

Editorial

Reinhold Hedtke

The Online Journal of Social Science Education (OJSSE) is dedicated to foster European discourses in the field of civic and economic education. To give a first overview on relevant institutions, organisations, persons and topics this number continues the series of national reports which started in no. 2-2002. Further reports are published occasionally in forthcoming issues. Of course, the editors welcome submissions of papers which deal with the national situation of economic and civic education.

The reader should note that an additional printed edition of the journal is produced under the title Journal of Social Science Education (JSSE) by the Wochenschau-Verlag, Schwalbach/Taunus, Germany.

This edition of the Online Journal presents articles on civic and economic education in England, on civic education in Portugal, Spain and Italy. The Online Journal has already published national reports on Austria, England, France, Germany, Greece and Cyprus. Number 1-2003 of the Online Journal deals with civic education and contains several national reports which are focussed on this topic, too.

Concerning England we have two complementary contributions. David Kerr describes in his paper Citizenship Education in England - The Making of a New Subject the policy background, the efforts to shape citizenship education, its curricular implementation and the main challenges of civic education as a recently established compulsory subject in schools. He analyses the relationship between the attempts to redefine citizenship and the decision to establish the subject of citizenship education, and gives the main outline of the process of developing the idea of citizenship education and its practice in England. From his point of view there are four crucial challenges for citizenship education: definition of curriculum and creation of appropriate means for teachers, community involvement and partnership, professional development and the challenge of transformation as an issue of participation and engagement.

Ian Abbott starts his report on Economic Education in England with the observation that Business Education is gaining importance at the expense of Economic Education. Students seem to avoid Economics because of its perceived difficulty. The government fosters Business Education as a means for economic success of a society. Abbott gives information on specific teaching and learning methods, the organisation of economic learning at secondary schools and teacher training. Interesting is the debate on attempts to create joint Economics and Business courses, because it requires some kind of interdisciplinary teacher training and teaching.

In Portugal Citizenship education has become recently a major goal of basic education which encompasses Personal and Social Education since 1989. Isabel Menezes analyses these curricular turning points and their political backgrounds in Civic Education in Portugal: Curricular Evolutions in Basic Education. The main strategies followed are Civic education as a cross curricular goal and issue in a multidisciplinary project area and as a specific subject. The alternative of focussing on values education or on a vision of emancipation is much debated. Menezes points out some crucial problems which are to be solved: What is an appropriate concept of citizenship? How should the tension between conservation and emancipation be solved? How can the gap between curricular policy goals and actual practise be reduced? How can sufficient teacher training be achieved?

Concepción Naval, Murray Print and Concepción Iriarte criticise the weakness of instituted civic education in Spain, and their paper Civic Education in Spain: A Critical Review of Policy is a committed plea for strengthening it. Nevertheless, they report on growing interest in education for democratic citizenship which seems to be closely related to the processes of europeanisation and globalisation. The problems connected with the implementation of the cross-curricular approach are discussed as well as the challenges of teaching Moral and Civic Education. As for the Portuguese and English situation the (re-)definition of the kind of citizenship which should be the regulative idea for civic education remains a main topic. In addition, the gap between educational policy and

every day realisation in schools and the missing of evaluation are still unsolved problems.

For Italy the intention-implementation gap in civic education is a crucial problem, too. While Bruno Losito reports empirical evidence for this problem in his contribution Civic Education in Italy: intended curriculum and students' opportunity to learn, he underlines as well the high esteem for civic education in general. The author presents the situation of civic education throughout the Italian school system and the various subjects and curricula related to this topic. Generally, History as a school subject plays a crucial role in Italian civic education, but some additional cross-curricular and extra-curricular projects on special issues have been created recently. Dissatisfaction is widespread regarding the democratic climate in schools and classes, although participation of students is instituted. Teachers are trained without any specific education for the field of civic education which is an added and crucial problem of quality.

Gender in social science education will be the main topic of number 4-2004 of this journal. Contributions are very welcome and should be announced immediately; the deadline for submitting papers is 1st of March 2004.

KeyWords: Economic education, civic education, citizenship education, social science education, European discourse, European communication, European cooperation, national report, national politics of education, teacher training, England, Italy, Portugal, Spain, students' participation, "Europeanisation", models of citizenship, gender education.



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