



# Pestalozzi

## Training Resources

Diversity of world views and world  
knowledge in the classroom (VIEWS)  
Auto ethnography as a tool for self-reflection

by

Author: Karmen Trasberg - Estonia

Editor: Olga Ferreira



The Pestalozzi Programme  
Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

# Diversity of world views and world knowledge in the classroom (VIEWS) Auto ethnography as a tool for self-reflection

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## Theme: Auto ethnography as a tool for self-reflection

### Expected outcome

- To promote trainees' reflection on their own cultural identity and engagement with different world views;
- To encourage trainees to use the method of auto ethnography to build a personal history of their own cultural identity, beliefs and values;
- To develop a self-monitoring, reflective attitude in order to help student teachers becoming aware of the role of culture in their world views.

### Target group

Type of training	School level / age	Subject area
Initial and in-service teacher training	Any	Any

### Brief description of the unit

The concept of auto ethnography is a form of autobiographical personal narrative that explores the person's experiences in life. It can be presented in written, musical, visual or drama form.

In the first activity student teachers are invited to write their own cultural autobiography and their life story. The students are given questions to be used as guidelines helping them to gain a new perspective of their culture, the effect of it on their culture, on their personal and professional development and their present cultural identity and world view. These guidelines will also help student teachers to write about these reflections.

In the second activity participants are asked to work with photographs, images and representations of themselves. They select the images they feel they represent their own notions of cultural identity.

Auto photography allows participants the freedom to use their actual surroundings, to pick and choose the people who are important to their cultural identity, and to decide what issues and what objects are the most salient to their personal construction of world views. Auto photography also allows to overcome some cultural and language barriers that may be present in other forms of identity research.

## Methods/techniques used

- Individual work
- Work in pairs and plenary
- Discussion
- Debriefing

## Time 3h45

Preparatory activity	▶ 60 minutes
Activity 1 - Autobiography	▶ 60 minutes
Activity 2 - Auto photography	▶ 105 minutes

## Resources

Diversity of world views and world knowledge in the classroom - Basic Assumptions Document - BAD	Appendix 1
Hand out for preparatory	Appendix 2
Blair, T., Jones, D. (1998) <i>Preparing for Student Teaching in a Pluralistic Classroom</i> . Allyn and Bacon. Jason Hunt Auto ethnography (as an example)	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUplHH97fLE&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUplHH97fLE&amp;feature=related</a>
Schwarzbaum, S.; Jones Thomas, A. (2006) <i>The Use of the Cultural Life Story in Multicultural Education</i>	<a href="http://counselingoutfitters.com/Schwarzbaum.htm">http://counselingoutfitters.com/Schwarzbaum.htm</a>
How to Write a Cultural Biography	<a href="http://www.ehow.com/how_6121457_write-cultural-biography.html">http://www.ehow.com/how_6121457_write-cultural-biography.html</a>
Noland, Carey M. (2006) <i>Auto-Photography as Research Practice: Identity and Self-Esteem Research</i> . In <i>Journal of Research Practice</i> , Vol 2, No 1.	

## Preparatory activity 1 How can world views be reflected in auto ethnography?



60 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ <b>General aim:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ To become a self-monitoring and a reflective teacher.</li> </ul> <p>▶ <b>Specific aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ To share ideas about diversity of world views and world knowledge;</li> <li>➢ To be aware of the importance of reflection in order to improve teaching and learning;</li> <li>➢ To highlight events that have shaped participants' world views and professional perspective about teaching.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Methods /techniques used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Reading assignment;</li> <li>➢ Activity;</li> <li>➢ Discussions.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Diversity of world views and world knowledge in the classroom. Basic Assumptions Document (BAD) - Appendix 1</li> <li>➢ Hand-out for preparatory activity - Appendix 2.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Practical arrangements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ The Preparatory activity can be organised in form of a classroom discussion or of a distance (e-learning) course.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Instructions/procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ 1. The trainer explains the aims of the activity and gives a short overview of the main concepts used</li> </ul>	

<p>in this training unit (10 min);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2. Participants read the material (Appendix 1) (10 min);</li> <li>➤ 3. Hand-outs (Appendix 2) are distributed and the participants follow the instructions:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please highlight 3-5 events of your personal life that have shaped your world view.</li> <li>- Please think about how world views influence your everyday practice as a teacher?</li> </ul> <p>Write down how those world views are reflected in your philosophy of teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pair up with another student and share your thoughts. Consider the similarities and differences between your perspective and theirs. (30 min);</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ 4. Debriefing (10 min).</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be prepared to discuss also personally sensitive issues (religion, sexual orientation, etc.)</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Debriefing/reflecting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What are the similar categories that have shaped the participants' world views (impact of travel experience etc.)?</li> </ul>	

## Activity 1 How can my cultural life story support self-reflection?



105 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ <b>General aim:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To develop an awareness of how prior experiences with family, community, peers, colleagues etc., have shaped participants' beliefs about other cultural groups.</li> </ul> <p>▶ <b>Specific aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To use results of preparatory activity, to reflect on one's own culture, cultural identity and world view;</li> <li>➤ To write a cultural autobiography;</li> <li>➤ To share it with others.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Methods /techniques used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Writing assignment;</li> <li>➤ Discussions.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Schwarzbaum, S.; Jones Thomas, A. (2006) <i>The Use of the Cultural Life Story in Multicultural Education</i> <a href="http://counselingoutfitters.com/Schwarzbaum.htm">http://counselingoutfitters.com/Schwarzbaum.htm</a></li> <li>➤ <i>How to Write a Cultural Biography</i> <a href="http://www.ehow.com/how_6121457_write-cultural-biography.html">http://www.ehow.com/how_6121457_write-cultural-biography.html</a></li> <li>➤ Blair, T.; Jones, D. (1998) <i>Preparing for Student Teaching in a Pluralistic Classroom</i>. Allyn and Bacon</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Practical arrangements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The activity can be organised in form of a classroom activity or in form of a distance (e-learning) course;</li> <li>➤ The students are given questions to be used as guidelines for writing the cultural autobiography.</li> </ul>	

<p>▶ <b>Instructions/procedure:</b></p> <p>It is recommended as an e-learning activity, but in the case of classroom activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1. The participants read the material on autobiography (20 min);</li> <li>➤ 2. They write a personal autobiography (60 min) (Appendix 3);</li> <li>➤ 3. Discussion: Trainees pair up and share their cultural life story. Then they explore and discuss what they see as some implications of these beliefs for their world views and for instruction in a diverse classroom (15 min);</li> <li>➤ 4. Debriefing (10 min).</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The trainer’s task is to support the students in the writing process, seeking to avoid that students limit their life story to the format of a CV.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Debriefing/reflecting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How can discrepancies between the cultural, home and school environment influence teaching and learning?</li> <li>➤ What kind of life experiences helps you – as a future teacher – to meet of the needs of a diverse student population?</li> </ul>	



## Activity 2 Experience how can autophotography support self-reflection?



105 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ <b>General aim:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ To reflect on one's own cultural identity and the development of world views.</li> </ul> <p>▶ <b>Specific aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ To interpret cultural autobiography using photographs;</li> <li>➢ To share with others.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Methods /techniques used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Auto photography;</li> <li>➢ Discussion.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Jason Hunt Auto ethnography <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUplHH97fLE&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUplHH97fLE&amp;feature=related</a>;</li> <li>➢ Noland, Carey M. (2006) <i>Auto-Photography as Research Practice: Identity and Self-Esteem Research</i>. In Journal of Research Practice, Vol. 2, No 1;</li> <li>➢ A camera;</li> <li>➢ Access to internet, computers and printer.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Practical arrangements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ The room must be prepared so that participants can present their pictures using PowerPoint or posters.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Instructions/procedure:</b></p> <p>It is recommended as an e-learning activity, but in the situation of classroom activity:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1. The participants read the material about auto photography (15 min);</li> <li>➤ 2. They choose or take the pictures (60 min). In auto photography participants are asked to take photographs, choosing images and representations of themselves. They select and record the images they feel represent their own notions of cultural identity;</li> <li>➤ 3. Presentation of pictures (15 min). Participants present their pictures, using PowerPoint or posters. They explain what the chosen photographs mean to them and how they reflect their world views;</li> <li>➤ 4. Debriefing (5min).</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The trainer's task is to support the students during the activity, so be prepared to give examples or make suggestions that may help the trainees.</li> </ul>	
<p>▶ <b>Debriefing/reflecting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe the principles and the process of choosing the photographs and to find similarities and differences. Discuss how to modify or adapt the method to be more relevant in a classroom context.</li> </ul>	

## Debriefing/ Evaluation and assessment

The impact of the training module on the teachers' work will be measured by a focus group interview. Three questions for the interview:

- What have you learned during this module?
- Can we study world views, combining autobiography and auto photography?
- What are the limits of using auto ethnography in the classroom?

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## Appendix 1: Diversity of worldviews and world knowledge in the classroom. Basic Assumptions Document

### 1. Worldviews and world knowledge: a description

A worldview is a personal insight about reality, a life understanding, a complex of basic assumptions that orient the fundamental questions about the past, the present and the future, a mental framework, ways of understanding, lenses that may interfere between a person and a picture.

Worldviews are linked to cultures but they are not identical to them. Food, music, habits, traditions can express a world view but these cultural elements are only one of the ways that a world view is expressed.

Worldviews are linked to identities too, but they are broader than personal identities. Every person has multiple identities. Similar identities do not necessarily lead to the same worldview.

Nobody is born with a worldview. At early ages, the perception and knowledge of the world seem to be single, natural and undoubted, a result of a life as it is in the narrow surrounding area of one's birth. Worldviews are developed mostly through communication but also through reflection to the actions of those surrounding us. In this ambiguous process, it is the same possible to adopt views, as well as to develop opposing ones. Accordingly, worldviews can be stable throughout one's life, more so if they are "majority" ones. But they can also change when a person is confronted to situations, encounters and incidents, either by personal choice, or as an influence or response to lack of acceptance, prejudice and discrimination, factors that may lead to marginalization or generalization of single worldview elements<sup>1</sup>.

World knowledge, being wider than the facts one knows and the information he or she gets about the world, becomes an important aspect to the formation of worldviews and its evolution. World knowledge is a conscious but also an unconscious procedure that deals with elements that form answers to major questions like what the world is, how things function, how people are, and how they act and interrelate. Based on those assumptions, a worldview is an image, a representation of this knowledge, which can be in accordance or in contradiction to it, no matter how explicit this knowledge may be in one's mind.

Worldviews are inherited, transmitted and learned. Sciences, beliefs, religions, philosophies, but also, authorities, powers and persons, present full, clear or perfect worldviews. Nevertheless, contrary to any absoluteness, in our world, similar and diverse

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a French Black Muslim, can change or experience simultaneously his or her worldviews, feeling more French when in visiting in Africa, more Muslim when the hijab is banned from public schools, and more black when police performs routine racial profiling in the streets of France.

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worldviews coexist, interact, change, evolve, disappear, new ones appear. In this plurality of worldviews, it is essential to understand that our actions are also guided by values that often need to be traced and realized.

## 2. The impact of world views in society and school

The idea that all members of a community share a certain or a common worldview cannot be anymore applied to contemporary multicultural societies. Basic elements of one's life (as for example race, sex, nationality, religion, philosophical orientation, social and economic conditions) will orient one's multifaceted sense of "belonging" rather than a common worldview. People who identify themselves under a common "label" are not the same. They may have few or many differences in their worldviews.

Stability and certainty are not anymore and actually have never been core elements of human existence. The more we share our common life in the global village, the more we realize multiple diversities that interact in different ways.

Mobilization, of people, being one of the main characteristics of our era makes the coexistence of diversity easier. Big groups of people, willingly or unwillingly become travellers or immigrants, seeking for better or safer life conditions. The expansion of internet creates a totally new content worldwide, equating its context to earth dimensions. Data, ideas, news, opinions are transferred to any receiver in seconds through text, sound and picture. The past, the present and the future are fairly easily reachable from different viewpoints, by different ways. New communities that are created do not need any more a common ground, once the cyberspace has broadened the necessary known elements of meeting and living together.

This new way of interrelation gives new dimensions to identities, creates new ways of communicating both in real life and online, changes the possibilities, context and ways of learning. Some talk about the creation of new values, some think that this is a new way of expressing the existing ones.

There are people that fearing the uncertainty that this diversity causes, defensively divide worldviews in "ours" and "others", where the first are assumed to be the best, the single, the right or the only true. Others accept that diversity is richness in the world. Where the first accept their worldviews as the only possible and they eradicate the others, the second propose that the diversity of worldviews broaden the world knowledge.

No matter what everyone's perception is, the basic element of educational approach to worldviews and world knowledge is to serve a better understanding of the world in order to increase the chances for a better society. The openness that education aims to have, also involves the evolution of new things, views and ways of action.

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### 3. Is the diversity of worldviews part of the problem or part of the solution?

#### *World views, social cohesion and education*

“The vision of a world where human rights are respected and where democratic participation and the rule of law is guaranteed to all, aiming to a more caring society showing more solidarity, capable of abating the negative effects of individualism, marginalization and social exclusion.” (CoE, 2003, 18) has been the concern of the Council of Europe for many years. There is a lot of work that has been done, deepening the understanding of diversity, bringing different opinions theories and mutual understanding to a common way, presenting opportunities of educational cooperation, and creating educational tools suitable for a diversity of educational systems.

The above basic assumptions describe a much different approach to worldviews than the one practiced in most of the schools today. They portrait an education that opens knowledge windows to the whole world, that functions as a searching community, eager to explore and critically approach our common world in its micro and macro dimensions.

This is not a theory that can be added to the existing ones. It is a shift in educational practice that involves: educators performing new teaching methods suitable for the educational needs of each individual student; cooperation within the whole school and between school and the wider community; communicative approaches using all technological means that make it possible today.

#### *World views and educational responses in a changing world*

Worldviews have not been among the main concerns of educational work. The ideas that teaching staff presents a majority worldview to students that belong to a homogenous group, mainly characterized by age, were strong till lately. Furthermore, diversity of worldviews cannot be understood as a relevant factor to politics or education that aims to ally everyone behind a ruling mainstream worldview, an ordered “happiness” or a “correct” social order. That is to say, that even if it always existed at school communities, it was either not realized, or not considered important. It is mostly due to the diversity of school population -a rather new reality in many countries- that forced firstly schools to pay attention to the diversity of worldviews, often as a problem to be solved.

Worldviews cannot either be neglected or not respected at school. They play an important role in the whole educational process:

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At first, because school should be a safe place to educate future citizens in order to be able to live together in a peaceful and democratic society, where the right to be different is recognized. Schools should be a suitable place to practice critical thinking and negotiation as important skills, needed for a common consensus of living together in a polity.

Secondly, because different worldviews may give different context, dimension or importance to knowledge, nature and science, different meanings to coexistence, communication, relationships and personality, different content to life itself. Diverse worldviews create different educational needs.

The new need that is visible in education today is to trace and realize the values that it is essential to be respected in every human action. It is important to clarify that the existence of different worldviews does not make every worldview welcome because it is a part of a diversity to be celebrated. While different values can be expressed through different worldviews, there has to be a common consensus, a common base that can safeguard the respect to common values to be expressed through the diversity of worldviews, namely, the respect of Human Rights and the Rule of Law.

### *The role of educators*

There are certain knowledge, skills and attitudes that educators should practice in order to address those new needs in education. They need:

- To gain awareness and understanding of the diversity of worldviews.
- To feel secure for their personal worldviews in order to be open to the different ones.
- To realize that their behaviour at school (teaching, communicating, speaking, moving ways) is connected to their values.
- To acquire the distance needed in order to respect diversity.
- To be actively tolerant in order to ensure that no part of knowledge and no difference in views are excluded from their work.
- To realize that they are actors of their own fate and future, actors of societal change.

This can be done by replacing the traditional teaching that informs about the world with learner oriented methods that help young people to experience and negotiate in order to learn how to live together. This presupposes to select diverse worldview topics, examples and sources in all subjects, to connect topics to aspects of worldviews where appropriate, to adopt

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active and cooperative learning procedures, to provide diverse learning opportunities that are open and equally consider the various needs, interests, abilities and social backgrounds of the school community members.

Those elements are described as basic educational needs in every constitution and law that deals with education in the member states of the Council of Europe, no matter how different the school population or the educational systems are. It lies in the hands of teacher trainers and teachers to make it a feasible reality in their everyday work. This module is hoped to be one step towards it. This course intends to make one or two steps towards this aim.

## Appendix 2: HAND-OUT

**Auto ethnography** is a form of autobiographical personal narrative that explores the person's experience of life.

Theoretical frame (adapted from Blair, Jones, *Preparing for Student Teaching in a Pluralistic Classroom*).

The ability to self-reflect and honestly analyse personal autobiographies allows pre-service teachers to understand the importance of instruction that is consistent with the values and worldviews of their students. It is critical that student teachers realize that they do not really see through their eyes or hear through their ears, but through their beliefs.

The aim of the activity is to highlight events that may have shaped your world views and your professional perspective about teaching.

1. Please name 3-5 events of your personal life that have shaped your world view.
2. Please think about how world views influence your everyday practice as a teacher? Write down how those world views which are reflected in your philosophy of teaching.

Event that has shaped your worldview	Principle in your philosophy of teaching

3. Pair up with another student and share your thoughts. Consider the similarities and differences between your perspective and his or hers.



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## Appendix 3:

The goal of the following questions is to help students to think about their culture, the effect of their culture on their personal and professional development and their present cultural identity and worldview.

### 1. Description of assignment:

Think about and construct a personal history of your beliefs, assumptions and values.

Identify the attitudes and values of parents/grandparents or other significant persons in your life.

Describe the impact of those attitudes and values to your personal growth.

- What are the relationships between the schools you attended and your experiences with different worldviews and diversity?

You could describe the composition of the elementary and secondary schools you attended, including people with special needs, socioeconomic status, linguistic, religious, academic or gender diversity.

- Identify significant positive and negative experiences of teacher role models in elementary and secondary schools, including the ethnicity of teachers.
- Describe your academic, social and extracurricular school experiences, including issues of diversity in grouping, accomplishments, and failures.
- Identify the nature of the community where you lived when you attended elementary and secondary schools.
- Identify the nature of communities where you have participated in field based experiences.
- Identify personal experiences you have had with persons from other cultural groups.

2. Pair up with another student and share your cultural life story. Consider the similarities and differences between your perspective and his or hers. Explore and discuss what you see as some implications of these beliefs for your worldviews and for instruction in a diverse classroom.