

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to study the reception of girls of foreign origin in the Icelandic compulsory school, their education and feelings. The participants were four girls, each from a different country of birth. They arrived in Iceland at different age, but were all teenagers when the research was conducted.

The data was gathered by in-depth interviews with each of the girls. The research questions focused on the girls' perception of how they were received in school, their hopes regarding their education and how they perceived other people's expectations towards themselves. How their studies and teaching was organised, as well as how they felt as a result of their experience.

It is noticeable that none of the girls received education in their native language, which is a prerequisite for further education and personal development and the parents tool in socialisation of their children. The native language also includes cultural values, whereby elder generations pass on experience to the youth. The ties bound by language and culture should not be broken. Thus, cultural background of students, such as language, customs and religion, must be taken into account.

The girls' Icelandic instruction aimed at preparing them for sitting in classes with icelandic students after a given period of time, however it varied greatly how fluent speakers they had become, before they had to deal with studies in class with local children. All further education was based upon their icelandic skills. Training in icelandic as a second language should be increased, up to the point where sufficient skills have been acquired to study in a general class on equal footing with local peers.

The girls matured and their identity changed positively during the research and influenced their adaption process greatly. Each girl's adjustment and social integration was unique, ranging from integration to marginalisation. It is necessary to strife for the adaption of various groups in order to encourage equality of all individuals in society.