

What we have here is an adaptation of an article that was published in *The Economist* in September 2008. It deals with the education of migrant children, which is an issue that affects many countries and many stakeholders in the field of education. Articles are usually not signed in this big weekly magazine, so we do not know the identity of the author.

The title of our article is *Huddled Classes*. It is accompanied by a sub-heading: *How migrants fare in school, and what schools can learn from them*. The main title is an allusion to a well-known poem by Emma Lazarus, to be found on a plaque¹ inside the Statue of Liberty in New York. We are looking not at the masses but at classes but the reference is clearly to the theme of immigration and historically, to migration to the USA. The sub-heading suggests that we can learn from how migrant children do in school.

The text can be divided into four parts. Let's take a look at part one. The first paragraph is about how teachers try to find an answer as to why a particular lesson doesn't work. If it is neither the subject nor the pedagogy, then the reason could lie with the pupils themselves. We can reformulate what we read in part one as: some children may be harder to teach than others because they are not pushed as hard by their parents for cultural reasons; some schools may not be fully-equipped to provide children with differentiated teaching methods. Of course, there must be other reasons why some children are harder to teach than others. This is just a selection as the three dots in brackets suggest (line 6).

In part two, the journalist reminds us that the OECD programme PISA measured results from 50 countries in 2006. In this article, though, we are told that some of the data has been sorted according to the countries of origin of children and their parents. Four countries can be used for drawing conclusions about the quality of schools in the countries where people from them choose to migrate to. These 4 countries are Turkey, China, the former Soviet-Union and ex-Yugoslavia.

Moving on to part three, we get down to the nitty-gritty: immigrant students do not do as well as locals. Why? Because they are more often than not "the children of poor, ill-educated parents and do not speak the local language" (l.16-17). An important fact seems to be that two students from the same country will do differently according to where they **settle**. Indeed, some countries "**track**" pupils, i.e. put them into different groups according to their ability, with an aim to teaching them separately. An example of how successful tracking can be is given in part four with the case of Hong-Kong.

¹The famous sonnet written by Emma Lazarus in 1883. A bronze plaque, dedicated in memory of Emma Lazarus' contribution to the completion of the Statue's pedestal, has been affixed to the inner walls of the pedestal since the early 1900's. This plaque, currently located in the Statue of Liberty exhibit, has come to symbolize the statue's universal message of hope and freedom for immigrants coming to America and people seeking freedom around the world".
http://www.statueofliberty.org/default_sol.htm

In the twenty-first century, migration seems to be a crucial issue. Ban Ki-Moon, in his opening address to the Third Global Forum on Migration and Development, which was held in Athens in November 2009, stresses the fact that countries need to work together, united in purpose and in action, since the situation is urgent. There have never before been so many migrants at any one time: 214 million people live outside their country of birth.

How are countries to cope with the influx of people? How must teachers be trained to cater for the needs of migrant children? I know that in France, there are special classes such as CLIN and CLA that are designed to help migrant children particularly if they speak no French. The language barrier is obviously a key issue for children who have just arrived in a new place.

Personally, I don't think tracking can be enough. It isn't just a matter of level but of competence in the language too. That's why I think that these students need to have a gradual induction into school life and learning.

To sum things up, I would like to go back to the title: classes, i.e. school, provide migrants with hope, even if they are huddled, which means overcrowded. Successful teaching of migrants will have to take into account that these students have special needs and may need more time than others or different teaching methods.