

GROUP-WORK IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS IN SPAIN

MARIANGELES DE LA CABA COLLADO and RAFAEL LOPEZ ATXURRA

Abstract – The present contribution analyses how Spanish textbooks deal with activities requiring primary-school pupils to work in groups. The sample comprised 24 social science, natural science and technology textbooks written for primary-school children (6–12 years old). Having coded the information, the authors followed a two-fold methodology geared towards producing a qualitative description of group-work activities as well as a quantitative assessment of the frequency with which these appear, including their continuity. The results indicate that individual activities tend to prevail, although there has been a concerted effort recently to introduce more group-work into textbooks. The underlying educational approach of each publisher determines the frequency, treatment and continuity of group activities. Nonetheless, there is also a perceptible general tendency to reduce those activities aimed at fostering active skills of decision-making and creativity.

Zusammenfassung – GRUPPENARBEIT IN DER GRUNDSCHULBILDUNG: EINE ANALYSE VON LEHRBÜCHERN IN SPANIEN – Der vorliegende Beitrag analysiert, wie spanische Lehrbücher mit Tätigkeiten umgehen, welche von Grundschulkindern die Arbeit in Gruppen verlangen. Die Zusammenstellung umfasst 24 sozialwissenschaftliche, naturwissenschaftliche und technologische Lehrbücher, die für Grundschulkindern (6–12 Jahre alt) verfasst wurden. Nachdem die Informationen verschlüsselt wurden, folgten die Autoren einer zweifachen Methodologie, welche darauf abgestimmt war, sowohl eine qualitative Beschreibung der Tätigkeiten in Gruppenarbeit als auch eine quantitative Einschätzung der Häufigkeit, in der sie erscheinen (einschließlich ihrer Kontinuität), zu gewährleisten. Die Ergebnisse zeigen an, dass individuelle Tätigkeiten tendenziell vorherrschen, obwohl erst kürzlich eine Anstrengung unternommen wurde, mehr Gruppenarbeit in die Lehrbücher einzuführen. Der zugrundeliegende pädagogische Zugang jedes einzelnen Herausgebers bestimmt die Häufigkeit, die Behandlung und die Kontinuität der Tätigkeiten in der Gruppe. Nichtsdestoweniger besteht auch eine wahrnehmbare allgemeine Tendenz, diese Tätigkeiten zu reduzieren, die das Ziel haben, die aktiven Fähigkeiten der Entscheidungsfindung und Kreativität zu fördern.

Résumé – TRAVAIL DE GROUPE DANS L'ÉDUCATION PRIMAIRE : UNE ANALYSE DE MANUELS EN ESPAGNE – La présente contribution analyse comment les manuels espagnols traitent des activités exigeant de la part des élèves du primaire de travailler en groupe. La collection comprenait 24 manuels de sciences sociales, de sciences naturelles et de technologie écrits pour les élèves du primaire (âgés de 6 à 12 ans). Après avoir codé les informations, les auteurs ont suivi une double méthodologie dirigée vers la production d'une description qualitative des activités propres au travail en groupe, aussi bien que d'une évaluation quantitative de la fréquence avec laquelle celles-ci apparaissent, en incluant leur continuité. Le résultat indique que les activités individuelles tendent à dominer, bien qu'il y ait eu récemment un effort concerté pour introduire plus de travail en

groupe dans les manuels. L'approche éducative fondamentale de chaque éditeur détermine la fréquence, le traitement et la continuité des activités de groupe. Néanmoins, il existe aussi une tendance générale perceptible à réduire ces activités qui visent à encourager les compétences actives de prises de décision et de créativité.

Resumen – TRABAJO GRUPAL EN LA ENSEÑANZA PRIMARIA: UN ANÁLISIS DE LIBROS DE TEXTO EN ESPAÑA – Esta contribución analiza cómo los libros de texto tratan las actividades que requieren un trabajo en grupo de los alumnos de la enseñanza primaria. La muestra comprende 24 libros de ciencias sociales, ciencias naturales y técnica, escritos para alumnos de la enseñanza primaria (6 a 12 años de edad). Codificando la información, los autores siguieron un método de dos vías dirigido a realizar una descripción cualitativa de las actividades de los trabajos grupales y una valoración cuantitativa de la frecuencia con la que estos aparecen, incluyendo su continuidad. Los resultados indican que tienden a prevalecer las actividades individuales, pese a los esfuerzos concertados que se han hecho recientemente en introducir más trabajo grupal en los libros de texto. El enfoque educativo de cada editor determina la frecuencia y la continuidad de las actividades grupales y el trato que se les da. No obstante, también se percibe una tendencia general a reducir las actividades tendientes a reforzar la capacidad para tomar decisiones y de la creatividad.

Резюме – ГРУППОВАЯ РАБОТА В НАЧАЛЬНОЙ ШКОЛЕ: АНАЛИЗ УЧЕБНИКОВ В ИСПАНИИ – В данной статье проводится анализ того, как в испанских учебниках отражены виды деятельности, требующие групповой работы от учеников начальной школы. В качестве образца было взято 24 учебника по социальным наукам, естествознанию и технике, написанных для детей младшего школьного возраста (6-12 лет). Зашифровав информацию, авторы придерживались двойной методики, направленной на качественное описание групповых видов деятельности, а также на количественную оценку того, как часто они появляются, включая их непрерывный характер. Результаты показывают, что обычно преобладают индивидуальные виды деятельности, хотя недавно была предпринята одновременная попытка ввести в учебники больше видов групповой работы. Лежащий в основе образовательный подход каждого издателя определяет трактовку и непрерывность групповых видов деятельности и их частотность. Тем не менее, также наблюдается общая тенденция уменьшения количества видов деятельности, направленных на закрепление активных умений принимать решения и развивать креативность.

Within the complex framework of human evolution, the continuity and development of societies has, to a large extent, depended on their capacity to foster values and strategies of active co-operation and solidarity between their members. Despite (or perhaps as a result of) the serious contradictions of the 20th century, concern about developing collaborative and group-work skills has constituted the cornerstone of many educational reflections (Dewey, Kilpatrick, Freinet, Freire etc.) and has given rise to a number of different proposals, especially the so-called 'New School'. For all that, educational systems generally tend to focus on transmitting encyclopedic

knowledge, training students to absorb information at an individual level rather than fostering active and shared construction of knowledge.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we have witnessed the deterioration of peaceful co-existence in social and school environments, combined with serious problems such as social fragmentation, excessive individualism, lack of participation or violence making themselves manifest, as well as issues deriving from economic evolution and technological innovation. This new scenario has forced schools to rethink their range of content, strategies and skills in order to respond to contemporary citizenship challenges. In an attempt to rise to this challenge, a number of paradoxically opposed movements have emerged, such as a return to disciplinary content or skill-based learning, which have resulted in turn in a wide range of methodological proposals. At one extreme, we have the more reductionist approaches which are designed mainly to transmit information and are generally aimed at the class as a whole, with few opportunities for stimulating interaction (Kerr 1999); and at the other extreme, we have more open interpretations which aim to train students to participate both in the school context and in their communities, since only in this way can they develop the skills required of citizens today: critical analysis and the ability to make decisions, resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner, negotiate, work as part of a team, find creative solutions etc.

Among the proposals that defend group-work as a context for skills acquisition and a basic methodological instrument, we should highlight citizenship-education approaches (Cogan and Derricot 2000; Cremieux 2001; Naval et al. 2002; Print et al. 2002), which are directly related to the lifelong-skills-acquisition approach (Istance 2003). Both methodologies endorse a constructivist, collaborative, active, contextual and intercultural perspective.

The Council of Europe (Audigier 1999, 2000; Duerr et al. 2000) has made a concerted effort to establish the skills that citizens of future generations should possess: (1) cognitive skills (the ability to analyse, summarise, argue, be critical etc.); (2) socio-emotional skills (knowing how to listen, self-control etc.) and ethical skills (not remaining indifferent to the consequences of your actions for others); and (3) skills for action (the capacity for debate, working with others, co-operating, resolving conflicts in accordance with democratic principles, being able to negotiate and mediate etc.). Not only have the skills to be developed been established, but the close relationship between these three areas of competence has been underscored. In this sense, we can say that knowing how to work as part of a group constitutes not only one of the specific skills established for effective citizenship but also the context in which other basic skills can be developed in response to current social and educational problems (Crick 1998; Hicks 2001). Nevertheless, group-work alone does not guarantee the development of these other skills. A number of additional requirements must also be met, since these will determine whether the opportunities for learning skills (especially the more active ones, such as critical reflection, dialogue, comparing perspectives, participation and joint decision-making) are expanded, distorted or restricted.

The psycho-pedagogic literature offers a large number of guidelines that should be borne in mind when setting up a group-work activity, in order to ensure that group members co-operate with each other and develop the skills required. The approach to the work has to foster positive inter-dependence, that is, the responsibilities and tasks of each person should be clearly defined so as to encourage co-operation (Johnson and Johnson 1987; Bennet and Dunne 1992), while avoiding joint tasks which are carried out in a way that involves simply coming together or merely commenting on the work carried out (Slavin 1985, 1992; Kutnick and Rogers 1994; Emmer and Gerwels 2002). Moreover, activities must be designed to encourage active learning, and this in such a way that the learners raise questions, take initiative, plan, restructure, experiment and do project-work (Schwartz and Pollinshuke 1995; Lunenberg and Volman 1999). In other words, whether the work is carried out individually or with others, learning becomes relevant insofar as it encourages one to develop skills that foster autonomy. Additionally, it is vital to offer useful activities, and in this sense the carrying out of projects (Ladewski et al. 1994; Krajcik et al. 1994; Lacueva 2000) is a longstanding alternative that helps promote citizenship competences, since it allows learners to propose, compare, decide and value. The aim of such projects is to allow pupils to follow a systematic, co-operative work process (and not just a one-off activity) in response to a challenge or problem. Finally, it should be stressed that one can make the most of a wealth of interactive activities only if appropriate guidelines are given (Galton and Williamson 1992; Tacade 1993; Reynolds 1997).

All curricular materials can contribute to the development of skills that enable students to become citizens fully prepared for living and acting in their environment. Although some areas, such as history or the social sciences, are particularly conducive to increasing students' awareness of citizenship (Berman 1987; Berman and La Farge 1993; Bailly 1998), we should not forget that all subjects may contribute to increasing such awareness, depending on the procedures and working methods used. For example, scientific activities that stimulate students to use the steps defined by scientific method and to reflect with their classmates will enrich key skills such as reflective establishment of hypotheses, causal analysis and the critical ability to discuss the results obtained.

However, learning citizenship competences cannot be limited to a mere curricular activity. In fact, it is necessary for the school to have a 'global approach' that provides a secure environment (Bickmore 2001) and encourages participation (Chilcoat and Ligon 1998; Obin 2000; Print et al. 2002). What is more, activities should not be limited simply to a school context. The community has tremendous potential for facilitating learning through 'experience-based learning' or 'community service' (Conrad 1991; Johnson and Notah 1999).

Numerous educational reforms carried out during the 1990s introduced issues related to group-work and training in life skills that are required by

democratic societies. In Spain, the most recent education law (MEC 1990) includes these aspects among its objectives.

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the research project presented here was to analyse the group and interactive activities proposed in primary school social science, natural science and technology textbooks published in the 1990s, subsequent to the Spanish Education Reform (MEC 1990), from the perspective of the citizenship competences that they promote. Our intention was to ascertain whether – unlike the traditional way of designing school tasks, which are to be carried out individually – the educational approaches fostered by the reform (which are oriented towards meeting the new challenges facing complex, democratic societies) have encouraged publishers to propose more interactive activities, and then to analyse these activities. More specifically, we aimed to do the following:

- (1) Out of the total number of activities (both individual and interactive) for each publisher and level, analyse the specific weight and calculate the percentages of the activities designed to be carried out with others.
- (2) Define the type of skills fostered by them and how often they appear in the different publishers' textbooks, analysing the actions required by the interactive activities. We also examined how they are organised, in what sequence they appear during primary education and what areas and levels of interaction they propose.
- (3) Finally, analyse whether the textbooks reflect the recommendations made by educational psychology literature regarding activity design. Here our intention was to provide a qualitative description of the tasks' requirements and the guidelines given for carrying out the activities.

We took a sample of 24 social science, natural science and technology textbooks from four publishers (Santillana, Bruño, Elkar and Erein) for the six years of primary education ($6 \times 4 = 24$). All of the books had been published in the 1990s, subsequent to the educational reform; the publishing firms were specifically chosen because they were the most widely used according to available studies (Gimeno 1995; Isasi and Erriondo 1996). Our sample choice was based on three criteria. Firstly, all the books analysed were textbooks, given that such publications constitute one of the key didactic resources available to teachers within the wide range of existing curricular materials (reference books, reading books etc.). Secondly, the study focused on social science, natural science and technology textbooks (a single joint publication after the educational reform), since this area of the curriculum offers a wider range of possibilities for the inclusion of this type of content than certain other areas (such as mathematics). Thirdly, all textbooks included in the sample were published between 1992 and 1999, given that it is from this time onwards that we can reasonably expect values oriented specifically towards

Table 1. Information codes

Type	Identification data	Place of interaction	Scale of interaction	Action required	Instructions and guidelines
Individual activities Activities involving interaction	Publisher Page numbers	School Outside school	In twos In small groups (3, 4)	Describe Discuss	What to do
					How to do
			Whole class	Create Other	How to behave

democratic citizenship to be included in accordance with the ideal defined in the foregoing educational reforms introduced in Europe and Spain.

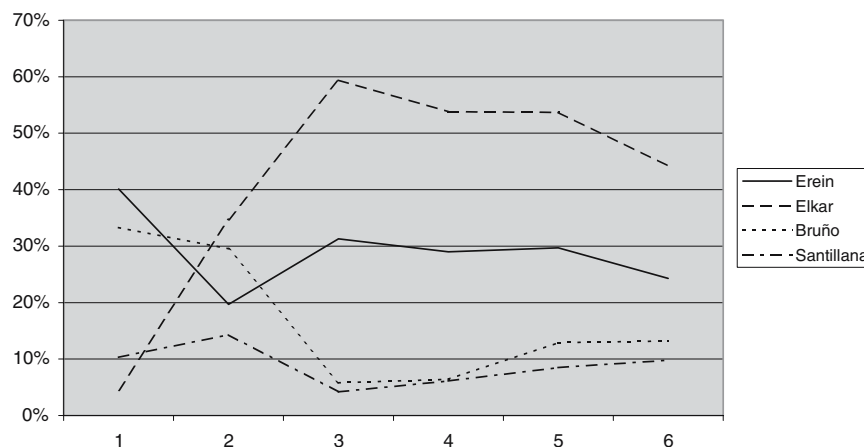
After reviewing the literature published in the field of textbook analysis (Venezky 1992; Lebrun et al. 2002), we first decided on information codes (Table 1). We began by reviewing, one by one, all the activities in the textbooks included in the sample, and then identified those that could be classified as interactive rather than as individual. Subsequently, we collected data on each of these activities. In addition to identifying data (publisher, page numbers), we recorded information about the place of interaction (inside or outside school) and the type or scale of interaction (in twos, small groups or entire classes). Furthermore, we recorded the actions required by each activity and the guidelines provided.

We followed the trends for textbook research and used qualitative and quantitative methodological analysis (Beck and McKeown 1991; Lebrun et al. 2002). Firstly, we ordered and classified the actions required for each activity (describe, analyse, comment, debate, survey, create etc.), grouping together activities according to common characteristics. The level of agreement between the two people responsible for classifying the activities according to type was very high ($r_{jj}=0.97$), as is reflected in the calculation of Ebel's (1951) inter-judge reliability coefficient, taken from Rivas (1984). Subsequently, during the second stage of our research, we provided a qualitative description of the activities' internal structure (Taylor and Bogdan 1984; Ryan and Bernard 2000), explaining the skills required to carry out the task. In this way, we allocated a typology to each group activity and counted the number of activities within each type, as well as the total percentages of interactive and individual activities. This enabled us to calculate the frequency with which certain activities appear as compared to others and their continuity in educational cycles and throughout primary education. Finally, we carried out a qualitative analysis of the extent to which the textbooks adhere to the recommendations made by educational psychology literature, while paying special attention to guidelines.

Analysis and discussion of results

Activities involving interaction: Their weight, continuity, areas covered and scale

In general, the number of activities involving interaction in the textbooks studied was lower than the number of individual activities. However, the percentage of group and participatory activities out of the total varied widely from one publishing firm to another, and ranges from almost half the total number of activities in the book (Elkar: 46%) to one very low 10% (Santillana), with some intermediate figures (Erein: 28.7% and Bruño: 18.6%). What is more, there was no homogenous pattern of continuity throughout all the years of primary education, and in fact the percentages

Figure 1. Percentage of group activities dealt with by publishers and corresponding levels

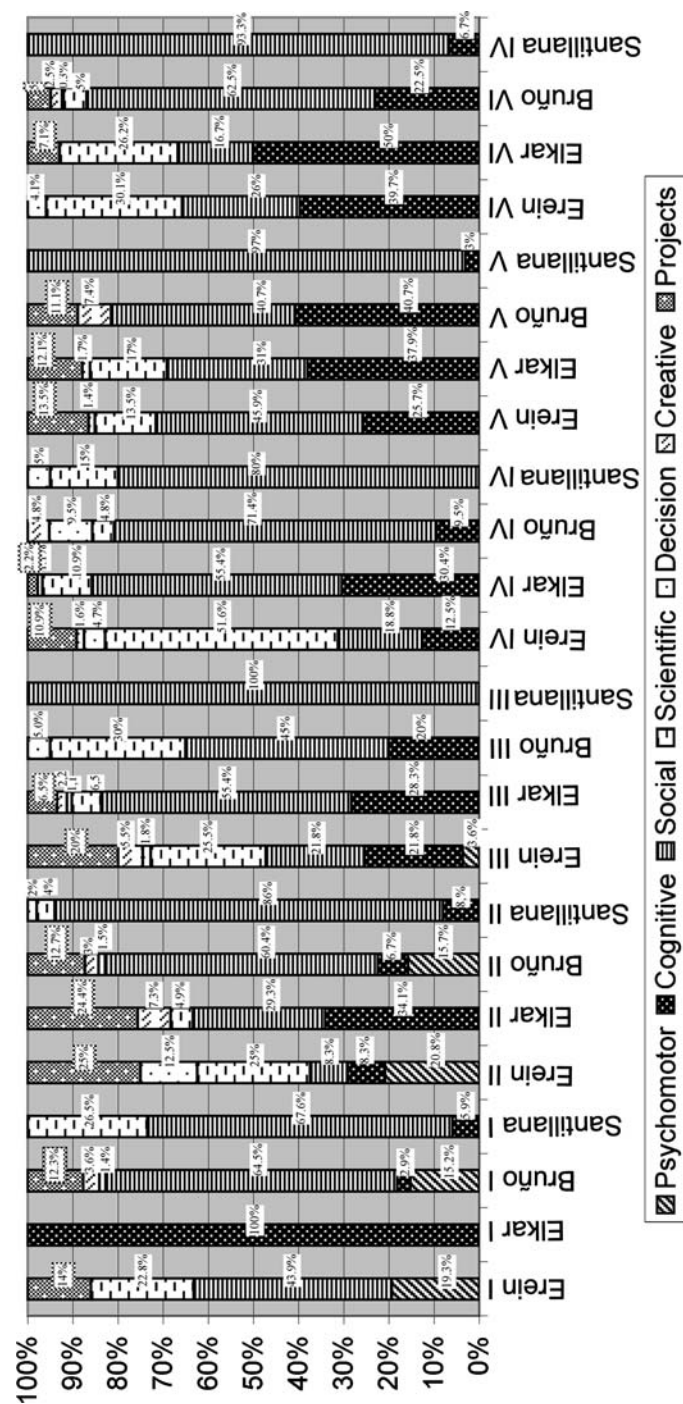
for interactive activities do not remain constant for any of the publishers (see Figure 1). When trying to pin down existing patterns (in light of the predominant lack of continuity), we found that there were almost as many tendencies as there are publishers: (1) a relative tendency to maintain a constant number of interactive activities in all years, except in the second (Erein); (2) a tendency to concentrate a large number of these kinds of activities in one specific year (the second cycle of primary education in the case of Elkar and the first in Bruño); and (3) a relative balance in the percentage of participatory activities in the first and final years, with a marked drop in the intermediate years (Santillana).

The majority of interactive activities were in-school and in-classroom. This was true for all the publishing firms studied, and in fact the percentage of out-of-school group and participatory activities in primary school was no higher than 10% even in the best of cases (Erein: 10.7%, Elkar: 9.1%, Bruño: 6.1%, and Santillana: 0.5%). There were three kinds of in-school activities (classroom group, small group and activities in twos, or face to face), and as a common denominator all publishers showed only a very minimal tendency to suggest activities in twos (Bruño: 1.7%, Erein: 1.9%, Elkar: 3%, Santillana: 5.1%).

Skills fostered by the different group activities

Analysis of the percentage of each type of activity, coupled with the analysis of continuity throughout the primary school curriculum, reveals the attention paid by each publisher to different skills (Figure 2). There was no generally unified approach. We should stress that textbooks selected specific types of group activities within the available range and then focused on them to a greater or lesser extent, thus shaping a specific perception of citizenship.

Figure 2. Percentage of each type of group activities out of total group activities by publishers and levels



However, all publishers showed a general tendency to reduce to a minimum any activities aimed at fostering active skills and more conscious participation (decision-making, creative activities, activities aimed at developing joint projects).

Some publishers (two out of the four we looked at: Bruño and Erein) included activities fostering psychomotor skills in their textbooks. These were concentrated in the first years of primary education and, viewed from the aim of inculcating active citizenship, are quite relevant. In this vein, it is important to highlight the co-operative element of some of the games that develop psychomotor skills. We found two kinds of activity: firstly, games of bodily expression and ball games that require both exact movements and co-ordination with other children (games that are organised in the form of group competitions). On many occasions, participation is required for a common goal, and so the finalisation of the task is the result of co-operative participation. The second kind, more numerous than the first, are musical-expression activities (singing, reciting) and rhythmic activities (clapping, rhythm-following).

Some of the interactive group activities suggested in the textbooks concentrated on tasks contributing to the development of cognitive skills, either basic ones (reply, remember, find, describe, identify, fill in cards, complete) or more complex ones (analyse, classify, relate, compare, calculate, write reports, summarise). The percentage level at which they are presented in the textbooks varies, but they were generally dealt with continuously during primary education by all the publishers we analysed. Their usefulness, from the viewpoint of the objective of training active citizens, would depend on their being treated not just like a simple list of tasks.

The interactive tasks that appear most in all the publishers' textbooks were those requiring a group response to social matters. These are the activities that have the greatest continuous presence in primary education, although their distribution varied. There were three types of such activities:

- (1) *Deliberation activities* requiring specific debate on interpersonal and social issues were formulated both on a small-group scale (Elkar and Erein) and at a classroom-group level (Bruño and Santillana). In general, publishers included debating activities throughout the whole of primary education, although not in a particularly balanced way. The potential for participation and the usefulness of the basic exchange varied in accordance with what is required and the type of content to which it was applied. Thus, 'commenting', which involves identifying and describing recognisable elements within a picture, can give us only a very limited perspective. However, 'interpreting' a scene, imagining what the people who appear in a comic strip might be saying, especially when it involves a problematic situation (the temper-tantrum of a child who has not managed to get a toy desired), provides us with more active options that involve participation and exchange of opinions. What is more, unlike

those tasks with a merely descriptive content that simply reproduce knowledge, activities that require telling classmates about experiences, knowledge and personal expectations ('things that happen to me', 'games that I remember', 'what my parents do', 'what would you like') are, in theory, more useful when promoting civic participation.

- (2) *Drama activities* placing emphasis on verbal and non-verbal communication through role-playing make it possible for a group to reproduce and represent social experiences that include playing different roles and using empathy. On many occasions, social matters were the reference point for dramatised activities; for example, they were used to introduce the roles of workers and employers faced with a work problem (Elkar IV) or the roles that people play in different production sectors (Bruño III). Political and institutional issues hardly appeared at all, although we did find one very useful exercise (Erein III) which encouraged participation through the simulation of a local council plenary session, with very structured guidelines for debate and resolution.

Furthermore, publishers presented *group activities aimed at developing scientific skills*. In general, these types of activities are uncommon throughout primary education both as regards their distribution over different years and their typology, but they do have a high degree of continuity throughout the whole of primary education. Publishers do consider (to varying degrees) the fact that this should not be limited to mere experimentation (Howe et al. 2000). Although it is true that not all publishers do so, we did find that oftentimes these activities require some kind of group reflection or debate, either to propose hypotheses or to draw conclusions (especially Elkar and Erein). These demands imply the development of more active skills, since they force students to carry out in-depth analyses of certain areas of reality, asking questions and forming explanatory proposals which they then test by experimentation, discussing their results as part of a group. All this fosters intellectual and social skills developed through group work.

Despite their supposed importance, *activities fostering group decision-making* (collecting proposals, deciding on regulations, choosing subject-matter and people, or proposing rules and improvements) were few in comparison with the total number of tasks involving participation, and they tend to become still less common in later years, even disappearing entirely in some cases. As for the issue of continuity, three trends could be observed. (1) Such activities were continuously present throughout primary education. Publishers made an effort to increase complexity progressively over time, both regarding subject areas and the way criteria were structured, gradually altering the type of decisions made, moving from specific life experiences to more general issues linked to the social life of the community. Thus, in the first years, it was a matter of choosing the names and number of members of a group, which afternoon should be spent playing games, or classroom

rules. In later years, other questions were posed, such as the choice of a journey or proposals for improvement at home, at school or in the city.

Creative activities aimed to encourage children to use their imagination to find a solution to a problem and (using a series of given elements) to produce something that goes beyond what was already known. These activities used instructions such as 'invent', 'create', 'imagine' or 'recycle'. They clearly represented a minority among all the activities, and in fact in one book they were never used at all (Santillana). Creativity appeared in all the various subjects, but it was specifically in recycling that publishers deal with it most frequently: building new objects from old or unused ones (Elkar V), creating figures (puppets and animals) out of wood pulp (Erein IV), or inventing new uses for everyday objects (Bruño V). In subjects related to everyday needs (food: Elkar II; leisure: Erein III), very simple activities were suggested, such as menu preparation or the invention of new games. Creativity applied to social reality was seen in proposals to improve local festivities (Elkar III) or in imagining ideal places (Erein V). Scientific and technical fields also provided opportunities for developing creativity by asking students to build a toy using an electric circuit (Bruño VI) or a new contraption (Erein II, IV), using a well-structured group activity that requires thought, comment, design, building, testing, showing and explaining to classmates. The field of social science was especially used by Bruño (I, II). In this publishing firm, it was the reading of the signs and signals made by comic characters that was used to formulate hypotheses about their characteristics (personality etc.) or about what they did.

Finally, *projects*, which are more complex and useful activities from the perspective of active citizenship skills, accounted for around 10% of activities (see Figure 1) in the case of three publishers. Moreover, they had a certain degree of continuity (noticeable in Elkar and Erein, and to a lesser degree in Bruño). Different subject areas were covered during the different stages of primary education.

Leisure and 'festive' issues predominated as project themes in the initial years of primary education. Festivities were used as a reason to organise a sports day or a tea party (Elkar II, Bruño) or a Christmas party (Erein I, II). In addition, there were a number of performances and games traditionally related to the building of objects or scenery (masks, puppets, shops, models etc.) that were then used as props or the backdrop for role-play, different situations, rules and forms of operating. In some cases (Bruño), the issue of personal awareness was dealt with through the identification, production and expression of different feelings (sadness, happiness, anger). The rest of the projects during the first years of primary education had a social content. Planning and organising a shop (names of materials, products, signs, labels, prices) was used as the start of a daily activity, such as 'a day of shopping'. In the same vein, puppets were made and then used to simulate the organisation of a supermarket (with check-out staff, security staff etc.).

As children progress through primary education, new project subjects appear in the textbooks, such as working with the media, outings, exhibitions and posters. The aim of working with the media was to use technological resources, organisational strategies and discussion or the formats traditionally employed by the media to prepare printed or audio-visual products. For example, some publishers asked students to prepare a radio programme (Erein III) or advertisements for each type of media (TV, radio, press: Erein IV), with each group in a class choosing a different kind of media for which to prepare specific ads for a fictitious product. In another exercise, students were to organise a radio or television session (Elkar IV) reproducing a specific programme structure (surveys and interviews in the street, roundtables, advertising). Outings were another common project type that appeared in textbooks and were used for fieldwork and for observing plants, trees (Erein III and Erein V), animals (Erein III, IV) or park ecosystems (Elkar VI). Finally, exhibitions and posters, which are used to depict historical content (changes in lifestyles: Erein V), sometimes were opened to other classes as well. The theme of historical changes came up again in the project on the history of the city (Bruño VI), which appears on a poster. Each stage was allocated to a specific group, which then had to use a variety of sources, find those objects and buildings characteristic of each stage, and explain how remains had been preserved. In this way, the project was meant to become a tool not only for providing academic knowledge but also for raising students' awareness of their local heritage.

Guidelines

We have grouped the guidelines we found in the textbooks analysed here into three types: guidelines about what to do, how to do it and how to behave.

(a) *What to do.* Normally, the group activities presented by textbooks simply employed a series of questions to indicate what was to be done for each given activity. Frequently, interaction was limited and involved the juggling of information and individual replies, especially when the questions were closed questions or questions with very limited possibilities for comparison. Such was the case with questions requiring a simple yes/no or descriptive answer.

Activities with several different kinds of instructions about what to do appeared only in very few projects, such as end-of-term outings. In this case, the guidelines on 'what' to do cover very different and varied tasks, such as debating and resolving problems, analysing, choosing, decision-making, planning a route, organising resources, sharing responsibilities and preparing a brief report using a three-page advertising-type leaflet to summarise the outing.

Apart from the actual questions, the way in which the subject was presented directly affected the activity's potential. The most widely used

formula for presenting an activity was a simple, neutral indication (using just a word or short sentence) of the subject with which the activity would be dealing. When this formula was used, the activity simply sought to repeat something dealt with in class, commenting upon what had been learned or found out, and taking a single approach. Using a far more enriching approach, albeit one that is still in the minority, some textbooks posed subject-based (e.g., history) issues or problems from different viewpoints (e.g., the enslavement of indigenous peoples). In this case, texts or materials were included with opposing points of view which required the child to take a stance, argue, make decisions or present alternatives. It is worth pointing out that on some occasions the introduction of local or global social problems (neighbourhood racism, abandonment of pets, man-made environmental imbalances) was linked to the analysis and preparation of proposals for improvement. Finally, only on very few occasions were ideas, social opinions and beliefs linked to everyday knowledge thematised ('some kinds of progress lead to others'). These were issues normally dealt with in debate format.

(b) *How to do it*. Activities with instructions or guidelines on 'how to do it' appeared for specific *types of tasks* requiring the use and handling of materials. Normally, the books provided written instructions on the order in which a task's different steps were to be carried out.

In the social sciences, guidelines could be found for two kinds of activity: (1) the study of social issues; and (2) debating experience. In the first of these, the guidelines focused on the final two stages of the scientific method: (a) the observation and study of a social issue with instructions on how to conduct analysis and items that highlighted the different aspects of the content to be studied (e.g., the structure of the local council); and (b) the presentation of a report indicating the points to be dealt with based on the guidelines given. In the latter stage, the guidelines linked to debate-type social experiences were mainly of the 'what to do' type (response to a set of questions) rather than the 'how to do it' type. On the other hand, in more elaborate debating activities, guidelines were offered for the three stages of the deliberation process. The first of these aimed to help students to prepare for the debate. In this case, preliminary study was required and could be carried out either individually or in small groups, and meant to focus the debate on the information gathered. Normally in these cases, indications were given about how to collect information (books, interviews, surveys), along with indications about how to analyse material and structure information (tables etc.). In the second stage, debating guidelines were offered. Such guidelines consist of an outline of questions that could be used to structure the debate and, depending upon the approach taken, could require students to take a stance, provide reasoning for decisions that need to be made or reflect on the pros and cons of a specific issue. In the third stage, guidelines for the final stage of the debate or post-debate activities aimed to help students

to reach a consensus, propose improvements or prepare results and appraisals. This was done by following specific indications regarding some of the aspects mentioned, specifying their achievements orally, in writing or with posters. Hence, the activity went beyond mere discussion, with the final stage closing the debate and giving meaning to the whole activity.

(c) *How to behave*. Activities that indicated how to behave or to go about something used three types of guidelines: organisational, meta-cognitive and attitudinal.

Organisational guidelines included those that refer to a task's material needs (resources, availability and use), decisions regarding the sharing of responsibilities (material to bring, pinpointing the concern and preparation of questions) and the role each person in a group should play (e.g., who is to chair), as well as the planning of the work to be carried out (time sequence, way in which the group work is organised). The co-operative type of organisation that tended to be used most often in textbooks was normally structured like a jigsaw, both regarding the activities carried out by the classroom group (e.g., with each group analysing one neighbourhood association) and those carried out in small groups (with each member working on one aspect of a poster). This type of organisation was also used for some projects. Thus, in the newspaper-writing project (Bruño), guidelines were given on how to share responsibilities (director, editors) and tasks (sections of the newspaper), and in the case of the rubbish-analysis project, the zones were divided up between groups (Erein).

Meta-cognitive guidelines were indications that bore on (a) the awareness of what we want to do, (b) task control and monitoring, (c) the appraisal and self-regulation of the task and (d) the ways of working together as a group. These aspects were thoroughly dealt with by the publishers (Bruño, Erein, Elkar) that used them in scientific activities and projects, although they were accorded very little weight.

Attitudinal guidelines, or codes of conduct related to behavioural rules in group tasks, were also accorded very limited weight in the tasks analysed. When they did appear, then exclusively in relation to two kinds of activity: debates and outings. Debate-centred attitudinal guidelines included: waiting your turn before speaking, speaking one at a time and without shouting, listening carefully, respecting the opinions of others, sticking to the subject-matter and taking notes. Attitudinal guidelines for outings focused generally on collaboration, asking the teacher for help when necessary, and how to prepare invitations.

Issues for consideration and conclusions

It is clear that not all activities involving working with others foster the development of active skills to the same degree. The textbooks examined here chose certain kinds of activities and levels from those available and then used

them to a greater or lesser extent; that choice represented a specific option related citizenship. The very limited percentage of more facilitating activities (or their gradual reduction and even disappearance) was striking, especially regarding those involving decision-making, creativity or separate projects.

Food for thought was also provided by the general decrease in the presence of activities involving interaction or at least a balanced proportion in comparison with individual activities, something that also raised certain questions. What is paradoxical about all of this is that if citizenship competences (Duerr et al. 2000; Morris and Cogan 2001; Marco Stiefel 2002) are limited and focus mainly on the early years of education, and even disappear altogether from textbooks published by certain publishers, are we really training participatory citizens capable of understanding and assuming their responsibilities, especially if we fail to foster any fundamental skills for this, or if they are limited to the first years of education?

Our analysis does not allow us to characterise the type of citizen fostered by the textbooks in general, since there are very noticeable differences between publishers. Despite these differences, however, there was a clear tendency towards only partially taking the recommendations of educational psychology into account. The actions of asking, valuing, comparing opinions, drawing conclusions, and reaching a consensus, actions that are supposedly necessary for group work, were usually in the minority, the exception rather than the rule. Even more infrequent were debating activities structured around materials and documents, where different or problematic viewpoints were compared or issues for conflict resolution dealt with.

Only very few activities focused on promoting co-operative work (Johnson and Johnson 1987). Nevertheless, we should acknowledge the fact that some textbooks truly made full use of the potential of project work, thereby actively engaging in the spirit of active teaching and promoting teamwork in different tasks that require building, organising and planning.

The majority of activities provided guidelines on 'what to do', using a set of questions. However, only very few activities gave guidelines on the distribution or exchange of both the activity and the roles to be played either within one large group or different groups within the classroom, despite this being a key aspect of the co-operative learning approach (Slavin 1985, 1992; Kutnick and Rogers 1994).

Meta-cognitive processes – whose importance has been highlighted to such a great extent by the scientific literature on self-regulation over the last 20 years and which involve defining objectives and tasks, asking questions in the different stages of the process, thinking about and monitoring how the student is learning, preparing summaries and drawing conclusions – were virtually nonexistent, although some interesting efforts were made to introduce them into some projects.

Out-of-school activities were generally scarce, so that the possibility of exposing students to an adult social world was limited to a very small number of experiences (the family, some sectors of the labour market and, to a

lesser extent, experts on a specific subject or group and institutional representatives). Many of these activities were optional, hence, the integration of the school into the community with a view to the social acquisition of knowledge was limited. Thus, if an activity is aimed at collecting or discussing information, we ought to be wondering to what extent active and co-operative learning is encouraged if information elaboration is minimal? Having said this, there were also activities that attempted to ensure that the information collected from the world outside the school was dealt with in a more co-operative fashion, through the preparation of tables, posters or conclusions. Nevertheless, there were only very few cases in which operational proposals were made that encouraged the participation of students in improving the community.

Finally, we should point out that the analysis we have carried out here should be compared to other research in order to widen the sample of publishers and geographical contexts. This would enable us to gain a better understanding of the predominant publishing trends regarding activity models; to carry out transnational research – asking whether group activities are limited to fostering the development of cognitive skills (analyse, summarise etc.), or are set up so as to stimulate the more active skills considered essential to coping with the challenges posed by individuals' personal and professional lives, such as making group decisions, finding creative solutions and carrying out co-operative projects etc.; and, finally, specify the scope and means of developing different publishing proposals within the school context (research into these issues would be of interest to all professionals working towards improving the classroom situation). In short, we believe that all of this would allow us to discover more about the citizenship models proposed here and elsewhere, models on which school practice is based.

Acknowledgment

This project, a continuation of previous studies by López and de la Caba 2002–2003 and de la Caba and López (forthcoming), forms part of a project subsidised by the University of the Basque Country, Spain (1/UPV 00024.354-H-13892/2001).

References

- Audigier, François. 1999. *L'éducation a la citoyenneté*. Paris: Institut National de la Recherche Pédagogique.
- . 2000. *Basics Concepts and Core Competencies for Education for Democratic Citizenship*. DGIV/EDU/CIT, 23. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Bailly, Antoine. 1998. La educación para las nuevas ciudadanías mediante la historia y la geografía: enfoque teórico [Education for New Citizens through History and Geography: A Theoretical Approach]. *Perspectivas* 28(2): 223–227.

- Beck, Isabel L., and Margaret G. McKeown. 1991. Substantive and Methodological Considerations for Productive Textbook Analysis. In: *Handbook of Social Studies Teaching and Learning*, ed. by James P. Shaver, 496–513. New York: Macmillan.
- Bennet, Neville, and Elisabeth Dunne. 1992. *Managing Classroom Groups*. Devon: Simon and Schuster Education.
- Berman, Shelley (ed.). 1987. *Making History: A Social Studies Curriculum in the Participation Series*. Cambridge, MA: Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibility.
- Berman, Sheldon, and Phyllis La Fargue. 1993. *Promising Practices in Teaching Social Responsibility*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press.
- Bickmore, Kathy. 2001. Student Conflict Resolution: Power “Sharing” in Schools, and Citizenship Education. *Curriculum Inquiry* 31(2): 137–162.
- Cogan, John J., and Ray Derricot. 2000. *Citizenship for the 21st Century: An International Perspective on Education*. London: Kogan Page.
- Conrad, Dan. 1991. School Community Participation for Social Studies. In: *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning*, ed. by James P. Shaver, 540–551. New York: Macmillan.
- Cremieux, Colette. 2001. *La citoyenneté à l'école*. Paris: Syros.
- Crick, Bernard. 1998. *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools: Final Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*. London: QCA.
- Chilcoat, George W., and Jerry A. Ligon. 1998. “We talk here. This is a school for talking.” Participatory Democracy from the Classroom out into the Community: How Discussion was used in the Mississippi Freedom Schools. *Curriculum Inquiry* 28(2): 165–193.
- De la Caba Collado, Mariangeles, and Rafael López Atxurra. 2005. Contents for Democratic Citizenship. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 37(5): 1–24.
- Duerr, Karlheinz Vedrala Spajic-Vrkas, and Isabel Ferreira. 2000. *Strategies for Learning Democratic Citizenship*. DECS/EDU/CIT, 16. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Ebel, Robert L. 1951. Estimation on the Reliability of Rating. *Psychometrika* 16: 407–424.
- Emmer, Edmund T., and Mary Claire Gerwels. 2002. Cooperative Learning in Elementary Classrooms: Teaching Practices and Lesson Characteristics. *The Elementary School Journal* 103(1): 75–91.
- Galton, Maurice, and John Williamson. 1992. *Group Work in the Primary School*. London: Routledge.
- Gimeno, José. 1995. Materiales y textos: contradicciones de la democracia cultural [Materials and Texts: Contradictions of Cultural Democracy]. In: *Libros de texto y construcción de materiales curriculares* [Textbooks and the Construction of Teaching Materials], ed. by J. G. Mínguez and M. Beas, 75–130. Granada. Proyecto sur.
- Hicks, David. 2001. *Citizenship for the Future: A Practical Classroom Guide*. Godalming, UK: World Wildlife Fund.
- Howe, Christine, Andy Tolmie, Val Duchak-Tanner, and Catherine Rattray. 2000. Hypothesis Testing in Science: Group Consensus and the Acquisition of Conceptual and Procedural Knowledge. *Learning and Instruction* 10: 361–391.
- Isasi, Xabier, and Lore Erriondo. 1996. Testuliburuak aukeran [Choosing Textbooks]. *Jakin* 93–94: 133–150.

- Istance, David. 2003. Schooling and Lifelong Learning: Insights from OECD Analyses. *European Journal of Education* 38(1): 85–99.
- Johnson, David W., and Roger T. Johnson. 1987. *Learning Together and Alone*. New York: Plenum.
- Johnson, Angelina Marie, and Deborah Jean Notah. 1999. Service Learning: History, Literature Review, and a Pilot Study of Eighth Graders. *The Elementary School Journal* 99(5): 453–467.
- Krajcik, Joseph S., Phillis C. Blumenfeld, Ronald W. Marx, and Elliot Soloway. 1994. A Collaborative Model for Helping Middle Grade Science Teachers Learn Project-based Instruction. *The Elementary School Journal* 94(5): 483–497.
- Kerr, David. 1999. Changing the Political Culture: The Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. *Oxford Review of Education* 25(1–2): 275–290.
- Kutnick, Peter, and Colin Rogers. 1994. *Groups in School*. London: Cassell.
- Lacueva, Aurora. 2000. Proyectos de investigación en la escuela: científicos, tecnológicos y ciudadanos [Research Projects in Schools: Scientific, Technological, and Citizen-oriented]. *Revista de Educación* 323: 265–288.
- Ladewski, Barbara G., Joseph S. Krajcik, and Connie L. Harvey. 1994. A Middle Grade Science Teacher's Emerging Understanding of Project-based Instruction. *The Elementary School Journal* 94(5): 499–516.
- Lebrun, Johanne, Yves Lenoir, Mario Laforest, François Larose, Gerard Raymond Roy, Carlo Spallanzani, and Mary Pearson. 2002. Past and Current Trends in the Analysis of Textbooks in a Quebec Context. *Curriculum Inquiry* 32(1): 51–83.
- López Atxurra, Rafael, and Mariangeles de la Caba. 2002. Formación sociopersonal del ciudadano en los libros de texto de conocimiento del medio (segundo ciclo de primaria) [Socio-personal Citizenship Training in Social Science, Natural Science, and Technology Textbooks (Second Primary Cycle)]. *Bordón. Revista de Pedagogía* 54(1): 69–82.
- . 2003. Los contenidos orientados a la participación en los libros de texto de primaria del conocimiento del medio [Participation-oriented Contents in Primary School Social Science, Natural Science, and Technology Textbooks]. *Innovación Educativa* 13: 73–84.
- Lunenberg, Mieke L., and Monique Volman. 1999. Active Learning: Views and Actions of Students and Teachers in Basic Education. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 15: 431–445.
- Marco Stiefel Berta (ed.), 2002. *Educación para la ciudadanía: un enfoque basado en el desarrollo de competencias transversales* [Citizenship Education: An Approach Based on the Development of Transversal Skills]. Madrid: Narcea.
- Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia. 1990. *Ley orgánica de ordenación general del sistema educativo-LOGSE* [Organic Law Governing the General Education System]. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia.
- Morris, Paul, and John Cogan. 2001. A Comparative Overview: Civic Education across Six Societies. *International Journal of Educational Research* 35: 109–123.
- Naval, Concepción, Murray Print, and Ruud Veldhuis. 2002. Education for Democratic Citizenship in the New Europe: Context and Reform. *European Journal of Education* 37(2): 107–128.

- Obin, Jean Pierre (ed.). 2000. *Questions pour l'éducation civique*. Paris: Hachette.
- Print, Murray, Susanne Ornstrom, and Henrik Skovgaard Nielsen. 2002. Education for Democratic Processes in Schools and Classrooms. *European Journal of Education* 37(2): 193–210.
- Reynolds, Michael. 1997. *Groupwork in Education and Training: Ideas in Practice*. London: Kogan Page.
- Rivas, Francisco. 1984. *Elementos de Psicometría* [Elements of Psychometry]. Valencia: Psique.
- Ryan, Gerry W., and Bernard H. Russell. 2000. Data Management and Analysis Methods. In: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 769–802. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schwartz, Susan, and Mindy Pollinshuke. 1995. *Aprendizaje activo* [Active Learning]. Madrid: Narcea.
- Slavin Robert (ed.). 1985. *Learning to Cooperate, Cooperating to Learn*. New York: Plenum Press.
- . 1992. Co-operative Learning. In: *The Social Psychology of the Primary School*, ed. by Colin Rogers and Peter Kutnick, 226–246. London: Routledge.
- Tacade. 1993. *Skills for the Primary School Child*. Manchester: Tacade.
- Taylor, Steven J., and Robert Bogdan. 1984. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings*. New York: Wiley.
- Venezky, Richard L. 1992. Textbooks in School and Society. In: *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*, ed. by Philip E. Jackson, 436–461. New York: Macmillan.

The authors

Rafael Lopez Atxurra is a Professor at the Teacher Training College of the University of the Basque Country (Spain). His research has included historiography and the social sciences. He has also collaborated in the compilation of textbooks, and has also worked on ideologies and values in manuals in school curricula.

Contact address: University of the Basque Country, Escuela de Magisterio de Bilbao, Ramón y Cajal 72, 48014 Bilbao, Spain. E-mail: tsploatr@lg.ehu.es

Mariangeles de la Caba Collado holds a Ph.D. in Pedagogy and a B.Sc. in Psychology. She is a Permanent Lecturer at the University of the Basque Country (Spain), where her teaching and research focus on themes of socio-personal education, with special emphasis on questions of values (moral development and autonomy, communication skills, discipline, participation and teamwork).

Contact address: University of the Basque Country, F.I.C.E. Tolosa Hiribidea, 70, 20009 Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain. E-mail: mipcacom@sf.ehu.es