Hakapaino, (pp. 17–29).
- Lahdenperä Pirjo (1997). *Invandrabakgrund eller skolsvårigheter? En textanalytisk studie av åtgärdsprogram för elever med invandrabakgrund*. Stockholm: HLS-Förlag. Studies in Educational Sciences, 7.
- Lahdenperä, Pirjo (2002). “Developing Multicultural Schools and Intercultural Education” In *Reflections on Diversity and Change in Modern Society. A Festschrift for Annick Sjögren*. Gomes, Bigestans, Magnusson & Ramberg (ed.), The Multicultural Centre, Botkyrka, Sweden. 2002. pp 293–309.
- Lahdenperä, Pirjo (2004.) Att utveckla skolan som en interkulturell lärandemiljö. I Lahdenperä (ed.) *Interkulturell pedagogik i teori och praktik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Lundgren, U. (2002). *Interkulturell förståelse i engelskundervisning – en möjlighet*. Forskarutbildningen i pedagogik, Lärarutbildningen, Malmö högskola. Diss.
- Norton, J.R., Fox, R:E (1997). The Change Equation—Capitalizing on Diversity for Effective Organizational Change, American Psychological Association, Washington.
- Mlekov, Katarina & Widell, Gill (2003). *Hur vi möter mångfald på arbetsplatsen*, Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Plisch, Emil (2004). Om konsten att spegla det samhälle vi lever i dag. Erfarenheter från Danmark. In Oscar Pripp (ed.) *Mångfald i kulturlivet*, Botkyrka: The Multicultural Centre.
- Schein Edgar. H. (1992). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Tallberg Broman Ingegerd, Rubinstein Reich Lena, Hägerström Jeanette (2002). *Likvärdighet för en skola för alla*, Forskning i fokus, no. 3, Stockholm: Swedish Board of Education.
- Tesfahuney, Mekkonen (1999). Monokulturell utbildning. I *Utbildning & Demokrati. Tidskrift för didaktik och utbildningspolitik*. Volume 8 No. 3/99, pp. 65–84.