Preface

Since the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957 and with the growth of the European Economic Community, advocates have sought to create a European identity that includes all Europeans. However, differences in cultures, languages, and history make this task a difficult one. Following Welsch’s (1999) concept of “multiculturality,” it could be said that the European Union is following a multicultural scenario where multiple cultures having to coexist inevitably creates problems that need to be addressed. The solution lies instead in changing the idea that cultures are isolated and discrete entities, encouraging better coexistence and cooperation, overcoming boundaries, and facilitating mixing of cultures in a multiculturalism that may be better described as “interculturality” or “transculturality.”

Several projects of the European Union and over the world were born under these premises (García-Peña, García-Peña, et al., 2012a), for example, the MIH (Multicultural Interdisciplinary Handbook) Project, led by the GRIAL Research Group (http://grial.usal.es) at the University of Salamanca (Spain), which aims to facilitate the creation of a European identity by designing digital educational content in Geography and History from a multicultural point of view (García-Peña, García-Peña, et al., 2011), and the ELVIN (European Languages Virtual Network) project aimed at creating an informal social network to support and facilitate language training inside a professional context with a cross-crossing cultural interchange among different countries. Its associated social environment is called MyElvin, which allows a very interesting combination of formal and informal learning activities (García-Peña, García-Peña, et al., 2012b).

Regarding the MIH project and the work done in the scope of this consortium, this book is born with the aim of exploring the multidisciplinarity, interculturality, and transculturality in education. It illustrates powerful multidisciplinary approaches to education by highlighting successful cases based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) all around the world.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

In a few words, the idea behind this book is that in the current society, multiculturalism is a reality. This fact should be reflected in educational contexts. Moreover, multiculturality and interculturality are key factors to empowering worldwide learning spaces intending to tackle five dimensions from which multiculturality and interculturality may be exploited and developed: Social Frame, Teaching, CLIL, Diversity, and Management.

Multiculturalism in Technology-Based Education is addressed to any scholar, technician, academic, or manager that could play a role in the field of education and be interested in how a multicultural/intercultural approach or reality would be able to be applied in learning processes. It is difficult to deter-
mine a specific audience because any field and any professional role could be potentially interested on multiculturality and interculturality issues regarding the above-mentioned dimensions, with applications to institutions, schools, universities, enterprises, associations, etc.

The book is organized into fourteen chapters. These chapters are organized in three main sections. The first section is devoted to introducing the MIH project and outcomes (Chapters 1-3). The second one is related to multiculturality and interculturality in social and diversity issues (Chapters 4-8). Finally, the third section gathers a collection of different cases and experiences about multiculturalism, interculturality, and transculturality (Chapters 9-14). A brief description of each of the chapters follows.

In Chapter 1, Zangrando et al. introduce the European Union MIH project (Multicultural Interdisciplinary Handbook: Tools for Learning History and Geography in a Multicultural Perspective). This is a Comenius Multilateral Project funded with support from the European Commission that was developed from 2009 to 2011. From the MIH perspective, the authors not only present the aims and outcomes of the project, but they also present the philosophy of multiculturality and interculturality that has been used in the scope of this study.

Chapter 2, by Anna Consonni, explores the use of the digital modules, which were produced as MIH outcomes, in Secondary Schools classrooms under a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach.

Following with the MIH related papers, García Holgado et al. present the more important reference technological outcome for this project, the learning object model, which has been used to create the set of multicultural educational materials in the scope of European History and Geography. The chapter also introduces the technological framework for multicultural learning object production.

Chapter 4 presents data on the educational reality of Neuquen (an Argentine province with a high rate of aboriginal people, Mapuche) and the use of ICTs in schools, based on the opinion of students, teachers, and school managers. It also analyzes the performance of students and its relation to the use of technological tools. This chapter has been authored by Caldas and García-Valcárcel.

In Chapter 5, Ovide presents the reality of the ICT influence regarding the expansion of the linguistic and cultural domains of endangered languages. These minority languages have been typical excluded from traditional media, having an even smaller presence in the larger world, but at the same time, technology enables and offers a great opportunity for these languages to have a voice and a presence in a way that would not have been possible before. The chapter shows a case study with indigenous peoples from the Chaco province (Argentina).

In chapter 6, Sánchez et al. deal with the gender violence issues of urban adult indigenous women, especially the case of Chilean Aymara women. The chapter deals with the description of conditions and ways of life of the Aymara ethnic group, including socio-demographic, economic, and public health indicators that may be related to these women’s perceptions concerning their situation in view of the intrafamiliar violence phenomenon.

Chapter 7, by Pavlis-Korres and García-Barriocanal, is also related to diversity and social exclusion issues, but this time regarding the Roma people in Greece. Specifically, the chapter introduces a framework (ESG Framework) for the e-education of educators of special groups based on and aiming to improve their compatibility with their learners.

In chapter 8, García Carrasco et al. introduce an objective concept of culture. The authors catalogue, from a pedagogical point of view, large categories of facts that identify culture. The idealistic perspective of culture is confronted with the perspective of real individuals. This way, when the real subjects become the point of view, the concept of inclusion has to be inevitably taken into consideration. Inclusion, in the context of this case study, involves not just individuals with handicaps, but also minority cultures with a faint voice.
Chapter 9, by Serradell-López et al., is devoted to introducing how cultural dimensions are related to higher education. In the highly competitive and global environment of universities, traditional elements, such as geographic location are less important in favor of other more intangible factors, such as the image of universities, prestige, ability of adaptation to the training needs of people, and the eLearning factor. In order to fulfill their aims, the authors present two culture models as main references: the Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and The Globe Project.

In chapter 10, Colomo-Palacios et al. deal with global software development teams’ communication and coordination problems, where cultural diversity and cross-cultural management are significant issues. The authors argue that e-Mentoring dramatically reduces the learning curve for novice human resources in this kind of team. This chapter introduces key success factors to enable e-Mentoring as a tool to develop a common culture in global software development scenarios.

Chapter 11 presents results of the analysis of behavior of students, showing the influence of gender and cultural background in individual and group performance, where students’ teamwork is analyzed while developing a case study supported by the use of technology. The analysis of these experiences shows a positive effect on students’ perception of teamwork and collaboration in multicultural environments. This chapter is authored by Luis Fernández-Sanz.

In chapter 12, Josh McCarthy presents an interesting Facebook-based experience devoted to helping immerse international students into Australian university culture at a first year level by furthering the development of academic and social relationships among peers. It is interesting to emphasize the engaging factor of the social networks and especially of Facebook to the success of this experience.

Chapter 13, by Borham et al., presents a case study of the use of technologies, and in particular the blog, in a Spanish Secondary School classroom in order to promote the teaching of values, such as solidarity or tolerance. The aim was to enhance coexistence in increasingly diverse and multicultural classrooms in which the acknowledgement and development of these values prove essential for a successful coexistence.

In the last chapter, Venus Olla presents a case study of an educator utilizing student voice and technology in the teaching and learning of Citizenship Education into a K-12 classroom context. The case study demonstrates how starting student learning from the perspectives of the multicultural backgrounds of the students and using technology can greatly enhance the learning experiences of the students in the scope of the above-mentioned subject.

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**REFERENCES**

