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*An Experience of “Human Rights and Citizenship Education” and In-Service Teacher Training*

*Fernando José Sadio Ramos*

*Politécnico de Coimbra, Escola Superior de Educação  
Grupo de Investigação HUM-742 DEDiCA – Universidade de Granada*

*Unidade de Investigação LIF – Universidade de Coimbra*

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- Training programme on Human Rights and Citizenship Education which we have developed to take place at In-Service Teacher Training Courses
- The programme occurs in the more general context of an ongoing Human Rights and Citizenship Education project between the Polytechnic of Coimbra, School of Education, our Research Group HUM-742 DEDiCA at the University of Granada and the Council of Europe (particularly, the European Youth Centre Budapest).
- In-service teacher training is an important component of this project, which seeks excellence and high-quality in both teaching and training.
- The use of non-formal education perspectives and methodologies is a distinctive feature of this experience and of the project.

*Keywords - teacher training; human rights and citizenship education; non-formal education*

## INTRODUCTION (1/2)

- The Training Courses' Programme corresponds to a training perspective that we have defined to be applicable to different demands of In-Service Training programme.
- The programme is driven by the need for Teachers who are prepared to impart Citizenship Education, an important transversal curricular element in the Portuguese Educational System).
- The specific conditions of the country's History, bearing in mind its subjection to a long dictatorship and the implementation of a democratic regime, are on the basis of the importance given to the citizenship's issues in school curricula.

## INTRODUCTION (2/2)

- A transversal curricular component means that all curricular subjects should focus on Citizenship, corresponding to the importance given to the students' personal and social development.
- In this context, every Teacher has to be prepared to conduct this practice, not only as the Teacher of a specific subject or equivalent curricular area, but also as someone who is able to focus the subjects on their Citizenship and Human Rights aspects and implications.
- Our course comes in line with a considerable work on this field of teacher training performed by our institution since its more recent foundation in 1987.

## CONTEXT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME MAIN IMPLEMENTATION (1/2)

- The Training Programme usually took place in some specific circumstances.
- The courses were, in general, prepared and performed by us as sole trainer.
- An important dimension of In-Service Teacher Training is ensured by Teacher Training Centres (associations of schools established in order to perform this task), but also at ESEC.
- In our case, most of our training activity took place at a Centre situated in Terras de Basto and at ESEC.
- Each edition of the course was performed in one school year, and an associated school was the venue for the training.



## CONTEXT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME MAIN IMPLEMENTATION (2/2)

- Portuguese teachers need the training for two main purposes:
  - a) Acquiring more competencies for their teaching activity;
  - b) Collecting elements/ acquiring academic qualifications for their CVs and to progress in their careers.
- Therefore, the training sessions are scheduled when their enrolment takes place (by October/November of each school year) and lasts for seven weekly sessions, interrupted by school holidays and other school commitments, which means that the training usually starts effectively in February and finishes by May.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING COURSES (1/2)

- Main aim of the training programme: to disseminate Human Rights and Citizenship Education in the Council of Europe's perspective on this kind of education, due to our mutual cooperation.
- Together with this aim is the dissemination of *Compass. The Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People* (edited by the Council of Europe, in 2002, and which has been translated into many languages over the years; Brander, Keen, Lemineur, 2002).
- Also to disseminate non-formal education methodologies.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING COURSES (2/2)

- The Training Programme was defined to attain the following objectives:
  1. To reflect on the importance of Human Rights and Citizenship Education in contemporary World;
  2. To relate Human Rights' issues with the personal and social development of the educational agents required by the Portuguese Educational Act (LBSE, 1986);
  3. To develop the trainees' knowledge, skills and attitudes with regards to Human Rights and Citizenship Education concepts and activities;
  4. To put various strategies and activities of non-formal education connected with Human Rights and Citizenship Education into practice;
  5. To familiarise the participants with *Compass*' perspectives and activities.



## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (1/7)

- Implementation of the courses – basic methodological presupposition about the relevance of the Teacher's person for the pedagogical relationship.
- From the start we assume the relational and intersubjective essence of the pedagogical act, of which the Teachers' *person* is an important and decisive element, with the necessary implications in terms of his/her ethical and deontological development).
- In the methodological procedures adopted in the training, we aim at placing the trainees in a training situation similar to the pedagogical situation in its activities, contents and procedures.
- The idea is to make them go through similar experiences as the students when learning these issues.
- The similarity was achieved by doing the same activities, when possible, and dealing with the same themes they might use when working with the students in future teaching situations (adapting to the age and teaching level of the students).

## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (2/7)

- With that procedure, it is possible:
  - a) To produce an empathic understanding of the students' experiences when dealing with these (adapted) issues and activities;
  - b) To use those personal experiences to raise a transformative conscience of the person of the teacher by allowing circumstances in which they are faced with the essence of value education, as well as of education as value conveyer, and reflect upon it.
- This personal transformation of the trainees' person may be of importance for future pedagogical practice on this subject's issues and on the teaching act in general (the main idea of non-formal education of intervening on the personal and social development of the trainees).

## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (3/7)

- The methodology used includes several procedures, such as:
  - 1. Group reading and discussion of texts;
  - 2. Brief theoretical explanations;
  - 3. Practical group activities, led above all by the teacher trainees, based on *meaningful, cooperative and participative learning*.
- These activities are conducted on the premise that the *group* is the real *learning subject* and the systematic use of *group discussion* and *reflection* is promoted.
- Beyond the face-to-face hours (25), the trainees have a further 25 non-classroom hours of written work and prepare materials and activities to apply in the training sessions and with their students.

## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (4/7)

- The Programme of the Courses includes the following work programme that was defined to achieve the previous objectives:
- 1. Brief overview of Human Rights and Citizenship Education in Europe and its current challenges. Human Rights and Citizenship Education as a prominent concern of contemporary society;
- 2. Analysis of the skills and values of trainers committed to Human Rights and Citizenship Education;
- 3. Practical activities of group dynamics to promote and develop attitudes and skills connected with Human Rights and Citizenship Education and included in *Compass*.

## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (5/7)

- Practical activities to promote democratic values and Human Rights are implemented accompanied of the theoretical treatment of the programmed subjects.
- Examples:
  - 1. All equal – All different (on Racism and Xenophobia);
  - 2. Ashique's Story (on Child Labour);
  - 3. Different wages (on Discrimination at Work);
  - 4. Do we have alternatives? (On Bullying);
  - 5. Domestic affairs (On Domestic Violence);
  - 6. Electioneering (On Representative Democracy);
  - 7. Let every voice be heard (On Democracy at School);
  - 8. Path to Equality-land (On Gender Equality).



## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (6/7)

- The referred activities address the following issues of contemporary society:
  - 1) Democratic citizenship
  - 2) Globalisation
  - 3) Racism and discrimination
  - 4) Interculturalism
  - 5) Child labour
  - 6) Youth aggression and bullying
  - 7) Domestic violence
  - 8) Violence in general.
- Based on them, the Trainees put together a portfolio on their themes, which includes several materials susceptible of being used in future teaching of Citizenship and Human Rights (information, photographs, videos, etc). Other activities and subjects are possible, beyond the present enumeration.

## METHODOLOGY, PROGRAMME, INSTRUMENTS (7/7)

- The following results are usually obtained from the training:
  - 1. Activities led by the trainees;
  - 2. Production of portfolios on the subjects of these activities;
  - 3. Other products resulting from the implementation of the Human Rights and Citizenship Education activities (photographs, videos, paintings,...).
- Main training tool: *Compass*, according with the aim of the training, in line with the ongoing cooperation between ESEC and the COE.
- Other instruments are also used, such as an article on Citizenship Education written by the author of this article, and a selection of texts for encouraging group discussions on the essence of education, democratic citizenship and Human Rights.

## CONCLUSION (1/3)

- Very positive results in what concerns the Trainees learning.
- Some critical points to highlight:
  - 1) It should be referred that the training is but a start of an ideally much longer process to be accomplished with the Trainees whom take part in it. 25 hours are undoubtedly insufficient to produce a proficient competency of the Trainees in the subject of Human Rights and Citizenship Education methodologies, processes and contents.
- It becomes possible with this specific training to raise the trainees' awareness to the issues involved and to share with them some main features on this kind of education.
- There should be, therefore, a continuous training process with the same participating group, but the conditions faced by In-service Teacher Training in Portugal can be difficult at times.

## CONCLUSION (2/3)

- 2) From our observation, we have identified some aspects in our trainees that must be dealt with in a second round of training, and to overcome, that is to say, the centering of the educative process around the teacher (teachers used to teach in a traditional perspective centering the educational act on the teacher and leaving little/ no initiative to the student). This is absolutely inconvenient and useless in this kind of education.
- 3) Another aspect that has to be intervened on concerns the shortage of teachers' competencies and resources by systematically using group-dynamic techniques and activities. This should be the target of a second training intervention, as well as the conception, production and use of student-adapted pedagogical materials for Human Rights and Citizenship Education.

## CONCLUSION (3/3)

- 4) Nevertheless, to perform the improvement and follow-up initiatives previously pointed out, it is of decisive importance that the Teachers start by perceiving and experiencing something different and that they have the opportunity of applying it in their training and practice.
- 5) Finally, we ought to mention that the continuity of such programmes depends on many factors, the most dangerous of them being the political ones, namely of a wild capitalist nature. As a matter of fact, the Portuguese policies of education have been submitted, for the last decade, to substantially unstable and contradictory processes that have resulted, amongst other relevant aspects, in a serious compromise and general harassment and submission to a considerable work overload of the Portuguese teaching class.
- 6) The present anthropological project of the Portuguese Educational System collides with all that was previously said...