

CHAPTER 1

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND COMMITMENT IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL SCIENCES: TOWARDS A RESEARCH TEACHING PROFILE

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1. INTRODUCCIÓN

In a sociopolitical context marked by mistrust in current formal democracies, from the school, in general, and the teaching and learning of Social Sciences, in particular, the need to build educational experiences that face socio-environmental problems is promoted. In this way, from the approach of a socio-critical paradigm that supports the action research processes, our educational approach is positioned in favor of the promotion of active citizen participation. Likewise, the teacher of Social Sciences who assumes the challenge of research his/her own practice is represented as a systematic, critical and reflective professional, committed to social environment and to professional activity. Thus, teachers of Social Sciences in XXI century would not be limited to be a spectator of reality and an uncritical reproducer of scientific content. In other words, professionals of education would be open to plan, act, observe and reflect on the changes in their professional practice in order to optimize teaching-learning processes.

According to the paradigm of a school connected to the social context, education for a critical citizenship, oriented to justice and competent to defend their rights and assume their responsibilities in Democracy has become a necessity in the teaching and learning of science in order to solve current relevant socio-environmental problems.

In relation to the basic contents related to citizenship education, taking as main sources Eurydice (2005) and the Evaluation of Educational Achievement [IEA] (Schulz et al, 2008), some of the main civic contents of the teaching of social sciences They fall within a series of domains: societies and systems, civic principles, civic identities, and civic participation. In general terms, societies and systems refers to the mechanisms and organizations that sustain civic contracts; civic principles are the ethical foundations shared by a society; civic identities are understood as multiple and articulated; and civic participation refers to the actions carried out by individuals in their community.

Considering the research teaching model as a desirable model and action research as a process of professionalization, emancipation and educational improvement, some difficulties are recognized for the teaching of social sciences from this perspective, such as directing democratic processes in the classroom or the disparity between the aims and the teaching practice. In this chapter, after a brief historical review on the teaching of social sciences, some relevant issues on citizenship education and professional development for a justice-oriented citizenship education are reviewed.

2. THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ITS EVOLUTION IN THE SPANISH LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In Spain, Geography and History in Secondary Education goes back almost to the origins of the appearance of the public education system, with the enactment of the Public Instruction Law of 1857 known as the Moyano Law. In the 19th century, the teaching of Geography and History was proposed to instill androcentric values and social conservatism,

promoting patriotism and the dissemination of the values of the dominant groups around private property and social hierarchy.

As Parra-Martínez (2009) indicates, in general terms, the Moyano Law reflected the political-social characteristics of a century characterized by discrimination based on race, class and sex. The ideological conception of Geography and History was harshly criticized throughout the 20th century in the renovating framework of the New School current, which assumed as necessary that the school contents were useful for life. With the arrival of the Second Republic, the proposals of the New School had a considerable impulse, extending the pioneering experiences of renewal. These experiences had already begun decades ago with limited incidence within the framework of the Free Institution of Education or the New School movement of Catalonia.

With the uprising and access to power by Franco, Spain entered in a dictatorship (Francoist), a phase of memory of the exaltation that broke with the accelerated process of educational change of the 1930s (Carretero, Rosa and González, 2006); forcing the adoption of a unique vision of an imperial Spain and subordinating the school institution to a barracks model whose main purpose was the justification of the dictatorship itself (1939-1974). Within this regime, we would have to wait until 1970, when the General Education Law (LGE) was approved, which opened the possibility of slightly initiating pedagogical renewal movements.

The General Education Law incorporated a language based on technocratic and efficient rationality in the pedagogical guidelines and in the programming. However, due to the political-economic context of the country, the approval of this Law did not imply major changes in practice. With the approval of the General Law of Education of 1970, the ideologizing function of Geography and History became more anachronistic before the popularization of the mass media. However, despite the "good intentions" reflected in this law, due to the lack of previous didactic experiences, a magistrocentric paradigm and the prevalence of memorizing.

The death of the dictator in 1975 was followed by the transition to Democracy, the beginning of the State of Autonomies, the entry of Spain into the European Common Market, school failure and the need to increase compulsory schooling until age 16, among other issues. This led to a series of educational reforms to bring education closer to sociopolitical reality. The educational reform processes take shape in the 90's from the approval of the Organic Law of General Organization of the Educational System [LOGSE] in 1990.

In the new stage, Compulsory Secondary Education, incorporates two courses that corresponded to 7th and 8th of Basic General Education, appearing a new area in Secondary Education: Social Sciences, Geography and History, which tried to maintain an interdisciplinary horizon of an intermediate nature. Subsequently, in a context of exponential growth of globalization and the development of information and communication technologies, citizen training acquires a relevant role in compulsory education with the Organic Law of Education of 2006.

Regarding the Elementary Education stage, with the Organic Law of General Organization of the Educational System (LOGSE, 1990), the area of social sciences and natural sciences would become knowledge of the natural, social and cultural environment; However, with the Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE, 2013) social sciences and natural sciences are again separated into two independent subjects. Finally, in relation to the central theme of this chapter, among the principles established in the Organic Law amending Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, on Education (LOMLOE, 2020)

are the teaching function as a factor essential to the quality of education, and educational research, experimentation and innovation.

3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES TEACHERS

Since the 1970s, research programs that attempt to establish relationships between teacher knowledge and student learning have been developed. Likewise, the interest in the teacher's knowledge gave rise to a research line focused on the teacher's thinking, a teacher who plans, thinks and makes decisions (Ávila and Estepa, 1997). Thus, our previous experiences and our knowledge determine our representation of the world; understanding professional knowledge as a dynamic phenomenon that is built in interaction with students.

The professional development of the teacher depends to a large extent on the evolution of the conceptions and the coherence between the verbalized discourse and the putting into action. However, it should be clarified that one of the great problems that education faces are the great differences between the explicit and the hidden curriculum.

From a socio-critical approach aimed at educational improvement and social change, the concept of professional development responds to a process linked to reflection on practice and professional identity. Starting from this idea, it should not be overlooked that ideological and experiential factors can condition the model of citizenship that is going to be constructed in the classroom.

Teachers must be reflective and must ensure that attitude in their students in order to form active and committed citizens. Despite this, Tutiaux-Guillon (2003) analyzed a series of investigations whose results showed that the purpose of teachers in training students in democratic attitudes sometimes conflicts with a teaching practice that does not favor the development of this competence. In addition, Trafford (2008), through extensive research carried out in the United Kingdom, demonstrated that, despite the advances in citizenship education and the importance given to memory in the teaching of History from the European Union, the democratic school is a minority model.

Thus, Schugurensky (2009) affirms that participatory democracy, understood as a process of deliberation and decision-making, requires citizen participation. However, in order to construct an active, democratic, reflective and responsible citizenship, Social Sciences teachers must implement critical didactics and firmly commit to an education for democratic action.

4. TOWARDS A RESEARCH TEACHING MODEL

As Estepa (2007) indicates, the teacher who moves towards a research teaching model can go through different phases within a hypothesis of professional progression. The most basic level corresponds to a traditional model; the second level corresponds to the technological model or the spontaneist model, and the third level is the research model, a model that is considered more complex and that requires overcoming the limitations or deficiencies of the previously indicated models (figure 1).

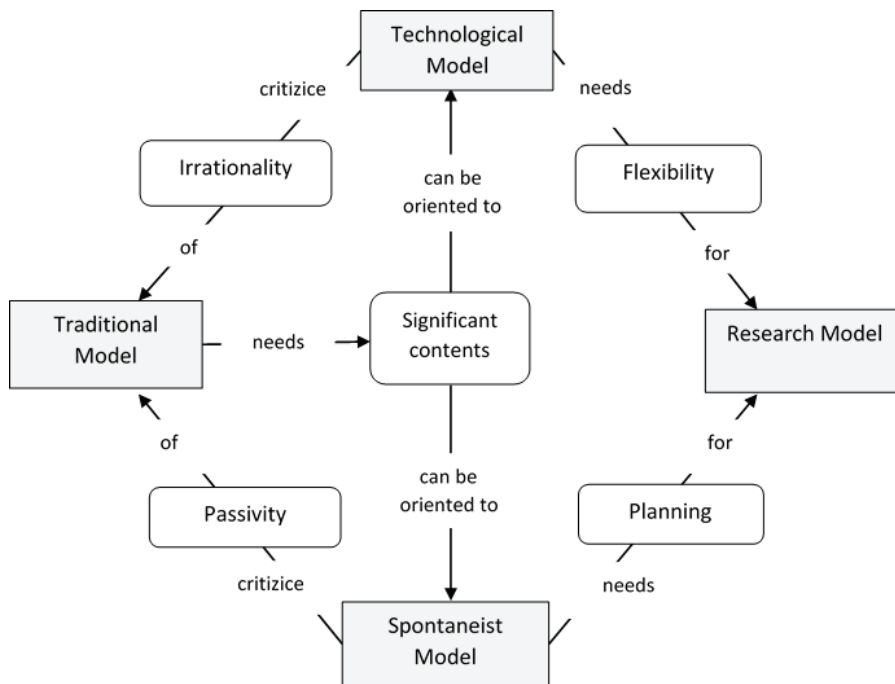


Figure 1. Relationship between the different teaching models

The traditional teaching model is characterized by passivity, the lack of rational processes and the lack of inclusion of the interests of the students. Traditional teachers show themselves as experts in the conceptual content of the subject. During the lessons, the teacher does the knowledge of him and presents it to his students. Students must listen to the teacher and memorize content. Both the content and the activities are obtained from the textbook. Only acquisition of conceptual knowledge and memorization are valued.

The technological teaching model arises as a response to the lack of rationality and scientific rigor of the traditional model. Teaching is highly planned and the role of the teacher is based on the application of schedules prepared by experts. The role of the students is also passive and lacking in creativity because their participation consists of carrying out the sequence of activities proposed by the teacher. The objective is for everyone to do the same and at the same time and communication between students is included in group work.

In the spontaneistic teaching model, the teacher does not plan and does not rely on disciplines or theories, does not design activities. The teacher is an affective and social leader, the students are the true protagonists of the process: they make decisions, propose activities, express their needs and interests, etc. Practice is more important than theory and lacks systematic evaluation.

The research teaching model is a model where theory and practice converge in an experimental and systemic curriculum process. Both teacher and students are active. The

teacher plans and designs the sessions, coordinates and facilitates student learning and is in continuous training as a researcher in the classroom. Students build their knowledge through processes of school research, participate, make decisions, etc. The activities take into account the previous knowledge and interests of the students, they can be individual or group. The evaluation is systemic and uses a variety of instruments.

In general terms, professional development responds to a hypothesis of progression. On the other hand, it should be clarified that the models are ideal referents so that no teacher responds 100% to a single model (Delgado-Algarra and Estepa, 2017). Within the four models, the research teaching model is the one that we consider most appropriate in a democratic education committed to the environment. This is because, in addition to working on the basis of problems and establishing a balance between planning and flexibility, it allows systematization and rigor in the development of innovative activities.

In relation to the general strategies and methods of teaching practice, we highlight the existence of expository, interactive and individualized learning methods:

- Expository methods are based on the teacher's activity as the center of the action that takes place in the classroom. The presentation is not negative by itself, but it is convenient for the teacher to know the level of the students, create a favorable climate for learning, start the presentation with a didactic activity, share the information in the form of concept maps, emphasize the more relevant content, control the pace of the presentation, use other communication strategies, frequently ask questions to recapitulate, contextualize the content, include some activities and arrive at a final synthesis of the topic.
- In relation to interactive methods, student-student and student-teacher interaction predominates. Some of the most prominent strategies within the interactive method are the case study, simulations, project-based learning.
- Finally, in terms of individualized learning methods, the main objective is to encourage each student to learn according to their own pace and abilities, guided by the teacher.

Certain analogies can be established with the citizenship education approaches proposed by Galichet (1999): mimetic approach, analogical approach and realistic approach. Thus, in terms of citizen education approaches:

- In the mimetic approach, values are transmitted and indoctrination processes can easily be generated.
- In the analogical approach, the school functions as a forum for debate and peaceful conflict resolution.
- In the realistic approach, citizenship is built on the basis of current problems and the school becomes a context of political, social and cultural participation.

On the other hand, despite the possibilities of including relevant problems in the classroom, many teachers feel uncomfortable working in the classroom with problems considered socially conflictive and raising debates around them due to their difficulties in handling uncertainty and problems. controversies. It should be noted the importance of the balance between teacher and student commitment, in addition to freedom of thought, freedom of expression and ethics (López Facal, 2011).

Machado (2010) considers that a paradigm is everything that a scientific community shares in which its members are recognized among themselves and by the rest of society;

leading them to adopt predominant positions in scientific development. At the same time, Fujita (2014) affirms that when a person carries out a critical judgment, it can be transformed into actions aimed at social change, a change that is directly linked to the socio-critical paradigm.

In this way, within the sociocritical paradigm, an emancipation of the research professional is intended through critical action within research processes aimed at change, such as action research (Evans, 2010). Participatory action research is based on teacher reflection, commitment and openness to professional change, ensuring the involvement of all participants with the support of an investigative action that is based on the aforementioned paradigm.

Taking as bases both this paradigm and our commitment to democratic education, it is essential to take up the proposal of Levesque (2008), who indicates that the action of the professor of Social Sciences, Geography and History can contribute to the construction of a democratic citizenship at least in four ways: study of political institutions, comparative historical analysis, comparisons of current events with the past, and development of habits linked to democratic thought.

Schools and citizenship education (one of the backbones of the teaching of Social Sciences) are relevant in order to foster a civic commitment that goes from the local to the global, passing through the regional, national and supranational spheres. In other words, education for a democratic citizenship oriented to justice aims to transform reality, it starts from the stages of Early Childhood Education and Primary Education to continue and spread geographically to the global stage of Secondary Education, following the didactic logic that goes from near to far. This approach diametrically collides with conventional teaching models focused on the dosage of content and the neglect of the student's critical thinking. A committed teacher must have the ability to be a reflective researcher of their own practice because it is impossible to catalyze the transformation of reality without generating changes in school processes and structures, changes that begin in the teaching action itself.

5. CONCLUSIONS

When educating for democratic citizenship in the teaching of social sciences, teachers must promote competent participation in the public sphere based on the interests of the students (Hauver, 2010). Ultimately, it is necessary to train fair citizens to internalize and make use of the necessary skills to change social processes and structures that reproduce injustices over time. For the development of this degree of maturity within the civic competence, it is necessary that from the Social Sciences classes critical and reflective thinking is promoted, around social reality. Thus, teaching practice, language, content, the inclusion of memory or the organization of the classroom and the center will condition the citizenship education approach (Estepa and Delgado-Algarra, 2015).

In addition to the necessary technical training, the teacher who chooses to start a participatory action research process must have an appropriate profile that includes issues related to their conception of teaching and their own personality. In other words, as Evans (2010) indicates, the research teacher assumes that educational practice is an activity that requires questions at all times; questioning their attitude, their roles and their professional action, reviewing objectives, content, methods and strategies, problematizing their work and evaluating both the process and the results

In a participatory action research process, all participants (teachers, students and other agents linked to education) are in continuous training through reflection on action, social relations, methodological strategies, etc. In general terms, and thinking about the extrapolation of this statement in the field of formal education, when people carry out a reflection on a problem, assume a commitment and try to find joint solutions to transform reality, they must also modify their values, their attitudes and interpersonal relationships; leaving evidence that the social transformation would start from an individual transformation (Oliveira and Waldenez, 2010). In short, it is essential that teachers modify their attitudes and assume an interactive and reflective profile about their own practice, always with a view to solving problems that ultimately contribute to the transformation of society from the local to the global.

In general terms, in the field of formal education, when people reflect on a problem, assume a commitment and seek to find joint solutions to transform reality, they must also modify their values, attitudes and interpersonal relationships; leaving evidence that the social transformation would start from an individual transformation (Oliveira and Waldenez, 2010). In short, it is essential that teachers modify their attitudes and assume an interactive and reflective profile together with their students with a view to solving problems that ultimately contribute to the transformation of society from the local to the global.

In relation to the teaching models presented, the most complex teacher profile is the researcher; a teacher who, as García-Pérez (2006) points out, assumes his condition as an educator trained to face uncertainties and conflicts, who reflects on and about practice, and who has a critical attitude towards school and professional codes. In essence, it refers to a school considered as a public space for cultural reconstruction in which weighted doses of skepticism and utopia are combined.

In a democratic education, the school must be directed towards competent participation in the public sphere based on the interests of the students (Parker 2003, Hauver, 2010). In short, it is essential to train fair citizens who develop the necessary skills to change social processes and structures that reproduce injustices over time. To develop this level of maturity within the civic competence, critical and reflective thinking must be promoted from the classes of Social Sciences, Geography and History; being the teacher a model of self-criticism with his own practice and reflection on social reality. That is, the teaching praxis, the language, the contents, the inclusion of memory or the organization of the classroom and the center will condition the type of citizenship education (Estepa and Delgado-Algarra, 2015). This practice can turn the school either into a player that strengthens inequalities and injustices or into an engine for the transformation of society that, taking into account the past, can seek solutions to the problems of the present with a view to building a more future just.

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