



Distance Learning in the Training of Teachers about Violence and Conflict Management in Schools: the Case of VGCE in the University of Coimbra

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Abstract

The growing conscientiousness of teachers and other education professionals about the dramatic effects of indiscipline and violent conflicts in schools has fostered their will to learn how to deal with these kinds of problems, in order to enhance the quality of life of all actors involved in school context and to help the pupils to become better learners and citizens. Using blended learning strategies, supported by the moodle platform, the Project ED.UC from the University of Coimbra is now training public schools teachers, many of them with direction responsibilities in their schools, in the problematic of violence and conflict management in schools, being this course financially supported by the Portuguese Government. Based on a comprehensive and systemic approach about the phenomena of indiscipline and violence, this course of ninety hours is divided in three main modules that take place continuously across three months, and offer several activities of collaborative work, like discussion forums. To complete the course teachers are asked to conceive an intervention project suitable to their schools. The several learning resources available to teachers and the different activities that are required to them are all organized to foster a deep reflection about the causes of conflicts in schools, about the importance of developing a cohesive and cooperative environment, within and outside classes, and about the benefits of conflicts prevention as an essential component of global school project. Schools will become better places if teachers develop their personal and pedagogic competencies to work effectively in conflicts prevention and management, helping new generations to build a peaceful society.