

NECE – Networking European Citizenship Education

Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 23 – 26 September, 2004

Workshop V: Education for Sustainability and Intercultural Learning (projects)

Referees:

Marian de la Caba University of Bask County, Spain

Jenny Philpott/Bernie Flanagan Institute for Citizenship York, United Kindom

Dirk Lange/Dan Daatland, Network Migration and Intercultural Relations Germany, Norway

Concepción Naval/Arantzazu Martínez-Odría/Kristin Sverdrup, University of Navarra, Spain

Murray Print, University of Sydney, Australia

Sulev Valdmaa, Civic Education Centre, Estonia

Chair: Susanne Ulrich. Center for Applied Polity Research, Germany

Reporter: Arantzazu Martínez-Odría, University of Navarra, Spain

After a brief introduction to the workshop, we reflected about the meaning and connotations of the term “Intercultural education” in small working groups, concluding that different meanings and understandings are possible for the concept. The power of language was when each participant in the group had the possibility of expressing its feelings in her or his own language.

1. Marian de la Caba. Professor, Basque County University (Spain)

She presented her research work on the analysis of how integrated textbooks of social science, natural science and technology for primary school children deal with the issues of education for democratic citizenship.

Using a quantitative analysis, the following conclusions have been reached in her research:

- a. While most of the books provide knowledge, only a few focus on active participation and direct involvement of the students.
- b. A scarce attention is paid to the concept of human rights.
- c. Activities performed to achieve goals are individual, and not group-based.

Considering the relevant role textbooks pay on the teaching process, these aspects are important to be considered for further improvement initiatives.

2. Jenny Philpott and Bernie Flanagan. York Local Education Authority (UK)

They have shared a citizenship education proposal with the group, which is based on the idea of giving young people the opportunity of having their say in issues that directly affect them. This citizenship proposal considers that the curriculum should attend knowledge and understanding, but also skills enquiry, communication and participation. This integral approach of education can't be achieved only by considering the role of the school. So, youth services, government departments and NGOs have also a lot to say.

A practical example of this is a model which includes “environmental citizenship project” that enables schools from across Yorkshire to think about and influence on sustainable development in their communities.

For doing that, school students from an action group, investigate an environmental issue, produce an action plan and persuade local government and business to take action. This is an example of an active, responsible and influential role of the students in their communities.

For further and deeper development of citizenship education, it is necessary to develop a stronger school-community partnership, a whole school approach and more resources.

3. Dirk Lange and Dan D. Daalang. Migration and Intercultural Relations, Comenius 3 Network (Germany and Norway)

After defining what “intercultural relation” means, the experts have reflected on how can education contribute to make people competent on dealing with intercultural situations. For dealing with this issue, it is important to promote a collaborative work between teachers, local schools, teacher training programs and research institutions.

The network Comenius 3 here presented, started out as a collaborating group of 20-25 institutions, and now it has grown to more than 120, located in 10 countries. Its aim is to enhance migration studies for understanding today's growing migration to European countries, without forgetting its historical past, using empathy in its teaching, and setting up collaborative groups within schools, colleges, educational authorities and research.

A practical example is a new initiative called “Umbrella project”, that as its own name says, covers different realities and activities. Through this project an evaluation of existent materials on migration is pretended, considering the historical perspective implied.

For an integral intercultural education approach, it is necessary to attend a wide range of contexts, creating learning environments and not focusing in formal education only

4.. Concepción Naval/Arantzazu Martínez-Odría/Kristin Sverdrup. University of Navarra (Spain) and Spanish Association of Volunteer Effort.

The situation of civic education in Spain has been explained by Concepción Naval, researcher at Navarra University. The Spanish approach has been achieved through a cross-curricular option. However, citizenship education should be attended in collaboration with other educative agents and contexts, as the family, local governments or NGOs. The school cannot be the only responsible of the citizenship education. There is also a lack of evaluation, which in a whole, makes the integral education of the students in the Spanish education system still a weak point.

A practical way of contributing to citizenship education is the Service Learning, an American initiative that has been promoted by the Spanish Association of Volunteer Effort in Spain. Service Learning is an active methodology of teaching and learning, that promotes the partnership between the school and the community, in order to make the students an active part of their own learning process, as well as part of the solution of their communities' needs. This initiative is being implemented in Spain since 2002, and the recent creation of ESLA (European Service Learning Association) opens the efforts to the European perspective, where other similar initiatives are being promoted.

5. Murray Print. Centre for Research and Teaching Civics, University of Sydney (Australia).

Since the 90s, a renewal in the interest of citizenship education is perceived in Australia. The expert has shared the main points and conclusions of an integrated citizenship education project that started in 1994 and concluded in 2004. The target groups for this projects have been educational authorities, civic education organisations, university students, government and research organisations, and the pedagogical orientation adopted has been applied research and participative methodology.

Murray presented a practical example, the “Civics and Citizenship Benchmarking Project”, that addresses the need of citizenship education of the students, by providing a detailed knowledge base in the form of benchmarks of student achievement at the end of Years 6, 10 and 12. Each benchmark provides statements of the areas of study that students should have access to, so as to achieve the benchmark statements and supplies the indicators of successful performance that can be identified in students' work.

The main problems experienced in Australia are the finding of a balance between content knowledge, process skills and attitudes, the absence of a specific school subject to relate to and gaining consensus.

6. Sulev Valdmaa. Jaan Tonisson Institute (Estonia).

Citizenship education is a compulsory part of the Estonian National Curriculum, and is considered an integrated area for all the subjects throughout all the years. Its objectives are, among others, to educate knowledgeable, responsible and skilful members of society, with a all-humanistic and practical dimension. Besides the official Civics course in public schools, Citizenship education is exercised by some NGOs.

In the last ten years of existence of Citizenship Education in Estonia, a clear evolution is perceived, actually advancing towards a more active and participative implication of the students. Sulev Valdmaa is an active part of Jaan Tonisson Institute, an Estonian NGO founded straight after the collapse of communism in Estonia in 1992. This organisation is involved in the curriculum development and textbook writing, offering assistance to compulsory schools' teachers of History and Civics, and also working directly with students at the schools, teacher-trainers, local government and administrators of education.

This NGO is the only centre in Estonia specialised on promoting citizenship education to the compulsory schools and more widely.

After all this experts' panels, 2 minutes were given to a participant of AFS, to explain the exchange cultural program which is a network for democratic partners of different countries who spend one year living in another country, with another family and attending classes in another school.

WORKING GROUPS

After time for discussion, we reflected in small working groups, where we wrote down 3 wishes related to "An European network of activists in citizenship Education". The wishes by the different groups were the following:

- 1) A greater motivation for European conscience, to be part of a common project.
- 2) Trust in one another.
- 3) A just and free society, where equal rights exist for everybody.
- 4) One all European pilot project, the north and the south.
- 5) Emphasis on the implementation of active projects.
- 6) More funding, structures,
- 7) Flexible governments, means for change and less bureaucracy.
- 8) Adults and children network to define needs and share creative ideas.