

LEARNING HOW TO HANDLE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATION SETTINGS

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE



Using the manuals
Teaching controversial issues
and *Managing controversy*

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David Kerr and Ted Huddleston
Young Citizens (UK)

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	9
About this good practice guide	9
SECTION 1 – HANDLING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES USING THE MANUALS – WHAT, WHERE, WHY AND HOW? 11	
What are controversial issues?	11
Where do controversial issues arise in education?	12
Why bother with controversial issues?	12
How were the two manuals <i>Teaching controversial issues</i> and <i>Managing controversy</i> developed and how have they been used?	13
SECTION 2 – ENGAGING WITH THE MANUALS – CASE STUDY EXPERIENCES 19	
SECTION 3 – GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES – LESSONS LEARNED FROM WORKING WITH THE MANUALS 33	
Getting started with the manuals	34
Understanding the rationale behind the manuals	36
Planning how to use the manuals	39
Using the manuals in different contexts	40
Getting further help	43
SECTION 4 – ACCESSING THE MANUALS – LIST OF TRANSLATIONS 45	
Notes	46
APPENDIX 47	
<i>Teaching controversial issues</i> – Contents	47
<i>Managing controversy</i> – Contents	48

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Partners

- ▶ Organisations and individuals in countries across Europe who participated in the original piloting of the two manuals *Teaching controversial issues* and *Managing controversy*, many of whom have gone on to further disseminate, to provide training based on, and to promote the manuals within their countries and regions and across their networks.
- ▶ Individuals and organisations who were willing to share their approaches and practice and who sent us information and case studies for inclusion in this good practice guide.

Council of Europe

Sarah Keating, Katia Dolgova-Dreyer, Arzu-Burcu Tuner, Gloria Mannazzu, Marjorie Mantulet and Pierre Varasi

Preface

Controversy and controversial issues are at the centre and at all levels of our democratic societies. This means that learning how to deal with such issues must always be at the heart of an effective education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE). That learning takes place in schools and other education settings as children and young people progress in their education from early years, through primary, lower secondary and upper-secondary phases, into tertiary and higher education and beyond. As Professor (Sir) Bernard Crick noted in his seminal report of 1998, *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*, which led to the introduction of Citizenship as a new statutory school subject in England in 2002:

Learning how to engage in dialogue with and respect people whose values are different from one's own is central to the democratic process and essential to the protection and strengthening of democracy and fostering of a culture of human rights.

The Council of Europe has an outstanding record in promoting education for democratic citizenship, human rights education and intercultural dialogue, and in fostering and teaching about the importance of democratic culture. It is therefore fitting that the Council of Europe, in partnership with the European Union, through the Joint Programme "Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation" (DISCO) – formerly known as the Human Rights and Democracy in Action Pilot Projects Scheme – has helped to facilitate the creation of this good practice guide on learning how to handle controversial issues in schools and other education settings.

This good practice guide is very timely. There are many issues in society and communities that children and young people in Europe are keen to discuss. Yet often they are denied opportunities in schools and other education settings because such issues are seen as too challenging to handle in classrooms and learning environments, or to manage at a whole-school or education-setting level.

This guide captures the rich learning that has emerged over past years from the promotion of the two manuals we have produced – *Teaching controversial issues* (TCI), a training pack for teachers, and *Managing controversy* (MC), a practical support tool for school leaders and senior managers – as they have been taken up and used by a range of people and institutions involved in education and training in countries and contexts across Europe. Above all, the guide shows how the notion that controversial issues are too challenging to deal with and manage in schools and other education settings can be overcome through dissemination and training, and through innovative and effective approaches to handling controversial issues being put in place in classrooms and other teaching and learning environments.

We hope that this guide, along with the two manuals and the various translations and adaptations that are emerging across Europe, will continue to strengthen the ways in which controversial issues are handled in schools and other education settings across Europe. This will benefit all children and young people as they progress through their education. It will also help to contribute to more effective and impactful EDC/HRE and to the protection and strengthening of our democratic societies at all levels.

We hope that you will learn something from the guide and, in time, consider contributing your own experiences of working with the two manuals across Europe to further iterations of the guide so that it remains topical, relevant and useful.

David Kerr

Ted Huddleston

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September 2020

Introduction

About this good practice guide

This good practice guide on learning how to handle controversial issues in schools and other education settings builds on our experience of piloting two manuals on controversial issues, which were funded by the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe and implemented by the latter. The manuals, *Teaching controversial issues* and *Managing controversy*, were designed to help schools and other education settings learn how to handle controversial issues in a range of education settings. This guide:

- ▶ sets out the lessons learned by trainers, policy makers and facilitators in a range of European countries;
- ▶ describes why and how the manuals have been used;
- ▶ advises on how the manuals can best be applied in current and future training.

The guide consists of four sections:

1. Handling controversial issues using the manuals – What, where, why and how?
2. Engaging with the manuals – Case study experiences
3. Good practice guidelines – Lessons learned from working with the manuals
4. Accessing the manuals – List of translations.

The first section sets out where and how controversial issues arise in education, and the rationale for learning how to handle them in schools and other education settings. It also introduces the two manuals and gives brief details of how they have been used across a range of European countries and settings. The second section provides more detailed case studies from a range of expert trainers and facilitators showing why and how they have used the manuals to train teachers, trainee teachers, school leaders, managers, other education professionals, students and young people, among others, to handle controversial issues. The third section distils the lessons learned from those who have used the manuals in practice, to help others who are currently using the manuals and/or are considering working with them in the future. The final section provides brief details of where the manuals can be accessed and downloaded, including a list of the European languages into which they have been translated.

The good practice guide is aimed at anyone with an interest in the training and professional development of education practitioners in schools and other education settings – from policy makers to staff in universities and higher education, trainee teachers, school directors, leadership teams, teachers, managers of non-formal education institutions, youth workers, trainers and facilitators. It also includes information on how the manuals can be used with children and young people from pre-school to higher-education levels in formal, non-formal and informal education settings.

This good practice guide remains a work in progress. The authors continue to be interested in receiving further information on and case studies showing how the manuals have been and can be used in schools and other education settings across Europe and beyond.

Section 1

Handling controversial issues using the manuals – What, where, why and how?

This section introduces and sets out the following questions.

- ▶ What are controversial issues?
- ▶ Where do controversial issues arise in education?
- ▶ Why bother with controversial issues?
 - What is the rationale for learning how to handle these issues in schools and other education settings?
 - Is there a new urgency in handling controversial issues?
 - What is holding back action on controversial issues?
- ▶ How were the two manuals *Teaching controversial issues* and *Managing controversy* developed and how have they been used?
 - How were the manuals on handling controversial issues developed?
 - Mutually supportive? How are the two manuals meant to be used?
 - How have the Council of Europe manuals been used?

What are controversial issues?

Controversial issues may be defined as “issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society”.¹

Controversial issues vary with time and place, and from the local to the global. Some, such as the Troubles in Northern Ireland, are long-standing and deeply embedded in history. Others are more recent, for example global warming and climate change, Brexit in the United Kingdom and disputes over how schools address sex and relationships education in a changing world.

Such issues represent major disagreements or differences of opinion between groups of people, and typically involve:

- ▶ disputed claims;
- ▶ conflicting values and beliefs;
- ▶ contested facts;
- ▶ polarised views;
- ▶ conflicts of interest;
- ▶ strong emotions;
- ▶ suspicion and lack of trust;
- ▶ denigration of the other.

1. *Teaching controversial issues*, p. 6.

Where do controversial issues arise in education?

Most controversial issues in education arise in connection with:

- ▶ teaching and learning – in the form of controversial subject matter, methods or resources, for example in History, Religious Education, Citizenship/Civic Education or Sex and Relationships Education;
- ▶ national, regional, local or institutional policy – in the form of controversial procedures, rules and expectations, whether formal or informal, for example relating to gender and sexual orientation, religious dress or national celebrations.

Why bother with controversial issues?

What is the rationale for learning how to handle these issues in schools and other education settings?

Most curriculum subjects and areas of learning have their own distinctive types of controversy, an understanding of which is integral to a critical understanding of that subject or area of learning, for example conflicting theories in Science, doctrines in Religious Education and narrative accounts in History.

There are a number of arguments for embracing controversial issues in education, including the following.

- ▶ Developing young people's understanding and knowledge of the world: Many controversial issues are the significant issues of our time. How can young people develop a critical understanding and knowledge of the world if they do not have the opportunity to study these issues at school and/or in other education settings?
- ▶ Encouraging young people's development and democratic participation: Learning how to handle controversy is particularly important for personal and social development. It is also essential in EDC/HRE and for active and informed participation in society and communities both now and in the future. How can children and young people learn to do this if they have no opportunity to talk about and to handle controversy? Where will they learn to express themselves and listen to others, to discuss and debate, to decide on their actions and to participate, both individually and in collaboration with others, if they are not taught how to do it during their education in and beyond the classroom?
- ▶ Controversial issues are unavoidable: Whether we like it or not, students or others will raise these issues anyway. Controversy has become an unavoidable fact of modern life and, by default, of life in education today. It is simply not possible to keep controversial issues beyond the school/institution gates in today's fast-paced, rapidly changing world. They are brought in by those involved in education including teachers, pupils, students, families and other stakeholders who come into schools and other education settings with an unprecedented range of backgrounds, beliefs and values, and outlooks on life. Controversial issues are also raised through people's engagement with and exposure to media outlets. Constant and instant access to social media and other forms of digital communication at all hours of the day reinforces these differences and brings people involved in education into daily contact with the issues that divide them. As soon as something controversial happens, it is all over social media and often traditional forms of media as well, and is shared and discussed widely.

This daily instant contact with controversial issues is also experienced by children and young people. Few, if any, school-aged children today, from the youngest upward, are unaware of the basic controversies surrounding climate change, violent extremism and terrorism, ethnicity, religion, and gender and sexual orientation. Whether they have strong views, worries and anxieties or are simply curious about such issues, they want to talk about them, and will talk about them whatever their educators say. It is better that educators help children and young people frame these conversations for themselves than that they be framed for them by others.

- ▶ The dangers of ignoring them: We ignore controversial issues at our peril. Shying away from them or pretending they do not exist is not the answer. There is no knowing whether (what may appear to be) a small local dispute in a local community or a school playground, for example, will escalate into something more serious. If such issues are allowed to fester or get out of hand, they may lead to worsening relationships between stakeholders, a hostile atmosphere, staff frustration and declining standards of behaviour and attainment. In the worst cases, they can lead to aggressive or violent confrontations, the involvement of groups with more radical or extremist agendas and unwanted media (including social media) attention.

Is there a new urgency in handling controversial issues?

Although arguments in favour of paying greater attention to controversial issues in education are not new, the need to do something concrete about it has taken on a new urgency in recent years for a number of reasons, including:

- ▶ the extreme ethnic, religious, linguistic, social and cultural diversity that now exists in many schools and related educational institutions across Europe, as a result of a number of phenomena including the rapid movement of peoples both in and out of countries through migration; more rapid forms of communication; the creation of different types of schools along ethnic, religious, linguistic and social and cultural lines to serve different communities; and the general impact of globalisation;
- ▶ the heightened influence of interest groups based on particular identities in public life (identity politics), as support for traditional, broad-based party politics declines;
- ▶ the growing tendency for social and political debate to be expressed in polarised either/or terms, with more complex and sophisticated opinion often being drowned out or going unheard;
- ▶ the use of coarse and aggressive language and the lack of civility towards and respect for those with different opinions, which are becoming more prominent in public and political discourse;
- ▶ new forms of electronic communication allowing information (both false and genuine) about tensions or disagreements from the local to the global levels to be circulated widely in an instant and further commented on;
- ▶ an increase of hate crime across Europe motivated by prejudice on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation or other grounds – from internet trolling to high-profile mass attacks by violent extremists.

What is holding back action on controversial issues?

There are two main factors holding back action on controversial issues. The first is the challenge of handling controversy, which takes skills, knowledge and understanding that develop with experience. Many practitioners feel ill-equipped to deal with difficult discussions in the classroom and other learning spaces. They fear that things may get out of hand, that they will lose control and only reinforce divisions and prejudice that already exist, marginalising some students or groups of students. They also feel that they do not have the specialised knowledge to teach particular issues with the breadth and depth they think is required.

The second factor is that directors and leadership teams in schools and other education settings may be reluctant to support the teaching of controversial issues for many of the same reasons. They are often also concerned with protecting the orderly running of their school or setting and, ultimately, with its reputation with students, parents, local communities and government authorities. They may feel that opening up discussions on difficult issues with school/setting stakeholders will undermine their authority or open up a can of worms that will lead to even greater difficulties in the future. They may consider it more cost-effective to deal with controversial issues as and when they occur, on a reactive ad hoc basis, than to spend time trying to prepare for them more proactively and strategically.

How were the two manuals *Teaching controversial issues* and *Managing controversy* developed and how have they been used?

How were the manuals on handling controversial issues developed?

Following growing calls from member states to help educators come to terms with the need to take controversy and controversial issues more seriously and to understand what this can mean in practice, the Council of Europe, with joint funding from the European Union, produced and implemented a training pack dedicated to this, consisting of two connected manuals, *Teaching controversial issues* and *Managing controversy*.

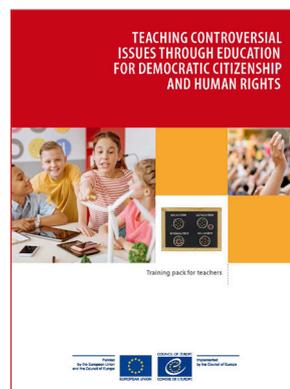
The manuals were developed by David Kerr and Ted Huddleston through their work at the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Citizenship Foundation (now Young Citizens) in London. They were piloted by a team of European experts through the Joint Programme DISCO, jointly organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The manuals are based on the Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human

Rights Education and the European Commission's Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020). They are also prominent in the new Council of Europe's "Free to Speak – Safe to Learn" education programme, and support the promotion of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.

Teaching controversial issues

Teaching controversial issues was the first manual developed. It was piloted across a number of European countries and published in 2015. It consists of two parts.

- ▶ Part A is a scoping paper, which draws on a review of published sources from a number of countries in Europe and beyond, and on evidence from research and initial piloting, to examine the major challenges of teaching controversial issues, suggest ways in which these challenges may be met, identify the professional competences required to meet them and make recommendations for the development of a set of training activities based on these competences.
- ▶ Part B consists of a set of professional learning activities based on the professional competences outlined in Part A and set out with full instructions. The activities, which are designed to be delivered by a trained facilitator, focus on developing an understanding of the teaching and learning of controversial issues and of how to put this into practice in the classroom/education setting. It is intended for use by trainers with schoolteachers and with other educational practitioners beyond schools.

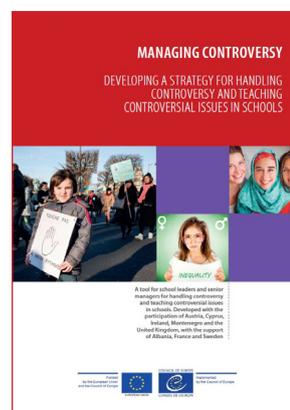


The contents of TCI are listed in Appendix 1.

Managing controversy

Managing controversy was the second manual developed. It arose from a recognition that, to maximise the benefits of the training given to schoolteachers using the TCI manual, schools and school leaders and managers needed to take a strategic, whole-school approach to managing controversial issues. In other words, controversial issues need to be both taught and managed in schools and other education settings so as to develop and embed successful joined-up whole-school/institution policies, practices and processes. It was piloted and published in 2017. It is different from TCI in its design, as it is a self-reflection and self-evaluation tool for schools and other education institutions rather than a set of professional learning activities. It is divided into three parts.

- ▶ Part A is a background paper that identifies and explains a range of policy options open to school leaders and senior managers in relation to handling controversial issues.
- ▶ Part B is divided into nine sections, each of which deals with a different area of school/institution life that could have an impact on the management of controversy and controversial issues. The sections address issues such as leadership, ethos and culture, curriculum, parental engagement, and staff development and training. Each section contains a description of the area – curriculum, culture or community, an explanation of its role in relation to the handling of controversial issues, a case study from a European context and practical suggestions as to how it can be applied in schools and other education settings.
- ▶ Part C contains a couple of appendices designed to support self-evaluation and action. The first is a checklist of possible actions to be considered, arising from the nine sections in part B. Each action is accompanied by a number of questions. The second is a scoping paper that explores the implications of managing controversy for leaders and managers in schools and other education settings.



The contents of MC are listed in Appendix 2.

Overall, MC focuses on the development of the management skills needed to implement a whole-school/institution strategy for handling controversy and controversial issues. It is intended for use by school leaders and leadership teams and those responsible for the management of other education settings, including non-formal and informal education.

Mutually supportive? How are the two manuals meant to be used?

The two manuals are designed to mutually support each other. They promote the concept that the successful handling of controversial issues depends on:

- ▶ teachers and other educational professionals being trained to teach them well;
- ▶ school leaders and leaders/co-ordinators in other education institutions recognising that the teaching of controversial issues works best when it is managed in a proactive, joined-up way across the whole school or educational institution.

In other words, the handling of controversial issues requires trained teachers and education professionals who are supported by co-ordinated whole-school and education settings management. The manuals can be used in co-ordination with each other as a single unified training pack. However, they are also designed to be used flexibly to suit a wide range of schools and other education settings and contexts within and across European countries. Each manual may be used on a stand-alone basis. Neither manual is meant to be entirely comprehensive, but each provides a starting point for basic training in how to handle controversial issues and a stimulus to further work in this field.

How have the Council of Europe manuals been used?

Since their original publication, *Teaching controversial issues* (2015) and *Managing controversy* (2017) have been used widely in different training settings across Europe, in both initial and continuing professional development.

At the heart of these developments is a recognition of the importance of helping children and young people to learn to live and to work together peacefully and equitably, however diverse their backgrounds, beliefs or identities, and of the part that formal, non-formal and informal education can play in achieving this. There is a wide range of factors stimulating the use of the manuals across Europe. The following are some examples.

- ▶ In northern Europe, and especially in the Nordic and Scandinavian region, the use of the manuals has been stimulated by the need to tackle extremism, terrorism and hate crime, triggered in Norway by Anders Breivik's horrific mass shooting of young people on the island of Utøya, and in the Baltic states by the need to reduce historic tensions between different groups in society.
- ▶ In southern Europe the need to provide newly arrived refugees and migrants with access to education has been a powerful driver for change and engagement with the manuals.
- ▶ In eastern Europe, and especially in the former Soviet republics, the teaching of controversial issues is seen as an important vehicle for the development of competences for democratic culture and as an essential component in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education.
- ▶ The use of the manuals in central and western Europe is driven by a range of interconnected factors, including the need to respond to current challenges to democracy (e.g. the rise of nationalism and populism at the expense of European unity); the rise of extremism, both of the far right and of Islamic fundamentalism; an increase in the number of terrorist-related incidents; and the spread of face-to-face and online hate crime.

That the manuals can be used to help address a wide range of contexts and issues across the different regions of Europe underlines their flexibility and adaptability. They are proving a helpful starting point for training those who work in schools and other education settings to feel more comfortable in handling controversial issues. It also encourages them to see handling controversial issues as a natural part of their efforts to educate children and young people across Europe so as to promote, as well as protect and defend, democratic societies in the 21st century.

The manuals are being used by a range of organisations, trainers and facilitators in different training settings across Europe, including the following.

- ▶ The European Wergeland Centre, a Europe-wide NGO based in Oslo, Norway, is using the manuals as the cornerstone of its training of teachers, school leaders, managers, policy makers and young people in programmes in Norway, Scandinavia, Ukraine and south-eastern Europe.
- ▶ In Denmark, after initial training for government officials, trainers and facilitators, the Ministry of Education is rolling out the manuals as a core component of its central efforts to educate children and young people in schools and education settings to handle the threats posed by the rise of extremism, terrorism and hate crime.

- ▶ In the Balkans, a number of countries are working with the European Wergeland Centre and the Council of Europe on a cross-country initiative to train new teachers to handle controversial issues as part of their initial teacher training.
- ▶ In Montenegro the Bureau for Education Services and a leading university are organising a number of national summer academies for those who teach in primary and secondary schools, focusing on strategies and methods to help them to address controversial issues in teaching and learning in their schools.
- ▶ In Greece, the Centre on Information and Documentation on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non-Violence (ANTIGONE), has used the MC manual to contribute to the development of more inclusive school communities that respect diversity and human rights principles.
- ▶ In England teachers are introduced to the handling of controversial issues as part of their teacher-training courses in universities, and encouraged to address such issues using the techniques and strategies they have learned while on teaching placements in schools and other education settings.
- ▶ In Hesse, Germany, the regional Ministry of Education sponsors training for those involved in promoting the European dimension and European school-linking initiatives in schools. This has sparked a number of developments, including the addition of controversial issues scenarios based on the TCI manual to a wider reflection tool on issues in a school context, which will be published on the Democratic Schools Network website later in 2020.
- ▶ In Sweden initial controversial issues training for a number of Ministry of Education officials, school leaders and teachers has been extended across a number of municipalities to school leaders, teachers, students and parents. One municipality is addressing controversial issues through incorporating it into the work of crime prevention teams that work in schools and with local communities.
- ▶ In Iceland, following initial training for its officials and a small number of school leaders and teachers, the Ministry of Education is promoting the handling of controversial issues as part of its presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers through a national seminar and follow-up training for those working in and with schools in Iceland and other Nordic countries.
- ▶ In the Baltic states, as part of the Joint Programme DISCO, the Ministries of Education in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania have worked with NGOs and youth organisations to train youth workers to work with young people both in and beyond schools to tackle historic tensions in the region and to reduce conflict between, and prejudice within, majority and minority populations, starting with influencing the perceptions and actions of children and young people.

In a number of contexts and countries across Europe initial engagement with the manuals by an institution or a small group of people is leading to their being taken up and used more widely at an institutional and/or system-wide level locally, regionally or nationally. For example, in Denmark, where initial training was provided for a small number of Ministry of Education and provincial officials, youth leaders, schools leaders and teachers, the manuals are now used as a central plank of the Ministry of Education's national programme to address extremism, terrorism, prejudice and discrimination in and beyond schools. The programme promotes democratic participation through training, videos and the adaptation of the manuals to different phases of education from pre-school to upper secondary. A further example is from Greece, where initial work by ANTIGONE to translate one of the manuals into Greek and use it with schools has led to the Ministry of Education certifying the Greek-language version of the MC manual for use as the basis of educational programmes from the school year 2019/20, and recommending it for use across the phases of compulsory education.

The Council of Europe is also actively incorporating the manuals, particularly TCI, into its ongoing programme of activities to support the promotion of EDC/HRE. There are two current developments involving the manuals that are worthy of note.

First, the Council of Europe is drawing on TCI in the creation of a new teacher self-reflection tool designed to support teachers and student teachers in developing their democratic professional ethos and competences.² Teaching controversial issues will be one of the six modules in the tool chosen to reflect the six themes in the "Free to Speak – Safe to Learn" Democratic Schools for All project and to help further disseminate the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. The tool is expected to be available in late 2020.

2. Available at www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/-reflection-tool-for-teachers, accessed 28 April 2020.

Second, the two manuals have been included in the Council of Europe's online compendium of resources to assist teachers and other education professionals in their work on these six themes and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.³

Translations of the manuals

A consequence of the manuals being piloted and used in a variety of training settings across Europe is that this has led to the translation of the manuals into a range of European languages, with the support of organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Wergeland Centre. These translations give many more people direct access to the manuals through local, regional and national training. As a result, translations of both manuals are now available in a wide range of European languages (see the list in Section 4 of this guide).

In addition, organisations are also adapting the manuals to different audiences by adding their own context-specific case studies to support training activities and by making them available in different formats. For example, in Denmark the Ministry of Education has produced its own versions of the manuals which can be used from pre-school all the way up to upper-secondary level in Danish schools and education settings. It now has separate manuals for training those working at pre-school level, at primary level and at secondary level, each with training activities, case studies and examples that are appropriate for that level. The Ministry of Education has also developed democracy games to support the activities in the manuals. Perhaps more institutions and contexts will follow the Danish example as their engagement with the manuals becomes more embedded and widespread.

3. Available at www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/compendium-of-resources, accessed 28 April 2020.

Section 2

Engaging with the manuals – Case study experiences

This section of the good practice guide presents case studies that describe in more detail the experiences of different expert trainers and facilitators across Europe in engaging with the two Council of Europe manuals *Teaching controversial issues* and *Managing controversy*. The case studies provide first-hand accounts of why and how experts have used the manuals to train a wide range of people to handle controversial issues, including teachers, trainee teachers, school leaders, managers, other educational professionals, policy advisers, students and young people, among others, across many European countries and contexts. The case studies also contain emerging lessons about what works best – why, how and where – in engaging with the two manuals.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING TRAINEE TEACHERS IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

David Kerr, England

Introducing trainee teachers in higher education to the teaching of controversial issues using TCI and MC

David Kerr is a teacher educator and NGO consultant from England, United Kingdom. David adapted the TCI and MC manuals for use as the core of a 2- to 3-hour training programme on policy and practice in Citizenship, Prevent, and Fundamental British Values for trainee teachers at a university in England. The manuals, particularly TCI, were found accessible, flexible and ideally suited to provide trainee teachers with practical advice and strategies on how to address these challenging issues.

David has delivered the training in a range of initial teacher-training (ITT) programmes at the university, including one-year postgraduate programmes training generalist primary school (ages 5–11) teachers and also secondary school (ages 11–18) teachers in the specialist subjects of History and Religious Education. He has also delivered the training to generalist primary schoolteachers in the final year of their three-year undergraduate ITT programmes.

Following an initial introduction to the government policy for Citizenship, Prevent, and Fundamental British Values in schools in England, the training programme consists of seven interconnected activities.

It begins with a review of media images of recent controversies in the UK and Europe, including ones involving school-aged children such as climate change protests and terror attacks. The trainee teachers – first as individuals, then in pairs and finally in groups – are asked to identify what makes an issue, such as those depicted in the images, controversial and to arrive at an accepted definition. They then go on to consider the implications of how they, as new teachers, might handle such issues with pupils in school.

Staying in their small groups, trainee teachers are introduced to the exercise “Hot or cold?” (activity 1.4 in TCI). Using sticky notes, they make a list of issues they think would be currently too hot/controversial for them to handle in the classroom, those that would be lukewarm and those that would be cold and therefore fine to discuss with pupils. Then all the sticky notes are put on a wall under “hot”, “lukewarm” or “cold” headings. In the plenary, the trainee teachers discuss why they have characterised the issues as they have, the challenges these issues pose for them as new teachers and the support they will need if they are to gain the confidence to handle controversy in their classrooms. This is followed by the exercise “Baggage check” (activity 1.5), where the trainee teachers consider, in small groups, how the personal beliefs and values of teachers may impact on how they handle controversial issues. They then discuss in plenary how their own beliefs and values, at this early stage of their career, might impact on their approach to the teaching of controversial issues.

Following this, the trainee teachers are introduced to a number of practical teaching methods and approaches that are designed to raise their confidence in their ability to teach controversial issues while on teaching practice in schools and when they get their first teaching posts. They carry out three further exercises.

The first of these, “Whose side are you on?” (activity 2.1), allows small groups to consider the pros and cons of a particular stance on controversial issues and where it can best be used in their practice, and then report back to the whole cohort. The reporting of stances provides trainee teachers with a repertoire of practical teaching approaches in handling controversy that they can immediately apply in their teaching practice. This repertoire is greatly appreciated by those learning how to be effective teachers.

The second exercise, “The school on the edge of the forest” (activity 2.3), is very good at showing how stories, fables and role playing can be used to help pupils to defuse sensitive issues. Trainee teachers like it because of its emphasis on developing literacy and oracy skills among pupils, skills that are currently high on the education agenda in the UK.

The third exercise, “Forum theatre” (activity 2.6), addresses the very real fear for new teachers of how best to deal with insensitive and inappropriate remarks in the classroom that may undermine their confidence and authority as the teacher. They particularly enjoy its group role-playing aspect, which shows them techniques to address this fear positively and professionally.

Depending on the time available, the trainee teachers finish by reflecting on how they felt during the activities and how far they think they would be able to apply the teaching methods and approaches to which

they have been introduced in their own teaching practice. They consider their own emotions, professional development and the kinds of support, in terms of people and culture, that may be available to them in their teaching placements and their first teaching posts.

At the end of the session, they are introduced to TCI and MC, and shown where they can download copies for themselves and to take into their teaching placement schools. Finally, as part of follow-up, they are asked to develop, in their own time, a "Lesson plan" (activity 3.2) – in any subject for primary, or in their specialist subject for secondary, trainee teachers – with learning activities, for a controversial issue, using some of the techniques to which they have been introduced during the training session. Feedback from the trainee teachers has been very positive.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS INCLUDING TEACHERS, SCHOOL LEADERS, POLICY ADVISERS AND TRAINERS

Olena Styslavska, Poland

Putting together a basic training programme on teaching controversial issues using activities in TCI

Olena Styslavska is an independent education consultant and trainer from Poland.

Olena developed a 90-minute programme on handling controversial issues based on the TCI manual. She found the manual flexible and very easy to adapt. The programme was piloted by Olena with educational practitioners from the six former Soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as a contribution to the Joint Council of Europe/European Union Eastern Partnership Programme. It was also piloted in Albania, Montenegro and the Russian Federation under the auspices of the European Wergeland Centre.

The programme consists of five connected activities:

1. The first is a snowball activity, in which **participants are asked to consider what they understand by “controversial issues”; first as individuals, then in pairs and finally in small groups. Together they try to identify the key elements in the concept (e.g. conflicting opinions, strong emotions) and arrive at an agreed definition.**
2. Staying in the same small groups, participants are then asked to think of actual examples of controversial issues. Each group is allocated a theme (e.g. controversial issues in families, friendship groups, schools, local communities, countries, the world), notes down ideas on flip-chart paper and presents them in a plenary. Then each group’s suggestions are challenged (“What is so controversial about that?”), to arrive at the most controversial examples. A few of these examples are selected for participants to reflect on what these issues mean to them personally and the kind of emotions to which they give rise.
3. Following this, there is some simple theoretical input. **It is suggested that controversy is not something to be shied away from but to be accepted as a normal part of life in an open, democratic society. Engaging with controversial issues is not first and foremost about trying to convert others to one’s opinions, but about accepting differences** and building relationships with others, by listening to and trying to understand their point of view, controlling one’s negative emotions and expressing one’s own views in a respectful way.
4. Depending on the time available, participants carry out two or more exercises from the manual as a concrete way of illustrating the theoretical process: “Musical chairs” (activity 1.2) and “Hot or cold?” (activity 1.4) are the most effective. Participants spend a little time reflecting on how they feel after each exercise. It is important for them to be aware of how their own emotional reactions are likely to affect their handling of controversial issues in school.
5. At the end of the session, the TCI manual is introduced and participants are given copies of it.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM USING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN AARHUS, DENMARK

*Jesper Holme, Anne Sofie Skare Rasmussen,
Christian Damgaard Kristoffersen and Nadia Helmy Ahmed*

From the abstract to the specific: using the methodology of TCI as a framework for local efforts at preventing violent extremism (PVE); drawing upon TCI tools to develop PVE workshop instructors' skills; and applying specific parts of the TCI manual when working with teachers and youth

Jesper and his colleagues developed an approach to preventing violent extremism using the methodology of and activities from the TCI manual in Aarhus, Denmark.

In the city of Aarhus, they were introduced to teaching controversial issues and the TCI manual through participation in the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) by the Ministry of Education. The RAN has disseminated the manual in English to its members, while the Danish Ministry of Education has published a translation that is available for free. In addition, the ministry has also held TCI training courses, facilitated by David Kerr, to introduce practitioners to the material.

This case study explains how Jesper, Anne Sofie, Christian and Nadia integrated TCI into preventing violent extremism (PVE) work on different levels and in different forms, specifically, in the Department of Children and Youth (DCY), which is part of the "Aarhus model". The Aarhus anti-radicalisation effort is a collaboration between the East Jutland Police, the Department of Social Affairs and Employment, and the DCY. The specific focus of the DCY is early prevention among children and youth, and the teamwork in schools and other institutions, both with teachers and directly with students – in separate settings. The partners also work with the general population of teachers and students. Because they work with early prevention, they do not target specific individuals or groups – but work with everyone. **Their aim is to facilitate a critical dialogue where both teachers and students get the opportunity to reflect on their own practices, opinions and perspectives on inclusiveness and democratic participation.**

Starting at the most abstract level, the TCI approach or methodology has been integrated into the framework of their PVE work or, in other words, the backdrop of their efforts. The idea is to create a mindset with which everyone is familiar and comfortable so that TCI can be the common denominator for the different arenas of our PVE work. Hence, the significance, methodology and techniques of critical thinking and engaging with controversial issues permeate their way of operating within the PVE field.

Moving on to a more specific application of the TCI methodology, the team looked at PVE efforts aimed towards the youth in Aarhus. This work is based on dialogue-based workshops in classrooms, where students can express their opinions and reflect on radicalisation and discrimination. These workshops are run by a corps of instructors who are trained in facilitating dialogue and have a thorough knowledge of radicalisation. Jesper and his colleagues introduced these instructors to the tools from TCI, not just the exercises but also the methodology, as mentioned. They also school the instructors in how to encourage critical thinking in the students and provide them with the necessary tools to address controversial issues. As the instructors develop their skills of facilitation through a learning-by-doing approach, they are given regular feedback and foci for improvement, drawing upon the methodology of and specific tools from TCI. The aim is to embed the instructors in the general TCI mindset and to develop a directly applicable skill set that they can use in their work.

Regarding the most specific application of TCI in Aarhus the team has used different exercises from the manual at different points in the training. First, they have used the exercise "Hot or cold?" (activity 1.4) as part of an effort to develop skills in teaching critical thinking among teachers. The exercise has proved very successful in getting teachers to reflect on their own practice and how they engage their students when dealing with controversial issues, and to develop strategies for improving their practice. When the teachers' consciousness of controversial issues and how to deal with them has been raised with "Hot or cold?", the experience of the team is that they can encourage them to take their reflection further by following up with the exercise "Whose side are you on?" (activity 2.1). Through this combination of exercises, the teachers see that it is important to address controversial issues, that they can develop their own strategies for doing so and that it matters how they do this.

In connection with one of their training courses with a school, Engdalskolen, Jesper and his colleagues made a short film to promote further collaboration.⁴

4. Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Moyk5RURbXQ&feature=youtu.be, accessed 28 April 2020 (video in Danish only).

CASE STUDY – TRAINING EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS, PARENTS AND NGOS THROUGH SUMMER ACADEMIES

Vida Kascelan and Bojka Djukanovic, Montenegro

Running workshops on teaching controversial issues in Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights for teachers, school leaders, students, parents and NGOs as part of a summer academy programme using TCI

Vida Kascelan is a civil servant at the Bureau for Education Services in Montenegro. Bojka Djukanovic is a UNESCO professor in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Montenegro. Bojka participated as a partner in the two cycles of the Joint European Commission/Council of Europe pilot projects scheme which led to the development of the training manuals TCI and MC. She also translated the first manual into Montenegrin.

Vida and Bojka used the TCI manual in training for teaching controversial issues in a national summer academy on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in Cetinje, Montenegro, in June 2019, the second such training event held in Montenegro. It was organised by the Bureau for Education Services and supported by the Ministry for Education and the government of Montenegro. It was based on the highly successful series of regional summer academies for the countries of south-eastern Europe, “Human Rights in Action”, held in Cetinje from 2012 to 2017 with the co-operation of the Council of Europe and the European Wergeland Centre. The theme of the 2019 academy was “Democratic School for All – From Word to Action”.

Participants came from 11 Montenegrin schools, both primary and secondary. Each school sent a teacher, a student, a representative of the parents’ council and an officer from an NGO relating to education. The main trainers were Vida, Bojka and Dijana Vuckovic, a colleague from the University of Montenegro.

The training on controversial issues was delivered in the form of two different workshops. The first was designed to raise questions about controversial issues in teaching and learning in school, for example, what is meant by “controversial issues”, why they are challenging to teach, what the benefits of teaching controversial issues are and what the role of the teacher is. This workshop was based on the early awareness-raising training activities in TCI. The second workshop focused on the strategies and methods teachers can use in the classroom to create a learning environment in which students can express their points of view and share their differences openly and constructively. This workshop was based on the later, more pedagogically related, activities in the manual. Finally, participants were introduced to the two manuals themselves and shown how to find the Montenegrin translation of the first of these on the Bureau of Educational Services website.

The first workshop was particularly helpful in allowing the participants from different groups associated with school – teachers, students, parents’ councils and NGOs – to share and discuss their experience of controversial issues in schools. This helped them to then reach a more grounded understanding of how such issues can be approached most effectively and inclusively in schools. The second workshop enabled teachers and learners, and those who support them, to try out a range of practical activities concerning controversial issues and to debrief the outcomes. It gave participants the confidence to introduce such activities to a wider group of teachers and students when back in their schools, with the active support of the parent council and NGOs. Together the two workshops helped to lay the foundations for the development of a co-ordinated approach to controversial issues across Montenegro following the summer academy training.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING LOWER SECONDARY TEACHERS AT UTØYA

Ingrid Aspelund, Norway

Running workshops on teaching controversial issues for lower secondary schoolteachers as part of the “Learning Democracy at Utøya” programme using TCI

Ingrid Aspelund is a programme manager and trainer at the European Wergeland Centre, based in Oslo, Norway. Ingrid developed a programme for teachers on the handling of controversial issues based on TCI. Between 2017 and 2019 the TCI programme was carried out with teachers from lower secondary schools from all over Norway that participated in the “Learning Democracy at Utøya” programme at the Memorial and Learning Centre in Utøya. The centre was built to honour the memory of the young activists who were killed on the island by Anders Breivik in July 2011. It hosts training courses for schools, school leaders, teachers and students throughout the year, including in co-operation with the European Wergeland Centre.

The teachers’ programme of “Learning Democracy at Utøya” is 3 hours long and the session outline and activities are based on the objectives of.

- ▶ strengthening competences and the confidence to facilitate conversation and discussion with students on controversial issues;
- ▶ strengthening competences to encourage peer learning in school after participating in the “Learning Democracy at Utøya” programme.⁵

The following activities from the TCI manual are used.

1. Defining “controversial issues” (activity 1.1): Participants are asked to consider what they understand by “controversial issues”, first as individuals, then in small groups. Together they try to identify the key elements in the concept (e.g. conflicting opinions, strong emotions) and to arrive at a more or less agreed definition.

It is useful to come back to the agreed definition during the training, as the participants usually discuss a number of issues, some of which may be more sensitive than controversial. In this particular learning programme teachers and students learn about the terror attack of 22 July 2011, some of whose issues may be considered more sensitive than controversial. However, several of the tools in TCI are still useful for reflecting upon those issues, such as “Where do you stand?” (activity 2.1).

2. “Hot or cold?” (activity 1.4): Participants are asked to identify as many controversial issues as they can think of. Some trainers ask the teachers to specifically link the controversial issues to the schools (e.g. what they as teachers find controversial, what students find controversial or what is controversial in the school community). Other trainers do not restrict the controversial issues to the school but rather open it out to society as a whole. Controversial issues in society that also affect the classroom often mentioned by Norwegian teachers include immigration policy, religion (such as religious headgear), climate change, the banning of mobile phones in school and abortion.

In some rural areas the “hot” controversial issues relate to the use of natural resources, such as the “wolf debate”, where there are stark disagreements as to whether sheep farmers should be allowed to hunt wolves that enter their pastures and kill their sheep, or whether wolves should be protected as an endangered species. There are similar issues in areas with reindeer. These issues evoke strong feelings and opinions, divide local communities and also find their way into classrooms.

The “Hot or cold?” activity has been useful for teachers in organising controversial issues and understanding similarities and differences. It also provides the trainer with an understanding of what is considered particularly controversial by a specific group of teachers, which is useful in moving on to the “Whose side are you on?” activity.

3. “Whose side are you on?” (activity 2.1): The teachers sit in small groups and are asked to agree on a case. They have to imagine that they are discussing a specific controversial issue with students. Then they discuss the pros and cons of a particular stance on controversial issues in that classroom discussion. Teachers often report back that they take many different positions during a single discussion with

5. One of the aims of “Learning Democracy at Utøya” is to strengthen students’ competence to act as peer educators for democracy and human rights in their schools and local communities.

students, but that they have rarely systematically thought about the pros and cons of their strategy, explaining that the use of different positions comes from experience. The activity has received positive feedback from teachers participating in the programme, because it encourages exchange of experience, provides concrete tools for teachers and emphasises self-reflection.

At the end of the session, the trainer sums up the discussion, emphasises why it is important to teach controversial issues and introduces the TCI manual. The participants are given a Norwegian translation of TCI produced by the European Wergeland Centre.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING TEACHERS THROUGH HEALTH EDUCATION

Elena Papamichael, Cyprus

Training teachers in teaching controversial issues through Health Education using TCI

Elena Papamichael is a researcher and teacher educator at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Nicosia.

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is the department of the Ministry of Education and Culture that runs professional teacher development. It provides a range of compulsory training programmes for teachers, based on current needs in schools in relation to Cypriot law and policy on education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute participated as full partners in the two cycles of the Joint European Commission/Council of Europe pilot projects scheme which led to the development of the training manuals TCI and MC.

Teaching controversial issues is especially relevant in a post-conflict society like Cyprus, in the context of a multiperspective approach to History teaching and the need to promote social justice and education for human rights and democracy across society.

Health Education provided the main focus for the training delivered by Elena and her colleagues at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The training provided in TCI was found to be particularly helpful for preparing teachers to deal with the many controversial issues in the Health Education curriculum. These included questions concerning religion, sexuality, euthanasia, racism, homophobia, transphobia, bullying, sexism and nationalism.

Building on the scoping paper and the activities in TCI, the teacher trainers were able to develop a comprehensive training package that could be integrated into and used to support official policy and practice in Health Education. This included websites, lesson plans, videos, guidelines and tools for teachers and head teachers. The teachers' guide on intercultural education developed by the Ministry for Education and Culture, for instance, recommends activities such as debates on controversial issues, for example euthanasia for animals, family types, smoking and drugs.

At the whole-school level, questions relating to teaching about and managing controversy raised in the two manuals played an important role in the implementation of the ministry's anti-racist policy, the Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents. The policy outlines the responsibilities and commitments expected by each member of the school community, and provides teachers and head teachers with detailed guidelines on how to prevent, and how to deal with, racist incidents in school. It views diversity as a multidimensional phenomenon involving various aspects of people's identities and inextricably related to controversy. Managing controversial issues within a framework of human rights and democracy is thus an essential element in a whole-school approach countering racism. It is also seen as contributing to a decrease in bullying and discrimination based on other sources of diversity in schools such as religion, ethnicity, language, appearance, disability, gender and sexual orientation.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING TEACHERS THROUGH CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Astrit Dautaj, Albania

Training teachers in teaching controversial issues through Citizenship Education and Social Studies subjects using TCI

Astrit Dautaj is a curriculum developer, teacher educator and policy maker in Tirana, Albania. He is head of the curriculum development sector at the Agency for Quality Assurance for Pre-University Education and head of the curriculum division at the Institute for Development of Education.

Astrit has used TCI with teachers, teacher trainers and inspectors of Citizenship Education and Social Studies in lower and upper-secondary schools in Albania. The piloting of new draft curricula in these subjects, including the integration of religion and related topics into Citizenship Education, provided him with the opportunity to develop the handling of controversial issues into a discrete element of professional training. This was presented as a distinct methodology that could be used to address the teaching of any controversial issue in school, from religion, gender and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) issues to radicalisation and violent extremism.

The introduction of controversial issues as a new training topic was justified in terms of the subjects themselves. Astrit argues, for example, that Citizenship Education is an inherently controversial subject and that teachers need the skills to deal confidently with this aspect of the subject. He also believes that controversy has become a growing phenomenon in Albanian life and that young people need to learn how to handle their differences in a peaceful and non-violent way.

The greatest challenge in the training has been overcoming teachers' natural fears of dealing with highly emotive and divisive issues. Lack of familiarity or insufficient knowledge, for example, is a common reason Albanian teachers give for not wanting to raise certain issues with their students. **However, it was found that, with training, teachers have become more willing to tackle difficult issues. The key is to identify what is putting them off and to provide training in developing the skills and techniques that will give them the confidence to overcome their fears.** One of the most successful activities in helping Albanian teachers handle issues fairly, even though they may not have detailed knowledge of the topic is "World café" (activity 2.5 in TCI).

Astrit has also dealt with ways in which schools, as a whole, can respond to the controversies in wider society, in particular the part they can play in helping to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. This has raised the question of what the proper role of the school is in relation to this issue: is the school to be an extension of the intelligence and police services or, as suggested in the training, should it aim to build resilience and social cohesion across the school population?

While the whole-school approach is more the subject of the MC manual, the experience in Albania has shown that questions relating to wider school controversies can also be stimulated through the use of some of the training activities in TCI. The activity "Hot or cold?" (activity 1.4) can be easily adapted for this purpose. Albania hopes to introduce MC in future as part of the framework for a pilot project focusing on schools as "community centres".

Following the pilot by Astrit, the aim is to train a group of trainers to disseminate the training based on TCI at a national level. An Albanian translation of the manual has been completed by the Council of Europe office in Tirana, and is available online on the Council of Europe and European Wergeland Centre websites as training material for teachers of Citizenship Education.

CASE STUDY – NGO TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS

ANTIGONE, Greece

Developing more respectful and inclusive school communities using MC

ANTIGONE is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation based in Thessaloniki, Greece. It works in the fields of anti-racism and non-discrimination, human rights, social ecology, peace and non-violent conflict resolution.

During the school year 2018/19 ANTIGONE implemented the MICRON! (Managing Issues of Controversy by Human Rights Education) project, which was funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe as part of the Joint Programme DISCO.

The project was inspired by and based on the MC manual. Its aim was to contribute to the development of more inclusive school communities that respect diversity and human rights. It involved a range of Greek educational stakeholders – policy makers, school directors, teachers, parents' associations and students – in five different regions: Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Achaia, Heraklion and Lesvos (Mitilini). These regions were chosen because of the number of refugees and migrants living in them, which gave rise to local controversies, tensions and confrontations, for example, controversy over access to the Greek public education system for newly arrived refugee children and refugee children from war zones, or the prejudice that second-generation migrant children confront on account of their ethnic and cultural background.

It was evident to ANTIGONE that the teaching community in Greece was reluctant to deal with issues like these in school. Teachers were also failing to deal with other, less obvious but equally controversial issues such as gender roles and sexual orientation. The aim of the MICRON! project was to help schools and their stakeholders overcome their fears about taking on such issues and to develop a common and systematic approach to managing them within the framework of democracy and human rights provided by MC.

The first task was translating, printing and disseminating the manual. Once MC was available in Greek, ANTIGONE ran a number of training workshops to introduce it to local educational communities. Local stakeholders were encouraged to develop programmes to open up pertinent discussion in their schools based on the principles in the manual. ANTIGONE supported these programmes with advice and additional materials and resources. An online network was also created to keep participants in communication with ANTIGONE and with each other.

The workshops adopted a participatory approach to training, which is familiar in non-formal human rights education. **The structure of the workshops was designed to reflect the inclusive and non-discriminatory approach to diversity that the school programmes were intended to achieve. Participants were encouraged to discuss, to share their differences with and to learn from each other. The exercises used, including ones from the manual, were introduced in such a way as to encourage discussion, primarily about ways of handling controversy and of challenging stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against different social, cultural and ethnic groups.**

In addition to the second manual, ANTIGONE also recommends using activities from a number of other Council of Europe resources in controversial issues training, including:

- ▶ *Teaching controversial issues: professional development pack;*
- ▶ *All Different – All Equal: ideas, resources, methods and activities for non-formal intercultural education with young people and adults;*
- ▶ *Domino – A manual to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance;*
- ▶ *Compass – A manual on Human Rights Education with young people;*
- ▶ *Manual for facilitators in non-formal education.*

There were two rounds of workshops. From these, 12 different school programmes were developed. Each approached school-related issues of social tension and confrontation from a different angle. These included:

- ▶ peer mediation;
- ▶ Roma students as peer mediators;
- ▶ school networking on peer mediation;
- ▶ peaceful conflict management and resolution;

- ▶ student participation in school decision making;
- ▶ research into student perceptions of the teaching of controversial issues;
- ▶ social inclusion of young people in prison education;
- ▶ art in human rights education;
- ▶ sport in human rights education;
- ▶ information and communications technology in human rights education;
- ▶ prevention of cyberbullying.

Although the project is now formally over, online communication between the participants continues, as they exchange material, information and news on local, national and European initiatives. The network members have expressed a wish to continue to meet regularly to discuss future projects and ideas on the handling of controversy and controversial issues.

The experience of the MICRON! project has proved that the MC manual can be applied by a range of school stakeholders in a variety of contexts. While this manual was originally designed simply as a self-evaluation tool for school directors and managers, the Greek project has shown that it is flexible enough to be used as a framework for all kinds of initiatives relating to the handling of difference and diversity in schools.

As a result of the project, the Greek version of the manual has been certified by the Ministry of Education as the basis of an educational programme for the school year 2019/20, which means that the ministry recommends the manual to schools and permits ANTIGONE to run educational activities in relation to it in primary schools, gymnasiums and lyceums.

CASE STUDY – TRAINING IN HIGHER EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY

Rhian Webb, Northern Cyprus

Using TCI to develop democratic competences in a higher-education English Language Teaching course

Rhian Webb is a researcher and tutor in English Language Teaching at the School of Foreign Languages, Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus Campus. One of Rhian's research interests is the role of higher education in democratic citizenship and human rights education, and how English Language Teaching courses can contribute to this.

At a summer academy on "Human Rights in Action", held in Cetinje, Montenegro, Rhian was introduced to the TCI manual and the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. This led to a research project at the Middle East Technical University exploring ways in which educators can foster the democratic competences of university students.

The project focused on the use of controlled discussions and debates on controversial issues in English Language Teaching and the impact this can have on student learning. Although the English Language Teaching syllabus was fairly rigid at the time and permitted little experimentation, the syllabus coursebook did include student consideration of the question "Should journalists always tell the truth?" This both legitimised and provided the starting point for a research project on the use of debating methodology in English Language Teaching.

Students on the course were introduced to the TCI manual and worked through a number of the training activities. They reflected on the implications of these and how they might inform the methodology they would use in their future roles as English language teachers, in managing diverse opinions in the classroom and the contribution of teaching controversial issues to English language learning goals.

The student responses are summarised in Rhian Webb and Troy Sarina, "The Role of Exploratory Practice and International Collaboration in the University Classroom: A Guide to Fostering Students' Democratic Competences"⁶

6. In Kenan Dikilitaş and Judith Hanks (eds), *Developing Language Teachers with Exploratory Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 157–80.

Section 3

Good practice guidelines – Lessons learned from working with the manuals

The case studies in the previous section testify to the numerous ways in which the manuals have and can be used across Europe and beyond. While each case is unique, there are a number of common themes and approaches. This section of the guide describes some of the practical lessons learned from those who have practical experience of working with the manuals. These lessons are summarised through answers to a series of questions in five subsections.

Getting started with the manuals

- ▶ Who are the manuals for?
- ▶ When and where can the manuals be used?
- ▶ With whom can the manuals be used?
- ▶ What are the benefits of using the manuals?
- ▶ What prior knowledge is needed to use the manuals?
- ▶ How can the manuals help overcome educators' concerns about teaching controversial issues?

Understanding the rationale behind the manuals

- ▶ What do the manuals say about the aims of teaching controversial issues?
- ▶ What do the manuals say about educator impartiality?
- ▶ What do the manuals say about the curriculum?
- ▶ How do the aims of the manuals relate to the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture?
- ▶ What policy issues do the manuals help to address?

Planning how to use the manuals

- ▶ What are the training methods used in the manuals?
- ▶ What pedagogical competences are developed through the manuals?
- ▶ How can we ensure that educators transfer what they learn from the manuals to their everyday practice?
- ▶ Can the manuals be used together?

Using the manuals in different contexts

- ▶ How can the manuals be adapted to meet local needs?
- ▶ What can be achieved with the manuals when the training time is limited?
- ▶ How can school leaders and managers be encouraged to use the manuals?
- ▶ Are the manuals suitable for educators working with children including young children?
- ▶ How can the manuals be used in initial teacher training?

Getting further help

- ▶ Where can additional support for the manuals be found?
- ▶ Where can copies and translations of the manuals be found?

Getting started with the manuals

Who are the manuals for?

The two manuals have been designed with two different sets of users in mind.

Teaching controversial issues is designed to be used by professional trainers or facilitators – teacher educators, trainers of new teachers, youth workers, local or regional “experts” and independent consultants. A degree of prior knowledge and experience is required to deliver the active learning activities that form the most significant part of the manual. In practice, however, the manual has also been used successfully in education institutions by practitioners who have responsibility for staff development, including school leadership teams, managers and lead teachers, and those with a similar responsibility in the youth, non-formal and informal sectors.

Managing controversy is designed to be used by school leaders, managers and leadership teams, and those in similar positions in non-formal education. The aim of the manual is to promote reflection on how well prepared one’s institution is, as a whole, to deal with controversial situations and events, including in teaching and learning. Therefore, a larger team of stakeholders should ideally be involved in the evaluation alongside leaders and managers, or different aspects of the evaluation should be divided up between them. In the same way, the manual may also be used by those with an interest in whole-school/ institution evaluation, such as advisers and inspectors, or trainers and facilitators called in to help develop strategy in this area.

When and where can the manuals be used?

The manuals were piloted in a range of different training contexts, including:

- ▶ Council of Europe network events and activities, for example, the Education Policy Advisory Network (EPAN) Research Group, the summer academy programme and the “Free to Speak – Safe to Learn” Democratic Schools for All campaign;
- ▶ programmes and dissemination activities run by other European organisations, for example, the European Wergeland Centre and the European Commission’s Radicalisation Awareness Network;
- ▶ training events conducted by countries involved in devising the manuals, for example the joint initiative for the countries of the Nordic region organised by the Nordic Council and the European Wergeland Centre;
- ▶ local and regional training conducted by the authors of the manuals, for example, in Hesse, Germany, with the Networking European Citizenship Education (NECE) network and the Nordic Council, and further training conducted by Ministry of Education teams in Denmark and Iceland;
- ▶ national in-service teacher-training programmes, for example, for Citizenship Education and Social Studies teachers in Albania, and for Health Education teachers in Cyprus;
- ▶ initial teacher-training courses, for example, in relation to Citizenship Education, the Prevent strategy and the promotion of Fundamental British Values in the UK;
- ▶ NGO-led projects, for example the MICRON! project run by ANTIGONE, which focuses on refugee and migrant education in Greek primary and secondary schools, and in refugee camps.⁷

The variety of situations in which these manuals have been successfully used to date testifies to the generic nature of the contents, their easy-to-use formats and the ease with which they can be adapted to meet local contexts and conditions. It has become clear through the piloting process that the manuals can be used to address a range of different policy issues, in a wide range of formal and non-formal education settings, across all phases of education – from early years through to higher education – and in connection with a variety of educational institutions, from schools and youth centres to universities. The translation of the manuals into different European languages (at the last count, 22 languages for the TCI manual) has served only to increase the range of contexts in which they can be accessed and used.

7. See Section 2 of this guide for more details of some of these initiatives.

With whom can the manuals be used?

The manuals have been used with a wide range of people, both professional and non-professional, including:

- ▶ education decision makers, policy makers and advisers at European, national/ministry, regional and local levels;
- ▶ school leaders and leadership teams;
- ▶ teachers;
- ▶ learners – children, young people, pupils and students;
- ▶ trainers and facilitators, often to train trainers;
- ▶ parents and local community representatives;
- ▶ youth workers and non-formal educators;
- ▶ university lecturers and students;
- ▶ teacher trainers and trainee teachers;
- ▶ NGOs;
- ▶ representatives of wider European education or training organisations;
- ▶ refugees and migrants, and those responsible for refugee and migrant education.

What are the benefits of using the manuals?

Those who have used the manuals say that the main benefits are their:

- ▶ flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts and settings;
- ▶ clear rationale for addressing controversial issues in education;
- ▶ sound theoretical underpinnings;
- ▶ mutuality in that the two manuals are designed to be used together to develop effective handling of the teaching and management of controversial issues;
- ▶ applicability to a wide range of education settings, including schools and non-formal settings;
- ▶ clearly laid-out training activities;
- ▶ simple, easy-to-follow instructions, including on timings and resources;
- ▶ suitability for use across Europe, regardless of country, region or context;
- ▶ helpful practical advice and guidance;
- ▶ strong emphasis on professional development and self-reflection;
- ▶ ease of translation into a range of European languages;
- ▶ adaptability in enabling the introduction of country, regional or contextual case studies and examples into translated and adapted versions of the manuals.

What prior knowledge is needed to use the manuals?

One of the key lessons learned from piloting was that the manuals are most successful when the training is carried out by skilled trainers and facilitators who know what they are doing and are able to model good practice in such a way that their participants will be able to pass it on to others. To make the best use of the manuals, it is recommended that – before, during and after training – trainers and facilitators:

- ▶ get to know the manuals well;
- ▶ make sure that they understand the rationale behind the manuals;
- ▶ have a clear vision of what they want to achieve from working with the manuals;
- ▶ understand how the manuals are linked to the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture;
- ▶ get to know the context in which the manuals will be implemented;
- ▶ find out the participants' prior knowledge and experience;
- ▶ plan activities carefully to fit into the time available;
- ▶ set clear goals and targets for themselves in terms of aims and intended outcomes;

- ▶ always model good practice in their choice of methods and interactions with participants;
- ▶ remain focused on professional development and self-reflection;
- ▶ are prepared to learn and adapt as they go along;
- ▶ ensure time for reflection and evaluation so that they can make any necessary adjustments to future training.

How can the manuals help overcome educators' concerns about teaching controversial issues?

Educators frequently have concerns, to begin with, about drawing attention to controversial issues in schools or other education settings. They worry that it may cause more harm than good. The message of the manuals is that they are right to be concerned. Handling controversial issues is challenging: get it wrong and the consequences can be serious.

However, experience of piloting the manuals has shown that, with the right approach to training, the majority of educators are able to overcome their initial misgivings. There are four key steps in this process.

- ▶ Showing that the potential benefits of talking about controversial issues usually outweigh the potential dis-benefits, and that therefore it is a risk worth taking: One way of getting this message across is to brainstorm some examples of controversial issues – as many as they can think of – with those who are being trained by asking them to list what they think are the dangers of talking about these in class at school or in some other education setting. Then ask them to list the dangers of not being allowed to talk about them. The value of addressing controversial issues will quickly become apparent in most cases.
- ▶ Allowing that there will sometimes be exceptions: Encourage those who are being trained to reflect again on the potential benefits and dis-benefits of teaching the controversial issues they have just been discussing. This time ask them whether they think the risk might be just too great in certain situations. Then discuss what these situations might be. Understanding that there may be exceptions can help to give educators a more nuanced understanding of teaching controversial issues and make them more likely to accept it as a general policy.
- ▶ Clarifying learning outcomes: Focusing on the goals of teaching controversial issues can help to give it more credibility. The introductory activity (activity 1.1) in TCI is useful for this. Ranking reasons for teaching controversial issues in numerical order gives those who are being trained an opportunity both to see the range of possibilities and to develop their own professional “theory” of the process.
- ▶ Developing a sense of personal and professional confidence and efficacy: It is not enough to understand why teaching controversial issues is important and what it can achieve. A degree of confidence is also needed for educators to feel able to take on difficult issues in the classroom. Confidence comes from having the skills and knowledge needed to handle issues safely and from knowing how and when to use these skills. A key step in overcoming reticence about teaching controversial issues, therefore, is the provision of opportunities to learn the necessary skills. TCI contains training activities that focus on a number of these skills, such as switching roles (activity 2.1), depersonalisation (activity 2.2), distancing (activity 2.3), building empathy (activity 2.4.) and dealing with insensitive remarks (activity 2.6).

Understanding the rationale behind the manuals

What do the manuals say about the aims of teaching controversial issues?

Activity 1.1 in TCI looks at different types of learning that can result from the teaching of controversial issues, including learning related to critical and analytical thinking, conflict resolution, democratic participation, and social and emotional development.

The main purpose of this training activity, however, is to help teachers and others recognise the value of taking controversial issues seriously. It is not primarily intended to clarify learning outcomes as such. However, experience of piloting the manual suggests that establishing clear goals for the teaching of controversial issues early on in the training process is a significant factor in building practitioners' confidence in their ability to handle such issues in the classroom and in other settings.

There is therefore an argument for drawing participants' attention to the question of learning goals early on in the training, and helping them to clarify these for themselves. It is important that these goals be defined in such a way as to:

- ▶ help practitioners develop a clear sense of the overall purpose of teaching controversial issues (what it is all about);
- ▶ make it easy for practitioners to identify with them (take ownership of them);
- ▶ have clear implications for practice (be concrete).

A useful approach is to describe the purpose of introducing controversial issues into teaching as helping students to learn to talk to others about difficult issues (i.e. "learning to talk about their differences and still be friends"). This could then be broken down into a handful of more fundamental goals, such as "learning to express one's opinions and feelings respectfully" and "learning to listen to others".

Experience has shown that speaking about the outcomes of teaching controversial issues in simple, practical terms at the outset helps teachers to overcome their initial misgivings and to be more open to incorporating this kind of teaching into their own practice. This approach can be more useful than starting with abstractions such as "critical and analytical thinking".

Once the initial sense of purpose is established, it is possible to unpack other, including more subtle, types of learning outcomes. The first of these is likely to be "becoming better informed about the issue".

As time is often limited, it is not necessary to devote a separate training activity to learning outcomes. The question of learning goals is best introduced in the debriefing session following an activity like "Musical chairs" (activity 1.2) or "Hot or cold?" (activity 1.4) from TCI.

What do the manuals say about educator impartiality?

The notion of impartiality is central to everything the manuals have to say about handling controversial issues. It is recommended as the default position for all educators, whether in the formal, non-formal or informal education sector. Not only should educators be impartial when dealing with conflicting views and opinions, but they should also be seen to be impartial. Learning is compromised when learners suspect that what they are being taught is influenced by the personal agenda of the educator.⁸

Impartiality is not the same as balance. While educators should generally remain impartial with regard to conflicting opinions, it would be wrong for them to give equal weight to all opinions. In fact, it would be "un-educational" – that is, it would be presenting learners with a skewed view of the world. For example, it would be reprehensible for an educator to act as though the view that climate change is simply a natural process has as much support from the scientific community as the view that human action is a major cause of it.

There are some issues, however, on which educators should not be impartial. Chief among these are issues that touch on human rights values. The approach to controversy promoted in the manuals has its origins in human rights theory and law. Educators are therefore bound to promote human rights values in their handling of controversial issues. It is important to make clear that, in deferring to human rights values, educators are not expressing a personal philosophy or agenda but rather the fundamental values on which their country's education is (or should be) based.

The same applies to the official line on certain issues that educators are mandated to abide by. For educators these are also non-negotiable. However, when they express these views, it is important, as always, to make their source clear.

"Whose side are you on?" (activity 2.1) is a TCI training activity dedicated to exploring the role of the educator in relation to conflicting opinions. It looks at the different pedagogical positions the educator can take in teaching about competing truth claims without compromising a basic sense of impartiality. "Baggage check" (activity 1.5) in the same manual is an activity that encourages educators to reflect on their personal and professional beliefs and values as a way of considering their own impartiality (or lack of it) in relation to different controversial issues.

8. The Beutelsbach consensus is helpful on this and following related points. This is a set of minimum standards relating to the teaching of civic and religious education named after the German town where they were developed (see Sibylle Reinhardt, "The Beutelsbach consensus", *Journal of Social Science Education* Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 11–13, available at www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/785/854, accessed 29 April 2020).

What do the manuals say about the curriculum?

Both manuals describe the curriculum as both a source of and a way of managing controversy. All subjects and areas of learning contain controversial elements, though they are not always recognised as such. This is why training in controversial issues is relevant to all educators. First and foremost, controversy can arise anywhere at any time, and educators need to be ready to deal with it. Second, by having their attention drawn to and learning about the natural conflicts and differences of opinion that underpin every subject or area of learning, young people can come to see diversity as natural and learn how to handle it.

The MC manual lists examples of what different school subjects have to offer in this respect, for example, issues like evolution, climate change and animal experimentation in Science; migration and tourism in Geography; conflicting historical narratives in History; and racist and sexist lyrics in Music. Raising educators' awareness of the potential of their subject or area of learning for the teaching of controversial issues is an important step in the development of a strategic approach to managing controversy.

How do the aims of the manuals relate to the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture?

Although the manuals were developed before the publication of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, there is a close relationship between the two initiatives. First, learning how to talk about our differences in a respectful manner is central to the idea of a democratic culture; and, second, identifying the competences needed for participation in a democratic culture helps to shape the way we talk about our differences.

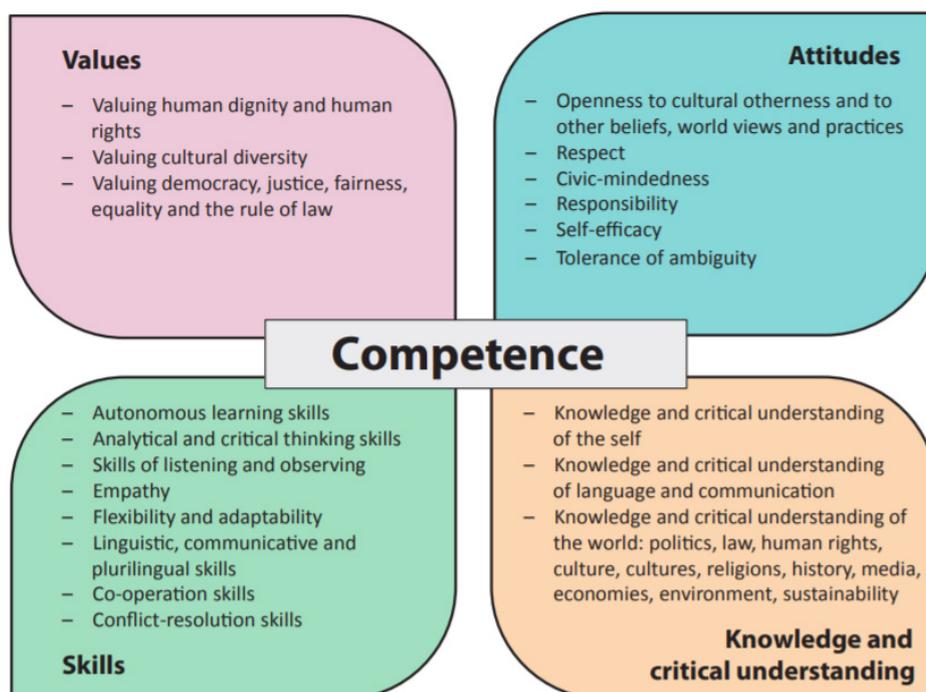
Asked during training which of the Council of Europe competences teaching controversial issues could help to develop, participants sometimes listed specific competences (e.g. tolerance of ambiguity, empathy and valuing cultural diversity) and sometimes said they think it could make a contribution to all of the competences.

Two ways in which reference to the Council of Europe competences have been used in piloting the manuals are to:

- ▶ show the value of teaching controversial issues for democratic citizenship;
- ▶ refine participants' understanding of the aims of teaching controversial issues.

The first way involves introducing the competences in the form of the butterfly diagram (see Figure 1) in the debriefing session after one of the initial active learning exercises in TCI, such as "Musical chairs" (activity 1.2), and asking "Which competences were developed in this exercise?"

Figure 1: The 20 competencies included in the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture



Such a use of the competences is usually only brief and is aimed at establishing a general sense of the value of the teaching of controversial issues as part of education for democratic citizenship – as one of the justifications for raising difficult issues in schools and other education settings.

The second way, where there is time for a more detailed examination of the outcomes of teaching, involves using the butterfly diagram to ascertain how teaching controversial issues can help develop the competences as a whole and what this implies for pedagogy. This helps participants to understand the aims of teaching controversial issues and how they underpin the development of democratic competences.

What policy issues do the manuals help to address?

During piloting the manuals were used to address different policy issues in a range of contexts. While the precise focus varied, reflecting local interests and needs, there was considerable overlap between the wider policy issues to which the manuals were applied. These issues included:

- ▶ inclusion;
- ▶ diversity;
- ▶ social cohesion;
- ▶ intercultural understanding;
- ▶ prejudice, discrimination and hate crime;
- ▶ radicalisation and violent extremism;
- ▶ non-violent conflict resolution;
- ▶ democratic citizenship and human rights education;
- ▶ threats to democracy and participation;
- ▶ competences for democratic culture;
- ▶ education for sustainable development;
- ▶ children's rights;
- ▶ literacy and oracy;
- ▶ refugee and migrant education.

Planning how to use the manuals

What are the training methods used in the manuals?

The training activities used in the manuals are mainly active and experiential. For the most part they consist of giving educators first-hand experience of the kinds of situations in which they might find themselves professionally. An essential part of this process is allowing time to reflect upon and to learn from the experience in a structured debriefing session.

The corollary of this kind of approach to training is that the trainer or facilitator is expected to model the competences they want to develop. So, when facilitating discussion, for example, they should ensure that no one individual or group dominates, that many views are encouraged and that everyone is able to understand what is going on. If there is sufficient time, they may also model the setting of ground rules at the beginning of the session.

What pedagogical competences are developed through the manuals?

Appendix 1 of TCI lists the range of pedagogical competences needed to handle controversial issues safely and effectively in education. They fall into three categories:

- ▶ personal (e.g. awareness of one's own beliefs and values and the potential impact of these on one's teaching);
- ▶ theoretical (e.g. understanding how controversy arises and how it is resolved in a democracy);
- ▶ practical (e.g. handling spontaneous questions and remarks of a controversial nature with confidence).

The detailed list doubles as a self-evaluation tool which educators can use to assess their progress in learning. This is best left until later in the training process. However, it is usually helpful at the start of a training seminar to give participants a general idea of the kind of competences they will be learning and how they stand in relation to these at that point. For this purpose, it may be useful just to identify a few key areas of competence in ordinary, everyday language, such as:

- ▶ knowing what you want to achieve;
- ▶ acquiring the skills and techniques you need;
- ▶ understanding what to do about your own beliefs and values;
- ▶ gaining confidence in your abilities.

How can we ensure that educators transfer what they learn from the manuals to their everyday practice?

It is important that what is learned from the manuals in the artificial setting of the seminar room or training venue is transferred to everyday practice. There are several ways of helping educators to do this, including:

- ▶ drawing up an action plan after the initial training;
- ▶ giving educators their own copies of the manuals which they can annotate and adapt;
- ▶ encouraging educators to share the practice they have learned from this guide with their colleagues;
- ▶ encouraging educators to share their training experiences in working with the manuals with others so that they can, in turn, train others using the manuals (a train-the-trainers approach);
- ▶ building follow-up activities into the training programme to evaluate how the action plan has been carried out and roll out the training more widely;
- ▶ developing a culture of professional development and self-reflection.

Can the manuals be used together?

Although the two manuals were designed as a unified training pack, they are not meant to be used at the same time. The most effective approach seems to be to start with the TCI manual, and then move on to the MC manual. In other words, begin by looking at teaching and learning controversial issues as a practice in its own right, and then move on to consider the wider institutional context. In using the second manual to build on the first, it is important, where possible, to have individuals with leadership or management responsibility involved at both stages, otherwise the connections between them may not be made. Of course, not all the activities in the first manual have to be completed before beginning the second one – just enough in the time available to lay a sound foundation for what follows.

Using the manuals in different contexts

How can the manuals be adapted to meet local needs?

Evidence from piloting suggests that, in general, the manuals need little adaptation to be useful in different contexts. Their contents are sufficiently generic to be easily transferable to a broad range of training situations. What is probably more important is that those mediating them are familiar with local conditions and issues and are able to approach them sensitively. However, there are four areas where a measure of local adaptation can be helpful:

- ▶ choosing examples: since they vary with time and place, it is important to choose examples of controversial issues that have significance in the local context, whether running practical activities in TCI such as “Musical chairs” (activity 1.2) or “World café” (activity 2.5), or reflecting on aspects of educational practice such as risk management in managing controversy;
- ▶ taking account of prior knowledge and experience: it is important to recognise that not everyone will have experience of the type of active learning techniques recommended in TCI (e.g. “Other people’s shoes”, activity 2.4), or of the forensic self-evaluation recommended in MC, and to make allowance for this in the way the training is carried out;

- ▶ using the local language: translations of the manuals into the local language should be used where possible, or participants should be given access to translations into their first language (see the list of currently available translations in Section 4);
- ▶ encouraging people to take ownership of what they are learning: encourage participants to take ownership of the manuals by writing in their copies if they have been given them as part of training and/or by adding in their own examples and contexts so that the activities become real to them, and hence more meaningful and impactful.

What can be achieved with the manuals when the training time is limited?

The time for training is always limited. It is important, therefore, that whatever time is available is used as well as possible.

Olena Styslavska⁹ has used the manuals to develop a 1-hour training session, composed of:

1. a snowball activity in which participants consider what they understand by “controversial issues”;
2. groups thinking up actual examples of controversial issues on an allocated theme (e.g. controversial issues in families, friendship groups, schools, local communities, countries, the world);
3. simple theoretical input on why controversial issues should be taught and how to teach them;
4. two or more short exercises from TCI (e.g. “Musical chairs”, activity 1.2; “Hot or cold?”, activity 1.4);
5. presenting TCI and giving participants their own copies of it.

David Kerr¹⁰ has developed a 2- to 3-hour training session for trainee teachers, which consists of:

1. an initial activity in which participants are shown media images of recent controversies, some of which involve children and young people, and are asked to identify what makes them controversial and how they might be handled with pupils in school;
2. two short exercises from TCI (“Hot or cold?”, activity 1.4; and “Baggage check”, activity 1.5) to consider how their beliefs and values might impact on their teaching of controversial issues;
3. an introduction to practical teaching methods and approaches to teaching controversial issues using the TCI exercises “Whose side are you on?” (activity 2.1), “The school on the edge of the forest” (activity 2.3) and “Forum theatre” (activity 2.6);
4. opportunities for participants to reflect on how they felt during the exercises and the kind of support they might need when teaching controversial issues during placements;
5. an introduction to TCI and MC, and showing where they can be downloaded free.

How can school leaders and managers be encouraged to use the manuals?

Everyone, including school leaders and managers, can go straight into the training activities in TCI. An exercise like “Hot or cold?” (activity 1.4) is a good one to start with. Ideally, leaders and managers should work alongside classroom practitioners, preferably from their own school, so that they can each learn more about the other’s perspective on teaching controversial issues. However, this will not always be possible.

Some trainers have asked their participants to read the scoping paper before they start training as preparation and setting the context. Others have preferred to hand out copies of the scoping paper later on as a way of reinforcing and going deeper into what has been learned in the seminar room.

The second manual, MC, required a little more introduction. One reason for this is that many school leaders and managers have not come across the idea of controversy as a distinct policy area before, and are more used to dealing with controversies as and when they arise, on an ad hoc basis. A good way to stimulate thinking about the issues surrounding the strategic management of controversy is to start with a real-life case study of a controversy that has not been managed well, and to ask participants how they think it could have been better managed. It is particularly helpful if it is a recent controversy from their own country or context. Then they can be presented with a number of other examples, in lesser detail, of controversies in school from their own and other countries. The discussion point is whether such controversies are becoming more common and difficult to deal with nowadays (perhaps using the ideas set out in Section 1 of this guide, “Handling controversial issues using the manuals – What, where, why and how?”). Then the manual itself, or sections of it, can be given out and the self-evaluation tool explained.

9. See case study in section 2 of this guide for more details.

10. Ibid.

Are the manuals suitable for educators working with children including young children?

The manuals were designed for all educators from pre-primary to higher-education levels and for use with children and young people of all ages. The principles they contain are the same for all age groups, including young children. Young children are aware of many of the conflicts and controversies of the adult world such as terrorism, climate change and war. They are often also aware that these are sensitive issues and there are unwritten rules about discussing and asking questions about them. This is why they are more than likely to turn to their teacher for an answer when they have a question about a controversial issue. Teachers are rightly concerned about frightening young children, forcing their own views on them or angering their parents. They see this age group as being more vulnerable.

However, in line with the principles outlined in the manuals, there are a number of simple things that educators of young children can do to help them address controversial issues:

- ▶ accustom children to seeing that people have different views (e.g. using stories);
- ▶ explain how they can like people even though they have different views;
- ▶ listen to children's concerns and provide opportunities for them to raise them (e.g. in "circle time");
- ▶ agree on simple rules for when the class talks together;
- ▶ correct misunderstandings or incorrect information, but only when necessary;
- ▶ always be reassuring and accentuate the positive.

To support educators working with young children of pre-school/nursery age, the Ministry of Education in Denmark produced a new version of TCI especially for use with this age group.

How can the manuals be used in initial teacher training?

The principles of using the manuals in training sessions with teachers, school leaders and other education professionals also apply to using them with trainee teachers in initial teacher training. The main difference is that trainee teachers are new teachers in training, and therefore have little or no practical experience of teaching children and young people to draw upon. Their confidence as practitioners may be low and fragile. They may also have heightened fears and concerns about how they can adopt an approach to controversial issues at such an early stage of their development as teachers. These fears and concerns are likely to relate to the impact on their classroom practice in terms of:

- ▶ their ability to control students;
- ▶ their ability to manage discussion and debate without antagonising or alienating particular groups of students;
- ▶ their lack of detailed knowledge of particular controversies;
- ▶ their fears that there will be complaints to the school from pupils and/or parents.

Therefore, it is important that trainers and facilitators take into account the following simple things in planning, conducting and following up their training sessions with trainee teachers:

- ▶ spend time understanding the background of trainee teachers, the nature of their training courses and the contexts in which they carry out teaching placements in schools and other settings;
- ▶ identify and emphasise from the start the benefits to the trainee teachers of teaching controversial issues in schools, in terms of both their professional development as teachers and the skills and knowledge they are teaching the children and young people to help them better deal with controversies;
- ▶ set clear targets for intended outcomes, particularly in building their resilience and their confidence in teaching controversial issues, and recognise that they may not be successful in their approach the first time and will have to work at it over time;
- ▶ model good practice in the training as a trainer/facilitator and also how they are expected to behave and react in the training exercises;
- ▶ provide lots of time for reflection and questioning during exercises to encourage professional development and embed ownership of teaching and learning approaches and methods;
- ▶ set out clearly where they can get further support and guidance, including access to the two manuals;
- ▶ set a practical follow-up task – in a way that fits all phases (early years, primary and secondary), all subjects and all ages – that encourages them to plan to teach controversial issues as part of their teaching placements;

- ▶ incorporate follow-up training sessions, both face to face and on line, into the ITT courses (as far as time will allow) to continue to build confidence and enable the professional development of trainee teachers as they make the transition to newly qualified teachers in their first teaching posts.

Getting further help

Where can additional support for the manuals be found?

There are a number of different sources of additional support available to users of the manuals in different member states. These include the following.

People

In the first instance, you can contact the authors of this good practice guide, David Kerr and Ted Huddleston, of Young Citizens (UK), and some of the other contributors (see Section 2).

Each member state of the Council of Europe also has its own EPAN representative who can advise on support, opportunities and other resources in the country or region.

Guides and manuals

Extreme Dialogue Facilitator Guide, available at https://extremedialogue.org/sites/isd.hocext.co.uk/files/2018-04/Extreme-Dialogue-Facilitator-Guide_0.pdf, accessed 29 April 2020.

“Essentials of Dialogue”, available at <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/essentials-dialogue>, accessed 29 April 2020.

“Teaching Elementary Children about Controversial Issues”, available at https://mhschool.com/resources/teaching_children_controversy.pdf, accessed 29 April 2020.

Tackling Controversial Issues in the Citizenship Classroom: A Resource for Citizenship Education, available at www.ubuntu.ie/media/controversial-issues.pdf, accessed 29 April 2020.

Teaching controversial issues, available at www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/lib_res_pdf/0118.pdf

Websites

Institute for Strategic Dialogue: www.isdglobal.org

Living Democracy: www.living-democracy.com

Council of Europe, Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education: www.coe.int/en/web/edc/what-is-edc/hre

The European Wergeland Centre: www.theewc.org

Council of Europe resources

Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, available at www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture

Jackson R. (2014), *Signposts – Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at : www.researchgate.net/publication/282656989_'Signposts'_Policy_and_Practice_for_Teaching_about_Religions_and_Non-Religious_Worldviews_in_Intercultural_Education

Czene Z., *Respect and tolerance are born in the classroom*, available at www.coe.int/en/web/learning-resources/-/respect-and-tolerance-are-born-in-the-classroom, accessed 29 April 2020.

“Free to Speak – Safe to Learn” Democratic Schools for All, available at www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn, accessed 29 April 2020.

Compass – Manual for Human Rights Education with young people, available at www.coe.int/en/web/compass, accessed 29 April 2020.

Books and articles

Bruen J. and Grammes T. (2016), "Controversial Issues in the Political Classroom", special issue, *Journal of Social Science Education* Vol. 15, No. 2, available at www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/issue/view/77, accessed 29 April 2020.

Claire H. and Holden C. (2007), *The Challenge of Teaching Controversial Issues*, Trentham Books, Stoke-on-Trent.

Cowan P. and Maitles H. (2012), *Teaching Controversial Issues in the Classroom: Key Issues and Debates*, Continuum, London.

Hess D. E. (2009), *Controversy in the Classroom: The Democratic Power of Discussion*, Routledge, Abingdon.

Where can copies and translations of the manuals be found?

The next section of this guide contains a full list of the European languages into which the manuals have so far been translated and information as to where the translations can be found.

Section 4

Accessing the manuals – List of translations

This final section of the good practice guide provides details of where the two manuals can be accessed and downloaded and includes a list of European languages into which the manuals have been translated to date.

As TCI and MC have been piloted and used across Europe, there has been a growing demand for them to be translated into European languages beyond English, French, German and Spanish. The original translations of the manuals were carried out by the Council of Europe and hosted on their website. This remains the main location where translations of the manuals can be found. However, a number of national agencies have also translated the manuals into other languages to facilitate their greater use. Translations have also been carried out by the European Wergeland Centre to provide direct access to the manuals for the regions and countries where it works to promote EDC/HRE. Table 1 provides a list of the European languages into which the manuals have been translated and the online locations of the translations.

TCI has been translated into more European languages than MC. This may be because it was the first manual to be published and piloted. It is hoped that the manuals will continue to be translated into other European and world languages.

Table 1: List of European languages into which TCI and MC have been translated, and online locations of the translations

European language	<i>Teaching controversial issues</i>	<i>Managing controversy</i>
Albanian	✓	
Czech	✓	✓
Danish	✓	✓
English	✓	✓
Estonian	✓	
Finnish	✓	✓
French	✓	
German	✓	✓
Greek	✓	✓
Hungarian	✓	
Icelandic	✓	✓
Latvian	✓	
Lithuanian	✓	
Montenegrin	✓	
Norwegian	✓	✓
Polish	✓	
Romanian	✓	✓
Russian	✓	✓
Slovak	✓	
Spanish	✓	
Swedish	✓	✓
Ukrainian	✓	

Notes

The publications can be found at:

ANTIGONE, Managing controversy (Greek version), <http://www.antigone.gr/en/projects/43>

Council of Europe, Joint Programme, Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO), Publications, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects/publications>

The European Wergeland Centre, Resources, Teaching Controversial Issues Through Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE), <https://theewc.org/resources/living-with-controversy-teaching-controversial-issues-through-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-edc-hre>

The European Wergeland Centre, Resources, Managing Controversy, <https://theewc.org/resources/managing-controversy>

Appendix

Teaching controversial issues – Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Part A. Scoping paper exploring the challenges and developing competence

Introduction

Purpose

Foundation

Approach

The context

Literature review

What are controversial issues?

Why teach controversial issues?

What are the challenges?

How can these challenges be met?

What types of training and training resources are currently available?

Conclusions

Recommendations

Appendix 1. Teacher competences for teaching controversial issues

1. Personal

2. Theoretical

3. Practical

References

Part B. Programme of training activities

The Programme of Training Activities

Implementing the Programme of Training Activities

Outcomes

The role of the facilitator/trainer

Section 1: Introducing controversial issues

Activity 1.1: Introduction

Activity 1.2: Musical chairs

Activity 1.3: Blob tree

Activity 1.4: Hot or cold?

Activity 1.5: Baggage check

Section 2: Teaching methods

Meeting the challenge

Activity 2.1: Whose side are you on?

Activity 2.2: Changing perspectives

Activity 2.3: The school on the edge of the forest

Activity 2.4: Other people's shoes

Activity 2.5: World café

Activity 2.6: Forum theatre

Section 3: Reflection and evaluation

Putting it all together

Activity 3.1: Snowball

Activity 3.2: Lesson plan

Activity 3.3: Blue letters

Activity 3.4: Fun tree

Managing controversy – Contents

Acknowledgements

Preface

Introduction

1. School leadership
2. School ethos and culture
3. Teaching and learning
4. The curriculum
5. Student voice
6. Guidance and support
7. Parental engagement
8. Risk management
9. Staff development and training

Appendix I – A checklist of possible actions

Appendix II – Managing controversy: implications for school leaders and managers – a scoping paper

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