

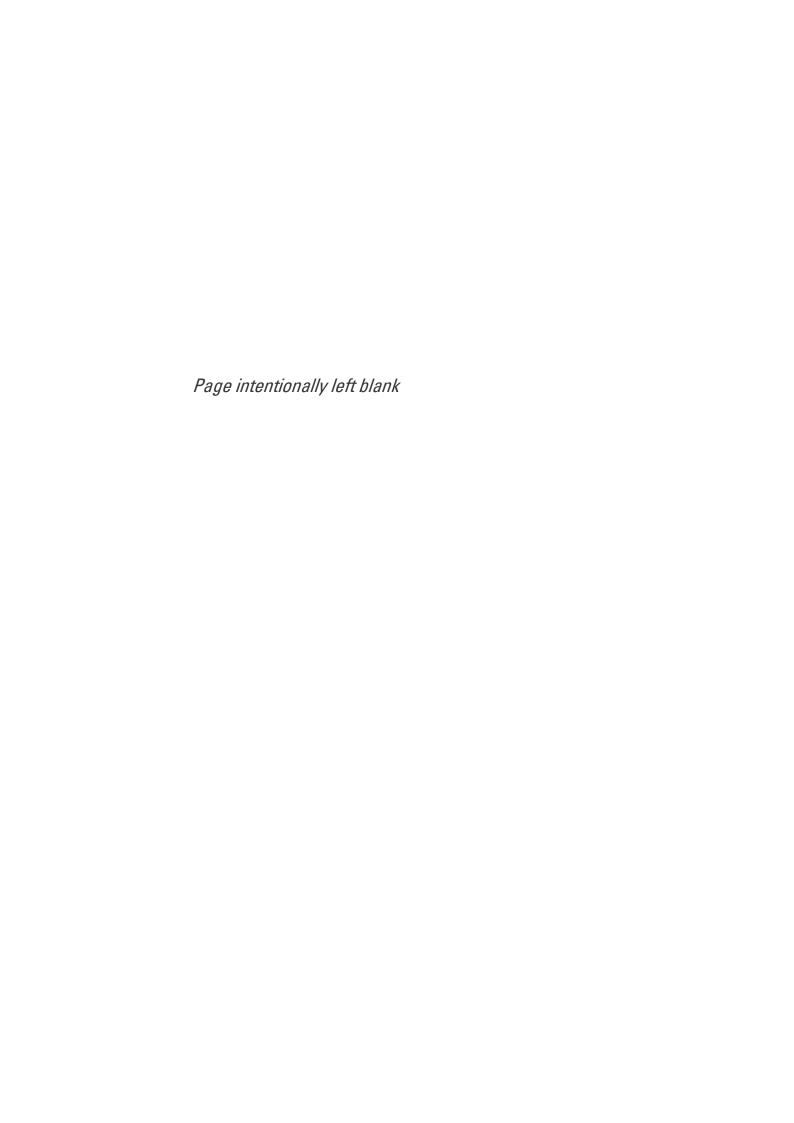
Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of the Journal Scuola Democratica REINVENTING EDUCATION

2-5 June 2021

VOLUME III

Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Space and Time

ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA"



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REINVENTING EDUCATION

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Title Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Journal "Scuola Democratica" — Reinventing Education VOLUME III Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Space and Time

This volume contains papers presented in the 2nd International Conference of the Journal "Scuola Democratica" which took place online on 2-5 June 2021. The Conference was devoted to the needs and prospects of Reinventing Education.

The challenges posed by the contemporary world have long required a rethinking of educational concepts, policies and practices. The question about education 'for what' as well as 'how' and 'for whom' has become unavoidable and yet it largely

remained elusive due to a tenacious attachment to the ideas and routines of the past which are now far off the radical transformations required of educational systems.

Scenarios, reflections and practices fostering the possibility of change towards the reinvention of the educational field as a driver of more general and global changes have been centerstage topics at the Conference. Multidisciplinary approach from experts from different disciplinary communities, including sociology, pedagogy, psychology, economics, architecture, political science has brought together researchers, decision makers and educators from all around the world to investigate constraints and opportunities for reinventing education.

The Conference has been an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education and thus promoting a trans- and interdisciplinary discussion on urgent topics; to foster debates among experts and professionals; to diffuse research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners' mainstreams; to launch further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale; to provide a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies. In this framework, more than 800 participants, including academics, educators, university students, had the opportunity to engage in a productive and fruitful dialogue based on research, analyses and critics, most of which have been published in this volume in their full version.

Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Space and Time A Premise

Papers in this third volume deals with the Covid-19 pandemic which is having an enormous impact on education systems worldwide. Policy makers, teachers, school managers, parents and students have been called to the reinvent their way of 'doing school'. At the same time, the governance of the education system and schools' organizations have been exposed to unprecedented tensions.

Within a short period of time, radical changes had to be introduced, simultaneously, at various levels of the school system. At national and regional level, there has been the need to rethink the way in which teachers are recruited, engaged and managed. National assessment and evaluation systems have been suspended or redefined in their uses by school actors The ways through which institutes were managed and organized had to be rethought, passing in a very short time through an on and off of dematerialization and hyper-normativity of time and space. Within schools, managers and teachers have been called to redefine the role of digital technologies in their didactic, as well as in their relationships with families and students. In some cases, these set of changes led to experience novel and unexpected daily proximities, in other prevailed a context characterized by distance and unsatisfactory relationships. Managers and teachers have been asked to re-invent their professionality to rethink their organizational, didactic and relational competences. Students and families, on their side, have been called to rebuild and reimagine new way of being at school, re-inventing the spaces and time of schooling and the way in which they relate among each other and with teachers.

The pandemic emergency has been a lens revealing intersections and structural tensions among various level and actors of the education system, but also allowing opportunities of changes thanks to the exogenous shock. At the same time, it must be considered that the emergency is interacting on pre-existing inequalities and contradictions. The pandemic clearly revealed the deep disparities of educational opportunities associated to students' life and housing conditions, beyond their access and uses of technological devices. Remote teaching and the enactment of an 'emergency didactic' has exacerbated learning difficulties for underprivileged students (children facing material deprivation, students with migratory background, students with special needs or disable, etc.). The interaction between the pandemic and pre-existing inequalities created different contextual conditions for actors' agency, orienting toward different directions the pandemic's transformational potential.

Higher education systems have been affected too: in constant evolution due to constant transformations of society and changed functions of knowledge, universities have undergone a structural change along with pandemic times. Simultaneously, the growing relevance of knowledge for the economic development of the capitalistic system has profoundly affected higher education systems, characterized by the neo-liberal approach which his subject of increasing critical analysis.

However, Higher education systems are starting to be affected by other somewhat inevitable changing processes due to the evolution of knowledge and the consequent forms of its transmission. These forms have to be necessarily new both because of the availability of new instruments and the increased need to develop interpretative models of a constant and often unpredictable change. In this juncture the university might assume a renewed central role. At Higher Education System level, the growing use of digital instruments is envisaged in order to cope with the rising of the management rates of the training offer as well as to answer to the growing differentiation of user categories. A feasible consequence could be the increasing of the already pressure for the differentiation among the universities, with the related social implications.

At individual university level, it is foreseeable the demand for university involvement in tackling the problems of society and the economy will increase. And this at global, national and local level. From an organizational point of view the most significant feature is represented by the accumulation of traditional and new tasks that do not seem to be possible to manage. Whatever form the higher education systems will come to take, it remains that a central point to be clarified concerns the management of change. It will be the market that will impose its rules and the universities will organize themselves individually within the invisible enclosures that will guide their policies (with predictable growing social and territorial differences), or instead the State will choose incentive policies to direct its training system. It remains that in a condition of uncertainty and constant change the university's roles multiply and become – at least potentially – more and more central. It can therefore be argued that the university is not only called upon to respond to the demands of society but by elaborating answers and solutions to the problems it progressively affects the functioning of society.

We are fully aware that each educational experience produces specific results and definitions of teaching-learning practices. The well-established model of the magister teacher, based on a one-to-many transmission of knowledge, is complemented by new configurations of teaching-learning practices. There are teaching practices that cultivate the ambition to combine the technological innovation with the psychological and pedagogical issues. Educational technologies, such as the Interactive Whiteboard, incorporate a new grammar and pragmatic in which the emphasis is placed on the

involvement and the participation of the student, as well as on a "reverse teaching", compared to the traditional one. The diffusion of online educational platforms, based on algorithmic architectures and data-driven approaches, also draws attention to a personalized way of learning and a datafication of teaching. Digital technologies are therefore stimulating a series of transformations in the socio-material order of the class affecting the spatial and temporal configuration of teaching. At the same time, they are embedded in the complexity of the educational contexts that rework their practical and symbolic value.

In the European framework of strengthening the relations between the labour market and education, we also witness the implementation of teaching practices associated with the idea of knowledge as an economic and social investment. Recently, a large field of critical investigation has highlighted how teaching aimed at improving the employment prospects of students is deeply affecting public values in education. At the same time, different points of view in the educational field claim to postpone the transmission of skills related to the labour market to broader educational objectives of social inclusion and civic participation.

The new proxemics imposed by the current pandemic challenge traditional spatial configuration, from the arrangement of desks to the mobile use of chairs, from the forms of communication in virtual environments to the interaction in the classroom. Therefore, this is to register the need to re-elaborate the ecology of the educational practices, starting from the socio-material space of learning.

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The Training of University Professors as an Axis for Achieving Participatory Citizenship Work on Relevant Social Problems as a Starting Point

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ABSTRACT: This study presents an investigation with university teachers in training. It analyzes the training itineraries followed by 44 teachers in terms of the introduction of citizenship education contents. The approach taken in the course seeks to achieve a model of citizenship education that is critical, participatory and committed to social transformation, through the treatment of relevant social problems. To this end, the usual practice of teachers is analyzed through a questionnaire that analyzes questions about their teaching practice (pre instrument) and a final public report (post instrument) that refers to the design, implementation and evaluation of the innovation developed in the training course. The study allows us to affirm that teachers, after participating in the training, advance in their training itinerary towards the introduction of citizenship education contents, although from a more professional than social perspective. Therefore, further research is needed to identify the obstacles that hinder the integration of this model in university teaching practice, in order to implement changes that will have an impact on them.

KEYWORDS: Course contents; Citizenship education; Relevant social problems; Teacher training.

1. Introduction

The current health crisis resulting from COVID-19 has highlighted, among other aspects, the need for a socially committed and responsible citizenry (Giroux, 2020). In this sense, education systems have a relevant role to play, since the paradigm shift towards a truly democratic society that aspires to achieve social justice and commitment to public goods depends largely on them.

Although in the compulsory stages of education this reality is intrinsically considered, as we advance to higher stages such as university, these issues are blurred (Díez Gutiérrez, 2018) as if democracy were an unmovable and achieved system and, therefore, its existence and survival did not depend on the citizens who are part of it (Biesta, 2016). This highlights the role of the university not only as a trainer of

professionals and specialized workers in different disciplines but also as a key player in the formation of global citizens, capable of facing and responding to complex problems (Hammond, Keating, 2018).

For its part, the Bologna plan attempted to change the teaching approach of university professors to put students at the center of the process, as well as to give more value to the development of citizenship and democratic competencies of university students (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018). However, some studies show how the transformation of university teaching after 20 years of Bologna has not undergone notable changes, neglecting, among others, teacher training (Fernández Fernández Fernández, Madinabeitia Ezkurra, 2020). This, although it should be key in this change, is still not regulated institutionally. This leads to a diverse and heterogeneous training offer in the different Spanish universities, although without common keys in terms of training strategies that allow progress towards a common goal that achieves the principles initially established by Bologna (Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019; Rodríguez, 2020).

Since the 1990s there has been research that has tried to delve deeper into the conceptions of university faculty about teaching and learning that pointed to the predominance of a model centered on the teacher and the subject (Prosser *et al.*, 1994; Samuelowicz, Bain, 1992). Subsequently, other studies, although minority and isolated, have tried to determine the influence of teacher education on changing teacher conceptions and teaching approaches (Postareff, Nevgi, 2015; Postareff *et al.*, 2007; Uiboleht *et al.*, 2016; Uiboleht *et al.*, 2018; Vilppu *et al.*, 2019), as well as in the development of their professional and didactic knowledge (Amunden *et al.*, 2008; de-Alba-Fernández, Porlán, 2020; Pérez-Rodríguez *et al.*, forthcoming). Despite the efforts invested in educational policies to change this situation, and the changes developed in university teaching, the citizenship training of university students continues to be neglected.

1.1. Citizenship and critical and creative thinking

Citizenship education should not be addressed exclusively from school but also in the university (Aktas *et al.*, 2017; Repáraz Abaitua *et al.*, 2015; Laker *et al.*, 2014; Viejo *et al.*, 2018). However, although there is numerous literature referring to the different conceptions of citizenship and the discussion about the ideal that we should reach in our contemporary societies, characterized by diversity, less attention has been paid to the pedagogical and curricular changes that should occur to foster democratic citizenship at this educational stage. On the other hand, in some cases studied, citizenship learning is linked to knowledge of political institutions and their processes, without developing values and attitudes (Laker *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to implement teaching and learning processes that favor that citizenship learning is not merely based on theoretical aspects, which can do little to change reality, but that are focused on developing democratic participation skills, i.e., those related to knowing how to do and be (Pineda-Alfonso *et al.*, 2018).

Democratic engagement requires bringing into play not only cognitive but also affective aspects (Wood *et al.*, 2018), in order to develop a critical and emancipatory citizenship (Schugurensky, Wolhuter, 2020) that is able to act even in a 'disobedient' way in the face of injustices (Ross, 2017; 2019) showing themselves as active and favoring the existence of a living and real democracy (Biesta, 2016).

We consider that in order to achieve this commitment and participation it is necessary that relevant social problems or controversial issues are worked on and analyzed at the university (Pérez-Rodríguez, forthcoming), which favor the reading and critical analysis of reality and the proposal of solutions or actions. All this will favor the development of critical and creative thinking and, therefore, decision-making for responsible social action (Estellés, Fischman, 2020; Santisteban, González Valencia, 2013; Larsen, 2014) and global citizenship education (Sant, 2018).

1.2. Relevant social problems at the university

The integration of education for citizenship in the university can be carried out in various ways. However, it has been demonstrated that, at the level of content, those contents that are left to transversality, linked above all to a participatory commitment, know-how and know-how to be, are forgotten.

Different successful experiences of integration of problematized contents focused on citizenship training have been developed in universities, although they seem to be a minority and depend on the voluntariness of the professionals involved. Of particular note are the service learning experiences that aim to link the university with the environment and are aimed the social, at academic/professional development of students (Redondo-Corcobado, Fuentes, 2020). Other experiences such as those implemented by Boni and Pérez-Foquet (2006), Boni-Aristizábal, Calbuig-Tormo (2016) and Boni and Calabuig (2017), contextualized in the field of technical careers, have shown how it is possible to develop engineering students' critical thinking and awareness through the treatment of global problems. In other universities such as the University of Ibagué, they have implemented a basic cycle of mandatory comprehensive training for all university students, regardless of the area (Astaíza-Martínez et al., 2019). They work from a systemic and citizen approach through complex social problem-solving projects. By analyzing the conceptions of citizenship of the faculty and students of this course they obtained an idea of active, reflective and transformative citizenship.

From our perspective, we do not understand problem solving as a merely methodological issue, which has been the most widely developed at the university. On the contrary, we understand that what is desirable is that the content proposals are articulated starting from relevant social problems or controversial issues (Pérez-Rodríguez *et al.*, forthcoming) as has been defended from the American critical social studies (Evans, 2004; Santisteban, 2019). The authors of the text, following Legardez (2017),

understand a relevant social problem as a current issue, relevant from a scientific and disciplinary point of view and that makes sense in the educational context in which it is worked. As Santisteban (2017, 559) rightly argues, reflecting on the teaching of social sciences, «disciplines are at the service of citizenship and should reflect on what they can contribute to people to solve relevant social problems». In agreement with the author, and going further, we defend the idea that all university disciplines, beyond the Social Sciences, should aspire to train university students also as citizens, allowing them not to be neutral in the face of problems and to question those assumptions and injustices that we socially accept uncritically (Pais, Costa, 2020; Waker, Fongwa, 2017).

2. Method

This paper presents some of the results of a broader interpretative and qualitative research (Pérez-Rodríguez *et al.*, forthcoming; Cohen *et al.*, 2007) contextualized in a Spanish university teacher training program. This study explores the progression itineraries of a group of university teachers in training regarding the introduction of citizenship education contents. For this purpose, we analyze how they work the citizenship perspective in their classes before participating in a training course (pre) and how they manage to change their teaching practice after the course (post).

The following lines present the context of the research, the participants and the research instruments.

2.1. Context of the research and participants

The Teacher Training and Teaching Innovation Program (FIDOP in Spanish) developed at the University of Seville has different lines of action, including a preliminary phase in which a General University Teaching Course (CGDU in Spanish) is developed and a permanent phase consisting of a Teacher Training and Innovation Network (REFID) (Porlán, Navarro, 2019).

The CGDU lasts 100 hours and is aimed at university teachers of different specialties and teaching experience. Its training strategy, based on the Classroom Improvement Cycles (CIMA in Spanish), seeks to progressively modify the teaching practices developed by the teaching staff. For this purpose, it employs different strategies, among others, peer discussion, analysis of their own practice through portfolios, peer observation and expert guidance (de-Alba-Fernández, Porlán, 2020).

The purpose of this course is for teachers to progressively consolidate a personal didactic model that is reflected upon and argued, in which the three fundamental elements of teaching practice (content, methodology and activities and evaluation) are coherent with each other and constructively aligned (Biggs, 2014).

The participants in this research are 44 teachers who have taken the course during 2017.

2.2. Instruments and system of categories

In order to analyze the progressions of the participants in the research and determine whether the course favors the integration of social problems as articulators of the contents, two instruments have been considered: a previous questionnaire (pre) in which the teachers answer questions related to their usual teaching practice and a final public report (post) in which they must collect the design, implementation and evaluation of the CIMA carried out during the course. Regarding the contents of citizenship education that teachers developed both in their classroom practice and in the innovation implemented, the system of categories shown in Table 1 was considered. As can be seen, it is a system with 4 levels in progression, where level 1 is the simplest as it does not include citizenship education contents and level 4 is the most complex as it articulates the entire knowledge framework around relevant social problems or controversial issues.

TAB. 1. Category system

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Category	Level 1 (L1)	Level 2 (L2)	Level 3 (L3)	Level 4 (L4)
Citizenship	Contents related to	Contents	Contents related to	Contents related
education	education for	related to	education for	to education for
contents	citizenship are not	education for	citizenship are	citizenship are
	included. Conceptual	citizenship	beginning to be	beginning to be
	contents, information,	are not	introduced. They	introduced.
	facts, theories or	considered.	refer to those linked	They refer to
	theoretical principles	The contents	to the exercise of	those linked to
	of the discipline of	are	being a good	the exercise of
	reference are	formulated as	professional: ethics	being a good
	considered.	disciplinary	and deontology.	teacher: ethics
		problems.		and deontology.

Source: Pérez-Rodríguez et al., forthcoming.

3. Results

The results of the study (Table 2) show that in the pre-course (before participating in the training course), the majority of teachers are at level 1 (72,8%), characterized by not including content to educate citizenship, compared to a minority level 4 who already work in their usual practice with a proposal of content articulated around relevant social problems or controversial issues (6,8%).

After the completion of the course (post-course moment), teachers move towards higher levels, especially towards level 2 (27,3%) in which they begin to consider problems, but from a disciplinary perspective, and level 3 (22,7%) in which the introduction of citizenship education contents is linked to more professional and social issues. Not many teachers manage to reach level 4 (13,6%).

TAB. 2. Progression itineraries (pre-post)

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Levels	Pre	Post
	F (%)	F (%)
Level 1	32 (72,8%)	16 (36,4%)
Level 2	6 (13,6%)	12 (27,3%)
Level 3	3 (6,8%)	10 (22,7%)
Level 4	3 (6,8%)	6 (13,6%)
Total	44 (100%)	44 (100%)

Source: Pérez-Rodríguez et al., forthcoming.

Conclusions

The work presented here highlights how the training of university professors based on the analysis of their own practice and the implementation of changes favors the integration of citizenship education in the university, through the treatment of social problems or controversial topics.

As shown in the results presented above, most of the faculty before participating in the training course did not consider in their classes contents related to citizenship education and, therefore, did not favor critical and creative thinking of their students or ideological positioning in their classes. After participating in the course and analyzing the plots of knowledge developed in their usual practice, teachers began to introduce problematized contents focused on educating for a more participatory and critical citizenship (Pineda-Alfonso et al., 2019). However, although some teachers are making progress and including citizenship education contents, these are linked to a more professional (level 3) than social (level 4) perspective, revealing different obstacles to reach the level that we consider as a reference and desirable (Pérez-Rodríguez et al., forthcoming). From our perspective, the obstacles that prevent this total integration from being possible should be further investigated in order to improve the training strategies employed and to favor the integration of citizenship education at the university.

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