

Curriculum case studies

Case study #1:

3rd Cycle Geography; from 12 to 15 years; the recommended duration of the subject is 100 minutes per week in the 7th and 8th grades and 125 minutes per week in the 9th grade.

In an increasingly shrinking geographical space, where environmental, population, social and cultural phenomena, among others, have multifaceted causes and consequences that transcend borders, it is essential to develop a geographical education that problematizes, questions and seeks to equate scenarios and find solutions to the complex situations that occur in the world, from natural disasters to contrasts in development, climate change, migration, demographic ageing, the multipolar composition of the world system (AE - Aprendizagens Essenciais / Essential Learnings - 9th grade Geography, 2018, pp. 1-2).

Case study #2:

3rd Cycle Citizenship and Development; from 12 to 15 years; weekly 45-minute classes for a semester or fortnightly 45-minute classes for the whole school year.

In order to contribute to the full humanistic formation of students, in Citizenship and Development, teachers have the mission of preparing students for life, to be democratic, participatory and humanistic citizens, at a time of growing social and cultural diversity, in order to promote tolerance and non-discrimination, as well as to suppress violent radicalism" (Citizenship and Development framework, n.d., pp. 1-2).

Case study #3:

3rd Cycle History; from 12 to 15 years; 325 minutes per week over 3 years and mandatory.

History, through the well-founded and critical analysis of examples from the past, is a fundamental subject for promoting the culture of autonomy and responsibility (History, AE 9th grade, p. 2).

Main findings Climate change

Geography and Citizenship & Development present moderate and substantial evidence of essential LOs aligned with all the topic LOs, while History essential LOs present almost no evidence.

- **Geography:** Climate Change is represented in a significant way and aligned with GET LOs, except for "LO5 - Critically reflect on a range of values and beliefs in relation to climate change". No references made to the tension between awareness and behaviour change, and between mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- **History:** The essential LOs about the visibility of Climate Change in the historical course of humanity are relatively weak (only 2 LOs are present). The problems of climate change are ignored, as well as the role of History as a fundamental subject to deepen global awareness and intersect events with consequences at the climate level. The essential LOs also fail to address a call for action.
- **Citizenship and Development:** The Environmental Education Guidelines were considered, which means that GET LOs received very good scores, except for "LO3 - Discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures in relation to climate change".

Main findings Gender inequality

The topic is generally absent from the LOs and guidelines of the documents analyzed for the three curricular subjects. Of the three curricula, History presents some points of connection, however with limitations.

- **Geography:** Only 1 LO (LO7) can be linked to Gender Equality. The way in which essential LOs (AE) are built - based on locating and understanding, problematizing and debating, and communicating and participating - is significant, but the link between these essential LOs and Gender Equality is lacking.
- **History:** Gender Equality is largely absent from the subject AE, although it is the discipline of the three subjects with the most evidence (namely, for LO1, LO2, LO3). To frame History as a tool that helps students to situate and explain the historical origins of current gender inequalities would help promote their critical analysis.
- **Citizenship and Development:** Very few references to Gender Equality in Citizenship Education official documents (except for LO2). This influences how learning about gender issues is done in the 3rd cycle. The lack of intentionality with gender inequality in C&D may reinforce a narrative that makes gender inequalities invisible.

Main findings International inequality

The topic is closely aligned with the GET LO, with substantial evidence present mainly in C&D and Geography. In History, the AE are limited and moderately aligned with GET LOs.

- **Geography:** The focus on inequalities exists (LO1, LO2, LO5, LO6, LO7), but when the scale is "international", the focus becomes sparse. "Development" is used in the LOs as having a simple understanding; being a polysemic concept, it should be presented in a complex way and/or be the target of a LO.
- **History:** With evidence for LO2, LO3, LO4, and LO6, more references between International Inequalities and the historical colonialist processes are lacking. Although there is a more significant presence of a critical and less "glorifying past" discourse in the AE for all grades, these contents are scattered, proposing sometimes conflictual LOs with other less critical content.
- **Citizenship and Development:** Very comprehensive analysis of the 7 LOs, mostly because the DE Guidelines (used in this case) have many elements in line with the table analysis guidelines. This might be explained by the fact that they were developed collaboratively by NGOD and the Directorate-General of Education.

Main findings Migration

While insufficiently, Geography is most closely aligned with the LO for Migration. History AE shows some alignment with these LO, but with scarce explicit references. C&D has the greatest misalignment, with almost no evidence.

- **Geography:** Significant explicit references to Migrations/cultural diversity (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7). Apart from a reference to valuing the diversity of relationships that different cultures establish with their territories (LO3), the cross-cutting LOs are concentrated in "Population and Settlement" (8th grade).
- **History:** Insufficient references to Migrations (LO1, LO2 and LO3 have moderate presence), which is rarely addressed in the 3 years. The failure of evidence on the AE promotes the lack of understanding of the different perspectives in the approaches of national and local structures on migrations (LO6), and its interaction with the historical and current structures of global governance (LO4).
- **Citizenship and Development:** Although a mandatory domain, there are no guidelines of the curricular component/subject of C&D. Since almost all the other domains of the mandatory group have guidelines, this is worrisome and weakens the specific curricular work (only LO3 has evidence).

Conclusion and recommendations for education stakeholders

1. **There is no consensus on the C&D curriculum, and the existing guidelines are unclear.** All other subjects have essential LOs. Although the autonomy that the Portuguese education system offers schools is interesting, **the lack of a specific curriculum and essential LOs penalizes DGCE and teachers might feel confused.** The guidelines are non-binding.
2. There are discontinuities in the content development of some objectives in the 3rd cycle. **This can be problematic for meaningful learning processes in DGCE.**
3. **DGCE depends on how teachers address it.** There are concepts in the AE that are formulated in a neutral way, although they are not neutral. The GET essential LOs may promote a critical reflection of reality, but **teacher training on a critical analysis of reality and the ability to problematize is fundamental.**
4. **International Inequalities & Climate Change stand out** concerning LO evidence, while **Gender Equality & Migrations have a fragile representation**, even though they are part of the C&D 1st mandatory group.
5. No guidelines for **Gender Equality & Migration**. Since there are no specific guidelines for both, **it would be important to create frameworks.**
6. Importance of a cross-referencing **work on the intersectionality between themes**, particularly for International Inequalities

