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**FERNANDO SADIO RAMOS**  
Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra

## Report on an experience of in-service teacher training on human rights and citizenship education

### ABSTRACT

*This article presents a training experience on human rights and citizenship education that took place at three in-service teacher training courses. This experience occurred in the more general context of an ongoing 'Human Rights and Citizenship Education' project, overseen by our institution, the College of Education – Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, University of Granada and the Council of Europe (particularly, the European Youth Centre Budapest). In-service teacher training is an important component of this project, which seeks excellence and high quality in both teaching and training. The use of non-formal education methodologies is a distinctive feature of this experience and of the project.*

### KEYWORDS

teacher training  
human rights  
citizenship education  
non-formal education

### PROLOGUE

This text aims at uncovering some aspects of the work we perform at the Escola Superior de Educação of the Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra, and, in particular, of our experience on human rights and citizenship education at three in-service teacher training courses. The need for teacher training in citizenship education derives from the fact that the Portuguese Basic Education Curriculum contains

a transversal curricular component on citizenship education, as well as a curricular non-disciplinary component of civic education (Afonso 2007; DGIDC 2010a, 2010b; Ramos 2007), thus corresponding to the great importance given to the students' personal and social development by this educational system (LBSE 1986; Ramos 2007). Our institution already has considerable experience in delivering teacher training with regard to value education in general (Ramos 2008; Reis, Ramos and Cunha 2007).

This work takes place within the context of a 'Human Rights and Citizenship Education' project, which we have been implementing since 2002 at the institution we are members of and at the University of Granada, through the Research Group DEDiCA. This project has several dimensions, such as research, training and community and social intervention in the area of human rights and citizenship education, amongst others. The activities include a series of diversified tasks covering all the aforementioned dimensions, of which in-service teacher training is an important aspect. This project continually pursues excellence and high quality in teaching and training. Cooperation with the Council of Europe, particularly with the European Youth Centre Budapest, is an essential characteristic of the project. The result of these vectors is the training experience presented here, in a descriptive and qualitative perspective. Our text seeks to present the training experience in itself, as well as its assessment by the trainees, hence sharing their experience of personal and professional development, as well as their opinion on the training performed – in particular its usefulness for their teaching work.

The connection with the Council of Europe's Human Rights Programme is peculiar to this experience, making it unique. Therefore, it is not possible to refer it to other experiences. Nevertheless, citizenship education is a major concern of the Portuguese National Curriculum and we will refer to it in order to establish the need for such specific training of teachers.

## THE TRAINING COURSES

There is a remarkable need for the preparation of teachers to impart citizenship education due to the importance that this curricular element takes on in the Portuguese Basic Education Curriculum (Afonso 2007; DGIDC 2010a, 2010b; Ramos 2007). The specific historical circumstances, such as a 48-year-long dictatorship and the subsequent implementation of a democratic regime, are on the basis of the importance given to the citizenship's matters in the syllabus (Brederode-Santos 2000: 53–62, 2004; Menezes, Xavier, Cibebe et al. 1999; Ramos 2007; Silva and Cibebe 2000). In fact, this curricular element appears in the current curriculum as a major requirement, since citizenship education is a transversal component, which means that all subjects should focus on citizenship. As well as a curricular non-disciplinary component, it also appears as *civic education*, thus corresponding to the great importance given by this educational system to the students' personal and social development (CRSE 1988: 119; LBSE 1986; Menezes, Xavier, Cibebe et al. 1999; Ramos 2007).

In this context, every teacher has to be prepared to conduct this practice, not only as the teacher of a specific subject or equivalent curricular area but also as someone who is able to focus the subjects on citizenship and human rights, and their implications (Abrantes, Cibebe and Simão 2002; Pureza, Praia, Cibebe et al. 2001).



### **Presentation of the training courses**

With the aim of responding to the need of preparing teachers for this pedagogical task, our Human Rights and Citizenship Education project implemented an educational and training proposal in three in-service teacher training courses, prepared and performed by the author of this article.

An important dimension of in-service teacher training is ensured by teacher training centres, which are associations of schools set up in order to perform this task. As well as similar ones aiming at enhancing the preparation of associated teachers, these associations also provide career management counselling. In our case, the training took place in a centre situated in a vast region on the north of Portugal. Each session was performed during one academic year, and an associated school was the venue for the training. The idea of rotating the venue was to ensure that most of the associated teachers were able to attend a training session. Teachers need the training for two main purposes: that of acquiring more competencies and that of progressing in their careers. The training sessions were scheduled for when the enrolment took place (by October/November of each academic year) and lasted for seven weekly sessions, interrupted by school holidays and other school commitments, which meant that the training was usually resumed in February, and finished by May.

The main purpose of these training initiatives was to disseminate human rights and citizenship education in the Council of Europe's perspective on this kind of education, due to our mutual cooperation. Together with this purpose is the dissemination of *Compass: The Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People* (edited by the Council of Europe, in 2002; Brander, Keen and Lemineur 2002) and non-formal education methodologies.

In Table 1 we may find the total number of the teacher trainees that have attended the three courses, distributed by their level of teaching and gender.

The teaching experience of the attendants ranged between 2 and 22 years in the profession. Participants of Course 1 are primary and secondary school teachers – from the 1st to the 12th year; participants of Courses 2 and 3 are pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers – 3–5 years and 1st to 12th year.

As in many other countries, the teaching profession is mostly dominated by female professionals, as the table shows. The coincidental fact that Course 2 registers a gender balance in numbers, which was not sought by the organizing training centre, is notable.

There was a large variety of teaching levels and years of experience. This diversity enabled very stimulating working groups, with very considerable and rich experiences of team building, communication and exchange of experiences. Some of the performed training activities addressed gender issues (such as domestic violence), which usually raise very controversial ideas and opinions, especially in a country where there still is a number of considerable

	<b>Course 1</b>	<b>Course 2</b>	<b>Course 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Men	4	6	3	13
Women	18	7	14	39
Total	22	13	17	52

Table 1: Number and gender of teacher trainees.

fatalities as a result of that social problem. It was possible to observe that the participants were able to face its different aspects in the most empathic, objective and effective manner, trying to analyse the phenomena and apply these to particular situations they knew, and improve their understanding. The diversity of the groups was mirrored in a set of members with extensive experience in terms of different teaching levels, and also with a considerable knowledge of diverse social environments and contexts. These conditions resulted in a remarkable effectiveness, both in the training sessions and in the tasks assigned for the autonomous extra-session work.

The data presented in Table 1 is from the training courses registries, thus including all those that have attended and completed the course.

The courses were defined to attain the following objectives:

1. To reflect on the importance of human rights and citizenship education in contemporary world;
2. To relate human rights issues with the personal and social development of the educational agents required by the Portuguese Educational Act (LBSE 1986);
3. To develop the trainees' knowledge, skills and attitudes with regard to human rights and citizenship education concepts and activities;
4. To put various strategies and activities of non-formal education connected with human rights and citizenship education into practice;
5. To familiarize the participants with *Compass'* perspectives and activities.

### **Programme of the courses**

The following work programme was defined to achieve the previous objectives:

1. Brief overview of human rights and citizenship education in Europe and its current challenges. Human rights and citizenship education as a prominent contemporary concern of contemporary society;
2. Analysis of the skills and values of trainers committed to human rights and citizenship education;
3. Practical activities of group dynamics to promote and develop attitudes and skills connected with human rights and citizenship education and included in *Compass*.

Various practical activities to promote democratic values and human rights are implemented at the same time as the theoretical treatment of the programmed subjects. For example:

1. All equal – all different (on racism and xenophobia);
2. Ashique's story (on child labour);
3. Different wages (on discrimination at work);
4. Do we have alternatives? (on bullying);



5. Domestic affairs (on domestic violence);
6. Electioneering (on representative democracy);
7. Let every voice be heard (on democracy at school);
8. Path to equality-land (on gender equality).

The implemented activities addressed the following issues: democratic citizenship, globalization, racism and discrimination, interculturality, child labour, youth aggression and bullying, domestic violence and violence in general. Based on these, the trainees put together a portfolio on their themes, which included several materials susceptible of being used in future teaching of citizenship and human rights (information, photographs, videos, etc.).

The following results were obtained from the training:

1. Activities led by the trainees;
2. Portfolios written on the subjects of these activities;
3. Other products resulting from the implementation of the human rights and citizenship education activities.

The aim of the training, in line with the ongoing cooperation between the Escola Superior de Educação of the Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra and the Council of Europe, was to promote and disseminate *Compass*. Thus, it was the main tool used for the training.

Other instruments were also used, such as an article on citizenship education written by the author of this article (Ramos 2007), and a selection of texts for encouraging group discussions on the essence of education, democratic citizenship and human rights (Ramos 2006).

The courses were conducted under a basic methodological presupposition about the relevance of the teacher's person for the pedagogical relationship. From the start we assume the relational and intersubjective essence of the pedagogical act, of which the Teachers' *person* is an important and decisive element, with the necessary implications in terms of his/her ethical and deontological development (Ramos 2005, 2008; Ramos and Reis 2005; Reis, Ramos and Cunha 2007). In the methodological procedures adopted during the training, we aimed at placing the trainees in a training situation similar to the pedagogical situation in its activities, contents and procedures. The idea is to make them go through similar experiences as those of the students when learning these issues. The similarity was achieved by doing the same activities when possible, and dealing with the same themes they might use when working with the students in future teaching situations. Naturally, the level in which the themes were presented has to be adapted to the age and teaching level of the students. With that procedure, firstly it is possible to produce an empathetic understanding of the students' experiences when dealing with these (adapted) issues and activities. Secondly, it is possible to use those personal experiences to raise a transformative conscience of the teacher by allowing circumstances in which they are faced with the essence of value education, as well as of education as value conveyer, and reflect upon it. This personal transformation of the trainees may be of importance for future pedagogical practice on these issues and on teaching in general.

The methodology used included several procedures, such as:

1. Group reading and discussion of texts;
2. Brief theoretical explanations;
3. Practical group activities led, above all, by teacher trainees, based on *significant, cooperative and participative learning*.

These activities are conducted on the premise that the *group* is the real *learning subject* and the systematic use of *group discussion* and *reflection* is promoted.

Beyond the face-to-face hours (25), the trainees have a further 25 non-classroom hours of written work and prepare materials and activities to apply in the training sessions and with their students.

### **ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE TRAINING COURSES**

The training courses were assessed and validated by this group of teacher trainees using a questionnaire, drawn up by the institution coordinating the training in the region. It contained both open (5) and closed (9) questions (these were answerable in a 1 to 5 scale, '1' being the less positive value and '5' the most positive). The evaluation made by the trainees was completed by daily observation and registration performed by the trainer, which goes in the same exact sense of the trainees' evaluation results. The answers given to the five open questions were used to produce the main *corpus* of a content analysis, which is made in a qualitative perspective. The quantitative results are included in this *corpus*. The biographical elements of the questionnaire only included the trainees' name, but it could be filled in anonymously, which was opted by seven of them. Therefore, it is not possible to cross data according to the different variables of the population.

The open question No. 1 was answered in the beginning of the first training session and it was kept with the rest of the evaluation questionnaire, in order to be accessible to the trainee by the time the rest of the questions were answered, in the end of the training sessions.

A total of three trainees were not present at the final of the courses and did not fill in their evaluation questionnaires. Therefore, there are 49 available evaluation questionnaires.

The open questions addressed:

- Their training expectations (1. 'I am attending this training session to learn or to master[. . .]');
- How the training met their expectations (2. 'To what extent did the training sessions meet my main expectations?');
- Training contents that can be used in their own teaching (3. 'Some of the contents of the training sessions which you think you will use in your future work');
- Possible obstacles to this use (4. 'Some obstacles that may prevent you from putting the knowledge and skills acquired in the training sessions into practice');
- Other comments (5. 'Additional comments').



The data obtained was processed by analysing the contents from a qualitative perspective (Vala 2003). The validation objectives of the respective categories were defined afterwards, considering that the questionnaire had been written by another entity. This is the reason why the log units for a same objective and a same category could be taken from several questions, although the accuracy and requirements of the exhaustive and exclusive categories are respected for their internal validation at all times (Navarro and Díaz 1999: 194; Vala 2003; Van der Maren 1996: 137).

The analysed assessments are subordinated to the following *objectives*:

1. To discover the teacher trainees' expectations of this training (Question 1).
2. To find out whether the training meets this group's expectations (Questions 2 and 5).
3. To find out whether these teachers will perceive personal, social and professional development in the training (Questions 2 and 5).
4. To find out whether this trainee group thought that the training would be useful and applicable to their own teaching in the future (Questions 2, 3 and 4).
5. To identify obstacles perceived by the trainees concerning whether the contents of the sessions could be applied in their own teaching (Questions 3 and 4).

These objectives will lead to the establishment of the corresponding *analysis categories*:

1. *Expectations*. The log units that fall under this category came from Question 1. It covers the trainees' assumptions prior to the training and shows their expectations on what would be delivered.
2. *Meeting expectations*. This category covers log units withdrawn from Questions 2 and 5. It intends to determine how the trainees think their initial expectations were met by the training performed.
3. *Personal, social and professional development*. This category includes its log units from the answers to Questions 2 and 5 and it detaches elements of perceived development of the trainee in consequence of the training performed.
4. *Relevance of the training/future application*. Category 4 refers to Questions 3, 4 and 2 and it is aimed at covering the perception of the Trainees about the usefulness of the training for their teaching activity.
5. *Obstacles and difficulties to applying contents*. Log units for this category were obtained from Questions 4 and 3. It aims at getting the perception of the trainees about the main obstacles and difficulties they think are most likely to prevent them from applying what they learned in the training.

Once the *log units* were detected, they were integrated into a data reduction matrix. The following aspects of the analysis can be highlighted. After each analysis, we will present tables with the obtained log units, corresponding to the category that is being referred (we keep the registration number of the data processing).



## RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

In a general and brief overview of the results, it is possible to say that the opinions show a great deal of satisfaction with the (1) training received; (2) subjects covered; (3) how these activities were implemented; (4) relevance of the training to the teaching practice.

### Open questions of the questionnaire

*Category 1.* The inherent analysis in Category 1 (Expectations) provides reference elements that can encompass indications given by the log units of other categories. Consequently, it is adopted as the prior and necessary basis for understanding the data provided by the trainees in their assessments of the training. This analysis provides a series of expectations put forward by the participants in connection with:

1. The need to acquire knowledge, as well as materials on the specific training subjects (democratic citizenship, human rights and current issues, education in values, personal and social training, and educational strategies or activities);
2. To learn how to make groups, putting suitable techniques into practice fit for purpose;
3. Exchanging and discussing ideas/reflections/experiences;
4. Interest in receiving training (in specific subjects and in interpersonal relationship skills), which can be used in daily teaching activities, both in the classroom and in the community;
5. Personal enrichment;
6. Interest in career progression by acquiring the necessary accreditation.

In Table 2, we can see some of the statements collected from those answers. What comes out of the assumption of these expectations and the revealed needs are in line with what is shown by the study on the Portuguese teachers' previously referred perceptions (Menezes, Afonso, Gião et al. 2005), mainly the lack of specific preparation for this curricular element and the belief in its potential for the students improvement and its consequence in society change.

*Category 2.* The identification of expectations is followed by the analysis of the data included in Category 2 (Meeting expectations) (Table 3). The records obtained indicate, as a result of the expressed views, that expectations were met. Some records even indicate that all expectations were met or even surpassed. The reasons given for this satisfaction are the organization, coordination and dynamism of the training, and more importantly the fact that the group was actively involved in the tasks. It is also possible to see the overall satisfaction as the training met their expectations and the consequent effort required from them for those months of overwork and the awareness-raising for some of the issues addressed in the training.

*Category 3.* As long as the subject of training is not merely converted into school contents to be conveyed and assessed at an objective level, and is taken as the transformation of the target learners and their praxis, we aim at analysing the perception of the latter aspect as revealed by the trainees in Category 3 (personal, social and professional development) (Table 4), which to us is relatively

<b>Category 2 – Expectations</b>
<b>Log units</b>
2. The best way of raising students' awareness and respect for human rights and to lead them not only to act accordingly but also to encourage others to do so. 'Mustering' information that will enable my own recognition and assessment of democracy.
4. Rights and duties of citizens. To learn how to live in citizenship. Raising awareness and encouraging respect towards the liberty of 'others'. Contemporary issues: human rights, violence, democracy.
8. Solving/discussing relevant ideas on certain issues related to the topic. Debating certain ideas regarding citizenship with the students, in the classroom.
11. Living harmoniously in society, observing human rights/democratic citizenship. Discussing and debating ideas. Theme-related issues.
28. Choosing which strategies to use in the classroom in order to call upon and execute this issue. Motivational strategies designed to encourage students to live their 'citizenship'. Strategies that will not only promote the students' observance of citizenship's rules but also improve their respect towards others.

Table 2:

<b>Category 2 – Meeting expectations</b>
<b>Log units</b>
1. [It] exceeded my expectations, since the tutor was able to deliver very appealing sessions, resorting to participation and dialogue.
2. I also appreciated the fact that recent events, as well as historical affairs, were included in the debates and related to the issues that were approached throughout the sessions.
14. The opportunity of applying issues to personal and social training. The promotion of collective thinking on citizenship and human rights.
15. I became aware of child labour, domestic abuse, youth violence and workplace discrimination.
18. It surpassed my expectations in every way.

Table 3:

more important than the others. The data analysis makes it possible to verify that these teachers have perceived a change in themselves, reflected on the three levels of development that were referred. Consequently, the following results are highlighted:

1. The acquisition of knowledge, with regard to the themes, contents and group dynamics;
2. Raising awareness and the change in attitude regarding values and preconceived ideas, as well as the capacity to act accordingly consistently;



3. Knowledge of oneself and others;
4. The development of capacities and skills (creativity, spontaneity, critical spirit, presentation, discussion of ideas/arguments, interpersonal relationships, application and practical implementation of education in values).

As we have seen in the aforementioned study (Menezes, Afonso, Gião et al. 2005), these results are also relevant according to the opinions they present, and they cover a wide range of requirements and necessities of citizenship/civic education teaching and learning. We would like to particularly stress the fact that our trainees are aware of the importance of the teachers' *person* to perform this kind of education, and the development that has to be carried out in order for it to become possible.

*Category 4.* This category (relevance of training and future application) (Table 5) aimed at verifying the teachers' perception of the practical usefulness of the training for their teaching activities. Satisfaction with the training results is also pointed out. The perceived usefulness ranges from the fact that teachers are able to apply the contents, themes and activities implemented (tempered by adaptation to the specific circumstances of the course) to learnt group dynamics techniques, especially in the perspective of their ability to

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**Category 3 – Personal, social and professional development**

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**Log units**

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1. I developed skills not only related to citizenship and human rights, but I also improved my creativity, spontaneity and critical capacity.
  4. These were clever, useful and up-to-date training sessions, where there was no room for dullness. We discussed relevant daily life issues, which we sometimes tend to disregard, in spite of their very real nature. This training forced us to think, to debate and to share our experiences on the matter we discussed.
  6. It proved to be a very relevant space for thinking and debating ideas. It raised our awareness for certain issues that are sometimes neglected.
  9. I developed basic skills that will be useful in my teaching activities.
  12. It opened up new horizons for me in every field. It gave me a better knowledge of myself, with regards to my relationship with others. In the end, I gained a different perspective on how others accept me and collaborate with me. I realized that teachers are great for dealing with these issues in theory, but not necessarily in their daily lives.
  13. The tutor was able to show the trainees all the prejudices that still influence [them].
  17. It allowed me to develop skills on group dynamics.
  21. 'It allowed us to develop skills on group dynamics.'
  23. Above all, I appreciated the fact that trainees had the opportunity to share their opinions and to be creative.
  26. The training sessions observed human rights and democratic citizenship. That was the reason why I got so involved in my self-improvement.
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Table 4:

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**Category 4 – Relevance of training and future application**

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**Log units**

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1. Methodology of group dynamics. Some of the topics proposed for the practical part of the training. Generally, I believe the issues discussed in these training sessions can be put into practice (if not elsewhere, then at least in the classroom).
  7. All the topics that were suggested for group work were very useful. They were so relevant and real that they can provide group work and debates, as well as the sharing of experiences between students, therefore improving their democratic sensibility and also promoting the exchange of opinions.
  10. They can be a tool for the development of student skills. Improvement of critical thinking, promotion of values and of a sense of responsibility.
  20. Interpersonal and intellectual skills; human rights; choosing the values that should act as guidelines for education.
  27. To use these issues in order to discuss them with the students in civic education classes (Portuguese school subject). Some of the provided teaching resources, as well as some of the strategies and activities to develop with the students, which I considered to be very interesting for practical work.
  35. The ground-breaking way of using them with my students.
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Table 5:

promote values, students personal and social development, their critical thinking, sense of responsibility, interpersonal and intellectual skills and sharing experiences.

*Category 5.* Finally, we verified whether and to what extent the teachers perceived difficulties in transferring the acquired training to their practical activity. Consequently, Category 5 (Obstacles and difficulties for applicability) (Table 6) has recorded the trainees' perspectives. The log units are in concordance with the data obtained in the previous category, and they are above all focused on aspects that are external to the presented training proposals and capable of being exceeded by the autonomy and imagination or creativity of the teachers and the institutions where they work. The following are especially to be noted:

1. Lack of resources, facilities and time;
2. Lack of understanding and support by superior authorities;
3. Scope of programmes and rigid curricula;
4. Organization of school activities;
5. Resistant members of the Education Community, and of the community in general;
6. Preconceived views and ideas;
7. Students' lack of knowledge;
8. The impossibility of applying certain subjects or activities, in view of the specific circumstances of some students or groups of students.



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**Category 5 – Obstacles and difficulties for applicability**


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**Log units**


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1. Scarce means and manifest lack of reasoning and support by decision-makers.
  6. The students' notorious lack of basic skills. Relationship between space and students. The short duration of this kind of training.
  7. Too extensive curricula. Shortage of time.
  8. The resistance offered by other elements of the educational community and the community in general.
  9. Frames of mind, prejudices.
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Table 6:

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean (N = 49)</b>
1. Global satisfaction with the training course	4.3
2. Adequate contents and activities for the programme's objectives	4.7
3. Contribution of the activities developed to promote new learning	4.4
4. Development of the activities within the expected time	4.3
5. Motivation to move forward through autonomous work	4.6
6. The methodology used was adequate in practical terms	4.4
7. The methodology used was adequate in theoretical terms	4.5
8. The management of resources was adequate	4.4
9. The space was adequate	4.2

Table 7:

**Close questions of the questionnaire**

The evaluation questionnaire also contained, as stated above, nine closed questions, and briefly described in a quantitative analysis. It included a 1–5 scale, 1 being the lowest evaluation and 5 the highest. Forty-nine trainees answered the questionnaire, although the total number of trainees attending the courses was 52, as previously stated. The questions and the mean that resulted from the answers may be seen in Table 7.

Although item No. 9 does not depend strictly on the trainer's capacity and resources, it could be the subject to adaptations and changes. Therefore, we have also chosen to consider its result in this evaluation, which shows the trainees' satisfaction with the conditions offered for the training courses, although it is the lower value obtained in the process of evaluation. The remaining values are higher, and it is notable that all of them are above the value 4 of the scale.

As stated above, the observation and registration made by the trainer confirms the evaluation *corpus* conclusion, both qualitative and quantitative.

The major difficulty which we had to deal with was the schedule of the training sessions. There were seven sessions, six of which were four hours long and one five, always starting at 18:30. Usually, the trainees had been working all

day and some of them had to travel from the schools to the training centre. This might have influenced the psychological and physical conditions under which they would attend the sessions, but the training methodology was particularly motivating, and lead them to remarkable levels of dedication to the tasks they were asked to perform, along with their usual work with the students. The learner-centred perspective and participatory nature of the training are among the most important factors explaining the positive evaluation achieved by the training programme.

## EPILOGUE

In conclusion, we would like to remember the descriptive and qualitative nature of this report, which only enables us to withdraw applicable results, and not to transfer them to any other situations. What is valid for this group of trainees is by no means transferable to others. Nevertheless, by presenting an experience and reflecting on its characteristics, we open the possibility of transferring the main conclusions and valid aspects to new training experiences and try them in other contexts and examples. Therefore, the conclusions drawn in this report are practice-oriented and have the scope of improving new and future sessions of the kind. We have been applying the results of the experience here described to other training situations, incorporating them in their programming in order to potentiate the effects on the trainees, and the outcomes have been of good use.

We think that the evaluation performed by the trainees allowed us to conclude about the usefulness of this training programme. It confirms that a teacher training which (1) is performed in a learner-centred perspective; (2) involves people's previous and daily experience, as well as calls to their participation and autonomy; (3) appeals to their emotions, feelings, individual expression and commitment as well as their personal interaction. It may result in a very gratifying, useful and motivating process that the participants may recognize, cherish and respond with goodwill and work. The use of non-formal education methodologies was particularly important to achieve this result in the experience, like in others we have performed.

This training enabled teachers to develop personal and social characteristics, which are expected to help their development and that of their students. At the same time, the training gave them considerable satisfaction. These are desirable and necessary conditions to improve teachers' personal and professional fulfilment, by giving a small contribution to their perception of the value dimension of education and their role in the educative process.

The use of these same processes in the initial training of teachers is, in general, a possibility worth considering in formal educational contexts, given that they are also capable of producing the same effects in children and young people, a fact that has already been seen in other similar initiatives that we have organized, and that will be covered in other articles.

Due to the reasons we have endeavoured to explain in the preceding pages, we may declare that the results of the training are very positive. There are, nevertheless, some critical points we would like to highlight to give a more complete vision on the range of the intervention performed with this training experience.

First of all, it should be referred that the training is but a start of an ideally much longer process to be accomplished with the trainees. As a matter of fact,



25 hours are undoubtedly insufficient to produce a proficient competency of the trainees on the subject of human rights and citizenship education methodologies, processes and contents. It becomes possible with this specific training to raise the trainees' awareness to the issues involved and to share with them some main features on this kind of education. So, there should be a continuous training process with the same group, but the conditions faced by in-service teacher training in Portugal can be difficult at times.

Secondly, from our observation, we have identified some aspects in our trainees that must be dealt with in a second round of training, and to overcome, that is to say, centring of the educative process around the teacher. In fact, our teachers are much used to teach in a traditional perspective that centres the educational act on the teacher and leaves little or no initiative to the student. This is absolutely inconvenient and useless in this kind of education.

Another aspect to be intervened on concerns the shortage of teachers' competencies and resources by systematically using group-dynamic techniques and activities. This should be the target of a second training intervention, as well as the conception, production and use of student-adapted pedagogical materials for human rights and citizenship education.

Nevertheless, to perform the improvement and follow-up initiatives previously pointed out, it is of decisive importance that the teachers start by perceiving and experiencing something different and that they have the opportunity of applying it in their training and practice.

Finally, we ought to mention that the continuity of such programmes depends on many factors, the most dangerous of them being political, namely of a wild capitalist nature. As a matter of fact, the Portuguese policies of education have been submitted, for the last six years, to substantially unstable and contradictory processes that have resulted, amongst other relevant aspects, in a serious compromise and general harassment towards the Portuguese teaching class which, in its turn, has been submitted to a considerable work overload. Therefore, the results of the training experience reported in this article, prompt motivation, if we consider the potential of personal growth and group building.

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### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Fernando Sadio Ramos is associate professor and researcher. He works at *Escola Superior de Educação do Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra* (Portugal) and is a member of Research Group HUM-742 D.E.Di.C.A. – Educational Development of Didactics in the Andalusian Community of the University of Granada in Spain and of Research Group LIF – Language, Interpretation and Philosophy, University of Coimbra. He dedicates his work to the field of philosophy, ethics, intercultural education, human rights education and teacher training since 1986. Latest publications as coordinator: (1) *Lançando Pontes para a Interculturalidade/Tendiendo Puentes hacia la Interculturalidad [Building Bridges towards Interculturality]* (Coimbra/ Granada, 2010); (2) *Exedra. Revista Científica [Scientific Journal]*, Thematic Number 2011: *Estamentos Educativos y Diferencias Culturales del Alumnado. Diseño de actividades para el fomento de la socialización (EEDCA) [Educational Sectors and Students' Cultural Differences: Developing Activities for promoting Socialization]*; (3) *DEDiCA. REVISTA DE EDUCAÇÃO E HUMANIDADES [JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND THE HUMANITIES]*, Nº 1 (March) 2011.

Contact: Fernando Sadio Ramos, R. Gen. Humberto Delgado, 402, 5.º Esquerdo, 3030-327 Coimbra, Portugal

E-mail: [sadoramos@gmail.com](mailto:sadoramos@gmail.com)

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