

Introduction

1. The purpose of this manual

The objective of this manual is to support teachers and practitioners in Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) – teacher trainers, head teachers, inspectors, textbook authors and editors. It focuses on key questions about EDC and HRE, including the following:

- What competences do citizens need to participate in their communities?
- What are the objectives of EDC/HRE?
- What are the basic principles of EDC/HRE?
- What do the key concepts that form the core of this EDC/HRE edition mean?
- In what way is the concept of constructivist learning linked to EDC/HRE?
- Why does EDC/HRE emphasise a whole-school approach?
- How can teachers prepare, support and assess their students' processes of learning in EDC/HRE?

The manual offers background materials and tools to cover these questions. As this book is not a treatise on EDC/HRE, it allows the user to read and use the chapters and materials selectively.

This manual differs from the other five in this EDC/HRE edition. Volumes II-IV contain model descriptions of small projects and learning sequences, generally designed as four-lesson sequences. A set of nine key concepts sets the framework for a spiral curriculum from elementary to lower and upper secondary level. Volume V offers model descriptions of nine short projects on children's rights from kindergarten to lower secondary level. Volume VI contains a collection of models for interactive and task-based learning.

Part 1 of this manual, on the other hand, outlines the basic principles of EDC/HRE as far as they are helpful and meaningful for the practitioner. Part 2 gives guidelines and tools to design, support and assess the students' processes of constructivist learning. Part 3 provides toolboxes for teachers and students in EDC/HRE. The user will find that these guidelines and tools not only give support in EDC/HRE, but for good teaching in general.

2. An outline of EDC/HRE

As reflected by the title of this manual, *Educating for democracy*, the objective of EDC/HRE is to enable and encourage students in their roles as young citizens to play an active part in their societies and political communities. To participate in a democratic community, students need to develop a wide range of competences including knowledge and understanding, technical and methodical skills, and values and attitudes, such as tolerance and responsibility.

“Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are closely inter-related and mutually supportive. They differ in focus and scope rather than in goals and practices. Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives.”² EDC therefore focuses on the young citizen's role in the community, while HRE looks at the individual and his or her identity, wants and needs, liberties and responsibilities “through a human rights lens”.

2. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers (www.coe.int/edc).

EDC/HRE emphasises the active role of students as young citizens, insisting that they need to know and understand their human rights, but also appreciate them, and through training in class and practical experience in school life feel confident to exercise them. In this respect, EDC/HRE takes a big step forward in comparison to a more traditional, solely knowledge-based concept of civic or citizenship education. EDC/HRE addresses students as experts, valuing their interests and experience in everyday life.

EDC/HRE adopts a holistic approach to teaching and learning. The EDC/HRE teacher's task may be summed up in three principles:

- teaching “about” democracy and human rights;
- teaching “for” democracy and human rights;
- teaching “through” democracy and human rights.

2.1 Teaching “about” democracy and human rights

Students need a sound understanding of what democracy means, and what human rights they enjoy, in which documents they have been laid down, and how they may be protected and enforced. As young citizens, they need to know how their country's constitution functions as a political system.

2.2 Teaching “for” democracy and human rights

Young citizens need to learn how to participate in their communities and how to exercise their human rights: “Democratic values and practices have to be learned and relearned to address the pressing challenges of every generation. To become full and active members of society, citizens need to be given the opportunity to work together in the interests of the common good; respect all voices, even dissenting ones; participate in the formal political process; and cultivate the habits and values of democracy and human rights in their everyday lives and activities. As a result, citizens come to feel useful and recognized members of their communities, able to participate in and make a difference to society.”³

2.3 Teaching “through” democracy and human rights

Students need a supportive learning environment. They require methods of teaching and learning that allow them to exercise their human rights, such as freedom of thought and expression. They require opportunities to participate in governing their school, exercising their human rights and fulfilling their responsibilities. They rely on their teachers to provide role models for mutual respect, tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflict. In all these respects, democracy and human rights serve as a pedagogical guideline, both for EDC/HRE as a curricular school subject and school as a micro-society.

EDC/HRE poses a challenge for learners, teachers and schools. This manual offers teachers and school practitioners guidance and support in meeting this challenge.

3. Hartley M. and Huddleston T. (2009), *School-Community-University Partnerships for a Sustainable Democracy: Education for Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the United States*. EDC/HRE Pack, Tool 5, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, p. 8 (www.coe.int/edc).