



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC)
Project work: participate and act in your community!

by

Author: Sulev Valdmaa - Estonia
Editor: Pascale Mompont-Gaillard



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: Project pedagogy in EDC

Expected outcome

- ➔ To promote competent and responsible civic participation through the use of project pedagogy in civic education within school programs, out-of-school youth programs and adult education programs.
- ➔ To develop key competencies and skills in EDC: support and trust in democratic systems, information research skills, critical reading and thinking, communication and presentation skills, support for cooperative structures.
- ➔ To promote cooperative learning and group-work

Target group

Type of training	School level / age	Subject area
Initial and in-service training	Secondary, post-secondary, youth, adults	All subject teachers and youth/adult program leaders

Brief description of the unit

Project work: “Participate and act in your community!” presents activities that will lead trainees to acquire a variety of skills needed for active participation in the society: information research, critical reading and thinking, group work, collecting and presenting written and graphic materials in specific formats, oral presentations and questionnaires.

In the beginning of the project, participants work cooperatively to identify local and national public policy issues and select one of the issues to be dealt with in the project. Learners will research the identified issue in depth, evaluate alternative remediation implemented elsewhere, develop their own solutions and proposals (new policy) for the issue and create a concrete action plan to implement the proposed new policy. In the final phase, participants produce a portfolio of their work and present it in a public hearing showcase.

Methods/techniques used

Cooperative learning, group research, coaching

Time 4 hours in session with trainer(s)

Activity 1: Introduction of the aims and format of the training unit	► 10 minutes
Activity 2: Exploring the local and national public policy issues ¹	► 45 minutes
Activity 3: Choosing the content of each subgroups' task	► 10 minutes
Activity 4: Forming subgroups, instructing the subgroups about their task	► 15 minutes
Activity 5: Independent parallel work of the four subgroups	► 2 hours
Activity 6: Presentation by the subgroups of the outcomes of their work	► 40 minutes

Resources

Computer access to internet(at least 4 computers), with printing facility	
Paper and four sets of glue, tape, scissors, colored papers, markers	
Recent press (newspapers, magazines, audio clips...)	
Four display charts of 80 cm x 100 cm (thick and solid material)	
Pre-reading, charts, Subgroup tasks	Appendix 1-3

Preparatory reading:

Ask trainees to read the text and answer the questions before the session. This is optional, but if the trainer decides to use the preparatory task, we suggest going back to the answers to these questions in the evaluation exercise at the end of the session. The trainer should let that be known at the beginning of the session. This allows for an interpretive approach to the unit.

¹ If it so happens that the trainees as a group are concerned, prior to the session, by a specific public policy issue, activities 2 and 3 can be skipped and the group can work on this particular issue from the start.

Activity 1 Introduction to the unit



10 minutes

	Notes
► General aim ➤ To present the aims, content and organization of the unit to the trainees.	
► Methods /techniques used: ➤ Presentation	
► Resources ➤ Flip chart or whiteboard	
► Practical arrangements: ➤ Arrange the room so chairs form a big circle	
► Instructions/procedure: ➤ Ask the trainees to name some skills, which are essential for the active members of democratic society (E.g. "Why it is good for democracy if the society members are participative and active?", "Can you describe active citizen?" etc). ➤ The discussion needs to remain introductory do not examine answers in depth, but reformulate them to summarize content and proceed to emphasize the following points: ➤ - civic participation depends very much on how the structures established by the state or local community authorities are fulfilling their daily duties; - each of us can play a role in the way they do this and citizens can defend their quality of life by having influence on their local and state government.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Explain the aims of the unit using the information in the fact sheet (page 2 of this document). Stress the skills the group will work to develop:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- how to determine the local and national public policy issues;- how to examine the origin and reasons these problematic situations;- how to plan action to improve the situation and support change.➤ Present the organization of the session (phases, tasks, timing) using the information in the fact sheet (page 2 of this document). Explain that timing will be paramount to the success of the process and that you will be very strict on that point.➤ Emphasize the value of collaborative work and cooperative learning; and that each person will contribute lot to the final outcome.➤ Repeat rules of respect and sharing talk time. Encourage trainees to participate actively during the training session, and stress that each person is equal and a valuable member of society, whose influence on “how the things are going” can be very strong.	
<p>► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties</p> <p>If This unit has 5 phases and therefore it is a good idea to make sure trainees understand the process well before starting. This will reduce the risk of them “getting lost in the process”</p>	
<p>► Debriefing/reflecting</p> <p>Allow time for short questions or comments</p>	

Activity 2 Acceptable definitions for the concept of “minorities”



45 minutes

Notes
▶ General aim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To identify and define public policy.
▶ Specific aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To learn how to identify local and national issues. ➤ To raise awareness on how to discern between private and public sphere.
▶ Methods/techniques used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual and group research
▶ Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ List of possible public policy issues in appendix 1 ➤ Recent press (newspapers, magazines, audio clips...)
▶ Practical arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set up the room so the newspapers and magazines can be easily displayed and accessed by trainees.
▶ Instructions/procedure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask trainees to go around the room to research the press and list the main problems or issues they find. Ask them to find around five different issues. Let trainees know that if they are concerned by a specific public policy issue that does not appear in the media sample presented here, they may add the specific issue to their list. (10 minutes)

<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Ask people to discuss and share their findings in pairs. Suggest that they debate on the reasons of existing or emerging problems. They will then choose a couple of the issues that seem more important to them and write these on the flip chart or whiteboard. (15 minutes)3. Point out some of the issues randomly and ask the trainees to explore why these problems exist, paying special attention to whose duty it is in society to deal with that particular issue. (10 minutes)4. Ask participants if they know any other issues, which are not under any official responsibility (for instance what kind of music somebody likes to listen, where the family plans to spend vacation, what kind of clothing one likes, what books I read, etc...). Emphasise the difference: these kinds of issues belong to the people's private life, not the public sphere. (But note, for instance my music preference becomes public issue if I listen too loud and too late when thus creating public nuisance!). (5 minutes)	
<p>► Debriefing/reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Ask trainees to define the terms "local/national public policy issue". When the trainees are ready to share their definitions, write some of these on the flip chart/ whiteboard and analyze/compare them together. (5 minutes)	

Activity 3 What public policy issue do we choose to elaborate during the next phases of the training unit?



10 minutes

Notes
<p>► General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ To choose the theme of the subgroups' work <p>► Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ To experience collaborative decision-making➤ To use dialogue for consensus and decision process
<p>► Methods/techniques used: Dialogical</p>
<p>► Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The list of local and national issues posted on the flip chart (or whiteboard/blackboard) by the trainer during the activity 2.
<p>► Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Participants should now go back to their places.
<p>► Instructions / procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Ask the trainees to look at the list of the local and national issues on the flip chart and think which of these issues the group will work on during the following phases of the training unit. The group must chose one issue

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Offer trainees a chance to decide, how the concrete issue will be selected.➤ They may decide to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- start a discussion during which the consensus will be reached;- chose a voting process where the majority decides;- chose another way to select one topic.➤ When the topic is selected, ask the trainees to formulate it in a clear and understandable text. It can be formulated as a statement or a question. When the final version of the public policy issue is agreed upon, the trainer writes it on the flip chart/blackboard.	
<p>► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ If the trainees have difficulties determining the local and national issues, the trainer should offer guidance to the group. Democratic and participative decision making processes have to be promoted here.➤ It may also happen that someone in the group will offer a new, not yet discussed local or national issue. In that case, the trainer will again offer support to guide the group in the decision-making process.	
<p>► Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Debrief with trainees on the decision-making process that just occurred. You may guide this discussion with questions: e.g. "what do you think of the process by which we decided to chose this issue", "do you agree with our group choice", "could we have done things differently?", etc	

Activity 4 Making groups and distributing tasks



15 minutes

	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ General aim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To present the work that will be done in sub-groups. ▶ Specific aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To distribute tasks among sub-groups. ➤ To model ways of dividing into subgroups and work collaboratively 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recent press (newspapers, magazines, audio clips...) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Instructions/procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Present to the whole group the process that it will follow during the session. Explain very clearly what the sub-groups' tasks will be and how the subgroups will cooperate during activity 5 using presentation in appendix 2. ➤ Repeat that each group will have different tasks, but at the same time while working on their group task, the subgroups need to communicate and share information about what they are doing. ➤ You can use different techniques to divide in sub-groups: voluntary based, using numbers (go around and attribute numbers to participants who then gather according to their number), using postcards (cut into as many pieces as subgroup members who then solve the puzzle and gather in groups), etc... ➤ When sub-groups are formed, distribute to each team their task sheet (appendix 2). Ask one member of the team to summarize the tasks. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reassure participants by stressing that: although it is hard to predict and describe, what, how and when exactly they should accomplish the tasks, everybody will understand it eventually as they start to work!➤ Concerning the context of the training session, explain that although their work will be a “fiction”, a “practice game”, they nevertheless are going to deal with an existing “real life” issue. Therefore all the solutions proposed and decisions made should be realistic and potentially applicable ones. Further stress that the proposals they present during this training session could be in some cases later implemented and presented to the particular institutional bodies dealing with the specific local or national issue within a ”live” exercise of civic participation.➤ The trainer should then repeat here that each subgroup will develop a display presenting the process and content of the work they have done together.	
<p>► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <p>It is strongly recommended to find a method, which forms random groups containing as diverse as possible selection of members. If by observation there are small groups or pairs of close friends among the trainees, those should be separated democratically. This allows for creating a situation of equal opportunities for each person to participate in the work process.</p>	
<p>► Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <p>Ask for feedback and clarifying questions from the trainees to make sure that everybody has understood what they are expected to do. This kind of short discussion in which questions arise helps the whole group of trainees understand the task as a collective experience.</p>	

Activity 5 Sub-groups work in parallel on the tasks for public policy issue they chose



120 minutes

	Notes
<p>► General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To experience though “learning-by-doing” a wide range of democratic skills such as group-work, leadership skills, decision making, critical thinking... ➤ To promote the use of cooperative learning/structures <p>► Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learning to be articulate: speaking and writing. ➤ To increase trainees’ organizational skills: data collecting, selecting and presenting. 	
<p>► Methods/techniques used: Cooperative learning, collaborative research, coaching.</p>	
<p>► Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recent press (newspapers, magazines, audio clips...) ➤ Writing material: paper (white and coloured), scissors, glue, markers and pencils ➤ 1 display chart (80 cm x 100 cm) per subgroup's ² 	
<p>► Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set up the room so that each subgroup has the space to work. A separate table with media resource should be set aside within easy reach. If possible each group should have their own computer with internet access. 	

² If computers are available for each group, and a projector is in the room, groups can of course work on an electronic document (e.g. PowerPoint) to display their task and proposals

<p>► Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The four subgroups are working independently in parallel, while organising communication with each other. (see appendix 2)➤ In order to avoid delay in the working process - as the subgroup three is dependent on results from the subgroups one and two; and subgroup four needs to wait until subgroup three offers their ideas - the trainer makes sure from the beginning that:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Groups 1, 2 focus on the <i>content</i> of the display, while groups 3 and 4 focus on the <i>design</i> of the display.2. Groups 3 and 4 should preview possible ideas without waiting for the results from the other subgroups. Thus, when the outcomes of the subgroups 1 & 2 start to come in, groups 3 and 4 are prepared towards the design and elements of content of the final version of their task.3. Once they have passed on their content, groups 1 and 2 turn to focus on the design of their display.➤ The trainer should be among the subgroups ready and available to answer questions and helping groups stay on task by asking questions: What is the issue? Why did we choose it? Who is it a problem for? How does it relate to EDC? What do we think should be done? What are the first steps to be taken to resolve the issue? What can I do? What can others do? Etc...➤ 30 minutes before the end of the activity, the trainer hand out appendix 3 to each group, to help them prepare for their presentation in activity 6.	
<p>► Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The trainer should be supportive but stay in the background. It is important that the <i>groups work independently</i> deciding what information is useful and relevant, how the display should be graphically designed and how the cooperation with the other subgroups will be established and carried out.	

Activity 6 “The making of the portfolio”, subgroup presentations, key proposals



40 minutes

	Notes
<p>► General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To develop speech and presentation skills in order to build confidence to speak publicly and answer questions unprepared <p>► Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To learn to express ideas clearly ➤ To learn to deal with critical feedback 	
<p>► Methods/techniques used: Coaching, role-play, critical listening.</p>	
<p>► Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The portfolio ➤ Recent press (newspapers, magazines, audio clips...) 	
<p>► Practical arrangements: Set up the room so that everyone is sitting in an oval</p>	
<p>► Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask each subgroup to present their display in front of the whole group. ➤ The trainer moderates the session paying particular attention to time-keeping: 4-minute time limit for speaking + six minutes questioning time. ➤ The sub-group members may be questioned by fellow trainees from the other sub-groups, but much better is to set up a special three-member jury for that purpose. ➤ The questions should be asked only on the related to the presentation issues for clarification. ➤ When one subgroup has passed their 4 + 6 minutes, the next subgroup will follow until the full presentation will be made. 	

Evaluation and assessment

This type of collaborative project work produces positive effects but also difficulties worth expressing and underlining:

	Notes
➤ To what extent did you feel comfortable with the task and content?	
➤ What was your rationale and creativity while dealing with the issue?	

➤ Did you find your place in the group?	
➤ What did you learn during the subgroup teamwork?	
➤ Do you feel motivated/ equipped now to do such work in real life?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ What could have been done differently?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Go back to the note taken during the preparatory activity and compare responses.	

	Notes
<p>► <u>Teaching activity</u></p> <p>These activities are designed to help you apply what you have been studying and achieve improvements in your place of work. They are most effective if you are able to work with other colleagues who can feed back comments to you on how well the activity achieves its purpose. They can help you apply the training and you can help your colleagues to share your good practice and learn with you</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>The purpose of each of the activities is to let the participants systematize and categorize the competencies obtained during the training unit and assess the acquisitions</p> <p>1. Activity 1. List 5 – 8 examples of local and national (public policy) issues from your personal experiences that should be improved. Give brief overview (two to five sentences) how/by whom those public policy issues should be improved. (10 minutes)</p> <p>2. Activity 2. List the skills, abilities and knowledge that an active citizen of a democratic society should have to participate actively in the community or public life. (10 minutes)</p> <p>3. Activity 3. Ask everybody to mark on the previously made list of active citizen's skills, abilities and knowledge in a way of self-assessment, which one thinks he/she needs to be improved. The self-assessment should be based on the experiences acquired during the training unit activities. (10 minutes)</p> <p><i>Note:</i> The trainer may want to make a break after Activities 1 and 2 and have trainees share the lists. This may help to refresh memories and enrich everybody's lists.</p>	

References

- Project "Citizen" Centre for Civic Education (Calabasas, California, USA) , November 2007 http://www.civiced.org/project_citizen.php

Appendix 1:

Preparatory Reading

This training unit is about identifying local and national issues (public policy) and about questioning why problems like pollution, violence, drug abuse, lack of leisure spaces for youth, etc... exist. People from each local community need to think, organise and act to find out why these situations exist and what to do about them.

While examining newspapers and dialoguing about public policy issues, we are mapping a wider picture about the quality of life in our societies. By dealing together thoroughly with a democratically chosen public policy issue we will develop our skills and abilities as active participants of the democratic society.

The skills needed for an active citizen to participate and change society are many: learning to step back and notice society and its problems; having the knowledge to decide which public policy issues are carried out well and which ones are dealt with in an unsatisfactory way; having good background knowledge of international, state and local government; being able to examine thoughtfully and assess the global context of issues; knowing how to research information; learning to work together with cooperation and negotiation skills, cooperative learning skills. Active citizens should have a positive approach and self-confidence that he/she is able to make a change.

During the training unit we will aim:

- To understand, what a local/national public policy issue is;
- To analyze critically what the root cause of problems concerning local/national public policies are,
- To design an action plan for suggesting solutions;
- To work cooperatively and exercising a variety of active participation skills;
- To present the outcomes of our work.

Following your reading, you are invited to reflect on the following questions:

1. What is a local/national public policy issue?
2. What knowledge and skills do members of democratic societies need to acquire to be active citizens?
3. What particular skills and knowledge can be improved by participating in the training unit?

List of possible themes / public policy issues:

Abortion	Drugs, illegal, and legalization	HIV and AIDS	School choice
Aging	Drugs in sports	Homelessness	School violence
AIDS and HIV	Drunk driving	Housing and urban development	Sexual controversies
Air pollution	Economics	Human and civil rights	Sexual orientation
Alcoholism	Education	Hunger	Sexuality education
Animal rights	Eminent Domain	Immigration	Smoking
Assisted suicide and euthanasia	Employment and labor	Juvenile crime and drug use	Sports and Drugs
Automobile safety	Environment	Languages	Stem cell research
Campaign finance	Euthanasia and assisted suicide	Labor and employment	Suicide
Censorship	European membership	Media	Teenage drinking
Child abuse and domestic violence	European constitution	Militia movement	Television violence
Children	File sharing and anti-piracy	Multiracialism	Term limits
Civil and human rights	Flag desecration	Nutrition and diet	Terrorism
Cloning and genetics	Foreign policy	National security	Water pollution

Crime and justice	Freedom of speech	Pornography	Welfare and poverty
Death penalty	Gambling, legalized	Poverty and welfare	Women
Democratization	Gangs	Prescription drug policy	Youth pregnancy
Diet and Nutrition	Gay and lesbian rights	Prisons	Youth suicide
Disability	Gay and lesbian marriages	Privacy	Etc...
Disaster Preparedness	Gay and lesbians in the military	Prostitution	
Diversity	Genetics and cloning	Race, national origin, and ethnicity	
Discrimination	Global warming	Rape	
Domestic violence and child abuse	Globalization	Recycling	
	Hate crimes	Religion and state	
	Health	Renewable energy	
	Health Care		

Appendix 2:

Activity 5

Sub-group tasks

The goal of activity 5 is that each subgroup analyse a chosen public policy issue and design a display presenting the work accomplished and the decisions reached with illustrative written and graphic materials.

The four charts together make a **portfolio** of the project.

Subgroup one – searching internet, analysing newspapers and examining other possible information sources (fellow trainees, trainer etc.), *describing and explaining thoroughly the essence and contours of the local/national public policy issue* chosen by the group. The local/national issue should be described very precisely so as to expose the origin, nature, characteristics, controversial aspects, (etc) of it.

Subgroup two - searching internet, analysing newspapers and examining other possible information sources (fellow trainees, trainer etc.) to *find out how similar local/national public policy issues have been solved* before or somewhere else, by somebody else. The other experiences should be to some extent applicable “in our case” and described clearly enough to support the decision process of group 3.

Subgroup three – *designing* on the basis of information from the subgroups one and two *policy principles of “our group” for solving the local/national public policy issue* “in our case”, paying special attention to the constitutional correctness of the proposed policy (the Constitution should be examined for that purpose).

Subgroup four - *designing* on the basis of the policy principles worked out by subgroup three *a concrete action plan* (steps taken) of “our group” *for solving the local/national public policy issue*. The questions “where to go?”, “whom to meet?”, “how much money is needed?” etc should be answered during subgroup working.

Appendix 3:

Activity 5 & 6

Content of sub-groups' presentations

- Sub-group 1 will introduce the local/national public policy issue chosen by the whole group in depth;
- Sub-group 2 will explain how the local/national public policy issue has been dealt with or in the other locations or situations;
- Sub-group 3 will present the policy proposal solving or reducing the chosen local/national public policy issue;
- Sub-group 4 will lay out the action plan for the implementation of the policy elaborated by subgroup 3.

Rules and recommendations for presenting the display

- Your group will have **4 minutes** to present the display.
- **Every** subgroup member must say something during the presentation, which means that the subgroups have to divide the roles before the presentation.
- All the subgroup members appear together in front of the listeners for no more than 4 minutes of group-presentation, which means that the oral presentation should be **exercised beforehand to fit in time**.
- All the necessary information concerning the results of the subgroup work should be presented clearly and the presentation should be complete, which means that the texts presented by each group member should be **written on paper**, but it is not recommended to read from the paper during the presentation.
- The materials on the display chart should be **quoted and referred to** during the presentation.