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The Historical development of Citizenship Education and the Contemporary Situation in the Latvian Higher Teacher Education within the European Context

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Citizenship education plays an important part in the context of the European social and economic development and it is given considerable attention in discussions concerning the development of a knowledge-based society in Europe. The topic is emphasised in various European Commission documents.

The importance of citizenship education was recognised in the Lisbon Strategy adopted in 2000 and in the following detailed working program on the *Goals of Education in Europe* (2002). Citizenship education was allocated an important role in the Bologna Process (2000), where guidelines for the development of higher education were determined. It is also an integral part of the European Strategy for Life-long Learning and the European Youth Policy. It should be particularly emphasised that the European Commission document *A New Impulse for the European Youth* (1991) highlighted new forms of the European government, which would be based on the youth autonomy and active civil participation, while the *White Paper* defined openness, participation, responsibility, effectiveness, and coordination as the principles of good democratic government (*White Paper*, 1998).

Within the context of these processes, there is a need in Latvia for the system of education to focus in a purposeful way on the development of an active personality capable of functioning in a free civil society. For this reason Latvian national program '*Social Integration in Latvia*' (2001) points out that 'the educational system affects to a significant extent the understanding of social values and the heredity of values (Latvia, 2001, 11). The necessity of citizenship education is also emphasised in *The Guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Science* and *The Conception for the Development of Education in 2006-2010*.

Thus the preparation of active citizens for life in their own country, the European Union, and the world is an important task on all levels in the education system. Teachers have to adopt and develop new approaches that enable both them and their students to engage reflexively and critically in the fundamental changes taking place in the society. The actualisation of citizenship education is an important element of teacher education.

This article will analyse the historical development of citizenship education in teacher training and evaluate its present situation in Latvia.

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Latvian National Awakening – the Origins of Citizenship Education for Teachers

Higher education, including teacher education, in Latvia has developed within the framework of the European academic space, or more precisely within the North European or Baltic space (including the academic centres of Germany and Russia). There was an intensive exchange of ideas and influence in foreign universities where Latvians studied. This polycentrism of influences is a characteristic feature of our universities' history, while the political and economic history set its boundaries for the development of the institutions of higher education (Stradins, Ceberis, 2003, p 31).

The development of the school system and teacher training became more pronounced in the Baltic region in the 19th century. Several teacher training institutions opened: Cirava-Dzerve School (1833), Vidzeme Teacher Training Seminary (1839), Irlava Teacher Training Seminary (1841) and the Baltic Teacher Training Seminary (1870). The growing number of Latvian students in these institutions strengthened the awareness of common national problems and laid the basis for the development of ideas of citizenship education.

The history of the Latvian teaching profession is the history of Latvian intellectuals, the development of which took place along with the development of national self-awareness. There were several reasons for this:

- The example of other European countries, where several other nations were striving for independence in the 19th century, e.g. Finns, Czechs, Poles, Slovaks: their experience stimulated Latvians' interest in their own history, traditions, and language, which strengthened their national self-awareness and striving for freedom;
- Obtaining education abroad and the acquisition of European literature and philosophy broadened their world outlook and made it possible to compare Latvian culture with that of other nations resulting in the belief that Latvians could occupy an equal place among other peoples of the world;
- In the 1860s several fundamental reforms started in the Russian Empire after the accession of Czar Alexander II: the liberation of serfs, the abolition of corporal punishment, and transformation of the court system and local government. As a result, the educated representatives of the peasant class started looking at their social status with different eyes: they were no longer ashamed of their social status, and started to think about helping their people (Kestere, 2005, p141).

During this process of the formation of Latvian intellectuals in the period of Latvian national awakening, the first ideas of citizenship education were raised by those people who had acquired higher education and wanted to activate social life.

Krisjanis Valdemars was one of the first representatives of New Latvians who possessed national and political thinking. As the Latvian society also got an opportunity to take part in the treatment of the political problems of the state, in certain layers of the society the views of the New Latvian representatives were

considered important – in order to find a compromise with the existing regime and to fight the influence of the Baltic Germans as well as to strengthen the Latvian identity in the Baltic space (Stradins, 2004, p 91).

It should be noted that in the 1850s and 1880s - to raise Latvians' self-awareness and emphasise Latvians' rights for their own national culture and higher education – it was emphasised that Latvians should acquire several languages, giving them an opportunity to acquire European pedagogic ideas. '...An educated Latvian has to know Greek, Latin, German, Russian, Polish, Swedish, Danish, French, etc. apart from their mother tongue' (*Pedagogic Ideas in Latvia up to 1890*, 1991, p 136).

The contribution of other New Latvians should also be noted. For instance, in his publications *Love for the Motherland* and *Aspirations for National Identity*, A. Kronvalds pointed out that the love of the motherland started with learning, beginning with one's home and family, parents' spiritual values, and national historical heritage. However, Auseklis urged that narrow nationalism should not be permitted: '...one should beware of national egoism. Incorrect and blind national awareness turns everything into a phrase' (Auseklis, 1923, p 463).

Ideas Concerning the Citizenship Education of Teachers during the First Independent Latvian State

The field of citizenship education changed dramatically after 1918 when the independent Latvian state was proclaimed, and higher education, including teacher education, was focused on the spiritual and political needs of Latvia as an independent state.

From being the political object of other countries, Latvians turned into the subject of their own politics. The founders and leaders of the new state understood that the education of citizens was very important for the development of an independent free state and the implementation of independent politics. Contrary to other European states, which had the basis of national education, hundred-year-old universities, their own professors and school teachers, textbooks in their own language, and their own education system and traditions, Latvia lacked all this. It was necessary to establish teacher training institutions, which along with the implementation of national education, could also deal with the upbringing of the citizens of the new state.

Referring to the ideas of West European and American reform pedagogy (G. Kershnesteiner and others), which focused on social priorities in education and the interrelationship between people and society, the idea of the 'national state' and serving the state were put in the centre of citizenship education. These ideas also lead in teacher education.

Regarding the purpose and objectives on citizenship education, it was emphasised that:

a particular individual should be educated not for his/her own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole community, nation, and mankind. The gifts and abilities possessed and developed by an individual should be given at the disposal of the community' (Universitas, 1937, p 241).

While defining the essence of citizenship education, J. Tentelis emphasised:

the goal of citizenship education is the education of the whole youth for diligent work, i.e. the work that would be useful for the state and promote the general development. In the state context, the purpose of citizenship education is the implementation of ethical community, which is the ideal of a cultural and law-based state, while the task of citizenship education is to devote one's work, both directly and indirectly consciously and unconsciously, to bring the actual constitutional state closer to this very distant ideal of ethical community (Universitas, 1937, p 242).

A. Vics stressed that the purpose of upbringing was to 'educate a generation proud of the achievements of their own nation – proud people' (Vics, 1938, p 233).

However, there were also different views concerning the understanding of citizenship and the role of education and teachers. For example, in his speech in Riga Teacher Training Institution on the 23rd of October 1925, J. Rainis talked about the objectives of citizenship education and pointed out, 'You have to educate the citizens for the whole nation, the whole state. Our duty is not only to be the citizens of our own state; we have to become the citizens of the world' (*Pedagogic Ideas in Latvia in 1890 – 1940*, 1991, p 29).

While he was Minister of Education, J. Rainis issued an instruction concerning the reform of Latvian schools. It stated:

In the constitutional form of the democratic state, we are facing new citizenship ideals, radically different from the requirements of the old regime of czarist monarchy. The old school raised obedient subjects for the monarch. The task of our school is to educate genuine citizens – the bearers of the sovereign power of the democratic republic. This ideal requires first of all that each citizen be able to govern oneself; second, that he be responsible not only for his own actions, but also for the activities of his social group and the whole state; third, that he be an active member of the society, guided by the feelings of mutual help and solidarity (*Our Future*, 1929, p 508).

Practical activities of young people were considered as one of the main forms of how to achieve the objectives of citizenship education. 'We will be able to instil in our hearts pride in Latvia and its heritage only when the young people see with their own eyes not only hear that the benefit of the state and the benefit of the people are the first priorities in all our life and deeds, that justice and truth are honoured' (Vics, 1938, p 235). For this reason, student corporations played an important part in the citizenship education of students in the first independent Latvian state.

In 1937, in his speech on the 20th anniversary of the corporation Ventonia, Professor Primanis, the Rector of the University of Latvia, pointed out:

The duty of the university is to give to the state not only people equipped with knowledge, but also physically and spiritually developed people with outstanding features of character. In all places and all times, the university has participated in the upbringing of students, where students' organisations play a significant and responsible part. You will be among those who will later have to protect the independence of our state and our national culture, and your active participation in the development and leadership of our nation is important and will always be necessary (*Universitas, No 15 (122), 1937, 15 XII*).

Professor Auskaps, the Rector of the University of Latvia, emphasised that student's work aimed at his/her own self-development had to be combined with the work on behalf of one's people and the state 'so that each educated citizen could become a personality, so that integrity, honesty, efficiency, professionalism, the sense of duty, respect in each honest belief, and selfless devotion for the common national goals would become an axiom' (*Universitas, No 4 (111), 1937, 1/III*).

In general, during the period of the first independent Latvian state citizenship education was focused on the national state of the liberal and democratic nature. After the events of 1934, the priority was given to the ideas concerning the formation of the ideology where 'the unity of the nation, which K. Ulmanis repeatedly proclaimed, would be connected with the leader's role in the society' (Stradins, 2004, p 91).

Citizenship Education and Teacher Education Today

At present, continuous teacher education is one of the ways for the implementation of changes. The potential, resources, and capacity of universities and other institutions of higher education constitute those institutions which can facilitate citizenship education and carry out the reform of education. After the regaining of independence in the 1990s there was a need to transform the Latvian teacher education in the aspect of citizenship education. Preparing of citizens for constructive participation in the national and European society was one of the main goals of education reforms. Regarding these goals, it should be pointed out that teachers constitute the most important component of education, and it is their participation that makes it possible to achieve the goals of educational system.

The training of professionals in the area of citizenship education in Latvia is based on several documents. In the *Political Guidelines for the Consolidation of Civil Society for 2005 – 2014*, citizenship education is defined as 'education whose goal is to give individuals the knowledge and experience necessary for their successful and full-fledged integration and functioning in the civil society.'

The Latvian National Lisbon Program for 2005 – 2008 pays considerable attention to the improvement of professional education (both at the secondary and tertiary level): the improvement of curricula according to the demands of the labour market, the development of a system for the ensuring of the quality of education, etc (*Report on the Development of Latvian National Economy, 2005, p 85*).

At present, the citizenship education of teachers is carried out together with general pedagogic education (at the bachelor's level) and in elective courses in the system of further education. Particular attention is paid to the teachers of social subjects. There has been developed a standard for the teachers of social subjects (*Professional Standard*, 2002). Apart from indicating specific duties and responsibilities, it also mentions personal qualities necessary for teachers, such as social participation, democracy and tolerance, and lists professional skills, including the ability to integrate the issues of economy, ethics, health education, and citizenship education.

In Latvia teachers of social subjects are trained in several institutions of higher education: Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy (the study program 'A Teacher of Social Sciences'), Rezekne Higher Educational Institution (the study program 'A Teacher of History, the History of Culture, or Social Sciences'), Liepaja Academy of Pedagogy (the study program 'A Teacher of History and Social Sciences'). It should be mentioned, however, that the programs have been not been accredited for very long, and cannot meet the demand of the schools.

In the following part of this article, the experience of one school – Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy – in educating the teachers of social sciences will be discussed more in detail. In 1994, the study program 'The Teacher of Economics and Entrepreneurship' was established. In 2004, when the program was modified, the requirements of the Latvian labour market in teacher education were taken into account. There was strong demand for the professional teachers of economics and social sciences, which was also important from the point of view of the new specialists – by combining the teaching of economics and social sciences, teachers could get a full workload.

The programme of studies was transformed taking into account Latvian law and binding normative acts: the *Education Law*, the *Law on Higher Education*, the *Standard of Professional Education (Regulations on the National Standard on the Second Level Professional Education)*, the *professional Standard for the Teachers of Social Sciences (Direction of the Ministry of Education No 405)*, and other normative documents. The practical part of the program was gradually increased, and students now have a teaching practice four times during the course of their studies. The tasks to be focused upon during it include the development of empathy, tolerance, enterprise, initiative, etc.

The main objectives of the program of studies are to provide knowledge on ethics and general human moral values, to analyse and solve various problem situations, to advance students' knowledge on the state and the society, to develop decision-making skills, to develop students' individual understanding of social sciences based on the knowledge of the content of pedagogy, psychology, health education, ethics, economics, and citizenship education.

Regarding citizenship education, the compulsory part of the program includes the courses of ethics, political science, and sociology; the required elective part of the program includes the fundamentals of law, ethics and social and psychological aspects of communication, the content and methodology of ethics and social sciences.

The methodology used in the practical implementation of the program is determined by the specific features of each course. Active learning methods are especially encouraged in the training of the teachers of social sciences in order to ensure relevant feedback and develop the readiness of future teachers for self-reflection. The variety of methods is an important factor in order to ensure the quality of education. Therefore, the methodology used in the training of teachers in Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy includes discussions, the discussions of students' reports (both oral and written), theoretical conferences, press conferences (in one group, within one year of studies, among several years of studies) quizzes and practical seminars (project presentations, role plays, 'brain storming' exercises, etc).

The methodology employed in various years of studies reflects the humanistic tradition in teacher education. The author considers that regarding citizenship education the diversity of pedagogic methods is the key factor stimulating students' self-reflection, which enables them to be better aware of the issues of citizenship education. It can be concluded that at present citizenship education is a developing process in Latvia; therefore, teacher education in the context of citizenship education requires further studies.

Conclusions

In Latvia, the citizenship education of teachers has developed within the framework of the European academic space. The history of the teacher's profession in Latvia is also the history of Latvian intellectuals, and the formation of an intellectuals' class took place along with the development of citizenship education. After regaining independence, the processes of social democratisation, the development of the civil society, and the formation of the system of citizenship education became more pronounced in Latvia.

Further development of citizenship education in Latvia depends on the level of teacher education, the creation of democratic environment in the institutions of higher education, and the improvement of the content and methodology of citizenship education.

Citizenship education comprises teaching separate subjects and maintaining of the interdisciplinary link, as well as the democratic environment in the institutions of higher education. Therefore, teacher education should focus both on general pedagogic education and the acquisition of separate subjects, especially those related to the area of citizenship education, i.e. history, political science, and social sciences. It is very important to develop an open and democratic style of teaching and learning in teacher education. In Latvia, there has been created an opportunity to critically analyse issues concerning citizenship education both in classes and extra-curricular activities, thus creating an experience for the students as a meaningful possibility to develop themselves.

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