The 'Good Memory' Club

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The Club: symbolic and historic imaginative resources

Talking about the past is an easy task for those who can turn memories into hope for the present and inspiration for the future. History teachers understand that memories are fundamental to how we construct, deconstruct and structure identity. The first narratives we encounter as children and young people - stories, poems, songs, images, words, and talk - enrich our imagination and remain in the memory.

Generalised curricular reforms in Portugal ten years ago allowed the organisation of project clubs, and in my school the English teacher developed one such activity. My interest and object is to spend time talking about Portuguese culture, and to involve students in 'tours' of historical monuments. Our club was named after João I, whose portrait became our symbol. João I was elected King of Portugal after the crisis of 1383-85 and his activities initiated Portuguese maritime expansion in the Atlantic and the Portuguese diaspora. The king's marriage to the English Philippa of Lancaster reinforced the ancient alliance of Portugal with England and helped to guarantee Portuguese independence from the kingdom of Castile. Over the centuries the Portuguese have taken their history, dreams and myths across oceans and to the New World, but they did not forget their culture's European roots. The identity of a state is also part of the identity of its people. A community is not a natural phenomenon but a human desire forged in the space and time, although similar desires have driven Europe to conflicts and war.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) declares everyone has the right to education as a guarantee of peace.

> … Education shall be directed to the full development of the Human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace...

The problem of globalisation reinforces that '…all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms in a peaceful struggle for a better world' (Henriques, 2002, p. 511).

Clubs in Europe - a network for peace

Education for citizenship challenges teachers. All societies and education systems have an element of education for citizenship, whether implicit or indirect, and an essential of the curriculum development process must be an examination of the underlying assumptions in this (Rowe, 1995, p.46). The evaluation of educational innovation has traditionally adopted models of enquiry taken from the physical sciences, but since 1992 the main strategy has focused on an evolving matrix of evaluation activities. These have

significant implications for curriculum development in schools and for teacher training, and in the priorities given to the reorganising and restructuring of plans and projects, (Bell, 1995, p. 137). If education is seen as a development project, our activities need constant re-evaluation and debate.

We work in a complex society based on networks of knowledge and learning. The OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) CERI project (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation) focuses on European construction. This analyses differences between European peoples, enhancing issues that support union. Convergence criteria are not only economic, but also a myth of community, transformed by civic education.

Of the many possible meanings for 'curriculum', one is concerned with what the older generation transmits to younger generations. Curriculum is not only about programmes and topics of study: its understanding includes the historic, the political, overtones of racism and sexism, phenomenological understandings, autobiographical, aesthetical, theological, and international dimensions. The curriculum is the cultural site on which generations struggle to define themselves and the world. Such an orientation now receives greater emphasis in schools, through the clearer definitions of desired learning objectives and by creating the conditions for more autonomous curriculum work based on cultural studies and on developing and sharing experiences through appropriate networks.

Curriculum is about what we think should be acknowledged, at a certain moment and within a certain system, and is not confined to programmatic texts. The most debate is about curriculum as an organised proposal: intentional, finished and constructed to achieve desired knowledge, leading to teacher autonomy within the European Community.

The Memory Club illustrates the disparities of cultural diversification. Identity and citizenship emerge from experience and theory, but are culturally configured by beliefs, behaviours and values. An anthropological concept of culture is inevitably normative, but is an essential component of the concept of culture as a way of life. Intellectual disciplines, just as other social projects, develop creation myths to account for the origins of their most fundamental beliefs and concepts (Bennett, 1998, p.87).

Rather than ignoring or seeking to invalidate everyday social experiences, educators must enable students to build connections between the personal and political, and thus prepare them for participatory citizenship functioning across a range of social domains (Buckingham, 2000, p.223). One qualitative indicator of school grades configures civic formation as an interpersonal relation: a reflection on the meaning of the school community, autonomy and responsibility (ESAD). This evaluation is pertinent in the NAC-New Curricular Areas- (Project Area/Company Study/Civic Formation). Continued evaluation in schools as a formative strategy has one more ambition: to fulfil and enhance the resources required for autonomy and responsibility in Europe's schools, as a resource and a store for human creativity.

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