



*The development of active
citizenship
On the basis of informal learning at
school*

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***INFCIV
PROJECT***

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

AT SCHOOL

Italian Report

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1. A conceptual snapshot: from civic education to civil coexistence

If we take into consideration the years after the second world war, that is the period of the present Italian Republic, in Italy the concept of citizenship in education regarded only the reference to the fundamental rights and duties of individuals and citizens.

Pupils from primary to upper secondary schools were entitled to study a subject connected to the study of history, that is “civic education”.

Only in 2000 we can see for the first time a new term “civil coexistence” in a law that was not applied owing to political reasons. Nevertheless the new school reform law in 2003 and the subsequent PECUP - educational, cultural and professional profile of the first education cycle (ages 6-14) – make use of this new term applied to all school levels.

In these normative documents the concept of civil coexistence is the synthesis of the six “educations”: the citizenship education, the environmental education, the traffic education, the health education, the food and eating education, the education to affectivity. In this perspective every single teaching has to produce a real civil coexistence.

This new educational vision, in a certain sense, collects the heritage of civic education, of the education to legality, the education to human rights, to interculture, to peace, to Europe, to the world.

2. The most important recent norms related to citizenship education

1948 - The Constitution of the Italian Republic

1974 – The participation of families, teachers, non teaching staff and students at local and school level (Presidential decrees n. 416 -418-419-420)

1977 - The programmes of civic education in lower secondary schools (Law n. 348)

1985 – The new programmes of primary schools (Decree n. 104)

1996 – The programmes of civic education in upper secondary schools (Decree n. 58)

1998 – The Students’ Statute (Presidential decree n. 249)

2003 - The global school reform (Law n.53)

2004 – The implementation of the reform in primary and lower secondary schools (Decree n. 59)

2005 – The guidelines for the reform of upper secondary education (Decree n. 5 – not yet applied)

3. The concept of ‘responsible citizenship’

As regards the meaning of ‘responsible citizenship’ in Italy it is necessary to refer to the programmes. The laws that have been implemented in the education system always make specific reference to the fundamental rights and duties of individuals and citizens, which are upheld by the constitution in Articles 2 and 3 quoted below.

Art. 2: ‘The republic recognises and guarantees the inviolable rights of man as an individual and as part of the social context which develops his personality, and requires the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of political, economic and social solidarity.’

Art. 3: 'All citizens have the same social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions and personal and social conditions.'

4. Citizenship education and the school curricula up to 2003/04 school year

In order to better understand the peculiarity of the Italian education system we have to consider the situation before and after the global school reform of 2003 (except for the upper secondary schools not yet applied).

The education of citizens has always been considered a cross-curricular aim of the Italian school system and is the result of curricular, cross-curricular and extracurricular activities, particularly in primary and lower secondary schools.

Primary school programmes

At primary level, the subject of social studies and knowledge of social life was taught alongside history, but with a cross-curricular emphasis. As a result, some pupils acquired an initial understanding of political and institutional aspects of Italian society so that they could contribute actively to social, political and economic life.

Lower secondary school programmes

The subject known as civic education was coupled with history and taught by the same teacher, the teacher of humanities, but still with a cross-curricular emphasis, in order to provide pupils with an insight into the basic rules of social life. The fundamental text was the Italian constitution. In particular, pupils learnt about constitutional principles and the role of the most important institutions and the most relevant aspects of their European and international dimensions. Teachers covered topics related to family life, local communities, the organisation of justice, the tax system, and the organisation and preservation of the labour system, as well as terms associated with traffic, health and international cooperation.

5. Citizenship education and the school curricula with effect from 2004/05 school year

Primary and Lower secondary school programmes

In the new programmes for primary and lower secondary school, education for civil coexistence is being provided with effect from 2004/05. In the national indications for personalised study plans, education for civil coexistence, although identifiable as a subject in its own right, spans all other subjects in the curriculum and leads back to them.

It comprises another six topics, namely education for citizenship, traffic, the environment, health, food and eating and relationships, for which precise learning objectives are specified.

The Raccomandazioni per l'attuazione delle Indicazioni Nazionali per i 'Piani di studio personalizzati' nella scuola primaria (recommendations for implementing national indications for 'personalised study plans' in primary school) state that 'this new term seems to say much more than the traditional, but still important terms "education for citizenship" and "civic education". It seems to be more concerned with education for citizenship, because in the multicultural and multi-religious society that surrounds us, "civil coexistence" is indispensable not just for those who have citizenship and exercise it, but also for those who do not have it and do not enjoy political rights. Such people often have to make an effort to secure even the minimum conditions for exercise of the most elementary human rights'.

As yet, the amount of time set aside for these activities has not been specified. Neither is it clear which teachers should be involved in them or how they should be organised. In this respect, the role and responsibilities of individual schools will be very important, as they are free to act as they wish regarding such matters.

Upper secondary education programmes

At upper secondary level, civic education is taught as a separate subject linked together with history for at least two hours a month. In fact, Art. 1 of the Ministerial Directive No. 58/1996 stipulates that 'the real objectives of civic education are on the one hand pursued by the complete didactic and educative activities which concern teaching, extracurricular activities and the various aspects of scholastic life, which are subject to flexible procedures and the autonomy of the individual schools...'

The intention is that it should 'satisfy the requirement for mutual collaboration between school and life'.

6. Primary and lower secondary school programmes with effect from the 2004/05 school year

The aim is that pupils should transform the following knowledge and abilities into personal skills:

• In the case of primary school:

the concept of citizenship and various kinds of citizenship; the main forms of government; the symbols of national identity (the flag, the national anthem, institutions, etc.) and of local and regional identities; the main fundamentals of the constitution; certain articles from the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Rights of Childhood; the function of regulations and law in the various areas of daily life; the concepts of right/duty, responsible freedom, identity, peace, human development, cooperation and subsidiary; services offered by the regional authorities; international, governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) supporting peace and the rights and duties of peoples; the nature and work of local administrative authorities; investigating ideas expressed from viewpoints different from one's own; expressing one's own point of view and personal requirements in correct and well argued form; behaving independently with self-control and self-confidence; interacting with familiar people and strangers for different purposes; accepting, respecting and helping others, including those 'different from oneself', and understanding the reasons for their different behaviour; preparing and writing class regulations; carrying out group activities (sports, music, etc.) to

promote understanding of and interaction between different cultures and forms of experience; analysing regulations and principles (of a game, an institution, etc.), and enacting any procedures needed to modify them; making correct and constructive use of local services (libraries, public spaces, etc.); identifying situations of peace/war, development/regression, cooperation/individualism, and respect for and violations of human rights; and becoming personally involved in solidarity initiatives.

• In the case of lower secondary school:

the role of standards and rules; the constitution and its principles; the organisation of the Italian Republic; conceptual distinctions between republic, state, region, province, metropolitan city and commune; the 'centre/periphery' relationship in the government and the management of social, educational, economic and cultural activities; consideration of how, why and when the state has intervened in the sectors of social life and the economy in the course of national history; the value of the autonomous regional and local authorities, academic institutions and the social forms of civil society; the principle of subsidiary, sufficiency and differentiation in services; 'e-government' and management of public organisations; the relationship between school and regional and local authorities; the political and economic organisation of the EU; the single currency; the EU Charter of Rights and the European constitution; the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; UNESCO, the International Court of Justice, NATO, Amnesty International and the Red Cross; worker and labour market statutes; the Italian school system; the causes of imbalances on our planet in the north, south, east and west; dialogue between different cultures and sensitivities; comparisons between the organisation of the Italian Republic and that of EU countries whose languages are studied at school; analysis of the organisation of the republic and the functions of various institutions through the press and mass media; recognition of the historical roots and geographical reference contexts of regional, provincial and communal emblems; organising a children's communal council; a comparison of the effectiveness of communication through a diagram of websites and other communication resources used by institutions; analysing the language of different institutions to evaluate their effectiveness in communicating with their audience; using IT to request certificates, declarations and services; organising real or virtual guided visits to commune offices to resolve problems or use services; identifying initiatives that originate from the relationship between school and regional and local authorities; reconstructing the stages of European unification and the process of European government; reading newspapers and following the mass media; recognising the activities, role and history of world and international organisations, political and military alliances, and international humanitarian associations; identifying significant elements of 'professional consciousness' in various working sectors; preparing for the choice of the vocational pre-course in the second study cycle, with due regard for regional provision and one's own inclinations; and identifying, analysing, visualising and displaying existing relations between globalisation, migratory flows and identity problems.

Within the end of the lower secondary school, the school has provided to the student these educational activities.

Education to citizenship

- *The function of laws and rules.*
- *The Italian Constitution and its principles.*
- *The organization of the Italian Republic.*
- *The amendments to the Constitutional Act of 1948 by the Constitutional Law of 2001.*
- *Conceptual differences between Republic, State, Region, Province, Metropolitan Town, Municipality.*
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- *The governance and management of social, educational, economic and cultural activities.*
- *When, how and why, along the national history, the State has intervened in the different spheres of the social and economic life.*
- *The value of autonomy of local Bodies, of schools and of social associations in our society.*
- *The principles of subsidiary fairness and diversification in providing public services.*
- *E-government and management of public organizations.*
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- *Relationships between schools and local Bodies.*
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- *Political and economic organization of EU.*
- *The European currency.*
- *Bill of rights of the EU and European Constitution.*
- *The Declaration of the Rights of Man*
- *United Nations Organization.*
- *UNESCO, International Court of Justice of The Hague*
- *NATO*
- *Amnesty International, Red Cross*
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- *Workers' Statute of rights.*
- *The organization of the labour market.*
- *The Italian school system between education and personal development.*
- *Comparing the organization of the Italian Republic with the one of the EU country, whose language students are studying.*
- *Analysing, through newspapers and mass media, the organization of the Italian Republic and the function of its Institutions.*
- *Recognizing the historical origin and the geographical contexts of Regional, Provincial and Municipal coat of arms.*
- *Recognizing in a concrete context the public Institution that has promoted some activities or enterprises.*
- *Organizing a municipal council of young boys.*
- *Comparing the effectiveness of communication through the graphics of the web sites and of the other instruments that public Institutions make use of.*
- *Analysing the language of different public Institutions to evaluate its effectiveness for users.*
- *Making use of ICT to request a certificate, a declaration etc.*
- *Organizing visits, real or virtual ones, to municipal Offices to solve a problem or to make use of public services.*
- *Identifying the enterprises that arouse from the relationship between schools and local Bodies.*
- *Reconstructing the main stages in unification of EU and the ways the EU is ruled.*
- *Recognizing, through the news of newspapers, magazines and mass media, the activities, role and history of:*
 - *international organizations,*
 - *political and military alliances,*
 - *international associations with humanitarian*
 - *aims.*
- *Identifying the most significant features of the "professional consciousness" in different sections of the labour market.*
- *Preparing for the choice of the upper secondary school by being aware of one's own bents and of what the local area can offer.*

- *Factors that bring about the political and economic gap between North-South and West- East.*
- *The dialogue between different cultures.*
- *Identifying, analysing, visualizing and stating the links between globalisation, flows of immigrant people and problems of cultural and social identity.*

7. Upper secondary school present programmes

Topics to be covered

• In the first two years:

rights and duties in social life; the sense of moral responsibility as a foundation for fulfilling the rights of the citizen; general and individual interests; collective needs; public services; social solidarity in its various forms; work – its organisation and protection; outline of the organisation of the Italian state; political representation and elections; and the state and the citizen.

• In the next three years:

the historical framework and principles inspiring the constitution of the Italian Republic; rights and duties of the individual and the citizen; freedom – its guarantees and limits; social solidarity in the modern state, and social problems with reference to their historical development; labour and its organisation; the family; independent bodies; the organisation of the Italian state; constitutional instruments and in particular the drafting and implementation of laws; and international and supranational bodies for cooperation between peoples.

8. Students' competences at primary and lower secondary level

Another significant document linked to Implementation Decree No. 59/2004, together with national indications for personalised study plans (pre-primary, primary and lower secondary level), is the Profilo Educativo, Culturale e Professionale del Primo Ciclo di Istruzione (6-14 anni) – PECUP (educational, cultural and professional profile of the first education cycle (ages 6-14) – PECUP).

This represents what '14-year-olds should know and do in order to be the people and citizens that they should be at the end of the first stage of education'. The document describes the process of developing a personal identity and the capacity to relate to others, and also describes the cultural resources that should be acquired by the age of 14. The final paragraph entitled 'civil coexistence' states that, thanks to this growing maturity and the acquisition of cultural competencies, young people are aware of their own rights and duties in the qualitative development of civil coexistence. Together with the development of skills concerned with the sphere of individual well-being (personal care, physical well-being, the acquisition of good dietary habits, etc.), the competencies are more directly linked to the civic sphere.

It is stated that young people should be thoroughly familiar with the 'constitutional and administrative organisation of our country, as well as the essential elements of the community and international arrangements and their functions'. They should think Citizenship Education at School in Europe about 'their own duties and rights as citizens,

transforming the present reality of the daily workbench on which they exercise their own processes of representation, delegation, and respect for the commitments of a group of people sharing common rules of living together'. They must behave so as to respect others, and understand the importance of recognising set codes and regulations. Finally, they must respect the environment, preserve it and try to improve it, remembering that it is the heritage of everyone.

"At the end of lower secondary education the young boy, thanks to the progress of his own personal development and of his cultural skills, is aware of being entitled to rights, but also of being subject to duties if he wants to foster the progress and quality of the human society.

According to this view, he faces with responsibility and autonomy the every day problems concerning the care of his person at home, at school and in the wider social community.

He knows the constitutional and administrative organization of our Country and the main features of the international system and of the EU political order.

He reflects on his own rights and duties as a citizen. He considers the concrete context where he lives as a test-bed for practising his own ways of representation and delegation and for meeting his obligations within a group of people that share common rules of the professional, social and political life.

As a 14 years old boy, he knows the reasons and ways of life aimed at preventing the troubles that show as a physical, psychic, intellectual and relational lack of harmony. At the same time he is engaged to behave so that he can promote for himself and other people a physical welfare strictly linked with the psychological, moral and social one.

He is aware that he must follow a diet according to principles that are respectful of physiologic needs and not according to the suggestions of consumerism and market. He knows the risks connected with disorderly ways of life (use of "additional" foods to the normal diet; use/abuse of alcohol, smoke and drugs; lack of balance between sleep and waking) and tries responsibly to avoid them

His behaviour at school (school journeys included), on the road, in the open air, on the public means of transport, is respectful of other people. He attaches importance to codes and rules and shares the reasons of the rights, prohibitions and permissions they express.

He takes care of the environment, keeps it in good condition and tries to make it better as he is aware it's a common heritage. His behaviour is aimed at protecting safety for himself and other people in normal and exceptional conditions of danger" (translation from the PECUP)

9. Students' participation in upper secondary school

In addition to the various school programmes, education for democratic coexistence and thus for citizenship is also provided by giving students a chance to participate in some fundamental decisions that concern them.

The delegated decrees of 1974 provide for participation by students in upper secondary schools and by parents in school bodies with mixed representation, the class council or school council. The latter is responsible for approving the educational plan of the school. Students in lower secondary school are excluded from these forms of participation, even though partial forms of student representation have been adopted in many schools and class representatives are elected in many lower secondary schools.

It is generally felt that these kinds of participation have been basically insufficient, both for students and teachers.

This also applies to the overall 'atmosphere' of schools, in which the declared aims of training for democracy and the organisational, educational, interpersonal and cultural conditions in which they are pursued are not consistent.

The Statuto degli studenti e delle studentesse (Students' Statute), also called the Statuto dei diritti e dei doveri degli studenti (Statute of the rights and duties of students), came into force in the 1998/99 school year (D. P. R. No. 249/1998) with strong student support. It

was the outcome of a long struggle which involved all school sectors and especially students through their associations, institutional forms of representation and numerous contributions from institutional assemblies.

The statute forms part of the process by which schools acquire autonomy. It both dictates general standards that individual institutions must adopt and develop, and helps to define the picture of relationships of students with each other and with other sectors of the school community. Autonomous schools are free to devise internal rules, projects and ways of organising the participation of parents and students in their activities. In so doing, they can broaden what is provided for in national standards.

The duties of students as specified in the Students' Statute include the following (see Article 3):

- a) attendance at courses and diligent study;
- b) respect for all school staff 'and their companions';
- c) respect for equipment and the need to help make the school environment welcoming – an important factor in the quality of school life.

Yet the discrepancy between the theory of the curriculum and what is put into practice remains apparent at organisational level, as far as the active involvement of families and students in school decision-making processes is concerned. Even though there are recognised areas for student discussion – including political discussion – and students are able to engage in public confrontation and demonstrations at school, they do not always take advantage of the opportunity to do so.

As a result, there is an ongoing debate about the tasks and make-up of school representative bodies, which has led to a proposal to reform both the constitution of councils and their tasks in relation to the new responsibilities of schools as they become more organisationally and administratively independent. At present, however, progress towards reform is at a standstill.

10. Teachers' role

Teachers should be aware of the need to base their teaching practice and relations within the school on the principles underlying education for democratic citizenship.

The teacher education system is inadequate in both respects. There are no training courses specifically on citizenship at university level. However, courses including specific content relevant to education for citizenship and civic values may be offered to primary school teachers; such courses are also offered by institutes that train teachers in secondary schools.

A national training and research/action project called 'Education for citizenship and solidarity: human rights culture' was started in the 2001/02 and now it covers the whole country.

The initiative aims to make school networks work in collaboration with institutions, agencies and regional or local areas to:

- develop common anthropological and cultural analytic activity for a better understanding of human rights management as required by official documents;
- create the conditions for initiatives and forms of participation in which students become the protagonists in models of citizenship and active solidarity by performing concrete actions in society;
- acquire the concept of community in order to spread a culture of citizenship;

- link the explicit curriculum covering all disciplines, and the implicit curriculum concerned with behaviour and organisation at schools (space, time and modes);
- create a national network of schools and USRs (regional school offices) for the exercise of inclusive models of citizenship.

The targets for this project are all teachers of humanities and sciences, and the class council coordinators of schools at all levels.

To plan this model, regional school offices have established horizontal and/or vertical networks of schools that have been identified with due regard for economic, social and cultural variables. Around 3800 schools are currently involved and coordinated by 200 tutors who interact with bodies, agencies and associations spread around the various regions or localities concerned. The function of the Ministry of Education, University and Research is to direct, coordinate and control activities, while also involving autonomous entities such as regional school offices, local bodies, schools and universities.

11. European citizenship

When school programmes were adopted, the European or international dimension of education was not perceived to be a real necessity and was therefore not as developed as it is today. Specific references to the European dimension within school teaching programmes at different levels are thus very general. However, schools have paid ever-increasing attention to supranational/European educational issues since people have become more fully aware of the process of European Union construction and integration.

Interest has been further fuelled by many initiatives not only at ministerial level but also on the part of public and private bodies (teachers' associations, local authorities, universities, research and monitoring institutes, etc.).

However, when schools became autonomous, they were able to take the supranational dimension of teaching into consideration with further support from ministerial directives and suggestions, the widespread use of information technology and appropriate teaching materials. International issues have also been taken into account when updating textbooks. In particular, those for geography, civic education and history have gone beyond a nationalist perspective to increasingly cover the European and global context.

An agreement has been recently signed between the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and the Prime Minister's Department for EU Policies. The agreement launches a three-year training and research project on education for European citizenship destined to school heads and teachers of the second cycle of the newly reformed education and training system. The training programme foresees the institution of networks of schools in order to assure the implementation throughout the country of this initiative based on the e-learning training model developed by INDIRE (National Institute of Documentation for Innovation and Research on Education).

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