

## **World Federation of Associations for Teacher Education (WFATE)**

### **Fourth Biennial International Conference**

#### **Innovation in Teacher Education within a Global Context**

Barcelona, 21st-23rd April 2016

### **Barcelona Declaration on The Teaching of Social Sciences**

We affirm both the social and educational value of the knowledge of social sciences (history, geography, art, anthropology...) and believe that innovation and educational research in these disciplines should be enhanced. In this sense, it must be pointed out that, at the beginning of the 21st century, social sciences are multidimensional disciplines that are becoming true sciences which deal with the human complexity. For these reasons, and considering the growing trend to minimize and even abolish the teaching of these disciplines, we insist that social sciences should be an important part of the general education curriculum from the beginning of primary education right up to third level education. We therefore state that:

1. We are firmly convinced that teachers and learners should not perceive social sciences and their didactics as final and immutable truths, or as a set of data and assessments to be learned by heart or believed in. It is essential that the social sciences with all their internal methodological consistency be taught in such a way make their structure as scientific knowledge of past and present more accessible.
2. In this sense, we believe that social sciences, as scientific disciplines in constant evolution, contribute knowledge with a huge training and educational power and a great capacity for global interpretation and the integration of human societies.

3. We also know that social sciences foster a large number of intellectual abilities through their methodologies and didactics and can become tools to acquire basic life skills and to develop a participative and critical citizenship.
4. We declare that social sciences must be taught as fields of knowledge that, far from aiming to manipulate human beings, have the goal of understanding him/her and therefore, promoting his/her personal development.
5. We also consider that these disciplines are an irreplaceable way to learn how to carry out social analysis both of the past and the present in a broad sense, as they integrate many epistemological dimensions, making it possible for them to structure the human mind rigorously.
6. We are also convinced that the social sciences structure scientific knowledge of high critical capacity, which is an important step in providing answers to the various challenges faced by men and women today due to obscurantism and ignorance. In this respect, we believe that social sciences must not be – as is so often the case – a tool manipulated by political and media powers responding to the demands of the moment.
7. We demand a scientific debate that strengthens innovation and the research of new didactic methods, an essential path to bring social sciences closer to citizens in general and to students of all ages in particular.
8. We are aware that social sciences cannot anticipate the future of our societies, but we affirm that the present will always be easier to understand through the knowledge of the past and with the methodological tools provided by social sciences.
9. In our opinion, the educational involvement of cultural and research facilities with social responsibility (libraries, archives, museums, monuments, heritage interpretation centres, history and natural parks...) is essential in a knowledge society.
10. Finally, we request the whole educational community, the academic world and authorities to update the scientific contents of the Social Sciences curriculum, as well as to progressively incorporate research

advances in the field both of these subjects and didactics in the school curriculum.

In any case, we are convinced that no discipline fully achieves its objectives without an ethical dimension.

We wish to assert that without the methodological and conceptual tools provided by social sciences it is not possible, in our present world, to educate citizens who are capable of using their own judgment, and of understanding their own identity critically and setting it in the context of a global world.

Barcelona, 22nd April 2016

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**Group 15.** Members: Joaquim Prats (UB), Joan Santacana (UB), Alain Blomart (URLL), Margarida Llevadot (URLL), Nayra Llonch (UDL), Concha Fuentes (UB), Pilar Reverté (CESIRE), Carolina Martín (UB).