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**Two Perspectives on the Book:
Reinhardt, Sibylle. 2015. Teaching Civics.
A Manual for Secondary Education Teachers,
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out some of the accepted notions we have about democracy and how to educate people to understand the forces and inherent tensions in democratic systems and how to live in such realities. The importance of the subject and its proper and detailed consideration is a view shared by other educators who contend that 'properly developed and delivered educational practice on social learning can help promote social integration as well as contribute much to the fight against racism and xenophobia, and to developing essential attitudes and skills of inter-cultural communication, tolerance and understanding within a democratic framework' (CICE nd).

The book divides into a number of sections. Part one outlines what Reinhardt calls the Foundations of the subject. This section covers what she refers to as the building blocks of civic instruction and include the role of the teacher, the normative goal of learning as learning democracy, student abilities and learning democracy in the institution of school and she returns to these themes over the course of the book.

In the opening stages she argues that there has been a shift in focus from inputs with the emphasis on skills to competencies or outputs. Reinhardt offers the example of the guidelines for civic instruction for north Rhine Westphalia which seek to not only develop the child's 'ability and willingness to think about societal, political and economic structures' but to challenge and question such assumptions and 'to critically examine underlying structures, norms and interests' so that young people can 'develop the ability to adopt as their own, the ideas and values passed down to them as well as if necessary to consciously disengage from them' (p19). This notion of challenging convention and traditional structures through exploring controversial material in the classroom features throughout the book.

Reinhardt identifies the goal of democratic civic education as being about 'the formation of responsible citizens that is citizens who, out of responsibility for themselves and for others, keep themselves informed and independently make their own voices heard in the debates surrounding the political solutions to shared problems' (p18). This aim is not out of keeping with aims for similar subject approaches in other European countries. In the Irish context for example, Civics is taught primarily through the subjects of CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) up to the end of the junior cycle in secondary school and through the newly introduced subject of Politics and Society, for senior cycle. CSPE aims to 'encourage and develop the practical skills which enable students to engage in active participatory social

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"Teaching Civics. A Manual for Secondary Education Teachers" by Sibylle Reinhardt, which is considered to be a seminal text in the German speaking world, has recently been published in English. The book is intended to act as a handbook which, according to the preface, 'should be used and responded to in ways that are as diverse as its readers'. This modest claim for the usefulness of the book doesn't really do justice to the wealth and depth of material contained within it.

It is a logical and comprehensive work which offers a range of practical and theoretical considerations for teachers and learners in the subject area of Civics / Citizenship Education in secondary schools. Drawing on her experience as a teacher and academic in the thematic area, Reinhardt identifies the key concepts in the subject, the professional skills and competencies required of teachers and outlines a number of approaches to teaching and planning for the subject.

It is an extremely useful book in that it offers an insightful understanding of the complexity of the subject itself and the practical examples and case studies contained in it provide valuable templates for classroom activity. Although located within and drawing from a German experience and context, this material could easily be amended and adapted for use in a variety of contexts, across different jurisdictions and across different education sectors. It is of benefit to educators and particularly to teacher training programs as it outlines in an accessible fashion how the professional teacher should be prepared and how they should act and it speaks with authority on the necessity for such a subject in school systems in modern democratic states. It teases

interaction, and to adopt responsible roles as individuals, family members, citizens, workers, consumers, and members of various communities within a democratic society' (DES, 2016).

This notion of educating for an active citizenry is touched upon by Reinhardt in the opening section of the book and, elaborating on Ross' view that 'active citizenship should be encouraged and developed by educators (even though this might not necessarily be the first choice of all policy makers) and the context of contemporary Europe makes the development of an active citizenry particularly necessary' (Ross, 2008, p. 43) she suggests that 'if the active citizen is the ideal goal of civic education...the apathetic citizen represents the greatest difficulty for civic educators who should work to face this challenge rather than capitulate before it'.

Reinhardt poses what is probably the key question concerning the subject and not just from a German perspective but also arguably from a broader European perspective: 'How can democracy learning be translated into competencies that have normative content, can be formulated in terms of levels or steps and are empirically measurable?' (p. 22). She uses the example of teaching and testing knowledge related to the German electoral system to ask 'How can we know if the student can apply whatever knowledge they have or what significance it has for the political behavior?' (p. 28). These questions and the response of education systems to it is perhaps more critical and topical than ever in terms of the current European context which is arguably facing an existential crisis with threats to its economic, social and political structures.

The second and subsequent parts of the book are perhaps of most use to the trainee and established practitioner or teacher. Part two, Teaching Civics: Principles and Methods, which constitutes what she rightfully suggests is the heart of the book, begins by outlining what the author identifies as seven teaching principles which can be configured as methodologies and which form the 'glue that holds the teaching triangle (subject matter, learner, teacher) together' (p. 73). The seven principles she outlines are the conflict-based approach, problem-based approach, action-based approach, case teaching, future-based approach, moral and political judgment and the genetic method in civic education. Each of these is given a dedicated chapter in which the author begins by providing a theoretical context for the approach, moves on to suggest a framework within which to deal with the particular principle and each chapter concludes with recommendations on how best to plan and deliver classes with the particular approach. The chapter on conflict-based approaches for example, begins by discussing what is conflict and explores the work of Dahrendorf concerning how the 'creative power of conflict...constitutes a vital principle of all societies' (p74). The chapter goes on to offer a number of different categories or ways to conduct conflict analysis in classroom situations. Each of these categories, suggest Reinhardt, can lead teachers and students to develop a set of questions which can be used to then critically analyse particular conflicts which are presented in the

classroom in the form of real-life examples and using materials that can be integrated into conflict-based lessons. One of the many interesting aspects of this and the other chapters in part two is that the author draws on her own experience as a teacher and offers concrete examples from this experience, discusses problems that arose in the particular teaching episodes and describes how these were resolved. The categories that Reinhardt offers give learners a framework for how best to approach a problem and systematically work their way through it and this chapter was perhaps the most interesting one in this section of the book from this reader's perspective as the conflict-based approach allows students to begin to develop understanding of complex situations while at the same time equipping them with a set of valuable, transferable skills. The comprehensive, detailed and forensic approach taken in the chapter on conflict-based approaches is repeated in each of the subsequent chapters on those particular principles. This part of the book offers a rich set of practical guidelines for teachers which is grounded in theory, practice and experience and although based within the German education system could, with very little difficulty, be adapted to local and national needs in other national and educational contexts. The concluding sections of the book offer interesting and useful material on the development of critical skills for students moving in to higher education and in a final chapter some more practical guidelines and suggestions regarding lesson planning and are provided.

The book is very well written in an accessible style which is well served by the translation which presents a number of difficult concepts and materials in an engaging manner. Overall the book makes an important contribution at both a scholarly and practical level. It calls for a research based approach to many of the critical elements involved in teaching about and for citizenship and should provide guidance and food for thought for practitioners and academics alike.

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The strength of the book by Reinhardt is that it draws both on empirical research and on the large tradition of politische Bildung (political or civic education), in Germany, where researchers continuously engage in discussions and investigations of various approaches, principles and methods in the teaching of civic education.

The first part of the book provides the foundation for teaching civics in the form of a discussion of the goals of civic education and also some results from empirical studies concerning youth and politics. In the second part, the focus is on principles and methods in the teaching of civics. The third part is about the transition to upper grades of High School and civics as an introduction to the social sciences, and the fourth part is about lesson planning.

From a Scandinavian perspective, this book provides a valuable insight into central aspects of the German tradition of politische Bildung, a tradition which in many cases has been an inspiration for the development of civic education in the Scandinavian countries, while other sources of inspiration come from the English-speaking world. The book also provides valuable input for the planning and carrying out of civics teaching.

In Norway Rolf Th. Tønnessen (then professor of teacher education in Agder) published a dissertation on "Democratic education from a German perspective" in 1992. This dealt mainly with a discussion of the works of the German theorist of political education Herman Giesecke, and in Denmark the thoughts of Giesecke, with the focus on conflicts in political education and also works of the German professor in education Wolfgang Klafki, inspired the teaching of social science as well as the curriculum. On the other hand, inspiration from the English speaking world can be seen in the optimistic view of social science as the solution to societal problems. This can be seen in the strong focus on the scientific concepts in social science education for instance in the Swedish context. On a research level, similar inspiration is also present in the works on conceptual change in social studies by researchers at the University of Stockholm (Lundholm & Davies, 2013). In later years, the development of citizenship education in Great Britain has been discussed, for instance in Solhaug & Børhaug(2012). In the past few years the Scandinavian debate on civics education has been fueled also by the bi-annual NOFA-conferences (jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/1500) and the journal "Nordidactica" (www.kau.se/nordidactica).

The translation of the German terminology into English and Scandinavian (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish) languages presents several challenges. First of all "politische Bildung" is not easily translated into English, as it refers to a tradition which is not entirely similar to "civic education" as it is translated to in Reinhardt's book (p.17). The title of the book "politik didaktik" is translated as "teaching civics", which is probably the most adequate translation even if the German concept of "didaktik" can be understood as broader than the concept of "teaching".

Civic education in Scandinavia

When we look at the situation in Scandinavia a further layer is added as the school subjects that deal with civic education and the teaching and learning of democracy and politics appear with different names and content. In the following I focus on Danish, Norwegian and Swedish as these languages have many similarities. For the discussion of the development in Finland I use the Swedish terms.ⁱ

While "politische Bildung" in Germany developed as a distinct area of teaching and research at universities despite the fact that it did not cover one separate school subject, in the Scandinavian countries civic education in schools developed in such a way that all the countries now have a subject that brings together elements from the broader research fields of politics, sociology and economy. Historically, civic education was a part of the teaching of history, but in the 1960s and 1970s and, in the case of Finland in 2004, was established as a separate subject, under the names of "Samfundsfag" (Denmark) "Samfunnskunnskab" (Norway) or "Samhällskunnskab" (Sweden), "Samhällslära" (Finland) all names signaling the knowledge of society. It is sometimes translated as "civic education", in Denmark the official translation is "social studies"¹ or "social science education". This development mirrored both a rise in the social sciences as fields of study at the universities and inspirations from reform- and critical pedagogics to focus more on societal issues in schools (Christensen, 2012).

In Denmark the subject has elements from sociology, politics and economy and is a compulsory subject in grade 8 and 9 in lower secondary school and in upper secondary school. In Sweden the subject is mandatory from primary throughout secondary school. In Norway there is a broad category of social sciences encompassing geography, history and social studies (Samfunnskunnskab), where social studies is also defined as having elements of sociology, economics and politics. As part of the subject the Norwegian curriculum also has an area called "the explorer" with a focus on social science methods (Koritzinsky, 2014, p. 45). The Norwegian subject is mandatory in primary and lower secondary education. In upper secondary education social science is optional. In Finland Samhällslära has been mandatory in grade 7-9 but from 2016 it will also become part of the curriculum in the grades 4-6 (Löfström, 2014).

Similar publications in Scandinavian languages

In Norway the work by Rolf Tønnessen (Tønnessen, 1992), former researcher and teacher in the teacher education, built directly on the German tradition, and he has also published a book similar in scope to that of Sibylle Reinhardt (Tønnessen & Tønnessen, 2007). Some recent books that deal with the same issues are (Koritzinsky, 2014), in Norwegian (Långström & Virta, 2011), in Swedish and (Christensen 2015) in Danish.

The teaching principles and methods

Reinhardt presents and discusses seven teaching principles, or approaches, that can be characterized by



teaching-learning methods that are defined as “the structure of a lesson series and describes its inner dynamic i.e., the development of learners’ interaction with the subject matter” (p. 73). The seven approaches are familiar to Scandinavian readers, even if the debate has not been as extensive as in Germany: They are the: “conflict-based approach”, “problem-based approach”, “action based approach”, “case teaching”, “future-based approach”, “moral and political judgement” and “the genetic method in civic education”.

In a Danish context the problem-based approach has had a direct influence on the curriculum. In 1975 when social studies was introduced in the lower secondary school, the aim was to give the students “insight in relevant problems of our time”, this was both inspired by the political climate post- 1968 and by the didactical thinking of both Wolfgang Klafki and Hermann Giesecke. For the teachers in the late 1970s, the problem-oriented method was the key to social studies in lower secondary school (Kristensen & Stigsgaard, 1979). This was not as widely the case in the case of upper secondary school where the subject, and the education of the teachers, was more closely tied to the disciplinary structure of academic social sciences at the universities.

What remains from the problem-oriented approach in Denmark is that it is generally seen as a fruitful way of doing social studies, but the conditions framework for doing this has are limited as the subject only has two lessons weekly in grades 8 and 9 in the lower secondary school. In contrast, problem-orientation has a prominent place in a mandatory interdisciplinary project work which the students carry out in grade nine. It must be noted that in Denmark the problem-oriented approach has been developed in connection with a project-oriented approach, which influenced both lower and upper secondary civics education.

The conflict based approach has not been as clearly described in Scandinavian didactical thinking as a distinct approach, but it is still fair to say, that the conflict view of society has had a huge influence on the teaching of social studies. It is common to work with the differences between a conflict view and a conservative/functionalist view of society which was also explicitly expressed in the curriculum in 2009 for lower secondary schools in Denmark.

The action-based approach has its own history in Denmark, where the notion of action-competence developed especially by Karsten Schnack who, as professor of education in Copenhagen until 2011, has had a broad impact primarily in pedagogics and in environmental education.¹¹

If we look at Sweden, one of the interesting aspects is that there seems to be a strong confidence in the use of learning content from the social sciences as such - a theme Reinhardt also discusses (176ff). In the Swedish curriculum one of the goals for grades seven to nine is that students shall learn to “analyze societal structures with the aid of concepts and models from the social sciences”. This approach is also reflected in the subtitle of the book on didactics of social studies by Långström and Virta “Social studies’ didactics – education in demo-

cracy and social scientific thinking”¹¹ (Långström & Virta, 2011). In this book there are many relevant discussions of the content of social studies, but only one chapter on methods in the teaching of the subject – the working methods that are mentioned are “source-criticism”, “SWOT-analysis”, “analysis of argument”, “writing”, “field trips”, “interview”, “simulations”, “debate” and “role-play” (Långström & Virta, 2011, p. 136).

Theo Koritzinsky, in his book on the teaching of social studies writes in a Norwegian context (Koritzinsky, 2014). Like Långström and Virta he also dedicates one chapter (out of 8) to teaching and methods in teaching. Interestingly enough he also dedicates one chapter to the students’ use of methods of collecting and using sources for learning. The teaching-learning methods discussed are “classroom teaching”, “group-work”, “the students as researchers”, “storyline” and “project-work” (Koritzinsky, 2014, pp. 177-215).

In comparison with the list of methods given by Reinhardt, both Koritzinsky and Långström and Virta seem to discuss the methods that are already in use in the respective school systems in the light of civic education, while Reinhardt provides a list of teaching-learning methods that have been discussed and developed theoretically in the German tradition of politische Bildung – this is also why her book can claim that it can be “read as the legacy of civics/social science teaching in Germany since World War II” (p. 73).

In their book on the teaching of social studies (2007) Tønnessen and Tønnesen draw heavily on the German tradition. As already mentioned Rolf Tønnessen also wrote his dissertation on the discussion of Hermann Giesecke. In a later book addressed to teachers the categories from Giesecke’s conflict approach are presented as an analytical tool (Tønnessen & Tønnessen, 2007, p. 86). In terms of working methods in teaching Tønnessen et al. mention “one talks, the rest listens”, “teaching with focus on concepts”, “discussion”, “political talk show” and “games”. On the level of methods, most attention is given to “problem-oriented teaching” and “project-work”. “Field-trips”, “case-studies” and “studies of society” are also considered. The latter deals with scientific methods from the social sciences. Case studies are treated with the same systematic as in the book by Reinhart (Reinhardt, 2015, p. 125; Tønnessen & Tønnessen, 2007, p. 221).

The examples

The sample lessons given in the book are useful as they give examples of how it the principles can be carried out in class. Most of the examples presented by Reinhardt, such as the law of shop opening hours (p. 80), Muslim teachers wearing headscarf in class, (p. 97) or garbage disposal (p. 151), might as well be taken from Scandinavian classrooms even though the contexts are different.

Perspectives

As I see the translation of the book by Reinhardt in a Danish and Scandinavian perspective, it opens up many possibilities. As a teacher involved in teacher education, I



find that it will be valuable especially in discussing principles and methods in civic education and the teaching of social sciences. As a ph.d. student and researcher I think it can provide an important input into how teaching and learning in the area of the social sciences can be discussed with a foundation in research. In this way I see the book both as an inspiration for prospective teachers of civic education, for educators working in teacher education and for researchers in the field of civic education.

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Endnotes:

- ¹ As Swedish is the second official language of Finland official documents such as curricula are published both in Finnish and Swedish.
² The action competence approach in environmental education, *Environmental Education Research* 12(3-4), 2006 Special Issue: Researching education and the environment: retrospect and prospect
³ Samhällskunskapsdidaktik – Utbildning i demokrati och samhällsvetenskapligt tänkande

