This book results from an international research project, in which eight researchers from seven different countries were involved. The data for the project were collected in the course of May 2001. All researchers are members of CULTNET, a network of researchers of interculture in foreign language education (http://millennium.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/cultnet). Lies Sercu (K.U.Leuven, Belgium) initiated and coordinated the project. The other project partners were Ewa Bandura (Jagiellonian University, Poland), Paloma Castro (University of Valladolid, Spain), Leah Davcheva (The British Council, Bulgaria), Chryssa Laskaridou (Directorate for primary education in Western Thessaloniki, Greece), Ulla Lundgren (Jönköping University, Sweden), María del Carmen Méndez García (University of Jaén, Spain) and Phyllis Ryan (UNAM: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México).

The cooperation has been a stimulating and exciting experience for all of us. The book presented here is much more than a collection of individual papers. Though the different chapters in which we present our research results have been jointly written by two researchers only, they could not have been produced without the preparatory work of all eight researchers involved in the project. In the first stage of the project, each researcher collected the data on which these research results are based in her own country and provided a description of these data. These per country descriptions served as the basis for writing the cross-country research reports presented here.

We want to express our gratitude to a number of people here. First of all, we want to thank Mike Byram, who started CULTNET and who continues to be a source of inspiration for many of us. We are grateful for his comments at intermediate stages in the research process.

We are much obliged to Jan De Baere, too, who helped us transform a paper questionnaire into a web-based questionnaire, and who processed the data for us.

We also want to thank the editors of the series in which this volume is published, Alison Phipps and Mike Byram, for their valuable feedback.
and comments. We also want to thank the editorial staff at Multilingual Matters for their professionalism and support.

Finally, our warmest thanks are due to the many others, who do not appear as ‘authors’, but without whom the book and the project would not have been possible: to the teachers who volunteered to take part in the project. We hope we have done justice to their views.

Lies Sercu
Leuven, 1 May 2004