

RELATING THE ATTITUDES REPRESENTED IN THE MAPS OF THE ATLAS OF EUROPEAN VALUES TO THE STUDENTS

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This chapter is about the pupils' need to be able to situate themselves in the discussion about different values and to be able to empathise with a range of other perspectives. The 'relating' aspect is important to make the pupils' own values recognisable and so they can also relate them to the European values. The following part describes how successful every assignment was in regard to relating to the students.

THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS (SACRED) PLACES

In this assignment the pupils were really able to situate themselves in the discussion about different values, opinions and thoughts of different religions. They already did that themselves during the lesson by giving quite good perspectives and different observations for the discussion. The assignment fits really well to the curriculum framework. But it is advisable to adapt this assignment a little because some examples didn't relate to the pupils' neighbourhoods. If examples from their own town or village are used then they will understand it much better because it's related to their personal life and they will recognise it because they see it very often. For instance if you add a picture of a local sacred place to the assignment then it's much easier to talk about it and also much easier for the pupils to give an answer and take part in a good discussion. It's not necessary to adapt the assignment but if it's adapted to the region then it will be better. For example, in schools there is often a place for silence. Like a place where you can think about life and where they have candles for teachers or pupils, who have passed away. When you mention something like that and adapt that into the assignment, the pupils will probably be excited to talk about it because everybody is familiar with it. When the assignment was being checked, the pupils were talking

about the real meaning of the whole assignment and saying exactly what we wanted to hear and that was already after 15 minutes. For example one pupil said after 20 minutes that the real meaning of sacred places was ‘you can say that a building or sacred building is important because of the religion, that’s true but it’s actually just important because of the value **you** gave it’. The assignment is suitable for pupils from the age of 15 because you will get a large amount of input into the discussion. It’s not necessary to adapt the assignment but to relate it to the pupils you have to make it suitable and put in pictures and examples of their hometown or examples at school.

As a conclusion you can say that the assignment is really good if it relates to the pupils.

WHY BE RELIGIOUS?

In this assignment the part about relating to the pupils is really well covered. First they have to think about how religious they are on a scale of 1 to 10. Then a discussion takes place about why you are religious: is it from your culture, why did you choose that religion or why aren’t you religious? They had to relate the facts of the assignment to their own regular life. Some parts had to be adapted to make the lesson more suitable like using the traffic light game so they could better articulate their opinions about that. After that they compared their opinions to the opinions of their classmates and discussed about it in pairs and afterwards they explained why they chose that colour for the given question. In this assignment they have to relate their own values with the values of the rest of the group. After relating it to the rest of the group they will see the differences and similarities of their group compared with the European countries.

SECULARISM IN EUROPE

This assignment was hard to relate to the students. The subject of the assignment is ‘secularism and individualism’, which both are terms difficult to explain and it’s also really hard to relate them to the students. The student teachers carried out a lesson where the Dutch teacher talked about the difference between them and explained the Dutch meaning of the word ‘secularism’. After that the Turkish teacher explained the Turkish understanding of the word ‘secularism’. After that, the pupils had to fill in some examples of individualism in the Netherlands, Turkey and Europe and compare them and write down similarities and differences between both terms. Due to a lack of time the students skipped the example of the Czech Republic because that’s hard for the Dutch pupils and instead chose Turkish and Dutch examples. The text containing words like ‘prediction’ or ‘assumption’ was also quite hard to understand for the pupils. Although they were of a bilingual class, all of the evaluation forms told us that these words were difficult to understand. Easier and more concrete words should have been used because then it’s clearer for the pupil.

YOUTH AND RELIGION ('NO CREO EN EL JAMAS' (JUANES))

The assignment clearly starts with tasks relating to the students. Students thought about their own beliefs and which religious or para-religious aspects influence their own lives. As teachers, we decided to let students talk about differences amongst themselves in order to relate their own values to those of their classmates. This was a task the pupils really liked because for most of them it was a new concept because they had never thought about their beliefs in such a clear manner before. After this first task, the assignment asked them to make a class percentage for each religious aspect in order to compare it to the percentages of German youths. In this third task pupils are clearly asked to relate their own values to those of others, but they didn't. Being taught in the Netherlands, these pupils had little relation to the values of German youngsters. The assignment uses only German results to compare them to other European values, and Dutch pupils knew simply too little about this country's values to truly grasp it. It is difficult relating someone else's values to the bigger picture.

Furthermore, there were some questions in the assignment that seem to ask for an answer coming from a theory even though this theory is not provided. Thus, these questions are hard to answer and in that sense they do not relate to the pupils whatsoever. To summarize and conclude: the start of the assignment did relate to the students very well, but after the first 3 tasks it ceased to relate to them because of the German data. Data used in these assignments should be available for other countries, which was not the case. Instead of using the German data, teachers should be able to use the data gathered from the classroom and relate that to European values.

FOOTBALL & RELIGION

The assignment starts off with a story about football and how this is connected to religion. It discusses English football teams and assumes pupils will be familiar with them. In this way, the different tasks supposedly relate to the pupils. While this lesson was being taught, it became clear that pupils were not at all familiar with the football teams. If this assignment is meant to be taught in different European countries, only the real football fans might be able to relate to the subject, but even then it would still be quite far away from their own daily experience. For most girls, the subject was de-motivating because they disliked it. In this sense, this assignment failed to relate to students.

When advancing with the assignment, it is assumed that pupils have knowledge of religious conflicts in the history of Britain and Ireland, which does not necessarily have to be the case for pupils in other European countries. Teachers will have to give some explanations on this matter, which will be time consuming and unpractical when working with the assignment in the time given. In teaching this assignment, it appeared that there are a lot of pupils who are non-religious and have little knowledge

of religious differences. This should be taken into account when teaching this subject. Adaptations for this assignment can be made when using national football clubs as examples, but even then football as a subject does not appeal to everyone.

While students are asked to see if there is a relation between football and religion, the assignment lacks tasks that really aim for the pupils to relate their own values to European values.

In its current form, this assignment is aimed at those that under Britain. Teachers will have to prepare adaptations with different data and football clubs to really relate the subject to the pupils.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

The assignment starts off by giving pupils the chance to express their religious beliefs. This helps pupils to participate in the lesson, and thus, relate to the topic on a certain level. If teachers were to take time to ask for specific personal examples about these different religious beliefs, the assignment would be even more effective in relating to the students. To further develop this aspect of the assignment maybe some pupil case studies could be given to students and then they could be asked for comments or similar examples. Overall, pupils had to think about their own opinions on religion and politics throughout the whole assignment. There are several tasks in which the pupils are asked to compare their opinions on both religion and politics with the general views of different European countries.

In relating their own values to the values of different European countries, pupils should be given some more time. In case teachers have only one hour available to work with the assignment, choices should be made. It proves to be quite difficult to handle both these subjects, even though they are both important factors in the curriculum framework. Student teachers found that it was possible to skip the introduction questions on personal beliefs, but start off by working with the maps and ask for their opinion later on. This had a positive effect in the learning outcome, even though it is less effective in relating to the students. Overall, the assignment itself relates to the students in an understandable way and has enough tasks in which pupils are asked to relate their own values to those of different European countries.

PENGUINS IN HEAVEN

Considering the part of the curriculum framework on relating to the pupils, which was found to be clear and sufficient in terms of the explanations provided, the assignment was reported to not easy to relate to. Despite of an attempt to relate the assignment to the pupils via an article on gay penguins, it was still found to be too abstract. Some pupils expressed complaints that they had nothing to do with homosexuality. Regard-

ing these comments, the student teachers reported that they needed to make some adaptations in order to make the assignment to better relate to the pupils. Therefore, they included the traffic light game into their teaching of the assignment. In this game the pupils were asked several questions, which were ‘whether they would mind having a homosexual person in their neighbourhood’, ‘whether they would mind having a homosexual person in their family’ and ‘whether they would mind being raised by a homosexual couple’.

This adaptation in the assignment was reported to have yielded productive results. The game appealed to the pupils’ lives and helped them to think about the issue from a personal view, which made it possible to gain their attention and to relate the issue to their life.

LUCKY CHARMS

The assignment ‘Lucky Charms’ was found to be clear and adaptable by the student teachers in terms of the way it relates to the pupils. They reported the assignment to be quite clear to them and that how to relate it to the pupils was openly stated at the beginning of the assignment with some thought-provoking questions for pupils. The assignment was found to be successful at engaging the pupils. However, the implicit assumption in the assignment that all the pupils already knew what a lucky charm was, turned out to be unrealistic. The assignment itself does not have any definitions, explanations or any tasks to make the pupils discover what a lucky charm is although all the tasks are based on this concept.

The student teachers reported that the pupils needed some definitions and explanations; they decided to make some modifications and add explanations to relate it to the pupils. They expressed that by giving the pupils examples, explanations, and a chance to speak more rather than to give written answers in the assignment papers, they were able to better relate the assignment to the pupils. They were also able to attract their attention and evoke their curiosity with a real example of a lucky charm (evil eye).

For the development of the assignment, it was suggested by the teacher students that the age and language level of the pupils should be considered while preparing activities to relate to the pupils.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The way the assignment ‘Unity in Diversity’ relates to the pupils was found to be clear and obvious by the student teachers. Modifications were made, which also included the omission of the tasks regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the class level of the pupils and time restrictions in the assignment. The evaluation of the assignment by the student teachers is as follows: ‘In the original assignment, relating to students

is designed in a way that the activities do not just give students the information, but that they are first given a chance to think and guess and then discover the actual data.' Concerning how the assignment relates to pupils, it was also stressed that the assignment gives the pupils the freedom to choose which country's religious structure to study in one of the tasks. Moreover, it was put forward that the presentation of the background information on the Bosnia and Herzegovina exercise might make the topic more interesting or help the pupils participate more actively in the exercises. This was not tested however since these exercises were not used during the lessons. Furthermore in the evaluation, it was stated that the assignment also relates to the students because of its frequent questions leading to classroom talks, which are useful to include pupils' opinions in the lesson. The tolerance test (task 5), which can be followed by a discussion includes many of these questions. In order to improve the way the 'Unity in Diversity' assignment relates to pupils, it was proposed that a task asking the pupils to put themselves in the role of the new neighbour in task 5 would foster more empathy, which would also serve the main aim of the assignment.

RELIGION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

This assignment starts by asking pupils for their religious beliefs. This aims at involving the pupils in the assignment but student teachers found that these questions, instead of really relating to the pupils, they more or less ask pupils to simply say 'yes or no'. Given the fact that none of the pupils taught really was religious, the assignment more or less failed to relate to the pupils. Instead of having pupils fill in the tables, teachers could use the traffic light game.

Furthermore, the assignment continues with a wide range of charts in which pupils need to fill in both their religious beliefs and their participation in society. Depending on the age of the pupils, these tables more or less relate to the pupils. The tables themselves are interesting in the sense that they ask pupils about things that have to do with their daily life, but unfortunately the results are not explicitly discussed. Filling in these tables one after the other was found to be a relentless task by the pupils, but it was necessary for the build-up of the assignment, which means it is difficult to adapt. Since it takes quite an amount of time to fill in all these tables correctly, the assignment is not suitable for a one-lesson plan.

Later on in the assignment pupils had to relate their own values to European values. This element of the assignment proved to be quite effective since the pupils truly think about the similarities and differences between their own views on politics and religion, and those of other European countries.

Overall, the assignment did succeed in relating to the students and with a little creativity from the teacher it can be made more effective.