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Teaching European and World Citizenship at Elementary Schools Using Children's Literature

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Introduction

In this new millennium educators face great challenges in preparing children for an increasingly interdependent world. I believe that Social Studies deserves a special role in this challenge but:

[i]f social studies is to be world-centred, it is critical that students learn from the knowledge and experiences of people who, because of their race, gender, class, culture, national origin, religion, or political beliefs have been ignored, stereotyped, or marginalized in mainstream academic knowledge. As students analyze this knowledge and synthesize its connections with the legacy of imperialism, new global understanding begin to emerge that have less to do with divisions among people or nations than they do with the borrowing of ideas, the evolution and blending of cultures, and the shared nature of human experience of conflict. (Merryfield, 2002, 148)

This long quotation, from one of the leading scholars in the field of global education, has a threefold purpose. First I fully agree with Merryfield's views on global citizenship education. Secondly, it is a motivation to explain why I decided to analyse stories from Portuguese writers and not from foreign writers since I think that it is important to learn from people marginalized in mainstream knowledge. In fact, I already had experienced the potentialities of learning from people of different cultures when an in-service student developed a project focused on an Angolan grandmother of a marginalized second grade student who went to the classroom and participated in several activities related to their life in Angola (Freitas, 2002). However, I *also* know how teachers in primary schools did not teach the basic forms for multicultural education, (Freitas and Solé, 2004) and even how students resist when learning from a similar strategy to the one described above (Freitas, 2005). Therefore, to inculcate global education in stories exploration seemed to me a good way to start preparing teachers to educate students for an interdependent world. Thirdly, the teaching of history in primary schools I support includes learning about the 'borrowing of ideas' between people of different places and 'the evolution and the blending of cultures'. It is easy to teach by this way when the teaching of history is focused on everyday life history and not on political history.

Additionally the quotation also opens a path to connect the teaching of history/social studies to global education.

This presentation approaches directly global education, global issues and world education, but it is included in a research project that aims to find strategies easily usable in primary schools associating multidimensional citizenship to history/geography, in large social studies learning/teaching.

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The CiCe conference guides our presentation to European and World citizenship and I will only approach World citizenship because I agree with a well known Portuguese intellectual who defends that Europe is an ideal according to Kant's concept, a vanishing point from the European project. However he defends that such a project is not an empty envelope, but the very utopia of the paradoxical historical cultural object we named Europe. For him it is not possible to connect national identities and European identity, they are different. One of the most relevant features of a European identity is the Europeans' 'conviction, or their wish, for not having any other identity than the human condition in general; summing up, a destiny not only empirically planetary, as in some way it was, and it is, but ontologically universalistic.' (Lourenço, 2001, p. 234). He contends that the Europeans only saw them as Europeans when the 'Europeanization' of the World became exhausted devolving to Europe their specificity. CICE understanding of European Citizenship as stated in one of the collective publications at the end of CICE Phase 1 also points out that:

[m]ost members of CICE share an interest in the development of European citizenship – but do not want to see the emergency of a new form of supra-nationalism, that will replace the nation-state with membership of a chauvinistic 'fortress Europe'. They are interested in how children and young people will develop a new form of citizenship, an identity that aligns them as citizens of Europe and the world, members of a common shared humanity. (Ross, 2001, p. 10).

Conceptualization of World Education (Global/International)

This is a widely researched and theorized topic. The selection I will present is oriented to the identification of a list of categories and subcategories for the stories' analyses, much more in breadth than in depth.

For the National Council for Social Studies from the United States of America the terms global education and international education would be used to describe strategies for:

- Acquiring knowledge of world cultures;
- Understanding the historical, geographic, economic, political, cultural, and environmental relationships among world regions and peoples;
- Examining the nature of cultural differences and national or regional conflicts and problems; and
- Promoting behaviours on behalf of international understanding, tolerance and empathy.

However global education focuses more on trends and issues, while international education, also named world education, focuses more on culture. Multicultural education is also a related concept, exploring interconnection among cultures.

Hanvey's pioneer definition of global education (1976) had been discussed and deepened for several educators in the USA, (ex. Merryfield 1998; Kirkwood, 2001) and

other countries (ex. Burnouf, 2004) including the UK, (ex. Kirks, 2003) but the four dimensions identified were still useful for the stories' analyses. They are:

Perspective consciousness (awareness and comprehension for others' views of the world, including beliefs, costumes and values);

State-of-the-planet awareness (understanding of global issues such as population growth, migrations, economic disparities, depletion of resources, international conflicts);

Cross-cultural awareness (preventing stereotypes, prejudice and exotica);

Knowledge of global dynamics (it is a difficult process for young students but helps them to make cause-effect connections, to relate the local and the global);

Awareness of human choices (it is related to global dynamics and focus on making choices and decisions, most of them related to ecological issues applying to a sustainable world).

Merryfield (1998, pp. 370-371) synthesized the studies on the field in a list of seven categories, including in each one several subcategories according to the authors:

- *Understanding of the human and the world/planet as dynamic, organic and interdependent systems* (one subcategory is global systems – economic, political, ecological and technological);
- *Understanding of global issues* (human rights, peace, security, development issues, environmental issues)
- *Understanding of diverse cultures and multiple perspectives* (values and culture, universal values, diverse human values);
- *Understanding of skills and assuming of responsibility for making choices and decisions and taking action locally and globally* (intergenerational responsibility; strategies for participation and involvement; development of analytical and evaluative skills);
- *Interconnectedness of the human through time* (global history, the ecumenism, antecedents to today's world, causes of today's global issues);
- *Cross-cultural understanding, interactions and communication* (cross cultural experiential learning);
- *Perceptual growth for prejudice reduction and moral education within critical contexts* (reduction of ethnocentrism, both personal and national, open-mindedness, no chauvinism, inclination to empathize, global education as moral education, moral perspectives, critical pedagogy for global education).

In recent years educators have been paying more attention to the pedagogy of global education. Merryfield has also played an important role in this aspect in the last years of the twentieth century. She examines teachers' thinking and practice in three different groups from master teacher to beginning teachers. The commonalities found were: 'teaching students about their own culture and diverse cultures through multiple perspectives, connecting global knowledge and skills to their students' lives, and making connections across historical times and world regions' (1998, p. 342). She also stresses that the exemplary teachers use more interdisciplinary approaches, higher order skills, local and global inequality and cross cultural experiential learning. In two of her last articles (Merryfield, 2004; Merryfield and Subedi, 2003) she includes an interesting feature: she presents a list of problems students face or dimensions of global education suitable for elementary students and gives examples of practices, used many times, but

that do not address the problem and also examples of practices that do. For example, to *teach the use of skills in recognizing stereotypes, exotica, and cultural universal* does not ignore or play down commonalities, but promotes a balance between cultural differences and commonalities (Merryfield and Subedi, 2003). She also stresses the potentialities of interconnectedness over time and space that may include content related to culture, economy, technology content and give an example related to trade. (Merryfield and Kasai, 2004).

Before checking the stories to select those who had some relationship to world education and to world citizenship, I also looked to articles in CICE publications and I was surprised with the amount of those I selected: 67 articles in proceedings of the seven conferences. Most of them contained relationships to global and world education but they do not concentrate on this topic. In the first conference is Holden's paper (1999) that more directly addresses global education, calling attention to the teacher's bad preparation for teaching it. It is not surprising that it is also from Holden (2005) in the last conference that a paper addresses in more depth global education. Now student teachers say that they know about today's global issues but they are not confident to teach them because: 'global issues are seen as sensitive, controversial and complex and they feel they need specific guidance on appropriate teaching methods and better subject knowledge.' (p. 21). I think that Portuguese teachers are still less confident; I believe that most of them should be awakened to the need to introduce those issues in the curriculum, even in primary schools. There are various contexts for the introduction of global education, but cultural differences were the most common, and Roma cultures those that deserve attention of researchers of several countries.

The practical study

A list of categories and subcategories based on the reviewed literature was the basis for the stories' content analyses. They were divided into two groups, those not connected to global education and those that were connected. The stories of this last group were classified into two groups, one with evident and strong relationships to one or several categories/subcategories and another group with weak relationships, or strong but not very explicit. Most stories would be considered children's literature (3 to 12 years) and only a few would be more suitable for young readers. At this moment the stories analysed came from the Institute of Child Studies Library and the Social Science Resources Centre from the same school, my own library and the stories of the Portuguese site <http://www.historiadodia.pt/uk/index.aspx>. I already knew a considerable number of the stories; therefore my work was facilitated in checking them for the aims of this study. They were examined by the author's alphabetic order and only the most well known were checked more than one time to find those that were not in shelves when I checked them. One thousand, eight hundred and seventy five stories from 68 authors were analysed (a few of them poems). Even when the connections to global education are as simple as locations of cities or countries, the number of stories selected as having relationships to global education is very low, less than 3%; there are more stories listed as having implicit relationships, but the number is around the 5% mark. Most of the connections referred to the Chinese/Japanese cultures or African cultures.

Sometimes some stereotypes are evident as well as a static perspective of traditional cultures. Surprisingly the new writers are well represented only in relation to the ecological systems. Renamed writers, especially women, are those who wrote the best stories from a global education point of view.

The following list was designed based on a broad literature analysis and some reflection upon personal experiences with students' schoolwork, some of them using action research methodology.

Planning learning experiences in social studies based on story telling

1. Introducing the story (Generative questions/Context in which their use would come up).
2. Format/means utilized on presentation/reading the story.
3. Exploring the story.
4. 'Finalizing' the exploration of the story, including evaluation activities.
5. Development of activities suggested by the story after its exploration.

We just want to exemplify the exploration. Obviously not all stories allow the use of all mentioned strategies, but a good number did.

- Exploring terms and expressions related to time and space;
- Locating in time and space the story and/or the events, namely on maps and on the globe;
- Exploring different aspects of illustrations (clothes, furniture, streets, houses);
- Describing places (deductions and inferences);
- Portraying characters;
- Inferring different aspects related to time and space (based on verbal and iconographic languages);
- Identifying similarities and differences between the time of the story and the actual time, and between the places of the story and the place where we are living;
- Giving sequence to events (using illustrations or phrases);
- Building timelines and itineraries from the events of the story;
- Building schemes of parenthood relationships (genealogic trees) or others;
- Explaining reasons and consequences of actions taken;
- Hypothesizing about what would follow (in key moments);
- Hypothesizing about what would happen if certain events change;
- Imagining different ends to the story;
- Telling the story as different narrators would do (different points of view);
- Exploring characters' feelings and emotions;
- Analyzing explicit or implicit values, stereotypes, attitudes;
- Relating differences among the characters (social, age related, ethnic) and their way of acting;
- Identifying social and economic problems related to the story;
- Putting oneself in the shoes of the story characters and explaining how one would feel;
- Creating ornaments for the different characters and scenarios;
- Dramatizing the story or some of its episodes;

- Restructuring the story or some of its events using art;
- Comparing different versions of the story, including from different world regions, or to real historical events;
- Writing dialogues, biographies and other stories (similar or different);
- Doing some research about the time or the space of the story or about themes of social studies related to the story.

The exploration of two stories

Crazy Collector - 7th February - <http://www.historiadodia.pt/uk/index.aspx>

Author: António Torrado

The story would:

- Introduce a museum visit or would be explored after a museum visit;
- Generate an activity to develop location skills;
- Stimulate searching on the Internet and;
- Specially introduce a more systematic approach of global education/diverse cultures after having studied some physical features of several world regions.

The teacher would start to read the story and the students do not have it in order to prompt them to ask some questions.

An abstract of the story follows.

'I have a neighbour who is a collector.' What kind of stuff does he collect (things like postcards, old magazines, etc., are suggested)?

- Children present hypotheses about the subject of the collection justifying their ideas. Children also would talk about their occasional collections or family collections.

'No, nothing like that'. In fact, the neighbour collects... hats! He kept them on a hat-rack.

- In pairs children draw how they imagine the hat-rack would be. They also would describe it verbally.

'Whoever doesn't know of his whim and lingers in the hall' he can keep a lot of different hats: a musketeer plume hat, a Turkish cap, helmets, straw hats, and much, much more examples of hats.

- Students localize in a map the countries or regions. In pairs they characterize physically and psychologically the possible owners of the hats, but mainly the two neighbours. They try to find clues in the text to their descriptions. Students suggest possible kinds of hats and countries from where the hats belong. They present reasons for why women's hats are absent from the collection.

'It's a pity my next-door neighbour is about to put an end to the collection.' He is tired of hats and at the same time he feels bad thinking that he took the hats from their legitimate owners. To reduce his annoyance he wants to give away all of them. How?

- Students suggest other ways of acquiring the hats (more than buying it on stores)
- Infer why most of them were hidden.
- Suggest hypotheses about how he will put an end in the collection.
- Each student imagines he/she was the owner of a hat and expresses her/his feelings and emotions looking to the hat.

'With an advertisement'. A peculiar one! He is willing to give all hats for free to people coming, but they have to use the hat on their heads when going out through the end of the street. It would be a nice scene to be seen!

- In pairs they wrote a short dialogue among a few persons that were in the street and observed the scene. They read it to the colleagues.

'And now?' After the hats disappeared, the neighbour is by no means happier. He misses his collection given away and intends to begin a new collection. What kind of objects, now? Shoes! Old and used shoes, he said: and started the collection with the neighbour's shoes... because neighbours really must help each other!

- Explain why the neighbour suggested new shoes.
- Students discuss if they agree or not that only neighbours must help each other.
- They propose other ends to the story.
- Students in groups of four read the story in a dramatized way.
- In pairs they underline terms/expressions of time in blue, and in red of space, and exchange ideas about the task of each pair.
- In pairs they arrange by order the text divided into six parts.
- Students express their appreciation about the story and also about the way they work.
- Students in groups of four choose a country, or a certain historical time and research about hats and shoes and the culture they are connected to, in the library and on the Internet and they organize portfolios.
- The time group constructs timelines and the countries group maps.

'All colours children' Author: Luísa Ducla Soares

<http://www.app.pt/nle/luisads/meiogalo.htm#MENINOS%20DE%20TODAS%20AS%20CORES>

An abstract of the story follows:

A white boy, Michael, who lived in a white children land, thought that it was nice to be white, because so many things in the world were white, like the snow, the sugar or the milk.

Then the boy began a journey that took him to far lands, where lived other boys of different colours: yellow, black, red and brown. He learned that those children loved

their colours: the yellow girl because the sun, the sunflower, and the sand are yellow; the black boy because the night and the olives are black; the red child because the fire, the cherries and the blood are red; and the brown boy because the chocolate and the branches of trees are brown.

So, when the boy came back to his land, he could say that is nice to be white like the sugar, but it also is nice to be yellow like the sun, black like the nights, red like the fire, and brown like the chocolate. Happy, he drew big rings with all colour children smiling; the other children did not.

Suggested activities

Individually, in small groups or in pairs each child:

- Writes what he/she would say at the end instead of what Michael said.
- Suggests other nice things with the same colours of each child.
- Locates in a globe or in a world map the possible places where Michael went.
- Draws in a globe or in a world map a possible itinerary the child did and the transportations he used.
- Investigates about the distribution and number of people of the human race.
- Constructs a graphic with data collected about human races and interprets a map.
- Investigates other possible names for children he met in each place and selects one.
- Investigates how these children would live, using the Internet or using the book *Children Just Like Me* (UNICEF).
- Finds in the supermarket a product from each place.
- Discusses why it would be difficult to find a product from red colour children
- Puts in a big map a drawing of each child with some objects or pictures related to their culture. Draw a picture like Michael drew.

Besides that, older children would discuss if in the story there are some stereotypes or prejudice against some children, or at least if the examples of similar colours are the best ones.

Final remarks

The use of stories to teach social studies is a strategy I explored during the last decade in courses of social studies methodology for kindergarten teachers and especially for initial and in-service courses for primary teachers. These teachers explored different kinds of stories with children from three to ten years old and they told me very exciting experiences, which sometimes I also observed in classrooms. I also developed a Project at a public library reading and analysing stories with children coming from very different schools. Many times the teachers showed their surprise with the children's answers. Many times they also surprised me by drawing inferences and making associations that seemed to me very good, but that I did not anticipate. The potential of stories is very well demonstrated. Unfortunately I also noticed that many teachers, when alone in their schools, do not explore the stories as they learned to do. Therefore it seemed to me that it would be helpful to collect stories and to present suggestions to develop time and space

understanding but also to approach global issues. However, if it is not easy to find many good stories to develop time and space concepts it appeared that approaching global issues is even more difficult. The study I presented is an exploratory study. It is necessary to analyse the books from the Public Library of Braga, as it was supposed to do to have some more reliable outcomes. It would also be interesting to select books translated from a few countries and to compare them with Portuguese books. It would be interesting, although disputable, to find a way to motivate authors to write stories for specific issues.

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