

NECE – Networking European Citizenship Education

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

Workshop III: Competences in the Media and Information Society

Referees:

Annegret Ehman, www.lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de, Germany

Elfi Bendikat, Institute for Media and Education, Germany

Peter Sauer, Circom Regional – European Association of Regional Televisions, Germany

Pilar Rodriguez and Elena Garcia, Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain

Chair:

Thorsten Schilling, Federal Agency of Civic Education, Germany

Reporter: Andreas Elter, Germany

Workshop III was mainly project oriented. After the introduction by Mr. Schilling, who described the field of multimedia within the Federal Agency of Civic Education, the project "Lernen aus der Geschichte.de" was presented by Annegret Ehman. She first discussed the historical and political situation in which civic education developed in Germany after World War II. The memories and lessons of the Nazi Era still play an important role in German Civic Education. For example her project "Lernen aus der Geschichte" was established 1995, fifty years after the end of the war. At this time fears had risen in Europe and the United States that Germans might forget about Hitler's regime and its consequences. At the same time the international community did not know well that in Germany this period of history has been an integral part of civic education since decades. So her project documents how and why German school history and civic courses as well as others treat this chapter of history. A CD presents the different projects from primary and secondary schools, commercial schools, clubs etc. It shows the great variety of approaches. It is a collection of best practice examples in the German States since 1990. Since 2003 the website is accessible in four European languages. It provides several links, a search in archives and the possibility to contribute. Under "post your project" teachers and others are invited to publish their project online. Since 2001 the numbers of website users have risen from 130.000 to 140.000 per month.

The second speaker, Ms. Elfi Bendikat, presents her project, called "Media and ethical European civil society". It aims mainly at the multipliers, that means teachers in the field of adult civic education. It works interdisciplinary. Ms. Bendikat pointed out that it is important that civic education in Germany also focuses on the experiences of the people of the former GDR. "As a teacher of civic education you should keep in mind the transformation process those people have made during the last 15 years and especially before", says Bendikat. Her project therefore provides a large selection of media material from the GDR. Within the field of ethnical education her organisation works together with the "Katholische Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft". Their main goal is to encourage civic pluralism and the willingness for dialogue. In order to develop multiperspectivity and tolerance as one major ethic value of civic society, as Ms. Bendikat pointed out, it is necessary to know diversity and learn to recognise it. As an example for that she presented two photographs of "multicultural scenes" in France. At this point it was discussed how different knowledge of the meaning of images and symbols and of course your own background and experiences are directing your perception. There were different interpretations of the same picture within the group. But all agree that media literacy is crucial to civic education.

This short discussion was followed by the presentation of "networking Europe" by Mr. Sauer from the Bavarian Television (BR). This project is a European TV-exchange program of more than 370 TV-stations. The contributors produce different TV-magazine features at a length of three up to five minutes. 99 per-

cent of them, according to Mr. Sauer, deal with current issues concerning the European Union or Europe. Everybody can download the program in the internet for non-commercial use. This exchange program is not designed for the ordinary viewer via internet but for the contributing stations themselves. They use the programs for commercial interests and broadcast them in their countries. Nevertheless the program is also, but not exclusively, financed by the European Commission.

The last of the presentations dealt with the ENSENADA project at the university of Madrid. Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Garcia explained that their project has the main goal to develop a set of tools to help in the creation and execution of adaptive courses accessible through the Internet. To validate the effectiveness of these tools, a course on Civic Education will be developed, addressed at secondary education students, undergraduate students or any user accessing the course from other environments.

The main factor of the ENSENADA project is the interdisciplinary approach as within this program experts from political and computer science work together. As it was pointed out by both speakers the new media provides a wide range of interactive possibilities and self-guided education.

Now the tools will be extended and modified in four directions:

- a) by adding new authoring tools to make the development of courses by designers easier
- b) by including a tutor role in the teaching system
- c) by creating collaboration mechanisms among students and their tutors and
- d) by allowing new types of multimedia materials to be included and presented to the students. The ENSENADA-project is still in progress.

In the final discussion the question was raised: Who should be responsible for civic education: the state or non governmental organisations? It was mentioned that you have to differ between state and the public. One participant explained that NGOs often are not really NGOs, as they depend on public money or are financed by ministries which outsource the field of civic education. Another contributor said, that although it is desirable to achieve independence of political parties and governments, civic education should be thought in schools - and schools normally are state run. After all the group agreed that civic education should be supported by the state and public institutions but should not be run exclusively by them. At the end of the session the group collected goals and demands for the future of civic education. Also the main challenges were discussed.

The main goals and demands are:

- train practical competence of media use
- provide resources and technical equipment for internet and multimedia use
- free and legal software must be available for every citizen
- establish networks for open software
- secure open access to contents
- build networks of trusts
- give users orientation in the world wide web
- guaranty a quality standard of civic education in Europe

And the main challenges according to the group discussion are:

- different languages and the problem of translations
- the problem that the "universal language" english may be a social dividing line for those who are not able to speak it
- the different methods and didactics of teaching and learning civic education
- the different connotations in "civic education" in different countries, for example in the former communist ruled states
- the non-existence of media literacy
- the challenge of teaching media literacy
- gender, class and age specific differences for the use of multimedia-offers