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DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC COMPETENCES IN CONSUMER EDUCATION

***Abstract:** We believe that the novelty of the cross-curricular themes are the challenges that poses such a step and, last but not least, the usefulness of quality education, solid premises for the development of behavior centered on social responsibility among students.*

***Key words:** consumer education, cross-curricular, personality formation, holistic, competences, curricular aids, teaching methodologies, skills, values and attitudes.*

1. Introduction

Developing an EU integrated economy market has his starting point in radical alterations of behavior regarding the personal quality of life, of products and services, and environmental protection. This is considered a strategic vision by training the competences to ensure the quality recognition and respect of rules relating to the quality of products, services, processes and systems.

Because quality is essential for existence, it must find a place in school and, moreover, it must be among the learning experiences offered to pupils. It is known that, particularly at this age should be introduced any fundamental area of knowledge relevant to students.

Given the importance of consumer education in personality formation, is considered appropriate to introduce in the curriculum topics aimed on consumer rights and responsibilities, with emphasis placed on particularly in the sphere of attitude.

This does not mean that it introduces a new school topic, as Education *for quality*. Instead, we are proposing an approach in according with typical school age globalism, and a holistic approach. Generally, education for quality is aimed on producer formation and consumer responsibility. This is done primarily by learning the specific behavior of these two roles that, in everyday life, the children permanently adopt, depending on the context. In fact, there is always a situation in which the student is in the position of

producer or consumer of goods or services. Assuming the double role of producer and consumer- fundamentally depending by the way on which the student is reported to them: may be a left-handed or easy consumer, or contrary, one which has the concept of quality and wishes "better things". In the same way, the child can be a producer or one that relates to a standard and want to do something good, "better".

Principles that bases introduction in Quality education endorsed the following considerations:

- The existence in school' s curricula of some competences or contents aimed on issues of quality of life, environmental quality, communication quality, personal benefits in different contexts. They were the starting point in defining some cross-curricular themes which allow inter-areal approaches on core curriculum segment.
- The concern at the political educational elements, for the introduction of issues less-represented till now in our educational system (education for values, for the media).

2. Cross-Curricular Project "QUALITY for unity and diversity"

The purpose of the proposed educational program is to develop capacities, skills and attitudes in the sphere of quality education, increasing responsibility of teachers and local community in providing quality products and services. The project has the following *strategic targets*:

- awareness of stakeholders involved in education, from the school, but also from the local community level, about the importance and need for consumer education;
- development of curriculum documents in support for students and teachers involved in the implementation of this educational program;
- Information and materials dissemination related to consumer education in the area schools, through participation in educational circles, seminars organized by the ISJ and CCD.

The specific objectives derived from these strategic targets are:

- Development at the School level of strategies for the implementation of education for quality, starting from the status the students have, like producers / consumers;

- Develop curricular documents tailored to student age and level of training;
- Develop curricular aids to adapt teaching methodologies to the program objectives and national curriculum;
- Dissemination of good practice in consumer education, through experience exchange, workshops conducted at pre-university level;
- Awakening the responsibility of the main actors involved in the educational process carried out in school.

Both elaborated documents, the main curriculum and the training aids aimed at a common set of values and attitudes for students: participation in the projects / activities to improve the environment quality, awareness the impact of quality on a product competitiveness/ job; expressions of interest for the creation a quality climate and physical environment at home or/and at school; referral to the responsible authorities when they are seen violation of the quality standards; manifestation of critical spirit and responsibility in the use of public information, awareness that the promotion of quality in all areas of activity is a condition for development and continuous improvement of these areas, concern for adopting European norms regarding the rights and obligations of the consumer.

Scroll through these steps help in understanding the quality system in response to market demands and society requirements. The same route facilitates understanding the interaction between humans and environment, the emergence of environmental issues and ways to resolve them.

In designing interventions in the training-informative emphasis is placed on addressing the quality in integrated manner, placing students in the dual state:

- *as consumer*: the student will be able to appreciate the value of the product / service not only by the purchase price, but also by the total cost, throughout the whole cycle and the implications that the product / service may have on economic and domestic environment;
- *as producer*: the student will be able to raise awareness that the quality is not only a technical, but also a cultural issue, an attitude shown in dealing with others.

To bear in mind that the project curricular activities "quality for the unity and diversity" should be planned, organized and carried out so as to contribute to cross-training of skills among students, but also

to develop capacities in the school and local community to support the continuation of this project.

We must developed in the school a curricula, supporting materials, and a documentary, based on scientific study and preliminary documents of the same type from other European Union countries with tradition in quality education. These two major directions are centered on the following types of interventions:

- identification of cross-curricular themes in the existing programs for various training levels, including objectives or competencies, content and activity form addressed to consumer education;
- develop a curriculum for school programs at the school's decision, in which to address the quality from different perspectives. For this curricular document have been developed auxiliary materials that can be used during independent activities, for individuals and groups.

The themes are collected from the familiar world of children and are polarizes simple information leading to quality concepts intuition. With this in mind, the materials can be readjusted depending on needs; you can transfer to other content, offering them to provide multiple openings in the treatment of quality education, from the perspective of progression in the ring of composite education. From this perspective, the project is addressed to the "advised consumer and aware producer", the addressability area is very large.

Emphasis is placed on areas of social life, student's family (the scope of various consumer products, including products of intellectual property and the environment as consumption product). I have proposed numerous topics of debate, which have an interactive character, and are linked to life and children's experience, information is essentialism and relevant for the various themes approached.

Methodical suggestions are aimed on organizing of learning activities at more entertaining level, based on the conduct of mini-projects, the investigations carried out by pupils, teachers to be more like a mediator and a facilitator.

In the spirit of formative assessment is proposed a strategy based *on learning through projects*. It proposes a series of three projects that are completed by the three festive days - "important day" for the student's groups, not only from the perspective of the definition, acceptance and legitimacy, but especially so in a

confrontation with his own achievement in relation to a namely beneficiary.

Pursue the three types of projects make up promoting capacities in the field of quality, so that by combining three types of content, students are determined to assume different roles:

1. *Day of the environment quality*: the students are service providers (service provided consisting in a civic manifestation, involving awareness of the school or local community, regarding the environmental problems).
2. *Day of the books for children*: students are producers of teaching resources for primary school pupils (the action is completed by a *huge exhibition of books*) and educational service providers (in so far as that used books in a demonstration with children).
3. *Open-gates Day*: students are service providers (service provided consisting in cultural and sporting events, which include advertising, fundraising, organizing sports events, providing gifts in the holiday).

3. Conclusions

We believe that the novelty of the cross-curricular themes are the challenges that poses such a step and, last but not least, the usefulness of quality education, solid premises for the development of behavior centered on social responsibility among students.

By implementing this ways of thematic approach, it focuses on the following issues:

- Promoting an education model, that goes beyond excessive rigidity and academic orientation of traditional disciplines.
- Bringing learning in everyday facts arena, relevant to students.
- Transformation learning in a pleasant process, with sustainable and effective results in the personal and social development of the students.
- Optimal development of the child, depending on the age and individual particularities.
- Effective cooperation between those involved in educational approaches: students, teachers, representatives of the local community.
- Revaluation of the resources provided by the local community: individuals, institutions, legends, happenings copies, etc. heroes.

- Promoting a constructivist learning vision, in which the student has a fundamental role, participating actively conducting their own learning experiences
- Addressing a wide range of problems rooted in social life, forming skills, values and attitudes of which the young people need to operate successfully in personal and social life.
- Ensure an interconditioning between cross-curricular themes and new education: for quality, human rights, the environment, sustainable development, interculturality, etc.

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