
AN EXAMPLE: GCE AS A BASIS TO ORGANIZE THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

Thematic strands to give vertical coherence to the curriculum

Too often students only remember shreds of notions from chapters that they have studied sequentially, according to the approach of traditional history manuals which present a succession of facts that have little to do with the students; these shreds of notions do not allow students to reconstruct a temporal plot, and if some historical facts are remembered it is because these facts have struck the student's emotion or imagination more than others. In this way, students lack interpretative frameworks able to give meaning to past events and explain the transformation processes that have led to present-day reality; they lack the awareness of the ideological-value messages implicit in this way of presenting history. We know that history is not neutral, that it is always interpreted and reconstructed, even if this method is supported by a critical analysis of the sources. The important thing is to be aware of it and make it explicit.

It is therefore appropriate that teachers build their history curriculum around precise thematic and interpretative choices in order to give meaning and coherence to the vertical curriculum, at least to the curriculum of a specific school cycle.

In order to realize this meaningful planning, it can be suggested to choose those events of the past that can be grouped around three great thematic strands:

- the relationship between environment, resources and populations
- the relationship between individuals and institutions (forms of social organisation)
- cultural identities between conflicts and exchanges

Two or three of the educational paths that form the curricular design of each year can be dedicated to each one of these strands. In this way, even if facts are treated from a chronological point of view, it will be possible to identify a logical thread that could allow students to compare processes or events that occurred at different times, so as to better understand them within precise explanation models and in a long-term perspective.

The contribution of Global Citizenship Education in the choice of strands and curricular paths

In the three strands proposed, it is possible to see how the interweaving of the core elements of the historical-geographical-social study and Global Citizenship Education allows to choose the paths to be included in the curriculum.

In the first strand, for example, it is possible to study the success or failure of population settlements on the planet, the reasons for migration, colonial conquests, scientific-technological revolutions and their consequences. The part of the GCE that explores environmental issues or those of unequal development contributes to the reading of those processes, putting them in relation with the present.

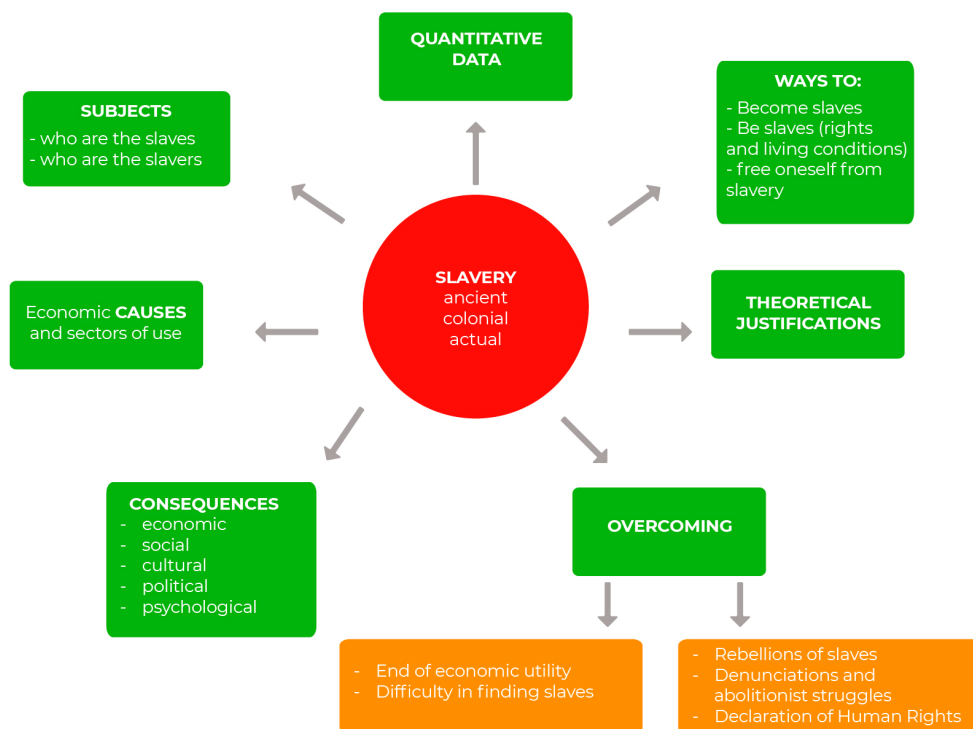
In the second strand we can study the different forms of political organization and power management, the rights granted and denied to individuals, sexes or social groups, the development of economic and social inequalities, the clash on forms of authority both in the theoretical debate and in times of revolutionary struggles, within the framework of the broader educational vision given by education to rights, legality, peace and conflict management.

The third strand allows us to examine times of convergence or clash between peoples, their interests and their cultures, or between different ideological and religious visions. It can study examples of hybridization in exchanges or radicalization in conflicts, reflect on what constitutes the collective identity of a people or critically read the pros and cons of the contributions of a different culture or of the processes of globalization; this can also include in-depth studies on migration processes. The global citizenship education and inter-culture that support these analyses also suggest a critical review of the cultural or sexist stereotypes often present in history manuals.

An example: slavery yesterday and today

Obviously, each main strand can be further divided into more specific ones, as you can see in this example.

THEMATIC STRAND OF HISTORICAL PERIOD



This map invites us to understand slavery in three different moments in history and in different geographical areas, but always using the same elements of analysis, which will have to be the subject of research because certainly not all information can be deduced from the textbook.

It is important to understand slavery not only and not so much as a form of evil exploitation of man over man, but as a model of production that has been dominant in certain places and historical periods because it had precise economic and social reasons and was supported by commonly accepted theoretical justifications. It is necessary to compare the three models, analysing similarities and differences, and discover how even today slavery is widely present in many parts of the world, and also in Europe, because it is an essential part of the current productive model, despite the fact that in theory international legislation considers it a crime and public opinion considers it immoral, even if it pretends not to see it.

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