

Francisco Esteban, Maria Rosa Buxarrais,
Teodor Mellen
Spain

What do University Teachers Think about the Teaching in Ethics and Citizenship in the European Higher Education Area?

Abstract

Ethics and citizenship education has become the focus of considerable debate since the construction of the European Higher Education Area. That this should be so is interesting, as it is a type of education that forms part of the educational mission of the university, as its history plainly demonstrates. Ethics and citizenship education cannot be analyzed solely in terms of its pedagogical requirements, the competences that it seeks to develop, or the type of students and professionals that the world needs today. Its success also requires our exploring what university teachers understand by this type of education, the situation it currently finds itself in, and how students perceive such an education. This paper presents a case study conducted among university teachers of education, philosophy and the humanities at several European institutions.

1. Introduction

The creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) corroborates that university teaching today is very much seen in terms of skills or competences (European Council, 1996; 2007; European University Association, 2007; 2010). It is no longer solely a matter of students acquiring theoretical knowledge and technical skills, but also of demonstrating that they are competent in their management and application. What is more, there is a rich diversity of competences, among which we find those of an ethical, moral and civic nature (González y Wagenaar, 2003). Ethics and citizenship education at university has become a subject of concern, even at