

4

Key issues of pedagogy in the host countries: overarching “ideological” points of consensus

4A

Background text

Judith Hollenweger, Rolf Gollob

Dealing with diversity and acceptance (recognition) of the other

1. Introduction

In the big Western-, Central- and North European immigration countries, which are the focus of this handbook, there is a broad consensus about a number of pedagogical and ideological issues and postulates. These include the postulate of equal opportunity, gender equality (equal value of girls and boys); see 4 B.2, the education for democracy, the appreciation of plurality and diversity, including cultural and linguistic diversity (see 4 B.3), and the treatment of themes and contents without ideological blinders, etc. It goes without saying that many of these points are also accepted and implemented in most or all countries of origin. In view of the context for which the present handbook is intended – an orientation guide for HLT instructors in the immigration countries – we are limiting the scope to the standards and key points which are accepted in those countries.

The following comments expand on a few key points and central demands; others will be discussed in chapters 5 and 9, among others.

2. Societal expectations of the school

Education enables people to participate autonomously in social life, and to actively contribute to shaping and enriching it. Educational efforts must therefore always be understood in the context of social, political, and economic conditions and developments. Different states have different ideas about how much and what kind of education is necessary and for whom.

Is it terrible if girls do not pursue further education, following compulsory schooling? To what extent must the school advocate for attendance, if parents from certain cultures and social classes consider it of little importance? Does the Department of Education have to intervene when children from minority groups cannot find access to more advanced higher education programs?

If the participation of certain social groups in shaping society is not desired, or considered unimportant, it follows that investment in the education of these groups tends to be reduced. This way, the societal structure remains intact and the existing inequalities will be passed on to the next generation.

However, if the social structure, the family and the origin no longer mainly predetermine a person's position in society, the future for the individual is fundamentally open (Hradil 2009, page 89). Today, this is a huge concern for democratic societies that put more emphasis on the long-term development of human resources over the exploitation of natural resources. Education thus furthers social mobility and opens up the possibilities of social advancement. Securing the best possible education for all children and adolescents is very important in post-industrial countries. If a high added-value is achieved due to highly-qualified employees, society has a great interest in providing talented young people access to the best possible education. Highly educated citizens will want to participate in political life as well. This way, the political, social and economic control is no longer in the hands of a small elite; all members of a society must take responsibility for the well-being of everyone (Turowski, 2006, page 447).

All Western-, Central- and North European immigration countries are democracies with a more or less liberal conception of statehood, that depends on individual responsibility as well as their citizens' willingness to actively participate. Depending on the type of democracy (direct democracy, representative democracy, etc.) problems will be addressed locally or centrally, and solutions will be developed either locally or on the national level. In Switzerland (as an example of a direct democracy), the stronger cantons effect transfer payments to the weaker ones, according to the principle of solidarity; the social insurance schemes ensure

the basis of existence of the weakest. This creates a balance and enables the living-together of different groups, linguistic and cultural regions. Many citizens engage in civil society in most countries, independently of the state. Thus, there are many associations that operate in the social domain and commit themselves for other human beings. They lend aid and support where existing problems are not within the scope of governments' responsibilities or the problems are not solved through state intervention (Emmerich, 2012).

In the first half of the 19th century, many countries introduced compulsory state schools, e. g. in the Canton of Zurich (school law of 1832). With it, the state accepted the responsibility for the education of all children from all social strata. How proud the communities and cantons must have been of this new task can still be seen in the prestigious school buildings from that time. The issue at stake at the time was the fight against child labor, and children's acquiring fundamental new skills, whereas the social tasks and educational mission have become far more complex today. The task of the school and family were clearly separated at the time (educational mission/mandate) but today they must be more interlocked and support each other. What remains is the mandate to ensure the social cohesion of society and the qualification of our children and adolescents (Tröhler & Hardegger 2008).

Today's educational efforts in the referenced host countries must be understood against this social and historical background.

In line with the mandate of equal opportunity, or similar opportunity, respectively, the school must not only ensure that all students receive the best possible education, it must also impart social and societal values. Thus, the diversity of today's population is also reflected in everyday school life; all concerned are invited to make a constructive contribution.

The preservation of values and recognition are the key principles in this effort. They require an active and respectful interaction with cultural and linguistic diversity. It is a matter of achievement and solidarity, the interest of the individual and the welfare of the community, of demanding and supporting. "Education is a multidimensional endeavor, and the dimensions must keep each other in check", as described by Prisching (2008, page 226). This must be achieved on the one hand through further development of educational institutions, and on the other hand, through the safeguarding of the individual rights of all students.

3. Life in a democracy – what does this mean for the school?

When speaking of democracy in the context of schools, people mostly think of questions pertaining to possible lesson content. What should students learn, what should they know about the structures of democracy? Which content fits into which subject? The declarative knowledge thereby is in the foreground: it is about facts surrounding democracy, that is the "knowledge, that...". As a second point, the question of student participation in the organization of the schools are brought up: student representations as regulated by statute, the formal co-determination of teachers or the representation of parents in various committees. This is a case of "knowledge, how...", that is procedural knowledge or the experiencing and shaping of democratic processes. Democracy is also a value in itself, and a positively valued objective in all Western and Northern European immigration countries.

A democratically-oriented school wants the students to develop a positive relationship to democracy. They should be able to develop democratic convictions and the school should make efforts so that the learners themselves become democratic.

It is therefore also a question of social readiness and ability and responsible use of democratic principles in the shaping of life.

When discussing democracy in the context of the school (which of course includes HLT), we always have to keep two aspects in mind: the instructional content as well as the existing structures and processes of the school. The conservation of values and expectations are always of urgent importance, and they are expressed and experienced in a unique way in each and every school, and in every HLT course (Retzl 2014).

Democracy is a situation that has to be described. On the other hand, it is a value to which we subscribe with conviction and want to realize practically in classroom instruction. Content can be taught, hours will be allocated for that purpose, and the learning results can be assessed. To equate values with facts would be a big mistake, however. Values that are taught as educational content become indoctrination. Values have their basis in experiences. Democracy as a value is urgently dependent on this experience. Classroom instruction and schools which do not include these values in the design of their teaching as an experience should ultimately forego teaching democracy as real facts (Krainz 2014).

It would be a great mistake to demand that schools simulate democracy. This, they cannot and should not do. A school has a clear structure and clearly defined roles. Schools are an instrument of democracy and, at the same time, a living environment for future democrats, in which age- and developmentally appropriate

and situation-specific assumptions of responsibility and participation are experienced and practiced. In other words: students should in the course of their studies (which includes HLT) acquire democratic attitudes which endure beyond their educational career. For the concrete implementation, actions should be chosen in which democratic decision-making competences of individuals and the democratic quality of the school are developed and experienced.

Classroom instruction is obviously of great significance in a school context. Instruction is experienced by the learner as a place and framework for negotiation processes and feedback, a place of cooperation in which the learners and teachers deal with each other in the spirit of mutual recognition. Children's rights and human rights, for instance, are building blocks of a democratically and pedagogically motivated school practice. (see links in the bibliography).

School projects are best suited for a joint planning exercise in order to facilitate equitable participation, a common well-coordinated organization, a transparent evaluation, and an occasion to practice and facilitate an assessment. Pedagogically valuable are projects related to democracy that approach learning through engagement and so-called service learning (example: a joint project of an exhibition and a sale of handicrafts for the benefit of a charity project). Central to this endeavor must always be the creative process, regardless of content and aim, as it is in itself promoting democracy. Such projects enable the students to gain personal experiences and achievements and should be documented and certified in form of a portfolio, whenever possible.

An entire school unit can be democratically shaped without great changes from its basis. Power is legitimized, solutions to problems are being sought jointly by means of communication, delegation and representation. Moreover, the school opens up to society and shows the learners how to tie meaningful action with project-oriented education in actual present-day reality. Such community-oriented projects are characterized by converting active participation simultaneously into the lesson topic. It is best to find out in conversations with your colleagues about the implementation of democratic principles in any country, educational system and in individual schools in which HLT instructors work, as well as what kinds of learning materials are being used.

For materials ideally suited for use in HLT and/or for comprehensive projects, we suggest the series EDC/HRE «Living Democracy» by the European Council which, depending on the specific volume, have already been published in up to 10 different languages and can be obtained as hard copy or downloaded from the internet free of charge (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Resources/Resources_for_teachers_en.asp).

4. Unity in diversity – diversity and inclusion

As shown in chapter 4.3, education should not only enable young people to develop their personality but to also actively participate in the shaping of society. A democratic society thrives due to its political diversity, the discussion of the opinions of others and the inclusion of all in the search for viable solutions. It also depends on the joint commitment by all to a conception of collective statehood, common values and the respect of the interests of minorities. The resulting tensions between diversity and similarity in all aspects of life have to be addressed constructively. The primary school as an official state institution cannot forego this dynamic and is called upon to develop a sensible approach to it. It has the charge of contributing to the social cohesion of society and, at the same time, safeguarding the personal right to education of each child. Diversity and inclusion are therefore central concepts for the treatment of diversity in the school (Ains-cow, Booth & Dyson 2006).

The use of the notion of “inequality” signifies an emphasis and valuation of differences; the terms “heterogeneousness” and “diversity”, respectively, on the other hand recognize differences without a simultaneous value judgment. The commonly recognized category diversity in today's discussion signifies a deliberate confrontation with dissimilarity and variety. Characteristics like gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, language, social situation, sexual orientation, health condition and disability, respectively, only serve to describe diversity. It does not mean that minorities should only be tolerated and forced to adapt and assimilate, respectively. The marginalized will become participants and solutions to problems will be sought collectively – insofar as there are problems. The term “inclusion” refers to this process, with the primary objective of problem-solving and addressing learning difficulties and participation in the schools. Whereas the category “integration” suggests primarily an expected adjustment effort on the part of minorities, the more current term “inclusion” demands an active contribution by all in order to arrive at a common solution. (Vojtová, Bloemers & Johnstone 2006). An inclusive school, therefore, actively deals with the issue of diversity and ensures an equitable access to education for all. At the same time, it has high requirements for quality in itself, and high expectations of all students (Nasir et al. 2006).

Why is it that students with migration backgrounds are often targeted disproportionately for special needs measures? How can it be that, at the conclusion of their compulsory education, socially disadvantaged adolescents have scarcely anything of value to serve them beyond? Why is there still a long way to go toward reaching equal opportunity or even similar opportunity in many places (see also chapter 4 B.1)? Why do the educational ambitions of the parents have such a formative influence? In view

of an inclusive school, these questions should be considered from the beginning of the school and classroom development process. The new school reform in the Canton of Zurich – to name one example – more strongly emphasizes integrative special education measures to counteract the negative consequences of segregating education. Many schools promote mixed groups in terms of age and educational level in order to achieve a stronger personalization of instruction. In creating parents' boards and through an intensification of working with parents, the schools try to create a viable network of common responsibility for all students. The project "Bildungslandschaften" (in English "educational landscapes") of the Jacobs Foundation and the Department of Education of the Canton of Zurich (see list in the bibliography) takes the concept one step further and even includes non-school entities. Quite specifically, it also deals with the reduction of existent hurdles and obstacles, as faced by children with disabilities on a daily basis.

An inclusive school not only continues to develop itself constantly, but advocates daily for respecting the individual rights of all children and adolescents. This is rooted in the foundation of children's rights by the United Nations, as well as the rights of people with handicaps, which are recognized in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Most of the Western and North European immigration countries have signed and ratified both conventions. These conventions not only ensure a free education for all children and adolescents, but also challenge the schools to equalize possible disadvantages which may arise from origin, handicaps, or health problems. In general, the educational opportunities must be adapted to the child's requirements, as equal rights does not mean offering the same thing to everyone. Today's teachers must be able to abandon such "premises of homogeneity" in favor of a stronger, personalized understanding of learning. In doing so, they must particularly assess their own ideas of justice (Bloch 2014).

HLT instructors can make valuable contributions to the goals of equal opportunity and inclusion with respect to their students. This may be achieved in the classroom itself through targeted support of teacher orientations (see also chapter 5.1) on the one hand; outside of the classroom, on the other hand, it requires discussions and consultations with parents and regular classroom teachers (see chapter 12).

5. Teaching and learning as a joint problem-solving process

When the students no longer perform exactly the same task at the same time, the teacher can no longer exclusively rely on a fixed instructional plan or curriculum. The above referenced personalization and democratization of instruction not only shows itself in the teaching structure, but also in the teaching materials and curricula of the Western, Central and Northern European immigration countries. The lesson plans are structured so as to also afford students the opportunities for self-directed learning, in addition to the guided sequences (Kiper & Mischke 2008). Learning materials are enhanced with more complex assignments, which may require the performance of various activities in different social forms and with different tools. Present curricula – such as the „Lehrplan 21“ which is being developed currently for German-speaking Switzerland – are skills-oriented, with competences needing to be acquired and applied in variable situations. Instead of providing clear guidelines for the input, that is what students will be offered, the focus is more strongly on the output, on the educational outcomes (see also chapter 5 A.1).

Learning is understood as an active and interactive process, according to the actual, broadly accepted definition. Although the acquisition of information establishes the first preconditions for learning, the learner must then endeavor to process and understand it.

Knowledge must be linked so that it can be used for solving more complex questions. Following the accomplishment of a task, the attained must be checked and evaluated. Teaching and learning must complement each other in such a fashion that they can jointly contribute to the solution of problems. The teacher helps with the selection of age- and interest-appropriate questions and topics, the development of the understanding of problems, and furthering the motivation of the learners to address and solve the posed questions. The necessary information, knowledge and skills are acquired jointly; the instructor supports as much as necessary and offers aid with structuring of the task. Once the foundations are established, concrete planning begins. If the path to success is found, the students perform the required actions and verify the achieved results.

The teaching and learning processes are interlinked, and the interplay offers the students a certain measure of support according to their needs, in terms of structuring aid, autonomy support, and sense of belonging (Rohlf 2011). All this, of course, pertains also to HLT, and can be equally well implemented in their lessons and in regular classroom instruction.

Difficulties with student learning and interaction may occur anytime and should be addressed as quickly as possible before the children become discouraged or negative interaction patterns solidify. A particularly

frequent issue in HLT stems from problems with the first language standard version and students' reading comprehension, as many only speak in a dialect version and are barely able to read and write in their heritage language (see also chapter 8). The instructors' early detection of such difficulties is central in this effort, starting with the specific learning situation which may cause problems to a child. It is frequently the case that a child has not yet acquired certain competences, or is used to other styles of interaction (from home or from regular education classes) and employs different learning strategies. If students exhibit persistent problems in school, in spite of a personalized educational program, so-called educational progress meetings are organized in many places (see list of links in the Bibliography, terms may vary, according to regions). The meetings are organized to bring together the perspectives of all concerned to analyze the child's situation, and to set goals as basis for the planning of measures. Based on the results of the educational progress meeting, a personalized support plan is generally established. After a jointly agreed- to period of time, the progress meeting is repeated, and the goal attainments verified. The procedure of the educational progress meeting occurs in many places as well when students need instruction in the local language as a second language. It goes without saying that HLT instructors can be valuable partners in such educational progress meetings.

The stronger personalization of education, as described here, signifies as well that the whole potential of a child is acknowledged and valued on the part of the school and the teachers. In other words, it is no longer just an assessment of the child's individual qualities and capabilities which are deemed as useful for school instruction.

Individuals with all their talents must be furthered in order to become responsible human beings who are capable of acting in an open society. This would imply a better utilization of the children's available resources, including their first language, specific cultural background, and their life experiences up to now.

In contrast to misunderstood interpretations of "individualization" the term "personalization" does not aim for a separation of education, but a recognition of the child as a person, as well as his/her rights, responsibilities and obligations (OECD 2006). Thus, all children and adolescents have to be recognized as equal (Emmerich & Hormel 2013). Their usefulness as good students is no longer in the foreground, but

their acquired competences and their development. The term "diversity" and "inclusion" aptly describe the meaning of this transformation process. Inclusion becomes a coercive measure without the recognition of diversity, but without inclusion, the notion of diversity stands for arbitrariness and indifference. Only the two combined show the way into the future for the democratic school, a future which must be created by all concerned and affected together.

Bibliography

- Ainscow, Mel; Tony Booth; Alan Dyson (2006): *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Bloch, Daniel (2014): *Ist differenzierender Unterricht gerecht? Wie Lehrpersonen die Verteilung ihrer Förderbemühungen rechtfertigen*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.
- Emmerich, Johannes (2012): *Die Vielfalt der Freiwilligenarbeit. Eine Analyse kultureller und sozialstruktureller Bedingungen der Übernahme und Gestaltung von freiwilligem Engagement*. Münster: Lit-Verlag.
- Emmerich, Marcus; Ulrike Hormel (2013): *Heterogenität – Diversity – Intersektionalität. Zur Logik sozialer Unterscheidungen in pädagogischen Semantiken der Differenz*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Hradil, Stefan (2008): *Sozialstruktur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel*. In: Oscar W. Gabriel; Sabine Kropf (eds.): *Die EU-Staaten im Vergleich. Strukturen, Prozesse, Politikinhalt* (3. ed.). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 89–123.
- Kiper, Hanna; Wolfgang Mischke (2008): *Selbstreguliertes Lernen – Kooperation – Soziale Kompetenz. Fächerübergreifendes Lernen in der Schule*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Krainz, Ulrich (2014): *Religion und Demokratie in der Schule. Analysen zu einem grundsätzlichen Spannungsfeld*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Nasir, Na'ilah Suad; Ann S. Roseberry; Beth Warren; Carol D. Lee (2006): *Learning as a Cultural Process. Achieving Equity through Diversity*. In: R. Keith Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Learning Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 489–504.
- OECD (2006): *Personalising Education*. Paris: OECD.
- Retzl, Martin (2014): *Demokratie entwickelt Schule. Schulentwicklung auf der Basis des Denkens von John Dewey*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Rohlf, Carsten (2011): *Bildungseinstellungen. Schule und formale Bildung aus der Perspektive von Schülerinnen und Schülern*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Prisching, Manfred (2008): *Bildungsideologien. Ein zeitdiagnostischer Essay an der Schwelle zur Wissensgesellschaft*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Tröhler, Daniel; Urs Hardegger (eds.) (2008): *Zukunft bilden. Die Geschichte der modernen Zürcher Volksschule*. Zürich: NZZ Verlag.
- Turowski, Jan (2006): *Voraussetzungen, Differenzen und Kongruenzen Sozialer Demokratie*. In: Thomas Meyer; Jan Turowski: *Praxis der Sozialen Demokratie*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 447–485.
- Vojtová, Vèra; Wolf Bloemers; David Johnstone (2006): *Pädagogische Wurzeln der Inklusion*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Links

- Centre of Human Rights Education, Lucern University of Teacher Education: <http://www.phlu.ch/en/dienstleistung/centre-of-human-rights-education>
- Children's Rights, Oxfam Education: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/childrens-rights>
- Compasito. Manual on human rights education for children: <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito>
- Projekt Bildungslandschaften Jacobs-Stiftung: <http://bildungslandschaften.ch>
- Teaching Human Rights. Practical activities for primary and secondary schools. United Nations: <http://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/abcchapter1en.pdf>
- Training and Education Materials, Human Rights Education Series, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/publicationsresources/pages/trainingeducation.aspx>
- Verfahren Schulische Standortgespräche, Bildungsdirektion Kanton Zürich: http://www.vsa.zh.ch/internet/bildungsdirektion/vsa/de/schulbetrieb_und_unterricht/sonderpaedagogisches0/ssg/formulare_ssg.html