

Introduction

Not only the public school, but heritage language education (HLT) as well, is pursuing the goal of supporting all students in the development of their identity. The development of one's own identity and the confrontation with it require a life-long intriguing dialog of the individual with self and the environment. In a multicultural and multilingual context, the students are especially challenged in light of the plurality of living worlds, the socio-economic disparities and conditions, and the different value concepts, when it comes to asserting their identities and to experiencing themselves as self-effective. In doing so, HLT students can neither shirk away from the conflict with their status as minorities and their cultural origin, nor can they deny their cultural characteristics. In the constant negotiation processes between themselves and their living world, they depend on the one hand on social recognition and, on the other, on spaces and places of security and identification, where they can discuss experiences of exclusion and assure each other of their identity.

HLT can help the students to reflect on and come to terms with their varied experiences. It can thereby make an important contribution in terms of developing openness and tolerance in dealing with cultural diversity in school and in society. If this process is successful, the students will be supported in gaining experience with self-efficacy and solidarity and to discovering their personal strengths and abilities. In doing so, they learn to perceive and appreciate their ethnic and multilingual competences and potentials as part of their (bi)cultural identity. In considering their diverse affinities and cultural backgrounds, they also discover their uniqueness and individuality. Based on their commonalities and differences within the group, they learn to perceive their transnational affiliation as a matter of course within the globalized world society. At the same time, this recognition and appreciation of the identities of all students with their diverse social and cultural personality traits supports living and learning together in class.

The following seven teaching suggestions contribute to furthering the perceptual competence, reflection competence and competence to act within the framework of HLT. The identity experiences, resources and potentials of the students themselves serve as a constant starting point. A primary role, of course, is assumed by the teachers with their personal and foreign experiences, which serve as important resource in the preparation and delivery of classroom instruction.

Which partial competences are prioritized in which unit, is evident from the overview at the end of the book. The assignments to classes and levels are broadly defined; most of the suggestions can also be implemented on the upper or lower level with only minor modifications.