

Author/Autor: Laid, Bouakaz (Laid.bouakaz@lut.mah.se). Malmö University Institute for teacher Education, Sweden

Title/ Título: The key to school is the key to a strong cooperation. Building bridges between minority ethnic parents and school in a Swedish primary school

La clave del centro docente es la clave hacia una fuerte cooperación. Construyendo puentes entre padres de minorías étnicas y el centro docente en una escuela primaria sueca

Topic: Cultural, technological and multicultural aspects of school, family and community partnerships

Aspectos culturales, tecnológicos y multiculturales de las relaciones que se establecen entre las familias, los centros docentes y las entidades y servicios sociales comunitarios

Presentation time/Día de presentación: Session in English. Thursday 15, 12:15, 1:45 p.m. Room 1, Third Floor

Sesión en Inglés. Jueves 15, 12:15-1:45 p.m. Sala 1, Tercer Piso

Abstract

Approaches conducive to developing a close working relationship between public schools and parents belonging to language minority groups with the aim of furthering the education of the children are discussed. A parent-school project which the author initiated in a primary School in Malmö, Sweden, a school located in a multiethnic disadvantaged section of the city in which some 90 percent of the children have parents who are immigrants, is described. The school is of a "comprehensive" type in which the pupils range in age from a preschool level on up to an age of about 16. Prior to the project, many of the immigrant parents had appeared fearful of taking contact with the school. In the first phase of the project, led by a project team consisting of four teachers, the school principal and the author, the immigrant parents were offered a one-term course dealing with the Swedish school system and Swedish society, a course held at the school. There were strong efforts to make the parents feel welcome and accepted at the school. The second phase of the project involved establishing a parent-teachers organisation to which the teachers and a large number of the parents belonged, both immigrant and native Swedish parents. A close working relationship between the parents, the teachers and the school administrators was established, the parents also being given a strong role in leadership of the organisation and being given ready access to the school for activities evenings and on weekends. A sense of mutual trust and understanding developed. The aim is that the work thus begun be continued by the parent-teachers organisation after the work of the project team is finished. The results are analysed in part in terms of the concept of social capital, seen as created by cooperation of this sort, and the related concepts of human capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. The strong advantages of an approach such as that described are discussed.