

Study aims, organisation and methodology

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Aims of the Study

The study group aims at providing a comparative European survey of 33 countries of the European Higher Education Area on structures, concepts and standards of assessment, tutorial systems and teacher education for (trainee) teachers of school subjects “History”, “Civic and/or Citizenship Education”, “Politics”, “Social Studies” and “Cultural Studies”. An overall view on teacher education for these subjects on a European level did not exist so far.

The study group also aims at investigating the conditions for and practices of developing key-skills and competencies of trainee teachers, which, in the near future, are expected themselves to promote European citizenship, respect for human rights and democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and respect for other people and cultures. It also aims at identifying concepts following the framework of the European Council and the European Commission ‘for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020).

On the basis of this investigation and systematic research, the study group aims at contributing to the quality improvement of curricula and training concepts for teacher education in the subjects of political education of the future European citizens.

The study addresses primarily the ‘community of practice’ of

- history teacher training institutions (universities, teacher training colleges, academies and institutions, teacher seminars, etc.) in Europe.
- educational researchers
- , policy makers, international education institutions, ministries of education in the European countries
- curriculum planners,
- teacher trainers and teachers

working in the field of History, Civic and Citizenship Education, Social Studies, Politics as well as in Cultural Studies.

Beyond this specific group of experts, the study addresses the wider community of

- Teacher trainers at university and teacher training institutions,
- Sociologist, Historians, Political, Social and Cultural Scientist with interest in didactics/ methodology;
- Mentors and tutors on the field;
- Teachers of primary and secondary education with interest in didactics/ methodology;
- The growing group of scientists and teacher educators working on Citizenship Education, Human Rights Education, Intercultural Education.

With the results presented in this study it hopes

- to give answers on questions about the organisation, the structures, the tenets, the content and methodology of initial education of teachers in the CHE-subjects,
- to facilitate the development of an academic canon for the newer fields of study variously referred to throughout Europe (and elsewhere) as Citizenship, Education for Democratic Citizenship, Civics in close relation to the epistemological capacities of historical sciences,

- to explore the interdisciplinarity of the group of subjects, History, Politics, Social and Cultural Studies and Civics; and by this
- to contribute to an evidence based discussion on teacher education in a European and global perspective in the aforesaid subject areas.

Organisation and methodology of the comparative study

Comparative and/or international educational research

In our theoretical and methodological conception of the study we followed a ‘comparative’ approach. We have developed a standardized questionnaire for all the participating institutions, which was filled in by institutions and/or by countries. The data we have got from the individual institutions – or, for more general items, for the individual countries – were then compared and analysed systematically by a team of researchers on a European level. From the political goal of the EU Life-Long-Learning Programme (Transversal Programme KA1SCR - Policy Cooperation and Innovation), the study might be related as well to the field of ‘international educational research’. In this interrelated understanding between ‘comparative’ and ‘international’ we are in line with the reflections of other scholars in the field like James Arthur et al. (2008) and David Kerr (2012). Although there was no direct connection between the ICCS study¹ and our study, we can underline what David Kerr just published recently:

“Comparative and international perspectives are, in fact, two interrelated, multidisciplinary fields of educational theory and research. They attract researchers, policy-makers, stakeholders and practitioners from a range of disciplines including education, political science, sociology, economics, social sciences, history and psychology, among others. There is ‘comparative’ and alongside it ‘international’ education. The leading scholars who work in both fields state that the main distinction, though it remains fluid, is that comparative includes ‘the more academic, analytic, and scientific aspects of the field, while international is related to cooperation, understanding and exchange of elements’ (Rust, 2002). Or put another way ‘while comparative education advances our understanding of education through comparative research, international education as an endeavour is normative; it helps develop attitudes of tolerance and understanding of different cultures’ (Eppstein, 1994).

Put simply, ‘comparative’ entails the study of more than one unit of comparison. Given that the field developed when the nation-state was prominent, the nation-state/national education system has been the primary unit of study and comparison. However, in recent times the interpretation has broadened with some researchers insisting that the unit can also mean samples from different cultures and/or samples from at least two different points in time.

Meanwhile, ‘international’ involves the advancement of international understanding more generally, as well as specifically in relation to education. It has been characterised by a tradition of promoting humanitarian principles and seeking to bring improvement. Those involved in international education

¹ Kerr, D., Sturman, L., Schulz, W. & Burge, B. (2010). ICCS 2009 European Report. Civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement among lower-secondary student in 24 European countries. Amsterdam: IEA; Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Kerr, D. & Losito, B. (2010). Initial Findings from the IEA. International Civic and Citizenship Education Study. Amsterdam: IEA; Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Kerr, D. & Losito, B. (2010). ICCS 2009 International Report: Civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement among lower secondary school students in 38 countries. Amsterdam: IEA.

have long had a concern about promoting human rights and the principles of equality, equity and justice.

In reality, the fields of comparative and international education have become increasingly interlinked. This process has accelerated in the last two decades with the desire of policy-makers and researchers to explore and better understand the implications of globalisation for education. [...] The upshot of these developments is that the impact of globalisation on society and education has succeeded in opening up new areas and topics for research and investigation and brought increasing comparative and international perspectives in those areas. One of these new areas is civic and citizenship education.”²

Research plan and its realisation

The CHE-project started early in 2010 and was based on a three-fold research plan:

1. investigation in the participating countries on the basis of a standardised questionnaire, collection of the data, analysis and feedback from the coordinating project team, in-depth expert discussions on the country reports at two meetings and additional comments from educational policy makers.
2. formation of thematic working groups to supply investigation on qualitative questions concerning the structures, standards and concepts of political, civic and historical education of trainee teachers, and
3. development of a comparative analysis on these topics on a European level with respect to results of previous case studies and results published by international educational organisations.

The project was coordinated by a research team at the Department for Didactics of History, Social Studies and Civic Education at the University of Vienna. The project-coordinator together with the Vienna based team had developed a standardised questionnaire, which asked in the first part for general information on the structures and the organisation of teacher education as well as the structures of the school subjects, and in the second part for the content, methodology and the theoretical fundamentals of full study programmes of teacher education in the Civic and History Education subjects (= the CHE subjects). This questionnaire had been discussed and fine tuned with all the participants at the first general meeting of the project (Vienna, 3 to 6 March 2010), then revised and sent out to all the partners and experts.

Between May 2010 and March 2012, based on the standardized questionnaire, the partners and experts organized investigation in their individual countries in order to answer the questions. Each of the partners developed research strategies following the concrete structures of teacher education responding to the available data to be able to answer the questions as accurate as possible. Detailed set of questions were answered by all the participating research institutions on: the models of training, the institutional and the legal framework, the organisation of full study programmes, the aims, the theoretical basement, the architecture and the content of curricula, the concepts of subject education, of general didactics and of subject didactics, the methodology of the practical training and

² Kerr, D. (2012) Comparative and international perspectives on citizenship education, in: Arthur, J. And Cremin, H. (Eds.) Debates on Citizenship Education, London, NY: Routledge, pp. 17.

of induction, as well as the forms of assessment and of tutorial systems in teacher education of the CHE-subjects.

Results were fed back to the Vienna based research team. An electronic database on more than 340 items was created by the Vienna team in order to analyze and to compare the collected data systematically. A draft of the comparative study was prepared by the Vienna team, presented at the second meeting, fine-tuned and then presented and discussed again at the final conference of the project.

During this period of research, four thematic groups worked in addition on relevant topics such as, “The interdisciplinary relation between history and citizenship education”, “The professional development of trainees”, “The training for media analysis and media literacy” and “conflict prevention and conflict analysis by history and citizenship education”. The working groups had been composed at the first meeting following the principles of a widespread regional diversity and representing different models of teacher education. After intense and in-depth discussions these groups produced case studies on the above mentioned topics which were included in the final report.

To facilitate communication between the partners and to publish relevant information and results of investigation, a web-portal had been created during the first months of the project which is accessible under www.che.itt-history.eu. This portal provides also information on the research network, the partner institutions, the curricula of teacher education at the participating institutions, the previous comparative studies in the field and the actual results and presentations of the CHE-project. Furthermore, the web-portal hosts the internal workspace, where the electronic version of the questionnaire and social software (wikis) for the discussion of the four thematic working groups are still accessible.

The collected data were filled into an electronic questionnaire so that the data are still available and can be used for further investigation and, as we hope, for the development of a databank on teacher education in the CHE-subjects in a next step.

The Vienna team analysed the country reports and gave feed back to the experts in the field. First results of the analysis of country reports were presented at the second expert meeting (25 to 28 May 2011) and a tentative structure for the final analysis of data was presented and discussed with the participants.

The three general expert meetings took place in Vienna, Austria, the first from 3-6 March 2010; the second meeting, from 25-28 February 2011 and the third meeting from 30 May – 2 June 2012. Additional preparatory meetings were organised with the project group (chairs of the thematic working groups, consultants, general rapporteur and evaluator) in Vienna, Austria, from 23-24 February 2011 and from 22-23 February 2012.

At the annual meetings, the chairs of the thematic working groups equally gave a progress report on the outcomes of their discussions. The work plan for the next work packages was fixed and participants agreed on the proposed schedule for the next period of research.

Due to the complexity of the research group, the project coordinator had decided to install an ‘inner project group’, which consisted of the chairs and/or rapporteurs of the thematic working groups, the consultants, the general rapporteur, the evaluator, the project manager and the project coordinator. This group met first in a preparatory meeting organized as an antecedent to the first expert meeting (3rd March 2010) and again (23/24 February 2011) three months before the second and (22/23

February 2012) before the third general expert meeting. The discussions and reflections in the ‘inner project group’ helped to keep the workflow going and to decide upon strategies for the refinement of the work plan.

In addition, to improve the quality of the project, a process-oriented evaluation had been installed and the evaluator, who took part in the meetings, gave valuable feedback to the project management. The evaluator also organized a partner survey and gave feedback on the outcomes at the third and final conference of the project (28 May to 2 June 2012), where the draft version of the comparative study was presented and discussed with all the participants.

The comparative study had been developed between autumn 2011 and spring 2013. A draft of the final version of the comparative study was also presented to the members of the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE) at its 2nd plenary session at the Council of Europe (20 February 2013) so that they could comment on it, make additional suggestions and commit upon the results on the political level.