Chapter 14
Re-inventing School to Develop Active Citizens

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14.1 Introduction

In the classic article "Positive psychology: An introduction", published in 2000 by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the *American Psychologist Journal*, among many characteristics supporting the creation of a new science named positive psychology, the authors highlight one aspect that, in our opinion, has been neglected by many researchers of this new field of knowledge. This aspect, in general, focuses on the individual traits and the role -and possible applications- of positive psychology at a group level in collective environments.

In the search for delimitating the fields for this emerging science, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) point out that, at a group level, positive psychology should concentrate on civic virtues and institutions that promote individuals to be a better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

Formal education may be the best locus for a social intervention aiming at strengthening positive traits at the individual and collective levels, such as those mentioned above. In this way, an ethic and civic education program, based on positive virtues, should be seriously considered by the society as a core element to impregnate school curricula and community relationships in its daily activities. Educational centers can play an important role in building positive qualities and civic engagement.

In this chapter we will discuss the evolution of education in recent centuries, trying to present the background that set up the current situation of the schools that our

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children and adolescents must attend. This universal schooling paradigm is demanding new approaches for the development of quality in education, and we will try to show how some of the principles, that positive psychology supports, can contribute for this process of re-inventing formal education.

Although we believe that this issue has a worldwide significance, Brazil and its educational standards will be the focus of the experience and the discussions described in the next pages.

14.2 Educational Revolutions and the Re-invention of the School

Formal education had its model structured at the time European national states consolidated principles based on the development of individuals and the society. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was believed that formal education – one that should be practiced in public spaces – did not need to be extended to all people but only to the children of the socio-economic aristocracy, as they would be responsible in the future for producing knowledge and managing the destiny of the society. This is the same model used in Europe for the creation of universities and has shown a frank expansion throughout the continent since the twelfth century.

According to the Spanish philosopher, Jose Esteve (2002), after the first educational revolution characterized by the creation of instruction houses in the courts of the Egyptian pharaohs – 2,500 years ago – ; the mark of the second educational revolution in human history is the decree of King Friedrich Wilhelm II. In 1787, this decree makes basic education compulsory in Prussia, taking schools' management from the clergy; becoming public; and being organized and managed under the State's responsibility.

In this historical movement, a pedagogical and architectural model of school that placed teachers at the center of the process was formed as a characteristic of the second educational revolution. Teachers were regarded as the holders and transmitters of knowledge, and a large number of students were set under their responsibility. This relationship was almost individualized before. Educational environments were designed based on these principles: small classrooms; teachers occupying a space next to the blackboard marking it the center of the pedagogical activity; and students' desks facing it. According to these concepts, students were positioned to receive the instruction coming from the master.

Despite the emerging industrialization during the nineteenth century, the economic basis of the European societies was predominantly agrarian. As only a minority of the population was able to study, it was possible to develop an educational organization based on selectivity, search for students' homogeneity, and the exclusion of those individuals considered as *different*. That is, students with learning difficulties or conduct problems. The higher the educational level, the more selective it became. Thus, the rationale behind this teaching model was the exclusion of

differences and the search for homogenization. The tools to achieve these processes were based on a criterion that focused on the absence of certain characteristics or skills in students, or even pathological problems on children. The teaching procedures centered on remediative processes that seek to fill the detected faults. The teacher's eyes turned to students with problems any coping difficulty in order to legitimized, based on their disabilities, their exclusion from school.

This was a similar scenario to the one experienced in the field of psychology since its beginnings. This model structured around the pathology has been questioned in recent years by the positive psychology.

Esteve (2002) reports that the idea of an education for everybody has emerged in the nineteenth century. However, it is only since the second half of the twentieth century that, what the author called "the third educational revolution" would consolidate, marked by the end of education policies based on the exclusion of the vast majority of the population and guided by the quest for schooling 100 % of children. A goal that now extends to the high school.

The search for universal education is clearly linked to the consolidation process of the modern conception of democracy in Western nations and its development is not a process devoid of tension. The society democratization, the quest for universal primary education and the increasing expansion of higher education have brought diversity into the classroom, characterized by new populations not sufficiently attuned to the school or academic paradigms. Therefore, one of the current challenges of education is the emergence of the need of dealing with diversity and the interaction among people from different gender and social, economic, psychological, physical, cultural, religious, racial, and ideological backgrounds. Finally, the disruption of the elite education has created what we call a 'different broth of cultures and diversity' in educational settings.

The struggle for equal conditions and the right to inclusion of every person in the schools; the structural changes on the role of knowledge in the contemporaneous society; and the current socioeconomic organization of post-industrial societies, feed a strong debate about the role of education nowadays. Our generation is facing therefore, new challenges involving the adoption of public policies capable of providing access and quality to schooling, but we are also challenged to find different ways to relate education with the knowledge produced by mankind.

As teachers are challenged to seek inclusive methods that lead to respect for differences and cultures and also to appreciate the students' different types of skills and knowledge in the classrooms, positive psychology can contribute to this process. That is, by providing new ways for educators to understand children and teenagers and helping them to promote the development of virtues that enhance their well-being and the pursuit of personal and collective happiness.

We are referring to the need for re-thinking and re-inventing the education in the same way that positive psychology has helped psychology to re-think the basis of its research and professional applications.

So, the model of school that we know, consolidated in the nineteenth century, now has the need to cope with the demands and request of a democratic and inclusive society, characterized by diversity and based on the inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary knowledge.

This process of re-invention, however, needs to be aware of the tradition and conservation, as these features are essential parts of the social mission of education: to preserve, to transmit and to enrich the cultural and scientific heritage of humanity. Thus, this search for new educational settings cannot be designed as dichotomous, by opposing tradition and innovation. The novelty does not sit on the emptiness but on the experiences of ancient humanity.

What academic and scientific movements attentive to the processes of re-invention of education has understood – without the temptation of simplifying and pointed out the dichotomy – is that the changes need to be built on a new model of education and science considering the dimensions of **contents, methods** and **relationships between teachers and students** in a complementary perspective (Araujo, 2011). The next section introduces how each of these dimensions can influence the re-invention of education.

14.2.1   Educational Contents

Regarding the goals for university education in the twenty-first century, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC & U) established through the 2007 Report four types of learning that should be expected of students: (1) Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and the natural worlds; (2) intellectual skills and practices; (3) integrated learning that synthesizes general and specialized studies; and, (4) personal and social responsibility, including knowledge and civic engagement at local and global levels, knowledge and intercultural competence, ethical thoughts and actions, and skills for learning throughout life.

In this recent document, for all universities in the United States which can be generalized to all levels of education, it is highlighted the concerns on how the technical dimensions articulate with the ethical values in a cross-curricula approach. Otherwise, it would not be achieved the civic engagement, social responsibility and quality in education that are pursued. This is a concern that doubtless can be taken as reference for educational goals in all countries at all educational levels.

Accordingly, the overall education of students – and consequently of teachers' professional training – is put in the spotlight of the education for the twenty-first century. To educate the new generation towards the construction of positive civic virtues and a better citizenship is an obligation of an inclusive, democratic and fair society, and this process demands a new approach at the school curricula. Ethics and citizenship contents should be intentionally introduced in cross-curricular projects at every levels of education.

14.2.2   Methods in Education

There is no way of thinking that the educational process will follow the models erected in the nineteenth century, ending in four walls, temporally limited in the classes schedule and based on a relationship in which someone who has the

knowledge transmits it to others. The ongoing transformations tend to significantly alter these processes in the production of knowledge.

With regard to the methods, it is necessary to rethink the timing, spaces and relationships in education, incorporating the radical transformations that the technological revolution and communication practices has provoked in the democratization process.

The introduction of educational approaches based on "open and distance learning (ODL)", collaborative and cooperative spaces of knowledge production and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are key elements in this process of reviewing the teaching practices. These tools and perspectives, if adequately employed in the teaching and learning process, can provide conditions for expanding access, but also to promote the quality and success in education (UNESCO, 2009). The possibility to incorporate different languages in educational relationships, supported by multimedia and new ways of conceiving the relationships of teaching and learning can re-configure the roles of teacher and student, opening up different ways to deal with diversity and the calls of society. Thus, we are on the threshold of something different in the mankind history.

In view of other forms of teaching and learning, there are two interdependent poles on this process. On the one hand, the preparation and organization of teaching materials in the form of multiple languages in an interactive relationship with students; and, on the other hand, conceiving the student role in the form of authoring plural, collective and collaborative knowledge productions.

14.2.3 The Relationships Between Teachers and Students

The changes in the role of teachers and students are what set the third line of support for re-inventing school. Authors such as Shulman (2004) and Weimer (2002) show that the teaching-learning must suffer a reversal, leaving such process of focusing on teaching and opening perspectives for learning grounded on the leadership of the learner. That is, breaking up with the dichotomies between "the one who knows everything" and "the one who knows nothing".

In this perspective, the construction of knowledge presupposes an active individuals who intense and reflectively participate on the educational processes, building on their identity and producing knowledge through the dialogue with peers, teachers and the daily culture.

We are talking about an educational model that promotes an intellectual adventure mediated by teachers. This adventure requires hearing the voice of students, promoting the collective and cooperative learning, encouraging their curiosity to question scientific knowledge in everyday life and, above all, providing the conditions to find answers to their own questions in the social context.

Active Learning Methodologies are the core of an approach where the emphasis in teaching is replaced by the emphasis on learning. The Problem Based Learning (PBL), according to Araújo and Sastre (2008), is an active learning methodology that fits well to this new role of education. Mayo, Donnelly, Nash, and Schwartz (1993) posits that PBL is a pedagogical strategy that introduces students to significant and

contextualized situations in the real world. The teacher, as facilitator of the learning process, is responsible for providing resources, guidance and instruction to students, as they develop their knowledge and skills in problems solving.

As a variant of this model, perfectly compatible with its principles, emerges the concept of Project-Based Learning. Graaff and Kolmos (2007) define it as a complex effort that requires the analysis of the target problem. This analysis has to plan and manage the desired changes that are to be conducted in people's surroundings, as well as to organize knowledge and attitudes towards life; and to involve a new and not previously solved task or problem.

Thus, we believe that the adoption of Project and Problem-Based Learning as a model teaching, as well as other active learning methods, combined with Information and Communication Technologies and the concern for personal and professional ethics, appear as powerful tools to form new generations under the conditions required for solid and deep knowledge, aiming at innovation, the transformation of reality and the construction of social justice.

But how all of these complementary dimensions of contents, methods and the relationships between teachers and students can be actually introduced in daily activities at schools? The following section presents an example of an experience developed in Brazil for training teachers to deal with this new educational situation, having the principles of positive psychology as a background.

14.3   Ethics, Values and Citizenship in School: A Teacher's Training Program in Brazil

Seeking to build new educational models consistent with the demands of the re-invention of education, and anchored in the principles of positive psychology that advocates the need to promote an education of civic virtues aimed at strengthening citizenship, in 2011 we offered a graduate program named "Ethics, Values and Citizenship in school (EVC)" at the University of Sao Paulo with a partnership of Virtual University of Sao Paulo (UNIVESP). It was a blended program, 480 h long distributed in 18 months, free of any taxes, and attended by 1,000 teachers from 12 Brazilian cities of the State of São Paulo.

To contextualize the relevance of this initiative in terms of public policy, it should be mentioned that, nowadays, it is a huge effort in Brazil not only to form teachers in a higher education level, but also to training teachers in service in a graduate level. Being the sixth biggest economy in the world, education standards in Brazil are flunking when compared to most countries in the world and even to Latin American nations in worst economic situation. This has become a big issue for the Brazilian development. The PISA[1] – Programme for International Student

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[1] *PISA is a worldwide assessment program developed by the OECD – The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.* It aims to evaluate education systems worldwide every 3 years by assessing 15-year-olds' competencies in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science.

Assessment is a good example for that, since Brazil occupies the position number 49 in reading and science, and 53 in mathematics out of 70 countries in the world. Concerned with this type of social indicators, the government at all its levels, has been implementing public policies to foster teacher's better qualification and making compulsory for basic education teachers (from pre-primary to lower secondary education and adult literacy programs) to get a higher education degree. The special graduate programs designed to improve teacher's abilities and competencies lasted from 18 to 24 months and have become an important tool to face this problem. The program and experience we are presenting in this chapter belongs to this effort of improving the quality of education in Brazil.

Based on a methodological concept that people *learn by doing* and a constructivist epistemology, the main goal of this program was to give teachers the opportunity to meet these new educational paradigms actively experiencing issues of ethics and citizenship in their own reality, using different teaching tools languages and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in knowledge production, and working in collaborative and cooperative groups to solve daily problems of their school community.

Following Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) approach in positive psychology, the course had an interdisciplinary and cross-curricular concept in which the civic virtues, ethics and citizenship contents were the central element of the curriculum. Although it had to be organized in a disciplinary structure due to the university academic by-laws, it aimed at breaking with the traditional subjects when forming teachers, by introducing the Project and Problem-based Learning methodology as the main approach. It was supported by the following subjects:

- The construction of values in Education
- Community and citizenship education
- Health at school
- Human rights education
- Democratic life at school
- Ethics and teaching
- Inclusive Education: possibilities, advances and challenges
- Cross-cutting citizenship themes and Project-based strategies

As can be observed by the title of the subjects, this program seeks to direct students' behaviors and thoughts toward themes of pro-social nature. The contents addressed transcend the limitations of traditional disciplines to deeply work on issues of ethics and citizenship by linking them with knowledge from different areas such as health, education, sociology, philosophy and law.

In the offering of these subjects we had the participation of professionals from different fields of knowledge, who assumed the challenge of dialoguing with other areas but anchored in the cross and interdisciplinary themes of the course. Beyond that, the contents were designed by the course's professors with an approach that integrates theoretical models and teachers' needs of dealing with daily classrooms issues and deliberate about them.

In another pedagogical dimension, rethinking time, space and relationships at school, we have incorporated educational methods based on the "open and distance learning (ODL)," collaborative and cooperative spaces of knowledge production and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the teaching and learning relationships in the EVC course. In terms of blended learning, the EVC course combined weekly face-to-face meetings with the use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that requested and allowed other forms of relationship with knowledge.

To be really inclusive, influenced by the positive psychology approach, we adopted accessibility as a key element in the e-learning platform. But the meaning of accessibility wasn't directed only to those with disabilities. Based on the assumption that people have different ways of learning and in order to avoid homogeneity, we adopted the convergence of different *languages* and tools in the design of the virtual learning environment. It gives people with different abilities and disabilities the possibility to participate; to interact; and to collaborate in a diversity learning set. In this way, the contents in the e-learning platform were available with redundancy. The same class or support text or project could be accessed in many different ways and forms of organization, trying to respect the diversity in which humankind can learn new things. To exemplify this issue, depending on the interest of the learner, he/she could organize his interaction with the course's contents in a linear timing perspective, or he/she could organize his work by studying each subject at a time, and there were other forms in which he could access the many different contents.

As pointed before, tradition and conservation are key elements in the social mission of education in order to preserve the cultural and scientific heritage. This type of knowledge must be transmitted to future generations and not re-invented every new course or every year. Consequently, we have established that part of the curricular contents should be available through video-recorded lectures in studios and classrooms of the University of Sao Paulo. University's leading experts on the issues addressed in the course were invited to teach recorded classes.

Each of these video-classes was long enough (15/20 min) to schematically present the state of the art and to give students the opportunity to view, review, pause, and take note on the topic, what is not possible in a regular class. A total of 112 video-classes were recorded and available on the EVC e-learning environment and at USP's website *e-aulas* (http://www.eaulas.usp.br).

The subjects were 2-months long, with 14 video-classes in which two of them were delivered to students every week. It is noteworthy that each video-class was recorded also in LIBRAS (Brazilian Signs Language) and closed captioned to ensure accessibility for people with different disabilities.

As a support for video-classes, teachers suggested texts, articles and websites available on online platforms with free access. We highlight that all the students at the University of Sao Paulo have access to the "CAPES' journals website" (http://periodicos.capes.gov.br), a government platform that includes over 30,000 of the main international and national journals in all areas of knowledge. Also, it was

widely used the network SciELO – Scientific Electronic Library Online (http://www.scielo.org), a platform that provides free access to about 1,000 of the major journals published in Portuguese and Spanish.

So, with this approach we avoided the expensive production of exclusive text for the course, recognizing that there is excellent academic material available online. We avoid also something common in distance learning courses, which is the production of texts that summarize important knowledge in simplified language with the assumption that people who attends this type of course has no good academic background; has little time available; and requires summarized texts to study. Finally, unlike traditional models of education where teachers often suggest the reading of one text every week to avoid overloading students, in the design teachers suggested a number of texts every week, giving students the opportunities to study more thoroughly the topics they are more interested in. Thus, a wide virtual library, fully and freely accessible online has been created.

Following the accessibility principles mentioned before, the reading texts were available in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) of the course in many different ways. The texts could be read on the screen or could be downloaded for later use. But for those who prefer to learn by listening, they were also recorded in a mp3 format, to be downloaded in audio equipment. Another possibility was to use a screen reading software, available to students, which guaranteed both the accessibility to blind people as a different way to appropriate the academic knowledge.

Each week, also aiming at enriching the learning experiences and reflections of students, teachers suggested other videos and films available on the internet, in free well-known platforms like YouTube (www.youtube.com) and vimeo (http://vimeo.com). A good example, suggested in the discipline "inclusive education: opportunities, progress and challenges" was the video "Beautiful dance by 2 amputees to Broken Wings", available on the YouTube (http://youtu.be/mK29iPaQDbg). With this initiative, besides enriching the course practices, it aimed at providing educational materials for students (basic education teachers) to bring them into their classrooms.

The television language and its production peculiarities that account for synthesizing important topics in short chapters was also an important part of this training course for teachers. Starting from problems of everyday life and real situations related to ethics and citizenship issues, journalists interviewed both experts on the subject and people involved on them, in order to provide a broad vision about those topics. UNIVESP TV, a public television channel in the digital band of TV Cultura (a public TV network), was responsible for producing many programs for the EVC courses. All programming of UNIVESP TV has education as its focus and besides being transmitted in an open TV channel; they are available in a special channel at YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/univesptv). The UNIVESP TV produced and aired more than 10 special programs for the EVC program, on topics such as: Education in values (http://youtu.be/hiIOC-1ZlEM); Social Representation of Human Rights (http://youtu.be/PrZsHduiv6E); Educational practices in human rights (http://youtu.be/dRtykdQy6Ts); The child that does not

learn (http://youtu.be/V_0noT10qVc); Interdisciplinary and cross-curricular issues at school (http://youtu.be/cNpTwye78Vk); Dyslexia (http://youtu.be/tyyd09_xfTI); Violence in schools (http://youtu.be/Z6lS_WQ0nWg); among others.

It is noteworthy that all these television programs were produced with the framework of the principles of positive psychology, looking for purposeful ways to conceive and deal with issues of citizenship in the classroom, aiming at giving teachers the ability to provide their students with an environment prone to the construction of citizenship' values and personal and collective well-being.

Summarizing this topic, the e-learning platform was designed with multimedia features (built on the Moodle platform) that could support the convergence of different languages in the educational processes. Passing through the languages of television, movies, video-classes recorded in studios and classrooms and texts, but also incorporating the features of audio-text, Sign Language, subtitles, magnifying glass, readers and screen contrasts, we created opportunities for many types of experiences in dealing with the same knowledge, mediated by a digital platform available for freely on the Internet.

Moving forward in the presentation of the EVC experience, we highlight that the adoption of a blended model, which breaks with the traditional classroom spaces but keep them partly, was motivated by the recognition of the importance of personal and interpersonal relationships as an essential language for teaching and learning. Teachers in this case, instead of being the knowledge holders, had to assume a leadership role for guidance and mediation between students and the different sources of knowledge, leaving the role of the educational process under the responsibility of the students.

Project and Problem-Based Learning (ABPP) was the method adopted in the program. Each group of six students, having a central theme of ethics and citizenship as reference, started a project elaborating a research problem to be empirically investigated for 16 weeks. The problem has to be based on important questions of everyday life at schools. The teachers of the course did not define the problems to be studied, what radically changes the learning process, as suggested by Shulman (2004) and Weimer (2002). The projects were developed in 4 h of face-to-face weekly meetings mediated by a trained-teacher who guides and encourages small groups of students. Google Docs was the tool used to foster and organize the collaborative work and collective construction of knowledge. With this tool, which uses the principles of "cloud computing", students could work in the collective report with multimedia features, including, for example, images, videos and graphics for a better explanation of the studies performed.

Thus, after a first semester with a subject like "Construction of ethical values and citizenship", and a second semester with "Values of democracy and human rights in our school," each group has several weeks of studying, mapping and seeking information about how these topics are reflected on schools' daily life. It was then that each group had to formulate a research problem to be investigated in a collaborative and cooperative way during the following months.

To illustrate the efforts of students and teachers in the learning process on issues of citizenship at schools, we can mention some projects designed and developed by groups from a general topic such as "Construction of ethical values and citizenship". Some examples are: How long does teachers' training take to construct citizenship and ethical values in response to the social changes?; How human values can be understood, constructed and experienced at schools?; How can the work with ethics, values and citizenship be ensured at public schools?; How should a collective practice for training of ethics, values and citizenship at school should be?; How conflicts caused by diversity should be managed in the classroom?; Does the genesis of shame in early childhood education influence the moral formation of 5-year-old children?; Citizen ethical training: School curriculum and teacher relationship; School dialogical spaces: Contributions to a civic education; The construction of values in school: The teacher's view; and, Intentionality on teacher's practice towards the construction of moral values, among others.

Basically, the process of Project and Problem-Based Learning, after 16 weeks of collective work, finalized with a scientific report (100 pages approximately), that has included the following steps:

- Brainstorm about the general theme.
- Problem definition.
- Mapping and search for information about the problem.
- Discussion on the methodology to be adopted.
- Development of the research instruments.
- Development of studies and research.
- Literature research.
- Data Collection.
- Data analysis and discussion.
- Report Writing.
- Report presentation and socialization of results.

Finally, it is important to mention that the assessment of the video-classes was done by the production of individual portfolios. So, coherent with the course's principles, each student had to represent through a digital file what they understood in each video-class, using different languages, such as songs, poems, texts, reviews, images, videos, etc. Most of the students, consistent with the principles of collaborative knowledge production, produced their portfolios creating blogs and websites. With this, they could share and get feedback on the knowledge produced not only by their colleagues but also by people from outside the course. We can mention some of these blogs, like those produced by students Nathália (http://nathi-explorandovalores.blogspot.com.br/), Celso de Oliveira Rosa (http://saolucas33.wordpress.com/evc-usp-disciplina-educacao-inclusive/); and Meily Cassemiro Santos (http://meilycass.wordpress.com/).

14.4   Concluding Remarks

Strengthening positive traits at the individual and the collective level through the development of ethic and citizenship education programs based on positive virtues, is a demand of democratic societies that should not be neglected by those involved in the creation of this new perspective in the psychological and educational field: positive psychology.

Damon (2008), an important author of the Positive Psychology, in his book *The path to purpose: Helping our children find their calling in life*, argues that schools have narrowed their focus to language and math skills trying to improve scores on standardized tests. In opposition to this, he defends that schools must prepare students to fully participate in the society, teaching them how to engage in their communities as active citizens.

Delle Fave, Massimini, and Bassi (2011) highlight that positive psychology – aiming at social empowerment, and considering the active interaction of human beings with their cultural context – should support individuals in the pursuit of personal growth through the allocation of psychological resources in activities that open opportunities for individual happiness and positive outcomes to the community.

When presenting the experience developed in the Brazilian context, training teachers to foster positive virtues at the individual level and in the school curricula, we had the school atmosphere and the surrounding community as a target to promote a better citizenship and to encourage the construction of civic virtues such as responsibility, altruism, tolerance to diversity, justice and work ethic. Working in collaborative and cooperative groups to solve daily problems at community schools, with the Problem and Problem-based learning method was an effective way to reach these goals.

Another important aspect treated in this chapter was the discussion about how positive psychology could contribute to help educators to face inclusion and diversity in classrooms. Firstly, we proposed an understanding of the development of western culture that led to the universal schooling, social and democratic inclusion and diversity into the classrooms, describing what Jose Esteve called the three educational revolutions in human history. To this author, the challenge of the third educational revolution is the consolidation in western cultures of the education as a right for every person. This has brought to each classroom, in all the modern nations and in Brazil in particular, gender, social, economic, psychological, physical, cultural, religious, racial, and ideological differences.

This "new" reality is a challenge for a school that used to look for homogenization of its students, with standardized assessments and a type of pedagogy based on teachers as the holders and transmitters of knowledge. In our opinion, the positive psychology movement can anchor the re-invention of school towards the construction of a democratic institution that pays attention to the singularities and strengths of its students, accepting that everyone is different, has the right to be at school and, at the same time, must learn how to live in a community.

To accomplish this goal, driven by the positive psychology field, we believe that teachers have to be formed to pay attention to students' psychological potential and to learn how to foster the construction of positive qualities and civic engagement, helping them to act promoting the development of virtues that enhance wellbeing, aiming at searching for personal and collective happiness.

We have been doing this in Brazil through an intense teachers' training, in a learning by doing perspective, that direct them to re-invent their classroom practice and use diversity as a tool for the individual and collective development, instead of facing it as a problem to be controlled towards homogenization. Changing contents, methods and the relationships between teachers and students is our proposal to forge a new educational process, coherent to the knowledge and technological society being built in this twenty-first century.

In the program presented, having the e-learning platform with multimedia features as a digital mediator, the convergence of different languages and the Project and Problem-based learning approach were the instruments we developed to respect the different ways people have to learn and to promote cooperative and collective learning towards active community work on ethics and citizenship issues. In some way, this pedagogical organization synthesizes the need to change contents, methods and the relationships proposed to re-invent education. The examples mentioned before are good indicators that we are accomplishing these goals.

Our hope is that this perspective, clearly based on the positive psychology paradigm, becomes a movement so interwoven into the routine of the schools that will be recognized as a natural process that helps to shape a new generation of students and citizens.

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