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Ethics in the School. Ethical Principles and Values and the Historical Research

Carmen ALEXANDRACHE¹

Abstract

The paper intends to show that the students will realize the quality scientific actions if they know how are correct to find and use the historical sources. We focus on the fact that the ethical norms, principles need to be internalized by each pupil / student and, in this way these became values which involve the best research aptitudes. In the history lessons, the pupils / students learn what is correct / fake, just / unjust, good / wrong in the research activity. They need to know what is or is not allowed to do when identify information, analyze and interpret some dates, notices, processes and historical persona. The paper shows that, in the educational system, the ethical principles in the historical research refer to use sources, to work with historical information found, to report the results and communicate the notices, conclusions. These aspects were developed in the paper associating them with the appropriate abilities.

Keywords: History, ethics, education, curriculum, competences, critical think.

1. Introduction

History, more than the other science, is focused on the knowing of the processes, facts past or present and on drawing the future world. It means that a good and correct knowledge of the past and actual realities as objectively as possible are the main objectives of the History [1]. From this reason [2], the students need to know what is allowed or isn't to do when

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identify information, analyze and interpret some dates, notices, processes and historical persona. All aspects which refer to the system of values which determines you to do or not to do something belong to ethics [3].

Our paper starts from the premise that learning History is more responsible and pleasant than the students know and respect the ethical principles and values in the research activities. In learning history, the students should respect some rules (norms) that help them appreciate themselves the value of the information and to use it in solving different problems, situations. This notice was determined by the notices made during didactical activities with the second year students from History, Philosophy and Theology Faculty at University of Galati. We were interested of the students' research skills and their scientific preferences. In this reason, we organized a few debate with them which allowed to students to find the best modalities of learning History in the academic educational system. They were encouraged to discuss the solutions for a correct Historical research in the school. Start from these discussions we notice the following aspects:

- among the majority of students identify ethics in the historical research with the moral and civic values;
- the majority of students consider ethics in the History like the critical analyze of sources.

From notices mentioned, we can notice that the ethical principles and values, especially of the research in the History area, need to be formed and developed in the educational system. Ethics in the Historical research means more than objectivity and critical analyze of the past or actual facts, phenomena and processes.

2. Problem Statement

Teaching History in the Romanian educational system is gradually achieved according to the pupils / students capacity to understand society, social relationships, and the relation between human being and nature and entropic medium or between one another. This orientation of the history towards society is predominant in the preschooler and primary school. In the secondary school, this orientation is completed with the moral and civic values and with geographical knowledge. In the entrepreneurial education is involved these preoccupations, too. All these aspects have noticed in the *Plans of the Educational system* which have grouped History and the other subjects of knowing the society in the same curricular area.

Generally, *the curriculum of the History* allows and encourages to use interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary for analyzing the historical events and

process. From this perspective, the ethical norms and values order the research in history and they can be learned during the scholar and academic activities.

These competences can be formed and developed into the children in the kindergarten, in the primary school, in the secondary and tertiary educational system, even if they study the history in the formal or non formal activities. They could also approach the history sources and research methods in the lessons of the History or in the other lessons (such as *Civic Culture, Religion, History of religions* etc.). From this reason, the history is included in the human and society educational domain, like other subjects such as the *Education for society, the Education for quality life, Education for health, education for traffic in the street*. Any wrong intervention in their interpretation, an intentional or neglected one, falsifies the research, so their result will be false.

Learning and encouraging the pupil / the students to pay attention to the correctness and objectivity in the historical research is a compulsory aspect of the educational process. At the age of children from preschooler and primary education system they learn this aspect by didactical role plays, respecting their rules and discussing about what they have learned from their playing activity [4]. They have involved in the activities of forms correct behaviors for a long time. These activities can be organized and enlarged to develop these behaviours and to understand the importance of keeping in. In the superior level of the educational system, the ethics of the historical research is focused on the social and professional integration. For examples, they learn to use the sources correctly and to analyze them critically (to indicate the author of sources, his intentions, what were the conditions which the sources were found were their aims, to verify the veridicity and relevance of the sources).

In the history lessons, the students have to learn what is correct / fake, just / unjust, good / wrong in the research activity. Unfortunately, the pedagogical and didactical literature is not really interesting in this area (to develop the ethical competences of pupil / students in the historical research) [5]. Instead, these competences are involved in the *moral and civic education* [6].

Of course, ethical competences denote the ability to comprehend an ethical argument, to identify the ethical implications in certain circumstances, to find practical solutions to diverse problems linked to what is right / wrong, fair / unfair, good / bad [7].

3. Research Questions

The Purpose of the Study presents the ethical principles and values of historical research that can be learned by the students in the history lessons. For demonstrating the efficiency of the ethical norms and values in the historical research activity, we make a presentation of them, with some appropriate learning activities.

The present paper starts from the premise that History is a research field which can offer multiple means to cultivate to students the ethical competences. The ethical principle in the historical research assures the correctness and objectivity in the process of finding and analyzing the information, of explaining and analyzing realities.

Foremost, we analyzed the *curricula* in the academic educational system, especially *History of the Middle Age curriculum* for:

- to identify and propose the scientific content units which may contribute more at the development of the ethical competences;
- to present the data which have proven to have the best results among the experimental sample;
- to focus on some recommendations regarding the encouragement of teachers to give more attention to training and developing these ethical competences.

4. Research Methods

The paper proposes an educational program based on methods and techniques of research in the history seminars. The results can be obtained by the systematic observation, oral and written interviewing, evaluation and self-evaluation.

In our education program, we propose to use the strategy to develop critical thinking and collaborative learning [8]. The methods which can be used in our educational intervention are: *Brainstorming, Debate, Case study, Brainstorming, Role play, Discussion Panel, working groups, I know-I will to know-I have learned, SINELG, Dials, Prediction method, Learning through discovery, Project Method* [9].

5. Findings and Discussions

At the end of our educational intervention, we are sure that most of students will improve their learning competences in the History field. For

example, the quality of activities will be better than before level, because the students worked together, more responsible and polite.

Ethics is a scientifically preoccupation [10] for appreciating if a think is good / bad, virtuous / unvirtuous, right / wrong according to science, occupation, function etc.

It is generally believed that between the ethics, as a scientific component of the research activity, and moral-civic area, as a scientific component about man and society is a good methodological and informational connections. In regard to this aspect, we aim to insist that there is a danger of incorporating it in the actual idea of research objectiveness [11], without it being a distinctive object that would emphasize directly the formation and practice of a moral, civic and ethical behaviour coming from those that use the interview in their scientifically research.

Certainly, ethics has to be in a relation with the personal ethics (the morality of the teacher and of the students).

Before analyzing the fact, the student is getting used with the standards according to which an action is considered to be right or wrong, good or evil, and also with the principles so called moral which determine the behavior expected from him by his community [12].

Therefore, the ethical principles in the research of History are interdependent to learning and internalizing the moral norms, values and judgments.

The following diagram highlights more clearly these aspects.

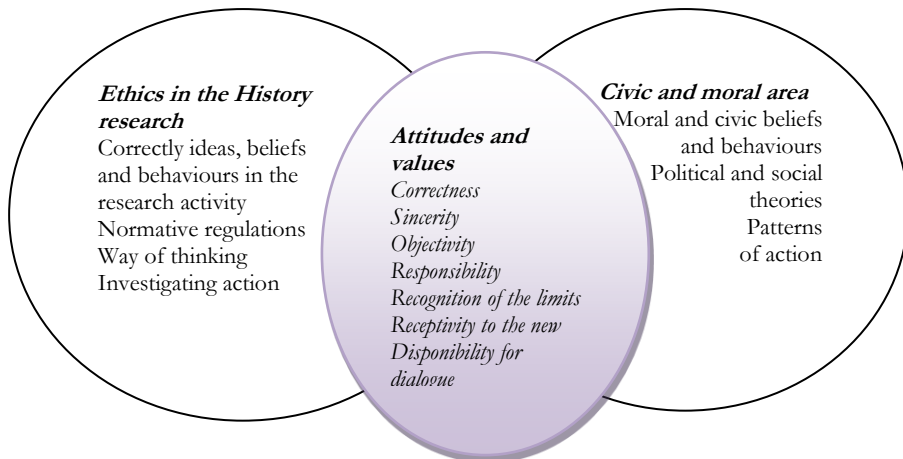


Fig. 1. Venn Diagram: The ethics and moral- civic area

It can be seen, the ethics in the historical research shows how to do that the research can be correct and objective. The ethical principles are

represented both at the level of the social and scientific behavior and conscience. The ethical norms need to be internalized by each pupil / student and, in this way, these became values which involve the research aptitudes best.

We continue our approach with the presentation of the ethical values involved in the historical research.

Starting from the above observations, next we offer a concise presentation of our educational intervention, which emphasizes ethical competences in the History research activities. The following table shows the units of the History of the Middle Age subject and the types of activities learning, which allow the formation and development of these competences. For a better understanding we have linked the ethical values to the learning activities which allow their development.

Table 1. Ethical competences in the History research

Action domain	Learning activities	Ethical research competences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to use sources in the historical research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> applying the critical analyzing operations; exercises of identifying the relevant and true sources; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to reach a higher documentation and to work on the information; to underline the (non)integrity of the sources; to be (and understand what means to be) responsible towards the scientific and juridical community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to report the results of the research activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showing the limits of the research and its errors; keeping impartiality in the interpreting the information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to assume you own results of actions in the research activity to show the limits of the sources and to use them correctly; to know the meaning of „fals”, plagiarism and to know what their consequences are
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to communicate the notices, conclusions of the research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relating opinions without the intention to persuade the others; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize the own mistakes; to show the problems of the research which have not been solved

- debating the results of the analyzing in the classroom
- to work in a group who is involved in the historical research activities
- realizing the comparative analysis
- to listen to other's opinions and ideas and to build answers starting from the information received;
- to collaborate with others in order to construct a discourse and in solving the working tasks;
- to identify the mistakes of others and to make them to correct what is wrong;
- to involve the others to keep in the rules of the working activity.

Foremost, the ethical principles refer to the following aspects:

- to get the concept of rule and to act according to the rules of the activity;
- to respect / keep in the rules and support the consequences of keeping off the rules;
- to discovery and keep your own moral values and of the others;
- to assume the responsibility of own moral values according to the others;
- to know the concepts, the personal and social freedom and independence;
- to live according to your own value system;
- to draw decisions and to act based on them;
- to desire to correct the mistakes;
- to use the methods of research in the history are correctly;
- to defend and to promote the right to freedom and equality irrespective of race, gender, age, culture and religion.

Ethics is a correct behaviour and consciousness belonging to a person.

6. Conclusions

Generally, any discipline which is part of History field intends to apply the fundamental concepts in describing some events. Even if in order to fully understand them the students also need to have abilities of use sources correctly, of analyze them and of communicating research results. But these demands are not explicitly written in the curricular documents. For this reason, we consider that the respect of the ethical principles and values are more important in every historical research activity. We believe that it is necessary for students to have these ethical competences clearly and detailed put down for the professors because in this way they will be encouraged to search and to apply different didactic means so as to train and develop them.

We consider that our observations can become the useful recommendations for those that are getting involved in conceiving and preparing the research activity in the History area, in applying it and analyzing the resulted data.

Knowing how is correct to find and use the historical sources for understanding, reconstructing and explaining the facts, phenomena and processes, the students realize the quality scientific actions. In this way they became autonomous beings and do not make mistakes (errors) in knowing history. The student learns how to effectively and constructively participate at his/her social life, how to daily use respect towards the law towards democracy and citizenship, personal and professional development.

The History activities become an exercise to form and develop behaviour and moral, civic and ethical conscience that is necessary in any activity of research, generally speaking.

Of course, they will be able to make a good research in other fields than History.

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