

Andrea ÓHIDY

The Jean Monnet Chair Freiburg for European Education (JMC-FrEE)

Introduction

This paper presents the teaching, research, and other activities realized from 2020 to 2023 within the EU-funded Jean Monnet Chair Freiburg for European Education (JMC-FrEE), grant no ERASMUS+ 620072-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPJMO-CHAIR

Background information about the project

Peaceful coexistence and democratic cooperation are central values in a rapidly changing globalized European Union with increasing mobility and migration. Respectful handling of diversity based on human rights and intercultural competence is necessary to keep and intensify the European integration process. Teaching EU studies and diversity/intercultural/minority education at schools to future teachers is vital to achieving these goals. Germany is a long-term member of the EU and an immigration country, having an increasing population with a migration background but an acute shortage of teachers to deal with this changing situation. In Germany, European matters are typically discussed from political, economic and legal perspectives. Issues of European Education are usually included but only sometimes emphasized. The JMC-FrEE project responds to this identified need to develop this field of study in Germany and Europe, discussing these issues from the perspective of social – esp. educational – sciences with a solid didactic perspective. It seeks to enhance the already existing profile of the University of Education Freiburg in European studies in teaching and research by strengthening this profile in the curriculum and deepening it through emphasizing the aspect of "Dealing with Diversity in Education" (particularly in schools and with regards to minority education) in Europe. A particular focus is put on the didactic perspective, dealing with learning and teaching about "Europe" in different school forms and subjects in heterogeneous learning groups.

Aims and objectives of the JMC-FrEE-project

A Jean Monnet Chair is an EU-funded teaching post for university professors specializing in European Union studies. The Jean Monnet Chair Freiburg for European Education (JMC-FrEE) was founded in 2020 to promote basic and in-depth knowledge of European Integration, esp. in European Education. The JMC-FrEE-Chair is based at the University of Education in Freiburg (Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg) in Southern Germany. It is one of the largest of the six Universities of Education in Baden-Wuerttemberg, located in the border triangle between Germany, France and Switzerland. The university has a multinational tradition in Teacher Training and a focus on European perspectives. It offers research-based qualifications and further qualifications in education for Bachelor, Master, Teacher Training, doctoral and postdoctoral levels. The JMC FrEE team is very heterogeneous: It includes researchers and teachers of every age and in different phases of their professional life (students, young researchers with and without PhD, senior researchers, professors, emeriti) from other European countries (Germany, Hungary, Poland and Lithuania), who work in different scientific (education, sociology, psychology) and educational areas (kindergarten, school education, special needs and inclusive education, teacher training, higher education, further education).

The main objectives of the JMC FrEE project are:

- to provide expert guidance to future educators and teachers about European matters and to prepare them to organize learning and teaching processes in a European context for the education of the next generation of active European citizens, and
- to raise more public awareness for the topic of European Education in and outside the academic world on a national and international level in cooperation with scientists, teachers, civil society actors, policymakers, journalists and school pupils.

To achieve these goals, multidisciplinary teaching activities, research projects and special events in the following areas:

- Europeanization of Education
- Intercultural Education (esp. Multilingual Education) in Europe and
- Education for disadvantaged children (esp. from the Roma minority) in Europe.

Project activities: teaching, research and special events

The JMC-FrEE-teaching activities provide a multidisciplinary perspective of social science disciplines, concentrating on in-depth learning opportunities with a didactic view for prospective teachers and other educational professionals to prepare them for their future professional life. The language of the seminars is English or German. A particular focus is put on the perspective of (subject-specific) didactics, dealing with the question of learning and teaching about "Europe" in different school forms and subjects in heterogeneous learning groups. The pedagogical approach is based on a systematic combination of theoretical and practical experience and a continuous reflection of the participants' convictions and subjective theories. Theoretical and practical experience are systematically linked while personal beliefs and subjective views are reflected upon: Students prepare concrete teaching plans for different school types, classes and subjects and put them into action in other school settings. The reflection of the planning and the implementation stages are realized in cooperation with school teachers.

The "Dealing with Diversity in Education" (particularly in schools and regarding minority education) is especially emphasized. The courses are part of the Certificate Programme "Dealing with Diversity", which has targeted students and teachers interested in additional qualifications for working with diverse classrooms since 2016. Furthermore, the participants can choose a new specialization called "Bildung für Europa" (Education for Europa) alongside Intercultural Studies or Inclusive Education.

The teaching activities plan the JMC-FrEE-research activities. They also focus on the three areas mentioned above on different (BA, MA, doctoral and postdoctoral) academic levels. They involve especially the young generation of researchers and teachers. Students on all levels (especially doctoral candidates) can participate by leading, monitoring and supervising the JMC-FrEE team. Research on European matters in school education is a particular focus.

Most JMC-FrEE-team members are young researchers (esp. doctoral candidates) who teach their particular area of expertise (PhD-topic). Their research output is published in different scientific and non-scientific publications and international research workshops. High-quality student research papers are also included to reflect upon their educational actions with scientific methods.

The JMC-FrEE-special events of the project (such as conferences, roundtable debates and exhibitions) aim to involve local, regional and national, but also international participants, esp. from outside of the academic world, such as members of civil organizations, policymakers and other interested members of the public. Furthermore, they focus on involving school pupils (both as active participants and as audience) of primary and secondary schools in Freiburg, who especially need advanced knowledge and competencies to shape Europe's future.

Target groups and dissemination strategy

The main target groups of the JMC-FrEE project activities are students in teacher training, teachers and school pupils.

Students in teacher training and teachers need to be prepared to organize learning and teaching processes in the European context and to raise active European citizens for the future. Hence the JMC-FrEE project focused on creating, implementing and reflecting didactical materials regarding EU matters for schools, teacher training and continuing teacher education.

Local students (esp. of the University Education of Freiburg) are actively involved in the project, for example, by creating different materials (student research papers, didactic materials) and events (radio programmes, exhibitions).

A particular target group are school pupils in primary and secondary schools, who are involved through activities in cooperation with students and teachers, being addressed in didactic seminars and special events (exhibition). In many circumstances, pupils are not only the audience but also the creators.

Furthermore, the project targets all public members – on national and international levels – who are interested in the topic. In addition, local public members are involved in the project through cultural events (roundtable debates), which will deal with the issue in a non-scientific way.

The dissemination and exploitation strategy of the JMC-FrEE-project is based on the intention to reach out to a broad, heterogeneous audience (scientific and non-scientific, local, regional, national and international, people of different ages, professions, positions/states of life, speaking other languages, reading and non-reading). Hence all events and materials of the project are free – personally or virtually – accessible to everyone. Furthermore, to publish the project activities and results, open educational resources are used, combining traditional (book, radio) and computer-based multimedia tools (video blog), scientific (research papers) and non-scientific (exhibitions) publication methods in German and English.

The project website is the central platform to connect and document all activities and products. It guarantees visibility and makes it possible for everyone interested to participate, even if it is impossible to do it in person. All other publication platforms, although also separately accessible, are linked to the central platform.

Although the teaching events primarily target students of the PH Freiburg, they are open to students of other higher education institutions, and some are open to teachers. The participating students and teachers disseminate their knowledge in schools.

Most special events – such as "Freiburg Discussions about European Education" – target a broad audience, reaching out to as many people as possible, esp. political stakeholders.

The project's exploitation strategy concentrates on non-scientific people and younger generations. To mainstream and multiply the actions and results, it uses selected social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and has its own Youtube education channel and a video blog. The project's social media platforms (website, radio programme, video blog) are mostly bilingual (German and English).

Results

The JMC-FrEE-project will end in August 2023 with the following output and outcomes:

- 30 learning offers (lectures, seminars, intensive courses, guest lectures) in German and in English for students, teachers and pupils;
- 12 special events: international research workshops, roundtable debates with national and international experts, exhibitions, students' and pupils' performances and study visits;
- 7 research activities, including free scientific publications (books, articles, special issues, research papers) and free didactic materials (for primary and secondary schools and teacher training).

The planned significant impact of the project is to increase interest and knowledge about EU matters and to develop intercultural competence of students in teacher training, of teachers and school pupils, but also of a broader national and international audience.

For optimum use of the project results, it is planned to continue as many of the teaching and research activities as possible after the project lifetime and to try to influence political stakeholders to implement the results and thereby change the education situation – e. g. of the Roma minority – for the better.

Further information:

- JMC-FrEE-Homepage: www.ph-freiburg.de/jmc-free
- Youtube-Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQgEk3Gkh7R_cBLxvFbK0IQ
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jmcfreeprojekt>
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/free_jmc
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/projekt_jmc_free/.