

Summer Academy 2010 – Summary of participants' feedback

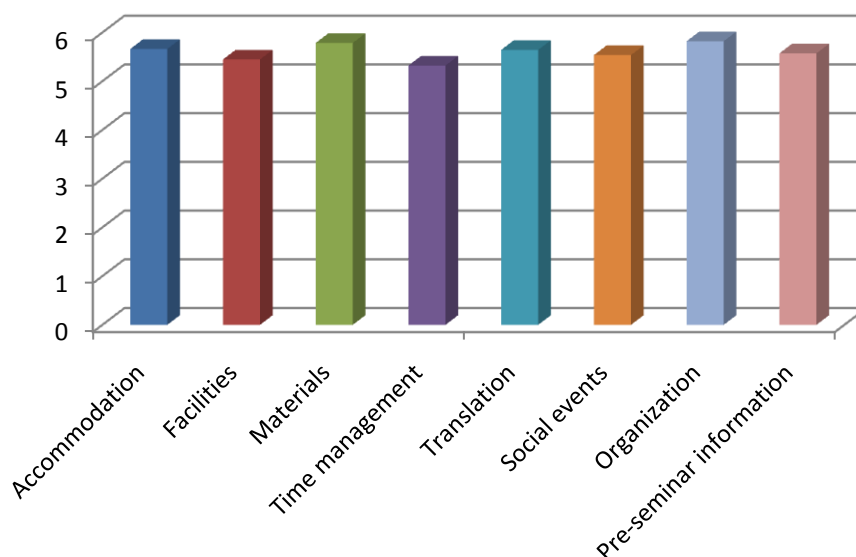
The Summer Academy 2010 “Democracy at School” took place in Warsaw and Sulejowek, Poland, on July 10-17th 2010. It was organized by the [Ministry of National Education](#), Poland, [Centre for Education Development](#), Poland, [The Council of Europe](#) and the [European Wergeland Centre](#).

The Academy aimed at training educators to incorporate the principles of human rights and democracy into their daily work. It put the Council of Europe's (CoE) education policy into practice through trainings and workshops based on CoE recommendations and publications, in particular the manuals [Democratic School Governance](#) and [How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: A framework for the development of competences](#).

Ten teams from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Poland, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine took part in the training, the total number of participants being 30. Each team consisted of a school head, a teacher and a NGO or parents representative coming from the same school/local community.

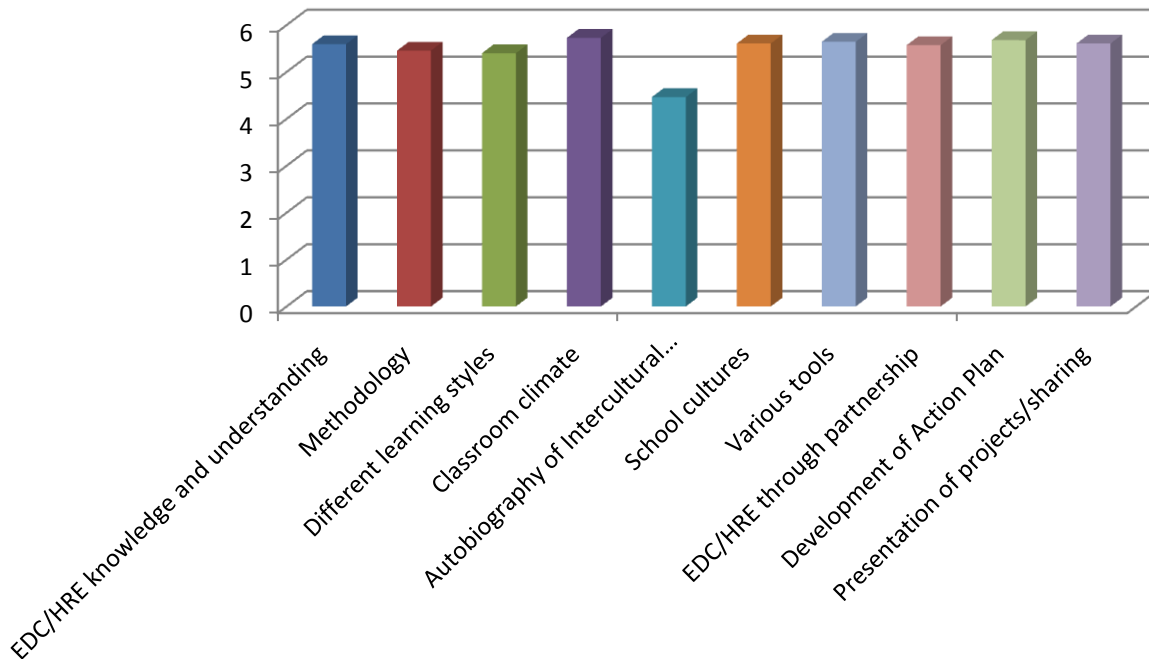
At the end of the Summer Academy, all participants anonymously filled out an evaluation form. Their answers and comments show a very high degree of satisfaction, as reflected in the two bar charts below. Importantly, 71% of the participants perceived the training as *very relevant* for their own practice, while 29% perceived it as *relevant* and no one perceived it to be *not relevant*.

Facilitation:



The bar chart above shows the *average* rating given to different aspects of the facilitation and organization of the Summer Academy, with 1 being the lowest rating and 6 the highest.

Training sessions:



The bar chart above shows the *average* rating given to the different training sessions, with 1 being the lowest and 6 the best.

The participants rated both the facilitation of the training and the different training sessions very positively. The comments given in reply to the open ended questions in the evaluation form confirmed this while also giving valuable advice on ways to improve next year's Summer Academy. Below is a summary of the comments.

Most positive aspects of the Summer Academy:

- Warm and friendly atmosphere
- Exchange and communication with other teams from other countries
- Very professional and friendly trainers
- A very high level of organization
- An emphasis on relevant practical tools and methods for own work
- A broadened perspective and many new ideas

What could have been done differently?

- The training sessions could have an even more practical approach and less lectures
- The schedule was too tight and not enough free time
- The pre-seminar information could have been more comprehensive to allow participants to arrive better prepared
- More time should be allotted to introduce and learn the online platform used for follow-up

Most valuable learning experience/training session:

- Practical approaches that are useful for one's own work: school climate, types of school culture, different teaching styles, methodology
- Partnership with local community
- Cooperation and exchange of experiences with others
- Work in groups to develop an action plan
- Reflection on the situation in one's own school and community through discussions, exercises and sharing

How will you use your learning experience in your own work and local community:

- Adapt and follow up the action plan
- Share with colleagues, students and parents
- Implement in teaching/own work
- Involve local community like NGOs and other schools

In general, the sessions that the participants perceived as "practical", meaning participatory, interactive and related more or less directly to their own work situations, were regarded as very valuable. Several participants commented on the value of new approaches and methods which inspired ideas and plans for their future work.

The participating teams were working on preparing an action plan throughout the training. This team work inspired valuable reflection on the situation in their schools as well as concrete ideas for implementation and sharing with colleagues. The teams will share reports on the development and implementation of their action plans on a designated online site where all participants have access. Their experiences implementing the action plans throughout this school year will be shared with the participants of the Summer Academy 2011.

The Summer Academy was organized for the first time in 2010. It will take place annually. The feedback from this year's participants is important when planning and organizing the Summer Academy 2011 in order for future participants to benefit from the valuable advice of the 2010 alumni.