Education for Democratic Citizenship in the High School

Why and what kind of education for democratic citizenship is necessary today?

The beginning of the new millennium closes a chapter of Bulgaria's history.
Almost twelve years after the beginning of the fall of the communist system, the major transformations of the transition to democracy have already been implemented. Turning back is impossible and society begins to function normally as a democracy - established political system, economy based on private ownership, civil society, legitimisation before the international community an expression of which is the invitation for EU accession negotiations.

This particular society needs clear mechanisms for socialisation of young people, for transfer of democratic values. The education for democratic citizenship is becoming one of the main elements of the system; without it, the system cannot function normally.

In a democratic society, the education in citizenship cannot be accidental, as it was during the transitional period.

The young people who will graduate from secondary schools have grown up completely in a post-communist reality. They need not only a moral system of orientation in the new world, but also a strategy of behaviour, knowledge about the concepts of this reality.

One of the major problems of transition was that neither the state was able to develop a program for socialisation aimed at responsible citizen behaviour, nor the parents, who had grown up under a different social system, could prepare adequately their children for life in the new society.

Today the young parents who have grown up during the transitional period are not burdened by the years of communism, but lack a stable system of values and clear strategies for behaviour. This is why it is necessary that the school /i.e., society and the state/ helps to build a socialisation system that asserts and transfers the basic values of Bulgarian democracy.

Today the whole society is much more complex than socialist one, and young people should be prepared.

Currently, we are at a turning point in the development of our education.

For almost a decade we've been creating mechanisms that divide and weaken the young people, and consequently, society, instead of unifying them. In reality, our school and educational system got rid of a series of socialisation mechanisms typical of the old society, without replacing them with new ones. It was forgotten that the school prepares the young person for life, that it is his small model of society. And when school becomes simply a place for education, be it even in the most modern technology and areas of knowledge, the gap between school and society widens.

It is natural for the education system to react slowly to changes but Bulgarian education's problems do not arise from this intrinsic conservative reaction but from the features of the system. In reality, it is a system relating to a bygone age, asserting a conformist model of behaviour, stressing only on the cognitive side of the education process.
Regardless of the phraseology typical for the end of our century and of a democratic school, non-dialogued models and practices still prevail in our education, there is a lack of freedom for actors and therefore, an archaic educational model is being repeated and reasserted. This model counts on the exclusive presence of content and not on processes, which contradicts to the changes in social reality. This is why the system logically pays more attention to the problems of its own survival in its traditional form, instead on the issues of citizen and moral development of young people. This is the reason why hidden programs are prevailing, which except everything else prove that teachers and students are committed to moral education without explicitly or philosophically discussing or formulating its ideas or methods, or simply transfer mechanically, without reflecting their unclear and old moral and educational norms in the new environment.

We need not a system for citizen education but education for democratic citizenship. If the former can be related to any social reality where there is a system of government, the latter reflects additionally the type of socialisation of young people in a democratic reality, helps them to become not citizens in general but citizens of a democratic society.

To encounter problems related to the inclusion of education for democratic citizenship in existing educational models and busier curricula, is normal in such an educational reality. If education for democratic citizenship is included as an independent educational cycle, won't that disrupt the even now fragile equilibrium in educational curricula?

Regardless of the modular character of the new school plan, the inclusion of a completely new subject disrupts the equilibrium between the humanitarian subjects established a long time ago.

The education for democratic citizenship arises also some fears related to the possibility of ideologisation and indoctrination, of imposing a model of behaviour which is difficult to justify.

And finally, the teachers are not prepared for the special role of trainers in citizenship.

The doubts and objections are due to the peculiar dimensions of *democratic citizenship*, of the risk to enter this field without a clearly expressed specifics which would dilute the borders of the new educational modules.

The metacapability for learning, for self-evaluation, for making decisions on social and living choices and strategies, is the new quality of modern young people, which is difficult to compare or come out of the traditional skills for memorising, arranging and reproducing information.
It is evident that all this can happen only after reforming the whole educational system, but there has to be a starting point and the education for democratic citizenship provides this opportunity.
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If we try to formulate a definition at a most general level, it would sound like: "Education for democratic citizenship is a process of personality development and young person's preparation for social manifestations, dialogue and co-operation based on knowing and respecting human rights and the laws of the democratic state".
In the upper grade, the main goal is the immediate preparation of the young person to enter life and to play the role of a responsible citizen.
This is why the goals here is to transfer specific, based on legislative norms, knowledge, to develop specific strategies for behaviour in situations which the young person will face while still in school /as a voter, member of citizen groups, hired worker/.

In order to have effective strategies, another specific goal is to increase young people's sensitivity to important social problems.

The education for democratic citizenship aspires to achieve another major goal - to assert a sustainable moral system or, in Kohlberg's words, assertion of the conventional phase of development, and for some young people, an opportunity to pass into a post-conventional phase.

In this way we will help to raise responsible citizens. Responsible citizenship includes:
- understanding the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizen in a democratic society and of citizen in the increasingly global human society;
- constructive participation in the democratic processes by making rational and based on moral choice decisions;
- respecting own virtues and values, as well as the virtues and values of other people.

The responsible citizens that we want to make Bulgaria's young people, are:
- with an exploratory attitude towards social reality, expressed in curiosity and seeking, experimenting with new elements of responsible behaviour;
- with a critical and constantly expanding consciousness and with increased opportunities of choice with regard to their own behaviour;
- authentic and open in their interpersonal relations;
- with established concepts for relationships between people based on mutual dependency and co-operation and respect of human rights;
- with increasing responsibility and capabilities for action in the name of others' good;
- aspiring to co-operation and community between people, as well as openly trying to copy with problems and conflicts.

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The argument about the autonomous character of this subject area is not restricted only to Bulgaria.

Of course, in the ideal case, the whole curriculum and content would be prepared in such a way as to provide an opportunity for development of citizenship and each subject or subject area would have a contribution in this field.

Unfortunately, our educational reality is still different:
* there is a lack of desired citizen elements in individual curricula;
* despite the positive moments in the new educational plan, an overall idea of co-ordinating teachers' efforts and unifying program elements for education in citizenship, has not been approved yet;
* teachers lack skills in this subject and have no methodological guidance on how to learn such skills.

Even if we assume that the above requirements are met, the education for democratic citizenship has peculiarities due to which it cannot simply be dissolved in the curriculum. What makes it different is the combination of social reality research as a cross-point of personal attitude and social and legal norms, and building a morally and socially responsible behaviour on this basis.

In history, for example, subject of citizen education are the citizen dimensions of historic processes: citizen participation; legislative regulation of citizenship in different political systems; the different codices of citizen behaviour; the development of citizen relations within democratic societies.

Like the family, the education for democratic citizenship is a study of the opportunity to establish attitudes and behaviour corresponding to the compulsory moral and legal norms and to find the place of this behaviour in the overall citizenship of the young person.

Even if we assume that with the quality development of school curricula the citizen element will have a much larger place in individual areas or cycles, the necessity of a subject area where the different types of citizen actions, behaviour and processes will be studied as interrelated, will still remain.

It is important that we realise this duality of the education for democratic citizenship. On one hand, it has to be mastered by every teacher, as there is no subject or a synthetic subject area or cycle, where citizen dimensions are not subject of arguments and training. On the other hand, there is an evident necessity of a separate cycle which should be extremely co-ordinated with the other subject cycles.

Age characteristics of the students in the high school

At this age, young people are placed in an interesting situation. On one hand, they are in the spotlight, in a society which, for many reasons, is developing a *cult to youth*. They are the group that defines society's character in the near future; they are the group that will

enter the world of politics; they are those who will dictate the vogue, models of behaviour, consumer demand.

In an incredibly quickly changing world, young people have the greatest potential to bear and copy with changes. This holds true for Bulgaria, too, regardless of declining birth rates and increasing emigration among young people.

This is the age at which the question of the meaning of life is raised clearly for a first time, when the person opens to the world and the world opens to him, when his cognitive interest needs to be satisfied, when durable social attitudes are developed.

Some authors compare the young person to an animal that has left the cage it has grown up in and doesn't know what to do with its freedom. In this way, the need for communication, discussions, arguments, asking questions, understanding the essence of things, is a part of a young person's personality and the education for democratic citizenship is aimed at creating conditions for this need to be updated, realised and satisfied.

According to Robert Havegurst, there are several challenges faced by a young person:
1. to accept his physical *package* and to assume the male or female sexual role;
2. to develop appropriate relations with his peers from both sexes;
3. to become emotionally independent from adults and his parents;
4. to gain confidence that he would soon have economic independence;
5. to make up his mind, to prepare and to start building professional skills;
6. to develop cognitive skills and concepts necessary for the development of social competence;
7. to understand the meaning of, and to try to acquire, a socially responsible behaviour;
8. to prepare to marry and establish a family;
9. to acquire values that correspond to the democratic view about social reality and to the prevailing scientific ideas about the physical world.

All these challenges faced by the young person are also challenges to his education in citizenship; actually, these are the key topics in which we need to help him to seek and find himself, to assert himself among his peers, to find a basis for his relations and for his place in the world.

The changes in thinking at this age are evident. The role and ability for abstract thinking, for reflection and looking into own thoughts and motives, grows. We should not forget that this is not only the age at which moral values are asserted and linked into a system, but also the age characterised by a greatest degree of idealism, both interpersonal and social.

Youth energy, optimistic attitudes for own development and for the development of the surrounding world, often conflict with reality. This is why many young people react harshly by revolting, disregarding public norms and moral, acquire deviant behaviour.

Citizen education is one of the mechanisms that can help them to discuss the multifacetness and variety of human behaviour, the contradictory character of social reality, the friction and contradictions intrinsic to the very essence of the democratic society.

The education in citizenship is also education in social adaptation, in understanding public processes and rules, but also in how to compromise and to enter the world of adults with dignity and confidence.

This is a period of accelerated moral development; in seeking a stable moral system, young people ask themselves questions not only about the sense of laws and rules but also about their fairness and about the need of making efforts to change them.

We should not forget that they come from a family environment formed during totalitarian years, without stable democratic attitudes, with a great degree of disbelief and pessimism about the possibilities for positive social changes, for the role of democracy, for the use of person's social efforts.

This is why the education in citizenship is also a basis for counteraction, for giving a solid ground to young people by means of providing them with the opportunity to discuss, share and form opinions independent from the adult world.

"The children live in the present, the youth start thinking for the future". Even in the slightly artificial world of childhood that is being created for young people, of their isolation from social problems and worries, of the prolongation of the careless period of their life /mostly typical of the children from educated middle classes in the country/, we cannot stop the powerful entry and impact of the outside world, of the future with its problems, insecurity, but also attractiveness and opportunities.
For the student in the high school, future is already becoming a reality and not just a game. Soon they have to make their choices: professional, political, moral, religious.

For many young people this period of transition to the world of adults is related to the identity crisis. Based on undergoing identity crisis, James Marcia differentiates four types of young people:
1. youth who have not felt a crisis neither have committed themselves to a specific area;
2. youth who have made their choice not by their will but do not feel an identity crisis;
3. youth who are constantly seeking sense, enlightenment, self-determination, and their life passes in constant crises;
4. youth who achieve identity, who have faced a crisis and different opportunities and have made their choice freely, who have dedicated themselves to critical things.

In every group for citizenship we can see representatives of all four types and it is important that we realise that in the process of group work and to use them for the purposes of the education in citizenship. We should rely on the calm ones who have made their choice and to give them opportunities to share, as well as to constantly create conditions for communication, for shared experiences with the seekers, with those who go through declines and problems.

We should not forget that all of these developments happen in a period of accelerated sexual behaviour which is the other side of the assertion of sexual identity, and that our task is to help the young people to develop a flexible combination of male and female sexual roles.

Actually, with group development, with group discussions, we legitimate another key phenomenon in young people's life - the role of peers. They are the ones who often help

the young person to emancipate from the role of family; they are the ones who serve as a basic reference group; they are the ones who create the models of behaviour. The group for education in citizenship is the only place where the peers have a structured place and where opportunities for directing this influence in a positive direction are created.

And finally, as a whole, this is the period of difficulties, of transition from late adolescence to early adulthood. It is important that we help the young people to understand that the end of adolescence is only the beginning of the new long trip in the adult world, and to be not only better prepared but also to start more confidently and fearlessly along the troubled path of changes.

The role and functions of the trainer in a civic education study group

The main difficulty for the success of the civic education course and the programmes listed above is, to put it straight, is the crucial significance of the leading figure.

As far as my consideration goes it is so detached from the role of a teacher in a school, that it is obligatory to pay mire attention to it, as for the teachers - before they concentrate their efforts on the mastering of this new and daring mission, it is important that they are convinced in their decision.

If they are, they must be aware of the consequences which could be rather essential even to their way of thinking and behaving, as well as to the relationships they have with their students or with the people surrounding them. The idea is quite simple - it is about a bunch of students, sitting face to face in a circle and talking, sharing their experiences, ideas about life in general, and discussing issues they are interested in.

This atmosphere is not easy to create in a classroom full of desks, so this leads to a few problems I would like to discuss. Everything about this model of interaction and dialogue between the trainer and the trainees is different from the traditional models.

It was on purpose when I mentioned that the students were supposed to sit in a circle. Sitting face to face means that we are EQUAL. All the participants are equal to each other and they are equal to their instructor, too. The subject matter is not the arrangement of the furniture in the room. It is that one simply cannot sit face to face with one's students, and still have the often illusory feeling of superiority that the platform and the lectern could give; if anytime one turns one's head one meets the eyes of a student, one can't behave just the same.

We become equal because in this circle we think and share our positions (not just knowledge) about life issues, our personal experiences and our knowledge of life. Some can express themselves better than others who aren't so eloquent. Is it possible to say who has got the best experience, who is the better person on the more important one? In the circle people are not only equal in the discussions, the participation in the circle removes THE BARRIERS.

Each and everyone at school has built up thousands of walls, has put on all sorts of protective armour and hides beneath them whenever he/she is unprepared, unwilling or just

bored. There is the comparatively safe territory of one's own desk or sheet of paper; also the solidarity and support of the people from the neighbouring desks that often generate in conspiracy or disobedience in class. There is the absolutely dangerous and exposed territory in front of the chalkboard and near the teacher's tower and sanctuary - the lectern. In due course of time all of them, and most of all the teachers, master to perfection the steps of moving within this perimeter of alienation and convention.

Within the study groups and the circle the old limitations and restrictions are valid no more - all share one the same space where everything is in the open. There is nowhere to hide for the cosiness of the desk is gone.

The only "way out" of this situation is to try and establish relationships of another kind - human relationships based on understanding, mutual support, and DIALOGUE.

In some of the groups for personal development silence not talking is the method. People keep silent until one of them feels the need to talk and breaks the quiet with his/hers confessions. The means for drawing people together in our groups is by conversation - a conversation which is based on sharing and understanding, on seeking the other by revealing yourself. By conversation we don't mean just a casual talk or a constrained dialogue, but conversations about matters that are important to the children, as well as to us. We can start talking about our personal experiences in our own family and about dividing the parental duties according to the law, and what is the situation at home. The subject of the conversation is very tricky since most of the people have been hurt once in a while, and react painfully or withdraw even at the mentioning of the family. Such a dialogue is like trying to connect small islands each of which may turn out to be a volcano.

When teaching in class it is impossible to know and notice the feelings and emotional reactions of all the students.

Being in a group where personal matters are discussed we can and we have to expect all sorts of reactions - for we are the ones who help the kids demolish the walls - from confession to outbursts and accusations. One is most vulnerable when one talks about oneself and our role is to aim that passion and interest out toward the others in a most painless manner. Let us not forget that this is one of the ways to leave behind and forget the bad memories -by sharing them with other people - and, that for a large part of the trainees this may be the first time when they share experiences with other people.

Let us go back to the island analogy. The dialogue is like the current between the island which helps them turn into an archipelago of inter-connected persons. The teacher is the boat (and the boatman). He drives between the islands and encourages them to unite, he connects them and often regulates the current in its way from one island to the next, from one individual to another.

The next important problem concerning the work with a study group is the
PERSONALITY OF THE INSTRUCTOR.
In the period between the two World wars there had been a great number of attempts to define the qualities which constructed the "good teacher". Some suggested ten, others - more than hundred qualities the teacher needed. Later on people understood that is was more than a sum of presumed qualities what makes a teacher good. That a "perfect" teacher is hard to meet, and the good teacher is an intact whole of personal characteristics and

understandings, of specific motivation and identification with the children and with the profession, and that the most important is the teacher's creativeness and adaptive behaviour. As Masloe, one of our great contemporary psychologists says, a person in psychic health (such as the good instructor is supposed to be) has a greater range of perception of reality, better acceptance of the self and the surrounding people, is more spontaneous, with better concentration on problems, is more independent and manages better resistance to the cultural clichés, his her sensual reactions are richer and possesses freshness of assessment, stronger identification with humanity, better interpersonal relations, democratic disposition of character, considerable creative power and acquire positive changes in her/his system of values.

After reading those lines many of you may argue: how is it possible to achieve all that when the requirements for the instructor are so much. I would like to persuade you that this isn't so and that the success of our mission depends on several simple facts about your personality. I chose words like mission and dedication very purposefully. Working in this new sphere is quite unusual and requires a lot of extra work and tension.

The lack of literature on the subject, the lack of methodology and specialised education in the pedagogical institutes in addition with the basically different character of the process of teaching - all that indicates that the people who decide to make their way through it will have to meet different kinds of requirements. I would like to mention several approaches without which, I am sure, everyone will meet great difficulties, or at least won't be able to fulfil the results we are aiming at.

One of the most important things is the OPENNESS - to people, to children and their problems, to the new ideas. Better or worse than it used to be, life is different today. The security and the accompanying feeling of being sheltered of the antecedent society are gone.

Trainers and trainees have lost it, too - the sense of being protected physically, the confidence that the future to come is, if not very exciting, at least predestined. There is no refuge from the problems anymore - real or illusory, and no one fends off the truths of life. Day by day our society loses its illusions and we are compelled to face our problems. Before we look for ways to solve our problems, we have admit that they exist, to open our mind to them. If we want to be an example for our trainees (I intentionally do not use the word "students") we cannot hide like oysters and but react and adjust to the changing world.

After all, together with our students we make our way in an unorganised and unformed space. On the one hand we have the basic norms of behaviour - this is how I define human rights. We have the norms of our country on the other. Then we have the personal experience of the children and their still childish passion for justice, their understanding of world-order and its norms of communication. In order to organise or at least make the space more comfortable we need something which I define as JOY OF COMMUNICATION, to feel excitement and pleasure communicating with the young people, solidarity with their problems, readiness to expose our own moral views and principles, and open-hearted interest in their often naive, yet in all cases miscellaneous worlds.

The joy of communication to me is connected with the GOOD INTENTION. To make clear what I said: the attitudes enlisted above are vital for every pedagogue. The teacher's

personality has always been and will always the most important factor in education. The contemporary education with the teachers specialising in a certain field, the human aspect was lost and the relations between the trainer and trainees became too object-orientated and turned into relations: informer and examiner - informed and examined.

Opening a dialogue about human relationships, our place in this world and what are the principles it is based on (the kind "civic education" dialogue) opens a possibility for revival of the direct connection between the trainer and trainees. This is why I pay so many attention to attitudes which have lost or their meaning or were underestimated in many other forms of teaching.

I would like to mention the readiness for TAKING RISKS. The risk is in involving oneself together with twenty young and eager for knowledge and self-knowledge people in a rapid of problems; the risk of exploring together a society which is far from being just or good; the risk of bringing to the surface one's own conceptions, convictions, and ideas in front of such straightforward but sincere judges; the risk that in spite the difference in the age might think of them as equals, as partners in this unusual journey to themselves and the truth.

You will need a lot of ENERGY in this journey. Not only because of the extra work you are going to do. To teach and to examine is different from to discuss and argue with a group of people, to take part in their indignation or delight. The space in the small room fills with thoughts and passions, and this is tiring not only to the mind, but to the physique. One has to be very strong and resistant. Let's not forget that in that pedagogical space which is set in a different way, the subject and its teaching have different aspects. The organising factor is not the knowledge that was taught or the respect of the specialist, but what the group experiences and the way it evaluates the experience.

In the group of students, of children sitting in a circle one loses a lot of one's traditional mainstay. Strange as it is, one becomes dependent and start counting on the others, but in order to become a real instructor, he has to gain SELF-KNOWLEDGE so that he can rely on himself too.

Gaining self knowledge

One thing is for sure: people have to know themselves and their own potentials before starting any enterprise, although in most of the cases we do not.

When approaching civic education, I guess, there are some things that are absolutely obligatory. If we start with the attitudes mentioned above, those are - good intention, willingness to communicate, to take risks, openness, a lot of energy, and strong motivation.

What we say is that with the course of civic education we aim at establishing a new educational model which is based on:

- *new concept of the trainee* (which his/her subjectivity, partnership, right of choice, motivation, personal responsibility). The Polish psychologist Mellibruda has some good and powerful words to say to those children, to those future citizens: One needs

satisfaction of one's basic life necessities; one wishes comfort, both physical and mental; one acts so one can reach such a high level of order and security in one's life that to be able to predict the results of one's actions as well as those of other people's; one craves for more and richer satisfaction from life; man is the child of hope and is not genetically predetermined to give up; man has the ability and the free-will to choose and stand by one's choice, and so demands for the freedom of choice; one likes to dare one's authenticity and identity, as well as the harmony of one's mind and wholeness of one's personality, the feeling of personal value and importance; one searches for values or a system of values to realise; one needs to be sure that the society of which one is part will stand behind one's endeavours and hopes for the realisation of these vitally important decisions and strivings;

- *new concept of the educator* (a trainer and a understanding partner competent in social matters, a link between the world of adults and the young persons, who has to make his/her choice);
- *quantitative changes* in the interrelations between the main parts in school (teachers, students, parents);
- *building strong connections with social environment*, guiding young people to practical social activities and joint with social institutions.

In this way we could help our trainees to:
- achieve the inventors of reality attitude, which consists of curiosity, seeking and experimenting new behaviour elements;
- open their self-consciousness and expand the possibilities to choose their own behaviour;
- be authentic and open in their personal relationships;
- build their own conception of how to behave on the grounds of mutual interdependence and co-operation, and the promotion of human rights;
- be ready to act in the name of others benefit;
- work for co-operation and solidarity, openness while solving conflicts and problems with the use of rational democratic procedures.

In order to achieve all this we need more than the attitudes mentioned above, we need a complete analyses of our personal interests, abilities and what we are best at doing. The trainer's job in this respect is many-sided, the responsibilities are bigger.

We can ask ourselves several simple but crucial questions about our motivation aims and relationships with the trainees, about the progress of us and them, both. We can try and find out more about some of our specific qualities and attitudes. I offer you to consider and evaluate to what extent you possess the following abilities and attitudes which are essential to the ability to communicate:

- *Empathy* - I watch the world with the eyes of the other people. I can understand them because I can put myself in their position. I pay attention to all verbal and non-verbal signals they send, and I reply.
- *Cordiality and Respect* - in different ways I show to the people that my life is dedicated to them, that I respect them and I can accept them no matter that I not always approve of their ways. I try support them.
- *Authenticity* - I am rather natural, than artificial while communicating with other people. I don't pretend and I do not hide behind a mask. The other people know what I want and what I think , they know my "Ego".

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- *Specificity* - when speaking to people I don't use vague and general terms, neither do I try to lessen the effect of my words - what I say concerns concrete facts and type of behaviour. I speak directly and straight to the point.
- *Initiative* - in my relations with people I'm not just responding, but acting as well. I'm the one to establish contacts, I am not waiting for the other person to do that. I'm spontaneous. Within group I feel a participant in the activities and get involved in them.
- *Directness* - in my relations with others I behave in an open and natural manner. I know what to expect from them, and make sure that they know it, too. This is how I build my relationships.
- *Openness* - I show my inner-self to the others which I do not declare. This helps me to establish strong connections with the other people without being a "secret hunter" or a "secret teller", because what matters is me (or the other person), not my (his/her) secrets.
- *Feelings and emotions* - I am not scared to deal with my, or other people's feelings. In my relations with others I try to express what I feel. I hope the other people do the same, but I don't expect them to share my feelings.
- *Counteraction* - for me it is a way to start a relationship with other people and I do it intentionally, but I realise the responsibility of the results that will come next.

We can argue that these characteristics of communication are idealised, that we could rather aspire to achieve them, than really acquire them. I agree, but let's not forget that such is the model of group inter-action we are aiming at.

That is why before we start to work, we have to give ourselves an account of to what degree are we able to react in such manner, to change or control our behaviour in this direction.

Here comes the next question concerning the group work - to what degree are these communicative abilities part of the instructor's personality and are in-built in it, or can they be mastered.

My opinion is that we can easily acquire those abilities and make effective use of them if not anytime in life, then at least in our circles and in our relations with the trainees, provided we have enough qualitative and proper training.

We must not be discourage by the fact that within the group we often behave in one way, while in life our behaviour is quite different. When we meet with the students we are carried to another world where we have only our good sides, we develop only the good part of ourselves.

These meeting help us become better, to understand human problems and inter-relations better, but never, or very rarely change us completely.

There is something else I want to emphasise on - in the process of those meetings we educate ourselves. We learn as we prepare for them, or as we try to experiment with certain topic or problem, we learn while arguing and pursuing the answers together with the children.

However strange it may sound to some, if not all of us these meetings can give us the opportunity for the first time to scrutinise and analyse one's own deeds and behaviour, to seek and find one's identity, to realise one's own narrow-mindedness and prejudice, and to feel joy when one discovers the best sides of one's communication and inter-action with the other people. Sure, this is a long and often painful, and even discouraging way to go. This is the reason I mentioned the energy, the good intentions, the readiness to take risks, and the joy of searching for and communicating with people.

We must not forget that there are certain limits to our experimenting - the inviolability of children, or in other words - their human rights. Not violating those limits is the only way to stay safe. Nothing in our search for ourselves or in our trials so communicate with the children and be of use to them is worth it.

Again, we come upon the established norms of teachers' behaviour assimilated with the school routine where the admonishing tone, manipulation, isolation, taking decisions instead of other people, living over the cannot be doubted. Let's make it clear that by taking civic education, it means that we acknowledge the universal and inseparable character of such rights of our trainees like:

- *Justice* - that right to share and to be heard out, impartially;
- *Peace* - to be acknowledged the right to be in conflict, but at the same time not to solve it forcibly;
- *Dignity* - no putting labels, hurting, showing neglect to children as the only way to establish their respect for us;
- *Equality* - to treat children in a way that encourages them to trust the equal possibilities at the end;
- *Freedom* - shouldn't be expanded to a point by which it violates the rights of other people to live in peace and dignity;
- *Security* - we have to use our power to defend the weak and vulnerable;
- *Democracy and participation* - to create possibilities for the children to exert their choice and responsibility, to participate in the decisions about problems which concern them;
- *Solidarity* - to open enough possibilities for the children in school to learn and work together with different people and study groups on the problems which concern them;
- *Mutuality* - to think about and stand for the children's rights as much as we do for our own rights;
- *Inseparability* - violating one of the rules, means violating all of them, and, in the same way, violating the rights of one child violates the rights of all the children in the group or community;
- *Universality* - the consciousness that the children's rights are standards which we are supposed to apply in all situations and to observe in any conditions.

Look at the list of the basic human rights and compare it to the list of the effective communication and you will discover that they are identical. To all intents and purposes to create conditions for effective communication means to put a start to a system a human relations which is based on the human rights. That is why is absolutely important that every person who intends to work in this field should undergo a training course of professional pedagogical communication, and, together with one's colleagues, analyse one's abilities, strong and weak sides. What a professional course of several days could give you is nothing compared to the piles of books on the matter at your disposal to read. The course

of communication makes one more sensitive to one's own presentation, and to the elements of inter-personal relations.

It will do you credit of you attend also: a course on organisation skills, leadership training, training for working in a small group, a course on intercultural diversities, a solving conflicts training. As far as this is hardly possible in Bulgaria now, I could advice you to try and form societies of teachers adherent to the idea, where you can share your experience with the group work and learn from each other's experiences. Nothing could help you more than the contacts with people who have the same motivation as you, and are in the same situation.

Sharing, doing research, and seeking for solutions of the problems is something you can't expect from an outside person, even if he/she is the best instructor ever, and shows perfect understanding for the problems.

Work in civic education is work in a group

In school we work with the class of students as a whole but practically we examine students individually. That is why at a particular point it is more important what is going on between the teacher and the student who is being examined. Work in a group is more like a stage performance for the people involved - we are all play together and we play together but each one of us has something to show to the others. We provide the motives and direct the action but everyone is free at any point to come up with something different or to share something with the rest that will eventually lead to a change in the situation, for everyone has a certain degree of personal experience and unique emotion of his own. This is the way, I think, to settle the seeming contradiction between work in a group and self-expression.

We work together because our purpose is to go beyond the limitations of our individual emotions and experience. In order to grow up we need role models to follow. And school can be anything but a place where people share thoughts and experience. In the rare instances when people at school share intimate thoughts and personal confidences there is yet no mention of the issues that are of primary importance to civic education. One grows up to become an equal to his fellow citizens and still has no clear idea what exactly that is supposed to mean. One is more likely to witness examples of misbehaviour, irresponsibility, hero worship which can by no means become sources of civil inspiration. In other words, school provides the grounds for mistrust and cannot offer students the possibility of identification with goodness or does not even stimulate the search for goodness.

Today the communist model is a thing of the past but nothing has come (officially or mot) to replace it. The process of acquiring civil consciousness can only happen when one is surrounded by people, but for that purpose one must also have an aim that is clearly defined and can be passed on to next generations.
As group leaders we do not offer heroes to be worshipped or bright ideals to be followed. We just provide conditions for the children to get together and talk about simple things - how to live together and be good to each other, what is the meaning of notions that are not abstract but concrete, like parental duty, filial love, camaraderie, inviolability of private

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space, help giving and tolerance. What should we know about groups besides what is written in books on psychology? I find it appropriate to compare the group with a living organism, consisting of many individualities, knowing how to respond to challenges, and follow its own logic of development.

Let us not forget that at the initial stage of group work children have just come from a world of no norms or at least no stable civil norms.

According to the American psychologist Coleberg people in general go through several stages of moral development.

For those who are at the first stage, moral behaviour consists in the observation of permanent rules with regards the award or punishment they can get by abiding to these rules or breaking them. "If I steal I may go to prison. That is why, it is not good to steal."

The second stage of the so called conventional morality is characterised by the behaviour of the responsible member of society; a person would oppose to theft because he or she would feel guilty and disreputable in the eyes of the others. People on the highest level of moral development are guided by moral principles more universal than those of the society they are living in. For them, condemnation of theft is based on the preservation of their own moral principles and their life, centred around these principles.

In our group we are bound to meet young people who have not reached even the first from the above mentioned stages of moral development. Yet, there might be people on the highest stage. From moral point of view the groups will be diverse, the way our society is diverse after so many years of killing faith and denouncing basic human values. We have to bear that in mind, but also we must not forget that violence and fraud degrade people and undermine their morals; we must remember that the work in the group consists in movement ahead and upwards and is based on goodness and on examples to follow.

For that reason our initial suggestion is "Let's work it out together how to become citizens!" We can hardly say to them more than that; moreover, they do not trust words very mush.
At that initial point we are only suggesting to build our interaction in accordance with the norms for group work, which norms, as we have already mentioned, are based on the principles of successful communication and mutual respect for human rights.

- *Sincerity (openness):* free expression of the feelings and problems that each participant has; understanding of other people's feelings and problems. Sincerity and openness are essential for preventing the feelings, the attitudes and the behaviour of the participants from wrong interpretations.

- *Non judging atmosphere:* based on free expression of feelings, as opposed to making assessments and giving labels. Assessment is a retarding factor in interpersonal relations and an obstacle to the authenticity of group work while free expression of feelings is an equalising factor in interpersonal relations.

- *Specificity and directness*: work in the group is characterised by sharing of specific feelings, attitudes, and behaviour leading participant's consolidation. Specificity makes personal emotions within the group important to the other participants.

- *Activity:* In order to receive effective feedback on the way others accept him or her, a participant should behave in a natural manner - i. e. participate in the group sessions, be active an in that way activity becomes a natural precondition for his or her development during the sessions. It is only natural, however, that not everyone and not every time can be active in a specific group, but willingness to be active is essential to successful participation.

- *Initiative:* At a certain point of the development of the group, activity is transformed into group-minded initiative. The problems and the tasks of the group are more and more often defined by the very participants and not by the instructor: the group has started full-blooded life.

- *Subjectivity of the participant in the group process* (as opposed to the lacking individuality, passive, only-listener type of participant in traditional educational models). In that respect, the group is a place interaction between individuals of equal status as regards their emotions, feelings and problems as well as the efforts they make towards solving them.

- *Stress on the strong sides* in the personality of the participant: Essential to personal development is for a stress to be laid on the strongest and not on the weakest sides of the participant. This creates the necessary atmosphere of good intention.

- *Unreserved acceptance of the other participants*: In the group we are all equal thanks to the freedom of expressing and sharing our feelings and experience with the others; but, we are also equal in our striving after mutual understanding, assistance and tolerance.
- *Individual and group responsibility*: In the process of interacting while getting to know the others and seeking personal feedback, the participant is fully responsible for his actions at any point.

- *Specificity of speech and action* obliges the participants: Group responsibility developing with the group dynamics is no less important than individual responsibility. It is, on the one hand, manifested in creating an atmosphere of psychological comfort, and on the other - in the maximum degree of concern for the others, thus the group becoming a point of support for solving everyone's problems.

- *Inviolability of person:* In the group there should be nothing offensive towards the feelings and emotions of any participant. Everyone is free to seek assistance and "intervention" on behalf of the others to the degree he or she finds it necessary. Breaches of the inviolability of person (or manipulation of a participant in general) lay obstacles in the individual and group development as a whole.

- *Freedom of expression: The* whole work in the group (in both individual and collective aspect) is underlined by the search for the balance between freedom of expression and inviolability of person. The search is often accompanied by the need for limitation and

"disciplining" and, no matter how painful this process might be, its progress is indicative of group dynamics development.

- *Lending assistance*: Young people have problems concerning their development and their relations with other people, so they need assistance: just human (letting them know that they are not alone with their problems), instrumental (helping them solve their problems), and assertive (facilitating their development in the future).

Now, let us put ourselves again in the children position.
In the beginning they are likely to become confused with this catalogue of good behaviour. If we have already won their confidence, it should not be difficult for us to lead them through these hard initial sessions.

If not, we must be prepared for everything and must also keep in mind the fact that any sort of reaction is only natural at the beginning. Some will nod their heads understandingly, other will plunge themselves in the discussions in a purely childish manner, but there might still be others to react disapprovingly or even in a hostile manner. For the last group this may seem to be yet another bait from the world of adults, concealed under a more glossy packaging.
Let us remember that at this stage we are trying to convince the children to give up their previous habits and norms of behaviour and start treating each other in a different manner. This is not an easy task, even for a child's flexible and adjusting personality. With adults we may say that this is a matter of " getting out of a rut": with kids it is more a matter of "breaking the ice".

Each group has a specific way of development and we are to be the most competent about the development of our own group since we provide the condition, determine the speed, and deliberately change certain things in the desired direction.

Following the "breaking of ice" stage comes the stage of "the difficult acquisition of the norms of communication and sharing inside the group". At this point we have to be extremely patient and careful. In the first place, we are dealing with children, whose reactions are often unpredictable, emotional and sometimes illogical.
Moreover, we are dealing with a model of behaviour which corresponds to the children's sense of justice, but is also totally different from what they see in school and in many of their families.

From the very beginning, in their attempts to acquire the new norms children try to balance between life in the group and the life outside it. It is much easier for an adult participant in a group to make a distinction between the context of study and the "reality" outside. This proves to be much more difficult for children - people seem to have the inborn capacity to look together for goodness, to share with others, to feel happy about others' achievements.

Very often children find a dream-like atmosphere in our groups and reluctantly go back to the world of school. At this first stage they acquire the norms slowly, but afterwards it is difficult to explain to them why they cannot follow these norms even in the closed world of school, which is supposedly meant for them.

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This can obviously happen at the third stage of the development of the group - the stage at which the group norms have already been acquired and when the children can discuss problems in a much more efficient way then other children of their age and even their teachers and parents. Let us not forget that at this point we have already created a group whose interpersonal relations are superior to those of the world outside. From here it is only a small step leading to disappointment from the clash with the real world.

That is why we have to not only set up these norms step by step and be very patient but we also have to make our message to the children clear: "We are seeking together the ways to live in the society of adults. We are seeking these ways fully conscious of the fact that the world around us is far from being perfect. In our search we are trying to gain better knowledge of our own selves and to become better citizens. It will be very nice if we can build up relationships like those within the group at our jobs, in our family, and among our friends. But this might as well not happen. The world is much more complicated and many things do not depend on us.

What we learn here is to make our choice, to stand for our rights even under most unfavourable conditions, to be honourable amongst ill-intentioned people, and keep the goodness of our souls.

The leader of such group has enormous responsibility, if only because for many of the children this will be their first change to participate in something that is good, to be heard and understood. For some of them it will most unluckily be the last and only attempt to seek the good sides of life and people together with other people.

A really efficient civic education study group is a model of co-operation which most of the children, and especially their schoolmates, are denied in their own school. There is certain danger in that - the children may become introvert and concentrated on the idealisation of their extraordinary persons with good-intentions. The relations between the participants in such groups are often so smooth and the atmosphere is so humane and full of good intentions that we have to react to this in a somewhat paradoxical manner. That is, the necessity to intentionally ruin the myth about their being special, to remove or lift up the barriers between the group and the other world, to create opportunities for them to meet other social groups and new models to deal with the problems of humanity. One can easily think of such: organisations of volunteers, parents' committees, teachers' groups for professional improvement, old people in rest-houses. Only through widening the perspective the group will be able to outgrow the limits of the study programme and come apart thus each of the individuals ready to set foot on his/her own path. This will be the last stage of the group development which some of the groups will hardly ever reach.

There is one other consequence - friendships are made, in most of the groups, which last for a long time. In this case, without knowing it, you would have helped for the cause of the good, and the good you'd done would expand through the years. For the person in isolation is weak today, and among friends and people who share one's ideas one is always easier to change.

There is something else I think we have to make clear - the reason we train this group is not just in the sake of the new experience and knowledge the children are going to acquire, but also to teach them how to deal with their own problems. After the group is formed and the norms of communication and behaviour are accepted as a rule, the group quite naturally

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becomes a work which can direct its energy not only to the group members, their interrelations, and the norms and laws of our society, but to solving problems and working our projects. Here is the other possibility that the civic education study group may outgrow its purely educational purposes and become an important factor in the life of the young people in a certain community (I purposefully don't set bonus for their activities within the school walls).

And we should not forget the most important fact - the students change easier and with better results than us. The world they live in is governed by different rules.

This is how being a leader in a study group gives us possibility to self-educate - this is the model in which with the help of our students we get over the limitations of time and generations, we feel younger and more broad-minded but at the same time we have the possibility to improve ourselves. In this way if we keep on working with motivation and good intentions, we too will abide by the laws of group interaction.

About the set of responsibilities or the "hats" of the trainer

The Americans have an expression: "to wear more than one hat" which means "to have more than one set of responsibilities". I find imagery of this expression and most of all the word "hat", appropriate to express the roles a trainer has to play - and to change parts like an actor with the help of one gesture or a single stroke, or just changing his/her hat.

I've already said enough about the group leader's personality and his/her roles, so I will make just a short review of the trainers' "hats" or transformations.

DIRECTOR
You are the one to co-ordinate, instruct, inspire, correct, think over the work of the group with the smallest details, arrange its organisation and think about the possible consequences. This role is the most important one, you are responsible for everything. What is more - your responsibility becomes the bigger the more your colleagues, the education authorities, and the parents show indifference. You can think of your work with the group as of a continually changing performance of which your trainees together with you are the authors. Your presence on the stage is necessary but not obligatory.

After you have taken the responsibility to build up something and to convince the young people to follow you, you become THE LEADER OF THE GROUP in each and every moment. From now on the people start to rely on you when they have hard times, but they also expect you to play the refer whenever there's an argument.

With the progress of the group your interference becomes less apparent, but you are still as necessary to prepare the scripts for the meetings, to give advises, to give directions of the work outside the meetings, to help develop the work projects.

A SOURCE OF ENERGY
At the beginning, but even later on in moments of crisis, you are A SOURCE OF ENERGY. Don't get upset if sometimes you feel you haven't enough energy (or you are not

strong enough) - it isn't always possible to give all of yourself. You, like everyone else, have problems of your own, your ups and downs.

There are certain moments when you've got to be ready to lead the group and to stand behind the progressive ideas, to encourage unconventional way of thinking and daring steps.
It may be appropriate to tell one thing to those of you who are abundant in energy - you are working for the group, not the other way round. You are there to give opportunities, not to overwhelm.

Keep you energy, leave the clever words and speeches behind you and the group, and remember that now you rarely have to play the roles of the ALL-KNOWING person, the EXPERT, the SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

It is human the children pose question, appeal to you, ask for your opinion. It is understandable if you feel the urge to answer these demands, to take parts in their arguments. Many times you will have to fight the powerful impulse to interfere, under the otherwise reasonable excuse that the judgement of a more experienced person who is not involved in the argument is better, that your expert's conclusion might save a lot of time, which could be used for other things.

This is one of sides of your role of knowing and capable person. You mustn't forget that the children have their grounds to expect a lot from you, that you and your actions are placed in a rather unusual position, compared to your colleagues. First of all, you are a MODEL of behaviour, of attitude toward different things, toward law and people. Each and every teacher is scrutinised by the students, but your unusual mission and your voluntary participation sets you in a more favourable position to their scrutiny which becomes more well-intended but more fastidious at the same time. In school model-teachers are very rare, and it usually takes a lot of years to become a model. In contrast to the discipline model-teachers who can hardly be imitated, don't forget that your behaviour in the group can be retorted or duplicated right off.

To be a model sets huge responsibility to all your words actions. The role of the model makes you concentrate better, think better, and be better persons, at least within the group.

REFERENT PERSON
Apart from being a model you are a starting point, the REFERENT PERSON children so often need at school. They often refer to you in their minds, but they do it a lot in or out of the group.
The role of the instructor as an adviser in an extensive and important topic. We are doing special training for building up attitudes and abilities to give advice and psychological assistance.

I enlist twelve types of behaviour which is not recommended in cases when you are asked for help, but, I am afraid, this may sound like a sort of advice to you.
1. Give orders, command - "Stop complaining, This isn't such a serious problem. All you've got to do is...!"
2. Warm and threaten - "No way for this to happen!"
3. Moralise or start sentences with "must" or "have to" - You have to be very cautious when you deal with such a problem in your group.

4. Give advises, solutions, or recommendations - "It will be better if you choose another way to solve this problem."
5. Rebuke, give logical argumentation - "You've already spent an hour trying at random to find a way out. Let's establish some order."
6. Criticise, blame, condemn - "One can't expect better results in any kind of problem with such a noisy group!"
7. Put labels - "This is the serious problem, and you behave like babies!"
8. Analysis, interpretation, diagnose - "You are trying to show with what you are doing today that you simply don't care about the problem"
9. Praise, recognition - "you are so good at it that there is no chance for you to fail"
10. Sympathy, consolation - "I've been in such situation, there is nothing to fear about"
11. Interrogate, ask in round-about manner - "Tell me more about what you've done, so that I can be able to answer."
12. Withdraw, change the subject - "It is not the right time for this problem, so let's go back to our theme."

At any case, the reason we are in the group is not to advice, but to facilitate the young people to go on their way to the truth. This is the trainer's role as a FACILITATOR - to soothe group interactions and communications. This word is very appropriate because it suggests the main point of our presence in the group. We facilitate the individual to reach conclusions on issues important for her/him. We facilitate the group, at the same time, to deal with particular problem. We can supply additional information or be experts, when it is necessary (and such occasions are rather often), but we have to know what to say and here is why we need our training as SPECIALISTS (to know the children and the specificity of their development, to know the law and so many other domains referring to human rights and civic education - sociology, psychology, science of culture, etc.)

Sometimes we have to act the JUDGE and ARBITER in giving our assessment of the sides of an argument. The important thing is not to do it in an intrusive manner. It would be even better if we could have this done by someone else - an expert, a parent, or our colleague. At all events, our function is to lead the group, not to moralise or evaluate.

A person who tends to judge other people loses his/her chances to be the BALANCING FIGURE or the POINT OF SUPPORT for the group.
You must have it in mind that you will have to play this role quite frequently - there are always naturally sprang spheres of influence in a group which arise numerous arguments.

You should not forget the fact that a lot of people will see a model and a supportive figure in you because you may be the first to place them on equal terms with the others, to treat them well and to hear them. That is why your words will be meaningful to them and your convictions and conclusions will have special value for them. each one of your appraisals will result in dividing the spheres, and will mean that you take sides, and the importance of your opinion is so immense that this may cause disproportion in the relations based on the human rights.

There is domain, after all, where you can freely give your judgements - you can do this in your role of GUARDIAN OF THE GROUP NORMS. the group has authorised and empowered you to do this. You have reached an agreement that the norms will do your group good and that the regulations must be followed. even here, your judgement concerns

the breaking of the rules, not the people who have broken them. it is hard, really, because the requirements for the trainer are so many and so controversial.

what we mentioned before was that with the progress of the group , at a certain point the group itself will start regulating the norms and relationships, and this role of yours will become less prominent. At this point it would be better if you had prepared several members of the group for leaders. this role of yours as a trainer of leaders is very complicated, but it will facilitate to a great extent the future development of the group. The members of the perfect group, of course , have all been trained for leaders, but it is hardly realisable in practice. It is more likely that you will rely for that on the born leaders.

As you may see the roles are so many that one may fairly ask whether it is possible all of them to be played by one and the same person. It often happens in practice that the study group has two leaders instead of one. In this way the two of them can demonstrate to the other members of the group a true model of cooperation. Under the circumstances here, in Bulgaria, it would be a much unworkable model. The potentiality of being two leaders in just one group sounds well - your partner may be a colleague, or a motivated parent or another person from outside the school. The more possible variant is if you train the children to do it, or to play leaders themselves. This will happen by giving them insignificant instruction s to give, than certain activities, until you plan together a whole meeting session, and at last they make the meeting themselves. Apart from all other things this will help you to have a better look at the intricate world of group leadership and development.

Evaluation

The question of evaluation in Education for Democratic Citizenship is extremely important. On one hand, it has to meet the following requirements:
- be a permanent process;
- be done in the context of the objectives;
- determine the level of realisation (qualitative and quantitative) of the student;
- apply different methods and techniques;
- give information, necessary for correction.

On the other hand, it is clear that traditional evaluation methods cannot be applied to the accepted ways of working:
- the opportunities for individual testing are very limited;
- it is difficult to make constant evaluation of group participation;
- the members of the small groups are constantly changing and the trainer cannot monitor the work in these groups;
- the traditional mark in that case will have a rather demotivating effect on participants;
- test techniques do not give the necessary results when the program is orientated to the development of attitudes and change of behaviour.

What could be done in such a situation?
- Use different ways of acquiring information about the personal achievements of participants – their working notebooks, test forms, participation in group tasks, gaining

of certain skills, self-evaluation, cross-evaluation, organisation of special evaluation sessions;
- The trainer can keep a special diary (or files) where the personal achievements of every participant will be listed.

You can use the following benchmarks for evaluation:
- organisation and interpretation of information;
- skills for listening to the others;
- skills for processing information from printed materials;
- skills for accumulating information by interviews and questions;
- skills for analysis, synthesis, problem solving;
- skills for evaluation of situations and problems;
- skills for decision-making;
- skills for presenting one's own ideas;
- skills for participating in problem solving, individual work, decision-making, implementation of action plans and defending one's personal opinion;
- skills for group interaction (work with partners, participation in group discussions, skills for cooperation);
- good knowledge of the matter;
- motivation for participation in group work;
- homework;
- participation in extra-curriculum activities related to the program.

It is almost obligatory for the trainer to have a personal working diary, where group development, problems in the course of work, successful or unsuccessful action and educational strategies, difficulties in program implementation and inter-action with parents and colleagues will be described.

It is important that parents are contacted regularly during the evaluation process, as many changes in the participant can be assessed better within the family. Thus we shall lay the foundations of inter-action between teachers and parents, which has to be maintained during the whole period young people spend at school.

Another important topic in the evaluation process is the use of feedback by participants – in discussing every single activity or closing the working day.

A main principle is the focusing on the positive developments and changes and the suggestions about what could be changed or improved.

We must not forget the rules of using feedback when we suggest that participants do this – feedback must be precise and timely, and it should not concern the character of the participant or features it cannot change.

One of the greatest achievements of the trainer should be the establishment of the feedback process as an everyday practice – thus one can not only collect the necessary information but participants will be able to take an active part in the work and improve their skills in making critical statements.

Another important moment of evaluation in an Education for Democratic Citizenship group is its individual character – participants are at different levels of social and moral development and every unification of criteria would prove confusing and unfavourable for their development.

It is also important that the trainer is able to assess the group development and its dynamics, the role division and the informal structure, the ability to cope with problems or tasks, the establishment of group identity, the undertaking of socially responsible group action, the inter-action or rivalry to other student groups.

On the whole, evaluation should reflect both the individual appearance of every participant and the group character of the activities it takes part in.

In that way the Education for Democratic Citizenship trainer will be able to see at any moment the direction and features of personal and civil development of every participant in their dynamics.