

Learning for Diversity:  
Creating Powerful Cooperative  
Learning Environments

16-17 September 2010

Ghent, Belgium

The Centre for Diversity & Learning (Ghent University, Belgium) organizes in September 2010 the conference "Learning for Diversity: Creating Powerful Cooperative Learning Environments."

The conference will be organized in six strands:

1. Cooperative learning
2. Intercultural education
3. Equity and Excellence
4. Multilingualism
5. Educational Policy
6. Powerful learning environments

The conference includes paper presentations, workshops, poster presentations, and plenary speakers. Scholars and practitioners are invited to contribute to this conference.

More information will be available soon on [www.diversiteitenleren.be](http://www.diversiteitenleren.be).

CENTRE FOR DIVERSITY & LEARNING

Steunpunt Diversiteit & Leren  
Ghent University  
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 49  
B-9000 Ghent  
Belgium

Phone: 0032/9/2647038  
Email: [info@diversiteitenleren.be](mailto:info@diversiteitenleren.be)

Website: <http://www.diversiteitenleren.be>



INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE

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# Learning for Diversity: Creating Powerful Cooperative Learning Environments

The Centre for Diversity & Learning (Ghent University, Belgium) organizes in September 2010 the conference "Learning for Diversity: Creating Powerful Cooperative Learning Environments."

The aim of this conference is to bring together researchers and practitioners in the field of intercultural education to reflect on how to deal with diversity in formal and informal educational settings. The main focus of the conference lies on how to define and create powerful cooperative learning environments; on how to strive for equity and excellence in education for students irrespective of their diverse backgrounds.

The conference includes paper presentations, workshops, poster presentations, and plenary speakers. Scholars and practitioners are invited to contribute to this conference.

More information will be available soon on [www.diversiteitleren.be](http://www.diversiteitleren.be).

The conference will be organized in six strands.

## 1. Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning becomes more and more integrated in the mainstream of educational curricula and projects. Especially the opportunities to combine subject-related knowledge with an innovating educational approach offers perspectives for teachers to challenge a changing society with new demands. But working with cooperative learning working formats means also thinking about how to integrate evaluation, social skills, learning and thinking skills, equal opportunities, self-image and motivation. Especially the role of the teacher in the motivational aspect of cooperative learn-

ing as an important key for a successful school career needs our interest.

## 2. Intercultural education

Intercultural education becomes more and more important in a multicultural, globalizing society. Schools have to deal with cultural differences in a non stereotyping way. At the same time, pupils have to be able to acquire at school the necessary competencies that enable them to deal with cultural differences, to be active as critical-reflective citizens in a democratic society. By practicing these competencies within the school community, their education contributes to the creation of a pluralistic, inclusive democracy.

## 3. Equity and excellence

Education has to be socially just and should strive towards equity both in society at large and in the educational field. All children and youngsters should get the maximum opportunities to learn irrespective of their social, cultural, ethnic, ... background. Heterogeneity and studying in a non-segregated setting are crucial to promote diversity and help all children to reach high standards of achievement in different domains.

## 4. Multilingualism

Within intercultural education the debate on linguistic diversity has been dominated by the – limited – question how optimal language education for immigrant students can be organized (majority language vs. bilingual education). An equally important question to be raised is how to respond to the *de facto* multilingual dynamics of urban landscapes and neighbourhoods and the schools situated in them. A wider 'multiple pathways'- approach to multilingualism, language learning and educational achievement needs to be developed. We welcome contributions in this field focussing on powerful multilingual learning environments, cooperative language learning strategies, everyday socio-cultural and socio-cognitive practices, innovative school policies, ...

## 5. Educational policy

In general, educational policies are designed to improve and optimize the educational system and school effectiveness. They are situated at school level as well as at the national level, and increasingly at the European and international level. Research can be aimed at different aspects of educational policy: How did certain policy measures come about? What were the underlying presuppositions? What is the impact, effectiveness of policy measures? What are the conditions and terms needed to implement new policy measures? Policy decisions have considerable consequences for the world of practice. Therefore, designing and implementing new educational policies require close co-operation between policy makers and stakeholders on the one hand and researchers on the other. In particular, we will be looking at educational policies linked to the main theme of this conference, being learning for diversity within powerful cooperative learning environments.

## 6. Powerful learning environments

A central aim of education is to provide all learners with the tools necessary to succeed in life. It's a challenge to prepare them for lifelong learning in rapidly changing contexts. Powerful learning environments play an important role in addressing this challenge. A basic principle is not only to bring academic learning into everyday learning, but to let academic learning link up with everyday learning. A process in which lifelike learning contexts, meaningful learning, participation and self steering seem to be key aspects.

