There is such thing as political competency and should adult educators care about it?

Mihai Predescu

IREA
Introduction

- Most projects are inferred from sound pedagogical approaches and applied in an inductive methodology.
- Our project came from the necessity to act in order to stop the low participation of Europeans in political life.
I understand and take into account that politics have different meanings in:

- States with a long democratic tradition;
- State that are building nations, in a postcolonial context;
- State that are building democratic political systems, in a post authoritarian context;
- States that are building new economies;

**But, whatever the context, all countries share an interest in politics, how it function and how their citizens are involved.**
Background of my inquiries

- Project Europol is a Grundtvig project aimed to raise the interest of adult trainees in politics.
- Our main aim is to convince adult educators to include politics as a topic in adult formation.
- The focus of the project is on political action and political involvement.
- The project is carried out by 9 partners from 8 European countries from across Europe (Romania, Finland, France, Bulgaria, Belgium, Poland, Spain and United Kingdom).
Antecedents:
In order to function properly, a democratic state needs its citizen to actively participate in political life
Political participation/action must be carried out by competent social actors

Conclusion
In order to function properly, a democratic state need TO HAVE COMPETENT CITIZENS IN TERMS OF POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

The most obvious mean to gain competent citizens is to train them to be involved in politics by strengthening their political competence
The citizens have to be competent in their political actions. The political competency must be developed and refined constantly. The state needs citizens actively involved in politics.
There is such thing as political competency?
The structure of political competency

Competencies are defined in terms of:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

In order to describe political competency, we have to take into account that it must be:

- General enough in order to match diverse political contexts
- Specific enough in order to be differentiated from other competencies
Knowledge about:

- Political systems
- Ways that power is exercised
- Ideology and propaganda
- Analytical and critical analysis of political discourses and actions
- Political topics

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Skills

- Voting skills and behavior
- Political social action
- Influencing policies
- Participating to political decisions
- .................?
Attitude

- Positive perception about politics
- Trust in the regulatory function of politics
- Trust in the effectiveness of politics
- ............?
Data analysis

2 type of actions:

- Mapping for adult courses, materials and projects in the field of teaching politics for adults
- Survey of adult trainers and trainees
Do you know any curriculum, training material, booklet of activities or e-tools designed for teaching politics in life long learning programs?

- Yes: 14%
- No: 86%
How characteristic are the following tags for teaching politics (trainers)/larger the value more relevant it is

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<th>Maximum</th>
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Factorial analysis of trainees perception of suitability of selected topics

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<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.
BUT

SHOULD ADULT EDUCATORS CARE FOR IT?
Why is more comfortable to avoid politics in adult training?

- The politics is an ideological charged topic that lacks neutrality
- The political involvement training is reduced to active citizenship
- There is no evident competence to be trained
- The adult trainers are not trained themselves to teach this topic
- The political involvement training is biased by trainers’ perception, beliefs and interests
More questions

• Should be political learning explicit, formal or implicit, non-formal
• Can be political involvement training un-ideological or unbiased?
• Should adult educator expand their specific competence repertoire with a political teaching competence
• Teaching politics it is worthy? It offers good long-term outcomes?
Thank you!

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