

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT A JOURNEY TO CITIZENSHIP

Upon starting this project a major problem I had to face was deciding what part of the whole spectrum of *citizenship* would be tackled within a 35-hour module, which was by no means a trivial task. Singling out topics, sorting and discarding materials was hard work: I could find scores of topics which somehow related to citizenship. I had to kill off ideas and shrink possibilities without having the feeling of losing track or missing the main target. Another element also deserving consideration was the fact that there are some issues which are cross-curricular or already covered in some social-studies classes, which was more a drawback than an advantage, since I did not want to step on any other subject's scheme. Given the fact that the materials here were to cover a 35-hour long credit, in order to be realistic, a number of certainly attractive issues ("eating disorders", "participation", "roadrage" or "death penalty" to cite but a few examples) were to be discarded or their presence ("poverty" and "violence") was to be significantly reduced or laterally tackled. Similarly, there were a great number of activities and materials which, however interesting they might have looked, needed to be withdrawn mainly because of procedural and interest reasons. It was not the point here to produce loads and loads of exercises and scores of pages and materials that time-minded teachers would not ever use in class, basically because of that: there is a short time granted for that. The sole objective was to plan wisely, considering all these criteria. In my mind lies, however, the conviction that the selected range of dimensions tackled all over the present project will in a certain measure contribute to help pupils understand better some major challenges they (and society at large) are facing.

A journey to citizenship features a series of topics for the Citizenship classroom (classe de ciutadania) to be used by teachers to prepare students to take an active role as citizens in nowadays' demanding society. The module looks at ways and strategies to help the teacher implement this subject in a successful way. The topics presented all through the unit are student-centered topics that are designed for second cycle ESO. However, it could be adapted for the citizenship class at any stage in the ESO or Batxillerat curriculum.

Established by the new Education Law as part of the statutory curriculum for secondary schools, citizenship and human rights education is considered a cross-curricular subject that requires a whole-school planning. The materials contained herein aim at helping students become better, active citizens, which means:

- ❖ develop confidence and responsibility
- ❖ develop a healthy, safe lifestyle
- ❖ change from simple bystanders to active social participants and learn to listen to others' point of view
- ❖ be able to exercise free choice and act responsibly
- ❖ learn to live in a global society and learn about the rights they are entitled to as well as the responsibilities
- ❖ respect the differences between people
- ❖ learn to respect the environment

A series of topics have been carefully compiled on the grounds of the above-mentioned aims; topics that deal with a range of challenging issues that shape students' own lives, their way of being and the way they see things. These topics cover several aspects regarding students' reality (and in a wider sense, society's too) and are meant to help them become more aware, responsible, active and critical.

UNITS

The whole credit is divided up into six manageable units of work. Each unit deals with a specific topic. There are fully-detailed, individual session plans designed in such a way that the teacher does not need to follow a specific order. Every topic should take approximately five hours. However, the layout is not statutory; the teacher might consider using as much as he/she likes or spending as much time on each topic as he/she considers appropriate.

TOPICS

- ❖ Discrimination and identity
- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Racism, xenophobia and genocide
- ❖ Violence against women
- ❖ Rights and responsibilities
- ❖ Child abuse

The scheme of work for each unit is laid out in such a way that it encourages students to become active and engage in dialogue or debate and in activities about issues that concern them. The methodology used all through the module has followed a range of dimensions: clearness, simplicity and structure were considered paramount so as to achieve students' engagement. Activities increase in difficulty throughout the unit. Thus, they start from simple explanations and definitions and, as they progress through the unit, activities become more challenging and demanding. The different activities presented in each unit are varied and motivating. Occasional role-playing, videoconferencing or computing issues foster participation and responsibly acting among students. The units are aimed at pupils who are attaining at certain linguistic levels. You might therefore need to customize them to meet your students' needs. At the beginning of the module the teacher will encourage students to use the dictionary as often as necessary and will actually make sure that they bring a dictionary to class.

All the materials contained within these pages, as well as all links, hyperlinks, news, etc. aim to be as contemporary as possible but, inevitably, in this rapidly-changing world, circumstances can change, links disappear or issues may no longer be so. Again, if that were the case, the objective was to foster debate and participation and I modestly believe these materials will have fulfilled this objective. In order to motivate students it has also been the aim to use as many Catalan-related materials as possible trying, at the same time, to avoid parochialism. Students tend to show more interest and involvement if the on-going issues are more familiar or close to them.

USE OF ICT

As the teacher will see from the different materials, a considerable number of activities require the use of ICT. Although specific ICT training should not be necessary, teachers might find that basic ICT literacy skills are indeed needed to implement some of the materials contained in this module. Students, I feel, find it really energizing and motivating to use this medium. It provides them with a personalized space, out of the grim classroom structure, in which drafting ideas or working is highly entertaining. My experience, after a long time using all kinds of ICT materials in class, has proved to me that students perform at a desired level and that they involve themselves much more. A good way for the teacher to boost students' interest might be by asking them for support on how to use such features as videoconferencing, or to do a quiz on the internet, or even watch *youtube* videos. Students, it is widely known, are more knowledgeable than some teachers as regards ICT. Yet, if limitations (knowledge or logistics limitations, for example) still persist, some activities can be left out or customized. Let me insist that some of the website addresses I link to all through this project can and do change, and sometimes at very short notice. I recommend you to visit them before the students do and, if necessary customise them.

VIDEOCONFERENCE

I strongly encourage the use of videoconferencing, that is if a videoconference device is available within the school. Well-planned videoconferencing is highly-educational and a wonderful tool to boost students' interest; besides it provides teachers with a real-life setting in which to address a particular subject. Fortunately for us, foreign language teachers, it is becoming a popular thing among students the use of such software as skype or messenger, for example, through which one can communicate with anybody anywhere by means of "one on one" videoconference. This would probably be the best know of all the options. However, in a classroom setting, a videoconference machine, such as a Tandberg or a Sony, would be the most adequate means, as such devices feature high-quality sound and image and can transfer loads of information and faster through the internet. The result is, depending on the device, a live, crispy-clear image of a whole classroom or group working alongside your students on a specific issue.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A separate *Additional Materials* section has been compiled to cater for students' diverse learning needs and reinforce their understanding of the subject currently tackled. This section features useful materials, interesting activities, links to internet quizzes, puzzles and games as well as topic-related movies.

ASSESSMENT

Students have a chance to self-assess themselves at the end of the unit by means of the *Knowledge Quest* report. The said report asks students to reflect upon the issues they have dealt with all through the unit and to realise whether they have achieved the objectives.

INTRODUCTORY UNIT

ISSUES THAT ARE NOT WORKING IN OUR SOCIETY

Before starting the first unit the teacher might introduce the whole module by asking students to reflect upon society for a short period of time. The teacher could have the students work in groups asking them to write a list of issues they consider are not working in our society or to brainstorm on the problems they consider need the most urgent address. This list will possibly include some of the topics to be covered in this credit as well as such topics as *discrimination, violence, immigration, globalization, environment*, etc.

DO YOU THINK WE LIVE IN / WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE IN A CORRUPT OR VIOLENT SOCIETY?

Next, the teacher might want to ask them if they would enjoy living in a corrupt, dangerous or violent society. Another possible question the teacher might consider eliciting is whether the students consider their society to be as formerly described and whether they could produce some examples.

BYSTANDERS...

Come this point the teacher should solicit their opinions about *bystanders* (those who watch and do nothing) and whether they consider themselves so. Next, the teacher may explain bring up the point that if we all are *bystanders* those issues will continue to be a major problem. As a means of an example the teacher can read the following lines, written by anti-nazi theologian, Martin Niemöller; they summarize in an accurate way the consequences of adopting such an attitude.

First they came for the Jews.
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist

Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist

Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me