East European Constitutionalism
Teacher-Training Project

FINAL REPORT:
“Assumptions and Lessons Learned”

American Council of Learned Societies

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This report was prepared by the program director of the ACLS East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project, Andrzej W. Tymowski, and includes materials supplied by individuals identified in the text. However, responsibility for errors, omissions, or malconstatations in this Occasional Paper must remain his alone.
I. Why This Occasional Paper?

This is a final report on the East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project, the last in a series of three initiatives sponsored by ACLS in comparative constitutionalism. The principal goal of this publication is, therefore, to give an account of the Teacher-Training Project, as well as to show how it built on and extended the Projects in Comparative Constitutionalism and East European Constitutionalism that preceded it. ACLS is proud of the accomplishments of all three projects: for the substantive merit of the conferences, publications, and training undertaken; and as a demonstration of the special quality that engagement of humanities scholars brings to the world of politics and societal change. The bibliography for all three projects consists of almost 40 books in five languages (see Appendix 2). Over 5,000 teachers participated in the Teacher-Training Project in semester-long courses and shorter sessions.

Still, our ambition in putting together this set of essays and other materials as an Occasional Paper is to offer more than just an account of what has been accomplished. We want to assess its significance in a way that might prove useful to others. This collection of essays and documents is intended for the members of ACLS learned societies, associates, and friends; for our colleagues in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world who have participated in ACLS constitutionalism projects or been affected by them; for anyone interested in the subject matter, especially the scholars and practitioners of constitutionalism; and for the larger international community engaged in promoting civic education, whose ranks we joined through our teacher-training initiatives. We hope that this slim volume of reflections on our accomplishments and their impact will inspire further efforts.
Assumptions and Lessons Learned

To the standard reporting format of “lessons learned,” we have added the notion of “assumptions at start” in order to open a comparative dimension that can enhance assessment of the past, and also inspire future work. The self-reflection that this comparison requires fits well with the humanistic perspective, which consists of a systematic back and forth motion between awareness of objective conditions—in this case, the resources available for the task at the outset of the project—and the intention to turn those conditions to human purpose. Recalling our goals as they were defined when we started our work can bring into better focus the destination at which we arrived, and what we learned along the way.

Contemporary History

A sense of history informed all three ACLS constitutionalism projects. Comparison took place not only across spatially disparate nations and political cultures, but over time. For this sort of comparative analysis, there could be no better laboratory than that created by the rise of new constitutional democracies in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Clearly there was a need not only to build new institutions, but also to train the people who would make them work.

After initial euphoria in Eastern Europe gave way to a generalized decompression (the transformation’s “hangover,” it has been called), the time came to think about teaching this new history to the next generation, the first to be growing up in conditions of individual rights and full freedom of inquiry. Western assistance poured into the region, including support for civic education. This was understood in the wide sense as education for the entire society to learn how to live in democratic conditions, as well as in the very particular one of preparing high school teachers to introduce new courses in their schools relevant to citizens’ rights and responsibilities.
We commend this collective reflection on our work to all readers who have themselves participated in these events, who now want to study them, or who may now be embarking on similar work elsewhere. It would be presumptuous to offer what we learned as a guide to follow or a set of lessons for others to absorb. (That each society must find its own way is perhaps the most durable truth we have encountered.) But the conferences, publications, and training programs described herein constitute a valuable stock of experience, and we offer them for consideration and dialogue. We can only quietly hope that they may serve as encouragement to press on despite any difficulties that emerge in the understanding and practice of constitutional democracy.
In 1987, ACLS was invited to assist the Ford Foundation in commemorating the bicentennial of the US Constitution. The Foundation readily agreed to our proposition that the project should celebrate not the American experience, but rather examine the progress of constitutionalism in the contemporary world. We considered constitutionalism to be a particular form of rule of law in which popularly authorized written fundamental laws limited the power of government in its relation to individual citizens and shaped the contours and boundaries of governmental process. We therefore mounted a series of locally planned conferences throughout the world—the ACLS Comparative Constitutionalism Project—in an attempt to compare and contrast the many cultures of constitutionalism that have emerged internationally. This was a very large undertaking that confirmed our hypothesis that there was neither a universal definition of constitutionalism nor a global experience of constitutionalism—but that constitutionalism was an ideal toward which most political cultures were moving.

The project was enriched by the political events following 1989, with the withering away of state socialist governments in most parts of the world. All of a sudden, our rather academic concern with limitations on government was an urgent policy issue for
nations in the process of making the transition from socialism to democratic constitutionalism. Our last conference was held in May 1990 in Pécs, Hungary, and focused on the nature of constitutionalism in the Visegrad countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland), bringing together participants in the Round Tables of those countries to discuss their understanding of constitutionalism and commitment to it.

We became fascinated by those countries, and thus were delighted when The Pew Charitable Trusts invited us to extend our work in the region by applying for a grant to introduce the teaching of constitutionalism in the Visegrad school systems. With Irena Grudzinska Gross as program officer for the ACLS East European Constitutionalism Project, we proposed to the foundation that a necessary first step would be to form committees in each of the (by then) four countries in order to explore their visions of constitutionalism. We felt that using a formulaic, universalistic (“one size fits all countries”) definition would make it impossible to construct workable strategies for presenting the idea of constitutionalism to school teachers.

Consequently, in the winter of 1992-1993 we held conferences in each country so that experts in law, politics, journalism, and education could discuss the history of constitutionalism in their country, its current status, and its prospects for the future. The results were strikingly different from country to country. The next step was to have the conferees, organized as local committees, solicit proposals from local groups for projects to train high school teachers in constitutionalism. Finally, the committees each selected one or two projects, funded by Pew through ACLS, as the East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project. The projects were of intense interest to ACLS given our involvement in the reform of elementary and secondary education in the United States. The Pew program enabled us to dovetail our interests in constitutionalism and schooling.

The local programs (five centers in all: Bratislava, Budapest, Lublin, Prague/Olomouc, and Warsaw) were based on the proposals each center submitted to their in-country commissions.
They proposed five different strategies for introducing the teaching of constitutionalism into schools. As we expected, the programs developed quite differently, interpreting the meaning of the basic notion of constitutionalism in their countries, and inventively constructing teaching strategies. While we deferred to local knowledge as to constitutionalism, we encouraged the programs to explore the varieties of “active” education that we in the United States have found pedagogically effective. This meant examining ways for children to engage interactively with teachers and subject matter, as well as methods of evaluating their learning experience in meaningful terms. The results have been striking, and have far exceeded our most optimistic aspirations for the project.

The ACLS-Pew training centers have not been alone in attempting to teach instructors and schoolchildren in the region about constitutionalism. Some of our centers collaborated with other US projects espousing similar aims. Still, I think that, taken as a whole, our projects had a distinctly “local” orientation, and in the long run will prove very important to these new democracies as they construct civil society for themselves. The work we proposed to Pew was about local self-empowerment, and I believe that the training centers we sponsored have made significant contributions to the development of constitutional culture and democratic education. Working with the centers and the teachers has been a rare privilege for ACLS, and we have learned greatly from the experience.
<table>
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<th>Chronology of Constitutionalism Projects at ACLS</th>
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| **1991-1994** | **East European Constitutionalism Project** |
| 1992-1993     | Conferences in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, and Bratislava |
|               | Publication of *Constitutionalism in East Central Europe* and *Constitutionalism and Politics*, both edited by Irena Grudzinska Gross |

| **1995-2000** | **East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project** |
|               | Training centers in Bratislava, Budapest, Lublin, Prague/Olomouc, and Warsaw design and carry out programs for current and future teachers, preparing them to teach new subjects related to constitutional democracy, develop curricular materials, and conduct related activities for teachers, students, and the general public |
|               | ACLS organizes annual meetings for regional communication as well as occasional workshops on teaching methods, new forms of assessment, and school reform |
| 1996          | Demonstration of active teaching methods by trainers and teachers at Bratislava annual regional meeting |
| 1997-1998     | A series of three workshops for teachers and trainers on “Project-Based Learning and New Forms of Assessment” in Konstancin, Poland; Prague, Czech Republic; and Krakow, Poland |
| 2000          | Focus group research on effects of training by ACLS centers on teachers |
III. What We Did

This chapter describes the situation confronting ACLS and the five training centers as we began work in 1995, and the development of a working relationship between ACLS and the centers (and among the six organizations); a few extended illustrative examples of program activity are also included. The first section on “Societies in Transition” was written by Sharon Wolchik, consultant to The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Societies in Transition

The ACLS Constitutionalism Project took place in societies undergoing large-scale changes in most aspects of life. The end of communism came about differently in the various countries involved. In Poland and Hungary, the change in regime occurred as the result of roundtable negotiations between reformist elements of the Communist Party and dissident leaders the results of which were eventually confirmed in elections. In both cases, the roundtable discussions were to a large extent the culmination of the gradual loss of legitimacy of the regimes in question, and the corresponding growth of support for the opposition. In Czechoslovakia, where there were no reformist communist leaders, the end of Communism came about very suddenly as the result of mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of citizens. Intellectual elites soon came to the fore to negotiate the transfer of power and assume leadership of the country, but the fate of the rigid, repressive regime was decided in the squares and streets.

Despite these differences in the nature of the old regimes and the way they fell, political leaders and citizens faced many of the same tasks after 1989. These can be summarized by the catchwords invoked by almost all contenders in the first free elections in these
countries: “Democracy,” “the Market,” and “Back to Europe.” The changes in public policy and daily life required to achieve these goals were enormous. Furthermore, though the overall goals were relatively easy to specify, the strategy for achieving them was not. New political leaders, who for the most part had very little if any practical experience in politics or administration, began removing the vestiges of communist rule and instituting democratic political life in fits and starts, with a great deal of conflict over concrete policies and a correspondingly high level of public uncertainty.

With the end of the Communist Party’s monopoly of power and the repluralization of political life, citizens gained the possibility of participating in free elections and making their opinions known to political leaders. They also won the right to form and join political parties and civic organizations. The willingness of citizens to exercise these new abilities was conditioned by change in other areas of life.

Some of the most important transformations occurred in the economy. Efforts to recreate market economies led to new opportunities for certain groups. Young, well-educated urbanites in particular benefited from the opportunity to start their own businesses, work for privatized or international firms, improve their qualifications, and travel abroad. But privatization and restructuring also produced large-scale dislocations, and many other segments of the population experienced a great deal of hardship. Older, less skilled people, as well as those living in rural areas, were often unable to take advantage of the opportunities the shift to the market provided. Many people faced uncertainty or new demands in the workplace, and sizeable numbers became unemployed in societies in which open unemployment had once been unthinkable. Social services declined as governments enacted austerity measures. Production plummeted while poverty deepened dramatically.

The opening of borders and relaxation of tight political control also exposed these societies to unprecedented outside influences. Many were beneficial, but the new openness also exacerbated existing social pathologies and brought in their wake new ones, including organized crime. The need to adapt to changing circumstances also represented psychological burdens for many.
In this context, many citizens came to distrust political leaders and institutions. As the early euphoria and enthusiasm for change gave way to suspicion and apathy, governments frequently became victims of a “throw the rascals out” mentality as well as a certain degree of nostalgia for the security, though not the repression, of the old systems. This tendency was most evident in Poland, where few governments completed their terms. But even in other countries, where governments were more stable, levels of interest in politics and belief in the integrity of political leaders declined.

All of these factors had an impact on the work of the ACLS project. There was clearly a great need for efforts to foster democratic values. The work of the Centers supported this effort; it also fit well with attempts to remove communist influences in the content and structure of education at all levels. But the Centers also faced considerable obstacles in their efforts to train and provide materials for teachers of civic education. Faced with difficult decisions, central officials allocated few resources to education. Personnel at central ministries changed frequently, as did plans for change in educational policies. Many teachers faced very difficult economic situations, and the willingness of administrators, teachers, and parents to take part in innovative projects was also conditioned by painful choices. The impact of political and economic factors on the work of the Centers was particularly evident in Slovakia, where the Meciar government, although popularly elected, was hostile to the non-governmental sector in general, and to efforts to promote liberal democratic values in particular.

The economic and political situation was somewhat more stable in the countries involved in the project by the late-1990s. These trends were especially evident in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Aided by substantial foreign investment, growth rates began to climb. In 1999, all three countries became members of NATO. As this is being written, all three are making substantial progress in their efforts to be admitted to the European Union. Political developments in Slovakia became more favorable after the victory of the opposition in 1998. The new government’s efforts to restart economic reform led to a substantial increase in unemployment in Slovakia and growing
popular dissatisfaction. But the country advanced in its efforts to join the EU and NATO. Conditions for the Bratislava Center’s work improved markedly with the change of government.

—Sharon Wolchik

The Situation in the Schools

Despite these tumultuous changes, innovation came to the classroom very slowly—if, indeed, at all. The social status of teachers, their relation to their schools, what students expected and what was expected of them: all remained essentially unchanged. Students were still required passively to absorb the knowledge dispensed by the teacher. (The impolite Polish term for this is “lopatologia,” “shovelology”.) Teachers were obliged to follow plans approved by Education Ministry officials and school principals, dictated by their students’ need to pass a set of examinations at the end of high school: the school-leaving “maturity” exams and then, for university-bound students, entrance exams for specific disciplinary departments. Preparation for these exams remained an exhausting rite de passage for every high school student.

In this context, it was difficult to imagine introducing any new subject, much less one such as “constitutionalism,” which came with no local academic pedigree nor effective purchase (because no place) on the all-important exams that loomed at the end of high school. In the early phases of the project, the five ACLS centers recruited teachers of different subjects, who enrolled in center training programs in order to gain knowledge and techniques they could integrate into their curricula in history, social studies, literature, or the national language. Of these, “social studies” (the term varied from country to country) would have seemed the most appropriate locus for teaching the principles and practices of citizenly life in a constitutional democracy. Unfortunately, social studies was widely viewed as a poor relation of the “proper” subjects, those with pride of place on the maturity exams. Social studies
was taught only one or two hours a week; it was assigned to the lowest-ranking teachers, or those who sought sinecures. Worse still, it had been a principal vehicle for leaden propaganda under the previous regime.

One tactic used by Centers and their trainers to open new possibilities for teaching constitutionalism in the schools was to develop after-school activities. These had to be exciting as well as instructive, for they needed to entice both pupils and teachers to spend additional time at an institution that, during regular hours, required very hard work and was thoroughly alienating. The Warsaw Center was extremely successful in promoting such extra-curricular activities—mock constitutional debates (during the Polish parliament’s writing of a new national constitution) and presidential elections (during the real Polish presidential elections)—involving scores of high schools and thousands of students across the country.

It may be instructive to compare these activities to similar ones in the United States, on which they were to some extent based. In US schools, mock elections are no novelty, and though they might generate a certain amount of enthusiasm, it is generally limited to the immediate issues involved (personal and electoral). In Poland, however, mock elections provoked a deep questioning of social relations of authority and citizenship ranging far beyond the political realm and penetrating into the classroom, the school, and their interactions with the surrounding community. Both the constitutional debates and the mock elections began with the Warsaw Center’s organizing a few model activities, and issuing nationwide invitations to schools to participate. These invitations included offers to train school commissions (teams of teachers and students) to prepare and carry out debates or elections locally, but within the context of a network of events culminating at the national level. In the case of debates, the final event was an “Olympiad” in which local, then regional, debate winners traveled to Warsaw for debate finals, and had the opportunity to present their recommendations to the parliamentary constitutional commission. The elections culminated in a nationwide tabulation and publication of results.
A condition of Center training for school commissions was that the school provide classes in basic constitutional and civic issues for all grades wishing to participate in the extra-curricular events. In some schools, this proceeded smoothly, but in others principals were reluctant to permit “political activity” on school grounds. Students and teachers protested, and formal (as well as informal) discussions ensued concerning the rights and responsibilities of students, teachers, and administration, and the advisability of addressing current public affairs in classes such as social studies, history, or “home room” (often used as an open forum or counseling session). In other schools, in which no teachers could be found to teach the necessary classes, students in higher grades organized after-school seminars for younger students. Local issues often meshed with large constitutional concerns: “What about our freedom of speech and association?” students asked when denied permission for “political” activity. “Can we not be trusted to organize and carry out educational activities?”

Student conduct during both these programs was exemplary. Participants researched the philosophical and political issues to be debated along with their social implications. Should the constitution guarantee social rights, such as the right of each individual to decent housing? Should it ban the death penalty? The mock presidential elections included role-plays for journalists and pollsters. Students undertook these roles very seriously—and strictly observed the canons of professional objectivity (at times with ingenuous attempts to keep their own political opinions from interfering in performance of “professional duties”).

Student pollsters reported disconcerting findings when they set out to examine about electoral preferences among adult residents in local neighborhoods. Many respondents, it turned out, would not vote at all. “Why not?” students found themselves asking. “Here we are, without the right to vote, engaging in all this activity, and you won’t even bother to exercise your citizenly privilege?”

The Center’s Warsaw office and its local affiliates were overwhelmed during these campaigns with happy swarms of high school students: in effect, a grass roots mini-movement. Many students kept in touch
afterwards through another Center program, KOSS ("Citizenship Education in Local Schools"), which encouraged schools to produce local newsletters and bulletins with information on constitutional and civic education.

Descriptions of the Five Centers and ACLS Program Activity

The Bratislava Center. The Citizen and Democracy Foundation, a non-governmental organization, held its training sessions in regional settings (rather than at a central national site), in order to focus better on local needs. Focus-group research helped the Bratislava staff prepare program activities, and surveys were conducted for evaluation. Videotaping was used extensively during training sessions, especially of model classroom exercises, interactive games, and simulations of electoral campaigns and court trials. Because of Slovakia's tense political climate during the early phases of the project (an authoritarian post-communist government), cooperation with Ministerial authorities and "methodics centers" was difficult at first, but after several years of patient work it improved significantly. Center-sponsored regional meetings were held at methods centers, and staff members were invited to sit on the Ministry's curriculum committees, which led to acceptance of a Center-written civic education curriculum for technical high schools. The Center's books, *The Citizen and Democracy* and *The Citizen and Public Administration*, were successfully distributed in schools and to the general public.

The Budapest Center. The Civitas Association for Teaching Civic Knowledge and Skills is a non-governmental organization whose primary focus has been preparation of curricula for use in teacher colleges at five leading universities in Hungary. The Association successfully introduced an interdisciplinary program (the "Civitas basket") into university curricula, after securing the support of an informal coalition of professors, administrators, and deans.
Regional offices were established at each of the five universities and functioned as local teachers' resource centers. This approach offered the advantage of strong institutionalization: universities committed themselves to continue to offer programs in civic education and constitutionalism as part of their regular curriculum after the conclusion of the Association's direct involvement. The Association also organized a "Civitas Teachers Club" to foster contacts among current teachers. A Ministry directive that all high school teachers undertake in-service training every seven years (paid for by the Ministry) made it possible for the Civitas Association to enter this "market" with its program of civic education.

The Lublin Center. The Studium ("School") of Constitutionalism is a graduate-level university program for teachers wishing to study the field of constitutionalism and train to present similar courses to their students. Though officially administered at the Faculty of Law and Administration at Marie Curie-Sklodowska University (UMCS, a state university founded in 1944 as a counterbalance to the Catholic University of Lublin), the Studium is in reality a cooperative endeavor with that same Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). This is significant, for although there has been some contact between the two universities since Poland's transition to democracy in 1989, the Studium represents the first instance of full-scale academic cooperation between these once-hostile institutions of higher learning. Studium courses provide solid academic grounding in the history, philosophy, and sociology of constitutionalism. The Studium interprets constitutionalism rather more narrowly than do training programs at other centers—that is, as the study of written or unwritten constitutions and the development of the current Polish constitution. Teachers enrolling in the Studium's courses come from the provinces of eastern and southeastern Poland, a developing but still underserved region. The eight volumes on various aspects of Constitutionalism published by the Studium have been well received and written up in the official Review of the Polish parliament. Over the course of the project, the Studium has expanded its profile from a university graduate program to a Center actively working...
with teachers, publishing a *Bulletin*, and participating in the “Project-Based Learning and Assessment” workshops.

**The Prague/Olomouc Center.** The Foundation for Education in Constitutionalism, with administrative offices in Prague, is a non-governmental organization closely associated with two leading Czech universities, Charles University in Prague and Palacky University in Olomouc. Training courses, run concurrently at both locations and featuring leading scholars and public figures as instructors, were first piloted with humanities students at both universities. Much progress has been made in introducing Center-developed curricula into high schools (the Eco-Gymnazium in Prague, for example), as well as into the programs of teachers’ colleges (e.g., in Hradec Kralove). The Prague/Olomouc Center has also expanded its academically-oriented programs to include training in teaching methods and the organization of special projects for high school students, including competitions in which students interviewed local government officials, conducted small-scale surveys, and wrote essays on civic themes.

**The Warsaw Center.** The Center for Citizenship Education is a non-governmental organization active in a wide range of projects in civic education and school reform. As indicated earlier, it includes courses in constitutionalism training and such extracurricular activities as nationwide mock elections and constitutional debates for high school students. The Center has been very successful in working with local governments (which now exercise budgetary and political authority over schools) and with schools themselves. Local school systems have begun to adopt the Center’s citizenship education curricula and have requested training for their teachers in its implementation, all the more noteworthy because local governments have agreed to pay some portion of the costs of this training. Staff members of the Warsaw Center have taken a leading role in ACLS-sponsored workshops in active learning and assessment.

**ACLS Program Activity.** ACLS staff and consultants encouraged and facilitated international cooperation throughout the duration
of the project. This included bilateral contacts between centers: sharing of materials, visits to other nations' training programs, and instructor exchanges. There were multilateral contacts among centers, as well, primarily at annual regional meetings of the project. Work was also undertaken with American advisers and teachers on special seminars and workshops.

ACLS proposed and carried out a series of workshops in active learning: new teaching methods and new forms of assessment. Following the recommendation of Pew consultant Sharon Wolchik, teaching methods were discussed at the first annual meeting in Warsaw (1995) and in a more intensive way at the 1996 meeting in Bratislava, which included workshop demonstrations of "interactive methods" (described in more detail below).

Active learning (project-based learning) and new forms of assessment were the main focus of the workshops. ACLS staff, in cooperation with the PACE (Performance Assessment Collaboratives in Education) program of Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, designed and conducted three workshops for 45 core teacher-trainers from the Centers. The first workshop, in Konstancin, Poland, was led by three American high school teachers and demonstrated project-based teaching. The second workshop, in Prague, Czech Republic, led by staff from PACE, ACLS, and Budapest, discussed the implications of interactive methods for assessment of student progress. The third workshop, in Krakow, Poland, led by staff from Warsaw and ACLS, reviewed the classroom projects prepared by teachers attending earlier meetings and examined their potential impact on schools in the four countries.

The Annual Regional Meeting
in Bratislava, 1996

The annual regional meeting held in Bratislava in 1996 provides a good illustration of both the regional cooperation that ACLS promoted and the developmental character of the meetings. The three-day gathering took place at the end of the second year of
the Teacher-Training Project. Each Center, with the exception of Budapest, had already conducted several semesters of training activities. (The Hungarian proposal called for working with five leading universities to transform existing teacher-training programs to include specialized training in civic knowledge and skills rather than training current teachers. As a result of contacts with the other Centers and discussion with ACLS staff, Budapest developed an active in-service program of training for teachers with resource centers at each of the five universities and by establishing a Civitas Teachers’ Club in Budapest.) The first half of the Bratislava meeting included reports from Centers, comments by advisers, and a sharing of curricular and other materials developed since the previous annual meeting. Jan Sokol, ACLS advisor from Prague, welcomed participating teachers from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. (See Appendix 8 for the text of his remarks on the role of the teacher.)

The second half of the meeting emphasized demonstration of active methods. In the preliminary discussion, János Setényi pithily described conventional classroom methods as “frontal” teaching: that is, the teacher faces the entire class, and students listen to lectures, memorize material assigned, and respond with answers on demand. In Setenyi’s view, this teaching style is especially inappropriate for instruction in the knowledge and skills needed by citizens in a constitutional democracy. Nor can it effectively encourage thoughtful reflection on the deeper meaning of constitutionalism as the nexus of individuals’ understanding and commitment to a shared public set of values.

Three Centers—Warsaw, Bratislava, and Prague/Olomouc—had already begun developing a variety of interactive (the Slavic translations of this word mean “activizing”) classroom methods. These were in part adapted from models in western countries, in part invented sua sponte to meet specific needs. Discussions via correspondence initiated by ACLS, and bilateral exchanges (trainers from one center attending events sponsored by another) disseminated particular techniques among Centers, inspiring trainers and teachers to devise games and other interactive teaching
techniques of their own. (Examples of these role-plays are included as Appendix 6.) Games demonstrated at the Bratislava meeting ranged from ones examining prejudices and stereotypes (“RU-FA-RU-FA”) to a conceptual puzzle intended to weigh the strengths, weaknesses, and practical consequences of different conceptions of equality (“The Trouble with Equality”). A typical role-playing game, with great potential for fun, is “Castaways’ Island.” Participants are given a scenario in which they find themselves on a deserted island and have to set up a minimal constitution (a set of rules to live by)—and then see what results as individuals take advantage of the rules (or the lack thereof) for their own individual purposes.

Additional examples of interactive play included the playing out over an extended period of time of fairly complex scenarios (complex either conceptually or in the number and specificity of roles). At Bratislava-sponsored summer schools, these encompassed mock murder trials (illustrating the roles of the accused, the judge, jury, defense and prosecution attorneys, journalists, witnesses) and elaborate mock electoral campaigns for a local government leader called the “Great Mogul” (Moguliak). Participants formed political parties, devised press coverage, and oversaw an electoral commission.

Stanley N. Katz, then President of the ACLS, attended this meeting, and with good grace took active part in the role-playing games. Near the end of the three-day session, in his quiet, courteous way, he dropped a bombshell by asking about the educational value of the interactive methods being presented. “You know, it is wonderful to free teachers from the passivity of the conventional classroom. But while students are having fun at their lessons, how do we know they are learning anything?” This simple question hit home. “It’s true,” Jacek Strzemieczny, director of the Warsaw Center said, “with all the work we have done on reforming the classroom and developing new teaching methods, we have never paid much attention to assessment.”
Three Workshops in Active Learning and Assessment

In May 1997, ACLS began to investigate ways of addressing these questions. Dennie Palmer Wolf, of Harvard’s PACE Program, helped identify individual teachers and schools in the United States engaged in using new methods and addressing the basic question asked by Stanley N. Katz. In May-June 1997, a small team of “explorers” from Central Europe (several directors from the Warsaw and Budapest centers) along with members of ACLS staff, embarked on intensive visits to selected classrooms in Cambridge and Boston, Massachusetts, and New York City. Ideally the visits would have been longer and involved many more European participants, to begin a cross-cultural dialogue as a basis for comparison and synergetic thinking. Still, the visits proved useful, not so much as a set of examples to be followed (after all, conditions in Boston are very different from those in Budapest and Bratislava) but for the questions they raised. Dennie Palmer Wolfe described the school visits as follows:

- **The Martin Luther King Open School, Cambridge, MA.** This elementary school was founded to bring the best possible education to a very diverse population. The school’s faculty and families have a long history of political action and a very strong commitment to using the city and its people as a source of education. The visitors observed 12-14 year-olds engaged in “The Jerusalem Project,” a multi-week exploration of the history, culture, and arts of Arab, Israeli, and Christian cultures as they meet in the ancient city. They visited with groups of students as they completed models and essays for a public presentation to parents and the larger community.

  Two teachers from the Martin Luther King Open School, Lynn Brown and Julie Craven, later joined the larger group in Konstancin, where they presented the Jerusalem Project.

- **Boston Latin School, Boston, MA.** This is the oldest secondary school in the United States. Its very traditional curriculum
resembles that of European gymnasium schools. Directors visited a special program, “Connections,” in which teachers combine very challenging academic work (higher mathematics, classical languages, ancient history) with active learning and assessment, seeing the two not as inimical, but as complementary. In so doing, instructors aim to provide the wide variety of entering students with the critical thinking skills that will allow them to survive, even flourish, in a very demanding curriculum. The Connections Program features a special kind of active learning that is based in the community. In place of the usual field trips, students use the libraries, museums, and streets of Boston as their laboratory for learning.

The director of the “Connections” program, Ron Gwiazda, also joined the group in Konstancin. There he described a project in which students use city statues and monuments to think about who and what gets represented in history.

• The Francis Parker School, Fort Devens, MA. The directors visited or spoke to students and teachers from other schools where teachers have developed active and open forms of assessment. These schools are characterized by an ongoing and public discussion of what constitutes quality work. Students and teachers actively engage in this debate; students act as editors and critics for one another and have the opportunity to revise their work to meet high standards. Grades are based on students’ portfolios of work rather than on examinations.

When the visitors met to sift through the information gathered, their task was to choose one or two projects that might be particularly useful to teachers and trainers in Central Europe. In addition, they needed to design a program to convey a number of complex messages about teaching, assessment, and school design in a simple but effective way. Several American teachers were invited to help: Julie Craven and Lynn Brown from Cambridge, and Ron Gwiazda from Boston. Dennie Wolf worked with them over the summer of 1997 to plan a workshop that would distill the essential
elements of Julie and Lynn's team-taught social studies class, and Ron's initiatives for learning in the community.

The result of all this travel and planning was the series of three Workshops in Active Learning and Assessment in Konstancin, Poland; Prague, Czech Republic; and Krakow, Poland. Honesty requires, at this point, confession of the organizers' stage fright about how European teachers might receive the Konstancin program. Theatre directors always feel a little bit nervous at the opening of a new production. But imagine their anxiety if multilingual, not to say multi-cultural, translation were required for even minimal comprehension. And what if the leading artists and the audience are fighting jet lag? And suppose the scenes and acts last all day and into the evening, only to continue the next day and evening? Fortunately, the inspiring presentation that Julie and Lynn provided more than compensated for linguistic difficulties. They described their own experience in project-based learning around a theme that could be explored through a variety of school disciplines: "The Jerusalem Project." Project-based learning was presented as a complement, and perhaps alternative, to the role-playing games and simulations demonstrated at the Bratislava meeting. Here students were undertaking more familiar tasks—studying, researching, writing, and presenting their work, and doing so in a structured framework—but in ways that excited their curiosity and challenged their abilities.

Subsequent workshops in Prague and in Krakow saw European teachers reporting on projects they had begun with their students (see Appendix 5 for two projects from Lublin.) Some took place during school hours, while others were extra-curricular activities. The main question for discussion in Prague was assessment: how to grade students' work in project-based learning? Maureen Grolnick, then director of ACLS education programs, addressed the group gathered in Krakow by means of a written statement distributed before the meeting entitled "Now What? Assessing Student Work When Learning is Interesting and Fun" (Appendix 7).
Summary of Activity

During the course of the project, the five ACLS Centers in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia trained a total of more than 1,000 teachers and prospective teachers in semester-long courses and more than 4,000 others in shorter programs (weekend seminars and summer schools) and special events (including nationwide student constitutional debates and competitions for research and essay writing). The Centers published 33 books, along with supporting training materials, information bulletins, and instructional videotapes. (See Appendix 2 for a complete list of publications.)

International activities deserve special mention. Illustrative examples are described in the preceding section on “project-based learning.” These had their greatest effect, of course, on the core of some three dozen teachers from the four countries who attended the programs, many of whom worked at Centers as trainers for other teachers. But the capillary spread of the ideas and techniques discussed at the various international workshops was significant, as well, extending the reach of Center programs and contributing to overall success. The comparative dynamics of the international meetings enriched activities during the course of the Project, promoting bilateral contacts among Centers. But they also had an indirect impact on the perspectives of trainers at the Centers, strengthening their vision of the needs of their societies (in a context of overall regional transformation) and solutions to address them.

This teacher-training project concludes a series of activities at ACLS centered on constitutionalism. For ACLS the most evident results are the records of conferences, the consequent publications, and the archive of materials from the project at the Hoover Institution at Stanford. (See Appendix 3 for contact information.) For all who participated in any way in the project—professors, teachers, non-governmental organization activists, constitutional scholars and practitioners, and people engaged in school reform—these concrete achievements were made more enduring, and warmer, by the collegial friendships that resulted from them and, indeed, made them possible.
IV. What We Learned: Six Essays

This section is a collective reflection on the ACLS East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project, consisting of six essays from each of the five training centers and ACLS.

We set ourselves the following tasks:

• to recall the moment before we started work, even before proposals were written. What needed to be done? What resources were available? What goals did we hope to achieve?

• that said, to turn to an examination of the roads taken and not taken. In hindsight, should something different have been done? What were the unexpected opportunities that arose during the project? What were the special problems and possibilities characteristic of each center’s situation?

• to look forward, and ask what recommendations could be made to those embarking on a similar enterprise, perhaps in countries further east or south of the Visegrad group. What should they be aware of? What can they expect?
Teacher-Training in Constitutionalism
in Difficult Political Conditions
and Regional Cooperation

by Šarlota Pufferová,
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The Citizen and Democracy Foundation, established by the Minority Rights Group-Slovakia (MRG-S), whose office is located in Bratislava, has operated within all of Slovakia for nine years. It promotes active approaches to the development of democracy in our country, implementing programs of an interdisciplinary character prepared by experts in different fields, including psychologists, lawyers, and sociologists. The core team that worked within the Foundation on the preparation and implementation of the Slovak part of the Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project was interdisciplinary in that it integrated the principles of democracy and rule of law into alternative ways to develop civic responsibility, freedom, and the positive social energy of citizens. Although our target group was secondary school teachers, we had in mind from the beginning the intention to address the broader public to explain the need for civil participation in a democratic society, different aspects of human rights, and various dimensions concerning the application of these rights. We were aware that the aims of our activities to a large extent needed to complement the activities of governmental sector. Thus, in May 1994, we addressed the Ministry of Education and were successful in getting their moral (not financial) support for implementation of planned activities with the teachers in the Constitutionalism Project.
Even now, after ten years of transition towards democracy, it is more and more clear that in Slovakia one of the key areas for achieving positive changes is the field of education. Before our project started, experience had shown the unsystematic character of educational reform and lingering remnants of the previous period, when education in citizenship was ideologically charged. This was the gap our project was trying to fill. A poorly developed legal consciousness and little knowledge of how law originates, the source of law, the “essence” of civilization, liberal democracy, constitutional democracy, human rights and the principles of civil culture in this context—all these were and, unfortunately, still are characteristic of the post-totalitarian citizen. One of the results of the slow process of conversion to democracy is citizens’ incomprehension of the obligation to respect the rule of law, flowing from incomprehension of the fact that citizens themselves are the bearers and guarantors of democracy, the creators of law.

In the early 1990s, a number of local, national, and international organizations held seminars about constitutional or human rights covering a number of substantive areas. Based on our observations and experience, however, there were reasons to believe that these activities had been insufficient to address the needs of Slovak teachers for reasons due mainly to the scale of the problems as well as the methodology and design of the programs. For example, such events tended to be sporadic, frequently targeting the same limited audience, covering the same theme or part of a theme, and making use of methodologies that failed to engage active participation. Those who took part often came away feeling that the Constitution and human rights were unrelated to everyday concerns and relevant only to people who have the time to discuss them. These training difficulties should be understood in the context of a situation in which people were systematically disempowered for many years under a communist regime, or later fed up and tired of a new dictatorship after the election in 1994.
Following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the “ambitious” Slovak politicians shaped the new state in even more authoritarian ways than the pre-1989 communist regime. Violations of human rights—from violating the newly adopted constitution to limitations of freedom of expression and political murders—became “normal,” and citizens again experienced the helplessness, fear, and isolation so very well known from earlier times. In this context, there is an implicit need for training programs utilizing participatory methods that are in themselves empowering. Their effectiveness is likely to be enhanced if participants are engaged in the program over time and the training is designed to address problems actually experienced in their local or professional community. In post-communist countries, there is also, typically, a persisting need to address practical communication barriers to interaction and thus to improve the underdeveloped communication skills of citizens.

What is more, as we explained in our original 1994 project proposal, in Central Europe the concept of constitutionalism is usually understood narrowly, as relating to the clarification of the written constitution. It is not perceived in its wider meaning, touching on the many aspects of the concepts of democracy and citizenship, and especially in terms of consciousness of civic responsibility for rule of law, implementing democratic principles at all levels of society, and respect for human rights.

Slovakia is a new state. In 1995—at the beginning of the project implementation—the Slovak Constitution was only two years old. People in general did not understand either the importance or the meaning of the basic laws of their state. They began to focus on the new laws only after they began to be misused by the political establishment led by Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar (elected in fall 1994). Not all Slovak citizens understood their basic human rights were being violated, since many of them were not even aware of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. At that very moment, in the context of constant suppression of civil initiatives by the government, we started our project, introducing constitutional issues to one of the most widely influential professional groups in society—teachers.
Teachers had always been the well-tested tool of totalitarian propaganda. “How dared we…” This time the reaction of the Ministry of the Education of Meciar’s government was not so friendly. They recommended to school directors that teachers not be allowed to attend educational activities of non-governmental organizations. This provision had caused problems with our initial recruitment, but later it appeared that self-selection of teachers brave enough to cope with the obstacles was better than our initial plan—albeit not intentionally so—since we managed to create three regional groups of teachers really motivated to learn more about constitutional issues.

**Project Implementation in Slovakia**

The East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project (1995-2000) promoted the ideas and spirit of constitutionalism in the everyday life of society. As its primary target group was secondary school teachers preparing themselves for the difficult task of increasing legal awareness among younger generations, several well-received publications have been produced for distribution among teachers and others, as well. The content and methodology of the project’s publications have been designed to meet the specific needs and context of the Slovak Republic. The main purpose of our project was to develop new approaches and methodology in civic education by organizing a series of training courses, workshops and summer sessions for secondary school teachers and humanities students. Our implicit aspiration was to increase legal awareness by means of public awareness campaigns.

Our initial activities included preparation of resource publications and materials, recruitment of participants, and assembling an expert group (which met regularly) whose task was to prepare the program and resource materials for training sessions.

In 1996, it came as a bit of a surprise when our recently proposed curricula for civic education were accepted for implementation in the newly reorganized high school system, which included a new major in social sciences. In cooperation with the Committee of the Ministry
of Education, we were successful (what a paradox!) in introducing into the new curricula constitutional and public administration issues in the Meciar government’s official plan for schools. Another question altogether is to what extent these curricula were used and how much support has been (and is being) given to their implementation.

In 1997, we began to develop systematic cooperation with all three state-managed methodological centers. More than 150 teachers participated in the long-term training program (each of them undertaking on average more than 160 hours of intensive participatory training), and the school directors allowed them to attend without any objections, as our activities became the key component of in-service training. Two groups of 30 students from the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University were trained after the Chief of the Department of Civics agreed in 1998 to allow our program to become part of their accredited courses. Our networking activities are ongoing: in addition to teachers, 25 law students were recruited to attend one of three summer schools organized within the project to team-teach groups of secondary school students, prepare lessons plans together, and provide one another with professionally balanced knowledge and skills.

Another very successful activity was instructor training. More than 30 teachers went through full three days of intensive training on how to train others. In the end, they also prepared their own training plans, and some are now organizing training sessions in their schools for their colleagues. Teachers also worked on developing and expanding the original techniques they devised. Later, these techniques were made available to their network of colleagues. We helped distribute them to all who were interested. Pilot research has been conducted at our foundation as part of a graduate thesis evaluating legal awareness of secondary school teachers, and analyzing the decision-making process and communication styles in the two groups of teachers testing non-structured discussion techniques in the teaching of certain human rights issues. The data gathered show the aptness of this method in evaluating the level of legal awareness in given groups as well as the advantages of a participatory way of teaching human rights issues.
Since the notions of civil values and democratic participation are evolving very slowly, public awareness and support of human rights are still underdeveloped in Slovakia. Consequently, one of the cornerstones for developing a pluralistic, democratic society is strengthening the general public’s insight into human rights issues. From this point of view, our public awareness campaign has been relevant to and compatible with the objectives of our project. Public education in legal matters and open debate about human rights standards and fundamental freedoms are helping to ensure that human and civil rights become an integral part of people’s expectations for their government and for society as a whole. One of the biggest challenges in our project was not only to transform the people directly involved in our programs, but also to have an impact on the development of civil culture and to induce the broad public actively to defend human rights.

Our project was based on a wide range of experiences that enhanced our ability to conduct rights and advocacy training programs. For example, in the early 1990s we developed a handbook for teachers on human rights education and inter-ethnic communication. We conducted training and educational programs on human rights for Roma community activists. Recently, we have worked closely with other non-governmental organizations in Slovakia, in particular during the 1998 Citizens’ Campaign for free and fair elections. Not by chance, the spokesperson for the entire campaign was also the coordinator of the Constitutionalism Project. This campaign to improve the legal awareness of people in Slovakia involved producing leaflets concerning new electoral legislation and organizing training courses for teachers, students, and other target groups. During our summer school, we organized a day-long simulation of the entire process of a municipal election with more than 90 participants, including secondary school teachers and students.
The 1998 Citizens’ Campaign was a widely publicized event that achieved its goal: informing voters about the issues at stake and urging them to vote. (The end result was the victory of the democratic opposition over the authoritarian Meciar regime.) The Campaign was a nonpartisan political initiative involving more than 60 non-governmental organizations in Slovakia with three aims: to improve access of voters to information about election laws, to increase voter turnout (especially among the younger generation), and to ensure citizen oversight of the electoral process, at the same time seeking to increase public input on electoral legislation. To fulfill these aims, non-governmental organizations and civil associations implemented a number of projects. The Citizen and Democracy Foundation was at the center of this campaign, increasing its credibility with the media and the general public, thus reinforcing its capacity to continue to promote human rights in the media. The 1998 Citizens’ Campaign, organized by non-governmental organizations, created more space for their activities and increased their visibility; it also afforded them effective lobbying positions in the post-1998 election period. The efficacy of the strategic approach adopted by non-governmental organizations in Slovakia has been demonstrated by the results in the 1998 parliamentary election (more than 84% turnout of informed citizens). Public awareness of the importance of being involved in the election process and of public issues in general has been enhanced. The credibility gained by having mobilized the public has become a new strength of the Foundation’s team. Solid contacts with media and parliamentary representatives have proved very useful in our subsequent work. Simply put, we made a good start at drawing the public’s attention to human rights issues and their importance in building civil society, and at imbedding them “under the skin” of Slovak citizens.

This involvement, as well as our recent successful initiative for an effective law on information access, has provided a solid basis for public awareness campaigns and cooperation with numerous organizations and influential personalities throughout Slovakia, by fostering highly efficient networks. Our on-going projects on civil
monitoring of the implementation of the law on information access (this proposal, prepared by one of the lawyers working within our Foundation, was passed by the Slovak Parliament in May 2000) are well in line with our main mission: to increase citizens' participation in public issues and to promote and actively protect their human rights and civil rights.

Two activities initiated by our Foundation in 1999-2000 were later taken up by teacher-participants in our training program: an inquiry on the ombudsman issue in Slovakia and the civil campaign for the adoption of a law on information access. Teachers conducted outreach to gauge opinion on the ombudsman issue and explain the importance of such an institution for human rights protection in our country. They also campaigned for the equal and easy access of citizens to information. Though this basic right was part of the constitution before 2000, there was no law on information access stipulating that officials in public administration provide the information to citizens. For human rights activists—as many of our teachers have become, having understood the importance of personal involvement—information access is crucial. We have also prepared materials on information access issues to be distributed regionally.

Since 1997, we have organized summer school and intersession courses for law students from three Slovak universities, creating a critical mass of young lawyers willing to specialize in the field of human rights protection and education. Three of them now work in the Foundation on a project for legal aid for individuals and groups as well as for non-governmental organizations. One of them leads our street law program (a follow-up to the Teacher-Training project supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts) and develops activities intended to institutionalize legal clinic education at Slovak law schools. These active young lawyers communicate regularly with their more experienced, practicing colleagues. They recently undertook work on law reform, participating in the campaign for—and helping to draft—a law on free and equal access to information. Our work increasingly involves monitoring how the law is being applied (two ongoing projects), legal aid, and education. Associates
of the Foundation are also working as volunteers in activities aiming to institutionalize the protection of human rights—establishment of an Ombudsman’s Office—and in the initiative “People Against Racism.” Although the political situation appears to have improved since 1998, in Slovakia the development of democratic institutions and practices largely remains the province of non-governmental organizations, with very little governmental assistance.

Partnerships: Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation

Several fruitful contributions of our Visegrad and American partners significantly enriched activities. We invited our Polish colleagues, teacher-trainers, to participate in our first summer school in 1996. We spent one week in the Sachticka mountains, having the opportunity not only to exchange ideas with Polish teachers but also to see those teachers in action as trainers. This was extremely encouraging for our teachers and their Czech friends who attended our activities regularly each year. Similarly, Slovak teachers eagerly traveled to the Czech Republic and Poland at the invitation of our partners within the Constitutionalism Project, looking for inspiration, but also for resource materials and methods to be adapted and used at home. Some teachers from Slovakia participated in special activities on project teaching that were held in Poland and the Czech Republic. Later, they initiated activities using this methodology that were very popular among their students in Bratislava and Kosice.

Meetings of the “project people” from all five Visegrad Centers organized by our American partners from ACLS afforded the opportunity for open discussion on problems that arose in other cooperating countries. Not only did we learn more about each other: we also had the chance to compare the situation in our countries, learn more about obstacles we encountered, and seek inspiration for further work. From this point of view, the meeting in Bratislava in 1996 was especially effective. It charged us with the energy drawn from creative training sessions and model lessons performed by the
teachers or trainers from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. This event was a good example of mutual exchange and sharing of concrete experience and methodology. None of the other meetings was so successful, perhaps because of the lower level of personal engagement and more passive input by participants in the discussions that followed the regular presentations of standard center reports.

In bilateral activities, we noticed our Hungarian colleagues were at a disadvantage because of their language. (Despite our efforts, we were unsuccessful in arranging for a common project in the Hungarian-speaking sections of Slovakia.) All other partners at ACLS-sponsored meetings could comfortably communicate without translators. As most teachers did not speak English, they preferred to use their native Slavonic languages. This made it easier to organize informal activities where participants could talk about their problems, experiences, and new methods or projects. This was the case of our last visit to Warsaw, too. Because Poland is generally further along in administrative reform, decentralization of power, and participation of citizens in public policy and decision-making, we decided to organize a kind of investigative visit by three people from Slovakia. We attended the events organized by our Polish partners who were working on school assessment reports as part of their project on improving school quality through self-evaluation in the newly decentralized educational system. We were also introduced to the process of negotiation with partners involved in the process at the local level: teachers, directors, students, parents, and entrepreneurs. We used part of the information gathered in Poland in our three regional conferences organized at the end of the project, where we discussed the decentralization of schools in Poland in light of similar changes expected in Slovakia. This activity was a very good example of direct exchange between two neighboring countries, taking advantage of time shift in reforms as an opportunity to gain relevant information in preparation for changes arising within the state and society.
Building Capacities for the Future
in the Visegrad Region

We intend to build capacities by developing additional programs linked with existing long-term training for secondary school teachers on constitutional issues. Through the regional coordinators, we have created the conditions for cooperation among law students and teachers involved in this program. Necessary steps have been taken to initiate debate on institutionalization of a new subject in three law faculties in Slovakia: law for everyday life (clinical education). In November 2000, we co-organized an international conference for participants from Slovakia and other Visegrad countries to introduce the concept of law for everyday life—street law—to influential people within law faculties. Our law students and alumni secondary school teachers took active part in the conferences, offering other participants (vice deans, teachers from law faculties) model situations to observe and sample cases from real life. We plan to continue working with Slovak professors and students of law, giving them technical support, training, methodological and legal consultation, and overseeing their cooperation with secondary school teachers. We can offer them training to transform newly gained knowledge into practical skills, and we will also provide them background and technical support to initiate their own activities in the area of human rights protection. This could involve teaching in secondary schools and special institutes for police officers and prison guards, preparation of resource and training materials, and monitoring activities.

We intend to continue work with partners abroad—old and new—especially from Visegrad countries, since we consider the exchange of experience, knowledge, and skills to be an important component of our work. The countries in a given geopolitical space, often sharing a common history and cultural heritage and undergoing similar political development, can take advantage of synergies and pool their resources to overcome remainders of the totalitarian past. The energy accumulated in this international project by striving towards common goals clearly shows the benefits
for all who participated, and the promise for future projects. One of the long-term objectives of the Constitutionalism Project was to create opportunities for people from Slovakia and its neighboring countries—most of them teachers and students—to get to know each other, exchange ideas, and increase their knowledge of the human rights and constitutional issues that are a priority for them. At the international level, the project resulted in improved knowledge and skills as well as greater self-confidence in the area of human and civil rights issues impacting target groups and many others. Though the training methodologies and resource materials were developed for this purpose, we now see they can be used for other target groups and for future activities, by trainers and alumni teachers as well as law students. In Slovakia we would like to continue our work in this domain and publish new studies, as the Constitution of the Slovak Republic was recently amended, and these important changes must be communicated to the broad public.
1. First Step: Formulating our Paradigm

The Civitas Association aimed to establish civic education as part of regular, university-based teacher training in the most prestigious Hungarian universities. This aim was ambitious by any standard. We had some major issues to consider at the outset.

First, we all favored long-term educational investment instead of *ad hoc* training activities. Hungary had a dynamic in-service teacher training market (i.e. short training courses for secondary and primary school teachers) even in the late 1980s. Civic education, in the democratic meaning of the word, did not exist, but an interesting set of topics (human rights, constitutional studies, basic law, modern history) were already accessible to teachers. Even civic education non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had already been established, mainly with the help of the Soros Foundation. Thus, a short-term approach would have made us “just another training NGO.” It is important to state that long-term and short-term does not imply a value judgement. Our approach, however, was not dogmatic. Occasional training courses became part of the Civitas portfolio, if not the central element.

On the other hand, we wanted to avoid the “academization” of civics. We resisted and still resist the delegation of civic education to a single academic department (history and law were the most eager applicants). We still consider civic education as a broadly interdisciplinary area with strong ties to practice (community life).
Secondly, Hungary in 1990-1998 went through a feverish period of structural reforms in all spheres of life. In the years of democratization, slow bureaucratic procedures were challenged, and all educational innovations seemed possible. The Civitas Association had a pool of educational experts who could use their professional reputation to stimulate cooperation between schools and universities.

Thirdly, our civic education paradigm integrated two fundamental concepts of nineteenth-century Hungarian liberalism. Count Szecheny's concept of polgarosodas (something like "embourgeoisement") calls for the emergence of a strong middle-class as the main stabilizing force of a democracy. Furthermore, Kossuth's idea of erdekegyesites (long-term, compromise-based integration of conflicting social interests about some fundamental issues) seemed to be an appropriate concept for our non-partisan, long-term civic education work. We were examining the consensual basics of democratic and constitutional life (so called "common bonds"), for a turbulent society.

Finally, having formulated our civic education paradigm, we differentiated civic knowledge, skills and attitudes. Having evaluated the capacities of the Hungarian educational system, we identified the "soft" areas (skills, attitudes) as the most critical areas of development. Consequently, our publications, standards, and curricula emphasized the development of skills and attitudes in civics. It is important to note that this approach was not readily accepted and understood by all.

2. Implementation: Opportunities and Outcomes

Our proposal was very well received by the five most prestigious universities of the country (all of which offered teacher training). We developed a sourcebook, teacher-training standards of civics, and other publications. We supported the creation of university-based teams of academics, small resource centers and curriculum development. We also supported the actual teaching
The Civitas Standards and Local Curricula

How to introduce programmatic and curricular changes in autonomous universities? Civitas solved this long-standing dilemma with the help of an intermediary tool, a set of standards. In our three-day workshop, an interdisciplinary mix of university academics, civic education experts, and school teachers developed the main topics of a civic education teacher-training program, structured around the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

As the next step, Civitas recruited academics from the four universities who were ready to modify their existing lectures and seminars according to the standards, or to undertake new ones. With the help of local coordinators, the puzzle-pieces of academic seminars and lectures were assembled into university-based curricula. The missing elements (training and community service, in particular) were provided by external volunteers. In the end, we had four university-based curricula (with academics) closely related to the standards.

The actual coordination of teaching was carried out by a local coordinator (based in a department). The teachers of the Civitas program formed a non-departmental network, regulated by the standards, the curriculum and the financial support of Civitas. Civitas experts also participated in the final examination of students.

This solution did not threaten the academic autonomy of universities, but it did introduce a new program which could have never been created inside the Academia. and preparation of the documentation for accreditation of a full-fledged major in civics.

We developed some tools that can foster changes in autonomous universities (i.e. ones not open to outside approaches).

Because of our limited resources and management capacities, the teacher-training college sector was not a target group of our project. These are smaller, less prestigious, but fairly innovative institutions of teacher training all around Hungary. Interestingly, our publications are widely used in this lower level of teacher training. Many teacher-training colleges (responsible for the training of primary and early-secondary school teachers) use Civitas materials. The Eger Teacher Training College even introduced our sourcebook
(The Good Citizen) as a compulsory literature and examination topic for students. We think that in the future, the college sector offers possibilities for collaborative efforts.

3. Lessons Learned

3.1. Universities as Partners for an NGO

Although the universities we approached were open-minded and useful partners in the implementation of our project, in the long term, the NGO-university relationship grew to be problematic. The Civitas idea of university-based curriculum development represented a combination of our curriculum standards and the teamwork of the interested academic departments. It worked excellently. As a result, we had four university-based teacher training curricula in civics and teams of university instructors prepared to implement them.

In the long term, however, a small NGO cannot maintain pilot projects in universities. It is also difficult for NGO members to lead and monitor groups of university instructors living in an autonomous academic world. We, like other, similar organizations, faced the problem of institutionalization. Here we had some good results; our project was institutionalized at the highest curricular level directly dependent on the universities. In all four universities (with the exception of Budapest), the Civitas program was established as an academic minor course of study. The establishment of a university-based major still depends ultimately on the decision of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee. This decision is part of the national curriculum policy, thus not easily initiated by universities.

Although we enjoyed the support of the leadership at all five universities, the performance of the teaching and curricula-developing teams were different, indeed. ELTE University (Budapest) considered us useful supporters of their own innovations. The universities in Miskolc and Pécs integrated the project into their
regular minor academic programs. The universities in Debrecen and Szeged showed real understanding and long-term commitment; they took a decisive role in the preparation of the accreditation documentation of the major program. Furthermore, on the basis of their accumulated experience in the pilot project, the Civitas team in Szeged remains very active in cooperating with civic education NGOs in the Balkans. One of our Civitas teachers (an assistant professor) in Debrecen prepared his Ph.D. dissertation on the training of civic education teachers.

The most important tool for stabilizing the professional cooperation of our small NGO and large universities was the set of Civitas curriculum standards for teacher training in civics. These standards created a frame for negotiating curricular structures, teaching hours, and disciplinary representation.

3.2. Civic Education in Academia

In the initial period of our pilot projects, only one of the four universities had an interdisciplinary and cross-departmental program, European Studies. Civitas immediately ran up against the rigid disciplinary boundaries and entrenched interests that made it difficult to implement the program at universities. Difficulties arose, for instance, around the delegation of local coordination in the university. The Department of Education was the most natural choice because of the teacher-training character of the program. But the prestige and bargaining power of pedagogues compared with those of lawyers, historians, political scientists, and sociologists were rather lowly in the Academic Senate. On the other hand, while a program coordinated by the Department of Political Science might develop a fully academic character, it might also overlook the practical dimension of teacher training.

An important lesson of our piloting years concerns the role of academic traditions. The Civitas standards, the joint curricula, and the interdisciplinary academic teams were accepted relatively easily. The smooth creation of the “Civitas baskets” (four university-based curricula along the lines of the Civitas standards) was the most
successful element of our project. There were always reactions, however, to “sharing” teaching hours along disciplinary borderlines and organizational pressures. These responses never challenged the concept of interdisciplinary curriculum, but they tended to simplify the registration and administration of the program. Academic routine (at least in Hungary) follows departmental structure, based on disciplinary fields. Academics are good partners in innovation, but their core activities (teaching, research, and scholarship) and daily routines are often organized in a traditional way.

Another interesting problem discovered during the implementation of our program was the universities’ limited capacity to provide non-traditional ways of learning. As part of our Civitas standards, we had strict requirements for community service and intensive training for our students. Based on our experience, Civitas was one of the first programs in these universities where modern ways of learning were compulsory elements of the curriculum. Consequently, in most participating universities, training (communication, problem-solving, etc.) were provided by contracted external persons from outside the universities. Community service (working in a local public institution and writing an essay on a related public issue) was unusual, too, but all of the university-based Civitas centers were able to cope with this challenge.

3.3. East-West Dialogue

Participating in the ACLS Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project, we had access to the rich and long-standing American experience of civic education. ACLS provided us with resources, field visits, training course on teaching methods and useful publications. We also had an opportunity to work together with outstanding American colleagues.

On the basis of our experience, we can state that civic education is (and should be) an international issue, where the exchange of ideas and experiences is not a luxury, but a necessary and unavoidable part of the work.
In the course of our project, we proudly and consciously represented the “American line” of international cooperation. In the American treasury of civics we found the valuable issues mentioned earlier complemented with other topics, including the role of civic duties and virtues and of local communities in the building of democracy.

With ACLS support, we tried to bring some new ideas to the common “basket” of the project. Here we would mention two issues. The first is the differentiation and prioritization of the development areas of civic education, on the basis of the evaluation of social needs in the relevant country. The second issue is the binding of modern civic education activities to the social history of Hungary. (See Appendix 2 for publication information.)

3.4. East-East Dialogue

In the course of the project implementation, we found good colleagues and true friends in the other Central and Eastern European NGOs and institutions. Their different approaches prompted inspiration—and admiration. While the ACLS Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project was being carried out, our organizations lacked the resources to build up long-term regional cooperation in civic education.

In the future, however, Central and Eastern European cooperation seems to be the most reasonable way to develop civic education in the region. We firmly believe that our shared experiences can have an added value in the framework of the European Union, too.

3.5. The Role of Dissemination

In the long term, the effectiveness of educational investments is strongly determined by the capacity of the innovators to disseminate the results. In the future, we will put more emphasis on the issue of university-based resource centers. Resource centers can open up a more effective way of learning for working teachers. They can also strengthen the links between schools and universities. With the availability of adequate civic education resources, local teachers
who have gained some experience in the theory and methods of civic education can do the job of dissemination to their colleagues in the region. Needless to say, schools prefer the way of horizontal learning, when working teachers train other working teachers. In this framework, universities can play the role of professional supporters and resource providers.
Lessons Learned:
The Lublin School of Constitutionalism—
A Cooperation Between Two Universities

by Krzysztof Motyka,
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Two features of the Lublin School of Constitutionalism stand out as distinctive in comparison to the other centers of the ACLS constitutionalism project.

- The School functioned within a university structure and, as such, had an academic character. This university affiliation brought both advantages as well as some disadvantages. Perhaps the most obvious benefit was the certification we provided teachers who successfully completed the School’s course of study.

  Unfortunately, the School diploma does not provide our alumni with any direct automatic salary increase. However, due to recent provisions requiring teachers to develop their pedagogic knowledge and skills and to complete postgraduate courses, our alumni can now use our diploma as a basis to apply for a salary increase.

- Although the School was affiliated with Maria Curie Skłodowska University (UMCS) and thus—from the formal point of view—constituted an independent unit within the University Faculty of Law and Administration it was, in fact, a joint venture (perhaps the first on so large a scale) of young faculty from both Lublin universities: UMCS and KUL (Catholic University of Lublin). The authors of this project, supported by the administration of the two universities, intended for the School’s legal status to be that of an inter-university unit, but this never took place. We take this as confirmation of the view, widely

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shared by legal scholars and others, that “it is the temporary arrangement that often turns out to last the longest.” In the end, however, the School’s affiliation with UMCS was very convenient and did not raise formal problems that might have occurred if the School had attained an inter-university status.

We assumed that teaching skills in the field of constitutionalism had to be based upon deep and broad knowledge and understanding of this domain. This is why the School’s curriculum was—typically for a university program—chiefly lecture-oriented. But it is worth noting that the proportion of lectures to workshops over the years shifted to favor the latter. However, despite this quantitative dominance of lectures over workshops, a few of our alumni (from our first graduating class of 1996, with a relatively small number of workshops), among them Lucyna Kujawa and Tomasz Panek, gained recognition for the excellence of their classroom projects: “Belfast” and “Poles and Jews in Lublin” in the ACLS/Harvard “Project-Based Learning and Assessment” workshops. (See Appendix 5 for descriptions of these projects.)

It is possible to argue that the ability of our students to author and implement such innovative teaching projects to some extent results from the second distinctive feature of the School: that is, its curriculum. Due to its inter-university character, the School (its faculty, curriculum, directors) provided its students with an authentic variety of opinions on issues of constitutionalism. I do believe that it genuinely succeeded in embodying the idea of tolerance that was one of the explicitly articulated values in the project proposal. The authors, as well as other members of the faculty, represented all three major currents in Polish political thinking: liberal, conservative, and socialist/social democratic. Two of its co-directors (Ryszard Mojak, UMCS, and Krzysztof Motyka, KUL) represented not only different political viewpoints, but also different types of personalities and ways of running their common project. This is why conducting the project was for them also an exercise, sometimes very challenging, in practicing the procedural and substantive values contained in the idea of constitutionalism.
Last but not least, since all three co-authors of the project (the third was Professor Andrzej Korybski, UMCS) also differ in their academic backgrounds and research interests, the School curriculum itself was multidisciplinary, as well.

The inter-university character of the School benefited its students in another way. At least some of the faculty members, including myself, were aware that their work was instrumental for how their home universities would be perceived by students. For me, it was an additional impetus to do my best. Thus, previous ideological rivalry was replaced by competition (within the framework of collaboration) based on academic competence and skills. Participation in our project was a unique experience for all because of these factors, combined with the excellence and diversity of the faculty and students. The faculty consisted of academics, some with national reputations, representing various disciplines (law, philosophy, sociology, pedagogy) and various academic centers (besides UMCS and KUL, Jagiellonian University, Mikołaj Kopernik University in Torun, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Warsaw University, the Polish Academy of Science). Non-academic centers for civic education (particularly the Warsaw Center for Civic Education) were represented, as well. And, rising to the occasion, our students showed themselves to be quite brilliant.

In the midst of carrying out our program, we expanded the School’s activities in two significant ways. First, we participated enthusiastically in the above mentioned ACLS/Harvard workshops. Secondly, we published a Bulletin for the School’s students, faculty, and friends. The latter was a forum for exchanging ideas among ourselves, including dissemination of interactive teaching methods, as well as a tool for creating a “constitutionalism community” that has remained very active over the last several years. I hope it will be soon possible to revive it. It is a pity that we had not enough time to continue and develop our contacts with other ACLS constitutionalism project centers in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary.
Some Reflections on Democracy and the ACLS Constitutionalism Project

by Vladimíra Dvořáková,

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During the preparation of our original proposal and the first revision after its acceptance, the crucial question that was discussed dealt with the balancing of two goals:

- to disseminate to the broad community of teachers social science knowledge that was not accessible to them during the communist regime, to present to them the concept of democracy, an analysis of the Czech Constitution and political system, and other issues related to living in a constitutional democracy.

- to disseminate new skills and new methods of teaching in their theoretical as well as practical dimensions (with an emphasis on the latter).

We had almost no problems with the first goal. We were able very quickly to identify basic topics, to prepare “readers,” and to engage lecturers of very high quality. In a real sense, it can be said that the greater part of the Czech intellectual elite working in social sciences participated in our program. There were no important changes in the substantive program during the five years of its duration. Some smaller changes were prompted by feedback from the teachers who took our courses. In evaluation questionnaires, they sometimes mentioned other topics they would like to have discussed and in several cases they criticized lecturers for explanations that were too complicated and difficult to understand.
The second goal—new methods of teaching—was a strong challenge for everyone. It was extremely difficult to find trainers who would be able to give basic theoretical background and to teach high school teachers practical skills, training them to be able to use new interactive methods in civic education.

In fact, neither the teachers nor the center staff were satisfied with the “experts” we originally engaged for preparing training sessions on interactive methods. So we decided on a “do-it-yourself” approach. Given that most of the senior staff members were to some level educated in psychology and pedagogy, we started to develop some basic examples of interactive methods that could be applied to particular topics discussed during civic education lectures. From the very beginning, we carried out our plan in collaboration with those teachers who attended our courses, who experimented with these methods during their civic education lessons and gave us basic feedback. The first weekend seminar (organized in spring 1996) gave us the opportunity to disseminate this knowledge to a broader public and to review the experience with the teachers.

Nevertheless, interactive methods continued to represent a challenge for our program staff. This situation improved after the American Council of Learned Societies organized meetings that enabled our staff and of some of our active high school teachers to meet and work with the other ACLS teacher-training centers. The first such meeting took place in Bratislava, Slovakia, where materials dealing with interactive methods developed at particular centers were presented. As a result of this meeting the Czech center started to work with the Slovak trainer Dušan Ondrušek, who organized the training for Czech courses. The next important international meeting was held in Konstancin, Poland, where teachers from the United States presented their experience with project-based teaching. Follow-up conferences were held in Prague, Czech Republic, and in Krakow, Poland, at which teachers from Central European countries who had attended the Konstancin meeting described the projects they had developed in response to the models discussed by American presenters.
Over the five-year course of our project activities, we were surprised by the energy of the teachers and their response to our program. First, they were grateful for the activities organized for them, and especially for the high quality of the lecturers. In addition to mentioning the valuable new knowledge that they gained, they made the following points:

- The courses were cultural events in themselves. Teachers mentioned frequently that participating in this course was somehow similar to going to the theatre or a concert because of the opportunity to hear inspiring lectures. (One woman who had to travel nearly three hours by train to get home after our meetings remarked that the whole way she thought only of the lectures, repeating the basic ideas, because she was so impressed by them.) Such strong reactions were no doubt more common after the lectures of leading public figures—like Miloslav Petrusek, Jan Sokol, and others.
- The courses represented a means of communication. Teachers who lived in small cities, with perhaps only one small high school, often cited their relative isolation, the fact that they had no possibility to share their experiences or to discuss their problems with someone.
- The courses were a means of building teachers’ self-confidence. Traditionally, teachers of civic education were in the least desirable position at school. Very often those classes were taught by anyone, without regard to qualification, and were totally ignored by school principals. Therefore, that someone regarded this subject as important, and that well-known lecturers treated the teachers as colleagues, was extremely significant for them. We tried to reinforce this sense of an enhanced status of the subject matter and of those who taught it by various means, including writing letters to our teachers’ principals, praising their contribution to our seminars.

The vital significance of these points—communication and self-confidence—was not at all foreseen in the early stages of our
program. Later, it would influence some of the results of the project, including the formation of the teachers association and student competitions.

The framework of the ACLS Teacher-Training Project was very flexible, allowing space for additional activities that we developed in collaboration with our teachers. This was a very important and positive feature of the way ACLS worked, because it meant that we could follow up on interesting opportunities as they arose. One such activity we organized was the weekend seminar at the conclusion of the first year of the project. We put together teachers from both the Prague and Olomouc programs, and we also invited teachers who could not attend any of the regular courses, but who expressed an interest in doing so. The weekend seminars became a tradition, and henceforth were held twice a year. The structure we developed for them included: two basic lectures by “famous” scholars (Friday and Saturday evening) followed by discussion, Saturday morning workshops, Saturday afternoon free for informal exchange of information and field trips, Sunday morning workshops, and a concluding lecture. The workshops were organized in part by the teachers who wish to share their experience with others (a game or project they developed, for example) and in part by experts whom we invited to prepare special workshop for the teachers.

We also started to work with other civic education projects (principally with Civitas) and with the summer school organized by Pedagogical Faculty in Olomouc. This helped create a network of teachers from almost all the regions in the Czech Republic and contributed to the formation of the teachers’ association, SVOD: the Association for Education for Citizenship and Democracy.

The other activity that we had not foreseen in the early stages of our program was student competitions, which proved to be very worthwhile for several reasons. First, although there is a tradition of high school contests in math, physics, biology, and history, there have never been similar competitions in civic education. In programmatic terms, this meant that school principals undervalued civic education, because they often evaluated the work of their teachers according to the results students attained in national competitions. Second, we
wanted the teachers to present the results of their work with students, and also we wanted to increase students' interest in this subject that is often neglected by them, their parents, and other teachers. About a dozen of the best students were invited to take part in a weekend seminar together with their teachers, participating in all the activities, sometimes as pilot groups for role-playing games or other exercises. During the final year of our program, there were two student competitions, one "traditional," with categories for essays, sociological surveys, and interviews; and a new one, "Towards the Roots of Czech Constitutionalism," organized by the teachers' association whose final stage (involving approximately 25 students) was held in the Senate of the Czech Republic, with leading Senators as participants.

Although the results of these competitions varied in quality, we were impressed by the excellence of the best work. Also noteworthy was the fact that student participants came not only from "grammar schools," but also from vocational schools. Two examples are from the work of one of our teachers from a small town in Western Bohemia (Planá u Mariánských lázní). She taught future bricklayers in a class where some of the children were from "youth homes" or troubled families, with a high percentage of Roma children, and a few students with minor criminal records. The theme the teacher chose for the first entry in the competition was "We and Others," dealing with the Roma minority. She developed very special methods to carry out this project. Because she knew that some children have trouble writing, are not very interested in reading, and have limited skills for expressing their opinions, she started with reading and comments on Roma fairy tales. She also led discussions on such questions as differences in cuisine and problems in partnership (whether or not to marry Roma). Conversations were taped. The teacher then asked students from another class (specialized in administrative work) to write up the results on the computer, and to present the results of the project. Although not everything was done in the way she expected (one of the participants left the school), the final results were very strong, principally in building a feeling of solidarity with Roma. (Some participants were Roma, some Czechs.)
The other project she led was inspired by a conflict between the students and one of their practical education teachers. On one occasion, that teacher became angry with the students and threw their personal belongings out of the building. The students complained to their civic education teacher, “We don’t think he has the right to do that.” Her answer was, “You have to find the reason why,” and gave them the Constitution of the Czech Republic with the Bill of Rights. They conducted their analysis together. The students found relevant articles in the Bill of Rights and Constitution and cited them in discussion with the practical education teacher. (In fact the problem had been resolved earlier, so the final discussions took place in an atmosphere of reconciliation.) The civic education teacher prepared with these students a reenactment for presentation before the Senate, where three student representatives (Roma and Czech) told the story and reported on their findings and their experience. It was a great success and the Senators were fascinated by their presentation. The experience made a tremendous impression on the students, because few of them had ever had such a sense of accomplishment, or of their dignity as citizens.

These two stories sparked discussion among our teachers, primarily regarding methods that can be used with students who are not expected to attend the university, but for whom, of course, familiarity with civic skills and democratic values are extremely important. This is a critical task for the future.

It is very difficult to evaluate the impact of our program of teacher-training in constitutionalism on civic education in general in the Czech Republic. Five years later, many changes are evident (though we have to mention that this was not the only project—there were Civitas, Phare programs, etc.). We can point to a higher level of activity on the part of teachers, greater understanding of existing problems, and efforts to solve them. But there remains a great deal of work to be done, involving the reform of the overall educational system, as well.

From the very beginning, the Czech Center did not intend to establish an institution that would work permanently in the field
of civic education. We planned to initiate activities and discussions, bring teachers together, and provide a space for their activities. What we did understand from the very beginning was the importance of strengthening the teachers’ own initiative, of building teachers’ “social capital.” We did not want them to be the “objects” of education (a strong tradition from the past that endures to this day), but to be “subjects”: active, critical, and with their own activities. We believed this would be the strongest factor determining future sustainability of this project.

In fact, we were not sure how to “institutionalize” this goal. At the end of the second year, we started to form regional structures (some regions had coordinators, others had none) to inform teachers about our activities but also about other interesting events connected with civic education. After the first three-year period of our program concluded, we decided to help with the formation of the teachers’ association, SVOD (created in fall of 1998). For about 18 months, we coordinated our activities with theirs, but from the very beginning the teachers’ organization had the resources for their own initiatives. Many of these activities are ongoing. They were certified by the Ministry of Education to organize teacher seminars, they organize student competitions in collaboration with the Senate, they oversee “Project Citizen” throughout the Czech Republic, and they hold a variety of regional seminars.

We can say that the situation now is much better than it was five years ago, when we began our work. The Ministry of Education conducts more extensive discussions with teachers. (SVOD participates in many of them). The atmosphere in society as a whole has changed, with a greater awareness that civic education is an important part of education that can strongly influence the future of society.
Education for Civil Society:  
A Polish Perspective

by Tomasz Merta, Alicja Pacewicz, and Jacek Strzemieczny,  
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Preliminary Assumptions and Goals

The communist system collapsed in Poland in 1989 and democracy took its place. But the change did not automatically produce a mature civil society or an efficient democratic system.

The Center for Citizenship Education was founded on the notion that school education and the activities of young people are key elements for building a civil society. The East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project enabled our Center to create an institutional infrastructure to carry on projects aimed at changing Polish civic education and the wider educational system, in the belief that school experience should give young people a sense of confidence in their own thinking and judgment, faith in their own abilities, and the knowledge they need to shape the life of their local community, their country, and the world beyond.

Under the unstable conditions of political and economic transition, the capacity of the highly bureaucratic Ministry of Education to manage education reform and respond to new needs has been severely limited. The state administration appeared to focus mainly on enforcing budgetary austerities in the education sector. This situation in the educational system creates space (and the urgent need!) for independent NGOs such as our Center.

In the Polish tradition, school has always been the place where students were introduced to the world of academic knowledge
and their national heritage. The subject called “knowledge of
society” was present in the curriculum (and potentially, a locus
for the study of constitutionalism and civic education), but it had
a bad reputation associated with the era of forced indoctrination,
manipulated upbringing, and using the idea of citizenship for
propaganda purposes. At the Center for Citizenship Education
(CCE), we decided to try to infuse new meaning into civic
education.

Whenever possible, teaching should be linked with projects
initiated by young people. Before natural human sensitivity
dies out in them and cynicism or resignation takes hold, young
people should be given an opportunity to experience success in
public activity. If students learn the ways in which various public
institutions operate, especially those in their own community,
this experience can become the basis for a civic activity in
their adult life.

But a general opinion prevails today that time should not
be wasted on subjects and classes that are not part of entry
examinations for the university. This discourages teachers from
using interactive methods, team projects, and methods other than
the classical pencil and paper. Poland has no tradition of students
working for their local community or any formal structure that
could promote such values among younger generations.

CCE curricula and manuals destined for secondary schools had
one very important objective, quite a new one in Polish education:
to improve the knowledge of law among younger generations,
thereby equipping them with knowledge and skills for effective
participation in the nation’s public and economic life. Stress was
put not only on the principles of constitutionalism, but also on
the practical dimension of the functioning of law, which could be
briefly described as “law in everyday life.”

CCE decided to use some complementary strategies to reach
such ambitious goals. One of the first activities within the
framework of the East European Constitutionalism Teacher-
Training Project was the development of new civic curricula for
elementary and secondary schools.
Our intention was to introduce to schools not only new content but also new teaching methods. Therefore, instead of traditional textbooks, we produced class scenarios for teachers and associated materials for students.

An important publication for teachers—two volumes of class scenarios—was produced under the “Constitutional and Civic Education” program (later renamed “Legal and Civic Education”). These thick volumes, each containing over 150 scenarios, were not only a collection of proposals suggesting how to conduct classes on various subjects, but also a methodological guidebook to using advanced active methods in teaching. The scenarios were accompanied by support documents, namely a selection of various historical and contemporary source materials, laws, press clippings, etc. They proved to be extremely handy for teachers, enabling them to cut class preparation time. At the same time, they filled the gap created by the lack of important books and other materials in many school libraries. The range of subjects covered by the scenarios was very broad. It encompassed classes on basic civil skills, information about the development, historical evolution, and contemporary shape of democracy, the role of modern constitutionalism, civil rights, and various aspects of the functioning of a civil society. Classes dealing with the Polish political system, especially the work of local governments and communities, were given a prominent place.

In order to better help teachers spread knowledge of constitutionalism and contemporary theories of democracy, an anthology of texts was published under the title Constitutionalism, Democracy, Freedom. It included articles and excerpts from books by outstanding Polish and international scholars and experts.

The class scenarios created for the program “Legal and Civic Education” as well as the above-mentioned anthology provided a basis for training and workshops for teachers and allowed introduction of this program into many schools. However, the impact of the scenarios was much wider, as they established certain
standards for discussion of the public sector, democracy, and constitutionalism, and showed other teachers how to teach students about difficult and complex problems in an appealing way while retaining a high level of quality in content. Many teachers, unable to carry out the full program, used selected scenarios during special classes organized for interested students, or they included in their lessons materials and didactic ideas taken from the “Legal and Civic Education” scenarios. In this way, the program designed for teaching “knowledge about society,” often played a role in classes dealing with other subjects, most usually history and Polish language.

Having found this “expansion” in every respect desirable, we wrote a book for history teachers entitled *Towards Constitutionalism*. The book offered a number of scenarios for history classes stressing aspects of constitutionalism and different political systems. This permitted history to be taught not as a series of individual lives or wars, but rather as a process of development of different models of democracy, the emergence of the idea of liberty, civil rights, etc.

**The New Matura Exam in Civic Education**

Work on a new school-leaving examination system had been going on in Poland for several years, to reformulate standards and assessment criteria with the goal of increasing incentive for gaining the skills necessary to conduct research, obtain information, build and check hypotheses, and express and defend one’s own opinion. Teams of teachers lecturing on various subjects were established to develop the principles of what was known as the “new matura” soon after the Education Minister undertook a profound reform of national education. Interestingly enough, the team responsible for the “knowledge about society” section failed to draft their project, so, at the last moment, CCE volunteered to do the job. We worked in mad haste to develop within only three months examination rules and requirements for the knowledge and skills to be demonstrated
by students taking their final examination. (See Appendix 4 for a
detailed exposition of these examination standards.)

We consider this to be one of the most important enduring
effects of the East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training
Project, because it has raised the status of civic and constitutional
education, a subject that traditionally has been ignored and
even looked down on, precisely because it did not have a place
on the matura exam.

**Partnership with Local Government Authorities**

Another significant consequence of the East European Constitutional-
ism Teacher-Training Project was that it led to productive
cooperation between CCE and local government authorities. At
first, this cooperation was limited to the introduction of civic
education in the schools. The topics covered in the curriculum
included knowledge of the local community and government, and
student projects oriented toward the needs of local communities.

After 1996, CCE signed formal cooperation agreements on
introducing civic education with more than 400 rural and urban
municipal councils. These contracts obligated the councils to
finance teacher training and extra classes in civic education.
Soon thereafter, CCE proposed assisting local governments in
developing a local education policy with the involvement of all
those concerned about education: teachers, students, parents, and
employers. CCE trained local teams to carry out projects, offered
them technical assistance, and provided all necessary materials,
including specially-developed computer software. We also taught
them how to evaluate the school’s performance and the work of the
overall local educational system, how to involve concerned parties
in this evaluation, and how to discuss the future of education
with parents, students, and teachers. Youth coordinators trained
by CCE helped primary and secondary school students commit
themselves to building local education plans.
Another activity that engaged local governments was development of self-evaluation techniques for local school systems. In the framework of the East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project, a number of conferences and workshops were organized to deal with the evaluation and oversight of teaching quality. At this time, CCE staff had the opportunity to work with Professor Dennie Palmer Wolf from the Projects in Active Cultural Engagement at Harvard University. She became our consultant in designing the school accreditation system called “The Learning Schools Club.” The main governing principles within the network include the establishment of standards of work by the schools themselves, and rigorous evaluations of the quality of their work in conjunction with students, teachers, parents, and colleagues from other schools in the role of “critical friends.” This project is now financed by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation and local governments.

It is worth noting that building a quality assurance system based on voluntary participation has never been tried before in Poland.

**Partnership with the Ministry of National Education**

As a non-governmental organization, CCE performs its activities independently of the Ministry. Initially, the only contacts with the Ministry were dictated by the obligation to obtain approval for CCE-proposed curricula and education materials for public schools. Later, CCE launched a regular lobbying effort to support its proposed educational changes. The education reform introduced by the Ministry of National Education in 1999 included most of the CCE proposals relating to civic education and used the idea of local education planning which had been promoted by CCE.

In 2000, the Minister of Education announced that the civic education curriculum developed by CCE was one of the best school curricula associated with education reform. CCE as a whole was awarded a medal of Merit for Education in recognition of
the introduction of this curriculum to schools. Justifying this distinction, the Minister wrote that the CCE curriculum “showed how to use action and experience to prepare a student for performing various public functions and social roles and for responsible and active participation in public life according to the student’s capabilities.”

From 1998 on, CCE has had authorization from the Minister of Education to carry out training courses of its own design which produce certified teachers of subjects related to social studies. Currently, CCE experts are sitting on a number of committees and other ministerial bodies working for education reform. Jacek Strzemieczny, CCE director, is taking part in the work of the Council for Education Reform, appointed by the Minister of Education.

Obstacles in Implementing Reform and Proposed Solutions

- **Shortage of funds for teacher training and additional civic education classes.** This was overcome by (1) persuading local government authorities that civic education is a subject that offers them a particular service, in that it promotes local government and prepares local citizens for participation; and (2) obtaining financial support for proposed activities from local authorities.

- **Very traditional teacher training by universities that are severed from school life; reluctance of the university establishment to make changes in their training of teachers-to-be.** We addressed this issue by establishing the Center’s own in-service teacher-training center registered by the Minister of National Education and providing training to active teachers. We established mixed teams of university lecturers and teachers experienced in civic education, who jointly trained students planning to become teachers.
• Lack of initiative on the part of teachers and education officials, and the fear inherent in the question: “Will the Ministry allow this?” We countered this with the program leaders’ vision and strategy of independently introduced changes, and with persistent implementation of the project, despite the fears of those involved and the reluctance of the government bureaucracy in education administration.

• Carrying out large-scale public activities with the limited resources available to the NGO. We managed this with strict adherence to the principle of working only with teachers designated by local governments and schools selected to teach the new civic education program.

• Teachers’ lack of skill in using interactive teaching methods (games, discussion, debate, case studies, role-plays, problem-solving). We addressed this issue by training teachers in small workshops, allowing them to practice active teaching methods. Targeted instruction permitted the teachers to identify their own weaknesses and “open up” to new teaching methods. Upon returning from training, teachers began to apply the newly mastered methods in classes and examined their own successes and failures at the next meeting.

• The danger that teachers using active teaching methods can lose sight of the goals of their classes and limit themselves to role-plays and “games” with unclear educational objectives. We averted this by having both trainers and participating teachers use the model of “backward planning.” Before teachers choose teaching methods and educational materials, they define the didactic aims to be achieved (knowledge, skills) and the way in which results will be evaluated. CCE issued a publication entitled How to Evaluate Teaching and Learning Civics? which presented the assessment methods available in non-traditional teaching. This publication was distributed widely and is also available on CCE Web site.
• Isolation of schools from their social environment; distance of teaching from actual problems faced by young people and the challenges of the contemporary world. We overcame this by orienting teaching to the real concerns needs of students, parents, and the local community. We organized projects serving the needs of the local community and concluded with a public presentation of the results of the young people’s work.

• Finding the right people to design class scenarios and develop teaching methods adequate to cover all aspects of civic education. We accomplished this by recruiting authors with diverse backgrounds (teachers, academics, public activists) to create materials in the initial phase, and by continuing work with those who produced the best materials. We assembled a competent editorial team to whom we entrusted much of the publishing work.

Dissemination of Civic Education Programs

The popularity of civic education curriculum has created a problem we have managed to overcome only to a certain extent: what might be called the problem of too-rapid growth. The number of students using our textbooks grew in five years from 20,000 to over 200,000. Our curriculum began to be used by teachers who had not undergone our own training programs or indeed any training in the use of active teaching methods. We have addressed this problem in part by revising our textbooks and inserting a number of teachers’ annotations on active teaching in the students’ textbooks. This led to a kind of “teach-yourself manual” which largely compensated for potential mistakes made by teachers in interpreting active teaching instructions.

Another method of expansion involved encouraging regional groups of leaders to establish independent teachers’ associations. These associations continue to organize activities and projects
consistent with the mission of our foundation, particularly with teacher training.

In some cases, our youth projects were launched via the Internet. Interested schools and students could download a set of materials from our Web site without needing to make direct contact. In the case of our youth voting project, within a few days about 400 schools acquired the necessary materials and filled out the questionnaire available on our Web site. Within another few days, all these schools were receiving “group correspondence” and e-mailing back to us the results of the simulated presidential elections they staged.

The Vision

CCE has changed over the last several years, from a center supporting civic education in Poland into an institution working for overall educational reform, civic participation, and an open society. Its tools include its programs, carefully tailored and tested in action.

In reforming public education, CCE as a non-governmental organization is using the “bottom-up” strategy, promoting changes in public stereotypes, transforming the inner culture of educational institutions, and modifying teachers’ and administrators’ attitudes, as well.

CCE’s partners in school reform are students, parents, local communities, employers, teachers, local government bodies, and the national educational administration. We are working to make these partnerships widespread and strong, and we hope that all parties will take advantage of and benefit from them. We seek to ensure our clients see us as an institution known for its well-prepared programs and deserving of confidence, so they can implement these activities according to our proposals and with the support offered by CCE.

We also hope that participation in “Young People Civic Action” project will be more than a one-time activity, but a practical means
of spreading youth volunteerism in Poland as part of ongoing cooperation between schools and local governments.

We are convinced that the use of efficient and valuable teaching methods in civic education will inspire the work of instructors of other subjects in such a way that their teaching will gradually become more integrated with life outside the school walls.

The expansion of our services will consist of providing organizations and individuals with access to tested procedures and sets of instruments required for their implementation. We plan to encourage program beneficiaries to work in a self-reliant manner, using our materials to support their efforts in their communities.

The principal task of CCE will be to identify potential leaders among teachers, train them, and build a system of professional development for them. Youth leaders and qualified trainers in educational performance evaluation will be trained separately.

Our Center is planning sustained cooperation with other governmental and non-governmental groups from around the world. The contacts with other Centers participating in the East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project proved to be valuable experiences from both a professional and a cultural point of view.
Assumptions at Start

The founding assumption for ACLS was that a project for training teachers would be a fitting conclusion to the series of scholarly conferences sponsored by the Comparative Constitutionalism and East European Constitutionalism projects, and that it would usefully contribute to the construction of constitutional democracy in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

The way we went about designing the project revealed further premises: a commitment to local definition, comparative perspective, and collegiality.

- **Local definition.** The collapse of the Soviet system in Eastern Europe, and the efforts to establish structures of democratic self-governance there drew the world’s attention, prompting a ready flow of financial support from a variety of donors. “Democracy assistance,” “civic education,” and “building civil society” became the keywords of the day.

  The assistance projects that sprang up in response to these offers to help proposed cooperation between western experts and local partners, with most such partnerships declaring commitment to local definition in some form. Westerners tended to understand the problem as one of sensitivity to local culture, which they wanted to respect, while offering their expertise concerning ideas and institutional arrangements
developed in the west. The best of them did not want to impose their views and values, but they did, in fact, come as mentors, guided by the question “How can we best help you?”

The three ACLS initiatives were guided by another question altogether: “What can we learn from each other?” For the Teacher-Training Project, adopting such an approach meant making a series of choices: in designing the project, in the relationship ACLS set up with the centers whose work we coordinated, and in modifying the program to pursue new opportunities as they arose.

Our strategy for training teachers in constitutionalism relied heavily on resources in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. In-country expert commissions announced a competition for applications to organize and conduct training programs. (ACLS invited scholars, jurists, journalists, and other public figures who had taken part in preceding ACLS-sponsored conferences to sit on these commissions.) Applicant organizations selected in this process became the five Teacher-Training Centers of the ACLS project, and their proposals became the basic structure of the ACLS East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project.

- **Comparative perspective.** Regionalism was another basic value orienting ACLS projects in Eastern Europe. It seemed only fitting that organizations working for their own societies, in their own languages, and out of their own traditions, should have the opportunity to compare their work with similar efforts in neighboring countries. ACLS wanted to facilitate contact among them, and provide a forum at which exchange of ideas, materials, and techniques could take place.

- **Collegiality.** From the beginning, we expected that the directors and leading trainers of centers would act as a collegium for discussion of program progress and recommendations for mid-course corrections.
What Worked, What Didn’t . . .

“Local definition” certainly worked. The centers manifestly thrived with the autonomy they were allowed. But over the course of the project, a few unexpected lessons arose. One of these concerned the issue of sensitivity on the part of westerners not to appear “imperialistic,” as if they were imposing ideas on subaltern partners. When this issue came up in conversation as well as more publicly at annual regional meetings, it proved to be in large measure a western (and particularly an American) preoccupation. Our East European partner organizations had no difficulties with the asymmetry of the relationship. They knew what they wanted to accomplish and were perfectly comfortable choosing among the elements of assistance and advice offered, adapting and modifying them as necessary for their purposes. The crucial question turned out to be not whether westerners were “imposing,” but the degree to which their local partners had a strong sense of purpose of their own. The firmer the goals (and, of course, the stronger the basic competence) of the local partner, the less likely “imposition” came to be an issue.

Too much local autonomy may cause problems, especially in complex, polycentric projects, because it increases the risk of programmatic incoherence. ACLS exercised overall control of the project—regularly monitoring progress, reviewing centers’ budgets (including a review of financial procedures by an external auditing firm), and making suggestions for program changes to ensure adherence to program guidelines and fulfillment of the basic goals of teacher-training. Still, this control stopped far short of central direction, because it was felt (by everyone) that such direction would stifle initiative and inhibit the ability to react effectively as the situation changed. In the event, this policy was proved successful by the results: the training sessions and special projects completed, and the impressive list of publications.

But it must also be noted that although a multi-year, multi-center program requires structure (program guidelines, budget categories, reporting requirements), this structure can, frankly, represent a disincentive to creativity. If a project is working well, it will
inevitably uncover new opportunities for extending, modifying, or (in extreme cases) superceding the work contracted in the proposal and grant letter. Contract terms enforce compliance, but they offer little or no reward for developing new directions. Fortunately, the regional structure of the ACLS program implicitly provided for creative communication among centers working in different countries. Still, it must be admitted that most of what was accomplished above and beyond basic program activities would not have taken place were it not for the energy, insight, and willingness to take on extra work shown by the directors and trainers of the five ACLS centers.

There is one more problem of “incentive structures” that we had not foreseen as we began work. It concerns the difference between training centers that are non-governmental organizations and those that are essentially university programs. As might be expected, it turned out to be easier for the NGOs to “think outside the box” when it came to adjusting or adding to their program activities. However, both the Czech/Olomouc center and the Lublin center (which were programs of their respective universities) made considerable strides in expanding their initially rather academic profiles by adding methods workshops, bulletins for teachers, special student competitions and the like. The editor of the Lublin bulletin deserves special praise in this regard.

As opposed to independent NGO training sessions, university programs can confer diplomas or certificates of completion, which are useful to teachers in seeking salary increases. The incentives for teachers to participate in an NGO program are necessarily of a different order—knowledge and skills gained, of course, usually with a greater emphasis on skills, and the satisfaction of intensive activity in a group of dedicated people, at times approaching that of social movement. A very worthwhile undertaking would be a systematic investigation of the setting and consequences of the NGO/university-based division of programs in civic education in Eastern Europe. A scholarly monograph on this could prove illuminating, and would certainly be received with great interest.
The positive effects of a “comparative perspective” can be seen in how much centers learned from each other, and in the genuine friendships that resulted from the association. Lest this be dismissed as an innocuous piety, we should note with some reluctant candor that on several occasions one center director or another was heard to remark, “You know, this international work is fun, but it doesn’t really contribute to the goals we set for ourselves in our country. And those must remain our priority.” This statement is true enough if interpreted narrowly, but it misses the obvious fact that all who engaged in the ACLS project’s international-comparative activity gained new experience and insights, and therefore became better able to accomplish their in-country goals.

It is worth looking at several specific interactions to see which worked better than others. Cooperation between the Czech and Slovak centers went very smoothly and was quite far-reaching (exchange of trainers, teachers, on-going mutual visits). The two societies are, of course, very close in language, culture, and recent political experience. Slovaks and Poles in the ACLS project also were able to work together successfully, although it was harder for them to establish what they productively could do together, and how to accomplish it. An essential factor for success was the fact that both the Warsaw and Bratislava centers are very energetic and very competent NGOs, who see their missions as much more than organizing training programs: each is actively engaged in continuing the transformation of their society through education. Because Poland is in many respects further ahead in its societal changes (not having had Slovakia’s burden of having to create all the institutional structures of an independent state in 1993), and because the Warsaw center has developed a series of programs that involve local governments in education policy, a useful exchange of visits was carried out. The Polish and Slovak languages are not so mutually intelligible as Slovak and Czech but, with some effort and ingenuity (which the Slovaks in the project especially have in abundance), it was possible for Poles and Slovaks to work together without resorting to a third language. What did not work quite so well as it might have is cooperation between Hungarians and Slovaks in
the framework of the ACLS project. Relations among the staffs of the Bratislava and Budapest centers were excellent, but not much headway was made in developing what would seem a natural common interest: a project on minority relations in the Hungarian-speaking areas of Slovakia. Again, the structural disincentives to mounting such a complicated effort need to be pointed out (neither Bratislava nor Budapest had such activity in their proposals, nor were special funds offered for this). The mutual unintelligibility of the languages might actually have become an advantage in such an initiative, because citizens living in the area would have been able to observe the close cooperation between staff people from Bratislava and Budapest. For the moment, however, the idea for such a cooperative venture will have to remain a road not (yet) taken.

In terms of “collegiality,” it can certainly be said that a collegium did form—convening at annual meetings and other regional activities organized by ACLS, and through correspondence—and that it exercised a collective wisdom in reviewing program progress, pointing out possible new directions, and deciding which were worth pursuing. If we may allow ourselves a moment of self-criticism, this collegium would have functioned better if the idea of a collective advisory body had been explicitly defined from the very beginning.

... and What to Recommend

Before turning to recommendations about developing cooperative projects with partners, a brief remark about the historical context of the work of ACLS Teacher-Training Centers.

The significance of the creative chaos in societal structures that transitions to democracy bring in their immediate wake cannot be overestimated. An interregnum appears in which old structures have lost their power but new ones have not yet taken their place, and it was just such an interregnum that provided the ACLS Centers with a unique opportunity. They began work not only in a relatively
open field, but also in a context of educational systems and political administrations that urgently needed to decide on new strategies and new proposals for curricula, teaching methods, and criteria of excellence. The pressure for filling the void left by the collapse of Soviet-style structures resulted in what might be called a "fast-track" approval process. The Budapest Center reported that the atmosphere of post-revolutionary uncertainty gave them access to university rectors and deans they otherwise could not have had. Warsaw took advantage of the situation in which city and county governments had received new authority (and funds) for high school programs and for the formulation of local school policy. The Bratislava Center worked under two dramatically different national administrations (the first, post-communist one, was unfriendly toward nongovernmental initiatives in education; the second, a reform coalition, much more amenable). In each case, Bratislava made significant inroads by being able to offer programs of high professional quality.

But the period of interregnum (and the fast-track opportunities it provides) is temporary. The lesson to draw is that because success will go to the swift, it is doubly important to produce quality programs and put them forward for consideration. Otherwise, by default, what will be set in place will be unsatisfactory. Worse still, once it becomes accepted as routine, it will be very difficult to dislodge.

Some recommendations:

1. For civic education or other assistance projects to succeed, the first requirement—more important than any other—is the quality of the people involved. They must be smart—this means, in measured parts, naturally intelligent, well-educated, and adept at translating good ideas into practical action. They must be foresightful, well organized, and persistent, as well, because every project requires good planning, careful management of details, and (not least) sufficient psychological tensile strength to rebound from the inevitable frustrations.
2. Trusting one's partners does not exempt them from criticism, though it does imply a collegiality of "critical friends." Moreover, the flexible, exploratory character that such a relationship lends to the work in progress is vital. Those things not working as well as they should must be modified, and such modifications are more likely to succeed if all involved participate in analysis and decision-making. New opportunities that arise should be turned to best advantage.

3. A constant comparative reference is not only useful in planning: it actually makes the program content better. Regional cooperation is difficult for many reasons, not least of which is misapprehensions about one's neighbors. But overcoming them is worth the effort.

4. Funders would do well to provide structural incentives encouraging creative development of the program as it proceeds.

5. Local partners should insist on including neighbors in their work, even when focused on in-country objectives. To bridge linguistic and cultural divides, they should make the effort to understand and be understood, using all the ingenuity at their command to make this possible (including learning the languages, if it comes to that!).

6. US partners in cooperative projects should have experience in the region, but, perhaps even more important than that, experience in establishing relationships with local partners and working with them. Asymmetry in the relationship is inevitable and ultimately not a hindrance, but it must be underpinned by a competent and critical collegiality.

7. Both local and US partners should have a clear sense of purpose in the work they propose to do. Questions that should be asked, not entirely rhetorically: What would be worth doing, if funding were no object? What would each partner be willing to do, even without funding?
On the basis of ongoing discussions between Andrzej Tymowski, Sharon Wolchik, Constitutionalism Center directors, and myself, ACLS made a decision to undertake comparative focus group research in each of the participating Centers. The aim of the focus group research was to gather information on differences between teachers who had received training in Center programs and those who had not received such training, particularly with respect to teaching methods. Tymowski, Wolchik, and I met in June 1999 to finalize the aims of this research and prepare a set of questions that would constitute the basis for the moderator guide to be used in focus group discussions. Specific attention was given to differences in the teaching process, views on the role of teachers, and the broader place of civic education.

During the summer months, Tymowski made contacts with research teams in each of the four countries involved in the Constitutionalism project. (One research team was used in Poland for both the Warsaw and Lublin Centers.) Once under contract, these teams set out collecting information from each Center to create program profiles. The purpose of these profiles was to obtain in a systematic manner a comprehensive view of the activities of each Center. This information was used to familiarize the research teams with the nature of Center activities and prepare for selection of participants in focus groups.
In early October 1999, Tymowski and Jenkins met in Bratislava with the country research teams to finalize the focus group moderator discussion guide and a short questionnaire to be administered to participants in the focus groups. (These documents are appended to the report.) The discussions at the Bratislava meetings also addressed the techniques needed for recruiting participants. The research team decided that the group of “trained teachers” would be selected not only on the basis of having taken the basic program at each Center, but also based on the additional activities in which they were involved (which differ by Center). The decision about the “control” group was that it would be recruited from teachers who had not had ACLS-related training and were not colleagues of teachers who had undergone such training. There was much discussion about how to find the control group. As a result of this meeting, country research teams proceeded with recruiting participants and preparing the necessary materials for focus group discussions.

Focus group discussions began in Budapest on October 23, 1999, and proceeded to take place over the next two weeks in all locations except Lublin. (The control group in Lublin met on December 1, 1999.) I attended all five focus group discussions of trained teachers and two of the control group discussions (Budapest and Warsaw). Research teams prepared reports on the focus groups in each country. This summary report is prepared on the basis of these country reports and my observations from the seven groups that I attended. Additionally, I had discussions with Center directors during my October-November 1999 trip to observe focus group discussions.

A preliminary version of this summary was distributed to Center directors in advance of a meeting in Bratislava at the end of February 2000. The summary generated much discussion and comments on detailed country reports were received from all Centers except Budapest. The preliminary summary was revised on the basis of these insights and comments.
Summary Conclusions

On the basis of the country reports, my observations, and the comments of Centers, the general conclusion is that there were subtle but important differences between trained and control groups of teachers in focus group discussions. These differences no doubt reflect the participation of teachers in Center programs. But what I find striking is the common situation teachers of civic education face across countries. After detailing the similarities between trained and control groups, I will take up the question of differences.

Similarities

What was expressed most often by both trained and control group teachers was the fact that civic education is generally treated as a subject of secondary status, and teachers are forced to adapt their teaching to limited time slots and indifference (or sometimes hostility) from colleagues. Both groups of teachers emphasized that the dominant pressure in schools is preparation for school-leaving and higher education entrance examinations. Since civic education is generally not a topic for these examinations, it receives little attention and resources. Teaching of civic education also suffers from the small amount of time set aside for the courses. Both groups of teachers reported the difficulties of covering topics in the limited hours available.

Both groups of teachers made repeated references to difficulties vis-à-vis other teachers in their schools. These difficulties stem in part from conflicts over available time. Time during the school day or week is zero sum, with hours given to one subject coming at the expense of other subjects. Some conflicts also relate to the nature of civic education classes. For both trained and control groups, civic education classes tend to be taught in a less formal manner than other academic subjects. Class periods involve more discussion of real-life issues, and this discussion often leads to noise levels in classes that disturb traditional school decorum. Field trips require absence from other courses, causing resistance or hostility
from colleagues. These problems with available time and class format are complicated by the low status that civic education holds in schools.

Both trained teachers and the control group described a wide variety of practices that they use to teach civic education courses. Diverse classroom techniques and field trip activities are used by both teacher groups and across countries. There is evidence that trained teachers utilize a broader array of activities and are more likely to think about issues in a larger context, but in terms of the way instructors discuss their activities, there is not a large difference between groups. Both groups generally seek to create active students who will understand and want to take part in civic life.

Differences

There were five areas in which evidence of difference between trained teachers and the control group was seen: the vision of the ideal civic education teacher, methods and practices preferred in teaching, the teacher-student relationship, knowledge of specialized materials and concepts, and language used and interaction in the focus group discussions. These differences are likely an outcome of differences in training and experience of teachers.

1. Vision of the ideal civic education teacher. There is some evidence that trained teachers have a broader vision about the ideal civic education teacher. Both groups mentioned personal and pedagogic characteristics, but trained teachers were more likely to speak of professionalism and civic attitudes. This could clearly be seen in Slovakia, while the outlooks of Hungarian-trained teachers could be described as more detailed and related to specific expectations.

2. Preferred teaching methods. Trained teachers were more likely to show a preference for non-traditional and innovative methods. In Slovakia, five teachers among the trained group said that innovative methods predominated in their classrooms. Czech-trained teachers also indicated that they were more inclined to adopt alternative
methods and ideas. They further emphasized the importance of developing citizenship skills relative to factual knowledge. In Warsaw, trained teachers cited interactive methods, simulations, games, and other activities not cited by the control group. The trained teachers were also more sensitive to relationships and process.

3. **Teacher-student relations.** Trained teachers were more likely to cite the teacher-student relationship as an important concern. The group of trained teachers in Slovakia made the most forceful statement about a different view of teacher-student relations, emphasizing the need for change to foster an equal partnership. Hungarian-trained teachers also mentioned the need to respect children as partners.

In the context of discussing these relationships, trained teachers emphasized increasing the skills and capacities of students, not simply imparting factual information (though control group teachers did share this preference with trained teachers). Lublin-trained teachers expressed greater expectations of their students and assumed more active participation on their part. The Warsaw-trained group appeared more sensitive to students.

4. **Knowledge of specialized materials and concepts.** Another difference between the two groups of teachers is that trained teachers were more often aware of the availability of specialized resources for teaching civic education, including materials prepared by Centers and international projects available in the civic education community. In this context, trained teachers more often made explicit reference to constitutionalism, citizenship, and human rights issues. A greater emphasis on citizenship was evident among Czech-trained teachers. Across all countries, trained teachers were slightly more likely to emphasize notions of civil groups (civil society).

5. **Language and interaction.** The clearest difference between trained and control groups arose in the area of expression and group interaction. Trained teachers consistently expressed themselves in more refined and eloquent terms, using a richer vocabulary about
teaching. One of the key outcomes of Center activities appears to be providing participants with concepts and language for thinking about their teaching, as both process and content. The self-confidence of the trained teachers was notable, both in the way they expressed themselves and in their interactions within the group.

The dynamics of communication within trained teacher groups were distinctive: easy, flowing, and personable. It was clear that participants were comfortable with one another and were more engaged in discussion than the control groups. This may be the result of previous meetings and of personal characteristics that drew them to Center activities in the first place.

Comments on the Focus Group Process

Focus group research provides an opportunity to gather information on the views a group of individuals puts forth about a particular topic. The richness of the focus group lies in its format: individuals freely speaking about a given subject. In the case of civic education teachers, it was extremely interesting and rewarding to hear about the challenges they faced in their work and the resources and skills they mobilized to meet these challenges.

Of course, there are inherent limits to the kind of information that focus group discussions can obtain. Conversational information does not lend itself to rigorous analytic conclusions. Given the nature of the focus group process, the attitudes and opinions expressed by some participants can actually shape those of others. As a result, a group can really be considered only a single instance of observation. Assessing outcomes of complex civic education training programs based upon two contrasting observations is impossible.

Instead, the results of the focus group discussions should be seen as suggestive of the differences that obtain between trained teachers and control group teachers. In an ideal research setting, further efforts (including classroom observation and systematic surveying) would be made to investigate differences between teachers who
had taken part in Center training programs and those who had not. Within the existing limits of focus group research, several additional cautions about the information obtained must also be given consideration:

- First, the questions in the discussion guide may have been too general to measure real differences between groups. While the questions were developed by three of us and reviewed by Center directors and country research teams, they were not actually tested in advance. Pre-testing might have uncovered the limits of the questions.

- Second, the discussion guide may have been too ambitious in the amount of information it tried to obtain. As a result, there was less opportunity to allow discussion to develop on any particular question. Without more detailed discussion on specific topics, it is difficult to compare across groups, since there is simply less information for comparison.

- Finally, there were five different focus group moderators involved in this research. They all exercised great flexibility and independence in their manner of using the discussion guide. Questions were routinely asked in a different order and, in some cases, additional questions were added. To the extent that moderators added questions, there was less time to spend on any individual topic.

I observed the following contrast between moderators when I was able to observe both trained and control groups at the same location. The moderator in Budapest followed the discussion guide and asked questions in the same order for both groups. As a result, it was easy to compare the information gathered. In contrast, the moderator in Warsaw used the discussion guide only as a point of departure and addressed questions to each group in an ad hoc and interactive manner. Some questions in the discussion guide were not covered. The inconsistency in approach makes systematic comparison between groups within and across countries very difficult.
Conclusion

The results from the focus group research indicate that teachers throughout Central Europe came a long way in their approach to civic education in the course of the late 1990s. Despite problems finding time and support at their schools and the general lack of prestige accorded their subject, civic education teachers throughout the region seem committed to creating active citizens. Listening to both trained and control groups of teachers leaves one hopeful about the future of civic education in Central Europe.

Differences between trained teachers and control groups appeared primarily in relation to the ability of trained teachers to express themselves, discuss issues in depth, and demonstrate self-confidence about their teaching and understanding of the pedagogical process. The trained teachers typically cite more use of active and innovative methods. Trained teachers are also more likely to address express themes of constitutionalism, citizenship, and civic society, though control teachers hardly overlook such themes.

Differences between trained and control group teachers appear to be weaker in Hungary and Poland than in the Czech and Slovak Republics. It is distinctly possible that this finding reflects the fact that civic society had greater room to grow in Hungary and Poland in the late communist years.

Focus group discussions demonstrate that the Constitutionalism Centers have produced a group of alumni who are valuable assets for future development of civic education in Central Europe. They possess substantive knowledge and experience with innovative methods for teaching civic rights and responsibilities and also comprise a real community that can be an important tool for furthering knowledge and skill development among their colleagues. Future efforts should focus on ways of drawing on these alumni as important Center resources.
Discussion Guide For Focus Group Research

1. What are some of the characteristics that a good teacher of civic education should possess?

2. In your civic education courses, what proportion of time is devoted to factual and theoretical knowledge, as opposed to other elements?
   - Do you use different methods to convey other elements than in conveying facts and definitions?
   - What are other elements, besides factual knowledge and definitions, to which you devote class time?
   - How do you assess students, including assignment of grades, on their mastery of non-factual elements?
   - Is there any difference in this regard from other courses you teach?

3. Do you take your students on field trips? What are some of the field trips you have done with your students?

4. If you wanted to prepare a unit of lesson plans on “good citizenship in the local community,” what are the key concepts that you would expect your students to grasp? Where would you find materials? What kind of activities would you like to use? Please give examples.
   - In teaching such “new” subjects, have you experienced any difficulties or resistance from the principal of the school? from other teachers? from parents? from your students?
   - How did you deal with such difficulties?

5. What differences do you perceive between civic education as you now teach it and as it was taught when you were in school? Are there any similarities in purpose?

6. What roles should civic education teachers play in the classroom? in the school? outside the school?

7. What is the prestige or position of the program you teach in your school?

8. Tell me about conflicts that have occurred in your class. How did you solve these?
Scenario:
Moderator reads scenario to the group. Individuals briefly write answers at bottom of questionnaire. Discussion follows.

Imagine that you are in the midst of a class on political participation, free speech, and the right to organize political parties. One student espouses neo-Nazi or skinhead views and is joined by a small group of others. The majority of your classroom is clearly upset at such a viewpoint. Because they are the majority, and because they are more articulate, they begin to argue with, and then to humiliate, the first group. What do you do?
Focus Group Questionnaire

[Date], Group Meeting

1. What is your first name? __________________________
2. What is your age? __________________________
3. What is the name of the course in which you teach civic education? __________________________
4. How long have you taught civic education? __________________________
5. In what schools do you teach (please indicate whether state or non-state schools)? __________________________
6. In what city is your school? __________________________

7. What types of training have you had in the past? When and where did you have this training? Please rate the usefulness of each (5 = very useful; 3 = useful; 1 = not useful).

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Appendix 2.

Publications Produced by the ACLS Projects on Constitutionalism

These works were published by the five ACLS Teacher-Training Centers or by ACLS. The title of the book indicates the language in which it is written and, therefore, who is responsible for its publication. The Polish books were published by the Warsaw or Lublin Centers, as noted.

An archive of materials from the ACLS East European Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project has been established at the East European Collection of the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California. It consists of pamphlets and brochures from the Centers’ training sessions and special events, syllabi and materials distributed at sessions, and office records and correspondence.


Appendix 3.

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Appendix 4.

Standards for the “Matura” Examination

prepared by the
Center for Citizenship Education,
Warsaw, Poland

From its inception, the Center for Citizenship Education (CCE) has been discussing how to gain an enhanced status for civic and legal education, a subject often disregarded by both schools and students, and considered redundant and boring. We have implemented three strategies in order to:

- make civic education a living and attractive subject for students, strengthening the link between the material taught and the real-life and problems young people must face;
- teach instructors how to work with interactive methods which are particularly appropriate in civic education, including discussion and debate, simulation games, role playing, problem solving, team projects, case-studies—particularly team projects, which produce noticeable effects at school and within the local community;
- make civic knowledge a subject covered on final examinations.

The fact that CCE quickly became a well-known organization widely admired for its innovative approach to civic education made its contribution to the work on educational standards welcome. Work on a new examination system had been going on in Poland for several years before, designed to provide an objective process for evaluating students’ knowledge and a new approach in teaching—namely, a stronger emphasis on research skills and how to use them, how to collect and interpret information, build and check hypotheses, and express and defend one’s own opinion.
Teams of teachers lecturing on various subjects were established to develop the principles of what was known as the “new matura” soon after the Education Minister decided to introduce a profound reform of national education. As mentioned earlier in this report, the team responsible for civic education failed to draft their project, and CCE volunteered to undertake the task.

Following are the examination standards developed by the CCE team and approved by the Minister of National Education.

The final examination tests students’:

1. Knowledge of facts, concepts, and the skill of applying both in the proper context. Examination questions test whether the student has mastered knowledge in the following fields:
   - the historical and contemporary forms in which societies are organized and types of state systems
   - the citizen vis-à-vis public authorities in totalitarian, authoritarian, and democratic systems
   - the fundamental principles of democracy—the rule of law and constitutionalism, polity models in democratic states
   - values and their conflicts in public life, politics, contemporary political ideologies and doctrines
   - the rights and freedoms of the individual and the mechanisms of their protection in Poland and throughout the world
   - civic duties and virtues
   - the nation, patriotism and nationalism
   - a civil society—the participation of citizens in public life (associations, trade unions, political parties, public opinion, mass media)
   - the individual versus community in Polish society—its structure and change
• the state system of the Republic of Poland—the constitution, organs of power and their competence, public administration
• the legal system of the Republic of Poland, the principles of making and enforcing law, legal protections
• the citizen and the law—selected elements of civil, criminal, and administrative law
• local government—the community of residents, local government bodies and their tasks
• the market economy, micro- and macro-economic mechanisms, problems of the Polish economy, international economic relations
• the economy in daily life—work, business, budget, taxes, money
• European integration and Poland in Europe
• problems of the contemporary world—conflicts and security issues, inequality, migration, civilization and social unrest

2. Ability to use acquired knowledge correctly in describing and analyzing social and political realities. The examination tests whether the student can:
• select and evaluate the significance of facts
• put facts and information together and draw conclusions from them
• critically use various sources of information, including source texts
• distinguish opinions from facts
• localize important developments and public figures in time and space
• identify cause-effect relations
3. Ability to understand the problems of public life and interpret the positions of various parties in a public debate. The examination tests whether the student can:

- demonstrate a grasp of the complexity of problems in public life
- explain their historical, social, and political context
- analyze the position of various parties to a public debate, evaluating the quality of their arguments
- put into words and justify his/her own opinion on public matters
- evaluate political and social developments and processes according to various values and criteria

4. Practical civil skills useful in a democratic state of law. The examination tests whether the student can:

- express him/herself in the forms adopted in public life (e.g., speeches; discussions; petitions; letters to the editor, members of Parliament, or a local councilor)
- identify problems in a given community by defining their causes and effects
- formulate, wherever possible, practical solutions to problems
- plan individual and collective action
- understand basic legal acts—find, read, and understand the legal regulations pertaining to a given problem

The next step was to develop, in cooperation with the Central Examination Committee and the District Examination Committee in Warsaw, a syllabus of knowledge about society that would constitute a guideline for students intending to take final examinations in this subject. This publication includes both detailed knowledge that the student must absorb and sample tests.
The new exam has three parts. During the first part, students are asked to answer questions based on tables, graphs, maps, and short source texts. The second part tests their practical knowledge and civil skills, comprehension of legal acts and other documents, ability to analyze real problems of public life using a variety information sources, and skill in formulating various proposals for solving them. The final section requires a short example of civic writing on public matters (a letter to a public official, petition, or speech). The third part of the examination is the one most similar to traditional Polish examinations and consists of writing an essay on one of three topics.

Passing the matura in civic education is important for many reasons: first, because the tests measure not only knowledge of facts but also students’ level of understanding of their civic environment, with all its political, social, and economic complexities; and second, because the fact that students can choose civic education as a final examination topic has greatly enhanced the status of this subject in Polish school. We can therefore hope that teachers and students will continue to attach greater importance to the constitutional, legal, and civic problems in future.
Appendix 5a.

The Belfast Project

by Tomasz Piotr Panek

based on the “Jerusalem Project” presented at the
Active Learning and Assessment Conference
Konstancin, Poland, October 1997

Based on the demonstrations and discussions at the Konstancin conference on active learning and assessment, a project on the city of Belfast was developed. This project extended the examination of historically and culturally rooted conflicts to a European reality that contains many of the same kinds of confrontations and hopes for reconciliation as occur between Arab and Israeli people in Jerusalem. In addition, the Belfast project demonstrated that the active learning methods of the Jerusalem project could work very well for examining other histories and cultures: the current struggles of the Basque people, for example.

The project was a great success with students, encouraging them to engage in discussion and also to produce research and essays of high quality. In addition, the project gained the support and interest of teachers from a range of classes (history, social studies, Polish, English, religion, arts, geography, and computer science). In this way, the Belfast project demonstrated that the methods of active learning and assessment translate well to Polish classrooms, learners, and teachers.

Following is an overview of the Belfast project.

Aims

- to popularize the method of teaching through study projects
- to bring together a large community to work on one project
- to teach students to work for others and with others (in a group)
• to encourage students to collaborate as a class and a working team
• to draw students' attention to contemporary problems in Europe
• to make teaching and learning processes in a conservative school more engaging
• to show that learning is interdisciplinary

The project was carried out with the cooperation of teachers of history, social studies, Polish, English, religion, arts, geography, and computer science.

Participants
• main participants: class IVC
• stage one participants: classes I-IV

Project Stages
Basic principle: project stages can be updated at any time to keep pace with dynamic changes in the problem under consideration.

1. Presenting the aims of the project. Discussion on:
   • the final stage of the project
   • assessment criteria
   • the purpose of the project

2. Preparing the research portfolio
   • analysis of the gathered materials
   • assessment of the filed information

3. Constructing the calendar
   • the history of Ireland and Great Britain (from a mutual perspective)
   • the history of the Northern Ireland conflict
   • the history of the IRA and its combat
4. Analyzing the Irish-British conflict
   - finding evidence of and discussing the Irish-British conflict in poetry, fiction, drama, music, films, documentaries, governmental and other reports and analyses
   - transcribing comments and opinions and adding new information to the files
   - Preparing criteria for an objective examination of the conflict

5. Discussion, allowing for “the democracy of noticing” (e.g., the engagement of all students in creating a shared fund of observations and understanding)
   - keeping minutes
   - standardizing problems and opinions
   - trying to work out mechanisms for controlling such problems and conflicts
   - drafting a future solution to the conflict
   - attempting to use the “Belfast Solution” for Jerusalem, Bosnia, the Basque country, etc.

6. Getting to know the work of stage one participants
   - art exhibit: “Signs of Reconciliation”
   - geographic exhibit: “Ireland—the Emerald Isle”
   - brochure: “Catholics versus Anglicans”

7. Analysis and discussion of new materials
   - establishing the relation between the research portfolios on the one hand and the exhibits and brochure on the other

8. Final projects
   - “Belfast”: large-scale map
   - brochure: “A Poll on Belfast”
   - historical-political essay: “Belfast in Everyone”

9. Final presentation
   - exhibition of all work
   - discussion of the project
   - participants’ assessment of the project
Appendix 5b.

Poles and Jews in Lublin: Together Yet Separate

by Lucyna Kujawa
Carried out in XII LO in Lublin
based on the “Jerusalem Project” presented at the
Active Learning and Assessment Conference
Konstancin, Poland, October 1997

Aims

* to explore the complexity of the Polish-Jewish relationship
* to try to overcome racial prejudices and stereotypes
* to teach the history of the city
* to show that the history of the Jews may be considered the history of Poland, as well
* to show the fate of the Jews as an example of historical memory
* to use the examples of the Jews in teaching about open and closed societies
* to practice interviewing people and adapting the interviews as project material
* to foster creative expression
* to prove that learning can take place through open-ended activities and cultural events such as theater performances.

Procedures

The project was carried out by 35 volunteers from various classes, who worked on it after school. They were aided by the religious education teacher (who holds degrees in philosophy and sociology), the Polish language teacher, and myself, a historian and teacher of history. At the same time, we were working on an oral history project, which was presented by a Lublin theatre, “Teatr NN,” and a quarterly for teenagers and teachers, “Scriptores Scholarum.” All of the participants benefited from the cooperation.
The project began with work on the history of the city of Lublin, with students producing both albums and papers. However, they were also encouraged to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through less traditional forms. For instance, one of the teams created a video presentation showing Lublin sites and monuments relating to the history of Lublin Jews. Other projects included a photo album and a city map marking streets and buildings previously associated with Jews.

As a part of the oral history project, pupils interviewed elderly people (family members and acquaintances). Using a specially designed questionnaire, they asked about Lublin’s past appearance, common occupations in the past, and Jewish people these individuals used to know. Some students recorded their interviews, while others took notes. Students then prepared and analyzed transcripts of what their interviewees said.

In search of their own roots, pupils drew genealogical trees, often discovering facts previously unknown to them. They were able to study the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the history of their families. As part of the project, we watched several films including “March Almonds” by Radoslaw Piwowarski, “Schindler’s List” by Steven Spielberg, and “Cross Written in the Star of David” by Linkowski. This last film was particularly valuable for our project. It tells the story of a priest, a KUL professor, who discovered that he was a Jew while studying to become a priest at the seminary. We also attended a performance of Isaac Bashevis Singer’s *The Magician of Lublin* at the Lublin theatre.

The Jewish culture team prepared a Jewish Sabbath celebration and staged a day in the life of a Lublin Jew, based on information in the oral reports from people who remember the Lublin Jewish community.

The project afforded many opportunities for reflections. We learned a great deal about the issues under examination, and encountered many pleasant surprises arising from this kind of active learning.
Appendix 6a.

Castaways’ Island, or
How to Solve the Problem of Freedom
and Order in a State

prepared by the
Center for Citizenship Education,
Warsaw, Poland

During the instructional game “Castaways’ Island,” students explore the main dilemma of public life: how to secure order in a state and at the same time guarantee the basic rights and liberties of individual citizens. In democratic countries the solving of this dilemma is facilitated by the constitution. It is not only a solemn record of the nation’s fundamental principles, but also a document setting forth guidelines for all actions undertaken by citizens and the state. Students examine these issues by assuming the roles of legislators and citizens organizing their life on an island invented by themselves.

Objectives
After taking part in the game, students should be able to:

- articulate the conflict between the need to provide order in a state and the goal of securing freedom for its citizens;
- show how fundamental laws create mechanisms that regulate public life;
- identify cases of human rights violations in light of constitutional principles.

Didactic Aids
1. Instructions for the castaways
2. A questionnaire on living conditions and the rules in force on the island
3. Descriptions of situations that can threaten civic rights and freedoms
Teaching Suggestions

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Distribute Handout 1 (see page 104). All the groups go through Phases I, II and III of the game, as described in the handout.

2. The next stage of work is a review of the solutions accepted by the groups and an assessment of the rules in force on the islands. All groups subsequently describe their vision of life on their island, and present their lists of underlying principles. (The best way is to hang the lists side by side for all to see.) After the presentations, all participants provide individual answers to the questions on Handout 2 (page 105). We found it worth while to establish a rule requiring that students assess all islands except their own, since many tend to stubbornly defend their own ideas.

Scores can be calculated, producing an overall assessment of individual projects. Students then discuss the differences between the rules in force on particular islands and the advantages and disadvantages of the solutions devised by the groups. The teacher may stimulate the discussion by asking more specific questions, such as: On which island would you feel the safest? Where are the limits imposed on those exercising power insufficient? On which islands might the creation of an independent judiciary be predicted? Ask students to cite concrete examples in their answer: for example, “On Paradise Island I would feel the safest because there are no provisions for independent courts of justice.”.

Read out the names given to the lists of principles developed by the students, noting that those documents serve as constitutions for the given islands. Now tell students that the island inhabitants decided to amend the principles in force in their “states,” and give the teams some time to amend the existing constitutions and add any missing statements.

3. Have students imagine that on all the islands three major problems have just occurred that pose a threat to state order
and/or to the rights and freedoms of individual island inhabitants. We assume that island inhabitants want to work within the confines of their existing “constitutions.” Thus, if it can be proved that a specific activity or plan is contrary to “constitutional” regulations, the authors or the advocates of such an idea must withdraw it and make a public declaration. Students work in their existing groups and in line with the constitutions in effect on their islands. Two modes of group work are possible: each island can consider one problem and analyze it in light of the constitution of other islands, or they can examine how the three problems can be solved (or not) based upon their own constitution. The problems the island inhabitants are supposed to solve make up Handout 3 (page 106).

4. When the group work concludes, each island reports on the course of the discussion and the final result. In some cases, the teacher may have to play the role of the constitutional tribunal judge and help the teams sort out the meaning of the rules written down at the very outset of the lesson.

5. Students (working in teams or in smaller groups) determine what laws were missing in their original constitutions. This is also the time to make final modifications to other rules, enhancing their clarity and precision.

6. Conclude the lesson by pointing out how the constitution and citizens’ awareness of their legal system solve one of the major dilemmas of the public life: how to secure order in the state while at the same time guaranteeing citizens their basic rights and freedoms. Distribute Handout 4, “The Role of the Constitution in a State” (page 107), and ask students to read it before the next lesson.
Castaways: Handout 1

Instructions: You are from a group of castaways who have landed on a desert island, about 100 people who survived after the sinking of a passenger liner by a storm. You are the castaways’ representatives, selected to develop the basic rules of life on the island. Only a few items remain from the wreck (three knives, three spades, a hammer) and a small amount of food (100 kg of wheat and 100 kg of potatoes).

Phase I: Imagine the island. Assume it is located in the tropics. Share your ideas on the island’s appearance, nature, and configuration. Agree on what it looks like and give it a name. Assume that the island is far away from the main sea routes and that it is hopeless to count on a quick rescue from the outside.

Phase II: Make a decision on how to use and share the items and products rescued from the wreck. Write down what you’ve agreed upon.

Phase III: Define the principles of your common life on the island. Write those principles down on a large sheet of paper.

1. Questions to consider:
   - How are you going to make decisions concerning your life on the island: how to use the limited resources you possess, and what tasks you intend to undertake?
   - Who will hold power and in what manner?
   - What rights and responsibilities will island inhabitants have?
   - How will you prepare to deal with external threats and conflicts that may arise among you?
   - What other rules do you intend to introduce and enforce?

2. Having completed your work, check to be sure that your rules include all the (in your opinion) essential elements for the functioning of an organized society.

3. Give a name to the document you’ve developed.

4. Elect a person who will present it to the rest of the class.
Score from 0 (worse) to 5 (best) the different islands, taking into consideration the following criteria:

1. How do you assess the inhabitants' chance of survival in case of natural disaster?

2. To what extent would your private life be endangered?

3. To what extent would the rules in effect on the island protect you in case of external aggression?

4. To what extent would the organization of life on the island secure your private safety?

5. To what extent can the island's inhabitants make their own decisions concerning their life?

6. To what extent would you be free to do what you want on the island?

7. To what degree do people in positions of power come under limitations and control?
Here are the situations that the inhabitants are facing now:

1. Those wielding power have just decided that from now on, only people who join a newly created association called “The Only Right Way” can be appointed to public positions. In order to join the association, one must pay a high entry fee as well as sign a declaration of loyalty to the Chairman.

   Those who are not members of “The Only Right Way” try to prove that the decision violates the rights guaranteed by the island’s constitution.

2. The services charged with keeping order on the island are concerned about the increase in the crime rate and have just decided that those suspected of breaking the law are to be detained in prison on a year-long preventive sentence. An alleged victim or witness need only inform the authorities for a suspected criminal to be arrested. In the opinion of the security forces, quick reaction and severe penalties are the foundations of public peace and order.

   Some citizens are opposed to such a procedure and attempt to prove that it breaks the basic rights guaranteed in the constitution.

3. Men constitute 51% of the island population. In the recent election, the inhabitants decided that the women are obliged to adopt the religion and political affiliation of their husbands. Under-age girls and unmarried women have no right at all to express their views on these issues, no matter how serious.

   Women decide that such a law violates the island’s constitution and try to prove it.

Note: If opponents of the above-mentioned decisions find no discrepancies with the rules set down in the constitution, they have to respect them. They must therefore sign the loyalty declaration to the Chairman of “The Only Right Way,” allow themselves to be arrested and sentenced without a trial, or be bound by their husband’s political declarations.
The Role of the Constitution in a State

Constitutions and Constitutionalism

A constitution is a set of the fundamental laws in effect in a state. This means that all other regulations, such as acts of parliament or government decrees, must be in accordance with it. The constitution defines the political system of a state; establishes the purview of the most important organs of legislative, executive, and judiciary power; defines the relationships among them; and contains the code establishing citizens’ rights and responsibilities. In democratic systems, creators of the constitution seek to balance government efficiency with the need to protect citizens’ rights and freedoms. They must therefore decide how much power be granted to particular institutions (parliament, regional, government, the president, etc.) so that they may operate efficiently yet not threaten civic rights and freedoms. The principle according to which the aim of the constitution is to limit the government’s power so that such rights and freedoms will not be endangered is called constitutionalism.

Since a constitution is the document on which government operations are based, it is important that it be trusted and respected by people and that the regulations it contains be (in theory) permanent. Where a political system is stable, constitutions do not require frequent major changes. For example, the United States Constitution came into being in 1787: it was the first in the world and remains in effect. Over the years however, several subsequent “amendments” proved to be necessary, though they still constitute only two percent of the total contents of the constitution. The supreme importance of a constitution is guaranteed by the mechanism set in place for changing it. Most often, constitutional provisions are amended by parliamentary vote (via a two-thirds majority or some other established threshold) that is in turn ratified by the people in a referendum. This procedure ensures that the most important political issues (human rights and the division of power) be protected against unlimited tampering by the current majority. This principle is regarded as the foundation of a modern constitutional system.
Polish Constitutions

The history of our country has seen several past constitutions. The first one, known as the Constitution of May 3rd, was ratified in 1791 and was the second in the world after the American Constitution. However, the partitioning of Poland meant that the constitution was never implemented. After Poland regained independence in 1919, the Seym accepted the so-called “Small Constitution” that contained only resolutions concerning the purviews and relations between the most important organs of power in the state; it did not define civic rights and freedoms. The adoption of the “Small Constitution” resulted from the need to define the fundamental principles indispensable for the operation of the state, which was facing violent political changes (the regaining of independence and building of a political system based on democratic principles). The parliament had no time to design a constitution containing all necessary decisions. It was not until 1921 that a proper Constitution of the Republic of Poland was accepted, known as the March Constitution. It provided a wide scope of civic rights, building on the most important documents in the Polish democratic tradition. After Jozef Pilsudski took power, the political camp connected with him attempted to strengthen executive power. As a result, in 1935 the “April Constitution” was adopted, giving greater powers to the President at the expense of the Parliament. After World War II, the Communists came to power in Poland, in defiance of democratic precedents. Its leaders planned to carry out a radical change of the Polish political system, mimicking the totalitarian solutions adopted in the USSR. The principles of the new system were initially defined in the “Small Constitution” of 1947, then in the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic in 1952. Since the “round table” agreements concluded in 1989, a democratic system has been gradually restored in our country. So far, the Parliament has not ratified a new constitution reflecting the many changes undergone and reflecting the principles typical of a modern constitutional democracy. Instead, a great many amendments have been made to the 1952 Constitution. In 1992, the latest “Small Constitution” in our history was adopted, defining interrelationships between the Parliament, the President, and other government officials. At present (spring 1995), the Constitutional Commission of the National Assembly is developing a new draft of the Constitution, which then will be the subject of a nationwide constitutional referendum and a vote in Parliament.
The Constitutional Tribunal

Historic experience shows that constitutional regulations genuinely influence the state’s operation and gain citizens’ trust when there is a system ensuring their enforcement. In Poland, such a system was not introduced until 1985, when the Constitutional Tribunal was created. Its primary responsibility is to determine the constitutionality of parliamentary acts and other government regulations.

If there is any doubt whether some law regulation, act, or decree is consistent with the Constitution, it can be brought before the Constitutional Tribunal. In order for this to happen, an application must be made to an organ authorized to submit a constitutional complaint. Those include the President, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, a group of 30 senators, 50 members of Parliament, the Seym and the Senate Commissions, the State Tribunal, and the Ombudsman. The Constitutional Tribunal considers the complaint and determines whether or not a given act is consistent with the Constitution. If it decides that the act in question is contrary to the principles expressed in the Constitution, it then sends the act to the parliament. To accept the findings submitted by the judges of the Constitutional Tribunal—that is, to change or render the act null and void—the approval of half of the current members of Parliament is needed. Parliament can reject the findings of the Tribunal by a two-thirds vote. If the Parliament declines to consider the Constitutional Tribunal’s sentence, it is thereby made null and void. The Constitutional Tribunal’s decisions concerning laws other than parliamentary acts are final, meaning that the government body that issued the unconstitutional act is obliged to change it within three months. If it fails to do so, the act in question becomes null and void.

An essential weakness of the Polish system for guaranteeing constitutional rights (in comparison with the American system) lies in the fact that the Constitutional Tribunal’s decisions concerning parliamentary acts are not final and must also be considered by the Seym. Current drafts of the new Polish Constitution modify or at least soften that principle. Furthermore, in the Polish system there is no provision for individual citizens to lodge a complaint to the Tribunal. They must use various institutions as intermediaries (parliamentary commissions, trade unions, etc.), and if the issue concerns violation of the rights and freedoms contained in the Constitution, they must first seek the intervention of the Ombudsman.
The Ombudsman

It may sometimes happen that it is not the parliamentary act itself but the ensuring conditions that violate the constitution. The Ombudsman addresses this kind of rights violation. He first of all safeguards the civil rights and responsibilities established in the constitution. The Ombudsman (as opposed to the Constitutional Tribunal) can be petitioned directly by some authorized intermediary body. The Ombudsman determines whether or not the request deserves intervention, and either may handle the issue himself or instruct some other body to address it; he may also limit himself to pointing out to the petitioner the measures he is entitled to take. If the Ombudsman determines a law has been broken, he issues an opinion suggesting how to deal with the matter. The Ombudsman may also move to punish the guilty party, by applying administrative sanctions, for example.
Appendix 6b.

RU-FA-RU-FA

prepared by the
Foundation Citizen and Democracy,
Bratislava, Slovakia

Goals: To make participants aware of the differences among cultures and subcultures, their influence on mutual relations and understanding, the cultural determinants of behavior, and the rise of prejudice.

The Game (based on a personal visit by Hogeschool de Horst, Holland, 1990): Participants divide themselves into two groups, the RU group and the FA group, representing two different cultures. The situation is as follows: both groups discover that not far away there lives a completely unknown group of people, whose language, habits, norms, values, relations, and social structure are unknown to them.

Instructions: Both the RU culture and the FA culture attempt to discover as much as possible about their new neighbors. Emissaries visit each other for a few minutes at a time; the visits are then followed by an analysis of the other culture. Several visits are undertaken. At the end, each group makes a list of the characteristics of the other culture (structures, communication, values, etc.)

The characteristics of the RU culture:
- rationality
- democratic structure
- dominant values: business and property
non-verbal communication alone, whose goal is the exchange of goods
societal status based on accumulation of property alone

The characteristics of the FA culture:
- emphasis on emotions
- a hierarchical structure with a strong leader
- men are allowed to speak to women, but women may not address men
- no one is allowed to address the leader
- property has no value

Both cultures make use of little cards:
- in the FA culture only two cards have real meaning: Taboo and Excommunication (punishment)
- in the RU culture the cards represent goods
- similar cards in both cultures symbolize precious metals and jewels, but in the FA culture they have no value and are simply decorative

Discussion topics:
- analysis of communicative shortcuts (jumping to conclusions)
- misunderstandings
- misinterpretations
- prejudices
- general attitudes toward the other culture
For many of you, simulations, games, and class projects are not new. I am sure you have used them as part of the civics education projects you have been conducting or in other extracurricular activities. However, making use of such activities as part of a regular classroom lesson may be something you have tried for the first time this year. When you incorporate “after-school” activities into the classroom, you may have found yourself faced with a new challenge. If these experiences were to be “worth” class time, then you had to be sure students were actually learning something from them. This may have raised some doubts in your mind. In Prague you were much too polite to say so, but I am sure in the back of your mind was the thought that even though simulations and projects are fun and interesting for students, they are still optional. They don’t teach the basics. They don’t teach the content that students must somehow learn. You may also have been thinking that, even if students are learning something in these kinds of projects and activities, assessing exactly what they are learning would be so subjective that it would be impossible, or at least unfair, to grade it. Some of you asked if it was even a good idea to assess students on how they performed in these kinds of activities because it might inhibit them from taking risks or from trying new things.
Just to see whether my intuitions about this are accurate, let me ask some rhetorical questions—questions of the kind you might have wanted to ask last February in Prague.

• *My students had a great time when we did the projects. If we did simulations in class, I'm sure they would like them, too. But these things take too much time just to learn about one topic. Is it worth it?*

Students can learn important things when they do activities like these. Not only are they learning the information they need to complete the project or participate in the simulation (and having fun while they are at it!), but they are learning other things that can only come from doing. They are learning how to use what they are learning.

When we examine students on the information we give them from lectures or from books, we find out what they know, but we do not find out if they can use what they know when we are not around. Will they be able to recognize the most significant facts when they try to understand a different period in history, or try to solve problems in the present? Will they use good judgement when they listen to a debate in which two people are using the same information to draw completely different conclusions? Will they be able to communicate their ideas in different ways and to different audiences? These are examples of things students can learn from doing simulations, projects, or any other activity that requires that they use what they know in a new situation.

Obviously, most of us have eventually learned to use what we know in new situations. We learned when we tried. We learned by trial and error. However, when we make our classrooms a place to try things, it gives us an opportunity to coach our students. We are teaching students to:

• make informed decisions;
• offer reasonable solutions to social and civic problems;
• acquire, synthesize, and communicate useful information and ideas.
Right. I know these things are important. In fact, I help my students with these kinds of skills every chance I get. It is part of how I work with them. But how can progress on these skills ever count as part of a grade? It is all so subjective. It wouldn’t be fair.

Excellent question. Being fair is essential to any kind of grading or assessment. Assessment of student skills can be fair and, even more important, it can focus on improvement.

Focus on improvement: Assessments of student performance should be based on an analysis of the skills, concepts and knowledge that the student must have to use knowledge successfully. When students know from the beginning exactly what constitutes good work (examples are a very good way of conveying this), they know what their goal is and how far they have to go to get there. Unlike an assessment in which students either have the right answer or they don’t (and how they got it or didn’t get it might be a mystery), students have a clear sense of standards, of what it means to say, “I have learned this.”

Fairness: Assessing student performance in this way is fair because students know from the beginning what it will look like when they have it right—like the soccer player who knows what a good corner kick looks like before he even attempts one. The assessment of performance can also be consistent (if not objective) when teachers in a school take time to agree on what their standards are before they go off on their own to grade their students. Based on looking at many, many examples together, it is possible to agree on what is excellent, average, or unsatisfactory work. In many respects this is no different than what judges in athletic events, essay contests, or driving tests do.

Should we be assessing students on such things? Isn’t it better to coach them—to encourage them to take risks without having to fear that they will get a bad grade?

I believe that there are two advantages to assessing these kinds of student performances. First, no matter what we might say to the contrary, students know that the work they do that is formally
assessed is the work that “counts.” It is what is important; it is the point of the instruction. If we really believe that the skills students exhibit in performances such as debates or mock elections are at least as important as the content we teach them, then we have to assess these performances with the same degree of seriousness that we give to essays and exams. Second, good assessments are a part of good instruction, and not an end in themselves. Assessments that are based on criteria that students recognize and accept as the basis for guiding and measuring improvement are, in and of themselves, lessons about excellence.
The following remarks on the role of the teacher were delivered by Jan Sokol, project advisor from Prague, to welcome participants to the annual meeting of the ACLS Constitutionalism Teacher-Training Project, December 1996, in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Mr. President, Dear Colleagues:

We come together this evening to celebrate an unusual—one might even say, post-modern—event: teachers gathering in a pub, and by invitation of an august Council of Learned Societies at that! As you see, times are changing—and the role of teachers is changing as well.

I cannot imagine a better way to clarify the teacher’s role, the teacher’s position in the larger society or community, and to sum up the teacher’s functions, than to take a short glance at the history of this age-old profession.

The Greek paidagogos used to be a slave: a slave who took care of the citizen’s children, very much like a village shepherd in Central Europe who, until very recently, was expected to take care of his lord’s cattle. The teacher’s task was to watch over children, to prevent them from breaking the glass out of windows (or whatever was the favorite crime of small Greeks), and to bring them back home in the evening in good health. In the course of time, this basic function of the teacher fell into oblivion, and I think it is important to remind ourselves of it in the present day, because it leads to an obvious corollary: home chores, home work, if necessary, ought to be seen as work for the children, not for their parents, who reasonably expect to be freed to some degree at least of the duties of child care.

If the old paidagogos was to deal with the children effectively, he was forced to find some reasonable and attractive occupation for them throughout the day. Thus he was the man who collected and created stories and narrations—mythoi and historiai—to cultivate this sort of literature and, out of sheer necessity, to
teach his children the basic cultural contents and traditions of their communities.

The role of the teacher grew in importance under the influence of the Jewish and Christian religion: both of them started to see children as tiny men and women, instead of looking at them as barnyard fowl, as was the case with ancient Greeks and Romans. These religions stressed the content of education, the Teaching, which obtained a heretofore unheard-of importance. The Christian conviction that every man, woman, and child has his or her own unique soul, created by God Himself in His image, whose care was the individual’s greatest task and own special responsibility, gave a much more palpable shape to the Platonic “care of the soul.” It extended the need for education to every member of society and made teaching one of the most important functions in the community.

This Christian view of everyman as a self-responsible person was further developed during the sixteenth-century Reformation, which extended this individual responsibility to the profane life as well. According to the reforming theologians, every Christian had to become literate to be able to read the Holy Scriptures for him- or herself, which was seen as a precondition to being a “real” Christian. Thus, the art of reading and writing, originally an extremely rare ability limited to a handful of the highest priests, became a part of the minimum cultural expectations of western civilization.

Another mighty push came from the absolutist enlightenment states, which began to govern by laws and decrees that they expected would be read and internalized by every single subject and citizen—just as, in a similar way, the Word of God had been before. The bureaucratic needs of these states led to introduction of other esoteric skills such as math. Finally, the impact of the sciences during the nineteenth century rounded out the school “curriculum” to its present shape and extent. To his great dismay, the teacher felt pressure to become a scholar, as well, and education, though using the name (“pedagogy”) of the Greek children-pasturing slave, rose to the level of a science.
This ever-increasing emphasis on the content of education, on the bulk of positive knowledge and socially useful skills, overshadowed the more elementary roles of education in modern western-type societies to such a degree that a certain redefinition of the teacher seems necessary today. Let us keep in mind the first two basic tasks of the teacher, the familiar and the social one: to take care of the children and to help them develop into valuable members of their respective communities and societies.

Modern societies are based on the assumption of a free individual, of a free and freedom-loving citizen—a jo polgar, as our Hungarian colleagues so pertinently call him. Thus, education in modern societies is to be an education of jo polgarok. All the particular knowledges and skills, as useful as they might be, are to be placed into the general framework of education to freedom, for citizenship. Their relative importance in the curriculum is to be measured according to the following two needs:

1. their necessity for the formation of a good citizen; and

2. the fact that some important abilities can be best learned in early childhood, e.g. foreign languages.

But only the fact that we as teachers must assist children in their growing and maturing to become responsible citizens can justify our being paid by the state out of taxpayers' money. It lies to a large extent in our hands whether we can hope for a good future for our societies. Whether we as teachers shall be able to educate generations of jo polgarok, of freedom-loving citizens, able to take over the heavy responsibility for this unhappy and beloved world of ours. Whether we shall be able to awake in them a true love of some “Common Good,” if you will allow me to use this old-fashioned Platonic notion.

For a philosopher, of course, the Common Good is a great temptation to launch into a long and probably boring lecture. And given the inappropriateness of a pub for lectures, I would like to confine myself to the following two urgent remarks.

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It is of extreme importance to remind ourselves and our students (as future teachers) what constitutes our and their ultimate task: education of citizens, education for freedom. Even if we made an odd bunch of scholars, we are working with people, with their souls. We cannot help but educate them according to some values, good or bad, if only by presenting our personal example, our human persons, to other human persons. Our work can never be “value-free,” as some thinkers would have us believe.

This emphasis on the goal of education as education to freedom cannot mean that children at school should simply be let loose to do whatever they want, that they should be spared of any duty or pressure. Just as you cannot start teaching children to write by giving them a piece of paper and asking them to write a poem, you cannot educate for freedom by simply setting them free. Civic freedom is a difficult and tricky task.

To finish, let me illustrate this with a small story. Once in northern Germany, I witnessed a kindergarten class coming into a public park. The lady teacher sat down on a folding seat and started to knit. The children ran around on the lawn. After a while a small boy came to the teacher and asked in a sad voice: “Do we have to do whatever we want again today?”

—Jan Sokol
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