



METHODOLOGY FOR TRAINING OF STUDENTS IN CIVIC EDUCATION

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Submitted: 30.07.2019

Accepted: 26.08.2019

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the topic of student education in the subject "Modern aspects of civic education". The study aims to present the changes and the development of the civic education in the Bulgarian educational space. Emphasis is placed on the European dimensions of civic education. It introduces new thematic areas arising from changes in the public and educational environment. A research methodology is presented for training students of civic education pedagogues. Competence levels are emerging to develop simulation-based pedagogical training in civic education.

Keywords: Civic, education, methodology, higher education

INTRODUCTION

The civic education has accompanied the democratic changes in Bulgarian education since the dawn of the Bulgarian Revival. The facts such as the first textbook of Peter Beron's reading, Bulgarian schools and high schools, book publishing, periodical stamp, donations of influential Bulgarians for the construction of university and higher schools are the components of the history of pedagogy and Bulgarian education, which focuses on the essence of civic education, its roots, specifics and ideals (Neminska 2018). All these facts help to introduce modern ideas into the new Bulgarian education, to preserve and develop national pride in the dimensions of European education and culture, to form a Bulgarian civil consciousness. These aspects are still up to date. The transition to democratic citizenship clearly highlights the European dimensions and trends in the development of civic education. The aim of the civic education is rephrased by including a pragmatic and creative element, emphasizing the development of life skills together (Toshev 2010). This means being able to better know and perceive the other so as to avoid conflicts, to create a better opportunity for different people to live and work in a multicultural society. In other words, it is the ability to be a citizen. And, this means knowing, implementing and realizing our rights and responsibilities to others, to society as a whole. Democratic civic education is one of the main factors determining social development, because it creates consciousness, self-consciousness, and appreciative reflection of society.

The Declaration on Education for Democratic Citizenship confirmed the primary role of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. It is convinced that spiritual and moral values represent the true source of personal freedom. Taking this into account, the Council of Europe states that the issue of better understanding and understanding by individuals of their rights and responsibilities is not delayed. The concerns of the member countries of the Council of Europe come from the negative phenomena we are witnessing not only in national but supranational formats. The media are constantly reporting on intolerance, racism and xenophobia, and thus, it increases tolerance and apathy towards intolerance. It is also a fact that shooting violence or disaster today, failure to provide assistance when needed is also not an isolated phenomenon. Ethnic and religious conflicts are still an unsolved problem. A particular issue on which democratic civic education takes serious consideration is the tendency for non-inclusion or insufficient inclusion of youth in public processes. These manifestations in themselves indicate the signs of a spiritual crisis.

The significance of the study

This paper stresses on the most important thing, which is to develop the axiological function of civic education. Today, it can be seen as a leader in its realization. The auxiliary function of civic education always accompanies its aims, content and tasks. In the widest sense today, democratic civic education means all processes that affect people's beliefs, the commitments they undertake and actions that make members of a society. In addition, civic education is a transfer of values and norms between families, religions, governments, societies, institutions. It is an overall active and flexible process with important media involvement, local political and public engagement. Major processes influencing civic education are democratization, globalization, and transition from mono-culture to multicultural, from mono/bi-religious to multi-religious society, immigration and emigration processes of modern times.



A strong influence on the axiology of civic education is the value vacuum, which is recorded in many aspects of our social life. In this sense, it can be argued that the reflection on the value worldview of students through knowledge gained from civic education has forming characteristics. The power of value reflection can be determined by “what I know, how much to give, and how to do (Neminska 2015).

The foundations of civic education are laid in educational institutions such as schools, universities and academies. The specificity of value knowledge also raises the questions of how it is happening in real time, how and where to sit and experience, so that it is appreciated emotionally-cognitive and professional-pedagogical. It is here considered that personal knowledge and value reflection are leading throughout the pedagogical process. In this sense, the leading value-forming role of the trainer's personality is also drawn in his activity to turn politics on this issue into concrete pedagogical practices.

The aim of the study

The objective of this study is to deal with the topic of student education in the subject "Modern aspects of civic education" considering the educational topics for each discipline, usually reflecting the concept, purpose and tasks. The study presents and discusses the thematic area of the subject "Modern aspects of civic education". The very name of the discipline also draws the concept to consider contemporary problems in the citizenship of society.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the implementation of the research approach in the subject “Modern aspects of civic education”. The researcher depicts the advantages of this approach based on her own experiences. The study is a qualitative study using descriptive method based on the notes and observations by the researcher. The aim of implementing this approach is to see the modifications and inventive and innovative aspects of the students as expected from the subject. The expectation is that training in civic education in an academic environment aims at raising students' awareness of citizenship issues. Thus, students can be acquainted with a variety of methods and forms for developing learning content in different age schools.

The content of the subject under research approach

The thematic framework of the curriculum "Contemporary Aspects of Civil Education" contains the following problematic areas as follows.

Table 1: Thematic Framework of the course "Contemporary Aspects of Civic Education"

Topics	
1	Civic education - strength, characterization. Main goals and principles. Basic concepts. Methodology and interdisciplinarity.
2	Human rights. Identity and differences. Democratic values.
3	Teaching of democratic values.
4	State educational standard for civic education. Aims and content of civic education at university.
5	Prevention of violence. Nonviolent communication.
6	Terrorism prevention and terrorist threat behaviour.
7	Corruption as a social phenomenon. Definition of the term "corruption". Corrupt behaviour
8	Social media. The role of social media in civic education.
9	Intercultural education and human rights. Inter-religious tolerance.
10	Prevention of psychoactive substance use. Pedagogical prevention.
11	Environmental education, Environmental Pedagogical propedeutics

In civic education, students develop skills pedagogically to interpret and comment on texts of the Charter, the Convention, and the Constitution of Bulgaria. They develop skills to analyze regulatory documents. Here, it is important to note Borisova Tanya's opinion that literacy is related to an understanding of "the weight of words, the influence they have and the roles assigned to them - to reflect relationships and to express the person" (Borisova 2018). In this sense, one of the objectives of education in civic education in an academic environment is namely functional literacy and reading with pedagogical understanding of normative texts. Such texts, which can be adapted to the pupil's age, can be limited and offered for training. The pedagogical interpretation of such texts goes through taxonomic levels of reading comprehension with understanding, analytical skills, assessment and interpretation. An important element in teaching the thematic content is to master a complex of case-solving skills and participation in controlled pedagogical simulations, to develop a case-technology for intercultural communication and to develop inter-religious tolerance.



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The subject "Modern aspects of civic education" has an interdisciplinary focus. In this way, students acquire a complex of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills that extend their pedagogical preparation. They are familiar with the research approach and its application to the subjects of civic education. They are acquainted with modern interactive methodological complexes for realization of the thematic content in the modern classroom.

The research approach is fundamental in the methodology of civic education training. It reveals a common approach to "learning and explaining the processes and phenomena of learning" (Petrov 2016). The function of the research approach, as mentioned in Kozhuharova, is found "in the ability of scientific concepts to serve not only to fix the knowledge already achieved, but also as a means of further development and enrichment" (Kozhuharova 2012). The specificity of the research approach in civic education is expressed not so much in the amount of knowledge that students receive as in the methods of realization of cognitive activity. The methodological culture of the lecturer in civic education is of particular importance because it develops the pedagogical skills of the students in teaching civic education. This methodological process is regarded as a "complete process of interaction ... in which education from static, hierarchical becomes process, interaction, multiplication, continuous fracturing of forms" (Doncheva 2016). Borisova (2017) commented on it as a process in which the student develops the ability to "formulate a basic thought, to choose what is necessary from the unnecessary information and to convey it in its own words". Lazarev & Stavrinov (2006) comment that such a methodology reflects "the professional willingness of the lecturer to manage the process of research training".

The aim of the interaction through this reflexive methodology is for the student to experience, to live, to overcome internal conflicts and stereotypes, to make real-time decisions about real situations. Also develop active civic skills to work in a multi-religious classroom; develop pedagogical skills to manage intercultural dialogue. A basic core of the methodology of civic education is the simulation-based pedagogical training (Neminska 2015). In the course "Contemporary Aspects of Citizenship Education", this method is extremely suitable for its adaptability, flexibility and the possibility of symbiosis. Simulation-based training in civic education involves a series of pedagogical simulations that allow the development of initial, non-risk-free experiences. This is related to an initial reading of the Charter, Constitution, moral norms and their pedagogical analysis. It has its potential for organizing the environment and controlling exercise simulations in the structure of pedagogical education by citizenship. The research approach in simulation training in civic education helps to plan and purposefully simulate a professional reality. In the learning environment, students experiment and multiply knowledge and skills related to teaching civic education. Employing a role in simulation in civic education, students make a deeper understanding of their pedagogical projections. They have the opportunity to "play" the role of different aspects such as social, pedagogical, cognitive, axiological, and personal. Planning pedagogical simulations on civic education is a systematic approach, thus simulating repetitive elements, ranging from difficulty simulations, integrative simulations, hierarchically evolving simulations. Successful techniques and strategies for designing structured learning experience in civic education are included.

Simulation-based pedagogical training in civic education allows predicting future pedagogical effects, impacts, and interactions. The methodology of simulation-based training in civic education allows the preservation of practical learning experience. In this way, this training is self-fulfilling as a valuable tool for developing and automating adaptive and flexible skills related to the process of teaching civic education. And last but not least, the methodology of simulation-based training in civic education provides a competitive environment for the development of personal civic skills and competences.

CONCLUSION

Training in civic education in an academic environment is a responsibility. Responsibility, because all the knowledge, skills and competences that develop in the course of this training will reflect in modern classrooms. In other words, the professor of civic education at the university forms the civic attitudes of the growing generation. In this sense, it is particularly important to formulate adequate and up-to-date civilian themes so that the future teacher is factually and axiologically oriented, being able to properly interpret facts and events.

Developed competences for teaching active and democratic citizenship in the classroom reflect the following:

- Scientific pluralism as a basic professional standard that pedagogical professionals in civic education have to achieve. In this sense, pedagogical competence related to the process of civic education is the ability to synergistically combine material resources, like instructions, books, articles, cases and technologies, and intangible resources, such as knowledge, skills, experience, to achieve efficiency and efficacy in the educational process (Madhavaram & Laverie 2010).



- The level of knowledge of contexts and assessment of the situation (Sampson & Fytros 2008). It includes the importance of the skill of selecting different methodological algorithms to achieve learning tasks in a dynamic simulation context in which civic education educators are implemented. Pedagogical competence reflects the teacher's skill in terms of co-operation, overall vision, and pedagogical contribution to the development of democratic citizenship. An important aspect here is the ability to transfer competencies and the ability to combine to achieve true effectiveness.
- The two levels of professional competence in civic education are achieved by the students using the simulation-based methodology for civic education. It has the potential to reflect the increasing interdisciplinary and multi-modality in the school environment. It outlines the need to create conditions in which the student deliberately develops interdisciplinary skills; to coordinate multiple sources of information in the classroom by reducing them in learning-cognitive models. In this sense, the simulated pedagogical environment in the process of civic education has emerged as a relevant competence model for the development of professional communication and active civic behaviour.

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