



Original Contribution

EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN TEACHER TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Countless classroom observations throughout the region show that most teachers today work in traditional ways, although many have incorporated a range of methods to vary to some extent the standard 'frontal' classroom style. But these approaches do not reach all serving teachers, and pre-service teacher training in universities and pedagogical colleges remains largely unchanged.

Key Words: classroom style, teachers

INTRODUCTION

The European dimension of teacher education refers to teacher education which takes into account the fact that we are living in a European society and no longer merely in national societies¹. The existence of a European economic, social and political area, in which each country is integrated, calls for this dimension; as in the past there was the need to construct a national dimension for teacher education, nowadays there's the same need for a European dimension. It is up to teacher education institutions, to the teaching profession, and to national and Community education policies to develop, with the co-operation of social partners, such a European dimension in the context of the progressive construction of the European Union.

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The European Union needs teachers who are prepared to promote student learning of a European education curriculum. The main reason for the need for a European student

curriculum is neither their possible mobility to study abroad, nor future freedom of movement workers are entitled to, but the fact that their horizon is European rather than national citizenship. The main justification for such a curriculum is not, therefore, the added value of European student and worker mobility stemming from being able to obtain identical education and qualifications in any Member State.

In fact, *the education for European citizenship* constitutes what could be called the first generation of the European dimension of education.

Through specific programmes, European Union institutions have been fostering both the construction of this European dimension in school curricula, by promoting trans-national partnerships among schools and teachers and the mobility of students, including, more recently, those from secondary education. However, there is still a long way to go to implement in all Member States the European dimension of education through school curricula and student mobility.

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European curriculum for teacher education. As there is a European dimension of education, teachers need to be prepared for promoting it. Therefore, it is obvious that the teacher education curriculum should also have a European dimension.

Besides the definition of the role of teachers in ensuring the European dimension of education, without establishing input and process-curriculum components, national and community policy measures aimed at supporting and encouraging the development of the European dimension of teacher education are also needed. Finally, policy measures aimed at external quality assurance of each teacher education programme also make sense, as guarantee of the appropriateness of the qualification to the fulfilment of the expected role of teachers

ASSURANCE OF COMPARABILITY OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN AREA

The European dimension of education *curricula* calls for a European dimension of teacher education curricula, as mentioned. However, the latter dimension is also linked to the existence of a European education and employment *area* that calls for the assurance of comparability of professional qualifications of teachers in order to ensure their recognition within this area.

A *European area of teacher education and employment*. A European area of teacher education and employment means that:

- there are equal opportunities for any European citizen to obtain a teaching qualification, as a whole or in part, in each Member State;
- this qualification entitles her/him to teach in any other Member State; and
- s/he can be recruited for a teaching position in any other Member State.

The mobility of prospective teachers and of teachers already qualified in the European education and employment area is, above all, a European citizenship right.

A POLICY CO-OPERATION PRIORITY AGENDA TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

In the policy co-operation agenda towards the development of the European dimension of teacher education two priority fields of action have herein been outlined:

- *The definition of a European teaching competences profile* that, on the one hand, includes those competences needed to ensure the teaching of a curriculum aimed at contributing to European citizenship education and to European economic, social and political development, and, on the other hand, is a reference for the organisation of teaching education programmes leading to comparable professional teaching qualifications in the European area;
- *Development or consolidation of comparability assurance systems of teaching qualifications obtained in several Member States*; if these systems turn out to be Member State-based, it will be necessary to agree on their common characteristics so they become mutually accepted in all Member States.

It should not be necessary to stress that accomplishing this agenda will mean long hard work, although the work has already begun. Some features of the perspectives herein outlined on the European dimension of teacher education constitute a forward-looking view which is perhaps polemic in nature. In addition, some issues of the agenda of the Common Objectives Process have not been dealt with, such as qualified teacher shortage in several Member States and the corresponding need to promote the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Although these issues are also linked to other factors, the above mentioned policy measures to promote the European dimension of teacher education could also significantly contribute to solve them.

Before concluding, it should also be noted that to make this European dimension effective, it is of strategic importance to consolidate and broaden the range of other Member States' languages future teachers have learned during basic and secondary education.

In a move towards the development of the European dimension of teacher education, the role that national policies and policy co-operation among Member States plays has been privileged throughout this article, as was stated at the beginning. However, the decisive role of teacher education institutions and of the teaching profession in this process must also be underlined. Moreover, the process will only significantly move forward if there is a close link and joint efforts between these entities and political instances.

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AS THE BASIS OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

headings: dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizen's rights and justice. These rights are based on the fundamental rights and freedoms recognised by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms mentioned above and on the constitutional traditions of the countries of the European Union.

Therefore, one of the main issues in the European Dimension in Teacher Education should be to foster fundamental rights and freedoms at all levels and recognise them as the core tradition of European identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The multicultural approach is to be applied in a wider Europe where more different cultures will co-exist at the same level. In the future, several cultures, each one with its own past and with clearly differentiated development processes, will be in the process of constituting a unique political and cultural setting.

Enlargement will enhance cultural and linguistic variety and diversity within the EU. This will give rise to new requirements in terms of promoting and respecting linguistic and cultural identity, a common heritage of

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was proclaimed in Nice. It sets out the civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens under six cultural values and a common European identity. The protection of cultural minorities will also become more important in an enlarged Union.

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