

A Qualitative Evaluation of a Civic Curriculum to Increase Global Citizenship Competences in University Students in the Netherlands

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Abstract : In a world where there is increasing exchange and movement of populations groups, and interconnectedness, there are plenty of opportunities for mutual cultural enrichment. However, in everyday life, relations among different cultural groups do not go that smoothly often resulting in discrimination, inequalities and violence. The increasing differentiation of roles, values and worldviews raise a lot of tensions and dilemmas for the state and people -especially in western liberal societies- about issues of acceptance, fairness, justice, autonomy, plurality, freedom, equality and cohesion. Cultural diversity requires a deeper understanding of the roots, meaning and consequences of group differences. We argue, that a psychology from the standpoint of the subject needs to be developed further according to new societal needs. This means within a globalised society, issues regarding the construction of the other as another have become of utmost importance. In constructing the other human beings construct their ideal and possible worlds and meanings about their lives and their significance by drawing on a set of cultural norms, beliefs and values embedded in the different contexts whereby they find themselves in. In this article, we are describing a series of exercises developed in collaboration with University students in the Netherlands that have been piloted with undergraduate 2nd year University Psychology students. These exercises aimed at making tangible and obvious how students apply different moral principles and norms to regulate relationships, which are linked to hegemonic ideological forces. The exercises were in the form of thought experiments that included 8 moral dilemmas, inspired by the moral foundations theory, that touched on different moral principles. The moral dilemmas were built onto each other in incremental steps: from a very tangible/hands-on level to more challenging and demanding ones which require to step into pre-existing networks on knowledge and discourses. After the execution of every dilemma, a discussion followed, which is focused on building links between the 'theme of the exercise' and participants' own lives experiences. In this paper, we provide an evaluation of the methodology used through a discursive analysis of the discussion between the students and the teacher.

Keywords : citizenship, moral dilemmas, social justice, education

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