

(Future) Spanish Teachers' Perceptions on Critical Education for Sustainable Development

Keywords

Spanish Language Teacher Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Social Justice Education, Critical Literacy

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Abstract (500 words)

Abstract (300 words)

At the present time, there is a small but growing body of research concerning how language teachers understand and implement critical pedagogies and environmental topics in their classrooms (Goodspeed et al., 2023; Louloudi, 2023; Mercer et al., 2023). Although these studies focus on experienced teachers, very little is known about prospective or novice teachers' concerns, especially for languages others than English.

In order to address this gap, and as part of the Erasmus+ project CRITERION (Critical Spanish Language Teacher Education), we conducted and evaluated a series of teacher training activities for Spanish teachers in both school and university settings. Through the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) of semi-structured interviews, observation protocols and feedback questionnaires, we examined the participants' understandings, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the potential implementation of Sustainable Development Education (SDE) from a critical perspective in their teaching.

On a conceptual level, our findings revealed that participants tend to equate 'critical' with critical thinking and with (digital) media literacy. In addition, issues of social justice are frequently linked with the 'intercultural' domain. On a more practical level, teachers confront the predicament of recognizing the essential social relevance of both a critical perspective and SDE, while facing the particular challenges of teaching Spanish, especially at lower-level courses. In this vein, whereas some teachers find these challenges discouraging,

others view them as opportunities to advocate for more robust teacher training to support their efforts, given that they feel somewhat 'left to their own devices' by the educational authorities.

Critical teacher education programs on SDE, whether through one-day workshops or university courses, should not only actively address these conceptual and practical challenges but also empower language educators to effect meaningful change.

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