
Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes (EDCD-TEP)

Lisbon National Workshop
23, 26 and 27 March 2021

Final Report

Alfredo Gomes Dias
Maria João Hortas



ENGLISH VERSION

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Implemented
by the Council of Europe



INDEX

INTRODUCTION	3
1. METHODOLOGY	4
2. DEBATE AND REFLECTIONS WITH ESEL_x STUDENTS	5
3. DEBATE AND REFLECTIONS WITH ACTIVE PROFESSORS	10
4. FINAL NOTES: CONTINUE TO REFLECT	17

INTRODUCTION

On the 23rd, 26th and 27th of March, the Lisbon National Workshop (LxNW) took place at the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon's Superior School of Education (ESELx) as part of the project **Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes (EDCD-TEP)**, embedded in the programme **DISCO – Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation. EU/CoE Joint Programme for international co-operation projects.**

LxNW was designed around three working sessions. The first, with a duration of six hours, divided into three two-hour long periods, was carried out on March 23rd, 2021, and involved 26 students from the 1st Cycle of Basic Education Teaching (grades 1-4) and Teaching of Portuguese, History and Geography of Portugal in the 2nd Cycle of Basic Education (grades 5-6) Masters Programmes. The second, held on March 26th, was carried out with a focus group that included the participation of five basic education teachers who received their initial training at ESELx. The third, held on March 27th, centred on a debate also generated within a focus group consisting of basic education teachers who did **not** receive their initial training at ESELx.

The different sessions had the collaboration of an external evaluator who attended the work sessions presented comments at the end. This method permitted the identification of the central lines of thought that dominated debates, systematising ideas and helping to better understand what is thought, verbalised, carried out and proposed when it comes to promoting the development of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC).

Having as reference the competence matrix designed by the Council of Europe in 2016, the debates valued ten of these competences focusing specifically on human rights, autonomy and critical thinking.

To these three competences, it is also important to add cultural diversity, cooperation, respect, empathy, communication (ICT), conflict resolution and justice. In addition to these 10 competences, it is important to also highlight the importance attributed by most teachers to participation and flexibility, two competences that are absent from that aforementioned competence matrix.

Pedagogical-didactic practices aimed at the development of CDC should be centred on the students, on their knowledge and on their experiences, promoting their active participation at the different stages of construction of teaching and learning processes, including assessment. Highlighted is the need for continuous, formative and participatory assessment using a variety of assessment instruments and mobilising different assessment modalities.

The poster is titled "Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes (EDCD-TEP)" and "National Workshop Lisbon". It specifies the dates "23, 26 and 27 march 2021" and provides the email "disco.eselx.ecdc.tep@gmail.com". The poster includes logos for the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Manchester Metropolitan University, and the University of Aveiro. At the bottom, it mentions "Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO) EU/CoE Joint Programme for international co-operation projects REF: 2016/00121 DISCO".

1. METHODOLOGY

In general terms, the LxNW resorted to participatory methodologies, with the realisation of three focus groups, with the objective of guaranteeing reflections, debates and the exchange of experiences among teachers, around the topic of CDC.

The sessions were recorded and transcribed in order to carry out a **content analysis** of the participating teachers' interventions.

The working sessions, in addition to the focus groups, included the participation of invited external experts who, in addition to adding knowledge to reflections and debate, contributed to the external evaluation of the LxNW.



2. DEBATE AND REFLECTIONS WITH ESELx STUDENTS

LxNW took place during on March 23rd, 26th and 27th, 2021 at the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon's Superior School of Education (ESELx).

The first day of work, March 23, had as main actors the 26 ESELx students, who attend the master's courses in initial teacher training: Master's Degree in Teaching of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education and Master's Degree in

Portuguese, History and Geography of Portugal from the 2nd Cycle of Basic Education (MPH-GP) (Table 1). On this first day there were three sessions, each lasting two hours.

In the first session (8:30h-10:30h), the matrix of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) of the Council of Europe was presented (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 11).

Tabel 1.

Lisbon National Workshop. Programme, March 23rd.

March 23	
Time	Events
08:30-10:30	<p>08:30-09:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theoretical matrix: competences for democratic culture. Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT. <p>09:00-10:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the project "We Propose!". Sérgio Claudino, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT. <p>10:00-10:30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debate.
08:30-10:30	<p>11:00-12:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Café <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What competences/methods/assessments should we focus on? • What practices can be considered "good practices" in teacher education? • What resources can be built? <p>12:00-13:00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers and democratic competences at school: what practices? Herculano Cachinho, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.
08:30-10:30	<p>14:30-15:30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Café: presentation of results. Presentation of the responsibility of students in training, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT. - Debate. <p>15:30-16:30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments. Miguel Prata, Paula Frassinetti Superior School of Education, Porto, PT.

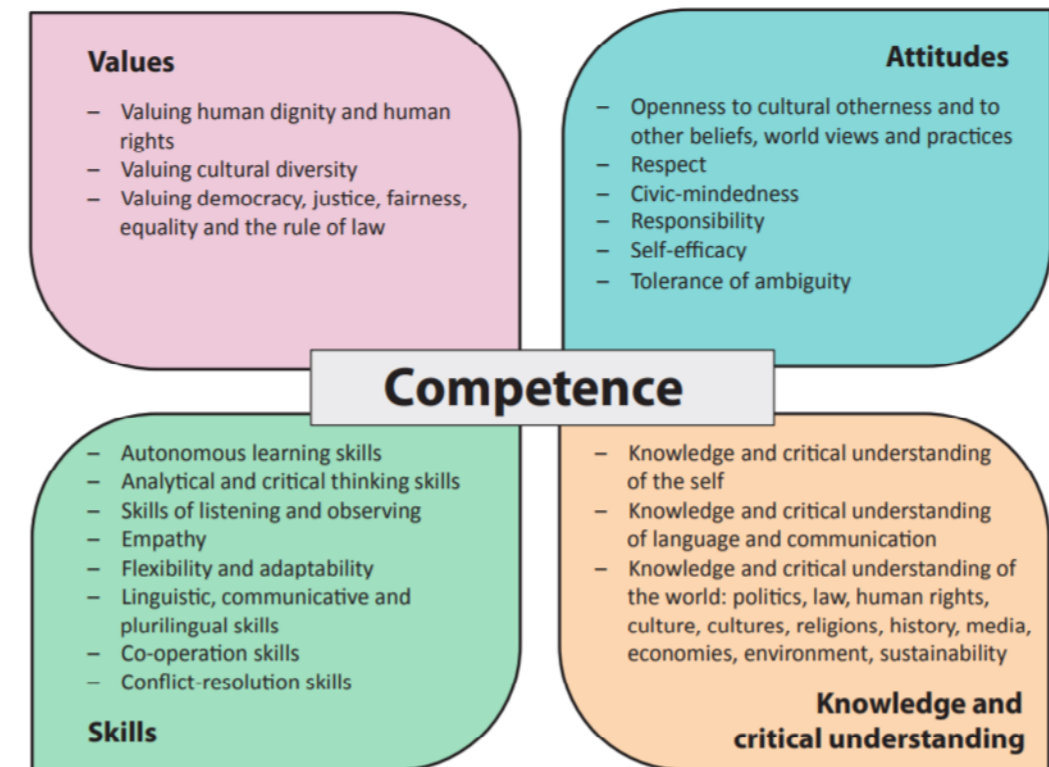
Within the scope of the DISCO Program – *Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO). EU/CoE Joint Program for international co-operation projects* – the main purpose of contributing to the sustainable development of the promoting citizenship and human rights based on the common strategy defined by the European Union and the Council of Europe, was highlighted.

This finality is materialised via actions aimed at **promoting and educating with the aim of consolidating and deepening a democratic culture**, recognised as an increasingly

demanding necessity, taking into account the challenges facing the world today and, more specifically, facing Europe: migratory movements, cultural diversity in European societies, constant acceleration in the development of information and communication technologies, as well as the phenomenon of globalisation.

It was in this line of work that a matrix of 20 competences were defined, distributed over four dimensions (Figure 1).

Fig. 1. 20 Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC)



Source: Council of Europe, 2016, p. 11¹.

¹Council of Europe (2016). *Competences for Democratic Culture. Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies*. Council of Europe.

After presenting the CDC matrix of the Council of Europe, Professor Sérgio Claudino, from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Lisbon, explained the main objectives and actions of the “We Propose Project”.

The “We Propose!” Project has as its primary goal to promote effective local territorial citizenship. This is a major national project that kinds its base in the discipline of Geography, mobilising schools all across the country. Above all, it is aimed at secondary school geography students and teachers, particularly 11th graders, but also grade 12 students and students from other levels and professional courses.

The Project mobilises a “Case Study” methodology, testing identified local problems, with the goal of presenting resolution proposals formulated by the students. Simultaneously, the “We Propose” Project aims to promote partnerships between different institutions (universities, schools, municipalities, companies and associations), with which cooperation protocols are established.

In the second session (11:00am-1:00pm), a World Café was held with 26 student participants, with the aim of reflecting upon three central questions:

- What competences/methods/assessments should we focus on?
- What practices can be considered as “good practices” in teacher education?
- What resources can be built?

This was followed by the intervention of Professor Herculano Cachinho from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning of the University of Lisbon, who animated a work session under the theme “Teachers and democratic competences at school: what practices?”.

This intervention resulted in two valuable ideas:

- the strengths of the threshold concepts and empowering knowledge, combined with the offer of meaningful learning experiences, enhance teacher training, facilitating the democratisation of training practices;
- Aware of the power of this approach, teachers can design pedagogical experiences aimed at developing transformative learning, thus encouraging the formation of more creative, innovative and resilient young people.

In the third session (14:30h-16:30h), the three working groups, which participated in the World Café, presented their conclusions.

What competences/methods/assessments should we focus on?

- Promote autonomous work (study) methods.
- Build individual work plans.
- Promote project work.
- Group work, large and small groups.
- Share ideas, opinions and even advice.
- Organisation of debates.
- Democratic management in the classroom. Integrate everyday situations into teaching and learning.
- Ensure pedagogical differentiation. Sharing power: introducing democratic practices in the classroom: voting, elections...

- Organise class councils.
- Addressing different cultures, ethnicities, religions and nationalities: educating for inclusion.
- Teach about political realities and institutions of power.

What practices can be considered “good practices” in teacher education?

- Having democratic practices inside the classroom (a class council, autonomous work, project work).
- Giving students the floor (giving students time and space to talk about their interests on a daily or weekly basis). Allow students to design their own learning (exploratory work; cooperative work, research work and information selection;
- knowledge check list construction; individual work plan).
- Promote responsibility (classroom roles/ leader of the day).
- Encourage Pedagogical Differentiation (responding to everyone’s difficulties, mobilising differentiated pedagogical resources).
- Addressing different cultures, ethnicities, religious faiths and nationalities. Educating for inclusion and tolerance (debates, sharing personal accounts, freely approach different beliefs, rituals...).
- Teaching different political principles and institutions (parish council, city council...).
- Encourage the exercise (civic duty) of voting (know the history of democratic elections in Portugal, explain the negative impact of abstention, demographically analyse abstention and discuss the results...).
- Know the local environment and history (physical/virtual study visits, field work,

- get to know the neighbourhood: commerce, theatre, parish council, parks, markets/squares, statues, monuments...)
- Stimulate critical thinking, getting students to share ideas about a certain topic (for example, ask questions, present news stories aimed at getting comment or to have their veracity checked...).
- Create moments aimed at regulating the learning assessment.
- Present news to be debated (to make students aware of the current reality, poverty, cultural diversity...).
- Encourage volunteering.
- Try to get the involvement of parents and community (career week, project exhibits, handing out leaflets...).

What resources can be built?

All resources can be worked with the intention of developing democratic culture, in accordance with the intentions and attitudes of the teacher who use them.

- Use of forums – make it possible to obtain information, allow the sharing of ideas and suggestions for improvement.
- Individual Work Plan (IWP) – creation of checklists, suggestions for improving the work of colleagues.
- Anything that includes giving students a voice.
- Try to understand the reasons that led to certain actions before criticising them.
- Questionnaires for teachers and students about what could be improved.
- Class council or assembly.
- Class diary.
- Objects and/or news to share with the class.

- Daily Behavior Self-Assessment Grid – gives students the opportunity to self-regulate their behavior and learning.
- Tables with different identified types of behaviors or rules for student self-assessment.
- Posters that allow students to post (when they feel the need to do so) what they liked the most, what they didn't like and what they would like to do.
- "Reading Meter" – a chart where students register the number of books they have read spontaneously.



3. DEBATE AND REFLECTIONS WITH ACTIVE PROFESSORS

The second and third day of the LxNW – March 26 and 27, 2021 – were dedicated to two focus groups: the first with currently active teachers who completed their initial training at ESELx; the second with currently active teachers who carried out their initial training at other higher education institutions.

The focus group session that took place on March 26th, between 18:00 and 20:00, was attended by five currently active teachers of basic education (students between the ages of 6 and 12), who held their initial training at the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon's Superior School of Education (ESELx) (Table 2).

Tabela 2.

Lisbon National Workshop. Programme, March 26th

March 26 (18:00h – 20:00h)	
Time	Events
18:00-18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of participants • Theoretical matrix: competences for democratic culture. <p>Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.</p>
18:30-19:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What competences/methods/assessments have you focused on? ✓ What practices have you identified as good teacher education practices? ✓ What teaching resources have you drafted? <p>Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.</p>
19:30-20:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Reflections <p>Carmen Garcia, University of Málaga, Málaga, SP Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.</p>

On March 27th, between 9:30 and 12:30, a second focus group session took place that was attended by six currently active teachers of basic education (students between the ages of 6 and 12), who did **not** carry out their initial training at the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon's Superior School of Education (ESELx) (Table 3).

Centring on the three questions, it was possible to carry out a participatory analysis focusing on three fundamental aspects of a teaching practice that aim to promote the development of competences for democratic culture: privileged competences, teaching methods and assessment.

Among the 20 **competences** for democratic culture of the Council of Europe (2016), in their discourses, this group of teachers privileged human rights, cultural diversity and justice (values); autonomy, critical thinking, cooperation, empathy, communication (ICT) and conflict resolution (capabilities); as well as respect (attitudes) (Fig. 2).

The first dominating idea that was addressed pertained to the valuing of **student centrality** in the teaching and learning process, which, in the context of the development of CDC, translates into the idea that “the democratic culture is the student” (focus group, 2021). Promoting democratic culture implies having the school and the classroom open to the social and cultural reality of the students, integrating their knowledge, relations and experiences, and building a learning space that allows them to have a free active voice to express what they think and feel.

In addition to these ten competences, two more were highlighted by the teachers who were involved in the focus group: firstly, “participation”, the competence that contributed the largest number of references, followed by flexibility and solidarity, and, secondly, “power sharing”, as in participation in decision-making.

The value given to participation is directly related to the teaching **methods** that are identified by teachers.

Tabela 3.

Lisbon National Workshop. Programme, Março 27th

March 27 (9:30h – 12:30h)	
Time	Events
09:30-10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of participants • Theoretical matrix: competences for democratic culture. <p>Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.</p>
10:30-11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What competences/methods/assessments have you focused on? ✓ What practices have you identified as good teacher education practices? ✓ What teaching resources have you drafted? <p>Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.</p>
11:30-20:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Reflections <p>Ramón Martínez Medina, University of Córdoba, Córdoba, SP Alfredo Dias and Maria João Hortas, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, PT.</p>

Fig. 2. Competences for Democratic Culture considered most important by primary school teachers



Source: Focus groups interventions.

This student centrality in the construction of student learning requires that the teacher guarantee **democratic relation** in the classroom, recognising that citizenship is something that is always present in our daily lives.

To this end, the **project's methodology** was considered the best approach for the promotion of CDC, ensuring the establishment of participatory and collaborative practices. In addition to the project work, the teachers highlighted the holding of class assemblies as a way to promote among the students reflections, debates and participatory decision-making solution finding around problems faced by the group on a daily basis.

The project methodology, by providing investigative practices in the classroom, facilitates an **integrated management of the curriculum**, which makes it possible to learn from the identified problems related to a social reality, be it proximate or distant.

This integrated approach to the curriculum is the one that comes closest to a critical analysis that promotes among students the **ability to reflect and act** on the same level of reality. A teaching practice aimed at the development of CDC, therefore, must go beyond the classroom and the school, mobilising the social and cultural environment, institutions and resources offered by the given context to the processes of teaching and learning develop, in each respective classroom.

It is in the school-community relationship that **meaningful learning** is most easily constructed. Still, in the present day, it is possible to provide students with conditions that permit that their knowledge of social realities goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate environment,

allowing students to know other, more distant realities, extending critical reflection and analysis to different spatial and temporal scales.

In the issue of **resources**, the group of teachers focused the debate on three fundamental ideas: (1) students are the main resource in teaching practices directed towards the development of CDC; (2) the local environment, one closest to the students, is an important resource source to be taken into account, not only in the case of available human resources, but also for cultural, heritage and social resources; (3) students, during the process of learning acquisition, can also be builders of resources that teacher can integrate into their teaching strategies and activities.

In providing a brief summary of the teachers' interventions who participated in the March 26th workshop, **Professor Carmen Garcia** pointed out the main lines of reflection followed during the debate she observed and participated in based on the three questions that guided the focus group.

Regarding the first question, it was possible to draw out three main ideas: first, there is no explicit reference to **competences**, methods and the relationship that can be established between them. The group reflected on democratic culture as a community experience in a culturally diverse society. The teachers understand democratic culture as being a principal integrated within the programme, which should be seen less as a discipline, and more in an integrated and transversal perspective. Democratic culture must be a tool for the development of critical thinking for children living in a globalised and interconnected world.

Concerning the second question, focusing on **good practices** for democratic culture, the perception of practices is heavily linked to the difficulties and obstacles that are normally found when teachers, in the classroom, try to implement a project of this nature. One of the difficulties identified centred on the different conceptions the collective of teachers had about what democratic culture is. A democratic culture also requires changing the school culture, changing the organisation of (functioning) academic activities in reference to timetables and subjects, and reducing content to allow the development of projects that activate students' learning in a social and cultural perspective. The group considered the practice of a democratic culture as a construction in a constant state of tension, which should bring together not only the teachers and the students, but also the entire teaching staff that makes up the school community.

Lastly, concerning **resources**, many interesting ideas surfaced, especially when it was mentioned that there is no specific resource that can be worked when it comes to developing democratic culture, having also been pointed that the school and the surrounding community are the primary resource that can be drawn on, this in spite of the scarcity of resources teachers come across when exercising their teaching profession, a constant battle that always accompanies them. Resources are found in the development of practice within projects. Resources can be found and built by students, through their questions and interests, which allow them to transform the classroom space, both in its physical and social dimensions. It was pointed out that a **good practice** can imply questioning the multiple resources of popular culture, commonly consumed by students, which can be a strategy to promote cultural discord, to create

social concepts, ideas and representations that often do not respect the spirit and experience of democratic culture.

Professor Ramón Martínez was asked to attend the workshop that took place on March 27th and present a final comment on the debate that was held.

The existence of a wide range of **methods** was highlighted. The traditional method of the Modern School Movement was discussed, but, above all, it was the difficulty in choosing a concrete method that generated most debate. From there, colleagues gave examples on how to work the concept of citizenship: project work, autonomous work, experimental work, investigative experiments (one colleague even talked about circuit rooms to work on skills, which came across as very interesting).

Focusing specifically on citizenship, the idea is to try to promote interdisciplinarity, crossing different areas of knowledge – such as Mathematics or Sciences – aimed at trying to work cultural diversity in the classroom. Issues around migration, the diversity of students found in classrooms and the relationship of these themes with citizenship, were focused on. This interdisciplinarity, along with the flexibility of the curriculum, also allow working with human rights, reinforcing the idea that we live in a globalised world, with different realities, with different problems, and that it is necessary to create awareness of this existence in our World. A very practical example is globalisation: we are experiencing the Covid pandemic, which is a result of globalisation.

Furthermore, this also allows teachers to work on issues of multiculturalism, utilising the collaboration with Non-Government Organi-

sations, as was one of the examples presented. In this context, the most important factor to reinforce is the idea of working locally: approaching issues of citizenship as derived from local problems in order to create awareness/a sense of the fact that we are citizens of the world while, at the same time, citizens of a concrete community that is proximate to each of us.

With regard to the **competences** addressed, the difficulty of measuring (evaluating) the scope of competences, was mentioned, bringing to light that one should always try to accomplish them. The difficulty of defining whether all students should achieve the same competences was addressed, having recognised that not all students are at the same development levels when it comes to these competences.

Of all the competences, four were most repeated in the interventions: **curiosity** (justifying curiosity is important in order to know more about the world around us) and its fostering will allow students to become **autonomous** leaving them to try to depend solely on themselves. In addition, they must also try to develop **flexibility** and **solidarity**.

Evaluation was one of the least debated aspects. Mentioned was that a **diagnostic evaluation** should be carried out on what students know about Education for Citizenship.

The **qualitative dimension** of the dominance of competences should be considered and attempts at quantifying of this type of learning should never be set forth. On the other hand, the need to **evaluate the practice of teaching** was also mentioned, this in order to guarantee that competences for Citizenship Education are being developed.

The characteristics that should be possessed by Citizenship Education practices were addressed: they must be **sustainable, contextualised** and **adapted** to the level of the students (as mentioned, there is a big difference between working in the 1st cycle of basic education and the 3rd cycle: students are different, they have different abilities, but what must be valued is the importance of learning) and, of great importance, is the fact that they ought to be interdisciplinary. These practices must be open to families, to family participation and to the local community

Examples of practices that can be implemented were advanced: group project work, autonomous work – doubling up a bit on what was previously mentioned concerning methodologies – work in accordance with competences, learning units (with multiple modes of learning and programmed content presentation), notebooks and class diaries. These practices must fundamentally respond to real problems, making students feel like citizens of a community.

Some particularly interesting types of practices were highlighted. **Democratic election processes** such as, for example, class delegates: getting information, campaigning, voting, counting the votes and taking a certain position (for or against) regarding the different options. **Participatory heritage**, rehearsing cultural appreciation in the lived-in environment, putting forward the example of the “We Propose” project, a model project in Portugal, defined by a very interesting way of promoting participatory citizenship among students. To conclude, all projects must include a **final reflection**, which will allow them to develop critical thinking, regardless of the level of education.

On the issue of **resources**, digital resources, ICT resources, museums and interpretation centers were mentioned. Again, this is work to be developed in conjunction with the community. Furthermore, audiovisual resources: films, documentaries – including the debates that may arise from that – were also mentioned. Debate is fundamental to learning and to listening, this in order to acquire knowledge and to listen to the opinions of other colleagues with different ideas, and in order to discuss matters with the goal of reaching conclusions about common problems. This is what allows us to live in democracy and in society.



4. FINAL NOTES: CONTINUE TO REFLECT

On practices

The **methods** for developing CDC should privilege...

- problems of social reality, integrated into the surrounding environment;
- student-centred teaching-learning processes;
 - project work
 - cooperation
 - citizenship
- mobilising differences;
- integration of student's previous knowledge.

On evaluation

- **assessment** should be continuous, formative and participatory... focusing on competence, with...
- diversified assessment tools, according to different methods.

On resources

- resources should be diverse and flexible;
- students can participate in the construction of resources; and...
- it should be considered that students are the main resource.

On CDC

- **Participation?** How is it integrated into CDC? Participation is central to the development of democratic culture.
- The development of **CDC is essentially a process** that takes place on a daily basis in the classroom and at school.

This text was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Council of Europe. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of either party.

The "Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes (EDCD-TEP)" project is funded by the EU/CoE Joint Programme Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO).

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

www.coe.int

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

<http://europa.eu>

