



Universität Potsdam



Anke Uhlenwinkel (Hrsg.)

## Teaching about the work values of Europeans

Critical reflections from the first student exchange of the  
EVE-project



# Praxis Kultur- und Sozialgeographie



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## **I INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**



## Foreword

*Anke Uhlenwinkel*

This book is, to a large part, written by student teachers and, although published in Germany, it is written in English. The reason for this is *not*, that we wanted to follow the trend of publishing texts in English that you can also publish in German or any other language. The reason is that the teacher students involved in writing this book speak different first languages: They come from Turkey and the Netherlands, from Slovakia and Germany as well as from the British Isles. The student teachers of four of these countries worked together in two multicultural groups, planning and teaching lessons in the host country, e. g. the Dutch students went to Turkey and the Slovak students came to Germany.

The students had to prepare lessons using teaching units that had been developed by the lecturers of the universities taking part in this project (Bosporus University Istanbul, Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Tilburg, the London Institute of Education, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and Potsdam University). The main topic of the units was “work in Europe” and all of them used maps from the Atlas of European Values. As the units were written for more than just one lesson the teacher students had to choose what to teach, and they were encouraged to use the curriculum framework as a guideline. After having taught their lessons they were asked to evaluate their experiences. To do this, in each of the two exchange groups, six groups worked on the four steps of the curriculum framework (relating to students, working with patterns and trends, explaining data and critical thinking) and two additional topics (developing lessons and working in a multicultural

group) respectively. The results of these evaluations are found in the following chapters.

The chapters do not only reflect the different experiences of student teachers in two different multicultural groups. They also show quite different scientific approaches to the task. This is what makes reading them so interesting.

Because of the different structure of their teacher training course, British students unfortunately could not take part in the exchanges. Therefore their work with one of the assignments is discussed in a separate chapter.

The chapters are introduced with a short description of the school system of the country in which the exchange took place. This may help the reader to better understand the conditions in which the student teachers worked.

The first three chapters set the scene for the exchanges: the first chapter introduces the European Values Project of which the exchanges are a part, the second chapter gives a short overview of the findings of the European Values Survey on work in Europe and the third chapter discusses the curriculum framework used by the student teachers.

Overall the book reflects the first stage of the project. There are probably still a lot of things to discuss and to improve, but the value of the exchanges for the student teachers can hardly be underestimated.

## **Something about EVE**

*Uwe Krause*

For a lively debate about Europe it is important to connect with peoples' lives and their culture. Values are at the heart of culture, and values are what the "European Values Education" (EVE) project is all about. The project is run co-operatively by the University of Tilburg (UvT), European Values Study (EVS) and Fontys University of Applied Sciences Tilburg. The European Values Study is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program on basic human values, initiated in the late 1970s. The most recent survey of values took place in 2008-2009.

In 2006 Tilburg University and Fontys University of Applied Sciences Tilburg developed a pilot project that aimed to make the data and results of the European Values Study accessible for educational purposes. So far, this co-operation has resulted in a website, and a range of pilot projects. The target groups are secondary school students, teachers and students at teacher training institutes. During the last few years Fontys has established international connections with several universities in Europe. Together with the universities of Potsdam (Germany), Banská Bystrica (Slovakia), Istanbul (Bosporus - Turkey), Tilburg (Netherlands) and the Institute of Education London (United Kingdom) Fontys is working in a Comenius multilateral project which has been given the name "European Values Education" like the whole project.

The first results of the most recent data set will probably be ready in April or May of 2010. As soon as the project has access to these results, new maps will be made and put on to the website. The plan is that these results will not only be

available in the languages of the partners (Dutch, English, German, Slovakian and Turkish) but also in French and Spanish. Of course, the results of the earlier set will still be accessible and it will still be possible to make comparisons as to whether the opinions of the European Citizens have changed during the last ten years. Like in the old module it will be possible to combine every map and to create new maps to answer new questions (like for example, which countries in Europe are the most in favour of the emancipation of women).

The main idea of the “European Values Education” project is to clarify and communicate value issues. Students should understand that identity has multiple layers, is changing over time and is dependent on the context: this is true for your own personal identity as well as for cultural identities. These insights enable students to overcome potential us-and-them-differences and to experience the European motto “Unity in Diversity” in a positive way. One of the main tasks of the project is to find a way to achieve these goals. Therefore a group of experts is working on a “curriculum framework”, which will develop throughout the project. So far several aspects have been identified. For example, besides the issues of communication, the framework considers how to link the subject to the students, the description of patterns and trends, the (im-)possible explanations for similarities and differences in values between people and countries and the role of place and space and, last but not least, how to stimulate critical thinking amongst the students. This concept will be developed by the participating research teams and point the way ahead in how to teach values issues. The following chapters contain much more information about the first steps towards such a “curriculum framework”.



Unlike some other initiatives, the aim of the project is not just to develop a kind of pedagogical guideline (which is often far away from the daily teaching practice) OR just to create some materials which can be used for teaching (which often lack a theoretical background), but to combine both of these important activities. So, besides the curriculum framework the professionals of the participating universities (mostly working in the Geography, Civics or Curriculum Design departments) will develop 40 examples of good practice during the whole project. Each assignment will be discussed by the group of experts, tested by students and/or teachers in practice and be adjusted before being published on the website in the different languages. Step by step the assignments will reflect the curriculum framework and will show how teaching materials are constructed in the tradition of each specific country. Therefore this project is a truly European one. The topics addressed in the assignments are (in this order) work, religion, family and society.

The opinion of the experts participating in this project is that the best way to define learning is “sense-making”. So the teaching materials contribute to that in different ways. The themes are linked to meaningful questions from the European Values Study, and the early testing completed in different countries showed that young people reacted very enthusiastically. The reason they gave quite often was, that the subjects were linked to people’s opinions (and to themselves) and not to, in their opinion, boring matters like the agricultural policy of the EU or the introduction of the Euro. One important way of sense-making in a European context is that young people can identify with their peers in other countries. Consequently, one of the elements of the teaching material will be the production

of 12 videos (3 – 5 minutes) in each participating country on how young people think about the four issues (work, religion, family, society) together with a portrait of the interviewed students.

The challenges when developing “good practices” teaching materials are enormous. Of course, the quality of the developed teaching materials will be guaranteed by the international co-operation of professionals in teacher training at the participating universities. But that will not be enough. The materials will have to be tested several times and the feedback will have to be used for adjusting the assignments. The testing phase follows two lines: First, the assignments have been translated and given to teachers at partner schools, which have agreed to co-operate in this project. According to the themes, different subjects at school are involved. For the theme “work” these have been the subjects Economy and Civics, Geography and English as a second language. Secondly, within the project, the student exchanges play a big role within the testing phase. The Institute of Education in London was unfortunately not able to take part in the exchanges, because of the structure of their education system and the University of Tilburg is only responsible for the scientific part of the EVS data. The other universities are participating in the exchanges and in November 2009 ten Slovakian students came to Potsdam and ten Dutch students went to Istanbul to work in mixed pairs or groups and try out the assignments developed by the “experts”. All students involved will be future teachers. They already have teaching experience (from several months up to four years and part-time jobs) and are acquainted with the most recent views on teaching practices. So they can fulfil the role of very critical testers. In the following paragraphs you can

read how they fit into that role. These students can also have an enormous multiplier effect and will use and develop assignments with the Atlas of European Values in their own lessons. The last aspect is a very important one because this project aims to inspire continuous development. This has to be achieved by being firmly rooted in the daily routine of the participating universities. To ensure that the website is sustainable and dynamic, it is intended to become a key feature of the initial teacher education courses of the participating universities. There is a long way to go, but for example in the teaching trainer courses in Tilburg the website [www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu](http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu) is already a substantial part in courses in several major and minor subjects and in the bachelor and master programmes. But this project should also play a significant part in further education. All participating universities have the professional expertise to develop teaching materials and have a large network of secondary schools. They organize meetings with teachers working at these schools, contribute to regional and national conferences and write articles in teacher journals and so on. These are only some steps in achieving the ultimate aim of the whole project: that the website is available in all European languages and will be used in the whole of Europe, supported by the Centre of European Values Issues in Tilburg.



## Workvalues in Europe

Loek Halman

Although the overwhelming majority of the population spend significant parts of their lives 'working', either in the form of a paid job, or in various forms of unpaid labour, few themes are as *ambivalent* as 'work'. A review of the literature reveals that the same dissension almost always returns: work is as much a blessing as it is a curse (see, e.g., ACHTERHUIS, 1984; KERKHOF, 1997). The literature usually distinguishes fundamental dimensions pertaining to work orientations (e.g., CENTERS & BUGENTAL, 1966; MOW, 1987).

A so-called *intrinsic* work orientation emphasizes that the *aim* of labour is found *in the work itself*: the employee who wishes to develop him- or herself by means of his or her work. This orientation is also commonly referred to as 'expressive' work orientation. This resembles Arendt's conception of 'work'. Individuals with this orientation emphasize the importance of work which is interesting and enables them to use their capacities and provides opportunities for personal development. They prefer work in which they 'can achieve something', and in which they can show initiative and take responsibility.

The *extrinsic* work orientation stresses work as a *means* of achieving goals that are *outside* work. Therefore, it is also referred to as the 'instrumental' work orientation. People with this orientation stress the importance of income and the securities offered by work. The exact job content is of less importance. Thus, favourable working conditions, such as a good physical working environment, not too much stress and pressure, good working hours, and generous holidays are considered highly

important. As such, this orientation aims at reducing unpleasant job characteristics ('labour' in Arendt's vision).

These two orientations can be easily linked to the broader developments within society which are usually denoted by the umbrella term, *modernization*. The modernization perspective usually describes a process of declining traditional or conventional views in favour of more 'modern', individualistic orientations (see, e.g., ESTER, HALMAN & DE MOOR, 1994; HARDING & HIKSPOORS, 1995). According to the modernization ideas, modern values strongly emphasize an individual's self-determination and his/her personal development.

Applied to the domain of labour, it means that the intrinsic (or expressive) work orientations gradually become more important, emphasizing personal autonomy and self-development. In order to understand the transformations in society, Inglehart emphasized the importance of increasing levels of security. His ideas are based on Maslow's theory of the satisfaction of basic human needs. According to Maslow, human needs are hierarchically ordered. The 'lower' or fundamental needs (physiological needs, safety and social security) are at the bottom. On top of these are the so-called 'higher' needs, such as appreciation and self-development. In Maslow's view, these higher needs only become relevant when the lower, fundamental needs have been satisfied. Inglehart builds on Maslow's ideas in his scarcity hypothesis, which states that an individual's priorities reflect his or her socio-economic circumstances: people will attach particular value to what is scarce. When the labour situation offers little safety or security (e.g., no career certainty, insufficient pay, or an unsafe working environment), people will cling to an extrinsic (or instrumental) work orientation, because these aspects are insufficiently

satisfied. When the labour situation is secure – in the sense of low levels of unemployment, sufficient pay, etc. – and thus the basic needs are satisfied, people will stress intrinsic (or expressive) work orientations. The lower needs are then satisfied, and thus people do not have to be concerned about those and can focus on the realization of higher needs. Therefore, it is suggested that an increase in prosperity goes hand in hand with the reinforcement of an intrinsic work orientation. However, this also implies that an economic recession and rising levels of unemployment are likely to produce a return to material priorities. In times of insecurity and economic instability, people will be highly concerned with job and income security and thus emphasize instrumental or extrinsic work qualities. An individual's preference or priority is co-determined by the presence of (material and immaterial) possibilities (or resources) and limitations (see, e.g., VAN DEN ELZEN, 2002). This applies to the individual level, as well as to the level of the country in which the individuals live.

Taking part in the labor market processes is not only important because labour provides income and a certain level of welfare in society, it serves also an important societal function and a social integrative function which, in its turn, can help to develop social cohesion and solidarity in society. Labour enables an individual to develop him/herself and enhances social engagement and as such it contributes both to the individuals as well as the collective well-being.

Policies have been developed to create the ideal circumstances for both men and women to remain in work or to enter the labour market. Men are expected not to remain the breadwinner who is working outside the home and who is just a father and a partner. Men should be prepared to take over

household chores that were traditionally tasks of women. Women in turn are expected to enter the labour market and take part in working processes. Governmental policies aim at facilitating the combination of labour and care. Fiscal arrangements have been developed to create optimal opportunities to stimulate the combination of labour and caring activities for women as well as for men. In order to combine work and such caring tasks, various measures have developed such as: saving for parental leave, flexible leave arrangements and possibilities to attune labour hours with caring tasks. E.g., maternity leave, care leave, parental leave and adaptations of labour hours. In the Netherlands the gender roles and tasks have not yet changed much. In many cases it has meant a double burden for women. Although many women have entered the labour market, they also remain responsible for caring tasks at home.

However, not only do people work in different places but the nature of labour itself is changing. Flexibility and employability are key words in describing the main features of the modern European service and information-based economy (ESTER et al., 2001). The modern worker is expected to permanently maintain, secure, and of course practice his or her 'hard' and 'soft' skills, human capital, and added-value for the organization. European employees are nowadays presumed to be highly flexible workers who can be employed at multiple positions within the organization and for whom continuous competence development is self-evident. Workers need to be willing to adapt, adjust, and be mobile, to be creative and innovative, and to develop multiple 'portable' skills. Internal and external mobility are seen as meaningful, distinctive individual ambitions. Extensive employability is expected with respect to



changing organizational goals and contexts, working hours, and working locations. Investment in keeping one's knowledge and competences up-to-date is seen as a crucial personal drive. The modern employee becomes an entrepreneurial employee. Such flexible and employable workers with work values aimed at flexibility and employability are the vital assets of modern European companies operating in a highly competitive, rapidly changing, and dynamic global environment. These values assume a new mind set of the European employee: in a post-industrial, service-oriented European knowledge economy, mere extrinsic or conventional work values are no longer sufficient to do the job. These values have to be augmented, if not replaced by intrinsic work values which stress continuous personal development (in line with the life-long learning debate), the use of initiative and taking responsibility (in line with the entrepreneurial emphasis), and the aim to challenge one's abilities (ESTER et al., 2001).

“The emerging emphasis on expressive work values does not mean that instrumental values are rejected or denied. On the contrary, such qualities are, to most people, still highly relevant” (HALMAN, 1999: 41).



# **The European Values Education Project Curriculum Framework**

*Clare Brooks*

The European Values Education (EVE) project is a Comenius funded Project, part of the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme. This venture focuses on cross-European professional development projects for teachers. The main focus of the EVE project is to bring together teachers from across Europe to work together on developing a greater understanding of Europe, values education and critical citizenship. The project was inspired by the Atlas of European Values, a publication that emerged from the European Values Study that features maps depicting how values and attitudes vary across Europe. The project partners were convinced that these maps and the data they represent would be of benefit to teachers. The project team also wanted to create a sustainable tool that would continue to support teachers' development after the duration of the project. The challenge was to go beyond a series of lesson plans that demonstrated how to use the maps and data, but to create a useful product that could be used by European teachers in different subject areas to develop lessons which investigate values and attitudes across Europe. It was this motivation that led to the development of the EVE curriculum framework, and in the chapter that follows, I will explore what we mean by this term and how the first draft of our curriculum framework was developed and what it contains.

## **Why did we need a curriculum framework?**

As teacher educators and pedagogical experts, the project team were faced with an interesting practical dilemma. Participants in the project would be student teachers working in cross-cultural groups. They would be teaching with unfamiliar classes, sometimes in a foreign language, working with complex issues represented in map form. The project team needed to support these teachers during the project exchanges, but also wanted to help them develop their understanding of teaching and learning and their confidence in dealing with complex and sometimes controversial issues. It was therefore decided that this support would come in two levels: primarily through the sharing of ten lesson plans, written by the project team but used by the student teachers in the project. The second level would be a curriculum framework, a statement of the ideas and approach that underpinned the construction of these lesson plans. Each stage of the project would involve some revising and refining of the curriculum framework. The final version of the curriculum framework would represent the pedagogical thinking behind the lesson plan construction and could be used by the student teachers (and their teacher associates) to develop further lesson plans and assignments with the Atlas of European Values, or with other sources of controversial or values-driven data.

## **How was the first draft developed?**

Key to the development of the curriculum framework was the first project meeting held in October 2009 in London, at the Institute of Education. During this meeting, the project team

discussed the aims of the project and what they hoped that the project would achieve. During these discussions, three themes emerged that all partners agreed were key to the success of the project, and to the creation of the lesson plans and assignments. Those themes were: values education, critical citizenship and developing greater knowledge and understanding of Europe.

There was much discussion at the initial meeting (and subsequent meetings) about what these project aims meant and what we understood by them. For instance, it was agreed that there were three possible interpretations of values education:

- Transmission of values
- Clarification of values
- Communication of values

The project team agreed that we did not wish the project to be prescriptive about what values young people should have, or to suggest that some values were more important than others. However, we did feel that there were moral dimensions that we needed to consider: some values are morally unacceptable (such as racist, sexist, or homophobic values). We therefore adopted a constructivist approach where pupils were encouraged to investigate their own values and to understand that their values were not necessarily shared by others. We wanted pupils to recognise differences and similarities and also to understand the range of reasons why people may hold different values and attitudes. Through their engagement with the EVE project, the pupils could understand these reasons more. We understood that this required a particular pedagogical approach as well as careful selection of content.

The project team were representative of different academic disciplines, and were working with teachers from different

academic backgrounds. We were sensitive to the needs of teachers who often have to teach prescriptive curriculums, to prepare pupils for public examinations, and who may not have the flexibility to teach lessons merely because they are part of our project. We also wanted the learning outcomes of our project to have gravitas and to be considered valuable and worthwhile. Therefore, we discussed what we hoped pupils would learn by having been taught EVE lessons. There were several factors to consider here: first, that not all teachers would be teaching the same curriculum area or even subject; secondly they would not all be teaching the same age group or grade level; thirdly, that there is variation in how school subjects are conceived and understood in different countries. We therefore agreed that adopting a conceptual approach would be useful. There are key concepts in Civics, Sociology and Geography which are all relevant to the understanding of variations of values across Europe (such as space, place, change, scale, cohesion, modernisation etc). To understand how values are different across Europe, pupils would need to appreciate that these values may stem from a range of different dimensions, which we understood to be: religious, social, cultural, economic, political and historical. We also considered whether these differences could be environmental, but it was agreed to reject this dimension as it carried with it undertones of environmental determinism. These concepts and dimensions were seen as important content areas for the EVE project to draw upon. A third important dimension of the project was critical citizenship. The team explored the three dimensions of citizenship as put forward by Westheimer.

These are:

- Conformist citizenship (for example, where a person saves someone from drowning; i.e., they do good deeds)
- Responsible citizenship (for example where a person organises a team saving children from drowning; i.e., they take responsibility for collective action)
- Critical citizenship (where a person asks why children are drowning; i.e., where they look for underlying causes and relationships).

As the EVE project has an educational focus, we felt that it was important for pupils to look beyond describing the differences they saw, but to question why these have come about and to consider the implications of such differences. These goals have two influences on the project: one on the pedagogical approach: which emphasises critique and pupils asking their own questions, and the second influence is on the selection of appropriate content.

The project team considered what implications these three aims would have on the curriculum framework. Subsequently the first draft of the curriculum framework was produced as below:

### **Curriculum “framework”**

Teaching with the resources from the Atlas of European Values is a great opportunity for pupils around the world to develop:

- Critical citizenship
- Knowledge of Europe, and other key concepts (to be defined)
- Values education

However, in order to meet these ambitious objectives, teachers will benefit from considering the curriculum framework below. This framework has been designed to support teachers in constructing

lessons which use the Atlas of European Values, and meets the above objectives. This is not a prescriptive approach, but can be used and adapted to enrich most curriculum structures.

Our approach contains four stages. It is not essential for the stages to be followed in the order below. However, in order to meet the objectives of the EVE project, all stages should be covered at some point.

### *The stages*

- a) Describing differences (and recognising similarities) – this stage entails some interrogation of the values as described in the maps of the atlas, and recognising patterns and trends.
- b) Investigating explanations. Values can often be attributed to a variety of different explanations. We recognise that one explanation rarely explains why people hold different values. Pupils should understand that values can stem from six dimensions.
  - i Religious
  - ii Social
  - iii Cultural
  - iv Economic
  - v Political
  - vi Historical

(We have deliberately not included environmental as it may lead to opinions that reflect environmental determinism). These explanations could come from existing theories and research. They may also be explained by making reference to real events and contexts from around Europe. These explanations should enable pupils to critique stereotypes about their European counterparts, and also understand why these stereotypes have developed.

- c) Relating the values in the AoEV to their own. Pupils need to be able to situate themselves in the discussion about different values and understand that others have similar or contrasting views.
- d) Developing critical perspectives through questioning.



## **Why a curriculum framework?**

In the development of the curriculum framework, an important consideration was what it was for and what it should be called. Initially, it was considered to be a pedagogical or didactical framework. There are linguistic considerations here. Didactics has different meanings in different European contexts: for example, in the UK the term is often used to indicate lecturing or a transmission form of pedagogy, whereas didactics has a more progressive meaning in other contexts. The project team considered whether the framework was indeed about the pedagogical approach of the project: i.e., whether it was about *how* to teach about European values. We agreed that it was about the process of creating lesson experiences for pupils. As such we agreed that the word “curriculum” was probably a more accurate representation of what we wanted the framework to represent.

## **The future of the framework**

During our initial discussions, there were aspects of the framework that the project team were less than happy with. One aspect was the status of the document. As a team we agreed that its creation and discussion had given us a clearer sense of what our lesson plans and assignments should seek to achieve. We also felt that being explicit about the underlying ideas behind our lesson plans would be helpful for teachers and student teachers. However, as our engagement with the project developed, so would our understanding of both the process and the value of the framework. We therefore agreed

that we would return to the curriculum framework in the light of the experience of having worked with it.

Another consideration was how the content dimension of the framework (as represented in section b) was quite linear in how it represented explanations of values. It assumed too much about cause and effect, and did not have sufficient scope to recognise the processes that can cause change in values and in society (such as globalisation). We wanted our project to consider these factors. In addition, we were not yet sure to what extent the curriculum framework should specify which concepts the project would explore. This would be an aspect to which we would return in subsequent meetings.

In short, the team remained open minded about the framework. It was seen as a first draft, a working document. However, with this in mind, it did also represent an important first step in articulating how the lesson plans and assignments were seeking to achieve the aims of the EVE project.

## **II RESULTS OF THE SLOVAK-GERMAN GROUP**



# Schools in Germany

*Sophia Kulick*

The most important aspect about schools in Germany is that they are not part of one complex education system, but belong to the school sectors of 16 different education systems - one for each of the 16 federal states or 'Länder'. As highlighted by LOHMAR and ECKHARDT "in the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. [...] Unless the Basic Law awards legislative powers to the Federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, adult education and continuing education" (2009: 32). However, these education systems have a common and comparable basic structure that was agreed on in the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder. Moreover, there are, for example, current attempts to improve quality control and quality improvement in the school sector by introducing uniform examination standards and common national educational standards, in for example the subject of geography (see DGfG 2007).

LOHMAR and ECKHARDT (2009: 34-36, 109-116) point out further connections of the different education systems in the school sector. As a rule, in the year in which children reach the age of six, they are obliged to attend primary school (Grundschule). With the exception of Berlin and Brandenburg, where it covers six grades, the Grundschule comprises four grades. Secondary education is subdivided into the lower secondary level (Sekundarstufe I), which (with the stated exception) comprises the courses of education from grades 5 to 9/10 and

encompasses pupils between 10 and 15/16 years old. Once pupils have completed compulsory schooling – generally when they reach the age of 15 – they may move into the upper secondary level (Sekundarstufe II), which concludes with grade 12/13 and covers the age group between 15/16 and 18/19 year olds.

Whereas at the primary school stage all children attend mixed-ability classes, the organisation of the secondary school system in the Länder is sectioned into various educational paths with their respective leaving certificates and qualifications for which different school types are responsible. However, there are three traditional courses for education: The Hauptschule provides its pupils with a basic general education. The Realschule provides a more extensive general education. The Gymnasium comprises both the lower and upper secondary level and provides an intensified general education. Here, pupils can accomplish the 'Allgemeine Hochschulreife' or 'Abitur' which entitles admission to all subjects at all higher education institutions. Moreover, almost all Länder have comprehensive schools under different names, but all combine the traditional courses of education. Upper secondary education is subdivided into various types of school too. They differ in terms of duration and school-leaving qualifications. Admission to them depends on the qualifications and entitlements obtained at the end of lower secondary education.

The subject of geography is already taught in the Grundschule as part of an overall subject called 'Sachkunde' (social and natural studies) and continues to be taught in secondary education either as a subject in its own right or combined with the subjects of history and civics.

## Relating to Students

*Andrea Blahušíaková, Christian Röper-Kühnemann,  
Christoph Staufenbiel, Hana Vozárová*

### **1 How did you relate the topic to the pupils' ideas and conceptions?**

Before we started to plan our lessons, we had to arrange our teaching-groups. In doing so, it seemed natural to us that each of the teaching-groups should be composed of two German students from the University of Potsdam and two Slovak students from the University of Banská Bystrica. We then associated the different teaching-groups with the German schools which have kindly provided their classes and courses to support our project. Regrettably one of the schools cancelled their cooperation shortly before the lessons started, so we were not able to teach there.

The schools spread across a wide region and the class-levels were also well diversified. The schools which supported our project were three Gymnasiums in Potsdam and Berlin and two comprehensive schools in Potsdam and Luckenwalde, (a small city about 50 km south of Potsdam). The classes in which we held our prepared lessons were the seventh and tenth grade at one Gymnasium, eighth grade at a comprehensive school and the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth grades from the "gymnasialen Kurssystem" (which is a course system where the students are not together the whole time and it is introduced to them at the eleventh grade). The latter is the final school year, from which the students progress to enter an apprenticeship or to visit a university. The major task for us was to develop content from the assignments about the topic

“work”, which we considered interesting and appropriate for the pupils, so that they could work with it properly. Unfortunately we did not have enough time to customize the lessons exactly to a particular age-group. That fact forced us to design the assignments in such a way, that we could use them for any age-group without any problems.

## **2 Assignment “Why work?”**

Interestingly, our 5 teaching-groups decided to work with only two of the given assignments, namely „Why work?“ and „People in need“. It turned out, that we had different interpretations of the topic which formed the basis of our decision. In general the teaching-groups had chosen „Why work?“, because they wanted to introduce the pupils to the importance of work in daily life. The teaching-groups expected that especially the pupils of the higher class-levels would be engaged in this issue. We expected that this would be a very important subject for them, because they have to answer questions for themselves regarding their professional future. Nevertheless also for the younger age-groups, work is an important topic, because basically work plays a huge part in a person’s life. Work also can affect basic needs like acceptance and self-esteem. Another significant reason for the teaching-groups to choose „Why work?“ was, that they instantly had good ideas on how to prepare the topic in a didactical way and on which methods can be used to present the issue to the pupils. In addition, some of the students were also very personally interested in the topic, which provided some extra motivation to work with this topic to create some good lessons. During the planning of the lessons, the teaching-groups, who choose “Why work?”,

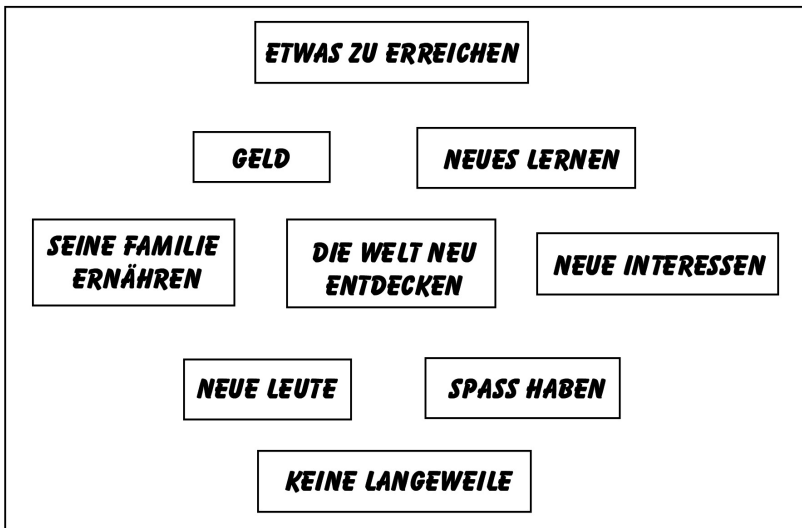


framed a prospect of what they expected from the pupils. Initially this was not an easy task, because we have had very different associations of the pupils' minds. All teaching-groups expected that work is a major aspect of life for the pupils, even though it is possible, that certain pupils may say, that work is completely unimportant and work cannot be considered a value in their life. Due to this reason the teaching-groups tried to develop teaching-methods, which were able to make these differences visible. However, some of us, both from Germany or Slovakia, thought before the lessons were held, that the pupils did not have any preconceptions about work as a European value and how it is seen in different European countries. Other students stated the opinion that the pupils are well aware of the fact that a different value is placed on work in different European countries. Furthermore we had more general expectations of the pupils concerning the lessons, that were not specific to the value of work. For instance the pupils should learn that employment is also varied, that it varies in complexity and that this fact leads to different wages. Furthermore the payment of labor is not necessarily an indicator of work's importance for the society and for oneself. Another general assumption was, that work correlates with social prestige and that there are jobs, which enjoy a high social status and other jobs, which are important, but have a low social status and which may be looked down on. To finish the preparation, the teaching-groups formulated the possible reasons, which the pupils may indicate, as to why work is assessed differently by Europeans (if so). A possible result could be, that work is more important to people, if they are satisfied with their job linked with a high social reputation and salary, and less impor-

tant to those, who work in jobs which are monotonous, less paid and insecure.

To check the expectations, the teaching-groups developed teaching methods that ranked the value of work by the pupils. The basis for that was the excellent material for the assignment „Why work?“ i.e. the Atlas of European Values, which was applied more or less unmodified. One Group started their lesson with a brainstorm. The pupils should express spontaneously what they thought about work and how important it is to them. The second group had also chosen this question as an introduction, but their classes visualized their opinions via the “point method”. The third „Why work?“-group started with an open discussion in which the pupils should say whether work was important to them and why, with the why-part being emphasized. All groups managed their introductions in a way, that the results could be used later again in the lessons. This is why all groups created model answers, but allowed enough freedom to leave them, if the lesson made it necessary. After the introduction, all of the teaching-groups used various methods to work on the topic and to compile the differences. In this phase, all groups used the maps published in the Atlas of European Values. Two of the groups used the maps to compare Germany with Slovakia to find out differences or/and similarities regarding to the value work. The third group used the maps to compile certain questions in an European context. These questions were: How important is work, family, religion, salary in your life? To activate the pupils’ critical thinking several methods were used by the pupils to weigh their opinions. For instance a diamond-ranking was used and a Maslow Pyramid of needs too.

Figure 1: Example of a diamond-ranking of a seventh grade class of Wilhelm-von-Siemens-Gymnasium in Berlin-Marzahn



The issue was: “Why is work an important value in your life?”

From top: to achieve sth. – money – to assign new tasks – to support the family – to visit new places – new interests – to meet new people – to have fun – not being bored.

Also the suggestion from the assignment, to review the job advertisements in newspapers and to analyze them in reference to the Maslow Pyramid of needs was implemented. All lessons concluded with a discussion about the topic. The results of these discussions are comparable because they were with similar class-levels. In general the pupils found out that different European countries put different weight on the value of work. But they did not know at this time what exactly those differences were. A comparison between Germany and Slovakia was discussed especially. The pupils mentioned why the people of these two countries assess the value of work in a

different way (the Slovak people rate work higher than the German people), and the different characteristics of the social framework in both countries. But they mentioned also some differences in the historical development and the mentality of the people, which they were not able to further specify. All teaching-groups got the impression, that the pupils for the first time in their lives thought about the topic, that German people think different about work than Slovakian people. Basically at all class-levels the result of the lesson was that work is an important value to someone's life, allowing people to live the way they want to live and to afford goods beyond the basic needs. Nearly all pupils said that the salary is the most important aspect of the topic work. This is because it is necessary to feed the family, to buy a house or to consume.

### **3 Assignment "People in Need"**

Both groups, which worked with the assignment „People in Need” explained that the reasons for their choice of that assignment were that this is a very emotional topic and the pupils were not left cold handling this topic. Another reason was that the prepared material of the assignment could be used in the lessons without any problems. Concerning the schools and the environment in which the schools are located we thought that the pupils should have enough previous experience with the topic, in the way that they are either personally affected (through their parents) or they know someone, who is concerned with the problems in Germany such as unemployment and the associated poverty.

During the planning of the lessons both groups referred to the material in the Atlas of European Values, because the maps

are very meaningful, and the photos gave good images to the pupils so that they can reflect their own thinking on the matter. Our expectations of the pupils were not formulated very specifically, because we did not know what they already felt about the topic. We expected the pupils to think about „people in need” in a stereotypical fashion focusing on aspects like hunger, poverty, third world etc. So in the pupils minds „people in need” will exist in Africa, but not in Europe. Concerning these expectations, the material of the assignment showed a different story which we wanted them to understand. Both groups used the photos and the maps which are shown in the assignment. The photos illustrate some people who are in several situations of need. The maps show the European comparison of what European people think about the reasons why people are in need. We choose a discussion as an introduction to the topic, the pupils should mention reasons, why people are in need and what causes it. With the eighth grade the reasons were written on cards and collected on the table to arrange them in a meaningful way. But with the higher class-levels the discussion was enough to catch their attention on the topic. Afterwards we showed the photos to the pupils to support them when they were gathering knowledge through the communication of facts as to why the people shown in the pictures are in need. The causes for their being in need were provided to the pupils by the maps of the Atlas of European Values. We applied four maps, which show the possible causes such as „they are unlucky“; „they lack will power“; „they are victims of injustice in society“ and „these are the ways of the modern world“. After all pupils studied the maps they matched one of the reasons to each photo and explained why the people in the

picture are in need (because they are unlucky in life for instance).

Also for this assignment the lessons were finished with a discussion. The German as well as the Slovakian students were surprised that the pupils in the schools reflected even more about the topic than expected. The Slovakian students were addressed in a Gymnasium in Potsdam regarding their opinion on the reasons why people are in need. It was very hard for the pupils to comprehend that the Slovakian people think that people are in need because of the lack of will power. Just like the other discussions on this topic the differences in the social framework were a popular explanation.

In general both teaching-groups were happy about the active cooperation at all class-levels, which came to unexpected conclusions in the end. Not only did they learn that even people here in Europe can be in need, but also that there are a lot of different causes for that fact. Both teaching-groups deduced from the reactions of the pupils that critical thinking was implemented because the pupils exchanged their opinions intensively regarding the reasons for people in need and the different assessment of the causes of that in Europe. It was also a big surprise for the learners that Germany perceived itself comparatively as a caring nation in Europe. But at the same time the pupils said that there are countries in Europe, where they would rather not live.

Generally this topic was surprising for most of the pupils we worked with and it gave them a lot of new ideas and perspectives about Europe. A possible reason for this could be that the German pupils never thought about the necessity to critically think about people in need because they associated it only with Africa or they simply accepted this fact uncritically.

#### **4 Which conceptions did we find?**

Basically we can say that our expectations of the pupils' opinions matched the results achieved overall but there were surprises as well. One „Why work?“-group, which taught in a Gymnasium in Potsdam and Berlin, expected the German pupils would value work as very important. However, the result was different. The pupils from Potsdam valued work also as not so important unlike the pupils of the Berlin Gymnasium, who valued work as very important. This result is surprising because we expected it the other way around, if there were to be differences regarding the importance. The reason for this belief was that the Potsdam Gymnasium is located in an environment which was well-established, with less people living on social welfare. The Berlin Gymnasium is located in an environment where a lot of people are living on social welfare and therefore provides an example of living without regular work. Although in the Berlin school work was an important value, there were differences between Berlin and Potsdam concerning work as a source of money income. Some pupils in Berlin characterized the social welfare as enough so that work is not a necessary source of money.

Also there were surprises with the topic „people in need“. In the comprehensive school in Luckenwalde we expected that the pupils would think that people are in need because of injustices of the society. Actually there were a lot of classmates who mentioned that the reasons for need are due to the people themselves (lack of will power).

In a Potsdam Gymnasium we were confronted with the opinion that in Slovakia people are more in need than somewhere else, because Slovakia is a small country and has no compa-

nies and business enterprises. Therefore the Slovakian people do not have as much opportunities to work (for a salary). The Slovakian students explained that Switzerland is also a small country and there are enough job opportunities offered, so it does not depend on the size of a country. Slovakia does not have transnational companies like Germany, but there a lot of small and local enterprises which offer enough job opportunities to the Slovakian people.

Generally we received a warm and positive feedback to our lessons. Of course, we did not integrate every pupil, each group reported one or two pupils, who were not interested in the topics and also did not participate in the discussions. But the teachers of the classes were very pleased with our work and told us that their pupils had been also very active and inspired.

A very positive aspect was that the pupils found our lessons very challenging and that they were forced to challenge themselves and others. Thereby they gained new understandings and got an opportunity to reflect on their own thinking in a critical way. Many pupils told us that it was great to look at several topics from a European point of view and they were surprised how many differences there are whose they had never thought of before.



# Patterns and Trends

*Katarina Chovanová, Kamil Gembický, Annemarie Schütze*

## 1 Introduction

Teaching patterns and trends was the theme of our workgroup during the first part of our exchange between German and Slovak students in Potsdam. “Patterns and trends” are not easily described, but knowing about them and being able to work with them is a major aim of geographical education.

Teaching patterns and trends was part of each of the lessons, which were taught by mixed groups of student-teachers. Pupils at schools were working with two of the assignments: either “Why work?” or “People in need”, depending on the choice of our student-teachers and their interest in the topic. Although the themes were the same for everybody, the processing was different. So we can compare what has been done and try to find similarities or differences to better understand how pattern and trends can be taught.

The main aim of our work was to find out if we taught patterns and trends at all and if so, which patterns and trends we taught and how well pupils handled them.

The different groups of student teachers taught at a number of different schools in Berlin, Potsdam and the surrounding area. For most of the pupils, the teaching methods used were a welcome change. What still needs to be seen is whether we were successful in teaching patterns and trends with these obviously rarely used methods.

One very important instrument in the teaching of geography is the map. Maps allow us to see world in actual “colour” and to know about similarities and differences. But it is not only im-

portant to look at maps in geography; you also have to try to understand their meaning. Helping pupils to learn to describe and explain maps is one of the tasks of the geography teacher. For that reason we used maps in the lessons too. The maps were taken from the Atlas of European Values and they were important visual media in the process of teaching about European Values.

## **2 Patterns and trends**

In general, descriptions give an account of how something is done, or what something is like. They do not give reasoned accounts of how or why something occurred.

Describing patterns and trends is not an easy task, especially in an international group, because there is the problem of finding a universal definition of what patterns and trends really are. We found that people in different countries understand different things by it. For example, in Slovak didactics the word “pattern” is not used. They do not distinguish between patterns and trends. On the other hand, in French didactics they have developed a very intricate system of different patterns. So Slovak students and French students would talk about totally different things when teaching patterns.

Some suggest that in geography education, there exist three or four important elements, which allow us to explain events, processes and relations between elements in the environment. These are space, place, scale and time. At least three of these concepts have an influence on the description of patterns and trends.

Trends are affected by time. Societies change over time and the way they have changed in the past and may change in the

future is described by trends. On the other hand, there are patterns. Patterns show the differences between countries at a certain point in time. Every region in the world has a certain position in relation to other regions (space) and it has special features and characteristics (place). The people of these regions often have different values and attitudes to things and people around them or people who live abroad. These attitudes and values are not necessarily stable, they can change with the trends found in space or they can change when someone leaves home, that is changes his or her surroundings.

Both elements can be found in the table below that shows concepts in political and geographical education. There we can see, that time is linked to change and can be found in political education as well as in geography. Space is linked to interaction, and place to diversity. Both are linked to perception and representation. And although political education may have similar concepts, the concepts linked to place and space are very geographical ones. They are at the heart of describing patterns. And the best way of presenting these patterns is a map.

The patterns and trends we were teaching about in this project are very important for the future development of our societies: preparing pupils for their future life plays an important role in education. Some of the key trends they will have to handle are globalization, the increasing mobility, safety and security around the world, the evolution of teaching and learning, collaboration between people of different cultural backgrounds, new competitive strategies and technologies, environmental questions etc.

Figure 1: Key concepts in political education and geography

cohesion	creation	relation	change
diversity	perception and representation	interacion	change
place		space	time
scale			

Source: power-point from course.

By first researching and then instructing students about trends higher-education institutions will be able to prepare students to become the next generation of productive employees and innovative leaders the world needs. Our lessons were our first step to improve teaching at schools and to make pupils aware of what will be needed in the future. Both in “Why work?” and “People in need” we discussed relevant trends with them.

But the trends will be different in different countries according to the basis on which they develop. How do different institutions adopt innovative ideas? How and what will students in different countries learn? How will people from different countries communicate and collaborate with each other? These questions will have to be researched as well. In teaching our assignment we also tried to make a first step to discussing the patterns we can find in Europe.

### **3           A closer look at the patterns and trends in           “Why work?”**

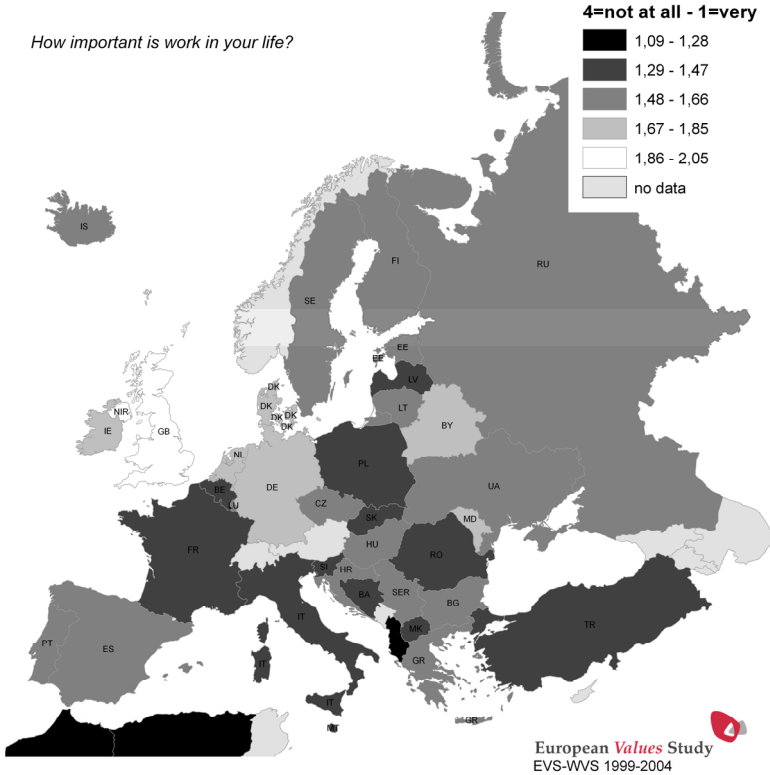
The assignment “Why work?” was taught in different age groups. We thought the assignment important, because work will be a big part of the pupils’ lives after finishing school.

The assignment offers a lot of maps, in total five. Of these, only some were used in the lessons we taught. The map used most often was the one on how important work was in life. This map was used as a reference point after a warm-up exercise during which the pupils were made to think about the question and rank the importance of work for them on a scale of 1 to 10. After this introduction pupils were asked to compare their own opinions with the average opinion of the population first of Germany and then the rest of Europe. They then were asked to describe the patterns they see in the map, before going on to trying to explain them.

A big problem with describing the map was that the colours used in the map were sometimes too similar, so that pupils could hardly distinguish one category from the other.

Pupils usually were able to see that there were differences in the opinions Europeans hold on the importance of work. Not in every class did pupils realize that the differences are not very big, because the intervals are not very big. Also apart from seeing that there are differences, pupils normally did not identify any patterns. This was partly due to student-teachers not dwelling on the point, but being satisfied with first answers.

Figure 2: How important is work in your life?



Source: European Values Study 1999-2004.

#### 4 A closer look at patterns and trends in “People in need”

Two of our five groups chose the assignment “People in Need” for their lessons. They did so, because they thought, it is very

important topic and young people should know something about it, because you find people in need in every European country.

The assignment includes four maps. The topics of these maps are interlinked as they show several answers to the question “Why do you think people live in need”. The possible answers were, because they were unlucky (1), because they were lazy or showed a lack of will power (2), because of injustice in society (3) and because it is an inevitable part of modern progress (4). All maps show the percentage of people who favoured the reason shown.

The assignment has a number of exercises before it gets to maps. Pupils are asked to reflect why they think that people are in need with the help of different photographs: a homeless person in Berlin, a bedridden old woman, a child in a home of asylum seekers, a disabled person trying to cross a street and workers on strike in Leuna. These pictures were also used to discuss, whether we would state the same reason for all of these people, or whether our reasons given also depend on which people in need we are talking about.

This exercise was very interesting to do and they handled it very well, but it also took a lot of time, so that in most of the lessons the introduction to the problem was really the main part.

Only after this part did we show pupils the maps with the results of the European Values Survey. In doing so most student-teachers didn't put a great emphasize on patterns. Maybe this was due to the fact that we were in mixed groups. Or maybe it was because the topic is also a very emotional one. Or maybe it was because we didn't feel very sure about a

lot of European countries ourselves. At least, very soon we started comparing only Germany and Slovakia.

This very quickly led us to explaining the differences between these two countries rather than describing the patterns. We reached the conclusion that different ways of looking at people in need in Germany and in Slovakia can be explained primarily by the different cultural, historical and social backgrounds of these countries. But although there are differences in looking at people in need between Germany and Slovakia, these differences are not very big.

During the lessons the pupils asked for some more information about Slovakia, especially about the situation of emigrants and foreign people in Slovakia. For the Slovakian student-teachers these questions were not hard to answer. They told the pupils about emigrants in Slovakia, the national structure of Slovakia and also about problems with the coexistence of national minorities in the country.

To conclude one can say that the pupils were very interested in the first part of the lesson and also loved to learn about Slovakia, especially because they had the chance to get first hand information. But this also led to the negligence of describing patterns and trends in Europe. It seems that it is very hard to link these two things, so that pupils can see the usefulness of describing pattern first.



# Explaining data

*Michal Bajzik, Anett Seeger, Ines Weiser*

## 1 What is an explanation?

Before talking about explaining data the first question should be: What is an explanation? Is it enough to name certain facts or does an explanation need an argumentative structure, for example? What are the indicators for an explanation? This section of the chapter attempts to give a concrete idea or definition.

“Some pieces of reasoning, rather than trying to convince us that we should accept a particular conclusion, aim instead to explain something which we already accept as being true. This is a case of giving reasons why something is as it is, rather than giving reasons for believing something” (THOMSON 1996, S. 57).

According to Anna THOMSON an explanation can be defined as the answering of a why-question concerning a fact. The important thing is that there usually is more than one way to answer a why-question.

The following example illustrates in detail what answering a why-question means. A fact can be: work is important. To give or to receive an explanation for this fact, one has to ask: Why is work important? Possible answers could be: because one can earn money, because one gains recognition or because one can be productive. All these answers are equally possible reasons or parts of reasons why work would be important. There are several explanations for one fact. This includes there also being different possibilities to explain data.

Furthermore, it should be added that discussions often provoke why-questions. In school, discussions can occur between the teacher and the pupils or simply between pupils.

## **2 Explanations and values**

The approach of the curriculum framework is composed of four stages in total. One stage is investigating explanations. Explanations often contain values which can stem from six different dimensions: religious, social, cultural, economic, political and historical. It can be assumed that different explanations can include values from the same dimension or dimensions. For this reason one explanation by itself can hardly explain why people hold different values. However, a collection of explanations may give an overview or an impression. Therefore, one can estimate that a certain number of explanations should give an idea of preferred dimensions (per country or per generation).

## **3 Explanations in the assignments**

During the exchange between Slovakia and Germany in November 2009 the process of explaining data was researched. First of all it should be mentioned that during this exchange only two assignments were used by the students, namely “People in Need” and “Why work?” Hence the results are based on the experience with these two assignments.

Secondly it can be assumed that all assignments contain or require explanations. However, the number of explanations per assignment is probably different.

### 3.1 People in Need

The assignment “People in Need” was used by two groups of the students. This assignment includes seven tasks in total which offer or require explanations. The following table shows the three of the seven tasks which were used by the students during the lessons.

Figure 1: Tasks used in “People in Need”

Task	Used
1. Note on each of the three file cards one word that comes to your mind when thinking about <u>why</u> there are people in need.	2 times
4. When social scientists want to find out, how participants explain <u>why</u> people in their country live in need, they usually work with four different reasons. [unlucky, lack of will power, injustice in society, ways of modern life] <u>Discuss</u> these four reasons, comparing them to your own ideas of people in need.	2 times
5. The pictures show different people. First try to find out, what each picture shows. Are these people in need? Then look at the reasons given for people being in need and tick the reason you find most convincing. <u>Give reasons</u> for your choice.	2 times

Source: Uhlenwinkel 2009, p. 1.

As shown every task was used twice, i.e. both groups worked with the same tasks. Task one and four are part of the “Starter” and task five is “Working with photographs”. One reason why the other tasks were not used by the students may be the comparison between Germany and Portugal. Due to the

fact that the assignment was tested during a German-Slovakian exchange, a comparison between Germany and Slovakia would have probably been better suited. One group mentioned that they did a comparison of Germany and Slovakia while working with the maps. The lessons took part in class 8, class 11 and class 13. Hence the assignment “People in Need” was tested on pupils aged 14/15, 17/18 and 19/20 respectively.

### 3.2 Why work?

The assignment “Why work?” was used by three groups of students. This assignment included thirteen tasks in total which offer or require explanations. The following table shows the four of the thirteen tasks which were used by the students during the lessons.

Figure 2: Tasks used in “Why work?”

Task	Used
1.b. <u>Why</u> will work be more or less important for you?	3 times
2.a. What needs in the Maslow classification might work fulfil? <u>Explain</u> .	2 times
2.d. Under Maslow’s Hierarchy money would be recognized within the safety category (or a base need for behaviour). When you have money you feel secure, because you have a resource you need to survive. Is money used by people to fulfil other needs as well? <u>How?</u>	1 time
5.a. Look in a local newspaper and cut out 3 job advertisements that you like and 3 job adverts that you don’t like. For each job, <u>explain why</u> you like it or not.	1 time

Source: Otterdijk 2009, S. 2-6.

As shown the tasks were used different times. Reasons are the age of the pupils as well as the number of lessons taught. It should be added that not every group of students who used the assignment “Why work?” had the opportunity to hold two lessons or lessons with a duration of 90 minutes. The assignment “Why work” was tested on pupils aged 13/14 (class 7), 16/17 (class 10), 17/18 (class 11) and 18/19 (class 12).

#### **4 Questionnaire**

On the whole twenty students participated in the German-Slovakian exchange in November 2009, ten students from each country. The students formed mixed teaching teams of four individuals. Every student was asked to fill in a questionnaire after the lesson. The results of the questionnaire are the data base for the following sections of the chapter (4.1 to 4.4).<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is about statistical data and the second part is about the explanations. The part “Statistical data” takes a closer look at information about the lesson (class, type of school, duration, and assignment). The part “explanations” comprises four questions. These questions are:

- Which explanations did we offer to the pupils?
- How did we teach them?
- Did the pupils find it easy to understand them?
- If they found anything hard to understand, what did they not understand?

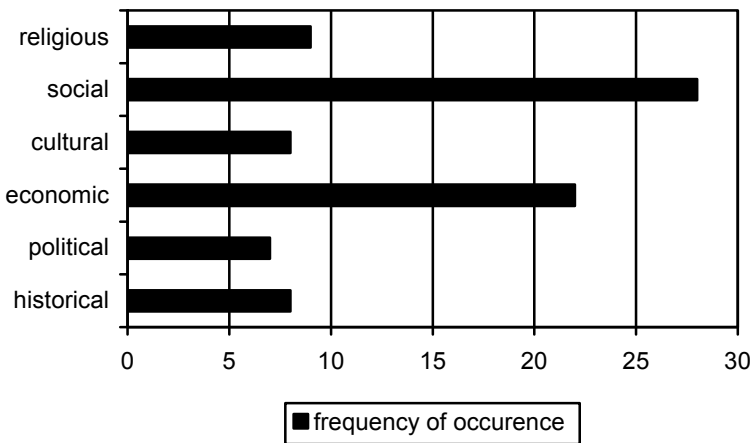
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<sup>1</sup> Only 34 of 40 questionnaires were returned because not every group taught two lessons and some students could not take part on the final meeting.

#### 4.1 Which explanations did we offer to the pupils?

To answer this question the six dimensions of explanations were presented to the students. They were asked to tick all dimensions that they offered to the pupils during the lesson. The following figure shows the quantitative results.

Figure 3: Explanations offered per dimension



The figure shows the dispersal of the offered explanations per dimension. An interesting result is that the number of social and economic explanations is very high in comparison to the other dimensions of explanations. In addition, it is also very interesting that religious, cultural, political and historical explanations are offered so seldom. It can be assumed that the socio-cultural background, the political situation as well as the socio-economic situation in the participants' countries is one reason for this dispersed result. To cite an example:

according to the results of the European Values Study, one can estimate that religious explanations are offered seldom because religion is less important in the countries of the participants (Germany and Slovakia) (Atlas of European Values, 2008). This means, that if the lesson had taken place in Spain, more religious explanations would have presumably been offered because in Spain religion is (more) important.

Furthermore, the ticked dimensions of explanations in each group are different. Almost no member of the five teaching groups ticked the same dimensions as the other group members. This result implies that the offered dimensions of explanations are very subjective. The perception of the group members seems to be different. One can estimate that the reasons are cognitional, personal, social or religious.

## **4.2 How did we teach them?**

The participants of the German-Slovakian exchange were asked to write down how they taught the explanations. All participants wrote down teaching methods. Mentioned were discussions, brainstorming, clustering, working with pictures and maps, working with existing theories, the “starter method” and diamond ranking. The most used method was discussion, followed by working with maps and pictures. Many students also mentioned that they asked the pupils why-questions or questions in general to verify their answers and ideas. While asking questions one is able to initiate meta-cognitive and reflective processes, thereby developing critical perspectives and critical thinking.

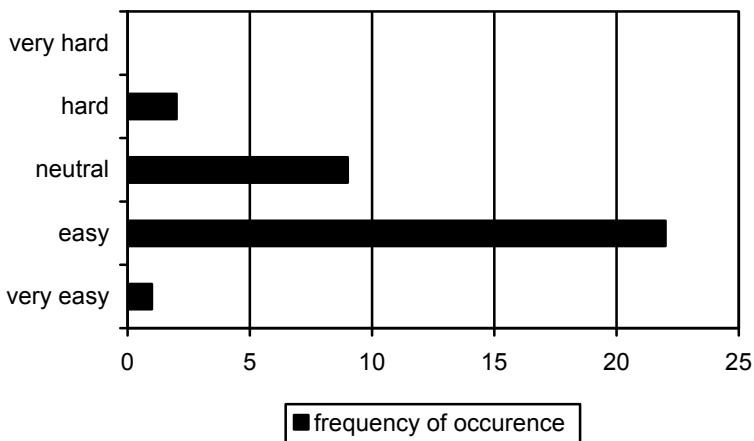
As shown with the above mentioned methods there are many possibilities to teach explanations or to give pupils help to think

about their ideas or opinions and thereby find their own explanations. It is not compulsory to suggest, present or offer ideas or existing theories to pupils to teach them explanations as pupils often bring their own ideas and their own knowledge into the lesson. In this way they are able to use and operate with their ideas and knowledge.

### 4.3 Did the pupils find it easy to understand them?

To answer this question a five-step-scale was presented to the students. They were asked to tick how easy or difficult the pupils found understanding the explanations. Possible answers were: very easy, easy, neutral, hard and very hard. The following figure shows the quantitative results.

Figure 4: Difficulty of the explanations



The figure shows the dispersal of the ticked possible answers. Nobody thought that the pupils found it very hard to



understand the explanations. Only two participants ticked that the pupils found it hard to understand the offered explanations. It should be mentioned that the other two teaching team members ticked “neutral” for this lesson. In total nine students ticked “neutral”. This can imply two meanings: firstly, it was neither too easy nor too hard; secondly, some of the pupils found it easy to understand the explanations and some of them found it hard. The major part of the participants ticked that the pupils found it easy to understand the explanations. Some mentioned that the pupils were able to reproduce the explanations in their own words. The possible answer “very easy” was ticked once.

#### **4.4 If they found anything hard to understand, what did they not understand?**

The participants of the German-Slovakian exchange were asked to write down what the pupils found hard to understand. Listed things were: working with maps, working with pictures and some words and matters. However, the students also mentioned that they were able to solve the problem by explaining the task, method or word again. Furthermore, it was stated four times that pupils just named facts instead of reflecting things. In comparison with the evaluation forms of the pupils, one is able to establish that for the major part, the pupils merely wrote down the facts mentioned for people being in need or differences between people in Europe (topic “Why work?”). Therefore, the meta-cognition as well as critical thinking processes was missing. It can be assumed that the pupils were not used to these processes. Due to the overfilled syllabus there is often too little time for critical thinking or meta-

cognition during the lesson. Moreover, the teachers have to make sure that they do not only teach factual knowledge. According to the aims of the curriculum framework teachers should ensure that pupils are able to develop critical citizenship and critical thinking. One way to reach this aim is values education.

## **5 Conclusion**

Explanations can be defined as the answering of a why-question. One can ask a why-question directly or one can start a discussion. Three possible ways to explain data can be stated in total. First of all, the pupil or pupils can give an explanation on the basis of already existing knowledge. Secondly, the teacher can give an explanation on the basis of existing theories and research. Thirdly, one can explain the data as the result of interaction and communication processes between the pupils and the teacher. Furthermore, the dispersal of the six dimensions of the explanations depends on the subjective situation of the participants. This includes their socio-cultural background, religion, political situation as well as the socio-economic situation in their country. All in all, explaining data is important to develop critical thinking and critical perspectives. Moreover, explaining data can be an instrument for meta-cognition and reflection processes.

# Developing critical thinking

*Dávid Kaňuk, Zdenko Majer, Juliane Röhl*

## 1 What is critical thinking?

Our first, spontaneous suggestions to describe, what critical thinking might be, were something like „don't accept everything somebody told you”, „try to find different perspectives and views” or „the same words don't always have the same meanings, because of different countries and cultures”. But these were just our individual ideas, so we wanted to find a general definition to explain, what is meant by critical thinking. Critical thinking can be understood as a complex process of reflection involving different skills and attitudes. Pupils should be able to identify other peoples' positions, arguments and conclusions and evaluate the evidence for alternative points of view. They have to weigh up opposing arguments and evidence fairly. Above all they should be able to read between the lines, to see behind the surfaces and to identify false and unfair assumptions. They should learn to recognize techniques, which are used to make certain positions more appealing than others, such as false logic and persuasive devices. Critical thinking includes the competence to reflect on these issues in a structured way and to bring logic and insight to bear. Pupils have to draw conclusions about whether arguments are valid and justifiable, based on good evidence and sensible assumptions. They should also be able to present their point of view in a structured, clear, well-reasoned way that convinces others.

The critical analysis of others peoples' reasons can involve different skills. To identify their reasons and conclusions, pupils

should be able analyse how they select, combine and order reasons to construct a line of reasoning. They should evaluate whether their reasons support the conclusions they draw and whether they are well-founded and based on good evidence. Furthermore they should be able to identify flaws in their own reasoning.

There are a lot of benefits of critical thinking skills. If pupils use arguments, they can improve their attention and observation, can read more focused and they can improve their ability to identify the key points in a text or other message rather than becoming distracted by less important material. They can improve their ability to respond to the appropriate points in a message, they develop the skills to get their own points across more easily and they learn about ways of analysing arguments that they can choose to apply in a variety of situations.

But not only do pupils need critical thinking skills, but also students. The latter should find out where the best evidence lies for each topic they are discussing, evaluate the strength of the evidence to support different arguments, come to an interim conclusion about where the available evidence appears to lead and also construct a line of reasoning to guide their audience through the evidence and lead the pupils towards their individual conclusions. They should select the best examples and provide evidence to illustrate their arguments.

## **2 Which methods can be used to develop critical thinking?**

There are a lot of different methods to develop critical thinking skills in school. One obvious way is to make pupils discuss about different situations and facts. In doing so, they have to

find different solutions and views. An alternative to a simple discussion is a role play. Here the pupils have to slip into different roles, even if they do not correspond to their own opinion.

In geography one of the main targets for critical thinking are maps. Pupils have to consider why maps look the way they do, what the authors want to say about the happening and how they, the pupils, can identify the implicit statements.

No matter which method you use or what you want pupils to reflect about, everything depends on the teachers showing them the way. If you ask the simple question “why?”, you can develop critical thinking in almost all exercises. It is important, that the pupils learn, that there is usually more than one argument and more than one view. Everything depends on the context. They should understand and comprehend, why different people have different opinions. It is helpful for pupils to understand, when they have to explain, what they found out and how they did it.

If you use these simple instructions, it will become a standardized method in your class and a good start to develop critical thinking skills in pupils.

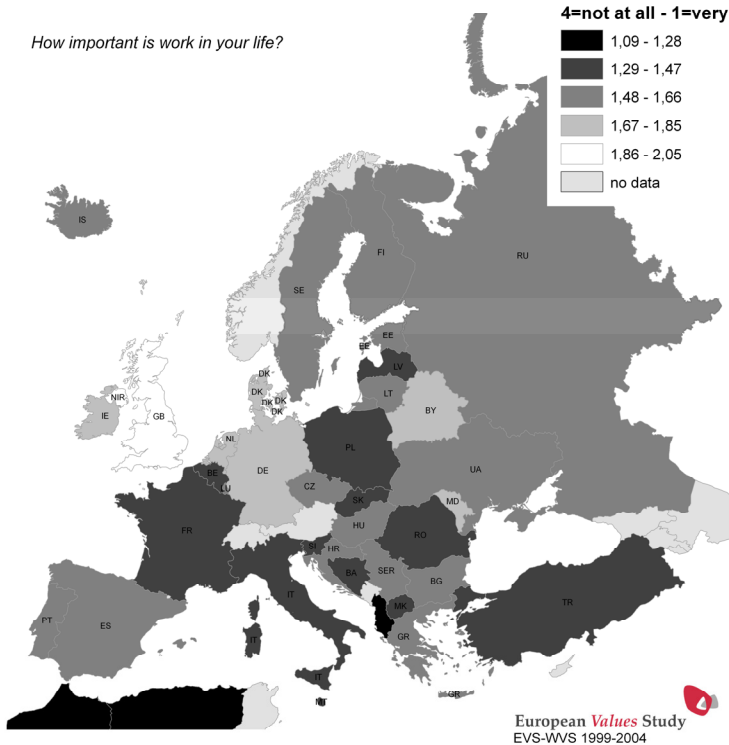
### **3 Examples for developing critical thinking based on two assignments**

The groups of student-teachers, which were formed at University in Potsdam, could choose between ten assignments. Eventually we worked with only two assignments: “People in need” and “Why work?”. In this part of our chapter we show some examples of how we trained critical thinking skills of the pupils while teaching these two assignments.

### 3.1 Examples from the assignment “People in need”

In this assignment the groups were supposed to train their critical thinking skills through the use of pictures and discussion. The student-teachers showed the pupils a number of pictures with people in need and they had to think about why these people in need. What are the reasons? Is it their fault or not? Then they had to give reasons for their decision and discuss it with other pupils.

Figure 1: How important is work in your life?



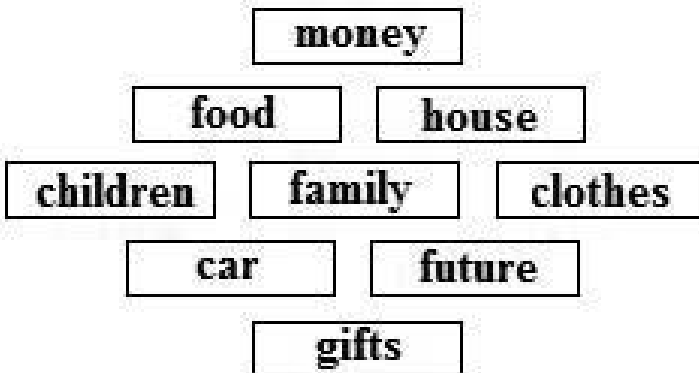
Source: European Values Study 1999-2004.

### 3.2 Examples from the assignment “Why work?”

In this assignment pupils were asked to train their critical thinking too. For developing their critical thinking skills the map “How important is work in your life?” (Fig. 1) was used. The student-teachers showed this map to the pupils on a transparency. Then they asked them why there were differences between people in Slovakia and Germany. So the pupils had to come up with reasons and explain how they got there.

In addition to what was offered in the assignment, one group of student-teachers used a method called diamond ranking. It was a very good method for training critical thinking skills because the pupils were asked to make a decision, in this case about what most important for their life and what is less significant. The pupils created very interesting diamonds (see Fig. 2 for one example), which they then had to present and of course explain.

Figure 2: Diamond of one of the students



## **4 Summary of methods used and results**

### **4.1 How did we train critical thinking in school?**

Once we knew how critical thinking was supported by the examples in the assignments, we could try to develop it in pupils; but how did we actually develop critical thinking? First, while preparing the lessons, we looked out for information that could be presented and / or seen as a pure and invariant fact. When teaching, it is important for the teacher to provide the pupils with a wide spectrum of opinions, even those that may be in contrast with the teacher's own philosophy.

One of the key methods for developing critical thinking skills is discussion. We used it mainly to explain differences in the perception of values (that is in our case the value of work) resulting from analysing the maps of Atlas of European Values. If most pupils responded to our questions in a similar way, we tried to lead them towards the search for alternatives to their first responses. For example, if the answer to the question, why there were higher or lower values in work ethos in a specific country, was that the country had a different social system compared to other countries, we tried to lead them towards other reasons like historical, economical or political reasons for example.

Another way through which we tried to stimulate discussions was group work. Having pupils discuss in small groups helps them to accept and understand the opinions of other classmates. When training critical thinking skills during group work, it is essential for the pupils to critically evaluate the significance of individual arguments, because this is the only way to



come to a conclusion that would be accepted by every member of the team.

A very helpful tool for developing critical thinking skills was the method of diamond ranking. Pupils were asked to lay out in a diamond the reasons why they think people worked. Doing that, they had to assess what is of higher or lower importance and present their own explanation to the others. The others were able to perceive differences and similarities in the thoughts of other people.

Comparison of differences in perception of values between countries (especially between Germany and Slovakia) stands as another valuable method for the development of critical thinking skills. Pupils usually used the facts and the information about foreign countries through the reality of their own country which can lead to stereotypical thinking and simplifications. The problem becomes obvious, when the teacher cannot provide a broader view on the issues discussed and does not sufficiently support his or her own commentary by verified facts and also slips into stereotypical thinking and simplifications. However, such a case did not occur in our classes, as the classes were led by teachers from two different countries.

We also found the use of material from real life quite valuable – for example information from the media. We used local newspapers. Pupils were asked to find job offers and choose as well as explain under which circumstances they would consider the offers as either appealing or not. When working with the different media, it is important to make the pupils look at the received information critically as opposed to passive acceptance. However, this was not possible with the given material. It would have been better to use some information

from the media which represents different opinions on one topic.

## **4.2 What did the pupils learn from it?**

Reflections on what pupils actually learned in class were collected through two sources – the evaluation sheets enclosed with the assignment and reports of experiences gained during the lesson. We found that it is often problematic to uncover whether the pupils did or did not develop critical thinking skills through evaluation sheets. As a manifestation of critical thinking we considered that the pupil didn't simply list what he or she had learned as a pure fact, but instead gave some reasons for an answer. When looking through the evaluation sheets we found that critical thinking was apparent in about 60 % of the pupils' answers.

From the more meta-cognitive point of view, as shown by our experience as well as the evaluation sheets, the pupils learned that the interpretation of facts is based on perception. What may be considered as poverty in one country, can be considered as relatively wealthy in another country. Pupils in our lessons also tried to develop argumentation skills in presenting their own opinions, which had to be supported by relevant arguments. Many pupils reformulated their opinion, if it had been based on a stereotype about a certain country, and learned to see the problems from different perspectives and to seek different aspects in the issue to avoid simplification. They learned, that people in Europe live in different cultural, social, political and economical environments, which influences their values.

Overall, we think that the pupils in our classes developed critical thinking skills – they presented their own opinions, supported them by arguments and accepted the opinions of other pupils. We therefore consider the project of European Values Education as successful and applicable in practice.

## **5 Our own experiences while working on this chapter**

The three of us managed to gain a lot of experience from writing this chapter. We also learned something new about our respective cultures. Although it was not always easy, thanks to helpful hints and everyday contact with our colleagues, we made it to the end. Straight after forming our group we had an idea of how this chapter could finally look. We found that on the one hand, we all come from different countries and have a lot to learn from each other; on the other hand, we share many common ideas and opinions. This was a major help with the final stage of creating these thoughts. Needless to say, we enjoyed being a part of this and are thankful for the opportunity.



## Developing lessons on the basis of the assignments

*Michal Ivaška, René Kallenbach, Anja Strehmann*

The practical work of the students on the EVE-project began with reading through the assignments. The ten assignments give examples of how one can bring across the significance of 'work' in geography lessons with themes like *Future jobs*, *Establish your own business in Europe*, *Unemployment*, *People in need* etc. After a first overall view every group chose one assignment and surprisingly the twenty students preferred two of them: *People in need* and *Why work?* Because of this uniform decision, the evaluation will deal with two assignments only.

What will be reflected in this chapter is how the students developed lessons on the basis of these assignments. Therefore the students were questioned on how they worked with the assignments: if they helped to create the lessons, how they were presented during the lessons, and whether the students would work with the assignments in the future?

With this choice of questions the students not only reflected on their working processes, but it also gave an idea of how useful the assignments are to develop educational lessons.

The evaluation of the assignments *Why work?* and *People in need* will be represented in the following.

## Part I: Before the lessons

### 1 What were the aims of your lesson?

The lessons with the topic *Why work?* should make the pupils think about the motivation to work. Therefore the students and the pupils focused on the questions: Is work important for your life? Why is work important for you? Why is work important for other people in other countries? Why do people have different positions on work? Which benefits do you obtain with the help of work? The pupils should become aware of their own motivation, should realize that people have different opinions on work motivation, and finally they should question why people have such different views.

The lessons with the topic *People in need* explored various reasons as well. The most important questions were: Why are people in need? And in how far are there differences between reasons given for people being in need in different countries of Europe? The pupils should think about reasons why people are in need, about the way the public looks at people in need and about different international conditions.

Every teaching-group asked the pupils for their own opinion, showed them the diversity of opinions and guided them on how to consider why people (e.g. of different countries) have different opinions. It was the aim of every group to develop critical thinking in their lessons. In comparison to the assignments it became clear, that these aims corresponded with the aims of the assignments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “In this assignment you are going to think about the reasons why people would want, or even need, work to fulfil their needs.[...] You may for instance find work important or less important.” *Otterdijk*, p. 1.

## **2 In what ways did the activities in the basic assignment help to reach these aims?<sup>3</sup>**

All of the students agree that the activities in the two basic assignments helped them to create ideas and to think about methods they could use. As shown above, the assignments also helped to develop the aims of the lessons. Furthermore, the material and the tasks were used to achieve the aims of the lessons.

In addition to that, the groups with the topic *Why work?* used parts of the tasks 1, 2 and 5 including the maps, the Maslow classification and the methods scale and ranking.

The groups teaching *People in need* used the file cards, pictures and cluster-method of the tasks 1, 2 and 5 in the assignment.

## **3 What are the qualities of the basic assignment?**

The students made use of maps and pictures as well as other materials that were helpful to work with and to create the lesson. The assignments offered a lot of information and contained a good collection of different methods teachers could use. In the assignment *Why work?* there were a few problems with the colours of the map *How important is work in your life?* In general the assignments were helpful to teach the lessons on a high level.

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'basic assignment' is used for the assignments of EVE and not about the lesson in general.

#### **4 Did you extend the basic assignment with your own ideas? (what kind of ideas)**

Students mostly extended the basic assignments with their own ideas that came to their minds while reading the assignments or while further preparing the lesson. When a certain activity from the basic assignment consumed too much time, other activities were neglected. In the assignment *People in need* students used the picture frame method (Roberts, 2003; Uhlenwinkel, 2007) and also prepared a creative writing activity that was planned for the end of the lesson. In this activity German pupils were supposed to write about the prejudices that Slovak people may have against German people. In the assignment *Why work?* students used the traffic lights method (Uhlenwinkel, 2006 and in print) and let pupils work in groups. They also added the diamond ranking method to find out what the pupils think is important about work.

#### **5 How would you improve the basic assignment?**

Firstly, it is important to say that students were generally satisfied with the basic assignments and that there were no significant problems. Some of the ideas of the students were to improve the basic assignments with more critical questions to find out what the reasons for pupils' answers, and how they got to a certain result.

In the assignment *People in need* students found some difficulties with pupils' understanding the evaluation question *What did you learn about the general and specific reasons people use to explain why others are in need.*



In the assignment *Why work* students would improve this assignment by adding more methods as well as improving the quality of the maps.

## **6 In what ways was the additional information useful?**

As every assignment is supplemented with additional information for teachers, students obtained the deeper overview about the given subject. Some of the students did not use the additional information to prepare their lesson. Others mostly used it for themselves, and thought about possible answers, even though the questions may have been very open. They could also prepare the lessons in a more flexible manner, because they could expect some questions from pupils and see things from another point of view as well as use some scientific background knowledge to the activities. Another use of the additional information was to better understand the aims of the tasks in the assignment.

## **7 How would you improve this?**

There were hardly any ideas in how to improve the additional information. Some of the students thought that the possible answers should have been more open in the cases, where the question was open as well. Another idea to improve the assignment was to write some parts in a more comprehensive way, as it can also be difficult for teachers, for example, to understand the results of specific studies.

## **Part II: After the lessons**

### **8 Did you achieve your aims? Why?**

All of the students think that they achieved their aims in their lessons. The reason for this is that the pupils got a closer look at our main topics *Why work?* and *People in need*. They were aware of the differences and similarities in Europe to start off with. Most of the pupils reflected their opinion, responded to our questions and took part in the discussions. With the help of some methods, we encouraged them to think about the reasons for the differences and similarities. Therefore, they told us their thoughts and ideas for these problems. It often surprised us, how interested the pupils were in the topics and what great ideas they had.

### **9 Where there are any difficulties in your lessons?**

In most of the lessons there were no difficulties or problems. The pupils were very focused and involved; they wanted to work with us and actively took part in the discussion.

In a few lessons there were certain problems with the language. Because the Slovakian students talked to the class in English and were not fully understood by all, the German students had to translate what had been said and vice versa. The Slovakian students did not understand when the pupils answered in German language. Thus a small delay came about. Yet generally the language was not a problem. Some students said that there were differences in the motivation and activity between the two classes they taught. However, this was to be expected and did not pose further problems.

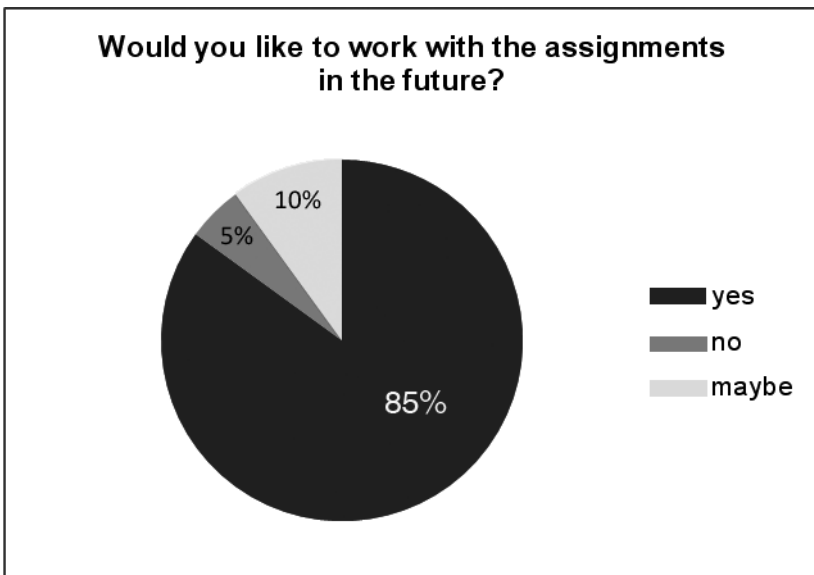
## 10 **Would you like to work with the assignments in the future?**

After the work with the assignments and the lessons in the school we wanted to find out whether each student would like to use the assignments in the future.

The outcome was absolutely clear: 85 % of the students would use the assignments again for the preparation of a lesson. Only 5 % thought that it was the first and the last time that they used these kinds of assignments. And 10 % did not know whether to use it in the future.

Clearly the end result was pleasing and showed that the assignments were very useful for students for preparing a lesson in a school.

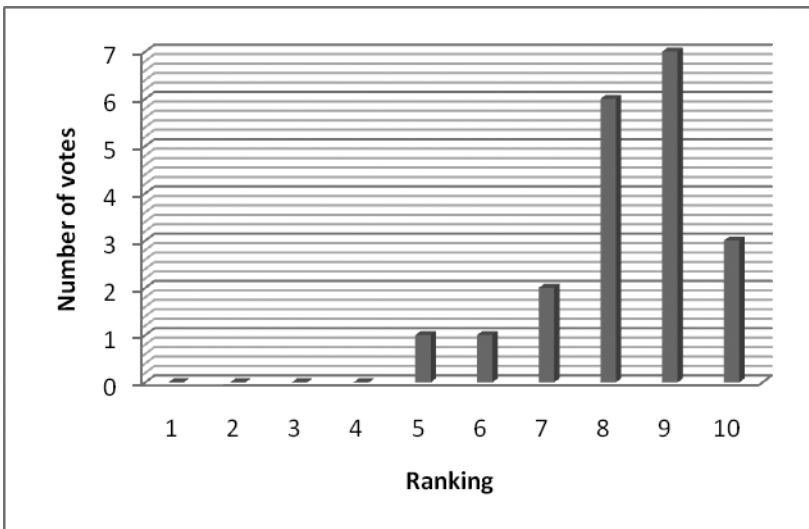
Figure 1: Future work with the assignments



## 11 Rank the assignments! (where 1 is the lowest; and 10 the highest)

With our final question we wanted to find out, how the students evaluated the quality of the assignments. They were asked to vote in a ranking from 1 to 10, in which 1 was the lowest and 10 the highest value.

Figure 2: Overall evaluation of assignments



Most of the students ranked the assignments from 8 to 10. Seven of them gave them a ranking of 9 and six and 8. The highest ranking was given by three students. Only one student gave 5 and 6 points for the assignments. To conclude we can say that the assignments were very popular among the students.

## Conclusion

At the end of this chapter we would like to think critically about our work: As easy as it was for us to develop the questionnaire for the participants, it was as difficult to evaluate the outcomes. It became clear that the questions were not that coherent and clear as we intended them to be.

One example was how to call the assignment we wanted to evaluate. We were aware of the difficulties communication causes when native speakers of different languages cooperate in a third language. To avoid a misunderstanding we named it 'basic assignment' (as in question 2, 3, 4 and 5) but that did not help in any way. Next time it will be better to make clear what we mean, before handing out the questionnaire.

Another thing to improve would be our questions on the improvements (as in question 5 and 7). The students often gave short answers or one-word-answers like 'yes' or 'no'. Evaluating these kinds of answers is quite a challenge. Maybe these answers are a result from the limited time the students were given to fill in the form. Maybe they did not take enough time to compare their notes, preparations and thoughts about the basic assignments.

Finally we recognized that most of the questions were understood in the way we intended. So we were able to evaluate and interpret them the way we did.



# **Working in a Multicultural Group**

*Daniela Baars, Luise Nern, Stanislav Písarčík, Pavel Rýgl*

## **1 Introduction**

Every society consists of different types of people with different races, cultures, religious beliefs, different nationalities, languages, customs, traditions and lifestyles. Thus, a multicultural group represents the connection between these people. When working in a multicultural group one has to be aware of the fact that there can exist differences compared to work in a mono-cultural group for example. On the one hand it offers advantages and benefits such as expressing ideas in another language or the enrichment by people offering them new experiences, ideas, and approaches to life. Furthermore, it conveys tolerance and mutual understanding. On the other hand problems could emerge as a result of communication barriers and occasional misunderstandings. What is important to overcome those problems is a common language, because speech is the fundamental means of communication. With the increasing importance of globalization in our world it is even more significant to achieve the ability to work in multicultural groups in order to be aware of common ideas and differences as well as to overcome prejudices between countries. Therefore it is great that there are many international programs for students from countries all over the world, giving them the chance for mutual interaction. The most frequent reasons for forming multicultural groups are surveys, scientific research or simply to discover problems or issues in different cultures. However, sharing our cultural values with others is necessary in order to

ensure equality and sympathy between people around the world.

The reason for creating our multicultural group was scientific research in which we wanted to find out about what students think about European values in the participating countries. In our case we formed a group of twenty students, ten from the University of Potsdam, Germany and ten from the Matej Bel University, Slovakia. This exchange is only one of many, since five different nations are included in the whole project (Great Britain, The Netherlands, Turkey, Slovakia and Germany). The following picture shows some of our participants working together.

Figure 1: German and Slovak students evaluating their lessons



What we had to do during this week was working on one theme in particular, namely “work”, and in addition give students the chance to express and share their opinions on it in German schools. In order to find out what it is like working in a multicultural group we chose two different methods to obtain



the necessary information from our workmates. Firstly, we used a questionnaire, which consists of several questions relating to working in a multicultural group. Secondly, we decided to do two interviews, asking one representative from each country about his personal experiences during this week of hard work. The results of both of these methods are presented in the following pages.

## **2 Questionnaire**

Since our topic was to find out, what it is like to work in a multicultural group, we developed a questionnaire that we handed to the participants of this project including ourselves. Regarding the questions we tried to cover the fields of language difficulties including misunderstandings, expectations before and after the project, feelings during the working process, cultural differences between the two participating countries as well as in what way the chosen tasks helped students to learn more about European values. A copy of the entire questionnaire can be found in the end of this chapter.

When we started designing the questionnaire it was not that easy to find appropriate topics. We thought about what it is like working with students from a different country and, hence, what sort of questions needed to be asked. The first thing that came to our mind was that the fact of using a secondary language and not our mother tongue as the basic means of communication could lead to misunderstandings. According to the majority of answers, Germans as well as Slovaks did have some communication problems, though, they developed strategies to overcome them. Hence, they reported that they observed an improvement in their English speaking skills, so

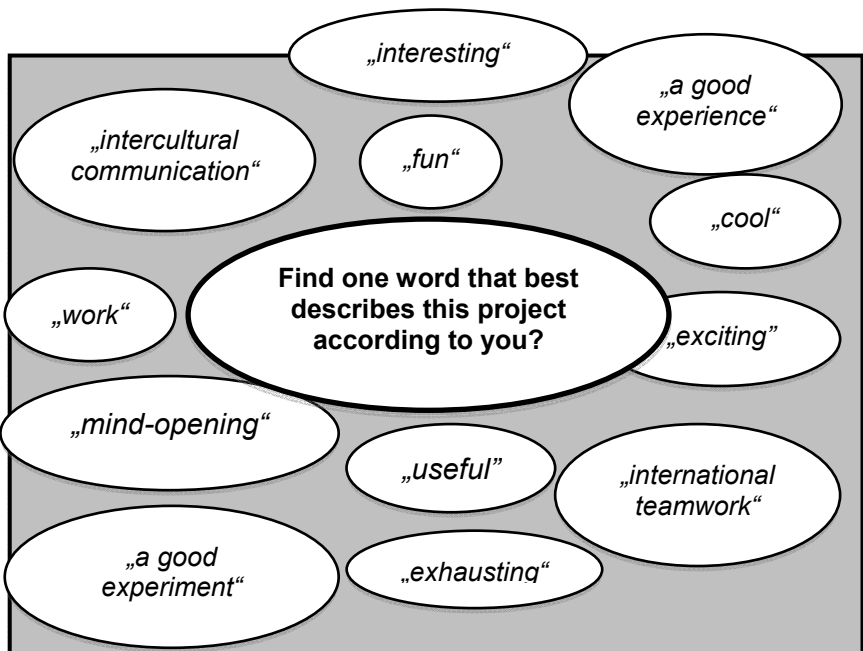
that by the end of the week some of them even ordered their next coffee in English, without even thinking about it anymore. What is striking about this fact is that exactly this (improving language skills) had been expected by many of the students before the project. But for others it was exhausting to use a foreign language all the time. Nevertheless, for all of us it was a great experience.

However, not only did the students want to improve their English but also they expected to meet new people and therefore learn more about a new culture. For the Slovaks, for example, the German school system seemed to be most interesting to get to know. Besides all that, of course, everybody expected to enjoy this special week. What the majority of us didn't really expect was the fact, that we almost didn't have any free time during which we could be all together. One of the biggest problems regarding this was the different places of residence of the German students. Some of them live in Berlin and others in Potsdam and again others in the countryside, which made it difficult to meet in the evenings. In general, though, it can be said, that we indeed enjoyed that week together.

When we asked about differences between their own culture and that of the other, the main answers were that most students noticed some variations. The most striking argument was the discrepancy in salaries in general, but especially for teachers between Germany and Slovakia. Those who did not see dissimilarities brought forward the argument that on the one hand we are all Europeans and hence, we are all the same and on the other hand that they did not have enough information about the other culture to answer that question exhaustively.

Since the pupils we taught were of different ages, it was not always possible to give the lesson entirely in English. Due to that some of the Slovak students could not follow the lesson and, hence, did not really enjoy the teaching. In those lessons where English was spoken the entire time the Slovak students could be included much better and the results of the answers show exactly this two-sided picture of how they felt teaching in a German school.

Figure 2: One-Word descriptions of the project demonstrate the results of a one-word description of this week and summarises some impressions



After discussing the results of the questionnaire we would like to conclude by saying that all of the students are people who are interested in other cultures and like new challenges as for example using a foreign language as the principle means of communication. The motivation to join this project for most of them was the interest in new experiences, so that according to the students, they learned interesting facts about Germany on the one hand and Slovakia on the other hand. To emphasise the meaning of this project to the students figure 2 demonstrates the results of a one-word description of this week and summarises some impressions.

Furthermore, we can conclude that during this project, although we were the teachers, we also learned what it means to talk about values, specifically about European values. Every country does have, generally speaking, its own values and to break it down even more, every individual of that country has his or her own very personal values.

### **3 Interviews**

In addition to the overall information in the questionnaire we wanted to know what two representatives of each country personally think about working in a multicultural group. Again we focused on language issues, feelings, expectations the students had before and during the project, and on their personal opinion in general. By doing an interview one has to take into account that the results are based on individual persons and that they do not reflect an overall judgment. Hence, we can only compare and contrast ONE German opinion with ONE Slovak opinion. The complete transcription of both interviews can be found in the appendix of this chapter.

Expectations of both the German and the Slovak student had in common that they in general wanted to learn more about Europe and their own country at the same time. What the relation of their country and the European Union is and how values are different in certain countries were some of the issues they asked themselves. When asking them about the actual working process and in what way it was possibly difficult, again both of them held the opinion that it was great to work in a multicultural group and confirmed that the cooperation between the Germans and Slovaks was very creative and valuable. They also agreed on the fact that misunderstandings as a result of language problems could be solved very well. Using English all the time was not seen as a handicap but more as a useful tool which improved their ability to work in a multicultural group.

When asking the Slovak student about his worries before coming to Germany he answered that he was thinking about whether the Germans will be nice and whether they would understand each other. Fortunately, his fears did not come true. In fact, he was surprised that they were even more motivated than he expected. So his hopes were fulfilled.

Accordingly, when asking the German student about the cooperation between him and his partner he responded that he liked the way they worked together since they all had the same aim and tried their best.

Trying to find out about their opinion on the use of this project, it seemed to be that both of them enjoyed it and gained many experiences not only in a personal manner but maybe also for their future careers. Although they suggested some improvement for future projects in the way that more countries, maybe not only European ones, should be included. One final com-

ment both of them made, was the lack of leisure time to be more interactive with the other students.

When looking at the answers of those two fellows it can be said that in fact they had a lot of fun working in a multicultural group. The two methods, the questionnaire and the interview show similar views. However, it is necessary to point out some critical remarks. With the questions and issues we touched upon one should consider the subjectiveness regarding the answers. Although we used the questionnaire to make the whole survey more anonymous, it is still not absolutely sure that the answers given reflect the truth. Generally speaking, the results draw a very positive picture of the whole project that should be taken as a good basis to continue in the future.

#### **4 Conclusions**

Comparing two groups of people from two different countries doing the same assignments does not seem that difficult in the first place. However, one important factor of being able to cooperate with each other is time. In the sense of how much time does every individual person need to get used to some new methods of working or using a second language as the principal means of communication. In that sense, time played an important role to everybody. One could have expected that the Slovak students, for example, may have experienced a culture shock that could have affected the quality of their work. Certainly not everybody can adapt oneself to new situations quickly, due to personal experiences as well as to competence (different levels of English, for example). Luckily our group melted together as one multicultural group very soon and without any major problems, as the results of the questioning

show. Furthermore the students reported that Germany and Slovakia are not that different, since they are located in the same geopolitical area, and hence the culture shock did not really appear.

When working multi-culturally not only two or more different cultures collide but the individuality of each person, no matter what cultural background they have. Some persons are more dominant than others, which could maybe affect the working process as well as the atmosphere. Surprisingly, according to the students, none of them mentioned any problems regarding dominance while doing the assignments in groups.

Taking everything into account that we have been discussing so far we can say that after only one week of intensive and hard work a group of twenty unknown students melted together to achieve common aims, namely teaching German pupils to think about “work” as one European value more seriously. However, it is only fair to say that the German students definitely had the advantage of being in their home country, thus, for them the exchange to Slovakia will be very interesting to see how they can manage to overcome difficulties in a foreign country where they depend on English as their only chance to communicate since nobody else speaks German. This project is a very good example of how it is possible to overcome prejudices easily and get to know other cultures. Surely, both nations learned a lot about the other and are more open to new things, which also already should have been a precondition to even take part in a task like this. For our future professions as teachers we can only profit from such projects, moreover there should be more offers in general for students at universities. Since we live in a world where globalization resounds throughout the land it

becomes more and more important to possess the competence of working multi-culturally. Although language is a very significant issue, it is not necessarily the only key to be able to take part in a job like this. What is more important is the process of getting to know other people, their beliefs and maybe discover differences or similarities and how to deal with them.



### **III RESULTS OF THE DUTCH-TURKISH GROUP**



## **Turkish Education System**

*H. Ayşe Caner, Fatma Nevra Seggie*

The contemporary secular education system was established after the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924. It is a highly centralized system and the state has all the power and responsibility for provision, control and supervision of all education activities by means of the Ministry of National Education for primary and secondary schools and the Higher Education Council for higher education institutions. Primary education is compulsory and lasts 8 years for all children aged between 6-14. The main purpose of primary education is to help students gain basic knowledge, and skills necessary to function in society and prepare for the subsequent level of education. Secondary education consists of 4 years of schooling for children aged between 14-18. It is divided into two tracks: vocational and technical education, and general education. Both tracks provide access to the higher education system, yet students on the vocational and technical education track mostly end up in higher education programs which are related to their specialized areas of study in secondary schools. The higher education system consists of two-year and four-year undergraduate programs and graduate and post-graduate programs. Access to higher education in Turkey depends on student success in a nation-wide central university entrance examination. Entrance, choice of university and program of study all depend on the score received from this examination.

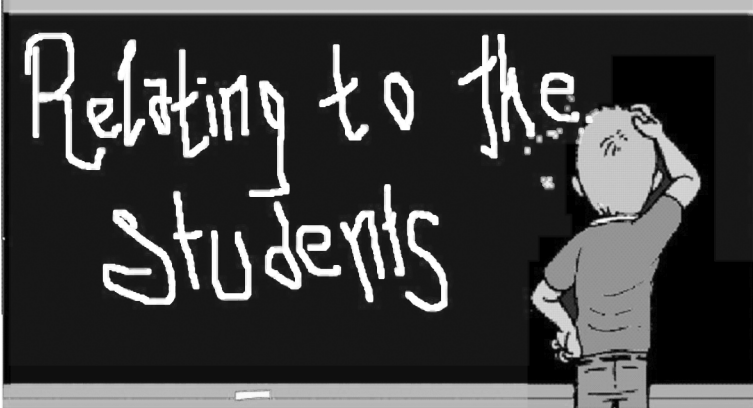
The curriculum of primary and secondary education is developed and controlled by the Board of Education under the Ministry of National Education. All the requirements and

contents of the curricula are determined by the Board and school teachers are required to follow them without having much discretion regarding decision making in related areas. Recently, both primary and secondary education curricula have been reformed within the framework of the constructivist approach. However, it is hard to claim that effective implementation of these reforms has yet been fully realized.

Geography is taught within the subject of Social Studies after fourth grade at primary schools and it is taught in secondary schools as an independent subject. The geography curriculum after Grade 5 mostly consists of physical geography. Yet, as a result of recent curricular reform attempts, aspects of human geography have been integrated to some extent within the geography curriculum. Additionally, content that can be considered within the realm of human geography is covered in an elective course called "Democracy and Human Rights" in secondary schools.

# Relating to the Students

Muhammed Çinkaya, Fethiye Erbil, Femke Knoops,  
Marloes Willemse



## 1 Introduction

One of the first things to do in the beginning of a class is, or should be, to relate the topic to the students' own lives. It provides an interactive class by making the students aware that what they are going to learn is not something irrelevant to them. In addition, it makes the process of making the classroom environment a comfortable one easier since the students will most probably feel less stressed to have a discussion on a topic that is concerned with their lives rather than a random, unrelated one.

Considering this, the issue of relating the topic to the students might be cited as a *pre-requisite* in order for a lesson to be communicative. If the lesson is not communicative enough, the result, more often than not, will be having a boring lesson.

Another advantage of constructing a relation between the subject and the students' own life is that it will definitely increase their motivation. Its benefits are undeniably plentiful considering the issue of "*extrinsic motivation versus intrinsic motivation*". This is because of the fact that if the students' motivation is coming from an inner source, it makes the job of the teacher easier. The subject itself will be sufficient to attract students' attention because the curiosity to learn about oneself is usually regarded as an inextricable part of being a human, or as a necessity of the human nature. And this fact will, under normal circumstances, facilitate students' involvement in the lesson.

## **2 In general**

In order to find out what the student-teachers' conceptions about the issue of "relating the topic to the students" were, and to see how much they were able to apply it in class, we interviewed them verbally as well as preparing a questionnaire for them to fill in. We also asked the student-teachers to get the pupils' ideas about the issue by raising a question right after the end of the lesson.

The results of the evaluation of student-teachers' attitude to relating the topic to pupils are quite the similar. Most student-teachers thought that the topics and concepts in the assignments which they were going to implement in the schools would not be appropriate for the pupils, that is they would neither fit their interests nor their age levels. Unfortunately some of the worries were justified. Some pupils found the subject quite abstract because until that time, the pupils had never thought about their future job, or establishing a business in

another country. However, with the further explanations of the student-teachers, pupils understood more and reacted more.

Relating to pupils was a big issue; most of the student-teachers were thinking that it was not coming out of the assignment and that they could not relate the topic and tasks to the pupils' personal thoughts.

Before the lesson the student-teachers thought that the pupils didn't know a lot about the topic.

### **3 Pupils' opinions**

To be able to have a good view about the relevance of the topic, we thought that it is important to consider the pupils' points of view. The reason for this is that it is the pupils who are, or should be, the focus of a lesson.

By looking at the evaluations made by the pupils in the classrooms that we observed, we can infer that the pupils found most of the assignments relevant to their lives. The assignments were all about work and all pupils will eventually need a job after they are done with school. However, it was less related to younger pupils (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, around age 14 or 15) because some of the pupils have not started to think about work yet. Some pupils mentioned this in their evaluations.

Therefore, it is obvious that it related more to older pupils (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, age 16 till 18). We also found in their evaluations that they liked that they had to think about their own future and that they could see how they can use the information from the assignment in their own future.

Most of the pupils who were given the assignment which included some aspects concerning migration were satisfied

with the assignment's relation to their own lives in that they had either a friend or a relative or just someone around them who is an immigrant.

Another example of the pupils' opinion about how relevant the assignment is to their lives is the assignment about unemployment. It was related to the pupils' lives as it has been a big issue in their country, Turkey, for many years.

All in all, looking at the examples we have given above, and all the evaluations from the pupils, it can be said that most of the pupils found some points that are related to their own lives.

#### **4 Adapting the assignments**

Right after the classes we gave evaluation questions to the pupils asking them whether they found any relation between what they did in the classroom and their daily lives. The results of the evaluations indicated that not all of the assignments were related to their lives. This matches with the student-teachers' evaluation. Sometimes it was not the assignment itself, but the assignment plus the effort of student-teachers giving more explanations and examples that made it possible to relate the topic to the pupils after all.

So most of the teachers thought that they had to make modifications on the original assignments.

The student-teachers asked questions to start a discussion in the classroom and to foster more interaction. Some student-teachers excluded some tasks from the original assignment and added pictures or newspaper reports, and made the pupils use their imagination to relate the topic to the pupils.

We asked the student-teachers whether they made use of any imagined situations or whether they directly went into the topic.



Nearly all of them used an imagined situation to start the lesson.

Here are some examples of how some student teachers adapted their assignments:

The student-teachers made the pupils imagine that it's the last day of high school, but they were very lucky since they could choose whatever job they wanted without entering any exam. The task was to "just think about your future job for a few minutes now!" This case motivated the student because it was relevant to their own lives and their future job decisions.

Another example:

*Fethiye Erbil & Femke Knoops worked with the assignment: "Establish your own business in Europe".*

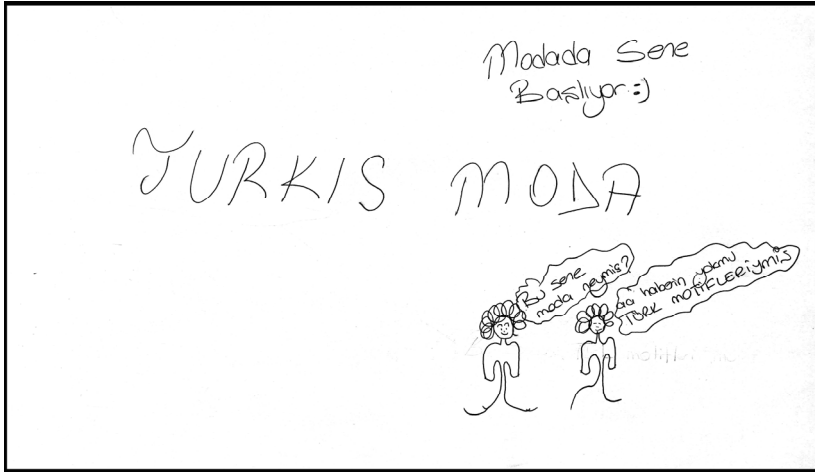
'We realized that the topic was a bit far from the pupils' lives because Turkey is not a member of European Union and the assignment was all about creating a company in Europe.

So, then we created an imaginary "Time Travel Machine" to take the pupils to the year 2020. They dreamed that Turkey is now a member of EU. They were informed that all the people in the member states could easily establish a business in the country they wanted to in EU. This imaginary situation helped the pupils and also the student-teachers to make the topic more understandable and connected to their lives.

Then we started to let the pupils brainstorm about their own company that they wanted to establish and let them talk about it before we started with the assignment. This was what was helping to relate the assignment to their own lives.

At the end of the assignment, to close the lesson, we gave them a blank piece of paper and let them write down all their ideas about their own company' (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: One pupil's idea for a company



(translations: )

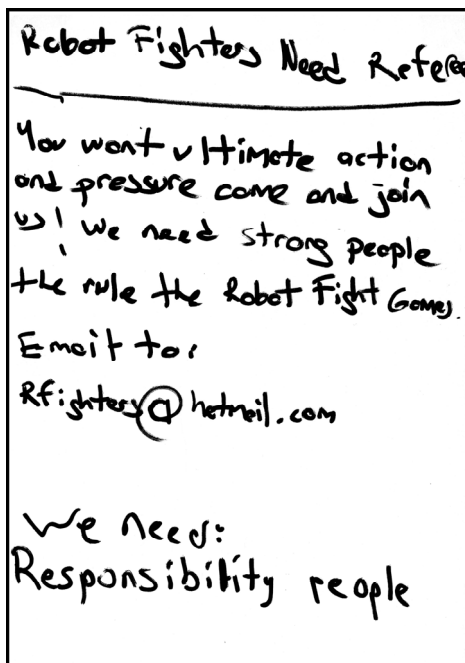
- "modada sene başlıyor: the year starts in fashion
- TURKISH MODA: TURKISH FASHION
- The first character: "Bu sene moda neymiş?: what is the fashion this year?
- The second character: "aa haberin yok mu. TÜRK MOTİFLERİYİMİŞ: Oh, haven't you heard. It's TURKISH MOTIVES

After these two examples and looking at the evaluations from the student teachers we can say that not all student teachers thought that the assignments for the Atlas of European Values related to the pupils' lives and had to make a lot of adaptations.

However, there were also some student teachers who thought that their assignments were related to pupils' lives. So not all assignments needed adaptations and were already relating to pupils' lives in themselves.

An example is the assignment used by Desiree and Mohamed called Future jobs, where the students were asked to formulate their own job advertisements (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Job advertisement by a pupil



All in all, looking at the examples we have given above, and all the evaluations from the pupils, it can be said that most of the student teachers found that they had to make quite some adaptations to the assignments to make it relating to pupils' lives.

## **5 Student teachers' opinion**

After having given the lessons we had kind of an interview and asked a few questions to the student-teachers to find out what they think about relating to the pupils and how they think that it came out in their lesson.

We asked them to evaluate which issues in the assignments were already directly related to the students' lives and which issues were not. The answers verified the prior assumptions of the student-teachers: there were many parts in the assignments which were issues likely to be discussed by the adults, but not by teenagers. These were beyond their capacity of understanding. So, student-teachers made further explanations to conceptualize the issues in students' minds.

We also asked the student-teachers if they used any technique to relate the topic of the assignment to the pupils' personal lives, such as role-plays, interviews and discussions. It is quite obvious that they all used some of these techniques. One group of students did a role-play to discuss the dimensions, similarities and differences among the countries in the map of the European Values Study.

This way, the pupils could give their answers and explanations more easily and this technique helped the student-teachers to keep their attention till the end of the lesson they have held.

These answers came from the evaluation forms that the student-teachers filled in right after they applied the assignments in the classrooms. The general answers and examples are given above to provide a clear portrait of student-teachers' opinions.

It is always good to go from general to specific. So, we made some interviews with two student-teachers about their expe-

riences in real classrooms. We wanted them to give examples and to talk about the difficulties in relating the topic to the students if they had any difficulty. The first student-teacher we interviewed was Mustafa Ertürk, a Turkish student in Boğaziçi University. This is an excerpt from the interview we had with him;

“We went to Arnavutköy Korkmaz Yiğit Anatolian High School. In one class, we had 9th graders; in another class we had 10th graders. The students were really motivated and eager to take part in the activities. They had a very good teacher. Surprisingly, they understood what we said in English; but our assignment was in Turkish. We were successful at relating the assignment to the students. We didn’t have to make any change of the assignment because we had our introduction in line with the assignment itself.

The assignment itself couldn’t relate to the students because our being there, our being university students readily made them curious and interested in jobs. In their reflection paper, most of the students wrote that these are daily issues in Turkey. It was really interesting. They were happy to learn about the circumstances in other European countries.

But it has to be taken into account, as one student-teacher we asked for his experience made it very clear, that it was the effort of the student-teachers that made it possible to introduce the topic of the assignment to the pupils. The connection between daily conversation and the issue to be discussed in the assignment was made by the student-teachers themselves. Otherwise, the pupils wouldn’t be able to make a connection to the assignment or they would have difficulty in that. It wouldn’t motivate them to be more realistic and sincere.

The second student-teacher we've interviewed was Marloes Willemse, a Dutch student in Fontys University. "First of all, a lot of subjects (in different assignments we've heard from other student-teachers) were kind of abstract which costs us a lot of adapting of the assignment to make it related to the students. We probably think it is because most of the students we've had were younger than we expected. Most of their English wasn't that good also. Because of that most of the lesson was in Turkish. Each assignment asks relating things but we had to adapt the questions like "How do you think? / What kind of job would you like to do? / Why do you think you will be suitable for that kind of job?" So we added concrete examples from real life to make the topic clearer and recognized by the pupils.

It's interesting to see that at first everybody didn't exactly know what to expect when they were teaching with the assignments of the Atlas of European Values but afterwards when we had evaluations it was good to see and hear everybody's experience and opinions because then you know also how other student-teachers cope with their assignment.

## **6 Conclusion**

Our teaching experience with the Atlas of European Values, and what we shared with our colleagues justified that relating the subject to the students is one of the most important things in teaching.

You can use so many different (didactical) forms to relate it to students as we have seen in this chapter and the examples that were given. One of them is using the imagination and creativity of the pupils.

When the lesson is relating to their life we found that the pupils are much more motivated and they work better on the assignments than when it's kind of abstract. They are willing to think about things when they know what the purpose is of the assignment and when it is close to their personal world. You will find more discussions between pupils and they will say much more and offer their opinion when it is related to their life so that is why it is important.





## **Teaching Patterns and Trends**

*Mustafa Ertürk, Desirée Maas, Martijn van den Beemt*

Success or failure in teaching patterns and trends is significant if we take into consideration that a high percentage of the assignments developed in this project consist of patterns and trends. For students describing differences and recognizing similarities between several patterns and trends like maps, graphs, tables etc. is the basic requirement for any further processing of the data presented in the assignments. This is because recognizing differences and similarities entails and triggers higher order thinking skills like developing critical perspectives through questioning, meta-cognition and critical thinking. It is crucial that students have a comprehensive understanding of the patterns so that they can grasp the aims and requirements of the tasks.

While conducting their research, the teachers had to describe and to explain the patterns in their respective assignments, and this calls for making a clear distinction between description and explanation. The difference between these two concepts is that in descriptions physical features of maps or graphs are stated and in explanations the contents of these are stressed. Making this distinction is important to ensure that students will draw the intended conclusions and find the necessary data in the maps that will help them to fulfill the tasks given in the assignments.

From experience in class, we know that it is very important for children to realize this difference and to understand the instructions they get from the teachers. Furthermore, usage of these two notions in various contexts is vital on the part of the

teachers as well. Without realizing this, it is not possible to ask students to fulfill the tasks appropriately.

From the teachers' reflections we see that they made use of descriptions and explanations in different parts of their classes. There are a lot of different ways to teach patterns and trends. One way is to simply tell the students. The patterns also can be categorized under different titles and there are a number of variables that have to be taken into consideration while deciding on this. Why you choose a certain option depends on many things, for example intellectual maturity of the students, the number of students in the class, the amount of time you have for the lesson etc.

One consideration for explaining the patterns yourself is because the pupils don't have the right skills to complete and comprehend the assignment on their own. In a case like this the teacher has to make the patterns clear, understandable and meaningful for the students. When you've achieved this, the students will be able to have a clear image and understanding of the assignment itself and the patterns, so that the assignment reaches its aims.

Another consideration is that the teacher is taking the role of a facilitator making it possible for the students to understand the patterns by themselves. In this approach the teacher will provide scaffolding, which makes students curious about the subject and in this way they will reach a higher level of thinking, they will produce more creative answers they wouldn't come up with otherwise.

This approach is more preferable compared to the previous one because of the skills that the students use. With just a little scaffolding the pupils will get into a more interactive setting

which will lead to production of more interesting and creative ideas on the part of the students.

Another way that was used by teachers to describe the patterns and trends was letting students figure them out on their own. Reflections from the teachers show that there has to be a hierarchy that starts with simple and goes on to complicated descriptions for students because the answers to the more easy questions could help the students to answer more difficult questions further on in the assignment. They relate the answers from the first, easier exercise, to the more difficult ones.

For example, first start to describe and compare facts from tables and after that, link this to the map and find a pattern in the map.

When the teacher thinks the students are able to describe the maps on their own, the students should be able to discuss their answers with each other. In this way they will compare their visions and descriptions with those from others, and in this way the students help each other, so that they learn from the opinions of their classmates. As a teacher you need to make sure the students feel free to discuss, so that they will interact with each other and come up with good answers which they had made up on their own. The learning process improves when the students discuss and think about topics. When they discuss their visions and descriptions with each other, they are interacting and active, and this will stimulate their motivation and critical thinking.

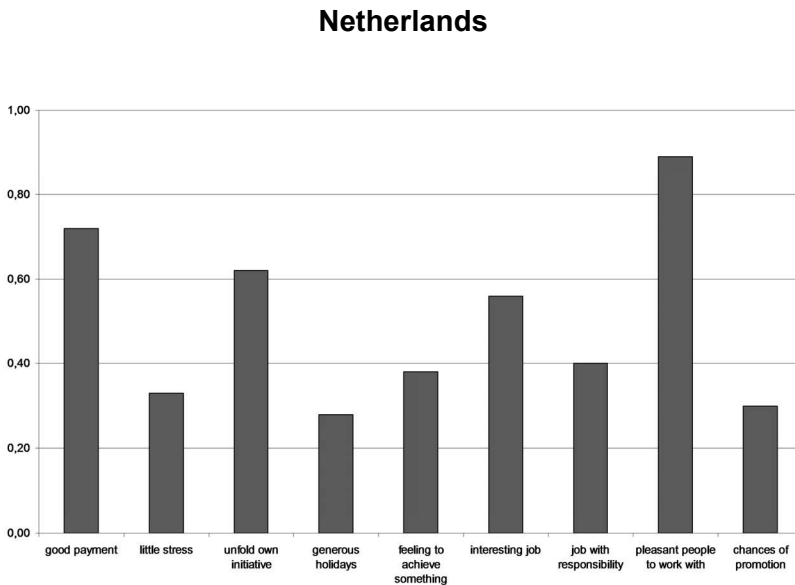
When you choose to let the students work without too much help from the teacher, you have to make sure they can reflect the facts and descriptions found in the map. In some cases you may want to provide scaffolding to students so that they

will be able to, for example, fill in a table with the information they get from the patterns.

In this way the students won't get bored because they use different kinds of materials to come to a conclusion about the description. That's why it's very useful to use more materials to work out a description. The students will like it to relate a map to a table or to their own vision; this will improve the learning process.

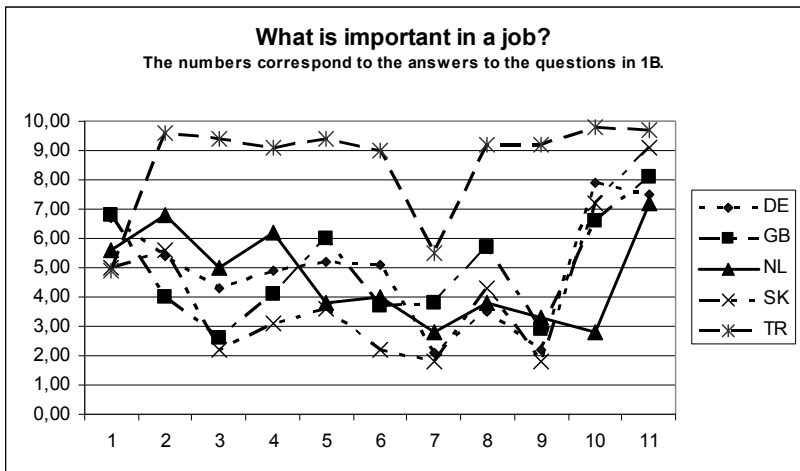
As pointed out, using different kinds of materials to achieve a good description is very practical and important. You can see an example of different materials to achieve a good description just below.

Figure 1: Diagram which was used in the assignment "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation".



The diagram above which was presented in the assignment “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation” was not directly explained and described by the teachers. The teachers just provided some helpful scaffolding and the students were asked to get the data needed from this diagram on their own. And teachers’ reflections state that students were successful understanding and interpreting the diagram without being explicitly told what information is given in it.

Figure 2: Graph from the assignment “Future Jobs” showing data in a different way



(1) an interesting job, (2) a job where you can use your knowledge and skills, (3) a job where you will be appreciated, (4) the opportunity to use your initiative, (5) a job where you can achieve something, (6) a responsible position, (7) good holiday allowances, (8) pleasant working hours, (9) not too much stress, (10) job security, (11) a good salary

Figure 3: Map on the importance of expressive work qualities



The Figures 2 and 3 are from the assignment “Future Jobs” and these figures are perfect examples of using a combination of description, explanation and also individual student’s work. The teachers conducting the assignment first described the data given in the first diagram. They informed the students about the physical features found in the diagram. Then they led the students to arrive at conclusions as to what the lines in

the diagram might stand for. In this way they also left room for individual student's work; pupils had to figure out the functions of the lines and the countries that these lines represent.

Then as the last step they gave students clear explanations about what they should have looked for in the diagram and the maps, what conclusions they could have arrived at from the presented data.

The comments from the teachers were very positive in terms of usage of these three ways in the assignment. They reported that in this way they could make the instructions really clear for the students. As students were not purely given data by the teacher but had the chance to think by themselves, they also enjoyed it and concentrated better on the tasks.

As we've pointed out before, the teacher chooses how to teach the assignment. The students actually have a big influence on the final answer; because every student is an individual, thus they have all different ideas, and other ways to achieve their goals.

We've asked how the students managed to reach the final description of the assignment. It's pointed out that not every way of teaching is leading to the same answers. If this happens, it's the task of the teacher to change the didactical form. For example, first you've chosen individual work, but if the teacher sees the pupils can't manage it, it's the task of the teacher to intervene and change the exercise / didactical form. In most cases, students were able to describe the patterns best if:

- The teacher gives some additional information about the map / graph / table.
- The teacher uses scaffolding.

- The students had to link given materials to other materials. After they compared and described these different materials, they were easily able to describe the patterns, because they saw and had to work with the patterns in different ways.

Describing is a very important factor in the curriculum framework. Without describing exercises it's really hard to fulfill the rest of the curriculum framework because they are the solid basis of all other exercises.

With descriptions the students will find a spatial pattern on a map. When they are correctly describing spatial patterns, they show they understand the meaning of the map. If this is the case, the teacher's task is to ask explanation questions or more difficult questions about critical citizenship.

Teachers often think the students only have to take a look at a map to see the spatial pattern, but that isn't true. Lots of students have troubles with map interpretation and map reading; students often have problems in understanding maps and see a pattern in it. It's very important that the teacher makes clear that there is a spatial pattern in it, because without a good description, it will be much more difficult for the students to explain the maps and spatial patterns. It's just like counting. If you aren't able to count till 10, it's really difficult to count till 20. It's just the same with maps. First you will have to learn how to read a map and how to see spatial patterns in maps. The next step is to explain the data.

Because teachers often forget the describing part, it will be really difficult for the students to explain the maps. Describing is a fundamental part of the curriculum framework, because it's the first step into learning about values. Without describing, the students won't be able to give a good explanation, because



they forgot to describe the pattern. If the students get the opportunity to describe the patterns, they will reach higher goals in explaining and in critical thinking.

In fact, some of the assignments of the Atlas of European Values didn't have exercises with a focus on describing patterns. In our opinion this is a point that has to be improved.

If the exercises contained more patterns and trends that would enable students to arrive at conclusions through describing, analyzing and critical thinking, they will have both the chance and skills to do more complicated tasks that require higher order thinking skills with more complicated items.

When the students see that they are able to complete more difficult tasks as well, they will be more motivated and they will participate more because they feel the power they can handle it.

That's why description is really important. It's the main part of any further development.

Overall, we think these assignments are good, but you can get so much more out of the students if there are more describing parts. Working with the Atlas of European Values was a real eye-opening study for us. We have learned so much about teaching students in an effective, controlled and structured way. We believe it's very crucial to let the students think by themselves, and let them ask questions. It is very good to see how the students get into the tasks because they have the feeling that they understand it and they will have more confidence. As a teacher you should always keep that in your mind. Patterns and trends are the base of every learning moment.

So, related to the assignments we see that 70% of them are poor in the number of patterns and trends that they include.

The students who had to make an assignment with describing parts were more enthusiastic about the lessons than the students who had not. It was also working better for the teachers themselves. All in all we can conclude that with some

Figure 4: Teacher-student explaining patterns



simple improvements in the assignments, it is possible to have more effective assignments to be conducted.

## **Explaining data**

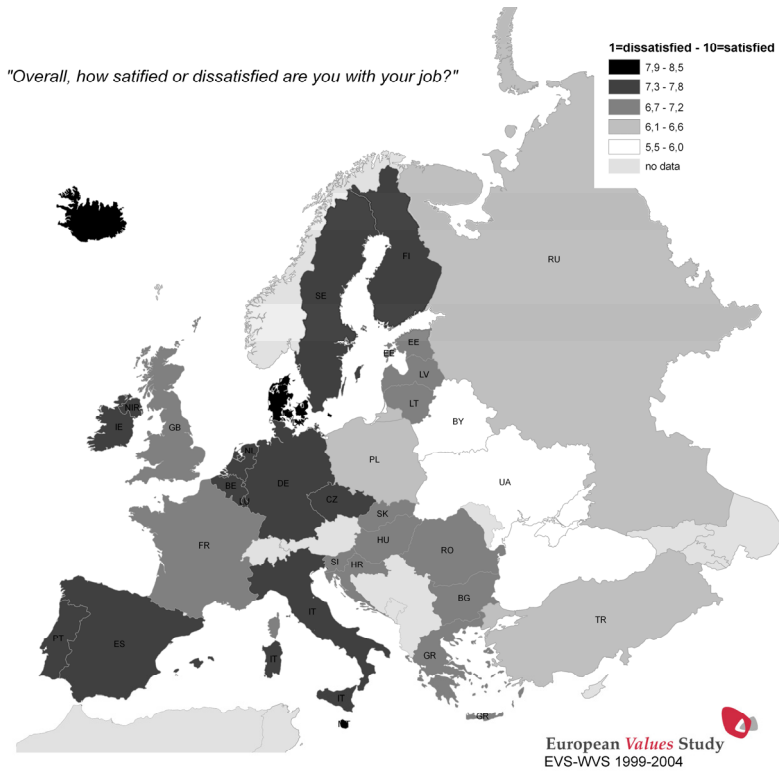
*Seda Akpınar, Didem Tuğçe Erdem,  
Desirée Verscheijden*

The importance of explanations in assignments while working with the Atlas of European Values cannot be underestimated, because students need explanations to be able to understand the patterns and trends. Explaining data in a clear and comprehensive way helps students understand the maps, figures and graphs because explanations explore the reasons for a particular pattern and how something occurs. Understanding what patterns and trends actually mean is a prerequisite for critical thinking and questioning. In another sense, explanations constitute the bridge between patterns and high ordered skills.

Explanations can be given to students in different ways. It may be deductively, in which the explanations are either written in the assignments directly or teachers give the explanations, this may be in oral form, or with the help of visual aids. Explanations can also be given inductively. In this way, the teacher's role shifts to being a guide and facilitator. Patterns are told to students, and students try to come up with explanations with the help of maps, graphics and their teachers. It is known that inductive teaching results in better outcomes as students personalize the topic and they are more active in the learning process. However, it requires more time. Because of this, in teaching assignments usually deductive method is used. Below, several examples for the use of explanations in different assignments are discussed.

Below a map from the assignment “Why Work” can be seen. It is a very good example of how the pattern can be explained deductively.

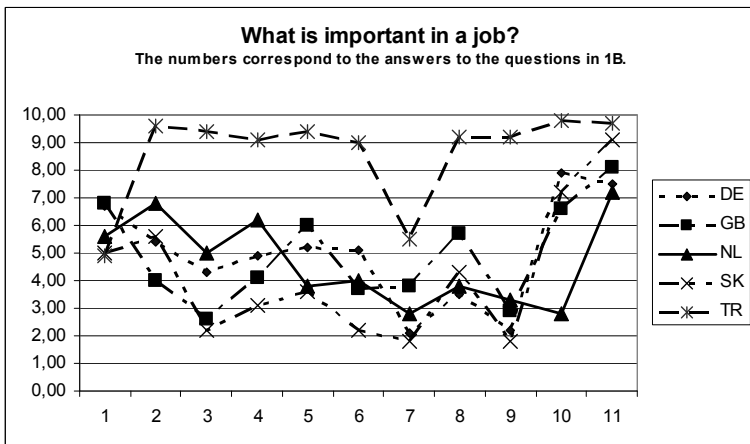
Figure 1: Job satisfaction in Europe



The pattern is that people generally are less satisfied with their jobs in Eastern European countries. The explanation was directly given in this example. In the assignment the students

were told that “job satisfaction can be related to working circumstances, working conditions, working relations, work culture”. Thus, the students gained more insight regarding why people in different countries have different levels of satisfaction with their jobs. The explanation was clear and adequate, so the teachers only used the explanation given in the assignment.

Figure 2: Import aspects of a job



1	An interesting job	7	Good holiday allowances
2	A job where you can use your knowledge and skills	8	Pleasant working hours
3	A job where you will be appreciated	9	Not too much stress
4	The opportunity to use your initiative	10	Job security
5	A job where you can achieve something	11	A good salary
6	A responsible position		

In the assignment “Future Jobs” motivations for work were studied, and here is one of the graphs from the assignment.

Two maps follow this graph, and looking at the maps, students build explanations. Here what teachers did was scaffolding, after the pupils’ first guess, the explanation was offered to them and then the pupils developed their own ideas along these explanations: Items 1-6 are related to intrinsic values and items 7-11 are related to extrinsic values and the two maps that follow the graph are about these values. Students were encouraged to explain the differences. At first, their explanations were not related to the values, for example, one of the explanations was “Earning a lot of money is more important in Turkey than Netherlands”, and then a description and an explanation specifically about the work orientations were given in the assignment and students started to explain the differences using intrinsic and extrinsic work motivations.

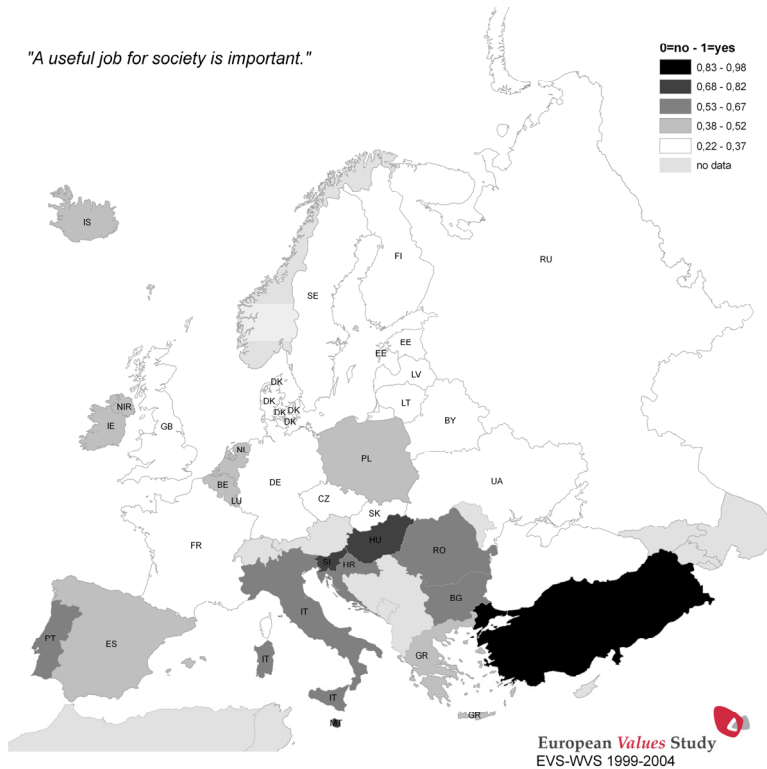
In some of the assignments, the explanations were not so direct, and the teachers wanted to use an inductive way to teach data. However, it turned out to be very difficult because of lack of time and they could not use explanations. For example, in “Work Travels Around Europe”, the students are given a map which shows the net immigration rates in European countries. Eastern European countries have a passive balance of immigration; while the other countries have an active balance. Students were required to look at the maps from AoEV to explain the pattern and put their explanations in different dimensions. This would require a lot of time, because there are six maps and students were not familiar with the maps. Hence, the teachers had to skip this task, but not to leave students without any explanation a short oral explanation was given and teachers explained that migration may be due to unemployment,

dissatisfaction with jobs and the importance of jobs in peoples' lives.

Explanations given by the student-teachers were very varied according to the levels of the pupils, the number of the pupils in the class, the amount of the time they had for the lesson etc. The reason for using explanations in a variety of ways was making the students understand the intended meaning as clearly as possible. For example, the assignment titled 'Work in the European Mind' was applied in two different classes whose grade levels were different. When the student-teachers explained the general distribution of decisions on choosing jobs as related to socio-cultural aspects in the European countries just by telling them, the students listened to them silently without any comment. This silence signaled the need of further explanations to the student presenters and they chose to use visual aids. So it was reported that they chose to use maps like the one that can be seen below from the Atlas of European Values to make the explanation understandable for the level of the students. With the help of visual aids, the students started to ask critical questions and make comments about the socio-cultural, political, economical, historical etc. aspects of the countries seen in the map. To be more specific, it was said that the students argued about 'the reason of representing Holland with light pink while using dark pink for Turkey in the map'. However, since the students were eleventh graders, they had difficulty in understanding the explanations when they were not helped by visual aids. The usage of maps helped the presenters to a great extent to make the explanations understandable, while they did not use visual aids as extra materials to give explanations for twelfth graders. Because it was stated that just after verbal explanation, the twelfth grade students

could immediately ask critical questions and indicate their comments about the countries' socio-cultural, economical, historical etc. aspects without the help of maps.

Figure 3: Importance of job being useful for society



During the application of the assignment titled 'Unemployment', the explanations given by the student presenters were not found clear enough, since, as it was mentioned before, the



“amount of time” was another determiner in the process of application. It was reported that because the assignment was too long to teach in forty minutes, the student-teachers cut four steps out of it, and they did not use visual materials to make the subject clear because of the time limit, so in the explanation part, the students were silent, and they were unwilling to make comments about the reasons of different views on unemployment across the European countries. And also, the students found ‘unemployment’ unrelated to their lives, saying they were only high school students and had not tried to find a job, so it was obvious that they were not aware of the job opportunities in both their country and other European countries. Consequently, they had failed to understand the essence of the assignment; and, at the end of the application, the student-teachers gave five points out of ten for the relatedness of the task to the students, and three point five out of ten for its adaptability.

### **Some comments on pupils evaluations of the assignments**

Throughout the applications of the assignments, we saw that the evaluation section was the most problematic part for the pupils. While answering the evaluation questions in English was quite easy for the private school students, using a foreign language to answer the questions and the obligation to write them down created frustration for most of public school students. Although, it was clear that they had some ideas about the similarities and differences between the European countries concerning job decisions, unemployment, career aspirations etc., they hesitated to share their ideas in English,

and asked whether they could share their ideas in Turkish, which is their native language, and after that they could ask critical questions and make comments about the subjects of the assignments. Additionally, as mentioned a few lines before, answering the questions in written form distracted the students' attention from the tasks, and they did not write all of their comments; although they verbalized them to the student-teachers.

Moreover, the students found some words hard to understand in the evaluation parts. The words such as "stereotype", "prejudice", "priority", "intrinsic & extrinsic motivation" were asked for definition and clarification. As a recommendation, instead of using these kinds of abstract words directly in the evaluation questions such as "What did you learn about *stereotypes* about work in Europe?", and "What did you learn about *priorities* of Europeans for a job", they should have been defined more clearly not to de-motivate the students at the end of the assignments. Because, it is believed that if the pupils face difficulty in understanding some parts of the tasks that they are supposed to do, it is highly possible that they cannot show their full competence on the task, such as answering the questions. In the light of this statement, when we looked at the evaluation parts filled in by the pupils, we found that 70% of the questions including these kinds of abstract words were not fully answered or just skipped.

As a conclusion, as explained above, the data were explained in different ways, and the pupils reacted in different ways to different explanation. The lack of time was a problem, hence, explanations had to be cut short and the patterns were more deductively taught.

## **Critical Thinking**

*Kezban Altuntaş, Sebastiaan Cornelissen,  
Çağlayan Erdönmez, Anneke Rooth*

When pupils think critically, they are able:

- to think of explanations for differences and similarities on a given value;
- give adequate arguments for their opinions or explanations on given values;
- to reach a conclusion through different explanations;
- to identify other people's opinions, arguments and conclusions.

Critical thinking is important because it enables pupils to use their higher order thinking skills such as evaluation, problem solving, making analyses and comparisons, and linking their prior knowledge to the target knowledge. Critical thinking enhances pupils' level of attention on a given task and they can look and observe the data from different angles and perspectives. Since critical thinking results in improved attention and observation, pupils can analyze every aspect of a given value. In addition, with a more focused reading thanks to critical thinking skills, pupils can identify the major and minor points in a given text. This helps pupils to get rid of unnecessary details and focus on the gist of the text. If pupils know how to think critically, then they may extract their own point of view out of so much data and information. Being aware of their own ideas and every aspect related to them helps pupils to transfer them easily. Having their own ideas and values thanks to critical thinking helps pupils to be critical in other aspects of life. For instance, if they know how to analyze their lessons and

assignments then they can be critical individuals and critical citizens. With critical thinking abilities, pupils can go beyond what exists to a level where they can understand why it exists. The assignments aim to foster critical thinking with the tasks which require the pupils to make data analysis, comparisons and drawing conclusions.

The questions we asked the student-teachers after holding the lessons were:

- Were the students able to think of explanations for differences and similarities in work values? Was the assignment itself self-explanatory enough to make the students see the differences and similarities in values, or was there the need for the student teacher to help them?
- Did you notice that the students were giving adequate arguments for their opinions or explanations on European Work Values? Was the assignment itself self-explanatory enough to make the students see the differences and similarities in values, or was there the need for the student teacher to help them?
- Did you notice that the students were able to come to a common conclusion through different explanations? Was the assignment itself self-explanatory enough to make the students see the differences and similarities in values, or was there the need for the student teacher to help them?
- Were the students able to identify other people's positions, arguments and conclusions?
- Would you say that the assignment helped them to think more critically?

## **1 Unemployment**

In the assignment there are several tasks for critical thinking. The pupils needed to realize the similarities and differences between the data and see the patterns and they also needed to put forward arguments about the patterns in other tasks. For instance, in task 4 pupils need to fill in a table with the data on maps and talk about whether there is a common pattern or not. The student-teachers expanded some of the questions by asking the pupils' motivation for their answers. They also made use of imagination and hypothetical situation analysis; so the pupils learned to identify other people's positions and opinions. The pupils were able to think critical and see the whole pattern between the opinions of countries related to the reasons of unemployment. Even they made comparisons between the general pattern and Turkey. The main difficulty was that to apply the whole assignment, at least two full hours would be needed but there were only 40 minutes available. Hence, to apply it in the classroom, it is needed to take some parts the assignment out. Unfortunately, the unity of the assignment is lost and there were some gaps between the tasks. The pupils had difficulties in reaching the ultimate aim of the assignment. On the other hand, the goals reached are that pupils saw the patterns among the European countries and their views related to the issue and they expressed their own ideas.

## **2 Career Aspirations**

In the assignment, the tasks are designed in a way to stimulate the critical thinking of pupils. The assignment first provides some example reasons for choosing a job so that the pupils can see some patterns. This way, pupils can see the inter-relations between values and attitudes. This is at first not a challenging task but it is somehow raising the awareness of the pupils about the concepts values and attitudes and how values underlie the attitudes. In task two, pupils are provided with a value pattern so that they have a chance to compare the value rates of different countries. In doing so, pupils can draw conclusions and make generalizations. However, in task 3, pupils are asked to fill in a table about the values that underlie the attitudes given. This is a challenging task for pupils as it requires going beyond the reasons and find the values that actually trigger them. Moreover, in task 4, pupils are asked to categorize the same values that underlie different attitudes. Hence, this requires them to make synthesis and find similarities. In task 5, pupils are asked to choose a value and look at the map on that value. In doing so, pupils are required to use their critical thinking skills to compare the different value rates given by different countries. This helped pupils to draw the conclusion that the generalization does not necessarily reflect the reality.

## **3 Future Jobs**

There were some tasks which support critical thinking but not in overt forms; the tasks were not aimed at critical thinking but pupils were engaged in critical thinking subconsciously while

doing it. For instance, the first task requires children to think about their future jobs and what they needed for those jobs. In this part, they were able to give their opinions and arguments and they can explain what underpins their reasons. The previous task was adapted and the pupils were asked to act out their future jobs instead of just filling in the table. The pupils learned that living in another country means having different values along with different opinions. It was difficult for the pupils to give explanations about the maps because they didn't have enough geography knowledge. Namely, they didn't know which country was where on the map and they didn't know much about those countries. In general, the assignment was fine but some more specific questions would have been better. In this current form of the assignment, the teacher needs to contribute a lot. Other student-teachers agreed on the fact that the assignment itself aims well on critical thinking even though they didn't have a chance to get a good result during the lesson, because of the students' English language and intelligence level.

#### **4 Work Travels around Europe**

The assignment itself did not actually aim to create critical thinking by the students. However, teachers could make the assignment more meaningful and with the discussion part they encouraged the students to think critically. The teacher found it difficult to stress the values in the assignment and this made it harder for students to think critically. However, when the teacher encouraged critical thinking, the students enjoyed it. There were no tasks directly related to encourage the students to identify with other people's opinions. The assignment

helped the students to think critically because students needed to think about push and pull factors. Later on, they needed to check if their thoughts reflected reality. That part was very good. Moreover, there were tasks which required the students to discuss advantages and disadvantages of migration for both the home and the destination country. In this way they would get a broader and a deeper understanding of migration throughout Europe.

## **5 When jobs are scarce**

The testing of this particular assignment was done with a group of 13–14 year old students. The assignment was therefore a bit too abstract. The assignment did however encourage the students to think more critically. For these young students, language was a difficulty so they could not express themselves effectively in proper terms. However, through small steps in the assignment the students were able to form appropriate arguments to express what they think. To give explanations for the opinions of other countries was too difficult, but they could understand the opinions of people in the class. However, that was not enough for the assignment to reach its aim. Another reason was that they did not have enough time to finalize the conclusions of the project. The assignment was too complex for the age level of students and the given time span. In the end, the student-teachers found that the assignment does indeed contain tasks that aim for critical thinking, but the students were too young to reach this aim.



## **6 Work in the European mind**

This assignment consists of three main tasks which are first formulating their own opinions, second searching for explanation for the differences in the opinions of other countries and making hypotheses, and third discussing the findings. The last step is the central part of the assignment in which critical thinking takes place for in this task they relate to each other. In the discussion part, they share their opinions and they may modify or change their opinions or become more aware of their own opinions in the process of the discussion. Unlike before, students felt that they had the chance to express their own ideas. Student-teachers and students themselves felt that this was not usually the case. The assignment itself helped the students to think more critically, but in this lesson the time available was not enough to reach the aim.

## **7 Establish Your Own Business in Europe**

The students were able to give some reasonable explanations for differences in work values. This was however not just due to assignment itself. By the student-teachers' questioning, the students could give adequate arguments for their opinions on European work values. There was an example where some students changed their opinions due to the information they gathered. Hence, it was found that the assignment did change the way students construct their arguments. During the lesson, mainly two groups were discussing which led to several conclusions, which were reached by the guidance of student-teachers and the discussion skills of the students, not through the assignment by itself. At the end of the lesson, student-

teachers found that students were able to identify other people's positions, arguments and conclusions. Overall, the student-teachers found that it was them who had to encourage the students to think critically, as the assignment failed to do so.

## **8 Why Work**

During the lesson, the student teachers found that some the students were able to think of explanations for differences and similarities coming from their general knowledge. This was reached by questioning by the student-teachers, not through the assignment by itself. Giving adequate arguments for these explanations was only done by one particular student, and it was clearly due to his own knowledge and not supported by the or by the assignment. In discussing values no real conclusions came up. Student-teachers could not notice students' ability to identify other people's opinions, arguments and conclusions for the discussions were too limited. At the end of the assignment, some students adapted their opinions on work through the information they were provided with by the assignment. Student- teachers are convinced of the assignment's potential to make students think critically, but in an abstract way. Hence, it's up to the teacher to enhance its effectiveness.

## **9 Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation**

During the lesson given with this assignment, students were very well able to think of explanations for differences and similarities in work values by exploring the given data. Although the assignment itself doesn't ask the students to find explana-

tions, it does give them the necessary information to do this and it is only a small step for the teacher to ask them for explanations. Not only did the students think of explanations for different motivations in a social dimension but also they explored different dimensions through teachers' questioning and random thinking. By questioning the data in the maps and graphs, and the way the data was collected it was hard to come to a common conclusion but the process shows some degree of critical thinking. Through investigating different types of motivation of different people the students were able to identify with other people even though they have different values. All the necessary steps for this process are in the assignment but it's the teacher who needs to take the final step to have students explain their opinion. In this way the assignment helps to train critical thinking as long as the teacher makes use of this element.

## **10 Final Conclusion and Suggestions for Possible Improvements**

It is important to let young people think critically because there is not enough time to share what everybody thinks in the mainstream of the classroom. Rather than spending so much time on explaining everything in the class, it is better to create critical thinkers so that they will analyse and reach conclusions themselves. Critical thinkers are those students who continually ask questions and try to find the reasons behind the facts. By leading students to think critically, we can contribute to active learning.

In the tasks, there should be more steps to prepare students to learn how to think critical because it is anticipated that they

can accomplish it. However, that's not the case. The tasks and concepts might be too abstract for the students and this means that they need more time to build up the necessary knowledge to complete the tasks.

## **Developing lessons on the basis of the assignments**

*Elif Zeynep Azar, Suzanne Kools, Richard Schnabel*

The following chapter aims at supplying information about the points below:

- aims of the assignments in general,
- whether these were reached or not,
- if yes, how did the activities help, if not, what were the reasons.
- the difficulties experienced during teaching,
- adaptations applied to the assignments,
- the quality of the assignments and additional information,
- how student-teachers feel about the assignments overall,
- whether student-teacher would want to use the assignments in their future classes.

Figure 1: Classroom environment situation in Arnavutköy Korkmaz Yiğit Anadolu Lisesi.



## **1 What were the aims of the assignments and to what extent were they reached?**

Based on the evaluation forms filled in by the student-teachers before they have given their lesson, the aim of the assignments was to help the pupils learn about different work values that different European countries have, to use the maps related to values and to interpret the differences presented in the maps. In a nutshell, the pupils should be able to realize that ideas and values are not fixed, they vary. And they would be able to think critically about these variations.

While trying to understand these differences, they would try to come up with some umbrella terms in terms of generalization and descriptive patterns through brain storming and/or group discussions. During this process, similarities were also to be realized, not only differences. After this starter exercise, the students would think about their own personal values and preferences related to work, and be given more detailed information.

According to the second evaluation form filled in by the student-teachers after they have given their lesson, these aims could not be reached all the time. The time available and the motivation level of the pupils, whether the pupils can relate to the topic of the assignment or not, were the key determinants in success in reaching the aims.

For the assignments whose aims could not be reached, the main problem was time limitation, low motivation of the pupils and the limited background knowledge of the pupils about the European countries. These factors seem not to be caused by the assignment and the tasks themselves at first glance, but comments about assignments show that the tasks were not

able to raise the attention and motivation of the pupils. Furthermore, some of the student-teachers used the additional background information accompanying each of the tasks in the classroom to help pupils' understanding. As these were difficult and long, the time provided by one lesson was not enough to complete all the tasks that an assignment requires to be completed.

On the other hand, when we look at the areas where the assignments helped to reach pre-determined aims of the lesson and the activities, we can conclude from the data we gathered from the evaluation forms that the tasks that work on the differences between European countries, asking for students' values and ideas, and for a class discussion to compare and discuss these ideas were beneficial in giving a way to critical thinking. Overall, the tasks and the maps were useful to stimulate ideas, explanation, and class discussions to reach these aims.

## **2            What are the additions made to the assignments?**

From the answers in the evaluation forms it is obvious that there is some agreement in terms of addition of the assignments. The additions applied to and suggested for the assignments generally aimed at making them more interesting. As a starter, there may be some warming up exercises, like short plays for example. Afterwards it would be easier to get the interaction going.

For another example, the student-teacher pair who worked on the assignment "Why work?" used the "wallpaper discussion" technique, and extended the task that asks students to cut job

advertisements with jobs they would like to do and they would not like to do from newspapers and to explain their reasons in the following way: one wall of the classroom was used for the “I would like to do” advertisements, and another wall for the “I would not like to do” jobs, and the students were asked to post their advertisements on the related wall.

In the second part of the task, the students were asked to list the motives that people may have for doing the work they do not like. Instead of just listing which is not attention drawing, the student-teachers posted a sheet of paper under each advertisement on the wall, and randomly student went to these advertisements and found the one they would like, but their classmates did not like, and vice versa, and then wrote their reasons on the paper, and also the possible motives behind the differences in liking the jobs. Then they randomly collected these advertisements and comments adjacent to them and discussed the results in groups of five.

When they reported the results, it was obvious that these activities helped them think critically, because they were able to see the different reasons and motives their classmates had, and they were able to comment on them. Some additional activities and visual materials were also added to the assignments to trigger critical thinking.

Because some tasks were abstract, to relate them to the students some daily life examples were given, or some plays were played during the lesson. For example, for the task “Work in the European Mind”, the pupils were asked to assume that they are going to graduate tomorrow, and they have the opportunity to choose any job they want. During this process of relating the topic to the students, the aim was to learn about the pupils’ criteria for work. Let the pupils imagine to



time travel to the future, when Turkey is a member of the European Union. Ask the pupils how the values about work would have changed in Turkey so that you can relate the topic to the pupils and real life.

The other aim of the extension was to make the assignments more understandable by giving extra explanations when needed, using visual aids such as pictures of different types of jobs to make the topic more clear. PowerPoint-presentations were also used very often, especially to be able to show the maps in colour to make them more legible. Some information about the background of the maps was also provided during the discussions. Because the maps do not include detailed information, when the instructor thinks that student can not find a plausible explanation about the differences throughout Europe, additional information should be provided.

### **3            What was the quality and the applicability of the assignments?**

The common opinion about the assignments is that the borders of the countries in the maps were not clear; the colors were so similar to each other that it was difficult to realize differences, but there are also some instructors who liked the quality of the maps and found the maps motivating unless they are delivered to students in black and white paper format. There is no background information such as age, economical or academic background of the people who had responded to the questions from which the data on the maps had been derived. Finally, some pictures of Turkey and the Netherlands were shown to arouse interest and motivation among the students.

#### **4 Was the additional information given together with the tasks useful?**

When the answers to the questions regarding the additional information were evaluated, it was obvious that most of the responders actually did not understand what the additional information was. They thought that it was about the information for the student-teachers to help them preparing the lesson, but that was not the case.

When it was used, the additional information helped student-teachers to understand the concepts behind the tasks better. The examples, explanations and definitions were useful to see the tasks in the broader context of the whole project.

#### **5 What were the difficulties and adaptations afterwards?**

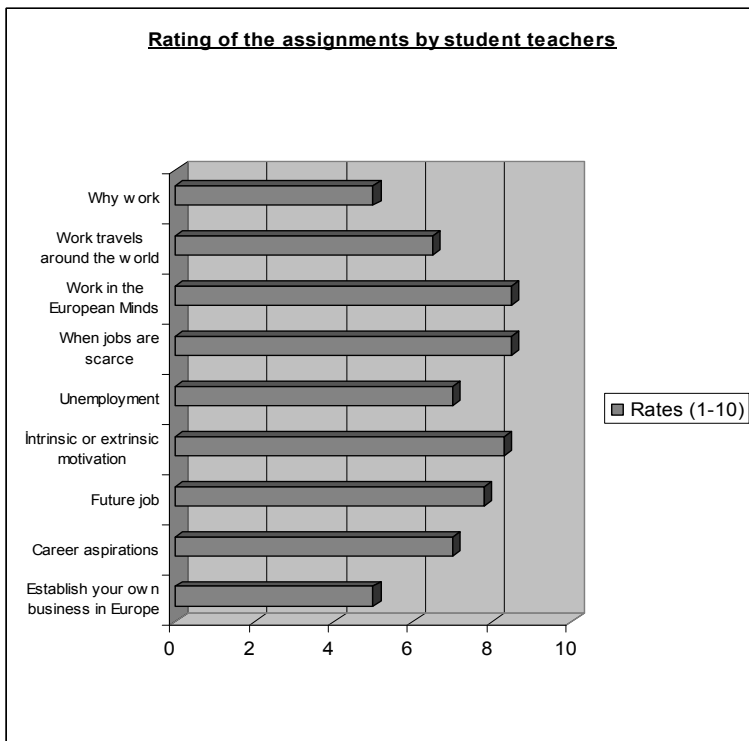
The main difficulty during the lessons was time limitation, and to overcome this problem, some tasks and maps were skipped and some activities were made shorter as an adaptation. And the maps were also adapted to PowerPoint-presentations. Student-teachers' scheduling of the lesson was another problem, again stemming from the limited time.

While working on the maps, and additional charts, explanations and illustrations that helped turning abstract concepts into concrete examples were used to facilitate the process of discussion. For example, one can give each student the identity of a European country at the beginning of the lesson to make the countries and their values more concrete. In this way, the students will try to think and respond according to the average values of the country they represent. This will enable

students to think about every task from one specific perspective.

As for the general opinion about utilizing the assignments in the future in their classrooms, most of the student-teachers said that they would use them, but after necessary adaptations as the ones exemplified above. And while doing these adaptations, grade level and background knowledge of the students and the time limitations should be taken into consideration.

Figure 2: Rating of the assignments by student-teachers.



The graph above indicates the rates that the assignments were given by the student-teachers who gave lessons for the European Values project. Every student rated their given assignment from one to ten. One is the lowest given value, while ten is the highest.

Figure 3: Feedback about the lesson with the assignment 'Why work?' by the classroom teacher Orçun Türegün.

18.11.2004

Sınıfta yapılan uygulamaya öğrencilerin ilgisi canlı tutma açısından gayet başarılıydı. Öğrenciler ilk başlarda çokta konusunda tereddüt olsalar da, Herkese zamanla ile daha çok katılım gösterip konuya ilgilerini belli ettiler. Özellikle işlemlerinin kolaylaştırıldığı bilindikten sonra öğrencilerin katılımı arttı. Öğrencilerin işleme konularında temel bilgiye sahip olmaları uygulamaların üzerinde etkiliydi. Fakat bir atılım için öğrencilerin özellikle işleme bilgisi (alt yapısı yetersiz olan) çalışmalarını sonuçları verebilmelerini bilemiyorlar.

ORÇUN TÜREGÜN  
İŞLETME DERSİ ÖĞRETİMENİ

### **Translation of the text above:**

The applications in the classroom were very successful in terms of keeping the students' attention alive. Even if the students were uneasy about the content at the beginning, after a while by participating more, they showed their interest in the topic. I observed that they especially enjoyed the part that they cut and used the job advertisements. The fact that they have background knowledge about the management affected their participation and interest in the lesson positively. But I am not sure whether this study will give the same result with the students from different backgrounds (especially with the ones from different backgrounds).

### **Conclusion**

As a conclusion, here are the points that we have come up with throughout the evaluation process of the assignments:

The general opinion about assignments is that they are not applicable in the real classroom environment in the way they are; they need some adaptations and addition.

Some tasks should be shortened, some additional information and explanations should be added to them, and also visual aids should be used to make the concepts and the tasks more clear and concrete. Apart from that, some warm up activities or plays should be utilized to make the assignments more interesting for the students. On the other hand, the basis of the assignments was suitable for interaction, discussion, and critical thinking among the students, but after necessary adjustments by the student-teachers.

Before applying necessary adaptations, some factors such as the grade level of the classroom, and the background knowledge of the students as well as time limitations should be taken into consideration.

Finally, the maps need to include more background information, more clear explanations, and necessary descriptions of the spatial patterns.

As the final judgment, the assignments and the maps are applicable to the real classrooms as long as some adaptations are carried out.

## **Working in a multicultural group of teacher-students**

*Pinar Akçay, Robert Janssen, Pelin Turgut*

The main aims of this exchange project was to use the Atlas of European Values and to use the assignments in Turkish high schools, but that was not all; the project members also had to work together as a team of Turkish and Dutch students. During the whole week they had the opportunity to discover how it worked, what the problems were and what went well, what the expectations and the experiences were. Moreover, having lived together for a week, they also found out the differences and the similarities between Dutch and Turkish values. Through the eyes of everybody in the project group, this chapter aims to summarize all of what we have mentioned so far.

Figure 1: The group of teacher-students working in a multicultural environment.



## 1 Language and Culture

The medium of communication during the project was English and since it was the only common language between the two groups, the participants always stuck to it. For a better and more open communication and also for politeness, English was preferred almost always even in the inner group talks.

The participants indicated that they did not have any problems related to the language they used. Both groups commented upon each other's English level as being very good. However, there were some instances of petty errors and misunderstandings, at the end of which they were always able to understand each other and which were also very funny and ending in laughter sometimes. Moreover, thanks to that much use of English, the participants, as non-native speakers of English, were all pleased to have practiced a lot and to have this chance to improve their English skills. Some of them also said, that they had gained more confidence in their English at the end.

Thanks to both the good level of English of all the participants and the sensitiveness about using it also in the inner group talks, they all were able to follow all the conversations going on and, therefore they felt comfortable.

Furthermore, they enjoyed not only using English but also attempting to learn bits and pieces of the other language. Everybody was so eager to learn something of the other language that after lots of funny conversations and unforgettable attempts with lots of pronunciation errors, each of them was able to say at least some words in the language of the foreign friends.

To cover the language aspect of the project better, the use of English in the high schools during the assignments also should



be commented on. The assignments were planned to be applied in English since half of the “teacher-students” (ie. the participants) did not speak Turkish. Among the four high schools, three of which were private institutions, there was a great imbalance in terms of the level of English of the students. It is assumed that this difference may stem from the fact that some of the classes were language classes and some were of other subject areas such as science. Therefore, while in some classes there were no problems of communication, in some others, where the English competence of the students was not enough to grasp the assignments, a need to switch from English to Turkish arose. However, these switches led to some limitations in the communication between the teacher-students in class, who were applying the assignment in pairs of one Dutch and one Turkish participant, and also between the Dutch teacher-student and the students in the class. Hence, there were two basic problems: Dutch teacher-students were not always able to follow all the talk in the class, and when it was inevitable to do the translations, more time was spent.

To describe the communication and the atmosphere of working in terms of culture, one needs to point out to the cultural exchanges and the ways employed for a better understanding of each other.

After a week together, during which the differences and similarities of values in European countries were studied, both of the groups had already discovered the similarities and differences between themselves. It was found that regarding the motivation and working very hard to get the best results, there were no difference between the two groups. Also, it was expressed by the participants that the biggest differences were not found in the behaviours but in more physical things such

as food, traffic or religion. On the other hand, there were some instances where some misunderstandings occurred due to the cultural understanding of things. While Turkish participants wanted something to be done as a group, Dutch participants wanted the same thing to be done as individuals, for example. As these kinds of differences are covered in detail by Hofstede in his book *Culture's Consequences, Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* (2001), some of the different characteristics of the two groups can be related to Turkish culture being more collectivistic and Dutch culture being more individualistic. However, since both groups were listening to each other being very open-minded, flexible and eager to hear each others' ideas and also to learn something new, the personal relations among the whole group were defined to be great by everybody. The experience was described by the participants as being comfortable, exciting, nice and enjoyable. On the whole, the general idea was that they have more commonalities than differences in the way they think and behave, and they did not conflict at all but complemented each other. A great pleasure to have gained an insight into the other culture and to have had the opportunity to learn different methods, techniques, habits and practices was expressed by each participant in the evaluation forms.

## **2 Feelings about the Project**

As you can draw a deduction from the assignments, the people have different kinds of motivations. They are motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically about the things they do even in their daily lives. It can be related to work, school or a pro-

ject. Thus, we tried to learn what kind of motivations the project members have in this project.

According to the results, all of them are intrinsically motivated. They joined this project because they wanted to and because they thought that what they were going to do was interesting. They liked what they did. All the project members were interested in different cultures and that made them join this kind of international project.

Besides being interested in different cultures, some of the members also gave interesting reasons. To illustrate, one member said that he wanted to join the project to be able to validate or invalidate the conceptions about Dutch students and culture he had beforehand. Furthermore, some members pointed out that this was a very good experience for their academic and social development. Some Turkish members also indicated that they wanted to learn more about the education system in the Netherlands and how the teacher-student relationships are. They were also interested in how to teach EU values. All the group members wanted to get some experience working with students from foreign countries.

Besides the motivations they had to join the project, they also had some expectations regarding the project. The expectations of the project members can be grouped as “about culture, teaching experience, the project itself and about meeting people”. All of the members said that they wanted to learn more about different cultures and observe the others daily lives. Furthermore, the project functioned as a mirror of their own culture and they had the chance to see their culture through the eyes of the foreign members. Especially Dutch teacher students found it interesting to compare their culture to Turkish culture and describe the similarities and differences.

First of all, Dutch students expected the teaching part of the project would be a lot harder than it was. However, most of them experienced the opposite thanks to the cooperation between the presenters and the teacher / the students. Secondly, since most of Turkish students working in the project had no prior experience of teaching, they did not know what to expect exactly.

For some of the members, the exchange program was a very new concept and they did not know what they were going to experience in Turkey. The others have already participated in many intercultural projects and they found that this project was much more serious than the previous ones.

All the members expected to meet new people and to build a strong bond between them. Additionally, they did not only want to learn from the project but also have fun while carrying out the project.

Figure 2: A teacher-student using the assignment.



### **3 Teaching at a Turkish School**

It can be said that all Dutch members of the project were quite satisfied with their teaching experience in Turkish schools. Their overall feelings about their experiences were positive. They expressed that they liked teaching in a Turkish school and gave different reasons about their feelings.

While some of the project members found teaching in a Turkish school very similar to teaching in the Netherlands, some of them found it different and interesting. Project members developed various ideas about teaching in Turkey and Turkish schools, and supposedly it stemmed from the fact that they were in different types of schools. Some students visited public schools whereas the others visited private ones.

To illustrate, two members who conducted the assignment in different private schools indicated that they did not notice many differences in the way the students behave and the way of approaching the students. There were also members who found the way of teaching in a Turkish school and the way students behaved different. To demonstrate, generally in public schools students stand up when the teacher enters the class. However, it was not the case in private schools in Turkey and schools in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, public schools in Turkey are strict about uniform, while the private schools are more flexible in Turkey and there is no need for uniform in the Netherlands.

Additionally, the host school's being a private or public school also affected the language used while carrying out the assignment. Sequentially, that affected the way Dutch project members felt about the lesson. The ones who were in private schools were satisfied with the level of the students' English

and the assignment because they could understand the whole lesson and interact with the students in English. This is because, few members found it difficult to communicate in English while presenting the assignment in private schools since the students' level of English was high. On the other hand, the members who were in the public schools had difficulty with the language because the students were not able to communicate with the presenters in English. Thus, they expressed that sometimes they felt lost during the lesson and they lost control of the class.

Moreover, some members expected that there would be much higher power distance according to Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede, 2001) and Turkey's results. However, it was not the case. They observed that the power distance between the teacher and the students was almost the same as in the Netherlands.

#### **4 Using the Atlas of European Values**

The Atlas of European Values was found by the participants to be a great medium for the world of education. The assignments were planned in such a way that any teacher who would like to use them in class could directly pick up one of them on the internet and do it in class. However, although some exercises were found to be very well planned and not to need of any adaptation, some pairs of teacher students expressed that it was not valid all the time. Some exercises were indicated to require a lot more adaptation before their application. Nevertheless, since the assignments are flexible enough to be adapted to every situation and every level of students, these adaptations were not found to be difficult to do.

Apart from its organizational quality, the visual material of the atlas should be reflected upon as well. By most of the student-teachers, the maps, graphs and charts were appreciated a lot. They were considered to be very practical and useful in that they make it a lot easier for the students to learn the content and for the student-teachers to teach and to prepare the lesson plan. By the student-teachers, it was put forward that a teacher can show the students the patterns or trends more clearly and s/he does not have to prepare everything all by herself/himself.

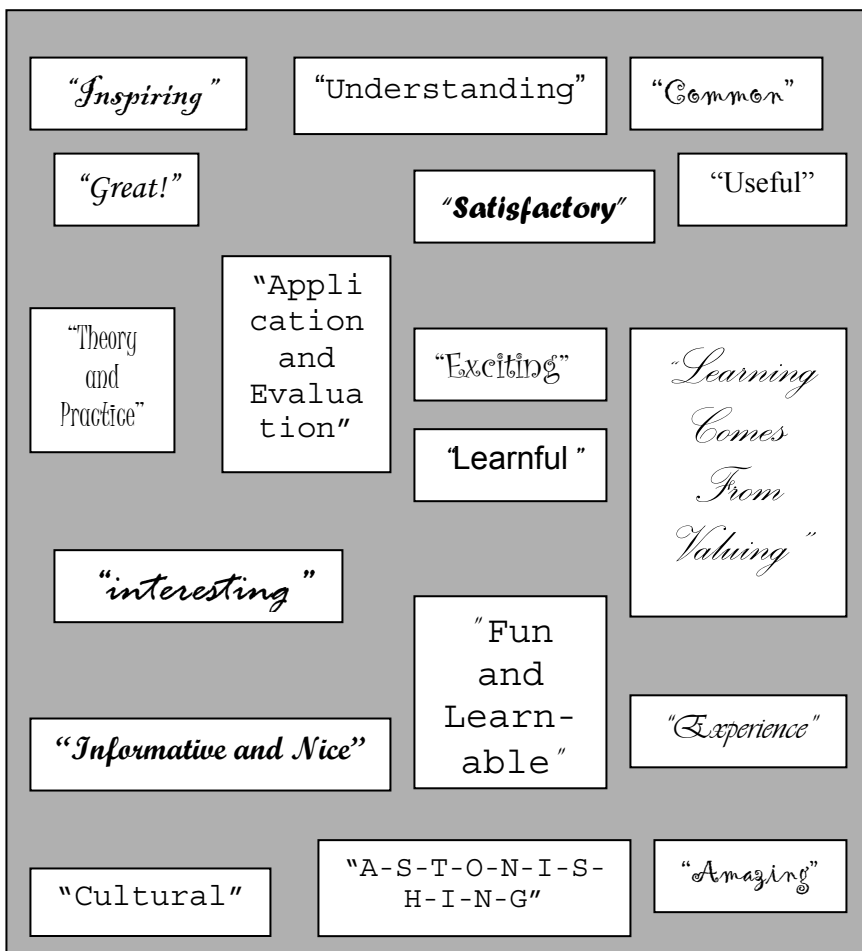
It should also be taken into consideration that two lessons (2x45') may not be enough for an assignment to be completely covered. By most of the student-teachers, it was argued that they either needed more time to cover the whole assignment or they needed to change it a little bit to make it fit to the time given. It is considered to be very good that these assignments have many exercises in case of an extra time, however for those who would like to cover it as a whole, they should remember that rather than attempting to do all the exercises superficially, it is better to do just some of them but in detail as it better serves the aims of the assignment.

In addition to its practical purposes, the atlas is defined to be a good resource of information and a comprehensive resource to broaden teachers' horizons. It was said that with the help of the teachers' notes, maps and the assignments, the teacher-students themselves were also able to think critically.

According to the results of the evaluation forms, the student-teachers think that this assignment helped them to break their prejudices about the values of the other countries and they had a better view of what is really happening in the world. It was also reported that they had discovered that not all of

European Union countries have the same values, they have differences as well. Hence, it could be argued that the atlas contributes to the students and also the student-teachers being more critical minded citizens, which the future generations need.

Table 1: One-word descriptions of the project by the participants





Moreover, discovering that their own values do not exactly match with the average values of their country, those who take the assignment are directed towards critical thinking again. In this direction, they search for more information and explanation, which contributes to their inquisitive spirit.

Furthermore, according to the participants, since there are no places for “European values” in the current education systems of these two countries, those who take the assignments gain an insight into European values in depth and through these applications more and more people can be included into this wave so that maybe in the near future the education systems may give more importance to these values through the newly educated teachers.

All in all, although the two groups have different native languages and cultures, there was a clear consensus that everybody in the project discovered each other, learned a lot and had lots of fun. The chart below which includes the one-word descriptions of the students justifies this consensus as well.



## **IV RESULTS OF THE BRITISH STUDENTS**



# **Evaluation of the Unemployment lesson from the perspective of the English Student Teachers**

*Rachna Kanzaria, Jilna Shah with Clare Brooks*

The participation of the English student teachers in the EVE project is different to those of the other countries. In this chapter, we will explore the nature of those differences and a detailed evaluation of one of the EVE lessons from the perspective of the English Student Teachers.

## **The English Context**

The Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) is the most popular route to becoming a teacher in England. Entrants to the one-year programme already have a degree in their chosen subject area. The year runs from September to June and during this time, student teachers have two extended teaching practices in contrasting schools. Time on the PGCE is very tight. Assessment of the course is also regulated, as individuals have to demonstrate that they have met a series of Standards in order to achieve Qualified Teacher Status and thus to be able to teach in English schools. These constraints mean that the English Student Teachers were not able to participate in the exchange programme.

Another important dimension in the English context is the regulation of the English curriculum. The National Curriculum is compulsory and features 10 foundation subjects which include Geography and Citizenship. All pupils are entitled to learn all of these foundation subjects until the age of 14. At this stage, pupils then choose further subjects to study to public exa-

mination levels beyond the compulsory core of English, Maths, Science and ICT. At the ages of 14 to 16, most pupils will study for their GCSE public examinations. Post-16, many pupils take on further study for A'levels or vocational qualifications. The results of these examinations are extremely important for both individual pupils and for the schools that they attend. Success at examination level will give pupils greater access to further study and even to entrance to high-status universities. School results (particularly the number of pupils who gain five GCSEs at Grade C or above) are published nationally in League Tables. A school's popularity is affected by its position in the League Tables, but more significantly, poor performance in examination results can mean additional school inspections and even the closure of a school (if poor performance continues). This process puts a significant pressure on teachers and schools. Teaching for examination success is extremely important.

However, this does not mean that English schools encourage "teaching to the test". Indeed, constructivist pedagogies are popular in English schools. Government initiatives, known as the National Strategy, have encouraged teachers to develop lesson activities that focus on thinking skills, and personalised learning. Teachers are encouraged to engage with formative assessment as well as summative testing.

The English context affects how the English Student Teachers read and evaluate lessons from the EVE project. In particular, student teachers are looking for lessons that develop personalised learning and will engage pupils, but that also are related to either the National Curriculum or examination specifications. They are also under pressure to ensure that lessons that they teach will achieve similar or better results than the previous

versions. It is in this context that the EVE lessons were evaluated by the English Student Teachers. To demonstrate their findings, Rachna and Jilna report on their evaluation of two lessons in details.

### **The school contexts**

Schools in London vary enormously. Both of us have taught in very different schools: one a boys' selective grammar school in South West London which is nationally renowned for its results and quality, the second a mixed-sex comprehensive school in East London which has been rewarded Humanities Specialist Status. Both schools have excellent results in their particular contexts and have been valuable learning experiences for their first placements. They are contrasting schools and so to evaluate these lessons together meant that we could compare how the lessons would work in both contexts. In this respect we agreed the criteria that we would examine:

- a) What were the learning objectives of the lesson, and how well does it meet them?
- b) How well does the content of the lesson fit in with the examination requirements?
- c) How well will the format and structure of the lesson work with pupils in the different contexts?

### **Unemployment**

We both selected to evaluate the lesson on Unemployment for several reasons. The recent credit crunch has meant an increase in unemployment in the UK, particularly amongst young people. We felt that the topic would not only be of interest to

our pupils, but would be important for them to engage with and understand. In addition, understanding the impact of unemployment is a key part of studying Economic Activities within geography, and was a topic that we both felt would benefit from being more connected to the pupils' experiences. In this respect we liked the lesson plan and the focus on exploring values about unemployment.

The lesson plan began with an exploration of why pupils felt people became unemployed; i.e. their own attitudes about the topic, and then encouraged them to explore four values that underpin that. The lesson then went on to see how these values varied across Europe. Finally pupils were encouraged to construct a scatter-graph of views towards poverty with a countries wealth shown by GDP. The learning objectives therefore were to explore values about unemployment across Europe and to see if there is correlation with wealth. In this respect, the lesson activities did meet the objectives, and we felt that they were appropriately scaffolded and would be achievable in both of our contexts. However, we started to question whether we would indeed teach this lesson and what its added value would be to our curriculum.

Exploring values and attitudes are an important part of the geography GCSE specifications. However, pupils are required to understand that people have different values and how those values might affect the decisions they make, or responses they have. In this plan, pupils are examining if there is a relationship between values and wealth. The results show that there isn't. This leads us to question what would be the learning outcomes of this lesson? The pupils would certainly gain in their map reading and interpretation skills, and we particularly liked the representation of values on a map (as maps



often feature quantitative data). However, what they would also gain is an appreciation that attitudes are not necessarily linked to wealth. This is a worthy outcome in itself but we struggled to find how it related to the examination specifications or the broader curriculum structure within our schools.

The lesson plans were accompanied by a curriculum framework. The lesson plan we analysed featured all the elements of the curriculum framework. Pupils were able to explore their own values and those of others, highlight similarities and differences, and to consider their own learning (meta-cognition) and develop their critical thinking. In terms of developing explanations, we speculated: what could be the explanations of why people have different values about unemployment. We identified some answers ourselves, one of which was wealth. However, there are many others: too many possibly for a lesson like this to explore. As such we wondered if this was a possible or desirable outcome from a lesson that explores attitudes about unemployment: maybe knowing that values are different is enough in this respect?



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## **Appendix 1**

### **Interview with Christian**

D: What were your feelings when you first heard about this project and your expectations also?

C: My expectation was that I would be learning a lot more about Europe in common and Slovakia especially. And my expectation was well, this sounds like hard work and a lot of work, and if we could manage it, but it fits very well now.

D: That's nice. And did you have any difficulties when working in the groups?

C: The main difficulties came of course from the different languages. So we all together talked in English. This sometimes it leads to some misunderstandings, but it happens not often and it has been cleared after all very quickly.

D: How did you manage to overcome those difficulties?

C: I've bought a little dictionary, a Slovakian dictionary. If we were at the point where it goes not further, we looked up the word and then we can explain to each other. This solved the problem and we can go on.

D: How did you like the cooperation between your Slovak partner and you in general and especially when you were working?

C: My Slovak partner was very handsome; we liked each other very much and had no problems together. This was the much nicest part of this whole project. As we worked together in this groups I think there are no differences to work in a German group. Because we all had the same aim and all tried our best and work hardest for the project.

D: So except of the language problems you liked the cooperation in the group?

C: Yes, I liked the cooperation and it was kind of special cooperation, because we had foreign partners, which is not usual in German Universities.

D: Did you have any worries before the Slovaks came here?

C: Yes. The main worry I had was that we knew they would stay in our house for the whole week. I'm married and I had thought of my wife what will she say. Did it disturb our casual life in a hard matter. This never happened, this never happened at any day. So it was also fine, he was handsome and everything was really nice.

D: That's nice to hear. And if you had the chance to take part at this project again, maybe next year or in two years, what would you improve or would you like to change anything in this project?

C: What I like to improve is, I would like to integrate more European countries into this project, not only six, maybe grow



up to 12 or 18. And exchange a lot of more people all over Europe for improving this project.

D: But don't you think this is too much of organization, because even with those five countries it's already a lot?

C: But I'm not responsible for this organization work, this is just a dream of me.

D: And this is what you like to improve or change?

C: Yes and you can always make other assignments, other topics. And you can spread it over the cultural things across Europe.

D: So, you like the idea of this exchange program and you want integrate other topics?

C: Of course. I think this is a very necessary part. Because we are a European Union and this means we also have to speak with one voice. We can also do this when we get to know each other and know what the others will think about.

D: Do you think your expectations and your thoughts were fulfilled in this project?

C: Because my expectations and my thoughts were on a very low standard at the beginning. I thought about, okay let's do this week and then it's gone...But now my thoughts and

expectations are really more than fulfilled. And the best part of everything is, that I think I've found a new friend.

D: Thank you very much for your last comment.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview with Zdenko**

D: So, Zdenko, what were your first feelings and expectations before you came to Germany?

S: I was a little bit afraid of my English, of Germans; if they are all nice and about some problems and I was afraid, if I'm good enough for this project. That students can make a good work and I can represent my country.

D: Did you have any difficulties working in the groups?

S: No, just some language misunderstandings. No problems. So, no really big problems.

D: And, those language problems, how did you manage to overcome them?

S: I improve my English. And also we always find different ways to say something, so after a few minutes we worked out that problem.

D: Did you use a dictionary sometimes?

S: Yes sometimes.

D: How did you like the cooperation between you and the German partners and the direction during the work?

S: I liked it so much, because the Germans are motivated, active and they wanted to work. It was nice to work with them. So it was easy for me. They listened to me and we had no problems.

D: That's cool. So do you think it's a very nice working condition with the Germans?

S: Yeah, I think it's nice.

D: Did you have any worries before you came to Germany, except the language problem?

S: No, I had been in Germany before. I knew it is a well developed country. Just scary about, if I and my partner will understand each other.

D: If you had the chance to take part at this project again, what would you like to improve? Or what would you like to change the next time?

S: I think this project is very good and I don't have an idea now what to improve. Because I was very surprised. I liked it very much. The project was very good. Maybe the students should have more free time after work. It was very hectic, but nice.

D: Do you think your expectations you had before the trip were fulfilled when you came here?

S: More than fulfilled!

D: More than fulfilled?!

S: I didn't expect so much. I thought we were going to Germany, see some German schools, make some lessons, write something. But it was much better than I thought.

D: Well than thank you very much for your time.



# Praxis Kultur- und Sozialgeographie

Herausgegeben von

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The European Values Education (EVE) project is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program on basic human values. The main topic of its first stage was “work” in Europe. Student teachers of several universities in Europe worked together in multicultural exchange groups. Their results are presented in this issue.



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