



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Core competences in Education for democratic
citizenship (EDC)

EDC in community and everyday life

by

Author: Odd Ragnar Hunnes - Norway

Editor: Miguel Ángel García López



The Pestalozzi Programme
Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

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The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

Theme: Introducing democracy in the class

Title: What, why and how to learn democracy in class?

Expected outcome

- To explore and become aware of what the students already know about democracy.
- To set an effective approach to democracy learning in class, on the basis of the students' competences..
- To introduce the theme of democracy in a democratic way.

Target group

Type of training	School level / age	Subject area
School Teacher training, pre-service and in-service	Secondary School University College and University	Social studies (geography, history, civics), religion

Brief description of the unit

This unit uses the competences that students already have. This implies helping them to become aware of what they already know. It explores and benefits from the diversity of knowledge and experiences that different students have. In coherence with the idea of democracy as a participatory process, the unit promotes the active participation of the students in its different steps.

The unit has two main parts:

- The first part starts with an introduction to the unit and continues with a survey where the students answer a questionnaire on democracy (See Appendix 1).

- The second part is a follow-up session where the teacher presents the results of the survey. S/he gives the correct answers where it applies (not all the questions have a correct answer) and invites the students to comment on the questions where opinions may differ.

Following this presentation there is a discussion which starts in groups and is summed up in a plenary session. The question at hand is: ‘Considering the presentation of the whole student group’s answers to the questionnaire, our curriculum on democracy and the time available in the semester program... What do we want/need to focus upon, while learning democracy?’ (See Appendix 2)

Based on this discussion, the “what”, “why” and “how” of learning democracy in the classroom should be decided.

Methods/techniques used

- Survey through a questionnaire
- Plenary presentation with students’ comments
- Group work, group presentations
- Plenary discussion (including decision making, and finally completed by a voting procedure)

Time 3 hours

Part 1 Introduction Activity 1	▶ 10 minutes ▶ 25 minutes
Part 2 Activity 2 Activity 3 Activity 4 Activity 5	▶ 45 minutes ▶ 45 minutes ▶ 30 minutes ▶ 30 minutes

Tips for trainers:

- There needs to be sufficient time between part 1 and part 2 to sum up the information that is given through the questionnaires. However, this span of time should be as short as possible to avoid breaking the connection between the two parts.
- You may have to be flexible on time since needed time depends on the number of students (number of groups) in the class, how the discussions in the groups and the plenary sessions evolve, and how familiar the students are with the different approaches suggested (in some cases extra time for instruction may be needed).

Resources

Questionnaire about knowledge and attitudes on democracy	Appendix 1
Learning democracy planning form	Appendix 2
The relevant curriculum on democracy for the student group (the teacher should make it available)	
A blackboard / overhead film / flipchart and writing equipment to go with it	
If needed, an overhead projector or facilities for PowerPoint presentations	

Activity 1 Survey on democratic knowledge and attitudes



25 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To find out what the students know about democracy and what their attitudes towards democracy are like. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To help the students to realize what they already know about democracy and what their attitudes towards democracy are like. ➢ To help the teacher to find out what the students actually know about democracy and what their attitudes towards democracy are like. ➢ To set the basis for students' participation in the planning of how to organize democracy learning in this class. ➢ To set the basis for students' participation in implementing the plans thus made. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Survey using a questionnaire 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Questionnaire (See Appendix 1) 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The students should be able to comfortably work individually without interference from peers. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ After the presentation of the complete unit (introduction), the teacher explains how the questionnaire is to be understood and answered. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The questionnaire is given out and the time limit for answering is announced. ➤ When the time is up, the teacher collects the questionnaires. ➤ After this session, the answers should be registered and summed up. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make sure that all students are informed that the answers are treated anonymously. ➤ After the students have completed their questionnaires, their markings have to be recorded and added up. At this stage, a simple counting program on a computer may be used, or the summarizing may be done manually. This work may be done by the teacher or the students. ➤ Involving the students in the recording of data/answers is a plus: it has the value of promoting their participation and commitment in coherence with the ideas of participative democracy. Another gain of engaging the students in the work of registering the data is that they may see how difficult it sometimes is to interpret an answer even on a multiple choice question. ➤ If the students are participating in the recording/adding, it is important that the teacher organizes and keeps a tight control. The teacher may choose to assign a selected group of students, or all the students may be divided into groups, in order to register answers. They will enter the data into a form prepared by the teacher. Afterwards the results from each group will be entered into one final form (an unused questionnaire may be used for this) where all the entries are summed up. If students are participating in this work, it is very important that the anonymity of the respondents is observed. ➤ This activity (the students' participation in the recording/adding) will also take time which is not included in the total time plan of 3 hours and 5 minutes indicated for the whole unit. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check with the students if there were any questions that they did not really understand. ➤ Invite the students to reflect on the experience of answering a formalized questionnaire with multiple choice questions. (Was it easy/ difficult? Why? Did they always find an alternative that suited their opinion/choice?) ➤ Ask the students how they liked the activity and why. ➤ Invite the students to identify what they learned from this activity. 	

Activity 2 What do we know?



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To make the students aware of their competences on democracy and to enhance it. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To present a summary of the students' answers to the questionnaire. ➢ To give correct answers to the questions in the questionnaire where this applies. ➢ To invite the students to comment and discuss the questions in the questionnaire where opinions differ. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Plenary presentation with comments and discussions from students 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ If feasible: the teacher makes her/his slide pictures for the presentation. ➢ If relevant: an overhead projector or facilities for PowerPoint presentation. 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Make sure that the equipment for the presentation is properly adjusted. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The teacher presents the students' summarized answers to the questions in the questionnaire one by one. ➢ The teacher takes this opportunity to emphasize especially important points that s/he has discovered in the answers. This may be the occasion to point out the correct answers where this is applicable (questions 1 – 11). It may also be done where students' opinions differ. This is likely to happen in 	

<p>question 12a (the importance of the media not being controlled by the government). Disagreement opens up for a short discussion. And since the teacher has had the opportunity to prepare, s/he makes sure that important points for consideration are included in the discussion. A good way of showing the relevance on this point is to illustrate with concrete examples which the students are familiar with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The students are invited to comment / discuss points that may appear interesting to them during the presentation ➤ It should be pointed out to the students that this activity (2) may give them an idea of how their attitudes and activities compare with those of their classmates. It should also be pointed out that there is nothing wrong with being different and the students should be given the opportunity to comment upon this if they wish so. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make sure that as many students as possible feel free to contribute to the discussion. ➤ This exercise may be demanding in terms of time and content balance. It is important to strike a balance between not cutting short a thriving discussion and avoiding that one or two questions get most of the available time for discussion. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The debriefing/reflecting of this activity is channelled into the evaluation of the whole unit (activity 5). 	

Activity 3 What do we want/need to learn more about?



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To identify the main competence development needs of the group of students. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To allow the students to find out and formulate their needs for enhancing their competences on democracy. ➢ To relate the students' comprehended needs with the relevant curriculum on democracy. ➢ To work out some suggestions on 'what', 'why' and 'how' for the further learning on democracy in their class. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Group work ➢ Presentation in plenary 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Planning form (Appendix 2) ➢ A document where the relevant curriculum on democracy is presented and the time available for this topic for the whole school year is announced. This must be prepared by the teacher. ➢ Overhead film, overhead projector or a flipchart and writing equipment to go with it 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Have ready an overhead projector or a place where the flipchart is clearly visible for everybody. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Divide the students into groups of 3 – 5. ➢ Each group needs a leader (keeps time and makes sure the group is focused), a secretary (writes 	

<p>down all the suggestions that the group comes up with on the Planning form and thereafter on the overhead film or flipchart), and a reporter (presents the group’s ideas during the plenary session).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hand out the Planning form (Appendix 2). ➤ Hand out a document where the relevant curriculum is stated and the time available for this topic is announced. ➤ Hand out an overhead film or a flipchart and a pen to go with it for the groups to use in their presentation at the end of this activity. ➤ Using the planning form, each group is asked to point out in some detail topics for further learning democracy (‘what’, ‘why’ ‘how’). ➤ The groups write their suggestions on an overhead film or a flipchart. ➤ After the group discussion all groups will be called upon to present their suggestions in a plenary session immediately following the group work. ➤ The students should be informed that the time frame devoted to this activity is 30 minutes for group discussion and 15 minutes for the presentation in plenary (2 – 3 minutes per group). 	
<p>► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If the students are not used to group work, extra time should be spent to explain and organize this activity. Time for this is not included in the total time plan of 3 hours and 5 minutes that is indicated for the whole unit. ➤ Remind the groups that writing on the overhead film or flipchart is part of the group activity to be completed within 30 minutes. ➤ Remind the groups that one person (the reporter) should be chosen for presenting their suggestions in plenary. 	
<p>► Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The debriefing/reflecting of this activity is channelled into the evaluation of the whole unit (activity 5). 	

Activity 4 Discussion and decision-making



30 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To come to a plan for the 'what', 'why' and 'how' to further learn democracy in this particular class. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To let the students discuss the suggestions from the different groups and give them a chance to argue for their views. ➤ To come to a concrete plan for the forthcoming learning democracy. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plenary discussion ➤ Decision-making in class 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A blackboard / overhead film / flipchart and writing equipment to go with it ➤ If needed, an overhead projector 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have ready an overhead projector or a blackboard. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One by one, the groups repeat their suggestions from activity 3. These suggestions are written on the blackboard / an overhead film or a flipchart. As the suggestions were presented in detail during the previous activity, only the title needs to be written down. ➤ During the discussion, the students are invited to merge and group suggestions so that these are distinct enough and not too big for implementation. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ General rules and procedures for discussion should be used, and if the students are not accustomed to these, enough time should be spent in order to clarify the rules and procedures and thus support the discussion. Time for this is not included in the total time plan of 3 hours and 5 minutes that is indicated for the whole unit.➤ When a sufficient number of suggestions have come forth from the discussion, the final decision should be made through a simple voting procedure where majority rules.	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The merging of neighboring suggestions may be challenging. The teacher should feel free to play an active role in this part of the activity, if needed.➤ The number and size of suggestions should fit in the time available. The teacher should make sure that this consideration is taken into account. This may possibly best be done by prioritizing the different topics and deal with them one by one as the time frame allows.➤ Some students may find that majority rule comes out with an unfair total result. If so, this question of majority rule with its advantages and disadvantages could be addressed in the final evaluation of this unit.	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The debriefing/reflecting of this activity is channelled into the evaluation of the whole unit.	

Activity 5 Evaluation of the unit



30 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To evaluate the whole training unit. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To assess students' learning. ➤ To assess the procedures that have been implemented in this unit, mainly based on the students' perception. ➤ To check whether the unit has boosted the students' motivation for learning democracy. ➤ To allow the students to appreciate the sum effect of the teacher's, their peers' and their own contribution to the processes in the unit. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual work ➤ Plenary session ➤ Prioritizing ➤ Voting 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A blackboard and chalks 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Several pieces of chalk should be available. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The students start by taking a sheet of paper and divide it into two parts. On the left hand side 	

they put a minus (-) and on the right hand side a plus (+). On the left they write everything they consider negative and on the right everything they consider positive in relation to the process. The students have five minutes for this part.

- Then the blackboard is divided into two parts, the left hand side with a (-) and the right hand side a (+). On the blackboard the students now take turns to write all the points that they have taken down on their paper, but in such a way that no point has more than one entry.
- Afterwards the students study all the entries on the blackboard and select the one, two or three alternatives that each of them finds most important on the positive side and on the negative side.
- Finally the teacher organizes a voting procedure where each student may vote for her/his priorities and thus contribute to the summarized opinion of the student group. This may be done in the following manner: Each student is given 2 x 3 post-it notes (or any other piece of paper that may be taped to the blackboard) in 3 different colours, for instance 2 red, 2 yellow and 2 green. Each student is asked to attach a green note at the entry on the blackboard that s/he finds most important, a yellow one on the second most important and a red one on the third. This is to be done both for the positive and the negative side. At the end the result of the students' assessment comes out quite clearly from the distribution of the different coloured notes on the blackboard.
- The teacher may comment on this and ask the students about their motivation for continuing to work on the topic of democracy. The teacher may also invite the students to make some general comments on the unit.

References

- Chilambo, M. N. & O. R. Hunnes (eds.) (2007): *Learning democracy. A Resource Book*. Balaka: Montfort Media.
<http://student.hivolda.no/~democracy/resourcebook.html>
- The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Assessment (IEA) (2002): *Civic Education Study*
<http://www.terpconnect.umd.edu/~jtpurta/>

Appendix 1: Questionnaire about knowledge and attitudes on democracy

Some introductory comments

The questionnaire has been developed on the basis of a selection of questions used in the international survey called 'Civic Education Study'. This study was initiated by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Assessment (IEA) and published in 2002. In the report, the following countries are included: Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Israel, Cyprus, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Sweden and the Czech Republic. <http://www.terpconnect.umd.edu/~jtpurta/>

The questions in the questionnaire may be divided into four groups:

- Group 1. Questions 1 – 11
These questions have a correct answer (even though it may be argued that in some instances more than one may be accepted).
The correct answers are:
1: C, 2: C, 3: B, 4: B, 5: C, 6: A, 7: C, 8: D, 9: A, 10: B, 11: C
- Group 2. Questions 12 – 13
Here the students are invited to express their own opinions and therefore there is no correct answer.
- Group 3. Questions 14 – 15
The point here is to get a general impression on the students' activities that are relevant to the topic of democracy, and therefore there are no correct answers.
- Group 4. Question 16
This question is meant to give some help in the planning of how to work with the topic of democracy in class in the near future, and therefore there are no correct answers.

The questionnaire

1. In a democratic country (society) having many organisations for people to join is important because this provides ...

- A [] a group to defend members who are arrested
B [] many sources of taxes for the government
C [] opportunities to express different points of view

D a way for the government to tell people about new laws

2. What is the main purpose of labour (trade) unions? Their purpose is to ...

- A improve the quality of products produced
- B increase the amount that factories produce
- C improve conditions and pay for workers
- D establish a fairer tax system

3. Which of the following is the clearest violation of civil liberties in a democratic political system?

- A An armed policeman in uniform enters a religious shrine.
- B A policeman breaks up a private meeting where people are criticising political leaders.
- C A policeman arrests members of a group who were plotting to blow up a government building.
- D A person carrying an unregistered gun is fined.

4. In a democracy the most important function of periodic (regular) elections is to ...

- A increase citizens' interest in government
- B make possible non-violent change in leadership
- C maintain current laws in the country
- D give more power to the poor

5. A dictator agrees to restore democracy in his country. Which of the following actions would be the most convincing evidence to support the claim that he is promoting democracy?

- A He makes statements supporting other leaders in his party.
- B He holds a Parade for Democracy in the largest city.
- C He agrees to a date for national elections including several parties' candidates.
- D He speaks to a newspaper reporter about the need for democracy.

6. Which of the following is most likely to cause a government to be called non democratic?

- A People are prevented from criticising (not allowed to criticise) the government.
- B The political parties criticise each other often.
- C People must pay very high taxes.
- D Every citizen has the right to a job.

7. Which of the following is necessary in democratic countries?

- A There are laws protecting the environment.
- B Many companies are owned by the government.
- C Citizens can influence public debate and decisions.
- D Political leaders are rarely criticised.

8. A country's constitution contains ...

- A statements about the current relations with its neighbouring countries
- B statements made by the President (Prime Minister) to the national legislature
- C statements made by the political parties to their supporters
- D statements of principle establishing the system of government and laws

9. Three of the following statements are facts and one is an opinion. Which of the following is an OPINION?

- A Actions by individual countries are the best way to solve environmental problems.
- B Many countries contribute to the pollution of the environment.
- C Some countries offer to cooperate in order to diminish acid rain.
- D Water pollution often comes from several different sources.

10. Three of the following statements are opinions and one is a fact. Which one is a FACT (the factual statement)?

- A People with very low incomes should not pay any taxes.
- B In many countries rich people pay higher taxes than poor people.
- C It is fair that some citizens pay higher taxes than others.
- D Donations to charity are the best way to reduce differences between rich and poor.

11. In a democratic political system, which of the following ought to govern the country?

- A Moral or religious leaders
- B A small group of well-educated people
- C Popularly elected representatives
- D Experts on government and political affairs

12. What is good and what is bad for democracy? Please tick the box in the column which best fits your opinion. If you think that the statement does not apply, put a tick in the last column.

	Very bad for democracy	Somewhat bad for democracy	Somewhat good for democracy	Very good for democracy	Do not know/ does not apply
a. When newspapers are free of all government (state, political) control, that is ...					
b. When courts and judges are influenced by politicians, that is					
c. When many different organisations (associations) are available (exist) for people who wish to belong to them, that is ...					
d. When political parties have different opinions (positions) on important issues, that is ...					
e. When laws that women claim are unfair to them are changed, that is ...					
f. When people refuse to obey a law which violates human rights, that is...					
e. When newspapers are forbidden to publish stories that might offend ethnic groups (immigrant groups, racial groups, national groups), that is...					
f. When government leaders are trusted without question... that is...					

13. Please read each statement and select the box in the column which corresponds to the way you feel about the statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Do not know
a. Members of anti-democratic groups (groups that are against democracy) should be prohibited from organising peaceful (non-violent) demonstrations or rallies.					
b. Members of anti-democratic groups (groups that are against democracy) should be prohibited from running in an election.					
c. Immigrants who have been living in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections.					
d. The politicians quickly forget the needs of the voters who elected them.					
e. I am able to understand most political issues easily.					

14. For each of these activities, tick the box to show how often you do it.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Do not know
a. How often do you have discussions on what is happening in your national (your country's) politics (government)?					
b. How often do you have discussions on what is happening in international politics?					
c. How often do you read articles (stories) in the newspapers about what is happening in your country?					
d. How often do you read articles (stories) in the newspapers about what is happening in other countries?					
e. How often do you listen to news broadcasts on television?					
f. How often do you listen to news broadcasts on the radio?					

15. Tick one box in each row for each action to show how likely you would be to do it.

	I will certainly not do this	I will probably not do this	I will probably do this	I will certainly do this	Do not know
a. Vote in national elections.					
b. Get information about candidates before voting in an election.					
c. Join a political party.					
d. Write letters to a newspaper about social or political concerns.					
e. Be a candidate for a local or a city office.					
f. Participate in a non-violent (peaceful) protest march or rally.					
g. Block traffic as a form of protest.					

16. To do a good job as an active participant in our democracy I need to know more about (please continue on flip side if needed):

.....

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Appendix 2: Learning democracy planning form

Group number:

On the basis of

- the presentation of the whole student group's answers to the questionnaire
- our curriculum on democracy
- the time available in our semester program,

we have the following suggestions for our further learning on democracy:

WHAT do we suggest focusing on?	WHY do we think this is a good idea?	How would we like to work on this?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Please continue on flip side if needed!