

Visible and Invisible CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Editors:
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Socrates - Comenius

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CONTENTS

List of figures	5
Editors and contributors	7
Introduction	11
<i>Giovanna Barzanò, Emanuela Brumana, Jane Jones</i>	
0.1 The project	
0.2 The contents of the publication	
Appendix	
1. From theory to practice: the development of responsible citizenship	23
<i>Jane Jones, Michaela Thomas</i>	
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 Context: a paradigm shift in Citizenship Education	
1.3 A culture of respect	
1.4 Democratic principles in the school	
1.5 Citizenship-rich schools	
1.6 Conclusions: responsible active citizenship in action	
2. A way of putting citizenship into practice	33
<i>Andreas Holvik</i>	
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 Context and structure	
2.3 New roles and behaviours	
2.4 The KWL model - an illustration of the most fundamental learning strategy	
2.5 Conclusions	
3. The floor to the students	43
<i>Emanuela Brumana, Virginia Ginesi, MariaCristina Zarrella</i>	
3.1 What the pupils think of.....	
3.2 My opinion...a questionnaire for pupils	
3.3 The “Pre-teenagers school committee”	
Appendix	
4. Citizenship at school and beyond.	
Active citizenship projects in the Catalan educational system	73
<i>x Anna Babra, Maria Ojuel</i>	
4.1 Introduction	
4.2 Educational context of Catalonia	
4.3 Citizenship Education and school culture	
4.4 Cooperative learning and active citizenship	
4.5 Conclusions	
Appendix	

5. Teaching towards citizenship in Norway	91
<i>Bjarne Hansen , Linda Velle Sjøen</i>	
5.1 Introduction	
5.2 Research	
5.3 Educational context	
5.4 Five examples of educating citizens	
5.5 Conclusions	
6. Do students wish to play an active role in changing schools?	
Alias Democracy and Responsibility	115
<i>Vlastimil Fiala</i>	
6.1 Introduction	
6.2 Case study	
6.3 Conclusions	
7. Developing school culture towards European citizenship	
a Comenius training course	123
<i>Rosangela Baggio, Francesca Brotto, Gianfrancesco Musumeci</i>	
7.1 The course	
7.2 The activities: contents and methodology	
7.3 Sensing the culture of a school on a brief visit	
7.4 Modeling aspects of citizenship throughout the course	
Appendix	
8. The SEEDS Course: perceptions and evaluations	139
<i>Maria do Carmo Clímaco</i>	
8.1 Introduction of the aims	
8.2 The course and its context	
8.3 Perceptions and evaluations - the collection of data	
8.4 Findings and analysis of the findings	
8.5 The learning experience	
8.6 Final Comments and recommendations	
8.7 Conclusions	
9. Keys for the field:	
some threads of history from the SEEDS' development.	161
<i>Giovanna Barzanò</i>	
General References	165
Table of products	166

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Responsible citizen	Pag. 33
2.2	Structure in traditional school	Pag. 34
2.3	The learner – centered classroom	Pag. 38
2.4	The Learning Style model from Dunn & Dunn	Pag. 39
2.5	Citizenship and self-Identity	Pag. 40
3.1	Class profile 1	Pag. 57
3.2	Class profile2	Pag. 58
5.1	Skudeneshavn Playground map	Pag. 105
6.1	Teacher Questionnaires results	Pag. 119
6.2	Student Questionnaires results	Pag. 120

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Introduction

Giovanna Barzanò, Emanuela Brumana, Jane Jones

There is now a broad acknowledgement that educating pupils to citizenship is far more than just adding another subject to the curriculum. In most education systems, schools are expected to prepare children for life and not just for work and citizenship education is to do with how young citizens can interpret the values of participation in society.

This publication explores this perspective on citizenship education and provides some examples of citizenship as an identifiable subject and as a cross-curricular theme underpinning the whole school curriculum. Furthermore, the whole school curriculum is seen as a collection of learning experiences that extends beyond the confines of the school building and the school day and into the community at large. This is an important factor in developing children's citizenship skills since many of these skills will be useful and utilised in the local community and ultimately in wider communities. Whilst there is an element of 'futures-thinking' about citizenship and lifelong learning for lifelong competence, the learning of citizenship awareness, skills and competences take seed in often very modest ways in the daily happenings of the school setting. These are developed naturally in the various school settings that comprise teaching, learning and assessment approaches, the full range of classroom activities and whole school dimensions and initiatives. They are developed in the fullest way when such activities are framed by a school culture that is citizenship-rich in its philosophy and belief and that generates practices that engage pupils, teachers and other staff in participatory, collaborative and reflective action. The project has explored means and ways to achieve this and this book presents a range of possibilities to attain it, creatively, actively, practically and in a rich variety of contexts.

1. The project¹

The conceptual framework

The starting point of the SEEDS project is the idea that the development of the European dimension and citizenship finds important roots in the school culture. The atmosphere, the ethos and the patterns of co-operation and learning interactions experienced by pupils at school, are meant to contribute relevantly to the growth of their sense of participation in a cultural, social and political perspective. In fact learning the “interplanetary” or “multidimensional” citizenship (Morin 2000, 2004, Bocchi Ceruti, 2004) in which the European identity is situated is not only a matter of being confronted with renewed curricula. Rather it is the combination of both formal and informal learning experiences to have an enormous impact on this kind of achievements (Parker, 2000). Whereas *Formal learning* concerns the process activated by the academic activities proposed by school programmes implemented in accordance with the framework of a certain educational system, *Informal learning* is usually defined as a lifelong process whereby the individual acquires attitudes, values skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources of his or her environment.

The role of the school is increasingly seen as crucial also as far as the informal, more invisible dimension is concerned, that is the learning that can be expected to take place by functioning at school, by interacting with teachers and peers, by being confronted with behavioral rules and norms and the cultural frames of references from the school as an organization and from the different participants in this organization.

In this perspective the school with its culture can be seen as a model community of the concept and practice of multidimensional citizenship and the educational process has to be taken into consideration with its variety of dimensions:

- *a personal dimension* which implies learning how to take on board personal commitment to nurture a citizen identity among one’s other identities and to acquire socially responsible habits of mind and action;
- *a social dimension* which involves the ability and willingness to work with other citizens in a variety of public settings and creating a common ground;

¹ In appendix : - A summary of the SEEDS project
- The Co-ordinating Institution and the Institutions Partners of the project

- *a spatial dimension* referring to the modern requirement that citizens should see themselves as members of multiple, overlapping communities: local, regional, national, global;
- *a temporal dimension* where heritage and tradition play a role in coping with the challenges of the future and the past must be integrated into the future with awareness

The project activities

The overall aim of the SEEDS project has been to understand how the *seeds* of an active and fertile idea of European citizenship and “international mindset” can be spread and introduced in the school culture. Therefore one of the main lines of the project development has been analyzing the school culture, which is the field and the background where ideas of citizenship take root and grow. Fundamental questions have been asked:

- How can the culture of a school be understood? Are there relevant differences from a school to another? How can the seeds of European and citizenship values be introduced into the school culture?

To answer those questions the Seeds Project research focused on *Participation, Rights, Responsibility and Relationships* that are four key issues interrelating to school culture and citizenship. School organization, school and classroom climate, leadership and the students’ informal learning experiences are interesting dimensions to investigate in depth the four issues. In detail:

- *School organization* relates to values, collaboration between teachers, teacher participation, professional development, relationship with parents; structures for student involvement (school magazine, website, school parliament), projects at school for helping others,
- *School and classroom climate* regards learning and teaching strategies, student-teacher relationship, assessment orientation / monitoring, behavioural and disciplinary rules, open climate for expressing one’s views and discussion, school norms and rules
- *School leadership* means distributive leadership, community building, communicative leadership, school project and school co-operation with municipalities, empowerment
- *Students’ informal learning experiences* concern conflicts and critical incidents, dealing with conflict situations in school, dealing with differences between cultures / inclusion policies,

multiculturality, dealing with peers and issues of collaboration in student (project) work

Ways of working

To investigate this field and to answer the questions, the project used a variety of *case studies* concerning schools where meaningful experiences and particular sets of organisational strategies have been adopted to derive from it suggestions on which to base a new set of considerations and training activities to be implemented with teachers.

The case studies research follow a *constructionist epistemology* (process → actions → policies, micro-politics, negotiations of relations, meanings, etc. → results = process itself). In this perspective the actors are committed to observe and to research in various ways :

1. *in search of a "thick description"*;
 - a. A rich collection of data and examples was gathered;
 - b. Qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews, videos and focus groups were used to obtain information from different points of view;
2. *in search of participation*;
 - a. The objective was not only story-telling but also story-producing; in fact some schools involved in the Seeds project planned interesting experiences of active citizenship as the one of Pre-teenagers' School Committee of the Istituto Comprensivo of Chiuduno.
 - b. Co-participation when coding categories was requested of schools operators, in particular head teachers and teachers;
3. *in search of longitudinal perspective*;
 - a. The experiences presented in the following pages focus on :
 - i. the formal decisions, but also the informal ones;
 - ii. not only the relations net, but also its evolution;
 - iii. the results but also the future developments.

Case studies tools and actors

"Case study research always involves the study of an instance in action" (M. Bassegy,1999), so case study researchers are patient, reflective, willing to see another view of the case.

The different case studies carried out in the SEEDS project implied the use of various instruments : *questionnaires, focus groups, interviews*

brainstorming, peer observation, external and participating observation, descriptions.

In fact “a narrative account, a story, a chronological presentation, personalistic descriptions, emphasis on time and space provide rich ingredients” (Stake, 1995).

Different actors (teachers, heads, students as well as non-teaching staff and caretakers) have been involved in this investigation. It was possible to find out examples, narrations, evidences to understand how students are interested in decision-making, how they reflect about rights, regulations and norms, how they face the conflicts and it was also possible to describe the strategies used in the school under analysis to increase good climate, participation, cooperation and responsibility.

The narrative “sweet” approach used by researchers was aimed at eliciting short tales from real facts experienced by the interviewees.

Interesting practices of citizenship education are presented in the following chapters as case studies useful to investigate the field and they can be good suggestions for teachers and school operators in general.

2. The contents of the publication

The book is structured in three chapters: the first includes two sections to introduce readers to the practice of active citizenship education at school starting from a well-constructed conceptual framework.

The first section, the UK contribution, identifies the shifts in the development of Citizenship Education and then explores the concept of the active responsible citizen in school. The potential for the democratisation of the school in terms of greater pupil participation is explored and the idea of citizenship-rich schools proposed. The authors, in support of the concept of ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’, assert the need for students to learn to be active and engaged agents in the school community and beyond. The second section describes how some schools in Norway are providing students with the tools and a new school structure to develop students as active and responsible citizens. Such a new structure requires new roles for both teachers and pupils and to implement such changes and to create learner-centred classrooms.

The second chapter offers some highlights from the different countries. All the experiences are really linked to the specific country context and each of them expresses the richness and value of the different cultural backgrounds. Together, each of them belongs to the framework of the SEEDS project, felt as an open space to reflect, to work and to co-operate together.

The Italian section focuses on the students, their perceptions, opinions, and experiences of participation at school, analysing three interesting experiences carried out in some schools belonging to STRESA (“*Tools for school effectiveness and school self evaluation*”), a network of 33 schools, involved in a heavy work program, centred on the improvement of school quality through self-evaluation.

The first contribution relates to significant aspects and critical incidents that emerged from the students’ focus groups conducted in these schools thanks to the Seeds project research: it was a way to understand the pupils’ point of view and to reflect about the importance of informal learning in active citizenship education. The following one presents a pupils’ questionnaire used as a tool to develop pupils’ self-evaluation, a powerful way for each student to take responsibility for her own learning project.

The third contribution refers to a school project centred on co-operation, participation and learning interactions experienced by pupils at school, carried out in the Istituto Comprensivo of Chiuduno.

The Catalan section reflects upon the social competences that can be developed through school projects and pedagogical methods carried out in Catalan schools aiming to achieve active citizenship. It underlines the need for incorporating pedagogical methodologies and community service projects for active and global Citizenship Education, referring to real experiences carried out in different Catalan primary and secondary schools. Cooperative learning is presented as a key method to develop active citizenship.

The Norwegian contribution gives some examples that demonstrate aspects of teaching towards citizenship in Norwegian schools. The intention regarding the daily life examples is to show how important it is to live as citizens and not only to learn about citizenship. The first two examples deal with teacher-student dialogues. The following exemplifies how a school playground can be important in the development of social skills and democratic behaviour. The fourth deals with The Children’s Municipality Council in Karmøy. It presents a way to teach young people about the decision making process in the local political system, and to encourage participation in political activities. The last one refers to Holmen School, *a second chance school*, that offers everybody a way to discover to have a dream of a better life.

Do students wish to play an active role in changing schools? This is the question to which the following section tries to respond. It describes the

procedure used for finding the students' and the teachers' opinion about the level of school democracy and the relationships between students and staff in the Gymnazium of Dr. A. Hrdlicka, Humpolec, in the Czech Republic, as a necessary first step for the improvement of the school culture. The author underlines that various conclusions emerge, some of them surprising, that include the teachers' willingness to change and adopt new methods as contrasted with a certain reticence on the part of the students to embrace the responsibilities that such change would incur.

The last chapter presents the Seeds training course "*Developing School Culture Towards European Citizenship*". The first contribution presents the setting, the participants and the rationale of the course, that offered opportunities to reflect critically on the concept and practice of responsible citizenship as a multi-faced field linked to the global as well the local contexts.

The second one relates to the perceptions and the evaluation of SEEDS Course using the lenses of its participants: how they describe and react to the planned work, what they mention as learning, experience and new understandings of responsible citizenship education and its basic principles. The author says "*A lot of ideas and practical suggestions to be adapted to their own realities were taken away, together with feelings of self satisfaction and fulfilment.*"

This is the evidence that ideas and experiences carried out thanks to the project can be effective *seeds* useful to a new perspective for active citizenship education at school and beyond.

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Appendix

I - The SEEDS Project

Summary

The school culture is a crucial aspect to develop the European dimension and citizenship . In fact the atmosphere, the ethos and the patterns of co-operation and learning interactions experienced by pupils at school, is meant to contribute relevantly to the growth of their sense of participation, in a cultural, social and political perspective. The school can be seen as a model community of the concept and practice of multidimensional citizenship.

The overall aim of the SEEDS project is to understand how the seeds of an active and fertile idea of European citizenship and “international mindset” can be spread and introduced into the school culture, from the point of view of contents, but also of organisational strategies.

Therefore the project follows two main lines of development, pursuing two categories of objectives. The first is concerned with the understanding of the school culture which is the field and the background where ideas root and grow, the second deals with the specific contents and perspectives which inform training modules aimed at enhancing teachers’ and schools’ “international” competences, and with the organizational frameworks in which they can be productively implemented.

The two areas are strictly linked in the assumption that the understanding of school culture is both a competence in itself and at the same time something which provides the basis for the implementation of the competences targeted.

In summary the objectives of the project are:

1. the implementation of an empirical study on school culture, to understand how the seeds of an active and fertile idea of European citizenship and “international mindset” can be spread and introduced into the school culture
2. the identification and selection of experiences and sources of knowledge and information which can promote the European dimension and the international mindset in the school culture
3. the definition of teachers’ and schools’ international competences based on the analysis of examples of good and interesting practices, and the analysis of perceptions and needs expressed
4. the development of case studies concerning meaningful experiences where particular sets of organisational strategies have been adopted.
5. the planning and the pilot of training modules in local settings
6. the setting up of an international training module "SEEDS: improving school cultures towards a European dimension"

Appendix

II - The Partners of the Project

Co-ordinating institution

Istituto Comprensivo "Mons. Valoti" of Chiuduno - Italy

It is a primary and lower secondary government school accounting for 798 students. The school undertakes the responsibility of the educative and learning path of all the pupils without any distinction of social class, race, religion or economic conditions in order to educate them to the values of the international charts, of the children rights and the Italian Constitution. It belongs to the schools participating in the STRESA network.

Participating institutions

Associazione RETE STRESA (STRumenti per l'Efficacia della Scuola e l'Autovalutazione) Osio Sotto - Italy

It is a no profit association of 30 schools whose main aim is to implement and monitor self-evaluation and organisational learning activities. These include action research, workshops, seminars on various topics, job shadowing, peer observation etc. In the last 2 years some 2000 hours of INSET activities for teachers were implemented through about 100 different modules attended by about 700 teachers. The network carried out, in these years, an intensive work focused on the improvement of school quality and made surveys about pupils', parents and teachers' perceptions on school functioning, teachers and head teachers development plans as well as performances tests. These actions proved to be an important bench mark for some significant aspects of the innovation brought in by school autonomy and provided experienced instruments and procedures, comparison areas and conceptual references. The activities undertaken enlightened the relevance of such a work and the great potential of networking and of modelling experiences. The STRESA network, with the important collaboration with the CSA of Bergamo (Local Education Authority at provincial level), has organised through the last years many international activities and participated in various international meetings presenting its experience.

Pedagogisk Psykologisk Senter Karmøy

The main working areas for the Educational Advisory Centre department are to:

- Strengthen educational innovation in the schools
- Implement the new national curriculum plan "Culture for learning"
- Cater for in-service training for teachers (local, regional and national)
- Stimulate local post-graduate courses in collaboration with universities and colleges of higher education
- Advise on methodology and within subject-related areas
- Convey and co-ordinate practical pedagogical initiatives

- To provide advice to all stakeholders within the school community: pupils, teachers, school assistants and parents
- Implement evaluation in schools
- Organize and develop school management program for its 60 school managers
Operate and manage a regional resource centre including a library of updated educational books, textbooks, teaching aids, videos- DVD, audiotapes, CD-roms, ICT software etc.
- Provide various multi-media equipment for schools
- Serve teacher and students in the use of video-editing system.

The Department of Education and Culture, Educational and Psychological Advisory Centre and many schools in Karmøy have been and are involved in several Socrates projects funded by the EU.

King's College University of London (London-UK)

King's College London is one of the constituent colleges of the University of London and the second oldest College, established by royal charter over 100 years ago and located on The Strand by the Thames in the heart of London.

King's College is renowned internationally for its excellence in research and its teaching provision. It is graded 4*, the top rating in the University rating scale. It attracts scholars from across the globe to its range of departments and counts many luminaries amongst its former and current scholars. DNA is just one of its enduring discoveries.

The Department of Education and Professional Studies, which was rated 4* in its own right, provides highly rated and innovative postgraduate initial teacher training, and a wide range of Masters and doctoral study and research opportunities. Its research activity has been very influential globally, for example in Science, ICT and Maths Education, the literacy and numeracy initiatives, language education and Assessment for learning (AfL), all of which have had global impact in many education systems. King's works with governments and non-governmental agencies across the world in a wide range of collaborative activity and research.

Generalitat de Catalunya, Department d' Ensenyament (Barcelona- SPAIN)

It's the regional body for Education in Catalunya. It has full competences in education matters for all the region in any field related to education. It promotes many initiatives at all the education level.

Gymnasium Dr Aleš Hrdličky in Humpolec, Czech Republic

It became a national centre of excellence through its participation in the SLAM programme. There has been a great deal of interest in work to date and the school (an 11-18 Gymnasium) is now acting as a regional centre (the former head is now Deputy Minister of Education, CZ) and is looking to develop wider community provision and use of its facilities. The school, together with its regional group of secondary schools, has been tasked with organising preparatory teachers courses for ECDL tests across the region.

The Gymnazium has participated in a number of international projects in recent years. It has been a successful participant in the worldwide Globe Programme (since 1996). This programme provided an opportunity for the Czech students to participate in a

global programme involving hundreds of thousands of students and contributing their regular weather observations to build up a worldwide database. Working with students from outside their community enhanced the Czech students understanding of global environmental systems.

The Gymnazium has also taken part in Project Europe, a project managed by the Norwegian Society for Nature Protection and looking at air pollution through measurements of acid rainfall and ozone concentrations together with a survey of lichen in their area. Working with students from Germany and Sweden, students from Humpolec participated in 'Peace in Time' a project looking at one historical area (Westphali)

Chapter 1

From theory to practice: the development of responsible citizenship

Jane Jones, Michaela Thomas

This section identifies the shifts in the development of Citizenship Education and then explores the concept of the active responsible citizen in school. The potential for the democratisation of the school in terms of greater pupil participation is explored and the idea of citizenship-rich schools proposed. The authors, in support of the concept of 'cosmopolitan citizenship', assert the need for students to learn to be active and engaged agents in the school community and beyond.

1.1 Introduction

It is against a background of the development of Citizenship Education (CE) that we consider the concept of responsible citizenship to be a cornerstone of the SEEDS project. Citizenship in this form recognises the need for education to be directed towards developing the child's personality and talents as well as the learning of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The concern is for the wholeness of the child as a human being and for successful interactions with other human beings.

Preparing children for responsible life in a free society by teaching them to respect cultural identities, languages and values is an overarching aim of education in general and of CE in particular. Freedom is very precious and individuals need to learn to defend against the constant encroachments on their freedom as well as, at the same time, respect the freedom of others. CE seeks to ensure that school students have the opportunity to learn about, practise and engage with issues that they may otherwise not have the opportunity to address adequately in their lives. CE is designed not just to be a visible and tangible subject in the school curriculum but as a cross-curricular area that permeates the entire curriculum in line with recent curriculum developments as a more coherent and interlinked learning whole for students. Such learning goes beyond the school since issues and events that are at play in young people's personal lives or in their own communities are inextricably linked to the impact of these on a wider scale. This means, for example,

looking at the role played by governments, non-governmental organisations and global institutions such as the United Nations for barely a day passes in our globally networked world without some reference to this institution and the exposure to this in the media. Osler and Starkey advise that we should go beyond the status of national citizenship and emphasise the need to embrace and inhabit ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’ for this would allow us to ‘*make links between the everyday experiences which individuals have in their communities and developments which are taking place at national and global levels*’ (2005:4). At a time rife with global uncertainties, this is an appropriate moment to attune increasingly to the need for our students to develop into active and responsible citizens in their schools, in their locales and beyond local boundaries as it is feasible to do so. To be a responsible citizen requires one to be ready, informed and willing to take actions, however modest, in ways that will demonstrate that active citizenship.

1.2 Context: a paradigm shift in Citizenship Education

CE is a major educational initiative and one of the most important in recent times. The construct of citizenship itself is not new as it goes back to ancient times. Furthermore, forms of citizenship education have also existed since those ancient times *de facto* because it has always been necessary to initiate the young into ways of knowing and practising citizenship in the societies they inhabited. In terms of formalised CE, we have, over time, seen a shift away from a Civics, i.e. factual-transmissionist teacher –led model of CE (the teacher dictating notes, or students copying information from a book with minimal engagement in the worst case scenarios), to CE as a model with a contested controversial content and taught using active learning strategies. In this model, students need to engage in considerable self-learning and the teacher’s role is more of a well informed guide and mediator.

Let us cite an example of one lesson observed where the students had to consider critically the motives and possible reasons for the shooting of J.F Kennedy. The students had to look at a range of evidence themselves and try to reach an informed judgement on this. The teacher did not provide a solution but guided the students towards the evidence. Such an approach aims to engage learners in critical thinking in their lessons and provide opportunities for enacting participation in school infrastructures and arrangements that promote these processes. It is important for schools to examine current school policies and pedagogical practices to see to what extent it is the case that students can be engaged fully in this way.

The fact that Citizenship education has only recently taken root in modern day schools' curricula is not least due to some teacher resistance to yet further overload on an already over crowded curriculum. CE has previously taken diverse forms in various contexts with 'weak' versions manifesting themselves, for example, in cross-curricular doses or as part of a wider social studies or a pastoral curriculum. In these forms, CE issues are embedded in broader considerations of topics such as 'making friends' which might typically involve a consideration of getting to know and respect children from other cultures.

In some countries a strong version of the concept is in place which takes the form of discrete CE lessons with clear definition in terms of topics and schemes of work. Northern Ireland shows good practice of this with very clear guidelines about the exploitation of topics (such as post-conflict scenarios) and provides equality of timetable provision alongside other subjects. Students consulted in this project as to their view on their CE lessons in Belfast schools said these were their most favourite lessons.

Overall, there has been an identifiable move away from the perception and structuring of CE as a subject of mainly factual data on the lines of old-style Civics or a sub-section of History (and politics) and a recognition of CE with the potential for learning that is active, exciting, powerful and allows pupils to become responsible for their own learning process. In the lesson on the shooting of Kennedy, the pupils had to decide on a most likely motivation for the assassination for themselves based on critical review of the evidence. They had to consider a variety of perspectives, not just the obvious ones of those to which they felt the most instinctively inclined. They were effectively taught to outline and defend their position with argument and counter-argument without the teacher providing an answer. The pupils' ability to form and present an opinion using democratic principles reflect the zeitgeist of the post-modern age and something students have to learn and be allowed to practise. CE provides a good opportunity for this kind of 'new learning order' (Gee, 1997). This involves such diverse factors as students' computer- literacy and the ability to work independently and to be responsible in large measure for one's own learning. It involves major shifts in the conception of the roles of the learner and the teacher and relates to the fundamental value of each learner as an individual working in a community of learners, taking opportunities and making contributions in a more participative and active learning framework. CE fully embraces such a framework.

1.3 A culture of respect

Much is demanded of school leadership, teachers and pupils to make the new learning order a reality and it is crucial that effective and ongoing training and professional development opportunities are ensured. Safe and secure learning environments need to be created in classrooms where pupils will feel able to express themselves openly and constructively without the fear of unconstructive criticism from teachers or indeed fellow pupils. Such safe environments require a culture of honesty, openness and respect that puts the child as learner, individual, human being and member of a class community at the centre, with both the concomitant rights and the responsibilities. For this to become part of everyday school life, practice and reflection for both teachers and pupils and the adoption of a different teaching method will be needed. The development of effective CE and of personal responsible citizenship needs time, researching and a constant flow of feedback in an evolutionary learning process that has as a prime focus democratic principles of schooling. Many of these principles are evidenced in the ensuing sections in this publication and relate to quite modest but meaningful practices in schools

1.4 Democratic principles in the school

Whilst much of the discourse in the area of citizenship revolves around a consideration of the individual human being, Crick (2000) writes that no idea of citizenship can be 'totally individualised'. In this respect, a crucial issue such as Human Rights enables young people to find out about how democracy and democratic principles function through learning about the dangers of not having a society based upon democracy and freedom, whether politically or culturally. Arlow (2002) suggests that it is the investigation of these democratic principles that helps pupils to narrow the gap between themselves and the wider world and to develop an awareness of the possibility of change and the role they themselves can play in that process of change. Tapping into youthful idealism whilst not shying away from 'democratic disappointment' can create a powerful mechanism for learning about the most fundamental elements of citizenship. Pupils feel deeply about what goes on in the world and cannot be sheltered from it; nor would they wish to be. Their generosity in times of natural disaster and instinctive ability to empathise with the underprivileged and disadvantaged is well in evidence and testifies to their ability to cope with disappointment when world events, in their eyes 'disappoint'. What takes place in classrooms and in the whole school community can enable pupils to understand the root causes of such

‘democratic disappointment’ and to begin to understand others’ perceptions and develop ideas to contribute to positive changes. Pupils will certainly learn more effectively when democratic processes of participation and debate, for example, are modelled in practice and there are many ways in which this can be done in the classroom. School councils and school governance also comprise basic platforms that exist in every school in some shape for the exercise of democracy.

Student/school councils

Hannam writing about democratising school life asks the rhetorical question ‘what aspects of school life can realistically become more democratic and participative?’ and responds ‘ I would answer all of them’ (2006:248). Such process would relate to whole-school organisation but would quintessentially include what the English call the School Council (a discussion group run by and for the students, in school time, with the commitment and support of teachers). An inspection report of 25 school councils in secondary schools in England (OFSTED 2003) led to the following conclusion in the inspection report:

‘Some of the school councils fail to involve all the pupils through such representation. Some have very limited ambition, with agendas being principally concerned with food and toilets. In a minority of the schools, school council members are appointed by staff rather than elected. In these cases, little or nothing is contributed to National Curriculum citizenship for most pupils’

Schools with effective School Councils do not try to restrict or constrain what can be discussed although they may well negotiate sensible guidelines. It is noticeable when investigating School Council agendas that food and the state of the toilets have always been important to pupils, indeed they are important to people and employees in all institutions and are often an indicator of the measure of wellbeing and respect afforded to employees at the workplace. Interestingly, Jones’ research (1999) showed that, in a survey of twenty English head teachers in the years immediately after local financial management of schools was introduced into schools in 1988 giving them financial autonomy, the first priority of the majority of head teachers was to create or improve toilet facilities for themselves and for the school. Important though these issues are for wellbeing, student discussion needs to spread to the core issues of their education that concerns teaching, learning and assessment as well as school governance itself. It is in these areas that pupils often do not have a voice or opportunity to participate.

School governance

Some school leaders gasp in disbelief about the idea of involving pupils and indeed giving them a voice at meetings of the school's governing body whilst in other countries such as in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, there has long been pupil involvement at all levels of the decision-making process. The English 'I was a Teenage Governor' project (Hallgarten et al. 2004) launched in 2004 by the Institute for Public Policy Research, (a project that has potential replicability in other contexts) indicated that the participation of students in governing, given the right conditions, can make a significant difference to the creative learning environment of the governing body itself as well as enabling students to understand better, communicate views to their fellow pupils and generally raise the participatory profile of the school.



Teaching, learning and assessment: students taking responsibility

It is in the classroom that pupils live out most of their daily lives and where democratic principles need to be enacted and pupils empowered.

We need to dispense

with the out-dated idea of hierarchy that places students at the bottom of a pyramid of influence and thereby takes away any sense of responsibility other than minimal expectations. When students are given responsibility for their learning, for aspects of their course provision and behaviour, for self-assessment and targets for improvement, most students, with the support to which they are entitled and well-

honed ICT skills, respond very constructively and experience enhanced self-esteem, well being and improved outputs.

The importance of an appropriate assessment policy cannot be overemphasised. The modes of assessment that are central to an 'Assessment for Learning' (AfL) approach include the ability and confidence to self-assess and an appropriate attitude and capability to

peer assess. The approach envisages assessment as an aid to support learning and move it forward i.e. assessment **for** learning as opposed to assessment **of** learning. Whilst the latter is endemic to schooling at certain formal testing junctures, an AfL approach is more concerned with pupil learning on a daily basis and, as Jones suggests, sees ‘more than one teacher in the classroom and students have a vital role to play in taking responsibility for their own learning and in supporting the learning of their peers’ (2008: 16-17). Thus within an assessment framework students can learn the art of collaboration and of mutual support.

1.5 Citizenship-rich schools

In an increasingly fragmented world, it is very important to create schools rich in citizenship in which students feel that they belong, can commit themselves and be active in the community. Breslin and Dufour call such schools ‘citizenship-rich schools’. Such ‘citizenship-rich’ schools, Breslin and Dufour state, (2006:342) have 5 defining characteristics:

- 1 CE is clearly identified in the curriculum model, in assessment frameworks, in CPD and in the school’s improvement and development plans
- 2 CE enables the students to develop their Citizenship knowledge through a skills-based and learner-centred pedagogy
- 3 Citizenship learning takes place not just in designated timetable space but through a range of opportunities, on and off the school site, that are valued by students, teachers, parents and the school community
- 4 CE encourages and facilitates the active and effective participation of all in its day to day activities
- 5 It models the principles that it teaches about in citizenship in the way that it operates as a community and institution and proclaims this approach in its documentation.

The creation of such a range of characteristics requires citizenship management as Potter (2002) writes, which includes management by teachers and coordinators in classrooms as well as direction and support by the senior leadership team. This does involve curriculum change and the integration of CE with a high profile across the curriculum. Although major changes are required in some respects, the necessary changes in fact mesh with current educational agenda concerns that include the personalisation of learning, differentiation, inclusion, active learning methods and self-assessment. Increasingly democratising school structures and practices and the employment of pedagogies by teachers that encourage contestation and debate as well as strategies for resolution

and agreement are crucial in the new order of things where teacher and student roles are redefined, sometimes reversed and made more flexible. As such, the pupils' voice is given due weight and consideration and will sometimes be privileged where circumstances permit. Thus, when pupils are given the opportunity to take decisions, then these should be respected.

Having a voice also involves taking a measure of responsibility for independent learning, self-assessment and personal demeanour as well as concern for others. The struggle for democracy across the world that is played out 24/7 in the media, most potently on the television, newspapers and the internet, becomes a meaningful and an entity felt in the microcosm of the school. Pupils, in their quite modest school-based scenarios, can begin and should be encouraged to experience social, cultural and political dialectic for themselves and develop a critical awareness and literacy in these matters. On the basis of these experiences in their everyday school life, students can become critical and caring thinkers as part of the forging of their identity as citizens. The school should be their bedrock of security, a place for reflection and a hive of meaningful activity and engagement.

1.6 Conclusion: responsible active citizenship in action

Whilst, as we have seen, there is a lack of clarity about the definition of CE, and there exists a variety of interpretations in different cultural contexts, there is some consensus in the community of practice about the sort of citizenship we want our students to enjoy and confront, whether it involves being fully politically engaged or what Crick et al. (1998) call being 'helpfully involved'. Osler and Starkey argue that citizenship is about status, that is to say how we relate to our nation state, feeling or how we relate to and identify with that state and ultimately practice as regards how we react, act and engage as citizens. They write that: *'For education in democracy to be effective, the institution of the school must be developed in a democratic way, guaranteeing the right of children to form views and express them'* (op.cit.:8). As long as students recognise and make reasonable choices about their positioning and how, ultimately, they can challenge inequality using and putting democratic principles into practice with a sense of urgency, agency and solidarity, the school community, as a consistent feature of children's lives, is an effective place to emphasise these values and start these processes.

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Chapter 2

A way of putting citizenship into practice

Andreas Holvik

This section describes how some schools in Norway are providing students with the tools and a new school structure to develop students as active and responsible citizens. In order to give the students such freedom, it is important to establish some clear classroom rules and also to emphasize the purpose of these rules. Such a new structure requires new roles for both teachers and pupils. Time is required to implement such changes and to create learner-centred classrooms.

2.1 Introduction

In the article “*Citizenship in schools: the gap between theory and practice*”, Sally Varnham says young people when leaving school are expected to play an active part as citizens in a democratic society. Are schools providing them with the tools to do this, Varnham asks, and in what ways are students learning to take responsibility?

In the Seeds project, those questions have been a key issue with the main focus on four key citizenship interrelating issues.



Fig.2.1 Responsible citizen

According to Jan Figel of the Directorate Generale of Education and Culture in a recent speech, those four issues seem to meet prioritized areas in the European Commission.

“ In recent years fostering more active participation by citizen in social and political life has become a key issue in all European countries.

Citizenship education, which includes learning about rights and duties of citizen, respect for democratic values an human rights, and the importance of solidarity, tolerance and participation in a democratic society , is seen as preparing children and young people to become responsible and active citizens.”

2.2 Context and structure

The Norwegian delegation has, since the beginning of this century, been involved in several inter-municipality projects. Those projects had their background in several researches in Norway saying that students, especially in secondary school, were bored and their motivation for learning was rather low. Questions arose such as *“could that be because of our classrooms are too teacher dominated and could learning be more successful if students were involved in how and when to learn?* These were some of the questions teachers, head teachers and advisors from the western part of Norway wanted to look into.

Structure in traditional schools

For 250 years, an old school structure had been the dominant way of teaching in Norway. This structure can be illustrated as below:

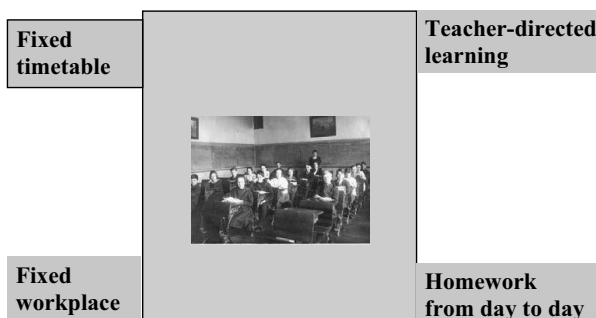


Fig.2.2 Structure in traditional schools

Most teachers have grown up in a teacher- centred educational system. A typical lesson in those schools started by pupils retelling what had been

taught by the teacher the day before. In the last part of the lesson, the teacher went through the homework. The structure was dominated by many teacher activities. Most of the time the students were supposed to sit quietly at their desks and listen to the teacher. The workplace was always the same, sitting in rows. The timetable was the same day after day. No group work, no individual work, no differentiation; just retelling the homework and listening to the teacher.

The new structure – the learner centred classroom

At the end of the nineties, the media focused on the lack of motivation among Norwegian pupils – especially in lower secondary school. Pupils said the school was boring and that teaching was dominated by teacher activities. Researches concerned with pupil participation and influence on their own learning indicated that the influence was low in Norway (“Elevundersøkelsen”). The students’ influence was only on small things, and traditional classrooms were dominated by teacher directed learning.

Was it possible to create a school with a more learner- centred classroom? Teachers from *Kunskapsskolan* in Sweden were invited to Norway to inform and motivate teachers to look for new ways of teaching. Influenced by this new pedagogical thinking, some schools in Norway started a project focusing on *wellbeing, motivation and learning*.

To give the students more influence, it was necessary to break down the old structure. Instead of spending most of the day listening to the teacher, the concept of *the study plan* was introduced in Norwegian schools. To some degree the study plan gave the students an opportunity to choose when and how they could do their tasks. They could choose between yellow, green and blue tasks which were symbols for different levels of difficulty. Teachers were asked to teach less and to guide more so an increased number of activities took place in many Norwegian classrooms. Most of the time was set aside for individual work. As a consequence, something had to be done to the learning environment. Classrooms were arranged for individual work, group work and some whole class teaching.

The curriculum from 1997 strongly emphasized the teacher’s role as an adviser and organiser. As a consequence of this many teachers misunderstood and were uncertain on their role as a teacher. They stopped teaching and organised most of the day for individual learning. After some time, a question was raised as to *what do the students actually learn?* With regard to tests, there was a big difference between the activities and the outcome so some schools said goodbye to the study plan system and returned to the old structure. However, most schools had a

pedagogical grip and understood that they could not just break down a structure without building up a new one. For some years now this new school structure has been about to be established. However, some changes have been implemented. As a result of poor PISA results, The Department of Education and Culture asked *Danish Clearinghouse for Udannelsesforskning* at Danmarks Pedagogiske Universitetskole to undertake a systematic review about which pedagogical dimension was of most importance in kindergarten and schools. They looked into more than 70 published researches from 1998 -2007 about the connection between teachers' behaviour and students achievement. The result was clear: teachers behaviour is the one single factor which can explain pupils' learning achievement. This research as well as the research done by Kari Backmann and Peder Haug "*Forskning om tilpasset oppl ring*" (2006) resulted in a better balance between traditional teaching and individual work

The necessity for a more structured way of organizing the school programme was obvious – especially for some of the children who had great problems in organizing their own program. Influenced by work in schools in New Zealand, some kind of *structured classroom programs* seems to be about to take over for the study plan – especially in lower primary classes.

When students were given more responsibility, teachers understood there had to be some kind of a control system. You cannot just give young people *rights*. Rights and responsibility and duty are closely linked together. So *learning goals, tests* and *individual guidance talks* between the teachers and students were implemented. Every third week or at least once a month there was to be a conversation having the learning goals as its starting point.

2.3 New roles and behaviours

In a way, turning from the old to the new structure constituted a paradigm shift in Norwegian schools and for some years, teachers were confused about their new role. They were used to teaching, not guiding and facilitating. To be a leader in the new learning environment, to facilitate and to guide, was a new situation and some students invariably took advantage of the situation and caused a lot of trouble. Teachers were confused and did not know what to do. Some adjustment had to be made.

A focus on the teacher as a clear leader with the ability to build good relationship with her students seems to be more important in this new

structure. During in- service training and according to the literature, the new teacher- role has been highlighted.

If rules were important in “the old structure”, they are even more important in the “new structure”. There was a call for classrooms rules built on the new pedagogy – rules such as Bill Rogers, an Australian teacher and consultant, describes in his book “*Classroom Behaviour*”. Rogers emphasises the need to:

1. Develop rules that focus on the core rights:
 - The right to feel safe at school
 - The right to learn
 - The right to be treated with respect
- 2 Express the rules behaviourally and positively where possible; we use positive language with each other.
3. Use inclusive language in framing the rules: “In our classroom we...”
- 4 Publish the rules.

The above four basic rules are similar to what you can find in many Norwegian classrooms. In some schools, students participate with their teacher in an agreement about common rights, responsibility and rules for behaviour and learning. The process concludes with the whole class commitment to the behaviour agreement. These are core rights which are non-negotiable, built on the values and aims of the whole school. The classroom behaviour agreement is a document for parents as well as students, Rogers says. Therefore a copy should be sent to all parents who are asked to read them together with their children.

When implementing the rules, it is important to emphasise the purpose of rules as *protection of rights*. Students also have to understand that consequences follow inappropriate behaviour. They need to know that when a rule is broken, a right is affected and that they can lose their rights for some time – as in ordinary society.

The new paradigm involves students in planning and organizing their own learning process. The Norwegian curriculum for compulsory school also says students should be involved in assessing their own learning. The Directorate for Education and Training very strongly emphasize the importance of assessment *for* learning. So far, assessment *of* learning has been important. Influenced by the research by Black and William of

King’s College London and experiences from New Zealand and Canada, a new regulation on *assessment for learning* was implemented last Year (2007), giving the students more responsibility for their own learning that also includes an impact on the results of their work.

According to the new regulation, teachers have to ‘feed forward’ on the students’ work. The white paper – “Stortingsmelding 31” (2007-2008) says feedback in Norwegian schools seems to be short of elements which promote learning. So far, many teachers have in their feedback just given marks such as “well done” a smiling face etc. This is not good enough. Students have the right to know what they are going to do to improve. The most important tools for this are *the student- teacher talk* and *student portfolio*. The student portfolio gives the student himself as well as his parents a unique opportunity to see the progress made since the last *parents – student – teacher talk*. The starting point for these conversations is often the documentation in the portfolios.

The model which describes the new structure and its tools looks like the following:

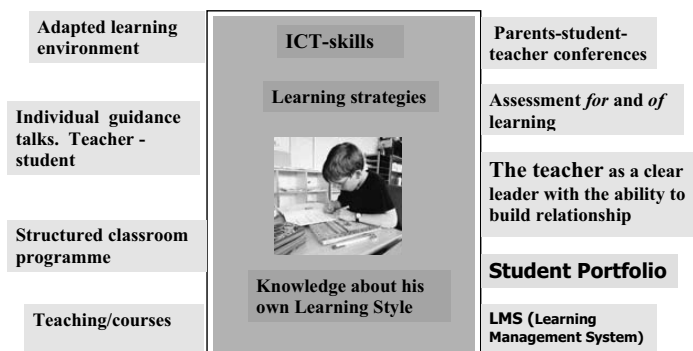


Fig.2.3 The learner – centered classroom

To work in such a structure (where students have more rights and freedom than before), the pupils must be given some tools. Teachers are no longer teaching all the time so the students, even in primary school, have to find some answers by themselves. First of all they need some learning strategies. *Learning strategies* are far more than learning, for example, how to use a mind map in their learning process. Learning strategies are about learning to plan, organize, think about, do and

evaluate and enhance your own learning process. So, before students are given the right to work in a student-centred classroom, the teacher needs to spend some time on strategy training and implementing learning strategies in his class – not just introducing them, but modelling them combined with practice and guidance.

2.4 The KWL model - an illustration of the most fundamental learning strategy

1. What do I know from before <u>Know</u>	2. This is what I want to learn <u>Want</u>	3. This is what I have learned <u>Learned</u>
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Different kinds of *learning style models* are disseminated widely on the market today. The most common model in Norway is The Learning Style model from Ken and Rita Dunn, USA. Together with the theory about Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner, these theories have had a great impact on Scandinavian schools. Even if we don't agree fully with their ideas, we might agree that we are all different and learn in different ways. If this is so, the students need to know the way that they learn best.

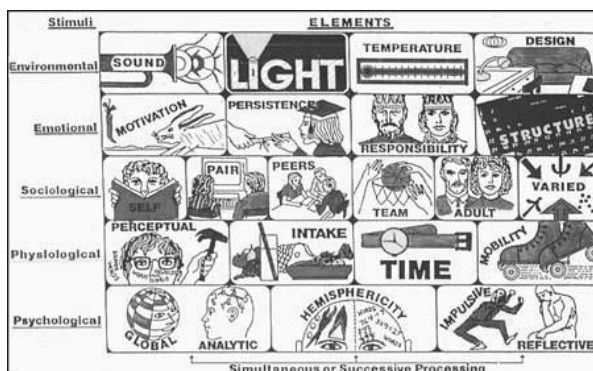


Fig.2.4 The Learning Style model from Dunn & Dunn

Computers have become more and more important in society in general as well as in schools' daily life. Schools are, according to Mark Prensky, stuck in the 20th century while students have rushed into the 21st. He challenges schools and asks how schools can catch up and provide students with a relevant education. Our students have changed radically. Today's students, he says, are no longer the people our education system was designed for. His answer to schools is in the new technology, using

mobile phones, game based learning programmes, the internet etc. It is expected that in 2008, our students should have excellent *ICT skills* to be able to manage their learning in the student- centred classroom. To meet some of those challenges, a considerable sum of money has been put into schools for ICT equipment and a new detailed plan for ICT skills will be implemented in our municipality in 2008-9.

The development of a Learning Management System (LMS) has provided schools with new possibilities for cooperation between teacher and students and between school and parents. Parents can easily have a look into their children’s digital portfolios where tests and comments are available for the pupils – and the parents- at the same time that their teacher has commented their work. However, without the necessary ICT skills, students will not be able to utilize the possibilities in a LMS. And to be honest, most teachers need more competence in handling it.

2.5 Conclusions

A new structure is not enough to create a good school with active and responsible students. In the learner- centred classroom, the ability to build relationship is crucial. For more than 250 years *controlling power* was the most important factor in schools all over the world .Today the importance of *relational power* seems to be more important. The Nancy Phillips schema provides a framework of necessary conditions for learning that seek to support learning. There are classrooms where there is no laughter, no well-being or warmth. Instead the feelings of *capacity*, *belonging* and *meaning* should be cornerstones in all classrooms.

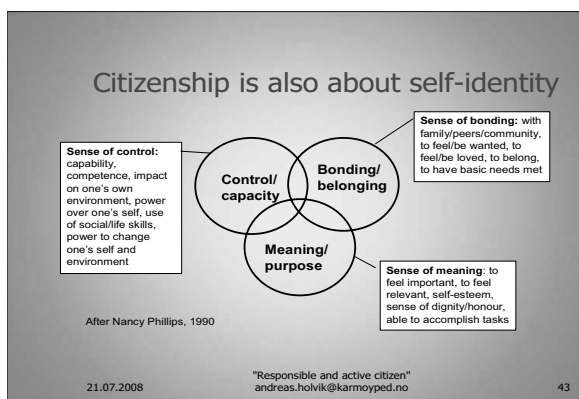


Fig.2..5 Citizenship and self-Identity

A child's self-identity is not just important when it comes to learning at school, it is crucial when entering the responsibility and challenges every person has to face as a citizen. One of the school's most important tasks should be to empower their students in building capacity so that the children can feel they are wanted and secure and have coping strategies.

It should be mentioned that experiences from this project have been introduced and disseminated to the SEEDS partners through film and power point presentations and has been a part of joint ongoing discussion.

The change from the old school structure to a new understanding of teaching and learning has not been easy. To turn a 250 years old teacher-centred system into a learning-centred classroom has not been without pain. We still have schools which live in the area of behaviourism-practising teacher centred classrooms, but more and more schools seems to see the importance of involving pupils in their own learning process. Evidence from external evaluation in Karmoy seems to indicate that the new structure in larger measure has been established in primary schools more than in secondary schools. However, there are examples of very good learner-centred secondary classrooms in Karmoy as well as in secondary schools all over Norway.

With a view to creating active and responsible citizens, we are on the way.

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Chapter 3

The floor to the students²

Emanuela Brumana, Virginia Ginesi, MariaCristina Zarrella

The door of the house

Who will come knocking?

An open door, we enter

a close door, a den.

The world pulse beats beyond my door.

Albert Birot

(A.Birot, *Les amusements naturels*, De Noël, Paris, 1945, in Bachelard,

La poetica dello spazio, Ed. Dedalo, trad. it. Dedalo, Bari, 1975)

This quotation introduces us to the topic of the relationship teacher-student: every pupil is like a den and the world knocks at his door. But the school is a den too, if its door doesn't open and the pupil feels he isn't allow to come in.

The Italian section focuses on the students, their perceptions, opinions, and experiences of participation at school, analysing three interesting experiences carried out in some schools belonging to STRESA ("Tools for school effectiveness and school self evaluation"), a network of 33 schools, involved in a substantial work program, centred on the improvement of school quality through self-evaluation.

3.1 What the pupils think of....

Emanuela Brumana

Introduction

This contribution explores significant aspects and critical incidents that emerged from student focus groups conducted in 9 schools belonging to

² Translation by Franco Tadini, Headteacher - Istituto Comprensivo Caravaggio- STRESA network

the STRESA network, on the basis of the case studies carried out within the SEEDS project. It was a special opportunity to understand the pupils' point of view and to reflect upon the importance of informal learning in active citizenship education.

The interviews were semi-structured and aimed at eliciting interests, stories and topics, sometimes unexpected, proposed by the students.

The sentences we have chosen and grouped according to the topics are illuminating in understanding how adults can, sometimes unconsciously, strengthen or discourage cooperation, responsibility, respect.

The focus group techniques

The focus group is a discussion technique, a typical form of group interview, between a group of people concerning one or more topics. The themes are stated in a clear way and are familiar to those present. The discussion is led by a facilitator. The strongest characteristic of this method is its ability to elicit the crucial points of the question or of the problem put to the group, in a rapid and profound way, thanks to a careful choice of participants. At the same time, this technique allows us to reconstruct how opinions develop in different operative contexts and promotes an interaction between participants aimed at gaining a deeper understanding that will eventually exceed the one of the single participants (see Stagi, 2001).

The focus group outline

The following outline gives some suggestions about the topics dealt with in the focus group discussions with the students. It was taken from the conceptual framework of the project focused on Participation, Rights, Responsibility and Relationships

The themes are clustered into 5 macro-sections:

1) The classroom as a group, to know and to recognise each other

Being citizens in a classroom: what does it mean?

Living in a classroom, living in a classroom as a group

Staying with other people.

Rules: which ones, how?

2) Opening up to other people

I am alone, I am with other people.

3) Shared respect

I stay with other people who have the same rights as me.
Differences arouse differences.

4) *Conflict*

Why different opinions arouse conflicts?

How to overcome conflicts?

Why to overcome conflicts?

5) *Choice and responsibility*

Can I make a choice?

What the pupils think of..... themselves

Girls and boys experience complex and intense relationships and emotions and this is clear in some accounts that we have been collected and reported here below. Students expressed their opinions, during the focus group sections, in such an open, fresh and ingenious way, that their opinions not only caught the adults unprepared, but displayed a different pattern of living and way of interpreting the school.

The way to respect

The climate of the class was reported to be good, apart from some troublesome issues, described by the students themselves.

The classroom has turned out to be a propitious lookout post: it is a “protected space” where pupils realize that they can take their own place



with respect to rules (accepting, building or breaking them), authority and their schoolmates.

“We come to blows because some mates say offensive words and so we have a free-for-all: it’s automatic to be hurt and as a consequence to come to blows”.

“At our age it’s the only way to show who is stronger and it’s also an easy way to clarify a matter...”

“Some of us believe to be right if they come to blows... on the contrary, they are wrong!!!!”

“A mate of ours is very touchy, gets angry immediately and comes to blows... Once teachers and caretakers had to intervene, but the worst is that schoolmates crowded around the two who were fighting and urged them to hit out more and more...”

“Girls! They don’t come to blows, but hurt strongly or push someone to one side... They behave as if he wasn’t there ...”

“The most difficult rule to be respected is to get on well...We have different personalities and it’s very difficult to avoid arguments...”

“When a mate makes a mistake or says something that has nothing to do with what we are discussing, we immediately blame him... it’s an instinctive reaction... on the contrary we should listen to him better, because perhaps what he said... might be worthy from some viewpoints!”

Grouping, loneliness and friendship

Some examples showed a strong sense of student solidarity toward classmates in difficulty. In this case the school’s capacity to acknowledge good behaviour becomes a pillar of active citizenship and creates a sense of belonging to the group and to the community.

In general, all students ask to take part in a group and hope for some kind of dialogue with their schoolmates. Better students are sometimes teased by the others but are supported by positive leaders. Generally, after some initial difficulties, Italian students have always put themselves at the disposal of the foreign classmates and proved willing to help and support them. However, clashes have also been recorded, with students often noting a sort of refusal on the part of foreign children to get involved in local life, especially outside the school.

“We meet students of other classes at school... our friends ..., we make groups...”

“A teacher can help you in school matters, but a mate can give you a moral support... and this is very important!”

“Being welcomed into a group is nice... and you can understand it by the look, by the way a person talks, if he considers you, asks for you, esteems you...”

“Apart from the Italian language, I didn't have any problem, I felt at ease with my mates, nearly all of them welcomed me...”

“When I came here, my mates push me to one side and I felt humiliated, I suffered a lot...”

“It's clear we belong to different social classes, within the classroom this doesn't exist, but from the corridor and beyond it exists and so someone is left out.....”

“Sometimes you tell your problems to a mate... I, for example, prefer to talk to my mates, sometimes to the caretakers and also to my parents, seldom to my teachers”

Learning how to cooperate

Collaboration and support are more frequent attitudes on the part of better students towards the weak ones. Teachers themselves are tending to promote this attitude of support and solidarity through working groups and/or work in pairs. The students' point of view is more diversified: on the one hand learning how to cooperate is an arduous task, on the other hand if you give support to a friend, you feel better with yourself.

“Oh, it's often a burden... when you are doing something and a mate asks for your help because he doesn't understand something ... you must break off something interesting you are doing and give him help...”

I don't want to refuse to help my mates... but they are selfish because while I'm working (and I am a bit slow) five of them call me and ask for help... keep calm ... I must work as well as you...!”

We help each other a lot ... it's good... you make your mate feel... even if he is... you help him"



"At the beginning it's a burden, but at the end we see that our mate who had a problem now has understood and so we feel better! It's a great satisfaction for us!"

"In my opinion we need to be patient also in the simple things...for example, when a mate asks you for a pen and you don't give it to him because you are bothered. But at the end it's something that comes back to you, because if you need something, the others behave as you did! So, even if you are bothered, it's better to be kind..."

"We tried to do a work activity in a group to improve our relationships. We set up different roles and chose as our subject the FRIENDSHIP. But it was a complete failure, because we couldn't get on well together within the group!"

Showing off

Boys and girls know they can challenge the authority because they take a limited risk at school. They can discuss their mistakes and learn from them. Teachers and parents aren't always aware of this and so it gives rise to conflicts. Thus different practices of democracy, different emotions and expectations, and different values and levels of consistency come into play.

"Yes, within the classroom you can't control yourself, we are all together and we get carried away ... For example, you don't think

about... you are reviewing your lessons because the next hour you have an oral test. A mate throws a rubber on your desk and you should focus on the test. But it's too funny... playing helps to soften the stress... we don't take in account we are disrespectful to teachers, to mates and to the environment... We don't give a damn!"

"When we pour water in the corridor, we feel a bit bad... but we have a lot of fun and so we don't want to stop... at the most we will clean up later...."

" And there is someone who throws crackers under the teachers' cars... there is someone who gives rude answers.. not always... but sometimes it happens ... someone who breaks something ... a glass with a head butt... you can imagine... teachers would want to give us a mark also on our behavior out of school...!!!"



The wish to challenge

The way the norms and values of school life are experienced, whether positively or negatively, is crucial to analyze and understand the concept and the attitudes towards citizenship. Regarding the rules, students report their difficulty in respecting all the rules in everyday activities. However, breaking rules seems to be part of their desire for rebellion rather than a lack of recognition of the rules themselves. Values and rules are dynamic, must face complexity and changes, but their number mustn't be increased or their contents changed arbitrarily, otherwise they lose their educational significance.

“Rules are made to be broken. When parents forbid you to do something, you do it on purpose!”

“It’s the class climate that urges you to break the school rules, but it’s almost normal to break rules...”

“Sometimes it’s difficult to respect rules because you would do something by instinct, but rules state what to do and how...”

“Oooh...it’s too difficult not to write on the desks, they are too clean. On the contrary writing on them gives a feeling of real life. Desks with signs are pieces of history”

“Yes, there are rules that are easier to be respected, but some of them are really hard... waiting your own turn to speak, not interrupting the teacher or a schoolmate when they are speaking. It is impossible for me to wait for my turn. I take the floor!”

“Some rules are set at the beginning of the school year, some others are set later on, when troubles arise... at the end there are too many rules!!!”

“I cannot see why we shouldn’t respect a rule we have chosen”

In fact, when students themselves have taken part in setting up the rules, they are more likely to respect them and would find it inconsistent to try to break them.

What the pupils think of..... their teachers

Consistency

Pupils underline the contradiction of teachers who state the respect of rules and sometimes are the first to break them. Perhaps the most negative aspect is not so much the broken rule, but the fact that a teacher, who is supposed to answer for the respect of rules, is the one who breaks them. It is clear that inconsistencies and contradictions between what it’s said and what it’s done, between what it’s expected from other people and from ourselves are not accepted, most of all in an educational institution. Many students testify that often teachers don’t apply the decisions, promises or choices made together in advance in the classroom, and they think they are entitled to do this because of their role. In this way decisions taken in a democratic way are then ignored. This tricky aspect is crucial to build

relationships of trust with students and to experience concretely the idea of democracy.

“We learn and help each other a lot when working in groups ... it’s easier. But in the classroom we generally do individual work, even if we try to prompt... A teacher said: - I’d like you to help each other, to prompt your mates-. But when we did it, he got angry!!!!!!!!!!”

“A teacher said: -It’s forbidden to chew gum during the lessons-... but she was chewing three pieces of gum when saying so!”

“Sometimes, when trouble arises in the classroom, we would like to speak to the teachers and to explain what really happened, who is the responsible... but teachers don’t listen to us and take the decision of who and how to inflict the punishment ... and often the punished people have nothing to do with it....”

“The teacher told a mate to read a text and she seemed to be asleep; then she told the mate to read again the same text... She gives you a bad mark because you didn’t answer her question and doesn’t give you enough time to reflect!”

“What makes me angry was the choice of seats within the classroom. The teacher told us: - This time we arrange seats at random-. At random two friend mates were near, but she separated them immediately. If she set up the rule, why did she change it later?!”

“Some teachers get angry, if they know you talked of something concerning their colleagues. They are angry because you didn’t speak of it directly with them. But if you try to speak directly to him, he gags you at once and you don’t settle anything...”

“... teachers have rules as well, but they not always respect them...”

Listening skills

Sometimes students have the feeling that teachers don’t want to listen to them. Sometimes they point out how difficult it is to defend one’s ideas in front of an adult, who has such a powerful role. Whatever the case may be, the educational relationship is asymmetrical and so students perceive their difficulty of taking part in school life, because adults have a great power and pupils are not free to express their ideas.

Sometimes students feel ignored in their requests and limited when they want to work together. Even if they acknowledge that it's right that teachers take decisions, they point out that often they don't take in account students' requirements, even if they are reasonable .

“You said in advance that the right solution for us is to talk and to listen to. But some people speak and the others don't listen to them. So there isn't any peaceful settlement because someone speaks but doesn't listen to what the others say!”

“Last year the teacher gave us advice and listened to our problems also out of the school ... some teachers asked us to tell our stories... But other teachers regarded all this as a waste of time... For us it wasn't so, because it gave us help, mainly to feel well together... This year we haven't had yet the opportunity for talking about this...”

“I have been learning my lesson by heart for three or four days. But during the oral test I floundered a moment because I was worked up and the teacher told me at once I hadn't studied. I should tell him I really studied my lesson, but I prefer not to contradict teachers. If I have something to say against them, I am not able to do so; I am afraid they will have a bad reaction, so I give up”.



“Yes... yes... sometimes, if it's an important matter, teachers certainly take you in account, perhaps not in a clear way, but you realize they have paid attention to you”

“ We talk about some of some problems to our teachers, but in advance we talk of them to ourselves... perhaps during the break... then, when we have solved our doubts, we speak to teachers. Many times we need to stop and to reflect a moment, so we can try to understand what are the problems, which mistakes we have made. Only in this way you can speak to teachers and try to solve a problem... what goes wrong”

“No, in my opinion it’s impossible... we tried many times but at the end they are always right. Sometimes, when I am at home, I reflect and say that this time it’s us who are right. But if we try to express our opinions at school, finally they are always right ... we’re never right!”

Paying attention and care

The core problem is the teacher-pupil relationship and the perception that everybody has of his own role. The relationship that teachers mainly tend to establish is based on respect and authority, whereas students require a relationship based on trust and especially on the desire to be listened to. Students point out how the different character or approach of teachers may have a strong impact on the behaviour of the whole class and on the attention level during the lesson. Just the prevailing attitude of a teacher may have an impact on the student motivation and the learning process.

“Teachers too are better when we are on a school trip... they are more understanding!!!!!!”

“Sometimes we are so tired of listening to teachers that we can’t stay awake... it’s tiring! Teachers can’t imagine how much difficulty we have and how little advantage we take from the lesson when we don’t pay attention and switch off our mind”.

“... the teaching methods can have a strong influence... because, if you don’t like the teaching way of your teacher, probably you don’t pay attention; instead, if the lesson is lively, captivating and quick, you are more alike to pay attention...”

“I think I am rather fond of school, but with this teacher... I’m going to lose my passion. When she explains a lesson, she’s boring and I can hardly stay awake. She often strays from the subject with personal stories which don’t interest anybody... I think she believes she is alone in classroom ... as if we weren’t there... she lives in a personal world...”

“If we spend two hours with a teacher, they seem to be as long as a day; instead, if we spend four hours with another ... time flies ... they seem like ten minutes... it depends on the teacher and his/her method... we go back to the point of the differences...”

“When we have the laboratory “Knowledge” and we start discussing social problems,then... it’s good, very good!”

Experiencing democracy

Educating toward active citizenship also means letting pupils experience democracy by giving them space to make suggestions, to take decisions, and to operate under the guidance of responsible adults. A further issue which is pointed out refers to the need for meeting areas within the school, where students are given a chance to spend some time together to talk, to discuss and to carry out activities, without adults, who sometimes are perceived as ‘inspectors’. Being by themselves in the protective atmosphere of the school may provide important opportunities for growth. Pupils would like to have more of a say within the school: classroom assemblies, circle-times to make mutual acquaintance and to talk with teachers and representatives, discussions about “real life” problems and not just school matters.



“In year one we set rules and tasks for all the mates and everything was all right. In year two we changed the teacher and asked her to go on with roles and tasks. She answered that she wasn’t interested and so nothing more was done about this matter. In year three we didn’t ask anything at all... In year one teachers asked us if we wanted to vote a mate as a monitor, but we didn’t know each other enough, so we took the decision not to vote. In the year two we asked to vote our class

representatives and they said no. Afterwards we asked to spend an hour every month to have a discussion in class, but for different reasons we couldn't have permission..."

"Some mates speak more in the classroom, others speak less, so the former ones take the initiative and speak to teachers on everybody's behalf"

"A positive leader must have a strong character, because he has to command respect of himself as a student better than others ... it's difficult!"

The statements and the thoughts collected have confirmed that the school context and culture can foster or restrain the informal students' activities and experiences, which

are also closely and mutually connected with students' civic behaviours and values. These three elements: civic behaviours and values, informal student activities and experiences at school, and the school context have come out as tightly interconnected. The school culture seems to be the primary setting of the informal learning of the sense of citizenship and the most important setting where pupils can experience participation, rights, responsibility and relationships, that are four key concepts strictly connected to the active citizenship.

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3.2 My opinion...a questionnaire for pupils

Emanuela Brumana

Introduction

In the following contribution, a self evaluation questionnaire is presented as a tool to develop pupils' participation in school life as real citizens who

can take the leadership of their learning process. The questionnaire has been used by the schools belonging to the STRESA network for long. However in 2006 it was submitted to 2680 pupils (10 and 12 years old) attending 15 Primary and Lower Secondary schools with the specific aim to develop analysis and then initiatives which could tackle various aspects of participation . Examples of how the questionnaire has been used are presented: two charts show how the results of data analysis are provided to the schools and the possible ways to take them in consideration to develop improvement strategies for the pupils' participation and relationships.

Self evaluation and responsibility

The questionnaire “ *My opinion...*” aims at creating concrete opportunities to develop awareness on school life and participation. In particular, it intends to capture:

Perceptions and feelings about teachers, schoolmates, school activities, relationship;

Data about wellbeing, climate, expectations;

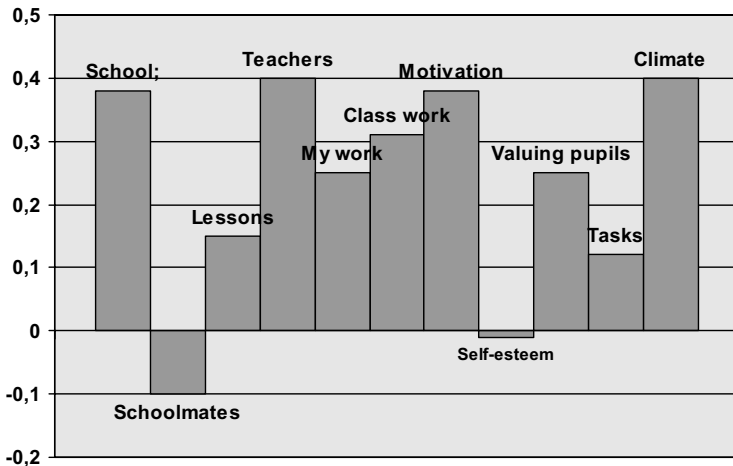
Meaningful information to improve the quality of the school life.

There are 59 multiple choice items and they explore six fields of daily school life: school, schoolmates, lessons, teachers, my work, class work. The factorial analysis allows us to read the results through new keys and to define six clusters: motivation, self-esteem, valuing pupils, supporting pupils, tasks, school climate.

A statistical analysis of the data collected was provided by the STRESA network and the results were fed back to the schools. Explanatory charts were provided in order to compare the school data with the network average. The charts show weak and strong areas of the school and of every single class group, so that the teachers can reflect on these issues. The teachers body can involve all its members in discussing and analyzing the pupils perceptions and plan strategies of improvement (retroactive planning). Each school can also organize settings to involve students in discussing and reflecting about data.

Two examples of this process are presented below with some notes about the improvement actions settled by the teachers body. The first one is focused on pupils' self esteem and the second one deals with their learning motivation: both are strictly linked to the process of building an active citizenship, and how it can be improved.

Class profile – 2C school = X



Average - 0 = General school average

Fig.3..1 Class profile 1

The chart shows two weak areas: schoolmates and self-esteem. The school is reflecting on these issues:

QUESTIONS

- ⇒ Schoolmates. Why do pupils perceive their relationship with schoolmates as problematic? Can this risk increase bullying? How can we create the conditions for a positive relationship?
- ⇒ Self esteem. How to promote a fair perception of pupil's skills with respect of school outcomes? What is the impact of a weak relationship between pupils and everyone self-esteem? What is the risk of isolation?

The teachers body plan strategies for improvement (retroactive planning)

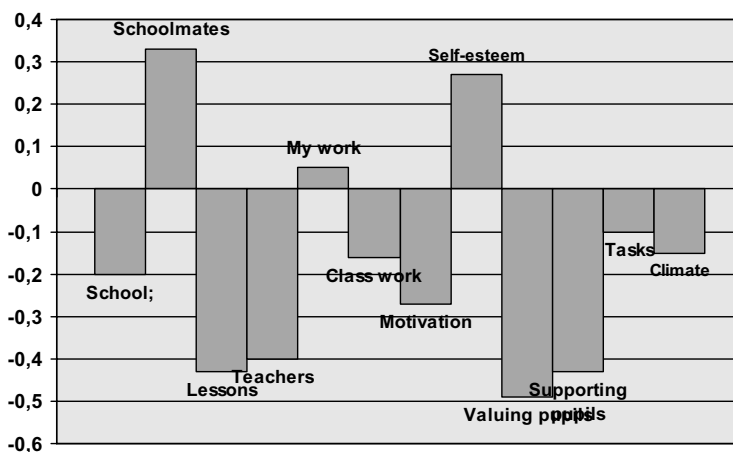
ACTIONS

⇒ School level. Training and professional development activities focusing on participative methodologies(cooperative learning, tutoring, etc)

⇒ Classroom level. Listening activities:

- Conversations in groups led by the teacher. Pupils stated that they perceive their schoolmates as” *scarcely responsible*” “ *sometimes joking too far and becoming even mean*” “ *There is competition between groups*” “ *There are differences in pupils popularity among mates*”
- Pupils’ proposals to improve their relationship with peers establishing behavioural rules. The most popular issues emerged: peer exclusion from games; quarrels and fights; gossip and unfair comparisons; sharing of tasks.

Class profile – 2 B – school = Y



Average - 0 = general School average

Fig.3..2 Class profile 2

The chart shows that the weak area is the relationship between pupils and teachers and sense of “justice” in the daily life. The school is reflecting on these issues:

QUESTIONS

- ⇒ Teachers. Do teachers pay attention to pupils' needs and demands?
Why do pupils perceive they are not taken into account by teachers?
Why do pupils say teachers show favoritism towards some pupils?
How can teachers give support to everyone?
- ⇒ Motivation. How can emotions and feelings influence pupils learning?
Is it possible to prevent pupils' indifference and troubles? Is the relationship between pupil and teacher based on mutual respect and confidence?

The teacher's body plan strategies for improvement (retroactive planning)

ACTIONS

- ⇒ School level. Training and professional development activities focusing on teaching/learning relationship
- ⇒ Classroom level. Listening activities:
- Conversations in groups led by the psycho-pedagogical operator. Pupils talk about concrete situations in which they didn't feel themselves respected taken into account and supported by teachers
 - Open letter to teachers to ask for a school agreement to establish shared duties and rights between teachers and pupils.

In appendix to this chapter we provide:

- the full text of the questionnaire “ *My opinion*”;
- the “*Educative Contract*”, an example of Educative Agreement between teachers and pupils, as a concrete way to develop students' responsibility and participation. It was thought and carried out by head, teachers and pupils of two schools³ belonging to the STRESA network after the discussion about the results of the questionnaire .

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³ Primary School of Cassano d'Adda (Bg), Primary and Secondary School of Vimodrone (Mi).

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3.3 The “Pre-teenagers school committee”

Virginia Ginesi, MariaCristina Zarrella *

A project to develop students’ participation and learning interactions

The last contribution refers to a school project focused on co-operation, participation and learning interactions experienced by pupils at school, carried out in the Istituto Comprensivo of Chiuduno.

The Istituto Comprensivo is composed of two primary and two lower secondary schools. It counts 870 students (the immigrants represent the 15-20%). Chiuduno is a little town (5350 inhabitants) placed at the foot of the hills near Bergamo. The school plays an important role within the local community and it is a reference point for many social and cultural activities. In fact, it was open by tradition to new and experimental enterprises, mainly after the School Autonomy Act. So it increased projects and activities in partnership with the Municipality and the local educational agencies to respond to the needs of a more and more complex and multicultural body of users.

Since 2003 the Head and the teachers’ body have been promoting activities to give the teenagers attending the school an opportunity to play an active role in their educational process and in the community life. The school, in partnership with the Municipality, promoted an educational inquiry, which identified the meeting points, the needs and the problems expressed by teenagers through a questionnaire about free time. Afterwards, teachers, municipal officers, parents and co-ops educators joined together in order:

* *Maria Cristina Zarrella* pagg. 60-63, *Virginia Ginesi* pagg. 63-65

- to increase students' participation
- to improve collaboration between adults and young people
- to develop young people's assumption of responsibility
- to encourage students to become real actors at school within the decision making process and the organization of the activities.

These activities were aimed not only at investigating and understanding how citizenship was conceptualized by pupils, but also how it was felt. Since then the Istituto Comprensivo of Chiuduno has been promoting a large range of activities, both the ones concerning free time and free grouping (parties, music concerts, sport games), and the ones more connected with the needs of growing up and of education (students assemblies, interviews/meetings with the Local Authorities, extra-school rooms to do homework and to stay together...) that could help in reducing the gap between the theory and the practice of citizenship at school. These activities are meant to produce "protagonists", that is teenagers who are able to play an active role in the democratic educational process in order to measure themselves before entering the adults world. This implies that adults do not work for the teenagers but they work with the teenagers of the school. It's true, in fact, that students often perceive education as something given and compulsory, rather than a process in which they are active and significant participants.

Over the last years some members from the school and some municipal officers joined together to develop a working group in order to increase and improve the participation of the teenagers in the community. This team, called "Consulta Giovani" (Council for young people), is composed by:

- The head teacher of the primary and lower secondary school
- A teacher that co-operates with the local agencies
- The head teacher of the pre-primary school
- The councillor of the Municipality responsible for the welfare
- A welfare officer of the Municipality
- A delegation of the educational co-op "Archè"
- A delegation of parents
- The parish priest
- Two delegates of local sporting clubs
- Two delegates from the local health agency.

The Council proposes rules and methods; helps educators and teachers to plan projects, strategies and activities; coordinates the community agencies; makes a monthly check upon the activities; negotiates the

young people needs and has regular meetings with the “Pre-teenagers School Committee”.

This committee is the core of the school project and is composed of representatives of the students who live at Chiuduno, attend the local lower secondary school and have been elected by their classmates. It has a meeting every 15 days and is coordinated by an officer, which is responsible for the “Project for young people” of the Municipality.

It is aimed at:

- increasing the sense of the representative ness of boys and girls;
- helping them in playing the role of representatives, both at school and within the local community;
- giving support to them in the dialogue with the world of adults;
- increasing their sense of responsibility both in collecting desiderata and suggestions of their mates and in planning and carrying out activities;
- giving legitimacy to the needs of grouping of the pre-teenagers in Chiuduno.



Core ideas and cues from the Seeds project

The Seeds project gave the opportunity for investigating the strengths, the future opportunities, but also some weakness of the school project. In fact, the Seeds core idea is that co-operation, participation and learning interactions experienced by pupils at school are meaningful to the growth of their sense of citizenship in a cultural, social and democratic perspective.

The information collected with interviews, context observations, questionnaires carried out by Seeds were important to monitor and to improve the school activity. More precisely, they gave suggestions and reflections about the quality of the educational relationships, the school

culture, the attitudes and the behaviours of boys and adults in classroom. The key concepts of the Seeds project are: living together as a real community, respecting rights and duties, taking care of the relationships among adults and between adults and young people, participating and taking responsibilities. They are strictly connected with the aims of the “Teenagers School Committee” .In this way the school was able to amend the project and to increase its value within an international context. Some interesting events and opinions of the protagonists are reported here below.

Some interesting events

A borderline student was elected as a representative. Previously, he didn't behave always in a polite and responsible way, had often arguments with his classmates and took up a threatening and arrogant attitude towards them. He was a discouraged boy, from a poor family. Being in charge of this role represented for him an important experience since he could build more self-confidence, use his energy in positive actions and gain more and more reliability. He was a very effective delegate. Many mates then approached him in a friendly way and started to look at him in a new way, to choose him in classroom work and also in their free time.



The “Pre-teenagers School Committee” held a party on the last day of school. The day before teachers, students, parents and caretakers had a meeting in order to get everything ready. They collaborated with enthusiasm, responsibility and care and the result was an extremely successful party. Furthermore, after the party, to the great surprise of the adults, many students stayed and helped to tidy up the rooms, while

previously they used leave this task to their mothers. Sometimes representatives were not able to coordinate their classmates during the meetings. Once, some students had such a rude attitude that two representatives burst out sobbing. The teacher had to intervene and stop the quarrel. He helped them to understand their role and the reasons why this had happened. It is important to give teenagers free speech, but this also means that teachers may face difficulties, risks and hard work.

Opinions

The Head

“From my viewpoint as a Head, the project of the “Pre-teenagers School Committee” has fostered a more straightforward dialogue between parents and teachers, which in the last years increased of 30% the number of pupils attending the school (in advance pupils “run away” to the private schools), a calmer and clearer contact with families, a mutual confidence.

Furthermore, it has built up and reinforced the link with the Municipality: the local Council has shared the perspective of prevention in the policy towards young people and the lower secondary school has made a contribution to its success through this project, which has been a concrete experience of citizenship for all the pre-teenagers.

And the students’ enthusiasm goes on, even if room and equipment are scarce: the “Pre-teenagers School Committee” has meetings in an old room with only a table, some chairs and posters.

But what makes me excited is to see my students who take a place in the adults’ world and are able to play their role with responsibility, in a fresh and simple way. The evening the students took part in the meeting of the Council at the Town Hall and then told us what happened, I thought: “We gave them confidence and they paid it back. This is an experience I will not forget”.

A teacher

“Teachers believe too often they are the only owners of education. This project is certainly a privilege for me, because it gave me the opportunity to consider in a deeper way my students’ needs, taking into account not only and not always their duties, but understanding that teenagers’ minds fly higher than you can imagine...Paying attention to the needs, the opinions and the suggestions of teenagers has become for us a need, a way of understanding them and of teaching them to have confidence in adults and in the future...”.

Some students

“In my opinion this experience has been very positive, both for the representatives and for all my mates.

The class representatives learn about the difficulties of their role as people who mediate, who are spokesmen of a group towards another group, in this case of students towards adults and institutions. Our representatives must learn to make a compromise, realize that not everything is possible and begin to examine a problem from many viewpoints”.

“Classmates must collaborate with their representatives, produce ideas which then will be put to the vote, express their own viewpoint and ask for them when some problems arise. It’s they that make the choice of representatives as the fittest people for this role and it’s they who take the decisions about many matters in the class assemblies. Being a representative means also to be able to mediate, because they must not take decisions according to their opinion, but report to the institutions what the majority has decided”.

“The representative has a difficult but rewarding task, because without him/her it would be impossible to carry out or to change many things. His/her commitment is necessary for the good of the school and it’s important to give scope to boys and girls in expressing opinions and carrying out activities and to take them more in account”.

Final remarks

Thanks to the project, the Istituto Comprensivo has become more active in the community life and it has set up a network of territorial relationships. Teachers, parents and Municipal officers have monthly meetings, they discuss suggestions, activities and ideas and, above all, they empower students to make proposals.

The project is ongoing and every year it grows richer in new ideas and activities and in the students’ interest to take part in it with excitement. The school Head is firmly convinced it will make a contribution to change and to improve the local community. In fact, “to live an active citizenship” doesn’t concern only the individual or family sphere of every pre-teenager and of his/her group, but it involves strongly the whole community. It gives the adults the responsibility of making clear, of qualifying and of justifying the great human potential of boys and girls.

Appendix

I - My opinion... Questionnaire for pupils

We would like to know your opinion about your school, what you like and what you don't like.

We don't ask you to write your name, but only your class and school. Your answers, with the ones of many other boys and girls, will be analyzed and studied by a team of teachers and professional researchers. The aim is to understand how to make schools work better.

For this reason it's important you answer this questionnaire in all sincerity. There isn't any "right" or "wrong" answer; your answers will be always right if you really think what you say. Don't allow you to be influenced by your schoolfellows' answers.

To make your answers, you must:

1. Read the questions carefully
2. Choose only one of the four answers
3. Mark with a cross one of the small checks
4. If you want to change an answer you have already given, put a circle around the cross and then mark a new cross on the right answer

Before starting, wait for the teacher's signal

Thank you for you collaboration

MY OPINION...ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1) I like our classroom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes, a lot
<input type="checkbox"/> enough
<input type="checkbox"/> a little
<input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all</p> <p>2) There is evidence in our classroom of school works we have done</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes, a lot
<input type="checkbox"/> enough
<input type="checkbox"/> little
<input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all</p> <p>3) Our school is cosy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes, very much
<input type="checkbox"/> enough
<input type="checkbox"/> a little
<input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all</p> | <p>4) I like the gym, where we do Physical Education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes, a lot
<input type="checkbox"/> enough
<input type="checkbox"/> little
<input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all</p> <p>5) I like having lunch in the school canteen</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't have lunch in the school canteen
<input type="checkbox"/> yes, a lot
<input type="checkbox"/> enough
<input type="checkbox"/> a little
<input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all</p> <p>6) We have got a lot of room to do the break</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes, a lot
<input type="checkbox"/> enough
<input type="checkbox"/> little
<input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all</p> |
|--|---|

7) There are many other rooms, besides our classroom, to do interesting activities in our school

- enough
- little
- no, not at all

yes, a lot

MY OPINION...ABOUT SCHOOLFELLOW

8) I think my schoolfellows like me

- all
- most of them
- only few
- no one

12) I often have a row with my schoolfellows

- with all
- with most of them
- only with few
- with no one

9) My schoolfellows often ill-treat me

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

13) I would like to change my schoolfellows

- all
- most of them
- only few
- no one

10) I think my schoolfellows don't like me

- all
- most of them
- only few
- no one

14) I often feel alone at school

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

11) I have got a lot of friends at school

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

MY OPINION..... ABOUT MY TEACHERS

15) I like my teachers

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

19) My teachers do lessons well

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

16) Our teachers teach in a pleasant way

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

20) My teachers do lessons in a difficult way

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

17) Our teachers treat us like little children

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

21) Our teachers pay attention to what we say

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

18) I think my teachers like me

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

22) When I say something, my teachers pay attention to me

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

23) Our teachers show favouritism towards some pupils

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

24) Our teachers often joke

- true
- rather true
- rather false
- false

25) Our teachers are rude to us

- true
- rather true
- rather

MY OPINION... ABOUT LESSONS

26) Our teachers are able to explain the same subject in different ways

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

30) My teachers are interested in why I have done my work in a certain way

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

27) Our teachers at the beginning of the lesson say what we are going to do

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

31) When we do exercises by ourselves, our teachers go round the desks to give help

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

28) If we don't understand, our teachers explain again the same subject

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

32) Our teachers repeat works and subjects we have already done

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

29) My teachers explain my mistakes when they give me back the exercises I've done

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

33) If I ask for an explanation, my teachers help me

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

MY OPINION... ABOUT MY WORK

34) I learn a lot at school

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

36) Our teachers suggest subjects of no/little interest to me

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

35) The exercises I do at school are too easy

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

37) When I have to do a test, I am concerned

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

38) It happens I have to do exercises I don't understand

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

39) The exercises we do at school are too difficult

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

40) It happens I have to study at school subjects I already know

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

41) I am bored during the lessons

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

42) I have got all the time I need to carry out my exercises

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

43) I have troubles to carry out my exercises

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

44) My schoolfellows carry out the exercises before me

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

45) I have too little work to do at school

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

46) I have too much work to do at school

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

MY OPINION ... ABOUT THE WAY WE WORK

47) We can work well in our classroom

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

48) I can't reflect in my classroom

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

49) We waste our time because we make a lot of noise in the classroom

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

50) Our teachers frequently tell us to be quiet

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

51) When the teacher is out of the classroom, we go on doing our work

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

52) When the teacher explains the lesson, we pay attention to her/him

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

53) We respect the turn of speaking during the discussions

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

54) If I don't understand something, I can call a schoolfellow for help without problems

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

55) Our teachers demand we work a lot

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

56) Our teachers tell us to do the best

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

57) Our teachers get angry if we don't work hard

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

58) Our teachers are happy if we work hard

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

59) My teachers help me to learn

- always
- many times
- sometimes
- never

Now your opinion about the questionnaire!

Choose your answer

- I was interested and I did my best
- I was interested, but I had some troubles
- I wasn't very interested and I did my best
- I wasn't interested at all and I did my answers at random

And finally some information about you
boy



girl

According to me, my achievement is:

- very good
- good
- sufficient
- borderline
- poor

Appendix

II - Educative Contract

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>School's duties</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pupils' duties</i></p>
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">1 <i>We prepare a cozy school for you</i></p> <p><i>We show interesting work at school that you have done</i></p> <p><i>We furnish the gym with pieces of equipment and plays for Physical Education.</i></p> <p><i>We organize other rooms to do interesting activities, besides the classroom</i></p> <p><i>We take care to have a room fit to play and for our break</i></p> <p><i>We see that rooms are safe</i></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">1 <i>I collaborate to make my school cosy</i></p> <p><i>I make use of school tools with care because I know they belong to everybody</i></p> <p><i>I leave the rooms where I work or play in order</i></p> <p><i>I know that I must behave so that I don't hurt myself or the others.</i></p> </div>
<div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">2 <i>We are a good class group</i></p> <p><i>We make you discuss, work and play together</i></p> <p><i>We help you to settle a dispute or to solve a problem, when they happen</i></p> </div>	<div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">2 <i>I enjoy staying with my schoolmates</i></p> <p><i>I try to be a good friend</i></p> <p><i>I pay attention to understand all my mates</i></p> </div>

<p><i>We help you to pay attention to the others, especially when they are in trouble</i></p> <p><i>We teach you to take part in groups and not to exclude anyone</i></p>	<p><i>I help my mates when they are in trouble</i></p> <p><i>I take part in the class life and I respect the rule</i></p>
<p>3 <i>We help you to enjoy your learning</i></p> <p><i>We see that working and learning are pleasant activities</i></p> <p><i>We make you realize that you can learn by playing</i></p> <p><i>We propose many different and nice activities</i></p> <p><i>We encourage you to try and not to be afraid of making mistakes</i></p> <p><i>We appreciate everyone's work and engagement</i></p> <p><i>We pay attention to you with care</i></p>	<p>3 <i>I do my best to learn</i></p> <p><i>I do all the school activities with care</i></p> <p><i>I try to do also the difficult tasks</i></p> <p><i>I realize that my mates and what they do are important</i></p> <p><i>I ask to give my opinion by waiting my turn</i></p>
<p>4 <i>We prepare useful and interesting lessons</i></p> <p><i>Before every lesson we explain to you what we are going to do</i></p> <p><i>We help you to learn the same thing in different ways</i></p> <p><i>When you are in trouble, we help you to understand better</i></p> <p><i>We help you to understand your mistakes and to correct them</i></p> <p><i>We are concerned to understand how you have worked and reflected</i></p> <p><i>We give you help and stay near your desk, when you do an individual work</i></p>	<p>4 <i>I take an active part in my lessons</i></p> <p><i>I listen to my teachers and try to understand what they say and to follow their instructions</i></p> <p><i>I commit myself to finding and trying different ways</i></p> <p><i>I try again and again and I ask for help when I don't understand</i></p> <p><i>I try hard to understand my mistakes and to improve</i></p> <p><i>I explain to my teachers and mates how I have done my work</i></p>

Chapter 4

Citizenship at school and beyond. Active citizenship projects in the Catalan educational system

Anna Babra and Maria Ojuel

This section reflects on the social competences that can be developed through school projects and pedagogical methods carried out in Catalan schools aiming to achieve active citizenship. The new educational law in Spain includes for the first time Citizenship Education as a specific curricular subject. This is an opportunity to reflect on the pedagogical methodologies to teach citizenship education. Catalonia, as an autonomous community of Spain, has legislative power in most educational aspects and this means that the Catalan political institutions can design 45% of the curriculum. The option for the citizenship education has been a model that emphasizes transcurricularity as well as the specificity of the new subject in the curriculum. This article reflects on the need for incorporating pedagogical methodologies and community service projects for active and global Citizenship Education. The case studies are based on real projects and experiences carried out in different Catalan primary and secondary schools.

4.1 Introduction

The research carried out within the framework of the SEEDS project aimed at finding out what elements of citizenship education (conceived from a perspective shared with the rest of European countries), could be conveyed through school culture. We understand school culture or atmosphere as the background where the interaction between the different members of the educational community takes place, across its different space and time dimensions. In this sense, the school can be regarded as a community model where multidimensional citizenship practices are applied. This school culture comprises contents but also practices of citizenship education. Consequently, it needs certain strategies enabling it to foster the involvement of different sectors of the educational community and that of its environment.

We initiated a research project comprising two differentiated phases with the aim of finding these strategies. In the first phase, three experiences, whose main stress was laid on collaboration and team work, were analyzed from a global perspective. In the second phase, other practical cases, of somehow lesser scope but permitting work on civil values, were analyzed through peer tutoring methodology and learning service. In both phases, those practical experiences which were considered to be more relevant in terms of being good examples of “good practice” for other schools were identified, selected and analyzed.

The research done within the framework of the SEEDS project is of capital importance in Catalonia and the Spanish state, given the fact that the new Education Law (LOE) envisages for the first time the inclusion of citizenship education as a specific subject of the compulsory education curriculum⁴. This specificity doesn't mean that we forget a wider dimension of the citizenship education, as part of the school culture. In fact, before the implantation of this new subject, a great number of educational centres carried out civil education projects, many of which were regarded as innovation projects by the Ministry of Education⁵. Sometimes they were launched by individual educators from their own teaching domain but others involved a good portion of the teaching staff and had a more transcurricular orientation. In fact, our research is based on practical experiences that a number of schools carried out before LOE and which now can be implemented within the framework of the new law, serving as a model of “good practice” for other centers. For a great number of centers, then, citizenship education, rather than being a new subject, is a new approach to a number of contents that were already being tackled in a transcurricular way or in some subjects in the field of social sciences, tutorials and elective subjects. This new approach includes looking for different teaching methods to develop an effective and responsible citizenship education.

In this article two points will be described: firstly, the educational context of Catalonia and secondly, the research itself. At the end, some conclusions will be drawn.

⁴ Compulsory education in the Spanish state is divided into primary education (6-12 years old) and compulsory secondary education (12-16 years old).

⁵ Recognising these experiences as innovation projects has brought about specific training for teachers and additional economic resources.

4.2 Educational context of Catalonia

The background of the necessity to convey educational contents through compulsory education aiming at a responsible citizenship can be traced back to the conclusions of a number of surveys done within the framework of the European Union. These conclusions were based on initiatives promoted by international organizations such as the UNESCO. Accordingly, the European Council recommended its member states to apply policies of social integration and active citizenship as part of the strategic objectives of the different educational systems. This revival of the interest in civil education in Europe should be understood as the consequence of an increasing detachment from politics by young people and as an off-shoot of the need for cohesion and social integration arising from the great international migrations and multicultural contacts. As for the Spanish state, after a long dictatorship (1939-1975), education for responsible citizenship is especially important among the generations that have always lived in freedom. Being aware of the past fight for democracy in one's country enables one to value more the present situation and the importance of playing an active role in them.

There are European countries that are already applying a transcurricular treatment of citizenship education by teaching its contents through other subjects and there are others that have decided to teach its contents through a specific citizenship education subject. As mentioned above, in the case of the Spanish state, the new education law, passed in 2006, regulates compulsory education cycles and sixth form. This law states that citizenship education and human rights must be imparted during one of the higher courses of primary education⁶ and in one of the three first courses of compulsory secondary education⁷. Ethics and Civility should be covered during the last course of compulsory low secondary education⁸, with contents dealing with interpersonal and social relationships, rights and duties and democratic participation. The Generalitat de Catalunya, the political institution representing the Catalan government, is entitled to design and manage 45% of the curriculum for the autonomic community of Catalonia. Finally, following the principle of organization and management pedagogical autonomy, the centers are expected to develop and finalize the established curriculum for the educational administration in such a way that it is a valid tool to meet the needs and different realities of each centre.

⁶ The higher cycle of primary education comprises students between 10 and 12 years old.

⁷ The 1st, 2nd and 3rd courses of compulsory secondary education comprise students between 12 and 15 years old.

⁸ The students of 4th course of compulsory secondary education are 16 years old.

In the curriculum regulation established by the Ministry of Education of the Generalitat de Catalunya, a global policy has been opted for, which aims at granting the specificity of the contents of citizenship education in the curriculum, as established by the LOE, without renouncing its transcurricular treatment. In other words, the stress is laid not only on the didactic transmission of the contents through a subject in the curriculum, but special importance is given to the school and even to all the community when following up some more global objectives, which needless to say, are more difficult to achieve and evaluate. To sum up, it is necessary to build up a school culture, which makes it possible for the school to instill its values and experiences into its students so that they can incorporate them into their daily life. We should point out that this task is regarded as a task involving the whole educational community.

The Catalan curriculum regulation, apart from spelling out the contents of the new subject, also establishes the importance of teaching it from a practical approach, following the saying “citizenship is learned through practice”. In other words, interpersonal skills and civil values must be taught, but these can only be learned through practice, thorough participation projects within the centre or through learning service or direct or indirect community intervention. Teaching citizenship from an experience orientated approach forces centers to reflect upon their theoretical discourse, which must be coherent with their school practices. Consequently, when drawing up the programs, it is necessary to select contents based on functional learning which enable students to recognize that what they have learned helps them to deal with real problems, affecting them directly or indirectly, which encourage them to find a solution and which provide a service within or outside the school through citizenship practice.

4.3 Citizenship Education and school culture

During the first phase of the research a case study was carried out in order to find out what elements of citizenship education could be found in the schools’ culture. This study stemmed from four skills that are at the root of the Catalan curriculum:

- Learning to be: it entails learning to build up a personal set of ethical values enabling students to be autonomous and discerning.
- Learning to live together: it entails learning to live with others and valuing them, while establishing satisfactory interpersonal relationships based on respect and tolerance.

- Learning to participate: it entails being able to become active citizens and recognizing one's rights and obligations in a democratic society.
- Learning to live in the world: it entails being conscious of the need to leave a fairer and more sustainable world to our descendants.

We realized that a correlation between these skills and the four main areas of the Norwegian school framework could be drawn: interpersonal relationships, participation, responsibility and rights.

Thereafter, we selected two primary education schools and a low secondary education school that were involved in citizenship education projects⁹. During several meetings with the boards we identified and singled out a number of specific projects dealing with citizenship that were being implemented in each of the schools. Then we collected and systematized the information through:

- Direct observation of the development of projects related to citizenship.
- Interviews with the whole of the educational community (teaching staff, families, students and non teaching staff)¹⁰. The objective was to find out to which extent participation was a current factor, to which extent it was encouraged by the school and to which extent responsibility was shared.
- Audio-visual recording of the experiences following a script play previously agreed upon with the school. These recordings have a potential didactic value, as they enable the diffusion of the experiences.

In fact, our objective was to look into the culture of the target centre focusing our attention on active participation, team work, common aspirations, sense of belonging, respect for the other and integration. The interviews provided information on how participation in the school was experienced by each of the parts of the educational community and their degree of involvement and responsibility. We started to interview the

⁹ Two of these schools belong to the network of basic skills, an association of centres that intends to reflect upon the learning of basic skills by students and on the research into ways of learning improvement. It is supported by the Ministry of Education of Catalunya.

¹⁰ See the questionnaires in the appendix 2.

teaching staff in order to have an initial outlook on the research, which expanded and became more specific with the interviews to the students, families, non-teaching staff and the board. In all the cases, the questions aimed at finding out how each part or group felt as a member of the educational community, how they behaved as such and whether they considered their degree of participation to be sufficient. On the other hand, each group had the opportunity to assess the participation of the other groups. In this way, we were able to form a clear picture of the relationships between the different school groups, as well as of their fluency and effectiveness. This research was useful for the schools themselves for it helped them to reflect upon the school participation and helped them to put forward improvement proposals for the areas that did not perform satisfactorily.

Global project on citizenship education in a primary school

The first project was carried out in the primary school “Joan Miró” (Barcelona)¹¹. It is a project in which the whole educational community was involved and where all the students learned to become responsible and to participate through practical work. The students were put in situations where they had to apply and develop the skills needed to be responsible citizens. Bearing this in mind, the school integrated in its daily routine activities in which the whole educational community participated and gave them the opportunity to experience participation in a hands-on way. These tasks were well inter-connected and contributed to creating a specific centre atmosphere. All of them made it possible to develop the four skills described above: learning how to be, learning how to live together, learning to participate and learning to live in the world. The first activity was carried out during tutorials. It focused on emotional education and aimed at making the students aware of their responsibilities. Other contents related to civil values were also covered. Each class had a student representative in the “values commission”, a sort of school council formed by a member of the board, the dining room supervisor and the students’ representatives, who brought to the commission the topics tackled during the tutorials. These students also participated in the decision-making phase. Then, the representatives had to be able to communicate the decisions that have been made to their peers. This activity focuses on the democratic spirit, responsibility and team work.

Another activity that encourages participation in the school community is the “Cultural Week”. Every year the school chooses a topic related to a

¹¹ The audiovisual recording can be watched in: See appendix 1.

country or world zone. Different tasks are allocated to each age level so that all the students between 3 and 12 years old can participate. The work of each group is indispensable for the shared result and enables all the members of the educational community – including families- to spend time together during this week while carrying out and looking at the work done by all the community. The activities done in the classroom acquire a wider dimension for they go beyond the classroom to become an activity that is “by and for everybody”. Furthermore, the students get familiar with other places and cultures, which enables them to understand and value diversity. The links between the school, the neighborhood, the city and other more distant environments are strengthened through other projects that contribute equally to consolidating the concept of citizenship. Families have other means of participating in the school, such as the program of recycling of school material, which parents carry out together with the school. The activity stresses the importance of responsible consumption by taking care of, saving and recycling school material.

Project on cooperative learning in a primary school

The second project is implemented in the secondary school “Bruguers” (Gavà), through what they call “The Fortnight for Peace and Non-violence”¹². Supported logistically and financially by the city hall, the centre organizes a series of workshops adapted to the age of the students (from 12 to 18 years old), so that everybody participates. The workshops deal with a wide array of topics: domestic violence, prejudice, food multinationals, war conflicts, globalization, civil regulations and democracy. This project has led, year after year, to an improvement in the degree of involvement of the students and to a stronger commitment from the teachers. Little by little, the teachers have shown a higher degree of participation in the joint tasks of the centre and what first started as several isolated activities has now become a consolidated centre project to which everybody is committed.

At the beginning the experience was limited to the days the project was held, but eventually the teachers have incorporated classroom activities related to the project to their program. The centre understands that citizenship education can't be constrained to the teaching hours of a given subject and has bet on a more inter - active model that, in addition, receives the support of the surrounding entities.

¹² The audiovisual recording can be watched in: See appendix 1.

Project on citizenship education in a secondary school

The third project is carried out in the primary school “Can Puig” (Banyoles)¹³ and consists of organizing the students into teams during the classes of just any school subject. The teachers lead students to the resolution of everyday tasks individually, in pairs or in groups. In this way they have the opportunity to help others or to be helped through co-operative learning. While learning the contents of the different subjects in the curriculum, the students learn to be respectful and show co-operative behavior in any given situation. Although the teachers mostly manage this process, the students soon become accustomed to this kind of approach and become progressively autonomous in the planning of their own work and in the meeting of the deadlines. In this context, evaluation is used as another way of learning, since students know the proposed objectives in advance. Moreover, the self-evaluation that is done at the end of each unit helps them to assess if they have achieved the objectives individually. However, and most importantly, the feeling that each student’s participation and commitment is essential for the team task, encourages responsibility and increases their self esteem while boosting efficiency in the achievement of school objectives.

4.4 Cooperative learning and active citizenship

As mentioned before, the second phase of the research centers on methodology so as to reflect upon those didactic methodologies that enable people to work on citizenship education contents in an active and transcurricular way, both in primary and secondary education. With this aim, a number of school projects, which were using pair work methodologies -also called peer tutoring- and service learning, were selected¹⁴. These projects could be good practice models for centers and they complemented the selected projects in the first phase of the research. The objective was for these projects to involve a good share of the students and the teachers in the performance of a service- within or outside the centre - while conveying various school contents.

Peer tutoring projects

In the first place, three peer tutoring experiences were chosen in which language skills were worked on in pairs. One of the students played the role of the other’s tutor. In one case, it involved pairs of students of

¹³ The audiovisual recording can be watched in: See appendix 1.

¹⁴ Most of these projects already had some audiovisual recording in the website <http://www.edu3.cat/>

different ages and in other cases it involved pairs of students of similar ages but with different learning paces or different levels of knowledge. In some cases, families were asked to participate.

The first experience, carried out in the primary school “Juan Ramón Jiménez” (Martorell), consists in acquiring reading skills through peer tutoring between students of the last course of the primary cycle (11-12 years old) and students from the first course of the same cycle (6-7 years old), following a series of activities suggested by the teacher. The second experience, carried out in the primary school “Riera de Ribes” (Sant Pere de Ribes), develops a peer-tutoring task between students of the same age but of different reading skills levels. This project involves the families, who can also become “mentors” of the tutored students. In the third case, carried out in the secondary schools “El Cairat” and “El Castell” (Esparraguera), the aim is to facilitate the incorporation of immigrant students through the so called “language couples”. These couples are of similar age and are formed on a voluntary basis. The student acting as a tutor participates in a number of conversation exchange sessions in Catalan with an immigrant student, who thus improves his/her language skills and becomes more familiar with the country he /she has moved to. In all these experiences, the student-tutor takes the role of “mentor”, “friend” or “counselor” of the tutored student, but at the same time he/she consolidates his/her own knowledge, since he/she is forced to “map out” what he / she is teaching. The experiences show that peer co-operation is a good way to learn, as the students being tutored acquire a more active role in the learning process and their self-esteem is boosted as a consequence of being taught by a peer. In the same way, the students acting as tutors develop an empathic attitude, increase their sense of responsibility and become more mature. Peer tutoring is a way to convey contents of different subjects while working on other citizenship education contents through values related to co-operation and mutual respect. Similarly, the will to participate jointly with other students within the school is substantially strengthened. It is desirable, therefore, that it becomes part of the methodological strategies of the different subjects and school projects, as it provides the students with a means to acquire a progressively active role.

Service-learning projects

In the second place, five experiences of service-learning entailing different links between the school and its immediate/non immediate surroundings were selected. They were chosen because they promoted a sense of social cohesion within the studied territory and, in some cases,

intercultural connections with other territories. We understand by service learning a formative methodology aiming at the acquisition of a number of contents and curriculum skills while the students give a real service. For this reason, it can mean a practical complement of the citizenship education classes or other subjects, or else it can be linked to the tutorials. On some occasions, it may become a wide scope project, involving a great number of members from the educational community; on some others, it can be an experience of voluntary basis and consequently, can only be assigned to those students who decide to volunteer.

The first experience, carried out in the secondary school “Montserrat Roig” (Terrassa), consists of a co-operation task with a school for children with special needs, “Crespinell” (Terrassa). The students from the secondary school worked with the handicapped children so that the latter could participate in a number of activities in the centre. In this way, the secondary school students learned how to relate to handicapped people without prejudices or condescending attitudes. The students from the school for children with special needs felt accepted and improved their self-confidence. The second experience took place in the secondary school “Egara” (Terrassa), where the students, thanks to an agreement with the city hall, undertake a forest preservation task near their school while learning natural sciences and values related to the environment. The third, carried out in the primary school “El Llierca” (Sant Jaume de Llierca) aims to create links between different generations in the village through the workshops run by the elders for the students. In this way, the elders share their life experiences and knowledge. In the primary school “Montanyans” (Castellet i la Gornal), the students interview the local elders so as to document their testimony and thus acquire first hand knowledge of the local history. In both cases, links are created with the community, which feels actively involved in the school projects. Finally, the last project has been done for some years in the secondary school “Ramon Berenguer IV” (Santa Coloma de Gramenet), where voluntary secondary school students travel to the Saharan refugee camps to actively work with the camp residents for a short period. The trip is prepared throughout the year and it involves all the school together with the collaboration of a number of associations. The participating students not only provide a service to the Saharan refugees but they also learn other cultural values, which in many cases fosters their desire to take part in other voluntary tasks in the future.

All these experiences show that the service-learning methodology, provided the contents are explicit and the service given has a social

purpose, has an enormous formative value since it is student - centered and can only be satisfactory if the students feel actively involved. In a way, peer tutoring could also be considered a variation of service-learning, where the service is limited to the school itself. Additionally, service – learning methodology is closely intertwined with the contents of the other curricular subjects, including citizenship education. Obviously, the more complex the project, the more interesting and more diversified the learning contents are, but it is also more difficult to both consolidate it and maintain the co – operation between the centers and its immediate/ non immediate surroundings.

4.5 Conclusion

The research done within the framework of the SEEDS project is important to confirm that citizenship education must always be present in the life of the centre rather than remain a subject confined to the curriculum. It should permeate the work done in all the curricular subjects through the activities performed inside and outside the school, through the organizational structure of the school itself, through the relationships between its members, but above all, through tutoring action. It should also be connected, if necessary, with other projects involving active participation in the school and the community. With this article we have reflected upon the convenience of expanding some experiences and methodologies that have proved to be useful for the practical application of contents related to citizenship education, be it from a specific subject or from a transcurricular approach. The aim is to materialize the saying “citizenship is learned through practice” and consolidate a citizenship education subject that helps students to put into practice what they have learned within the school’s framework and that enables them to become active and responsible citizens. On the other hand, the theoretical discourse must go hand in hand with the school practices. It would be completely useless if the students were told about some civil values if these were not actually applied within the school community.

This article has also enabled us to think about the mechanisms that the school has to achieve active citizenship objectives, from the school centre itself together with the participation of the families, from the local community and even from other more global sectors. We have realized that, in spite of the social changes, the school still has a very important role as a social catalyst within the community, a role that can improve social cohesion and the students’ integration. A student coming from another community, geographical region or country that feels integrated,

recognized and respected in the school, stands a better chance of adapting to the culture of the local community or country he has moved to. The school is usually the bridge between the individual and the immediate - non immediate surroundings and the bridge between the individual and all the community social agents. The school still has, therefore, a formative role, and plays an important part in the social network because, in the same way that it is expected to provide education standards and general knowledge to all the students completing their education, it is also expected to provide them with the capacity to be critical, active citizens. It is for these reasons that, more than ever, the school has to strengthen the links with the families, institutions or community sectors and find the mechanisms to guarantee the basic formation of the students so that they can continue learning throughout their lives while exercising an active citizenship.

Nevertheless, we must assume the contradictions that can arise during this process and minimize them as far as it is possible, since there may be negative factors/influences within the family, circles of friends, the media, political and economic systems, hampering the healthy development of civil values. However, even though we do not live in a perfect world, it is very important to point out to young people that the conquest of freedom, equality and democracy is not over yet and that, consequently, a better world is possible. We must aim at this as individual educators and as educational centers that should practice what they preach, striving to be as coherent as possible with what we say and what we do. Similarly, we must not give up on ambitious educational proposals, like the ones we have described in this article.

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Websites

<http://www.edu3.cat/>

Website of the Ministry of Education and the Catalan corporation of audio-visual means. It contains different audio-visual resources related to education (Language: Catalan and other languages). Most of the experiences shown in the article can be watched in this website.

<http://www.xtec.cat/innovacio/ciutadania/>

Citizenship education programme of the Ministry of Education of the Catalan government. It aims at promoting school projects on civil values and social participation. (Language: Catalan)

<http://www.aprenentatgeservei.org>

Website of the Service Learning Sponsoring Centre, an entity promoting the development of service learning projects. (Languages: Catalan-Spanish-English).
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<http://antalya.uab.es/ice/aprenentatgeentreiguals/>

Website of the research group “Peer learning”, linked with the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). It aims at promoting co-operative learning projects between students. (Languages: Catalan-Spanish-English).

<http://www.senderi.org>

Website of Senderi, a network of entities promoting civil values education. (Languages: Catalan-Spanish).

Appendix

I- Audiovisual recording

Title: Citizenship

Core theme: Global project on citizenship education in the primary school “Joan Miró” (Barcelona).

Website:

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=27332&p_ex=Ciutadania&p_alg=CEIP%20Joan%20Mir%F3&p_niv=2219&p_are=5639&p_tip=VIDEO&p_num=3

Title: Cooperative Learning

Core theme: Project on cooperative learning in the primary school “Can Puig” (Banyoles).

Website:

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=27333&p_ex=treball%20cooperatiu&p_num=3

Title: Schooldays for Peace

Core theme: Project on citizenship education in the secondary school “Bruguers” (Gavà).

Website:

http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=27334&p_ex=jornades%20per%20la%20pau&p_num=3

Appendix

II- Questionnaires for the interviews with the whole of the educational community:

<i>Interview with parents</i>

Relationship

1. Which are the channels of communication with the school?
2. Are they appropriate, enough? Through these channels are you able to contribute, give your opinion, be listened to? Which factors make it difficult or easy?
3. How would you describe the style of communication and relationship that the school and the families establish?
4. To what extent do you believe that the management team is accessible and sensitive to the families' interests and worries?

5. How are the relationships among the students in the school? Are there conflicts? How are they solved? How are relationships between boys and girls?
6. How do you think the relationships between teachers and students are, general speaking? Do you think they are appropriate and satisfactory?
7. Do you have a sense of belonging to the educational community? Why? Which factors make it easy or difficult?

Participation

1. Through which channels can families participate? To what extent can they participate in the making of decisions in the school?
2. To what extent are families concerned / involved in the making and implementation of the school rules? Do you think the implementation of rules is flexible, strict, severe?

Responsibility

1. Do you think students are concerned about their learning process? As parents which strategies do you use to promote involvement and responsibility of the students in their own learning process?
2. To what extent do you think students feel concerned about their evaluation and self-evaluation in the classroom and, in general, in the school?
3. Do you think the school makes a warm welcome to newly arrived students? How did you feel when you first have contact with the school?
4. To what extent do you think teachers and, in general, all the groups in the educational community are involved in the attention of diversity and students' particular needs?
5. To what extent the school works promoting citizenship education in aspects such as gender equal rights, education for peace, environmental care, intercultural matters? How do you participate as parents?

<i>Interview with students</i>

Relationship

1. When and how do you mixed with your schoolmates? How would you describe your relationship to other schoolmates? How do you feel when you relate to other students? Do you feel they respect you, listen to you, despise you, help you, make you feel integrated?
2. Are there behavioral problems in your class or in your school? How are they solved? Are there conflicts among the students? How are they solved? How are relationships between boys and girls?
3. Do you think there is room enough to work together, to collaborate and co-operate with other classmates? How do you do that?
4. How is it, in general, relationship with teachers? Do you feel listened to, understood, helped by teachers?
5. To what extent do you feel you belong to your class and school? Do you feel included or excluded? In what sense / ways?

Participation

1. To what extent can students participate in the taking of decisions in the school? In which fields can students give their opinions? Can they do it freely and openly? Do

they feel listened to and respected by other actors in the school (teachers, management team, parents, caretakers and so on)?

2. Do you think school rules are important? How are they made? Do the students participate in the creation of school rules?

3. How are the school rules applied? The implementation of these rules is fair, severe, strict, flexible, equal for everyone?

Responsibility

1. Are you concerned about your own learning process? To what extent do you feel responsible for your own learning? Do you think learning is your own business?

2. To what extent do you / students participate in the evaluation and self-evaluation in the class, and in general, in the evaluation processes in the school?

3. To what extent do you feel that the teachers and the school take care of your particular learning needs? What about other students, are their needs complied with?

4. To what extent other students accept newly arrived students? What factors make integration more difficult or easier for them?

5. Do you think that aspects like gender equal rights, education for peace, preservation of the environment, intercultural matters are worked in the school? How? How do students participate in this work? To what extent do you feel concerned about this work? To what extent can students contribute in the work on these aspects?

Interview with teachers

Relationship

1. Which are the fields in which teachers work together? The atmosphere in these different fields allows them to contribute, give opinion, to be listened, valued, respected? Which factors make it easy or difficult?

2. To what extent do you believe that the management team is accessible and sensitive to the interests and worries of teachers?

3. When and how is it possible the relationship between teachers and students inside and outside the classrooms?

4. How would you describe the style of communication and relationship you try to establish with students?

5. Which channels of communication exist for the relationship between teachers and parents? How would you describe them? Are they appropriate, relevant, satisfactory, and frequent enough?

6. Do you feel part of the school? Why? Which factors make identification easy, which make it difficult?

Participation

1. To what extent can teachers participate in the taking of decisions in the school? Do you think the participation is enough? Why?

2. How would you describe the participation of students in the taking of decisions? In what kind of decisions can they participate? Do you think the students' participation that the school promotes is enough?

3. To what extent teachers are involved and concerned in the creation and application of school rules? Do you think the application of these rules is flexible, strict, and severe?

4. To what extent teachers are involved and concerned in the creation and application of school rules? Are the students involved into the compliance of these rules? To what extent?

Responsibility

1. Do you think students are concerned about the learning process? As a teacher which strategies do you use to promote their implication and their responsibility in this process?
2. To what extent students participate in the evaluation and self-evaluation in the class, and in general, in the evaluation processes in the school?
3. How do teachers participate in the welcoming process of new students? Do you think they feel concerned?
4. How do teachers participate in the individual attention and the attention of the diversity in the students of the school? Do you think they feel concerned?
5. To what extent the school works to promote citizenship education in various aspects such as gender equal rights, education for peace, to preserve environment, intercultural matters? Do teachers participate? Do they feel concerned?

Interview with management teams

Relationship

1. How is the relationship with the teachers? In which fields? Which strategies do you use to promote co-operation and collaboration with / among the teachers? How do you promote the sense of membership to the school? Is there a new teachers welcoming plan?
2. How is the relationship with the parents? In which fields? Which strategies do you use to promote co-operation and collaboration with / among the parents? How do you promote the sense of membership to the school?
3. How is the relationship with the students? In which fields? Which strategies do you use to promote co-operation and collaboration with / among the parents? How do you promote the sense of membership to the school?
4. How do you deal with behavioral problems of students? Are there specific programs in mediation?
5. How would you describe the general climate of relationships in the school?

Participation

1. How would you describe the participation of the different actors of the school? In which fields can every group of the educational community participate?
2. How are the school rules made? How are they implemented?

Responsibility

1. How is the sense of students' self-responsibility in the learning process encouraged? And their autonomy?
2. How is self-evaluation promoted?
3. How do you deal with the attention of diversity among the students?
4. How do you deal with the attention of students' particular learning needs?
5. How do you welcome newly arrived students? Is there a welcoming plan? How has it been drawn up?

6. How do you promote citizenship education? Are there specific plans? Which aspects (education for
7. peace, environmental care, gender equal rights intercultural matters) are worked on in school? In which fields?

Chapter 5

Teaching towards citizenship in Norway

Bjarne Hansen and Linda Velle Sjøen

Five different examples of how to promote citizen education in daily school life are presented in this chapter. We first give a short introduction to inform the readers of the background for our choices. Then we refer to the results of a research about how the schools in the municipality of Karmøy deal with the concept of adapted learning. We then shortly describe the educational context of the schools in Norway, before giving two different examples of teacher-student dialogues, one example from a school play area, one about a schools' meeting with drop-outs and finally one about pupils' participation in The Children's Municipality Council.

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we present five practical examples of how to implement citizen education in daily school activities. First we say something about the background for research and how the findings resulted in a film about pupils' participation in learning and teaching. We also look at the educational context of teaching citizens before we turn to the concrete examples.

The intention regarding the daily life examples is to show how important it is to live as citizens and not only to learn about citizenship. A report produced for UNESCO in 1996 from the International Commission on “*Education for the Twenty-first Century*” asserted that education throughout life is based upon four pillars:

Learning to know
Learning to do
Learning to live together
Learning to be

These four pillars are the key words for the content in this chapter. One of the pillars can be called a main key to responsible citizenship. This pillar

is the one the International Commission thought was the most important of them all:

Learning to live together!

The background for choices of examples is a long history and a result of experiences through the participation in the SEEDS project. When the SEEDS group visited Norway, we showed them a school with an outdoor play area which was built on a philosophy of authentic play. The group also visited a ‘second chance’ school with a philosophy of respect and belief in every individual pupil. Both these examples have been a treasure to the whole SEEDS group and have inspired partners to look at citizenship in a broad perspective.

The choice of the three other examples is also inspired by SEEDS experiences. The first two examples are about teacher-pupil dialogues. During the project we produced a film called: *“How can we achieve genuine pupil participation”*. The film focuses on different elements of teaching and learning and on how to involve pupils in their learning process. In the SEEDS course arranged in Montegrotto in Italy in May 2008, we showed the film to the participants. A clear majority of the participants was interested in the teacher-student dialogues. In their written comments they told us that they liked the individual talks and the open dialogues between teachers and students, and that they would develop teacher-pupil conversation at their own schools.

As the first four examples show teaching towards citizenship in a school context, the fifth example deals with The Children’s Municipality Council in Karmøy. This arrangement is initiated and organized by our municipality. We conclude by discussing citizen education in our schools and school system, and how we look at the concept of citizenship.

5.2 Research

In Norway we started our research in the SEEDS project by looking into our project of external evaluation. Early in 2005 a pilot project was implemented on the external evaluation of two primary schools and one secondary school in our municipality of Karmøy. Three of the Norwegian members of SEEDS were involved in both developing tools for evaluation and as external evaluators. In Norway we do not have a tradition of external evaluation and we therefore were interested in the further development of our evaluation system.

The local system of external evaluation

During the SEEDS meeting at Karmøy in Spring 2006, we presented the content of questionnaires and evaluation methods. The project group gave us some valuable ideas about how to develop our system. During the last two and a half years we have continuously developed both the tools for evaluation and the dialogue with the teachers about learning. About twenty schools in our municipality have been evaluated during the last three and a half year. The schools also have a dialogue with the evaluation teams in a development process after the external evaluation.

The mandate given to the evaluation groups was to see how well the primary and secondary schools in Karmøy coped with the concept of adapted learning/inclusive education. Five criteria were developed and for each criterion there were 6-8 indicators. The school as a learning organization was also a focus area in our external evaluation. In Norwegian education there has been a long tradition to focus on the learning of the pupils. To develop the whole school as learning organization we had to focus on learning at all levels, also among the teachers and leaders.

The results of external evaluation

We found a lot of excellent examples of good teaching practice, but we also discovered that there was difference between the classes and the teaching skills among teachers. Both questionnaires and observations showed different practice and various quality of practice in different classroom. We knew that the whole school could improve if teachers could learn from each other and share their strengths.

Development areas:

- Involve the pupils more in the process of self-evaluation
- Increase the pupils' influence on the degree of tasks, aims and content of their work.
- Involve the pupils more in the preparation of teacher/pupil/parents individual talk and help them to be more active carrying out these talks.
- Promote the schools as learning organizations with special focus on development of the professional role of the teachers.

5.3 Educational context

The word citizenship, as defined in the Seeds-project, is difficult to translate into Norwegian. The word is usually connected to citizenship in the meaning of being a citizen of a country, as having a passport. Citizenship can also describe the life and values of the upper classes or it can be used as a word for the conservative political parties. The term citizenship used in the Seeds project has to be explained and rephrased if we want to use it in a Norwegian context. "*Taking responsibility as an active member of society*" would probably be a better way of explaining the central ideas of the Seeds-project in our language.

The ideas and ideals of citizenship

The ideas and ideals of Citizenship however are well known, and are taught and treated in a number of ways. Different aspects of citizenship are dealt with in different subjects, and are also covered by a variety of established activities that have not been directly initiated by curricula, plans or directives, but have come about in a broader sense of citizen education and effort. In the eighties and early nineties the curriculum contained a subject called *Practical social and cultural work*. The subject was removed from the later curriculum, partly because the notion of having a 'subject' of this character did not feel natural. Educating towards citizenship is seen as a task for society as a whole, but the schools have a key role, especially as to teaching the ethics, attitudes and ideas of citizenship, and showing these principles in school life.

Core Curriculum and citizenship

Through our national Core Curriculum we can find the idea of education for citizens as a main issue. Citizen education is about educating human beings. Our Core Curriculum describes the development of human beings under 7 headlines.

The spiritual human being: Education shall be based on fundamental Christian and Humanistic values and on the view that all persons are created equal. It shall confirm the belief that everyone is unique, that each can nourish his own growth and that individual distinctions enrich and enliven our world.

The creative human being: Education shall meet children, adolescents and adults on their own terms and so lead them to the borderland where they can encounter the new by opening their minds and testing their

skills. Pupils must develop an appreciation for beauty both in meeting artistic expression and by exploring and unfolding their own creative powers.

The working human being: Education shall provide learners with awareness of the variety and scope of the world of work and bestow the knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in it.

The liberally-educated human being: Schooling shall provide a multi-faceted and all-round general education with concrete knowledge about the human being, society and nature which can provide a broad outlook and perspective; with know-how and maturity to face life's practical, social and personal challenges; and with qualities and values that facilitate cooperation between people and make it enriching and exciting for them to live together.

The social human being: It is important to exploit the school as a community of work for the development of social skills. It must be structured in such a way that the learners' activities have consequences for others, and so that they can learn from the impact of their decisions.

The environmentally aware human being: Education must provide a broad awareness of the interconnections in nature and of the interplay between humans and nature

The integrated human being: Education shall inspire an integrated development of the skills and qualities that allow one to behave morally, to create and to act, and to work together and in harmony with nature. Education shall contribute to building character which will give the individual the strength to take responsibility for his or her life, to make a commitment to society, and to care for the environment.
(Core Curriculum 1997)

5.4 Five examples of educating citizens

The following examples demonstrate different aspects of citizen education. The first two examples deal with teacher-student dialogues. In the first example from Skudeneshavn Primary School it is a goal to create a real dialogue about a pupil's individual learning. The dialogue is connected to the way of organizing teaching and learning in the school and part of a programme to achieve more pupil participation in the learning process. The second example is an article by a teacher at Eide

Primary School, where teaching activities are organized in a more traditional manner, and where the teacher-student dialogues are mainly used in the process of student evaluation. This part is presented as a self contained article, to show how such talks can be carried out in different settings from Skudeneshavn. The talks are compulsory, but the teachers at Eide Primary School have the freedom to organize the dialogues in different ways – and this is one way of doing it.

The third example deals with the playground at Skudeneshavn Primary School. It tells about the play ground philosophy, the construction and the content of the play ground and how the play ground activities promote children's democratic and social skills. The fourth example is from a secondary school for 'drop outs', Holmen School. The school meets their pupils with respect and the teaching is built on the belief that everybody has the right to a decent life. The fifth example deals with The Children's Municipality Council in Karmøy. This arrangement is initiated and organized by our municipality.

Dialogues with pupils in the process of learning and teaching

Our curriculum says that the pupils should develop strategies to be able to plan, do and evaluate their own work. We believe that this is only possible with close guidance from the teachers. Skudeneshavn. Primary School emphasizes the need to create a teaching environment that allows pupils active participation in the learning process. The active involvement of the pupils obviously means knowing what will happen during the school day and school week.

Individual goals

The pupils have to relate to two important documents: The plan for the week which contains specific learning targets for the work period, and a schedule of tasks that need to be done. The plans for the school weeks, with the work schedules, form the basis for a target tests. These are tests at the end of each work period that is meant to show whether the pupils have reached their goals. The goals are set individually, and the evaluation is given according to the individual goals. Teachers spend a lot of time and effort setting goals and making good plans that are suitable and easy to understand. The work schedules have tasks on different levels.

Teacher-student dialogues

Regular teacher-student dialogues play an important role in the process of learning and teaching in Skudeneshavn. Having regular, planned dialogues with the pupils is an important part of their methods of education. The dialogue with each pupil last a quarter of an hour and take place every third or fourth week.

The target tests are evaluated and pupils and teachers talk about social and educational matters. The teacher has an excellent chance to get to know and understand each pupil within the class context. To have good quality in these conversations it is important that the teachers have structured dialogues, with scaffolding questions that invite pupils to reflect, give their opinion and take part in making decisions.



Evaluating and setting goals

The period preceding the conversation is evaluated, both as to the pupils' well being, situation and behaviour, and the work done. The academic goals for the next period are set: the amount of work that is supposed to be done, the quality of the work and whether to choose easy or difficult tasks. Pupils have different learning styles or ways of learning. It is important to be aware of this and to talk about it in the dialogues.

Dialogues about learning

The teacher-student dialogues are scheduled for all pupils at the end of the work periods, but there is always the possibility of more frequent

dialogues. The way the work is organized at Skudeneshavn Primary School gives the pupils a lot of freedom and influence in the learning process. This has to be balanced with good guidance. The teacher-student dialogues really are essential in the way the work is organized at this school.

Pupils need confidence and they have to learn important skills such as active listening and critical reflection. The aim is to give students a real voice in a real dialogue about learning.

Evaluation of written work by teacher-student dialogues

Bjarne R. Hansen



Teachers evaluate their pupils. It is an important part of their work. The evaluation can be done in many ways, spoken or written, spontaneous or planned. My simple method of giving evaluation of the pupils work by teacher-student dialogues, has developed over the last ten years. I enjoy listening to colleagues explain how they work and talk about their methods. I now will give a short introduction of how I work and the reason for giving evaluation of tests and written works through teacher-student dialogues.

I am a class teacher in Eide Primary School mostly working with 5. – 7th grade. I do not teach all subjects, but the class teacher has the main responsibility for evaluating the pupils work, and also for contact and cooperation with parents or guardians. Our school has four required evaluation dialogues per school year: two with each pupil and two with the pupil's parents. The older pupils are invited to the teacher – parent dialogues. These dialogues are usually arranged in the afternoon. The dialogues with pupils are carried out in ordinary school time, outside

class. The class will normally be occupied with a work plan, and is taken care of by a caretaker or a special needs teacher. These dialogues will mainly focus on the pupils' general well being and relations with pupils and teachers.

This presentation will only deal with the evaluation of written work and the way the evaluation is presented to the pupil. The evaluation is not used for giving grades. In our school system, grades are not used in primary school. The evaluation dialogues concerning the pupils' written work and test-results are carried out in the classroom, for practical reasons. The pupils read or do written tasks according to a work plan or schedule. It can be difficult to arrange a quiet corner in a cramped classroom, but these dialogues do not concern very sensitive matters, and keeping one's voice down is usually enough to create a space for the evaluation dialogues.

In addition to evaluating tests and papers, I regularly let the pupils write short texts that I correct and comment on with the pupil present. Correcting a paper with the pupil is a good way to demonstrate how an evaluation is done and what it is, and it is also an effective way to teach. Test results are always given as percentages, to enable comparison of results on different tests. This also allows me to let some pupils do parts of tests. The results and the assessment is given showing the test or written work, and linked to the goals set for the pupil. These will vary. Some pupils will be expected to have a high score and others will get a favourable evaluation for managing less. This is known to the pupils. Some pupils are expected to better their results, while some are expected to try to manage as well on the next test or task. When evaluating texts it is important to show improvements and to point to elements that need attention. Tests are really not that important, but have been constructed to give insights as to the pupil's knowledge and skills, and it is important that we point this out. It is an objective to get the pupils to talk, and to have opinions as to their own work and results

The dialogue with the pupil will normally take four or five minutes. Starting up with a class, the first dialogues will last longer. My dialogues this school year are done with a class that knows this way of working, and a lot of issues have been settled. Giving a response to a test to 24 pupils usually takes two or three teaching hours, and are usually spread over two days.

Some reasons for presenting test results in this way is a wish

- to get to know what expectations the pupil has to results

- to get to know whether the pupils feel that the evaluation is correct
- to find out whether the pupil wants more attention or help working with subjects, and to try to understand what help is needed
- to be able to give specific advice on how to achieve good results
- to set clear and understandable individual goals
- to make the pupils participate in setting reasonable goals for themselves and encourage self-evaluation

I feel that the evaluation dialogues allow me to give better evaluations than written comments, and I want to give the pupils the chance to take part in a dialogue. The pupils know that they will have an individual response to their work. Tests and evaluations are meant to be tools in the process of learning, and the evaluation should mirror this. I usually do not hand out tests or other written work that has been corrected and evaluated. I do not want the pupils to compare results. Of course pupils compare results, but they have the right and opportunity not to talk about their results, and most of them do not. This also applies to pupils with good results. All results are filed and presented in the teacher-parent dialogues.

The individual evaluation of school work and results needs to be balanced with a more objective approach. A standard is set as to what should be achieved. On a regular test this will often be a sort of lower limit set at about fifty percent. This will be adjusted if a test is presented as easy or difficult, and it is important to stress that the results will spread between fifty percent and a full score. I usually present a rough average result for the class after a test, as an indicator of whether we can move on or have to extend a work period. This is done after the individual evaluations, and is meant to give a sense of collective achievement: “This is what *we* have achieved” or “*We* have to do better next time”.

The metaphor used when talking about individual and collective achievements is the one of imaging the lining up all the pupils for a race. You can not expect all pupils to run with the same speed, and it would be unfair to evaluate pupils only by their ability to run fast, but most of us can be faster runners if we set our minds to it, with good effort and good coaching, and we can all help each other get better.

Giving good response to pupils’ work is complicated. I feel that I can give a better and more productive evaluation in quiet conversation. The pupils enjoy the evaluations and are impatient to have their turn. I think they enjoy the attention, and feel that this is a safe way to have their efforts assessed.

You sometimes hear pupils say things like: “I am stupid! I never get anything right!” It is very satisfying being able to give a proper response to these pupils: “No one is stupid. A lot of what you do is right, and I can prove it. “

The playground and responsible citizens

A challenging environment for play can create opportunities for pupils to develop social interaction and democratic skills. The playground and playground-activities at Skudeneshavn Primary Schools presents this kind of opportunity. The playground was designed in a project aimed at meeting the children’s needs for physical activity, excitement and interaction, and to encourage collaboration. It was important that this should happen naturally, and not necessarily with the help and guidance of grown ups.

An untraditional outdoor play area has been created. Assistant Professor Asbjørn Flemmen from the academy of Volda, has been the architect and consultant in designing the outdoor play area. He emphasizes creating an environment which stimulates to what he calls Real Play.

Real Play

What Flemmen calls “Real Play” is children’s spontaneous expression of movement and excitement in contrast to sports and athletics which are seen as play formed by grown ups. Through the project "Play environment, the child and play" Flemmen has developed a theory to understand playing as a phenomenon. After some years of trying out his theories in practical work in both summer- and a winter environments, there is now a reliable documentation of Flemmen's theories on children’s play.

Arias of real play

An area of real play must, according to Flemmen, satisfy the following fundamental characteristics of our nature:

- Create activity.
- Create contact; children must be able to do a lot of things together.
- Create investigation; children must try to investigate the unknown, both in a social and physical environment.
- Create exploration; children must frequently wish look for the same. In this way they can learn more about themselves, about other children and about the environment.

- Create experimentation; children must be given the possibility to alter different aspects of the environment. They must be given the possibilities of their own imagination and creativity.
- Create the possibility of moving the limits of their potential capacity and thus give them the enjoyment of stretching their personal capabilities.

In praise of danger



The playground in Skudeneshavn was officially opened in June 1999. Since then the school has had visitors from all over Europe, and many schools have been inspired to develop their outdoor environment. During the opening ceremony of the playground in Skudeneshavn, Rosalyn Coward, who is a columnist on educational issues for the British national newspaper “*The Guardian*”, visited Skudeneshavn. In the article “*In praise of danger*” she describes the playground:

“Imagine an opening of a new school playground where the following things happen. Everyone gathers around the latest play structure. It's formidable - the size of a football pitch and 10 metres high. Ropes hang from the top over mountains of giant tyres. During the opening ceremony children shin up the ropes and, dangling from great heights, listen to the playground designer saying that children should be left alone to fight and

take risks. Amid laughter, a swinging child knocks a member of the school band off her chair. The local mayor then congratulates everyone on restoring children's freedoms." (July 7 1999, Ros Coward, The Guardian)

Developing the children's own culture

Allowing children the chance to meet and socialise without adults organizing activities is extremely important for the children's development. They must have the chance to do their own experiences without adults always making the decisions. The children's culture must be allowed to develop. One must still make sure that children do not feel insecure, and adults must be available. The school staff must be active observers to be able to intervene if necessary.

In this Real Play project it has been an important precondition that there should be possibilities for all pupils to be active and challenged on different levels.

Solving conflicts is an important way of learning which must not be taken away from the children by quick intervention by adults.

Interview with the playground designer Asbjørn Flemmen:

"Authentic play comes to children naturally, with two related impulses: to use the body to its fullest while interacting with others socially. Inevitably it involves risk and conflict, but it also drives forward physical and social development". Flemmen is critical of adults who intervene to prevent children's "thrilling" interaction - fighting, for example. "It's only through competition and conflict that identities are formed," he says. "'Who am I?' is defined by 'Who are you?'"

Most fights, he says, are role playing. But even when they're serious, adults should hold back. "My grandson is two and a half and was playing with a four-year-old. They were fighting, and the four-year-old started hitting hard. The adults rushed to intervene. But how will he learn that what he was doing will make his friend cry and that he himself won't like that? You can tell a child that hurting others is wrong, but they only learn from real feelings. It's important to discuss it afterwards, but not to stop it happening."

Left to their own devices, children do the same thing over and over again, each time handicapping themselves more. Observe the children on the ropes at Skudeneshavn: they swing a few times on their own, and then

encourage another to join, then another. They aim at overloading the rope until they all fall off. Then they challenge others on another rope to bump into theirs to make it more difficult again.

It's not just the body being stretched here, says Flemmen, it is social skills as well: "In free play, children's conflicts revolve around how they will play, what they will play and who they will play with." They constantly make rules - not, as is often thought, to keep things under control, but to make the outcome more unpredictable. Flemmen describes two children with a football. One wants to shoot at goal from too close, so the other refuses to play. The first child hesitates, and then says: "OK then."

"OK then ", repeats Flemmen, "the two most important words in the language. This is the pre-school of democracy. They've agreed on a compromise which allows the thrill to continue. They are at the edge of what they can manage; this is what triggers development." (July 7 1999, Ros Coward, The Guardian)



The content of the playground

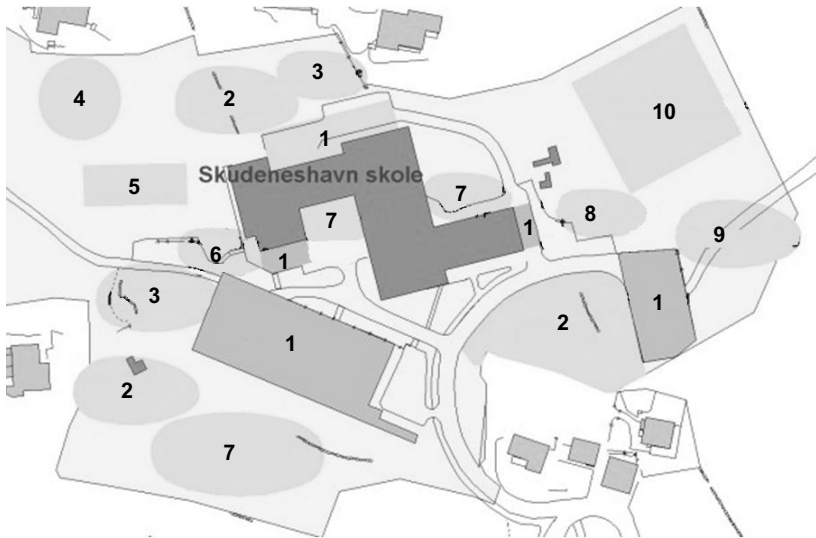


Fig.5.1 Skudenshavn Playground map

Legenda

1. **Areas for ball activities** like basket ball, soft tennis and ball-against-wall games. The baskets is constructed with different size and height for children at different levels
2. **Jungle areas.** These areas has been constructed so that the children can use most of their Sensory-Motor senses - Children have access to climbing and jumping activities with increasing demands to the children's ability of integration of their senses and mastering motor techniques. The areas have also been constructed so it stimulates the social development of the child.
3. **Gymnastic areas.** Areas for different gymnastic activities
4. **Hide and Seek.** The area around the school is full of nature inviting the children to play hide and seek.
5. **Table tennis** The area is a cosy and quiet area among some rock and trees. Six tables for tennis have been erected at different heights to fit children at different age levels. The tables are bolted to the ground and are available the whole year
6. **Area for music activities,** dancing and singing
7. **Skipping areas**
8. **Gymnastics and swings**
9. **Area for throwing horse shoes**
10. **Athletics and ball game:** Many groups of children can play football and other ball games at the same time
11. **Area for building** An area for building using saw, hammer and nails. Building huts is a dominating activity in this area

The following should be emphasised

- Each activity should involve more than one person at the same time.
- The children should be able to group themselves in mini-groups: each area ought to consist of many small elements: i.e. Soft-tennis, Skipping areas, Table-tennis, Tennis rackets (many of each category).
- The play areas should motivate children at different levels to be active participants (Table tennis of different size and heights, baskets of different heights, climbing areas where everyone can succeed and be challenged).
- You can find the same quality of play activities several places in the play area.
- The play area shall stimulate basic, physical movements.
- Take care of and provide facilities that will develop the positive elements which already exist in the play area.

The spirit of democratic citizenship

The building of the playground in Skudeneshavn was based on the idea that we have to trust our children! The impression we get when visiting the playground is autonomous pupils showing respect and responsible behaviour without teacher control or guidance. Of course we must help those who are not able to understand the rules of play, and teach them how to behave and interact with other children. Children must be able to agree on rules and to practise sharing, turn-taking and collaboration. Imagination, challenge and negotiation in children's play are important and have an influence on their development, socially, physically and intellectually. We believe that the spirit of democratic citizenship is indeed alive in Real Play!

Educating citizens at Holmen school - everybody has a dream of a better life

A second chance school

In Norway our educational system is based on equal opportunities. Every individual has the right to education according to one's abilities. This demand challenges both for the local school authorities and for the schools. We have become aware that a long period of industrial development and economic growth has created some problems. The gap

is widening between the well-doing and the ones standing in the shadow, the school-losers. Fifteen years ago the local authorities in Karmøy decided to develop a school for 'drop outs', a second chance school,

In Holmen School there are 10 pupils from 13-16 years old. Most of them are boys who can be described as noisy, rootless, confused, afraid and angry. We find pupils with a low self esteem and with very low scores in theory, and we find pupils who are moving in a destructive direction.

The school philosophy

With a strong belief in that everybody has the right to a decent life and that everybody has a dream to get there Holmen School 1. paragraph says:

“EVERYBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO A PLACE IN THE SUNSHINE”

They have founded their school philosophy on a dream and belief that every human being has a pearl. When the pupils come to Holmen School they get a new start. Jacob Madsen, who is the headmaster of the school, arranges a first meeting with each of the pupils. The meeting lasts for one hour and is based on a feeling of an open door and a feeling of acceptance.

Metaphors

In Holmen School they often speak in metaphors and lyric pictures. Jacob describes the metaphor of the pearls like this: *“The first meeting is based on the story of the pearl, and the people who are pearl divers. It is about the pearl we want to find inside the pupil, and it is about my teachers who themselves are shining pearls, and their skills in pearl diving”*. Jacob has experienced that this story has a releasing effect. It is in a way as if one is set free from prison. A seed of acceptance has been planted!

Practical projects

Modernization of society and industry has made education more and more theoretical and conformist. Practical subjects have been diminished. The teachers at Holmen know that practical projects are good entrances to learning. They have created new subjects like construction, apple production, boatbuilding and cooking.

At Holmen School they have built their own buildings and they are building a large ship! The teachers have hand craft skills like gardening, boatbuilding, blacksmithing and landscape gardening. One of the teachers is a musician and another is a chef. The buildings and surroundings are nice and tidy. If anything is damaged they fix it immediately. It is important for children with chaos inside to have tidy surroundings.



Citizenry

In Holmen School they know that knowledge cannot be forced into a pupil's mind, but has to come through the heart. They have to learn to live together. They have to practise responsibility, to have trust in other people and to believe in themselves and others.

The ship metaphor of Holmen School:

Come on board!
We are leaving past!
We know the direction!
We are sailors!

The Children's Municipality Council - educating towards responsible participation

The Children's Municipality Council is made up of two pupil-representatives from each of the 28 primary and secondary schools in Karmøy. The council meets every Spring to divide a sum of money between the schools. The representatives from the primary schools are all in the 6th grade. The municipality has five secondary schools. These secondary schools receive pupils from primary schools of the surrounding

area, which is called a school district. The children that attend the council represent their schools and are members of the Pupils' Council of each school. All schools write an application for funds that will be considered by the council. Each school has a teacher to help and guide the Pupils' Council. This teacher helps writing the application, and also to prepare the pupils for the council meeting. The school councils usually apply for money to get different kinds of equipment; often for the playground or the school area. The council meeting is not organized by the school, but by the municipality administration. The council meeting has been arranged for the last eleven years.



The decision to arrange the council meetings was initiated and decided by the Municipality council as a way to encourage young people to learn about the decision making process in the local political system, and to encourage participation in political activities. Teachers are not present at the Children's council meeting, and the grown ups participating as guides and instructors are public health nurses or employees in the children's welfare service and the culture department. The municipality wants to show that the arrangement is apart from school activities.

The school representatives are invited to what is called a Theme Day some weeks before the council meeting, with performances, workshops, discussion groups and a meal. The grown ups that help out on the theme day are the ones that act as guides and helpers at the council meeting. Themes that have been chosen have typically dealt with issues like cultural differences, justice, mental health or ecology. This year's theme (2008) was: How alike do we have to be for you to like me". The theme

days are not directly connected to the children's council session, but the children get to know each other and have training in taking part in discussions. The council meeting itself is led by the mayor and administrative leader of the municipality, and the session is covered by the local newspapers.

The task for the children's council is to decide on the distribution of 100 000 crowns, by negotiating and by voting. The first round of meetings is to decide on the distribution of money between the five school districts. This can be done in three ways: the money can be given to the school districts by the number of pupils, the money can be split evenly, or the money can be handed out according to the number of schools in each district. This is discussed in groups made up of the representatives in each school district. The final decision is made by the council by voting. The second round of meetings is to divide the money between the schools in each school district. If the schools in one district do not reach an agreement, a decision will be made by vote in the council. The children are encouraged to consider the applications for funds and to consider common interests. The secondary schools often argue that money given to the secondary schools will eventually benefit all pupils in the school district. Some schools have less than twenty pupils. It is impossible to buy equipment or carry out projects if the money is handed out as a sum per pupil, so the larger schools will have to give small schools a larger share of the money to make them able to buy expensive equipment. This year the schools had applied for a total sum of 277 000 crowns. This means making priorities. Getting as much money as possible for one's own school would not be a good argument trying to get votes.

The children that take part in the council have an exciting experience. The grown ups helping out with the council are impressed by the way the children take part in discussions, and the way they argue for good decisions, also from the speaker's platform. Most children will eventually end up voting to give money that does not necessarily benefit their own school or school district, (and of course there is some tactical voting and the forming of alliances.) The council meeting gives the pupils training in decision making and gives knowledge of the political process. The Children's Municipality Council is an arrangement for 56 representatives, so in a sense this is an arrangement for the few, and a type of educational activity that is apart. The children's council is not a role play; the decisions are real, though the sum of money that is involved is not that large. There has been some discussion as to the focus on money. Some

argue that democratic process is more than deciding on grants, but it has been difficult to come up with a good alternative.

" We all have responsibilities in our lives. The responsibilities grow as we get older. More is expected of us when we are in the 7th, than from those who are in 1st grade.

"

*From an essay on responsibility,
Cathrine, 7A – May 08*

5.5 Conclusions

We have illustrated five examples of teaching for citizenship in our schools. They are quite different examples but at the same time there are some connection and coherence between them. It is about educating human beings. It shows how to meet our children with trust and respect and to believe that they are competent and responsible. Through work, study and play our children will learn a lot about how to learn and how to live.

Two of the examples deal with teacher-student dialogue, one with the vision and practice in a second chance school, and one with real play and development of the children's own movement culture. The Children's Municipality Council arrangement differs from the others. This arrangement is a direct educational arrangement with a clearly defined aim. We see the Children's Municipality Council as an excellent teaching activity that could be further developed. The teaching of themes in different subjects at school can be seen as part of the same group of essential teaching activities.

We believe that teaching for citizenship must be seen in a broad perspective. The teacher – student dialogues are carried out as a part of the normal teaching activity. They are meant to be tools for giving and receiving evaluations, but also to enable the pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. The playground activities in Skudeneshavn are beneficial to physical fitness and physical skills. However, a school playground like this is also important in the development of social skills like; taking turn, respecting and helping each other, and respecting rules. Some of the activities in the playground can be dangerous, and the pupils have to adhere to rules and to respect safety measures.

The philosophy and practice at Holmen could be an example for all schools. Of course not all schools are able to offer subjects like boat

building and gardening, but everyone should be able to meet the pupils with respect and belief; to let them experience and feel that they are valuable, and to believe that everybody has the right to a place in the sunshine!

The children's municipal council uses the sharing or dividing of money as a way of teaching children about the political process. This activity is easy to understand, and real, but is still a construction, a happening. The children in the council need to bring to the session skills in negotiating, the ability to weigh arguments, take part in group activities, to have the confidence to speak to an assembly, for example. These are skills that a person needs to be able to take "responsibility as an active member of society".

Teaching towards citizenship is important in our society, and it can be done in many ways. The word citizenship is a concept that is useful to sum up the different aspects of training towards active membership in society. Responsible citizens are essential when our children will learn to live together!

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Chapter 6

Do students wish to play an active role in changing schools? Alias Democracy & Responsibility

Vlastimil Fiala

This chapter describes the procedure used for finding the students' and the teachers' opinion about the level of school democracy and the relationships between students and staff in the Gymnazium of Dr. A. Hrdlicka, Humpolec, in the Czech Republic, as a necessary first step for the improvement of the school culture. The author details the key questions and describes the methodology and subsequent data analysis. Various conclusions emerge, some of them surprising, that include the teachers' willingness to change and adopt new methods as contrasted with a certain reticence on the part of the students to embrace the responsibilities that such change would incur.

6.1 Introduction

The Czech educational system is based on a long tradition beginning in 1774, when compulsory school attendance was instituted. Many educational projects and pedagogical methods were brought about according to the political changes over more than 230 years. Some of them have their foundation in democracy and some of them in a non-democratic grounding.

The last change, the “Velvet revolution”, in 1989, started for the Czech society the return to democracy after almost 60 years. In particular, the years 1948 - 1989 interrupted our connections to democratic principles and the result is that we have had to build them from scratch. We feel that it is necessary to start with the young generation in schools. Our opinion is that democracy should be developed as a necessary part of our school life and as a necessary step for the next school stage in development¹.

The Gymnazium of Dr. A. Hrdlicka celebrated its 70-year anniversary in 2007. It was established as a result of an initiative by the citizens of Humpolec who wanted to offer young people the opportunity to study at a secondary school in Humpolec, rather than commuting to nearby towns. Presently, the Gymnazium in Humpolec has 354 pupils in twelve classes, attending the eight-year or four-year curriculum. The opinions of both the general public as well as the municipality on the school are very positive

and the school has achieved a good name and general trust from the whole region.

The relationship between teachers and students has also undergone a shift; it has changed from autocracy to partnership. Nowadays, most of the teachers make a distinct effort to try and understand and appreciate the personality and individuality of every student.

Everything is determined by the size of school which enables the teachers to know one another well, while continuing to respect differences. Such were the issues that this case study set out to explore².

6.2 Case study

Part 1 - Key questions

It was necessary to produce the key in the first part of the case study. As the result you can see 7 questions – three for the teachers and four for the students.

- a) Can teachers influence lessons and educational methods?*
- b) Do teachers feel responsibility for the changes?*
- c) Do teachers want to co-operate with students?*
- d) Can students influence lessons and educational methods?*
- e) Do students feel responsibility for the changes?*
- f) Do students want to co-operate with teachers?*
- g) Are there any methods for students to make suggestions in the school system?*

Part 2 - Methodology

We separated questions for students and questions for teachers because it was necessary to use different ways for data- collecting and for the conclusions.

Pedagogical staff

- ⇒ We organized 4 group interviews, with 6 people in each group. This activity was used as a motivational part for the next level of the case study. The main reason for this kind of communication was that this way is very effective for sharing ideas, for close contacts between participants and it is easier to lead such a small group than to arrange the same for the whole pedagogical staff. We discussed what the teachers understand about the level of democracy and about their opinions on co-operation with students in last 10 years and in the

future. The conclusions from the discussions were used as a ground for the next step – a questionnaire.

- ⇒ The main aim of the questionnaire was to collect objective data that are possible to evaluate. The questionnaire was anonymous with the closed part where the participants had to choose one of several possibilities, and the open part for their commentaries.

Students

The activities were arranged for 8 classes, each with about 29 students, in the age range 16 – 19.

- ⇒ 8 groups watched the short film 'Ways of teaching, ways of learning'. The film was presented to the SEEDS participants during the first project meeting in Montegrotto and was successfully used by some of the SEEDS partners. The film (otherwise known as a 'blob') consists of short movie sections which portray the different possibilities of education methods from passive up-front teaching to active self-learning. Then we arranged a short discussion about the film, asking the students to think imaginatively about the next school development and about the possibilities that could be given to students by teachers, by the head of the school and their own activity. The students also received the main information about the next step – a questionnaire.
- ⇒ The main aims of the questionnaire were the same as the questionnaire for the teachers and it consisted of similar parts.

Part 3 – Results

Teacher interviews

- ⇒ It was easy to understand that all the teachers have recognized the changes in our society since 1989 and that they feel how important it is to develop students' understanding of the connections between democracy – rights – responsibilities.
- ⇒ It is very important for the teachers to find the balance in the relationship between students and teachers on the way from teaching to education to the practice of self education.
- ⇒ The teachers are very satisfied that they can discuss school democracy and school culture and that the school would like to find the best way

in its development. However, the teachers are a bit sceptical about the students' participation in the school development. They think that it is much easier for the students to complain about perceived weakness in the school life than to help to change the current situation. The teachers hope that the students will help them to look at their lessons from the students' point of view.

Teacher questionnaires

⇒ We received the answers in two forms – closed and opened. It was quite straightforward to count and to interpret the first part and more difficult to draw real conclusions from the second part. On the other hand, the second part was more useful in the end, because of the many ideas and perceptions about the school daily life.

⇒ We expected some of the results whilst some of them were a very big surprise for us. For instance, regarding the teachers, we hadn't expected that so many teachers – more than 90% would like to cooperate with students on the content of lessons. On the other hand, there was a very important condition - teachers expect that students will be partly responsible if their suggestions are to be used in the lessons, as the diagram below shows.

Co-operation with students in the lesson content

- *I can't imagine it*
- *It is possible*
- *It is possible only if students take part of the responsibility for offers of realisation of their suggestions and educational results*

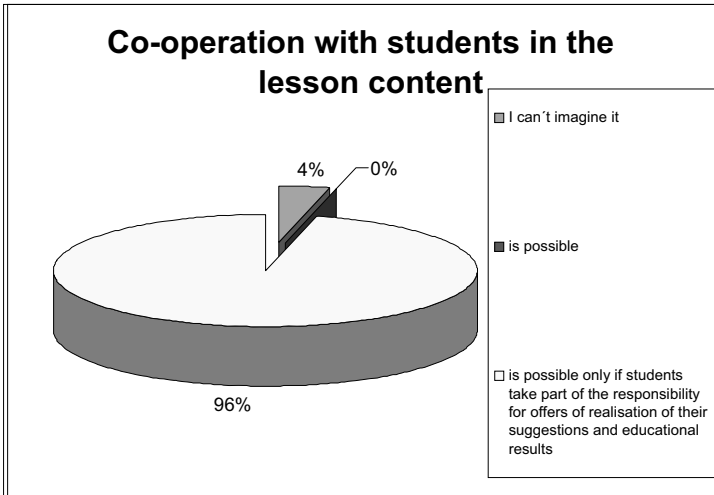


Fig.6.1 Teacher Questionnaires results

Teachers would like to co-operate with students in all aspects of the school life. They feel that the asked for changes in their educational methods and the relationship with students are based more on the changes in society and on political pressure than on changes in student behaviours and the teachers' "old fashion" teaching.

- ⇒ *Teachers have no qualms about the realisation of students' suggestions in lessons*
- ⇒ *The realisation of students' ideas in lessons will motivate the students to work harder*
- ⇒ *Teachers think that offer of collaboration between staff and the administration and the chance to realise students' ideas is the first step towards better education; but it is also a result of situation based on outside pressure*

With regard to the students, we had expected that students would prefer co-operation with the teachers in making changes at school. We thought that they would complain about the current situation. But the results were completely different. They prefer the current system with the same rules. It was possible to recognize the reasons in the open part of the questionnaire – they are afraid of possible changes because they are quite satisfied and prefer the clear stable rules based on the teachers' and head

teacher's responsibility. The new responsibility is, they are saying, too 'heavy for their arms'.

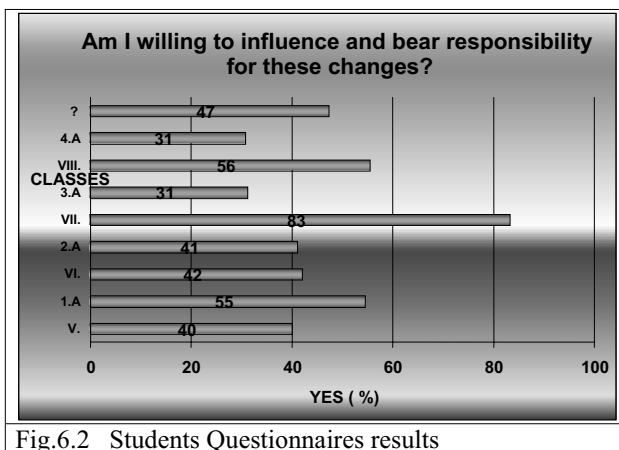


Fig.6.2 Students Questionnaires results

Some students would like to develop a partnership with the teacher in the lesson. They prefer more active educational methods, e.g. group work, project methods. They think that the change is possible only after pressure from the top (headteacher, politicians) or if the idea is not only the student's idea, but also comes from the teacher.

- ⇒ My behaviour during the lessons isn't always polite and active behaviour, so the teachers don't accept my offers and suggestions then
- ⇒ I would like to take part in the discussions, but only a few of my schoolmates join me
- ⇒ I would like to prefer my own study materials and interesting topics for the lessons
- ⇒ It is necessary to arrange a little pressure for teachers to change their teaching style

Part 4 - Back to the key questions

We were thus able to respond to the key questions according to the teachers and students' answers.

a) Can teachers influence lessons and educational methods?

The teachers can influence lessons and educational methods. They can integrate new ideas into school life.

b) Do teachers feel responsibility for the changes?

The teachers feel very a strong responsibility for the changes based on the head teacher, on their own and students' suggestions.

c) Do teachers want to co-operate with students?

The teachers would like to co-operate with students. They are able to accept students' suggestions but they would prefer students to take responsibility for their suggestions.

d) Can students influence lessons and educational methods?

A smaller part of students think they are able to influence lessons and educational methods.

e) Do students feel responsibility for the changes?

The students feel a very low responsibility for changes based on teachers and head teacher's suggestions and feel quite a strong responsibility for changes based on their own suggestions.

f) Do students want to co-operate on changes with teachers?

Students want to co-operate with teachers, but only some of them would like to be responsible for the results of such co-operation.

g) Are there any methods for students to make suggestions in the school system?

There are ways for students at our school about how to suggest possible changes in the school system. Nowadays, the usual way is through class teachers and teachers of different subjects.

Part 5 – Outcomes

⇒ It is possible to say that the methods and tools made by the school were successfully used as the case study focused not only on the school culture and citizenship, but also on other aspects of future school development. In co-operation with the SEEDS partners, they were found to be a useful tool and evaluated quite easily.

⇒ The results were very interesting and useful for the head, students and pedagogical staff of the school.

⇒ We would like to find the balance between the students' confidence and their readiness to be responsible for their behavior and suggestions. We understand that Czech democracy is in its infancy, and not only

young people but almost all the inhabitants of our pleasant country know mainly only their rights and not their responsibilities.

⇒ The case study has offered us a small perspective of school life, a chance for further discussion of future school improvement from the teachers' and students' points of view. We are preparing students' and teachers' conferences with the main task of looking at how to realise teachers' and students' suggestions and ideas, and deciding which of them are the most important priorities. More active teachers and students and their co-operation are the most important preconditions for the necessary changes, not only in the Czech Republic but also in school systems in the whole of Europe.

6.3 Conclusions

The research has shown how an ordinary school is able to arrange, realise and interpret a case study according to its needs. There are not huge differences between the teachers' and the students' opinions on the school culture and necessary changes in the school life, but there are differences in their meaning about the next stages of development.

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Chapter 7

Developing school culture towards European citizenship: a Comenius training course

Rosangela Baggio, Francesca Brotto, Gianfrancesco Musumeci *

The aim of this chapter is to describe the Comenius Training Course IT-2008-378-001 “Developing school culture towards European citizenship” which took place in Montegrotto Terme (Venice-IT) from 5 to 11 May 2008, taking into consideration the content and the structure, the methodology and the international added value derived from the course team and the participants’ experiences, in particular the school visit to the Liceo Brocchi in Bassano del Grappa. At the same time other issues, such as the opportunity to develop cultural awareness taking advantage of an international audience has been taken into account as well as modelling and promoting interesting practices.

7.1 The course

The Comenius course *Developing school culture towards European citizenship* is the main outcome derived from the project, and therefore it should reflect the methodologies adopted and the contents of the project itself. The planning of the course was a very important goal of the project, but obviously there are also other variables which have been taken into account in order to guarantee the success of the course, such as the characteristics of participants and the course atmosphere, so that the course has been flexible to a certain extent, allowing time and space for unexpected issues and developments. The course has been conceived as a dissemination event. It allows for wider dissemination through participants seen as multiplier agents (they report back to their school and colleagues the learning outcome of the course) and at the same time as an



* Rosangela Baggio pagg. 123-127, Francesca Brotto 128-133 and appendix pagg. 134-137, Gianfrancesco Musumeci pag. 133

opportunity to enrich the project through the participants' backgrounds and experiences, a tool for gathering and processing new information and insights.

The rationale

This course aimed at providing a rich, geographically and culturally varied, social and learning setting for participants, a setting where they could have opportunities to reflect critically on the concept and the practice of a responsible citizenship. To this extent the planning has been essential: activities were designed to elicit participants' experience making it visible to the whole group. Responsible citizenship is a multi-faceted concept and engages with the global as well as the local. It is crucial that our students feel well informed and prepared in their role as responsible citizens and have relevant experiences to assist in this development.

The setting

Montegrotto Terme is a thermal venue where the waters and mud have beneficial powers. It is situated in a lovely area of Northern Italy, in the region Veneto, near the beautiful cities of Padua and Venice. It is also a good starting point for a visit to the Euganean Hills (Colli Euganei). The nearest international airports are Venice (distance 50 km) and Bologna (distance 110 km). Montegrotto Terme offers an ideal background for learning. The hotel is located in peaceful grounds surrounded by the slopes of low range mountains, the whole providing a feeling of tremendous physical and psychological wellbeing which is an important factor in learning. Such a setting provides an opportunity for a wide range of learning styles, opportunities and contributions, creating a powerful basis for the wellbeing of the participants themselves. The choice of location was a very purposeful one.

Learning expectations

In the preparation of the course the tutors fixed these expectations:

- Developing an understanding of the crucial concept of responsible citizenship and identifying ways to promote this in the school community
- Becoming aware of the key role of leadership and understanding the importance of distributed leadership and leadership for learning
- Acquiring an insight into the education system and culture of Italy, the host country

- “Taking away” some practical ideas for developing responsible citizenship in schools
- Understanding the international/global context of responsible citizenship
- Deepening intercultural awareness and appreciating sameness across cultural practices as well as difference.
- Approaching the peer learning perspective

Crucially, the deepening of intercultural understanding was a prime objective and permeated all aspects of the course, both formal and informal.

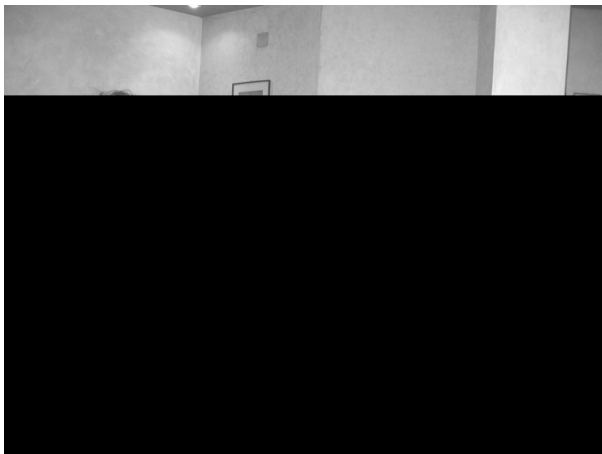
Preparing for the course and building up the group atmosphere

In order to prepare for the course, provide the necessary information and propose some background readings and materials (aimed at focussing the topic of the course), a restricted part of the project website was set up. Besides this, a contact through mail was established for specific questions and to “personalize” contact with participants. For starting to create the group atmosphere, a questionnaire was prepared to gather comparable information about participants’ schools and experiences related to the citizenship issue. The questions were related above all to the professional experiences of participants. Participants’ profiles were published in the website restricted area so that everyone could “know” other participants’ experiences before the course. In the organisational phase all these aspects were taken into account to enhance the quality of the learning atmosphere, creating expectations and fostering commitment.

7.2 The activities: contents and methodology

This course emphasised the power of co-operation and of team effort for the mutual benefit of all participants as well as for personal learning. Tutors shared their learning with participants promoting a perspective of self- learning in the belief that this is crucial and that self-reflection and self-evaluation are an inherent part of this learning process. Tutors had important contributions that proved to be effective as participants engaged and participated actively in the learning tasks, prepared and shared their learning and took leadership as appropriate.

In the course booklet each tutor published the key points regarding the presentation of his/her lecture in order to enable participants to prepare and concentrate on the main points that would be discussed. The tutor presentations included:



Responsible citizenship in Norway

Teaching citizenship in schools offers opportunities to work with young people on “real life” issues and topics. This presentation had its starting point in four key elements closely linked to citizenship (*rights, relationship, responsibility and participation*) Some examples from schools who believe in personal development through active participation and greater learner responsibility were presented. It was considered important to answer the question “How can school facilitate students’ involvement in their own learning process?” Group discussion and exchanges of experiences were an important part of the session with Norwegian colleagues

Do students wish to play an active role in changing schools?

The presentation mapped the situation in Czech schools at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of 21st with a focus on the situation in a small town grammar school and explored evaluation as a necessary part of the next stages in school development. Analysing the small-scale research the headteacher undertook in his school, he showed the initial questions, evaluation structure, tools and instruments, evaluation atmosphere and final results.

Citizenship at school and beyond: some experiences from Catalunya

The concept of community service at school and beyond was tackled through analysis, reflection and discussion of the videos that were made

by the Catalan colleagues and followed by group work. Could the experiences watched be implemented in the participants' schools or countries? Exchanging experiences of the participants' countries related to community service were shared and debated.

Citizenship as a journey: an interesting case from Norway

An interesting experiment in Karmøy has involved a school for 'drop outs', providing a second-chance-school based on the motto "everybody has a dream of a better life". School legislation gives every individual the right to education according to one's abilities. We are all aware of everybody's need for acceptance and for hope so that we believe it is important to offer our pupils a new start. The presentation focused on this school's philosophy and explained 'The Pearl Diving Project'.

Responsible citizenship in the school day life

This presentation focused on different elements of teaching and learning. It was about active involvement of pupils in the learning process, different learning activities and different and various ways of learning. And most of all it was about trust and confidence between pupils and teachers. A film from a Norwegian primary school gave an example of one of many ways to develop active citizenship among pupils. Group discussion and exchanges of experiences were again the most important part of the session.

Voices: a contribution from UK

The UK tutors considered aspects of school culture in schools that are conducive to the development and exercise of responsible citizenship; its rights and privileges and its obligations and responsibilities. A particular focus was on developing pupils' responsibility for their own learning and on self-assessment. Ideas were shared and the philosophy and practice of 'Assessment for Learning' (AfL), or formative assessment was promoted as a way to engage the pupil voice more effectively in their own learning.

The floor to the students: an Italian project

The core idea was that co-operation, participation and learning interactions experienced by pupils in school were meaningful to the growth of their sense of citizenship in a cultural, social and political perspective. This presentation focused on a project carried out in an Italian school, the Istituto Comprensivo of Chiuduno. Thanks to this project the schools

involved had become more active in social life and they cultivated efficient and productive relationships among territorial, educational and political agencies.

7.3 Sensing the culture of a school on a brief visit

Francesca Brotto

Introduction

Short school visits by a party of foreign guests often take the familiar format of an escorted tour of the school premises guided by the deputy head, followed by attendance of one or two lessons and a Question-and-Answer session during an informal chat over coffee with the school head and some members of staff. The visitors may ooh and aah over the up-to-date ICT , compliment a teacher and the head for the student work displayed on the walls (if it is displayed), look wishfully at the kitchen facilities and lounge chairs in the staff room (if the staff room back at home looks and feels utterly lifeless), and ask both “polite” as well as “burning-issue” questions, to which they are likely to receive single, rather than multiple, perspective replies. One often leaves with the sensation of having visited a school, but not having really *been* in it. “There simply hasn’t been enough time”; “It is difficult to show more in a 3-hour visit” are the consoling remarks the hosts and guests exchange as they shake hands and say goodbye.

180 minutes may be a morning’s worth of intense activities in a 5-day professional development course, but they are really just a quick snapshot of the life going on in a school.



For the SEEDS Comenius 2.1 project training module (May 5 – 11th 2008), I was asked to organise a visit to an Italian school in the vicinity of the course venue that might help the participants get something more than the above out of it, in brief to experience the school’s culture as a “model community of the concept and practice of multidimensional citizenship”¹⁵, all within the space of 150 – 180 minutes. This could only be done on the condition that the participants themselves would take on active roles as temporary on-site (re)searchers of that culture.

I contacted the principal of a 2000-student secondary school, the *Liceo Classico “Brocchi”* located on 3 sites in Bassano del Grappa (Vicenza). The school is at the head of a network of schools working on “Education for European Citizenship”, with ample experience in international exchanges, a students’ Model European Parliament project and a host of other citizenship awareness-raising initiatives. She agreed to allow us to visit her school in a novel way and to engage in the learning experience together with us.

The visit

The morning’s activities had two foci of attraction: an illustration of student work related to active citizenship (a short video and a

¹⁵ SEEDS Project Team, Course Booklet for SEEDS Project Meeting, Montegrotto Terme (Italy), May 5 – 11th 2008, p. 1.

presentation by two groups of students of their Model European Parliament Project and of their Ethical Consumer's Project sustaining small enterprises in Sicily working in infrastructure confiscated from the Mafia) and the course participants' own exploration of the school's culture (through a 40-minute shadowing activity matching the visitors with members of the teaching staff, the lab technicians, the secretarial staff, the administrative staff, the caretakers, the school head and her management team and through a 40-minute "school culture treasure hunt" engaging pairs of visitors and a student "companion" equipped with maps of the different school buildings).

The "matches" for the shadowing activity and the names of the members of the pair groups for the treasure hunt were predetermined by the activity leader (myself) on the basis of the participant profiles provided, using criteria related to possible relevance to the participant's own practitioner background where possible. They were communicated to the visitors individually on slips of paper before they got off the coach and entered the school building. Each pair of visitors engaging in the treasure hunt were also handed a quote (Appendix 1) from an article on school culture¹⁶ that everyone had previously had to read (it was on their course reading list). The quote would serve as their (re)search topic or "observation lens" during the treasure hunt, and it required them to negotiate the interpretation of which "objects" they were to look for, as well as what messages they conveyed. The visitors were also free to interview their student guide during the hunt.

All 20 of the SEEDS course participants and 8 of the organizers took active part in the morning's activities.

*N.B. It is important to note that the visit took place on a "normal" school day, while regular classes and administrative work were going on.
The programme*

¹⁶ The article was: Carla Solvason, "investigatine specialist school ethos... or do you mean culture?", *Educational Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, M arch 2005, pp. 85 – 94.

- 10.10 am Arrival at the school, welcome and brief introduction by the school principal (The coach was late with respect to the expected arrival time of 9.30 am)
- 10.30 am Presentation of Model European Parliament Project (with short video) by students in Assembly room
- 10.50 am Visitors matched to school staff for shadowing activity. Shadowing activity starts.
- 11.30 am Shadowing activity ends. Visitors report back to assembly room to meet student guides and start school culture treasure hunt.
- 12.15 am School culture treasure hunt ends. Plenary session: pairs report on their treasure hunt findings (About 40 students, teachers, members of non-teaching staff and the school head attend)
- 12.50 am Presentation by students and a teacher of Ethical Consumer's Project (supporting small businesses working against the Mafia in Sicily, in collaboration with partner school in Palermo). Interaction between participants and students.
- 1.15 pm Concluding remarks by SEEDS organizers and school head.

The feedback to the school

After lunch and the afternoon's activities (tour of Bassano and Marostica – famous for its historic human chess game – guided by school staff member and students), the course participants returned to Montegrotto (course venue), where after dinner they wrote their feedback to the morning's visit, using the following template:

SEEDS COMENIUS 2.1 Project Training Module

VISIT to LICEO BROCCHI

Bassano del Grappa, 7 May 2008

Points to consider for feedback

- *Your “lens” of observation and investigation (=> the quote given to you from the Solvason article)*
- *The people at school you talked to, encountered, observed, dealt with..., including your own partners in the activities*
- *The situation(s) you found yourself in*
- *Things/details that struck you*
- *Images you had; feelings, emotions you experienced*
- *Possible mirror effects with your own condition/situation*
- *What did the whole experience mean to you?*
- *A “message in a bottle” for the school.*

Please add any attachments you would like (pictures, drawings, ...).

THANK YOU

Please remember to sign your feedback.

The next morning a collation of salient aspects of the observations made was put together and immediately sent to the school head, with a letter signed by all the course participants. Some of these appear in the table in the Appendix to the chapter.

Concluding remarks

Although many of the participants highlighted the fact that they would have wanted to spend more time at the school, only one person felt there was too little worth saying on account of the limited-time experience. Most of the others highly appreciated the individualized and active approach used in the visit and the opportunity to come into contact with multiple perspectives through the different members of the school community they met and the chance to “walk around the school” freely together with their student companions. One of the participants remarked about how he had “learnt more about observation than emulation” during the visit. They also appreciated the kaleidoscope of aspects colouring the school culture that emerged when they stood up to present their findings in the plenary session towards the end of the visit. In their written reports, they generally wrote $\frac{3}{4}$ page-length “thick” observations related to their

focus areas and the elements that had struck them in the culture of the school.

The “messages in a bottle” often praised the work carried out by the school, but at the same time some touched upon the issue of social inclusion and selection and wondered whether a school like this has a pre-selected pupil intake. In a later contact with the principal to pre-announce the arrival of the participants’ feedback, I was told the school is already too large to be able to take in all the application requests it receives, but does not use social or ethnic or performance criteria to select the applications it does accept. A discussion of the matter would entail an analysis of the Italian secondary school system and the way it works, a topic related a lot more to the “culture” of our education system rather than to the “culture” of the school we visited.

7.4 Modeling aspects of citizenship throughout the course

The sense of «Europeanness» was evidenced and enhanced in many ways. Participants, using common terminology discovered their various meanings in different national contexts. They were able to engage in comparative education frameworks, in their discussions and their national exemplifications. The visits to an Italian school demonstrated just one schooling framework that was quite different to the experiences of many of the participants. The professional European context was a rich one. Participants learnt about the different education systems, different interpretations of school management and leadership and, always, different approaches to common problems and situations. «Europeanness» was absorbed and developed on a personal level too, through cultural learning, intercultural comprehension and the development of friendship, plans for the future. Good progress was made in that construction process, working collaboratively as a real international group.

Through the many activities, both in the formal course structure and in informal learning scenarios such as at meal times, breaks, and on excursions, for example in the gondolas, ways to learn, collaborate and to take care of self and each other were in abundance. A spirit of openness developed whereby participants felt comfortable in expressing their queries, concerns and sometimes healthy constructive skepticism as well as their appreciation and enjoyment. In such a way did the course provide a mirror image of the classrooms, learning communities and indeed a culture in which responsible citizenship thrive.



Appendix

I - School culture treasure hunt

OBSERVATION LENSES (quotes taken from Solvason article – cf. footnote 2 –, bold type inserted by visit organizer to highlight particular elements to focus on)	EXAMPLES OF FINDINGS illustrated by course participants
1) p.85: the 'character' of the school that one experiences on visiting the establishment	<p><i>-The classes are clean and light, but there isn't anything on the walls (decoration, student work...)</i></p> <p><i>-Even during break time, students were very silent and well-behaved</i></p> <p><i>- In general the pupils looked quite happy to me, with a healthy sense of discipline but as healthy a sense of assertivity and independence, too.</i></p> <p><i>- To me the school was like classical music: curriculum, theory, music history, not school rock bands and so on.</i></p> <p><i>- the students looked very happy and "loved" by the teachers</i></p>
2) p. 85: <i>culture</i> [...] school's	- <i>Unwritten rules: behave well, respect the</i>

<p>own unwritten rules, norms and expectations</p>	<p>teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Students are very respectful to their teachers</i> - <i>The most important thing I discovered is that every person who works or attends studies in a school should know the aim of the school. The more the values are explicit the more the quality will be improved.</i> - <i>One of the students claimed: "there is no bullying here!"</i> - <i>I found myself looking at a very well kept school where the pupils obviously respected their surroundings.</i>
<p>3) p. 86: Culture is deeply embedded in the school's history: beliefs, values, choices made, traditions kept.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>we asked students some questions, but the way they answered was important and full of significance, they all tried to underline the democratic attitude that is constantly felt in their school life</i> <p>See also n. 2</p>
<p>4) p. 87: Culture can be found in the solidity of the school building and its contents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>it was nice to see that modern, well-equipped classrooms had been built inside the venerable classic main building of the school</i> - <i>my impression about the building was very good because I had seen no graffiti in the walls</i> - <i>I found the classrooms a bit "cold". There were not any posters and pictures etc. on the walls</i> - <i>The classrooms (I visited only 2) were not as I expected. No pictures, no products, no posters of learning styles, strategies, etc. No computers in the classrooms just a black board and no overheads or projectors for teachers' presentations.</i> - <i>the school garden wasn't green at all, and didn't have much space for students. I believe that having a good garden changes or adds something to the atmosphere.</i>
<p>5) p. 87: Culture can be found in [...] how the school is organized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A large and open welcome by 2 ladies at a desk await you when you arrive</i> - <i>The school was good organized. [...] Everyone was helpful.</i> - <i>although there are 3 buildings, there is good communication between the staff and the teachers</i>
<p>6) p. 87: Culture can be found in [...] the staff that [the school building] houses and how they interact, and the individual histories and personalities that they bring to the melting-pot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The headmistress was a very warm person and effective without being bossy</i> - <i>I had the opportunity to talk to the headmistress and to observe she is the nucleus of a system which works or moves around her.</i> - <i>I was amazed by the huge non pedagogical staff: there must be a great bureaucracy!</i>

	see also n. 8
7) p.88: Hargreaves (1994) informs us of a school where teachers had very positive perceptions of one another, the students, the community, and where over half the teachers were involved in extracurricular activities and [...] tended not to want to leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Students have many activities after school.</i> - <i>Relaxed atmosphere: both teachers and students seemed proud of their school</i> - <i>The English teacher also told me she was involved in Comenius projects and had a long experience in that.</i> - <i>some of the non-teaching staff from time to time have experienced some teachers to be a bit rude; however, it seemed to exist a very good relationship between the students and the teachers.</i>
8) p. 88: Within an organization of <i>any</i> size, [...] it is possible to find sub- and even conflicting cultures. [...] Hargreaves (1994) has argued that there is a tradition of individualism within the teacher culture that works as a heresy against collegiality	- <i>Although the headmistress's aim is to put together all the teachers, some of them are not involved very much in her project. I think she's got enough support to run the school with the help she received from the "supportive" teachers. It seems to me from my view in the teachers' room that they need more opportunities to know each other</i>
9) p. 89: Parents, teachers, students, administrators, and support staff often form sub-cultures around immediate, parochial interests that pull the school in several directions (Deal and Kennedy, 1983)	- <i>I had an interesting dialogue with a young woman; we were discussing what power there lies in expectations, both positive and negative: for example, parents/ teachers' position in a way demanding expectations, pointing out directions and closing others.</i>
10) p. 90: While the teachers believed theirs was a culture of praise , the students felt the opposite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Students think that only some of the teachers are flexible towards them. Teachers' reactions might change as regards being supportive.</i> - <i>I liked the headmistress's attitude towards students and staff: the way she praised everyone's work.</i>
11) p. 90: it was very difficult to fully comprehend the students' perception of the experience of school [...] [Lewis and Lindsay, 2000] stressed the need for giving students their own voice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>When we speak to students, we see that they have opportunity to express their own voice.</i> - <i>Students also complained about bureaucracy and about not being taken care in more individual way</i> - <i>Student says: "The school is mine and the school helps me to become better"</i> <p>Also see n. 13</p>
12) p. 91: Toxic, or negative, effects can also be [...] nebulous, such as in Oakes's (1985) investigation of the persistence of inequality in school, particularly through the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I could conclude from the teacher's words there were no "special needs students" in the school, only pupils who needed support to keep up with the curriculum.</i> - <i>I conclude that inequality is a problem, but not within the school. It is rather a social inequality</i>

<p>act of streaming.</p>	<p><i>because pupils from the area who have “special needs” do not attend the school.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>There was no streaming within the school but because only the “able” and “capable” were included in the school (the act of streaming had already taken place !!!)</i> - <i>A school with a solid reputation [...] attracts pupils that fit in this “culture” – it is a continuous process. What about the students that do not fit in this system? Where do they go? [...] Perhaps it is – in a certain way – an “elite-school”.</i>
<p>13) p. 92: An important factor in school innovation is the extent to which individuals have been involved in the decision-making.</p>	<p><i>-Vlastimil and I asked a student about the possibilities students have of changing things at school. I had the impression that his school was organised in a very similar way to my own school. Of course, students can suggest or complain but only about minor things (stupid things, he said), whereas they think they can’t influence major changes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I also had the chance to have short conversations with some students. Here are my observations: [...] The student committee functions actively especially when students ask for a new practice at school</i> - <i>It seemed to me that the students couldn’t take part in choosing the methods used in the classroom</i>

Chapter 8

The SEEDS Course: perceptions and evaluations

Maria do Carmo Clímaco

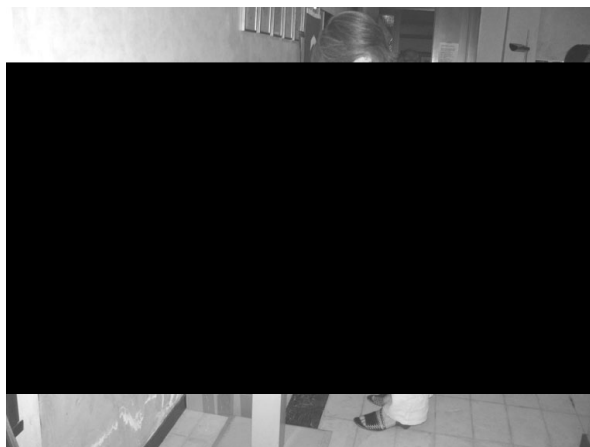
The chapter presents the perceptions and the evaluation of the SEEDS Course using the lenses of its participants: how they describe and react to the planned work, what they mention as learning, experience and new understandings of responsible citizenship education and its basic principles. Direct observation conducted by the external evaluator and data from two different written tasks, daily memos and a final course log were used as sources of information on participants' perceptions about the value of the work developed during the week. Participants recognize the course as a very valuable experience they would like to repeat. It was recognised that it constituted an opportunity for diversified and useful learning at personal and professional levels, having got new understandings of the theoretical issues and school practices that are at stakes in responsible citizenship education, as it was illustrated in the cases presented. A lot of ideas and practical suggestions to be adapted to their own realities were taken away, together with feelings of self satisfaction and fulfilment.

8.1 Introduction of the aims

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide, according to my role as external evaluator, an analysis of how successfully the course held at Montegrotto met the course learning expectations as stated by the organisers in the course programme. By the same token, it is part of the analysis of the success of the course to identify the extent to which and how participants' expectations for this course were responded to. Three criteria were used to assess the perceived importance of the course as a strategy for professional development: what is recalled or commented about inputs and meaningful learning focused on theory and practice of "responsible citizenship education"; how participants viewed themselves as active learners and worked together; and what is mentioned as useful cues or inspiration for their professional work. Beyond these specific aspects, it will be taken into consideration how references are made to the importance of the social experience of being part of a European international group sharing similar concerns, dealing with different challenges and choices, and involved in different responses.

For that purpose, participants were asked to take notes from their daily work, so that we could get an itinerary of the course progress, of their learning experience and feelings. It was made clear that those notes would be used as a feedback to the organisers, having in mind the improvement of future versions of this course. In this way, course members were involved in a participatory evaluation process, as has been largely applied in social research. The daily written tasks were planned as forms of collecting useful data for evaluating the course, but also, as some social researchers have underlined, as an approach to empower people (Mertens, et al. 1995). Beyond the intrinsic value of the projects presented, the quality of the working methods and the intentions of the different tutors, what is perceived and recalled as a meaningful experience tells about how effective we have been in the planning and delivery of different components of this course, and contributes to identifying which factors facilitated and inhibited the empowerment of the people involved in this international context.

Most of the daily writing follows an unstructured pattern, which is reflected in the randomness of notes and reflections. Significantly, the second day's notes on the visit to Liceo Brocchi, at Bassano del Grappa, followed a carefully structured visit, included note-taking of local presentations about teaching and learning projects in progress, focused observations and interviews. At the end of day all participants were asked to write their observations in such a way, that notes could be used as a feedback to be mailed to everybody from Liceo Brocchi involved in the different activities covered by the visit.



Before the course closure session, participants were required to fill in a questionnaire designed by the coordination team, which has been used systematically for the evaluation of other Comenius courses they have set up. Therefore, there was a combination of evaluation devices responding to different purposes, involving several internal and external authorships, but following a coherent strategy of participation and development.

Cousins and Earl (1992) mentioned the importance of the local context in providing a basis for determining the “exact form of the participatory evaluation”. In this perspective, others underline the need to tailor the evaluation format according to the aims of the object to be evaluated and the people involved in the purposes of the evaluation as negotiated beforehand. Mertens et al. (1995) explicitly state that it is necessary to design and implement the evaluation with the participation of relevant members of the organisation under analysis. According to them, the external evaluators will then act essentially as “facilitators of the evaluation process and (...) as educators about programme evaluation”.

It was then in this perspective of evaluating for increasing the responsiveness of international courses for teachers that the evaluation of the first course of the SEEDS Project was conducted.

8.2 The course and its context

The work developed by the different international teams of the SEEDS Project was framed by the belief that the development of European dimensions and citizenship is rooted in the school culture and in the way it is experienced or lived. Diversity of contexts and cultures within the European space, strengthened by mobility and access to information and communication, have contributed to question the school as a model community, where life and learning experienced by students is meant to contribute in a relevant way to the education of the new European citizens, namely when fostering the growth of their sense of participation and identity, in a cultural, social and political perspective.

The in-depth analyses of the selected projects implemented or improved in the five national teams as SEEDS initiatives, revealed that they all shared common concerns, and proposed new perspectives on the issues of citizenship education, setting them ahead of the traditional approaches of civic education. They could be framed within a broader view of education and identity development, to be seen at three interrelated levels: the person, the school community and the outer community. Citizenship education is presented as a transversal component of the curriculum,

crossing the whole culture and modes of action in the school setting. More than contents it is to be seen as attitude and behaviour. If the concepts involved in citizenship education are not new, the way they are proposed to be approached in the curriculum delivery as a new set of 3Rs – *responsibility, rights and relationships* - implies a new concept and practice of education, where education for responsible citizenship acts as the integrative determinant of change for schooling, and as the heart a new learning ecology. The consequences in the way people view themselves as responsible members of a learning community, are to be seen in the new roles discovered for each one, partner or stakeholder, administrator, teacher or student, in the way they interrelate in the inner community, in the way leadership and responsibility are to be distributed, giving voice and equal dignity to everyone, or in raising awareness of the basic principles of citizenship education as part of their “theory of action” and “theory in use” (Argyris, 1978). In different ways, but following a common trend, the SEEDS Project provided new “keys” for reading the school initiatives in the five member countries as “democracy in use”, giving a new dimension to the building of a European citizenship education and of democracy.

Benefiting from the work implemented and the knowledge produced by the SEEDS’ teams, a training course was organised intending to provide opportunities for participants to reflect critically on the old and new concepts and practices of responsible citizenship. This course emphasised the power of cooperation and of team effort for the mutual benefit of all participants as well as for personal learning. In this perspective, the active responsibility of each individual participant in his/her own learning was fostered. Self-reflection and self-evaluation were thought as inherent parts of this process.

To guarantee that participants were equally attuned to the major concepts and issues to be approached along the course, reading suggestions had been mailed to everyone about relevant literature and information on related websites, namely the ones developed for this topic in the scope of European agencies.

Seven learning expectations were stated for this course, namely:

- Developing an understanding of the crucial concept of responsible citizenship and identifying ways to promote this in the school community;
- Becoming aware of the key role of leadership and understanding the importance of distributed leadership and leadership for learning;

- Acquiring an insight into the educational system and culture of Italy, the host country;
- “Taking away” some practical ideas for developing responsible citizenship in schools;
- Understanding the international/global context of responsible citizenship;
- Deepening intercultural awareness and appreciating sameness across cultural practices as well as difference;
- Approaching the peer learning perspective.

The participants

The profile and the expectations of the 19 participants were much diversified: Some were senior teachers, with responsibilities as head teachers, teacher trainers or project coordinators, while some others were in the beginning of their careers; many of them were primary teachers, while others were secondary teachers with different academic background, teaching subjects as different as philosophy, biology, foreign language or special needs.

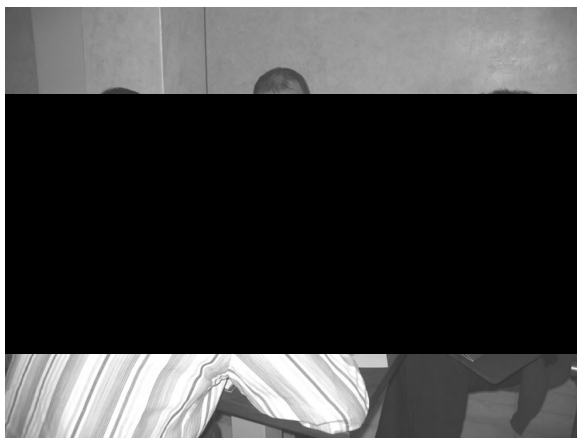
The perspective of participating in an international gathering of teachers seemed to be in itself a valuable opportunity for meeting different people with different mindsets, for having a break in their professional lives, for sharing and enjoying experiences from informal interaction. But the possibility of having more than a gathering of teachers, participating in a course and learning from the others’ experiences, listening to different tutors, comparing initiatives, collecting ideas and inspiration, was by far an invaluable opportunity for restoring energies and for professional improvement. They believed that a context was created to get a better knowledge about Europeans, to promote personal experiences of European citizenship, a context where they could discuss, learn and interact. These perspectives and expectations can be identified in their comments about their daily work, about their learning experiences or in the suggestions they made to improve future similar initiatives.

8.3 Perceptions and evaluations - the collection of data

In order to capture their perceptions of the way the course was progressing and how they evaluated it as a whole, participants were given two different tasks: at the opening of the course, they were invited to daily register some personal notes and/or comments on the work developed along each day’s course, as a memory of their individual

learning and feelings, or a kind of a diary of the course, the “*daily memos*”.

At the end of the course, a questionnaire was handed out for the evaluation of the course as a whole, “*the course log*”, structured around three aspects covering the purposes and the strategies of the course: “learning” and “caring for individual learning”, and “recommendations” for improving future courses. Memos and log were complementary but independent tools. They are complementary on sharing the same purpose of feeding back to the organisers about the work developed. They differ to the extent the former was intended to capture the immediate, fragmented perceptions of the value of the daily work, while the latter aimed at getting the global perception of the course mediated by an intensive week’s work and by the many interactions within the different affinity groups.



The daily memos

The daily “homework” as it was later called, was conceived as a non structured or open task. It could be a short memo about the contents or issues discussed, a reflection about the shared experiences, the emotions of the day, the specific aspects they valued most.

This exercise had a double purpose: to stimulate reflection and gather, day by day, some of the most powerful memories from the course. Writing is to be seen as a way to raise awareness and to consolidate learning, and to get feedback on the impact of the course as a learning experience and as meeting the participants’ expectations.

At the end of the week, every participant had completed their memos. Half of them correspond to the first three days' writing, daily handed out to the organisation team. The remaining ones were received before the closure session. Some are short notes, others are full texts summing up the most meaningful inputs intertwined with personal considerations on the work undertaken, or just expressing expectations, feelings and emotions. Some are spontaneous and enthusiastic, seeming to come out of a desire to share a comment. They can be sparse notes lacking cohesion as a text, sometimes completed by a drawing, when the words were short to communicate emotions, relying on the power of metaphors to convey a plurality of thoughts and feelings. One took the form of a personalised letter, addressing a specific tutor as "Dear Andreas" and several closed affectionately with an eloquent "Thank you", or just wishing "All the best".

Other memos, namely the ones responding to the feedback on the second day's visit to Liceo Brocchi in Bassano del Grappa, were structured according to the different focuses of the "thick observation" tasks distributed to participants, providing that way a reflected complementary overview of the multiple observed aspects. Most of the memos handed back in the last day are mostly small reports describing every activity in the programme, covering the last days. However, some participants used the opportunity to complete with more detailed reflections the short notes they had already given back to the organisers in due time.

The course log

The questionnaire handed out to the participants was to be filled in with their global evaluation of the course. It was organised in three sections, corresponding to three reflection criteria, respectively "*Learning*", covering three questions on: the scope of meaningful individual learning, the quality of the methods of work, and the effects of their learning in future practice; "*Taking care of myself as a learner*" equally addressing three questions, respectively about what was discovered about the self as a learner, how to consolidate what was learnt and what to share with other colleagues when back to their schools. The third section, "*Recommendations*", comprised a single question about comments and recommendations to the organisers.

The responses to the questionnaire were produced within a precise schedule. Some participants left the room, looked for a quiet seat and started responding individually. Most of them gathered in groups, discussed the questions, to be sure they had fully understood their meaning and what they were required to do. Several participants mention

how they would like to be more fluent in English, so that they could express more easily and quickly their reactions and points of view, unhappy with their telegraphic writing, or school English, as one of the respondents say. It explains why, after that group warming up, some responses start with similar sentences, as if copied, and evolve in different directions.

Course memos and course log are complementary documents, conceived as part of a strategy to reinforce learning, to promote reflexivity and to create situations for informal interactions in ad hoc groups. Their character of feedback materials made them very appropriate for the course evaluation. From their reading we understand how and to what extent, in participants' perceptions, the objectives of the course and the learning expectations stated by the organisers were met.

8.4 Findings and analysis of the findings

The individual writing

Three aspects in the comments or individual testimonies in the daily memos and log caught our attention: the individual writing, the learning process and the course in itself. Comparing both types of documents, comments and individual testimonies expressed in the daily memos are marked by the character of the individual writing: it is spontaneous, personalised and sincere. Most texts correspond to personal short notes taken during a break or at the end of the day, handed out before dinner, as if it were necessary to close the day's work, before informal conversations and after dinner relaxation, be it sharing aspects of their national cultures, listening to music and singing together, or other. In spite of some language problems, people made an effort to immediately write down their reactions, doubts and thoughts, an effort to communicate, as they did along the week.

Memos are written in the first person, mostly in the singular, and are very concrete in the identification of what they considered as positive experiences and benefits:

“The videos in the morning and the film in the afternoon were very interesting and practical because we can take some ideas in order to implement them in our reality.”

“We could have a lecture or read articles on citizenship, but that would not have the same qualities and impact as meeting and working with teachers from other countries”

Often participants recognise that the notions and actions presented and discussed in the different sessions were not new to them; but many recognise them as new approaches different from their “*own knowledge*” and experience, which they call “*a refreshing perspective of old notions and concepts*”. It is the case of the view about the roles of principals and teachers, or about school organisation and management of the teachers’ time. Others refer to the discovery of “*viewing concepts in line with others, as it is the case of “accountability and responsible citizenship” or “responsible citizenship and self identity”*”. Others sincerely recognize or admit they “*had never thought about it*”.

Predominantly their writing is marked by the emotions of the day, which they feel the need to share, to reinforce the reassuring function of courses of this nature, and to demonstrate individual reactions, distinct from the feelings of the group. In spite of the work load it may represent, they view themselves as members of a group and enjoy being individually taken into consideration, valued and respected. Individualisation fits a strategy to foster learning. “*This message gave a lot of self-confidence and self-esteem*”; “*It was quite a good feeling recognising my own everyday life*”; “*The visit to the Liceo Brocchi – Well organised, I felt that Francesca took care of me very well*”

8.5 The learning experience

In different ways, all the participants in their comments refer to their learning experiences as positive, characterised by confirmation, discovery and feeling good:

“I felt familiar with that presentation focusing on relationships, participation and responsibility”. On feeling good they were ready to accept new perspectives for old beliefs: “*The floor to the students – the citizenship idea brought outside the school too, ... was a new way of thinking for me*”, or just to accept there was a world of old ideas, newly re-conceptualised, which they were not aware of, which were summarised as “*I learned a lot!*”, “*Personally a very good experience*”, “*Now my head is full of ideas*”.

In general, as it can be seen in the log comments, participants have been very specific and clear on identifying the most interesting things they learned, experienced, and understood, phrased as distinct levels of appropriation of knowledge, as they constantly demonstrate. Some of their answers are just thoughts paraphrasing what had been presented by tutors, which apparently is associated to learning, but looking more as a

repetition of a sentence that stroke their sensitivity and they memorised, than a consistently internalised reflection. Specific pieces of information are mentioned as “important learning: *“I have learnt that citizenship education includes responsibility, rights, participation and relationships. I also learned how those principles can be practiced at school”*”, while other participants elaborate on what they summarise as “meaningful learning: *“I also learned how those basic principles can be practiced at school. (...)*”

Citizenship is not only to do some activities in school. Citizenship education is above all a permanent attitude and concerns all our behaviour as teachers: how I smile my students, how I coach them growing up, how you select the contents of your subject Citizenship is not an extra subject. It is, and should be, embedded in the school culture and in my work as a teacher, or as a caretaker, all the ones working in a school. It is about small issues, small seeds”.

“The concept of “citizenship” is very useful and interesting. It sums up a lot of what we already do, in a reflected way, but this new understanding will help us develop our thinking and practice”

The concept of citizenship is wide and should be at the heart of school; (it) is a philosophical foundation”.

“I have during the course understood that we already are educating our pupils to European citizenship, but now I have put the right words into it. I have also got some ideas from other participants in order to deal with citizenship in my school”.

For a great number of participants the best of the course were the opportunities to compare systems, schools and cultures, and learn about differences and similarities: *“Meeting teachers from other countries in this context has been very useful and satisfying”;*

“I got more understanding of how different European schools are organised and driven, but at the same time most of us have the same aims and thinking about European citizenship. Interesting the comparison of three national education systems and realizing their effects on the organisation of school life and their influence on the issue of citizenship, having the chance to see real experiences and projects carried at certain schools. You can't copy exactly the ideas because your reality is different, but it is important to find inspiration in good teaching practices”

“It has been very interesting to learn something about other countries developing school culture towards European citizenship, (and) to appreciate the job, the projects we are doing at school by seeing them in a new way, “wearing citizenship glasses”.

It is recognised that the course itself was planned and designed following an intelligent architecture, to facilitate the exchange of experiences, interaction and learning. On thinking about what facilitated their learning, a special mention is made to the lectures – the focus and the style of presentations -, to the visual aids, and to the created situations for interaction among the participants, keeping them active in a permanent process of receiving, accommodating, comparing, questioning and understanding what to select as useful learning. A very precise description of how adults learn and how their professional development can be made effective is given using their own words with different voices:

“The many presentations, the many projects, the many personalities, both speakers and public, made (the course) a rich experience. The presentations, all of them, were very pedagogical, clear and dynamic. The group-reflection; my self-reflection (facilitated my learning)”.

“The lectures have been important, but most of all, the possibility of exchanging points of view, asking and answering questions in order to compare and see what is possible to be implemented in my school.”

“In all presentations I transferred what was being said and placed it in my position”.

“I tried to think about my school, my country. How do we do this at home? Do we have the same understanding of this? If not, is this something we can do?” “I compared the things I have seen/learned during the course and the real situation in my country. We are practicing most of the things that other European schools do. However, the difference is that we are not doing these activities in a programme. I realised that a properly designed programme plays an important role.”

“When I have heard (certain) things in the sessions I tried to think about how we do this in my school and reflect on it. The group discussions were a good way for learning, because I could ask questions and see the issues from different angles”. “As I was hearing about how things have been done in other schools, I tried to think about how I can adapt this into my everyday life. It is important to relate things into practice and also put new ideas together with the old ones”. “We have had many examples and presentations that have dealt with the (same) issues in different ways. Learning from the others gives meaning to what can be used in my school”. “Learning from the others, together with my/our own practice, gives meaning”.

“The visit to the school in Bassano was very educational (...) “the treasure hunt”. I not only looked for finding the answers (...) but also

reflected on my personal position at my place of work. (...) the same aim in life (made the task) meaningful and facilitated my learning”.

“ (On the other hand) having visual presentations made learning easier and more interesting. The videos and films have been a good way to see the atmosphere in different country schools. The opportunity to share experiences full of new inputs and to show them through videos has been very useful, with a deep impact. A sort of “direct experience”

I don’t know if I am able to apply some of the things mentioned during the presentations, but I am sure that I will try my best to have a student centred atmosphere”

Depending on the professional experience and maturity of the participants, the role they play in their schools, their cultural background, and their expectations, they view differently the aims of the course, the contents and the way they were approached, the interactions among groups and the atmosphere that was created. This is expressed in the way they talk about the course work and in what they recall as meaningful and worth to be shared with the organisers, eventually with the others. For a few, in the beginning it did not fit in their specific expectations, or some of the sessions seemed too theoretical and difficult to follow attentively. For the large majority, the course was quite an experience, full of strengths and challenges, a starting point for change, a collection of happy hard days. They explicitly refer to the many opportunities they were given for learning and discovering opportunities for improving professionally. They see the course as an “*opportunity*” for raising awareness of “*routines*” and “*taken for granted beliefs*”.

On being actively involved in the different workshops, they recognise this organisational strategy for responsible learning as a model to be used in their work with students. In that perspective, they felt engaged in and inspired by discussions, which reminded them of “*the need to more frequently also involve their students in discussion and decision making*”, and use new approaches to leading learning, considering their own experience in the course as active learners:

“Showing is more effective than explaining”

“Group activities can be demanding, more than listening to lectures, but really rewarding”

“The use of videos is really helpful”

Moreover, they recognise that

“(…) In our schools we often are stuck in daily routine. We need to stop and from time to time to reflect on the responsibility of our job. There are so many aspects that we often forget. One of them is the feedbacks from our students”.

The course is also considered as an opportunity for reviewing their own practice, getting new ideas and insights to introduce changes in attitudes and behaviours, exploring information about concrete aspects of others' experiences and achievements.

Some participants mention specific practical ideas they got to be implemented at school level. Their position as school leaders adds pragmatism to decisions to be taken, specifically when it involves changes in the established organisation of their schools and in its underlying principles. Assuming a new perspective of citizenship education as a structuring concept of education, whose driving principles are responsibility, rights, relationships and participation, some heads are faced with the challenge to review the different leadership roles and move to the implementation of a model of distributed leadership, in the respect for the basic principles of responsible citizenship education paradigm. On getting new ideas and insights on Citizenship Education to take home, they gained confidence in their own learning and capacity to mobilise the others at school:

"This session opened my eyes about citizenship in my school and things that I never had thought about. I realized that the way we organise our student council is very similar to what I heard in the session and that we therefore are along with citizenship in this way".

"To me citizenship was a new expression, but the session and the discussions were good to the understanding of it"

"Responsible citizenship was an extraordinary good lesson that made me reflect upon the change in methods of education. (...) I believe that pupils must be given an opportunity to influence the school".

" I will take small steps, in cooperation with my fellow teachers. We've had some good examples in this course that can be adapted"

"In sum: the presentations and lectures gave insights into other countries' school systems and issues, and provided an opportunity to rethink our home school system and school challenges. This may seem self-centred, but we are going home in a few days, and this is one of the things we bring back".

The last part of the first section in the Course Log, "will there be new opportunities from now on in the way I teach?", questions the participants' self image as effective learners and as responsive professionals; on the other hand, it confronts them with their personal willingness, belief and skill to apply what they learnt to change or to improve own teaching and educational practices on coming back to schools.

To a certain extent, this question tackles the ethics of engagement, in this specific case, with citizenship education and responsibility for all. From an evaluative point of view it is also a way to check what they grasped as new in European citizenship education and that mobilised them the most.

The conviction in personal skill and capacity to introduce changes varies with participants and probably with the role they play in each school. Some are quite determined to create “new opportunities” for themselves and for their schools, colleagues and students: *“Of course!”*; *“Oh yes!”*; *“I hope so”*; *“Definitively”*, *“Now I want to go home and tell my colleagues ...”*. For others, the creation of opportunities for change is presented as part of their continuous learning process, even when they are generous and intend to involve students, or other teachers. Prudently they say: *“I’ll try to do”*; *“I really want to try”*; *“I am interested now in using it”*. For others, opportunities do not refer to the future work, changes or improvements in their teaching, but, in their opinion, to increase their degree of awareness.

Besides the differences in the degree of determination to use professionally what they learned, there are also differences in who will be involved in the opportunities for change or improvement: some responses have in mind the self improvement as individual teachers; others explicitly are thought for involving other colleagues in the school; the large majority of the responses refer “new opportunities” for the benefit of students and are related to the usage of the basic principles of citizenship education. Some others are addressed to students and teachers. One of them intends to ‘bridge’ with parents.

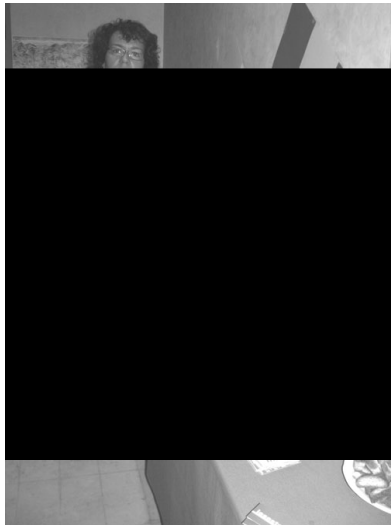
The answers to this first set of questions, together with the spontaneous written daily memories can be read as an inventory of what is viewed as learning, as innovation, as enriching experiences, as positive, challenging ideas to take home. Comparisons are constantly present in the references made to what was presented or discussed and their own work. The basic principles in responsible citizenship education appear as the structuring concepts for a new approach to democracy in schools. *“Opportunity”* and *“Awareness”* are two of the most frequent expressions in their comments about what mattered in their interactions, in what they observed, discussed and got as an advantage. *“I have been given the opportunity to put in words some of the little things I actually do in my way of teaching and learning. A lot of good things are being done, but I do not have the time to reflect on them and understand why we do those things”*

Taking care of myself as a learner

The organisation of a course for teachers in the context of their professional development is rooted in the strong belief on the individual as a life long learner. As such, monitoring learning needs and skills and being aware of own learning styles are assumed as part of the process of caring for the self as a learning agent. The immense majority of participants assumed themselves as learners and converged in the understanding of what was at stakes in this question. They tried to identify not only what they had learnt, but also why some strategies had been more useful than others, why some colleagues had been more effective in their initiatives. Some are very precise on identifying what in their attitudes, in their endeavours and actions had contributed to successful action and others failed.

“I do the same works at my school as we did in the course. But I discovered that I must do these group works in well organised programmes”

“I discovered the pleasure to share “our school life” and our professional style and realise that even if we live in other countries and in different realities we have very similar problems to solve and our frustration seemed to be heavier to carry on. Knowing different styles of teaching has helped me to consider my way to approach foreign students who come from so different cultures with new values”



“Taking care of the self as a learner” means to have the disposition, say the humility, to recognise that there is always something to learn and the ambition to look for the hidden faces of the already known. It also means to continuously consolidate and improve knowledge, skills, and competences. Consolidation is viewed as part of the sustainability of learning, against the erosion brought by the pressure of daily work and routines.

Participants refer to different strategies to be followed in the consolidation of what they learnt. For some participants consolidation will be achieved by passing (they *will tell, show, present*) the information they got to their colleagues; or by launching a school project involving other schools or even other countries “*to exchange ideas, learn from other schools and cultures*”, so that more people may have access to the experience of sharing and interact with colleagues from other countries, other cultures. Many would like to keep in touch with their mates from this course, and firmly state that “*contacts will continue...*”

The majority are pushed by the urgency of immediate action and of sharing with colleagues what they learned. For them consolidation goes through networking strategies, involving and leading people into action: they want to mobilise other people in school – heads, teachers, parents and share ideas and thoughts, study, discuss, implement innovations, investigate, influence decisions and increase their involvement. They will start with the materials used in the course they attended. Some propose to be involved in a set of initiatives involving different and simultaneous actions. The three main types of strategies for learning consolidation are presented as transmitting and discussing information, networking schools, and mobilising people and doing innovations, which are exemplified as follows:

“We will present the ideas and show some of the presentations that we have been given to colleagues, trying to bring new inputs into our plans and practices”

“I’m still in contact with a network on citizenship in my country. I’ll propose them some ideas from this course. I would like to begin an international project in my school”

“I’m going to share my thoughts, the things I learned with our head master and our teachers’ council. Since we have a small group of teachers working on cross-curricular issues such as citizenship, I can join them and provide them with ideas and examples of good practice. What I specially want to do is to make parents more involved in our school culture. To inform them of what we think is important and what we expect from them. To listen to them and share ideas on education.”

Their experience could be summarised in a short story as
*“I would summarise my experience to my colleagues with a metaphor I like a lot:
“Everybody has a pearl. Everybody has a dream of a better life. Let’s go.”*

8.6 Final Comments and recommendations

In Section C, participants were asked a final comment or a recommendation before leaving. There is a high level of agreement in the responses to Question C: all participants are unanimous on saying, in different ways, how happy they are for having attended this course, how they enjoyed and benefited from it. They are grateful for having been selected, and would recommend their friends and colleagues to attend it in future versions.

In their words, for example,
“The course was well organised. I have learnt new things. And this course has reminded me of some things I do at my school. So I am happy with being here. Thank you”
“The course was very well run and the speakers were very good. I make two exceptions- Jakob and Andreas were fantastic and their words, emotions and beliefs will stay with me for ever”

The list of examples of points of satisfaction and agreement could go on, almost from (1) to (19). They put forward a set of considerations related to the importance of a right context for learning, as they had been given, which covers the conditions of the physical setting, the stimulating presentations, the balance between time for listening and questioning, for exchanging ideas with other colleagues in formal teamwork and informally, and time for personal reflection.

They comment positively the quality of the group, including organisers, tutors and participants, the atmosphere that was created along the course, the learning opportunities, and the formal and informal activities.

“The location is fantastic”.
“The trip to Venice was wonderful! It was really good to come out of the hotel and just relax and enjoy the beautiful surroundings!”

Even those whose expectations were not high, recognise that progressively they were discovering advantages.

Parallel to expressions of satisfaction, there are, as requested, other comments and suggestions addressed to the course team. Some are

relevant and deserve reflection: They go straight to the mode in which the course was conceived and planned, and question the role left to participants. Independently of being fair or not, many participants would have liked to have been more meaningful contributors for the inputs, having opportunities for telling more about their own experience and participation in school projects approaching the same kind of issues; to have had more time to share or to explicit doubts, to ask questions, to be sure they had understood the explicit and implicit messages.

“Maybe a course like this needs some more time for reflections and more time for talking with each other. I think it would have been better if there were more group discussions telling each other about our own experiences and differences, and also reflect together about the topics in the course”

. “Short presentations of the school systems in different countries, may be by participants, might have made easier to avoid misunderstanding in discussions and group activities”

“(…) I think that there should have been some more short breaks that would give us the opportunities to speak / discuss the issues in an informal setting. There has been much input in all sessions and short group conversations of the issues are important to reflect on the themes and to share our different experiences.

The trip to Venice and the guided tour were an important part of the course, to me, because (….) many of the issues from the course have been discussed in the bus and in the train, and lead me to a deeper understanding of citizenship”.

“The group discussions have been useful. I would like to have more of them and also some more time for informal conversations with colleagues from other countries

On the other hand, the differences in expectations and in professional needs awareness, in experience and maturity, in reflexive techniques, or even in English fluency, have to be considered as variables associated to the pertinence of many of the comments and suggestions, either the ones concerning the organisation of the course and the management of time, or the methods of work and work load

“It would have been better if some presentations were not so theoretical”

“You are doing very good work. Do not do it too formal. No difficult words! Keep it simple. Close to school life like Jakob – Andreas did.

Let the force be with you when you do the evaluation of this course.”

“It has been very interesting (...). However, at the end of the course, I was a bit “full” of all the information!”

“Sometimes – I must admit – my head was not clear enough to assimilate the presentations on the moment itself. But when I discussed the ideas with my fellow colleagues it came back. So, those informal moments are most necessary. Maybe there was a bit too much information sometimes. But I will have plenty of time to let the seeds grow at home”

“To write down reflections everyday, forces us to think and reflect. Even if it has been a bit of work, I can see now afterwards that it really has been useful”

“Less homework!! No. Joke, of course. I sometimes cursed the homework, but please do continue like this: it was a very nice combination of learning, inspiring and culture (...)

As transcribed above, there are references to the theoretical level of presentations and to some hermetic / difficult language. As an observer of the course materials and work, the perception of complexity or abstract thinking might come from two sorts of “uncertainty levels” used in the approach followed in some presentations: some were supported by materials with a strong symbolic and metaphorical characteristic, which might not have been fully decoded; others, followed a certain process of deconstruction and reconstruction of behaviours and routines as teachers or just as human beings relating to each other, inviting each participant to identify stereotypes and look for meanings underneath.

Surprisingly, no references exist in the written memories to the planned or spontaneous activities intended for facilitating integration and communication among all course members, such as the “ice breaking” moment, for the introduction of every member, with a single exception; the “market place” evening, conceived as an opportunity for each member to introduce some elements of the culture of their own country, or the spontaneous “late gathering” after dinner for singing, teaching traditional folk dancing or just talking, which resulted in many cases in very nice informal moments for relaxing, comradeship and participation in other forms of European citizenship.

8.7 Conclusions

The different types of written materials describing and appraising the Montegrotto Course provide a very complete picture of the atmosphere, the attitudes, relationships and work that were developed along that week. In the participants’ registers it is clear what they identify as the most interesting things they learned, experienced and understood as multiple perspectives of the concept and practice of responsible citizenship. The

comparison of initiatives, approaches and practices among countries and schools, besides being enriching inputs, acted as mirrors of their own experience, now settled in a broader and reassuring context. That way, their awareness of the crucial roles of schools as model communities for citizenship education, as well as of teachers and students as active responsible agents in that process, was reinforced.

Participants recognise how some organisational strategies, including the architecture of the course in itself, the tutors and their lecturing, the materials used in presentations and group work facilitated learning and the development of their own learning strategies. Informal but meaningful work and learning was done through peer to peer interactions, either when asking for further details, checking their own understanding against other colleagues' or discussing and exchanging points of view. In what concerns these "learning opportunities" participants regret the short time for free interaction and the daily work load, namely some written tasks, though recognising their importance. They would have wished for more opportunities for presenting their own educational systems, innovative projects in the same field and practices, as to acquire a larger insight of each others' educational systems and cultures. However, it is recognised the many practical ideas they could take away and will adapt to their own contexts for developing responsible citizenship in schools.

The diversity of participants, either in experience, personality and culture explains differences in feelings and in the degree of satisfaction. For some it was a great opportunity for learning, though very demanding. They are enthusiastic and would like to repeat this experience as a possibility to break the intensity of school work, which leaves a short, if any, room for reflection or self questioning. Others might be less enthusiastic, a bit frustrated, but even so, make suggestions for improving possible future editions of this course and make it easier to follow. The analyses of the collected data show that the learning expectations of the course organisers were met to a very large extent, and the participants gave a lot of suggestions for future possible versions of this course, where they would like to be so lucky as to be involved again.

Final considerations

As adult learners, participants value experiences and the benefits or learning they got from the many exchanges and interactions. Positive experiences are mentioned as confirmation, discovery of processes, and feeling good. The atmosphere that was created, the shared aims and similar beliefs for the profession made most of the tasks meaningful and facilitated the "absorption" of a new language, or rather, the

“mobilisation” of a new lexicon identified as the basic principles of responsible citizenship education, symbols of a new “culture in action” for democracy.

It is not my role to say whether they are right or wrong, because the heart of the problem is not a matter of correctness. My role is to question if that is enough, and how we will move to the basic principles as “culture in use”. There is an enormous difference between what is new and what is transformational, between innovative curricular approaches and leading schools as healthy, meaningful and symbolic ecosystems for everybody with impact in the outer community and in the quality of democracy. The same basic principles can be used to illustrate different approaches to citizenship education.

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Chapter 9

Keys for the field: some threads of history from the SEEDS' development

Giovanna Barzanò

Educating for citizenship in a European perspective is a demanding learning-teaching objective, one which attracts increasing attention on the part of policy makers and a deep involvement as well as new skills on the part of teachers, as Jane Jones, Michaela Thomas and Andreas Holvik have reminded us in their chapters. This publication has attempted to offer some snapshots of this learning teaching objective, providing - one after the other- some “keys”, selected examples of activities concerning visible and invisible citizenship education undertaken in various contexts.

The SEEDS project team liked the key metaphor and all its implications. In the last meeting of our project we set ourselves the task of designing a key and of describing in a few words what it would have opened. We worked in couples and the 8 keys which now appear on the cover are the result.

We found this exercise meaningful in its simplicity: a powerful symbolic way to wrap up our work and the adventure of the project.

Keys are, after all, peculiar tools which always maintain, as small as they are, a bit of mystery and magic. They work in similar ways but they may have a variety of shapes. They may unlock (and lock!) very different scenarios in very different contexts. We all think with a shiver of pleasure of the noise of our beloved home's key, of the warmth and the cosy atmosphere opening up in front of us at the end of a tiring day. We think of the key to the treasure box, where the treasure may consist of a jewel, a map or a new formula. We think of a key which gives us access to the unknown hotel room where we will spend our next week of holidays. We can, however, also think of the key locking a prisoner behind bars, with its sinister squeaking.

There is indeed a world of imagination behind keys, rich in hopes, fantasies, promises of discovery, but also potential fears and sense of exclusion; and keys may work in a very visible way, or in a more invisible one, as is the case for the key cards which many hotels use nowadays.

Our keys for the field of citizenship education do not disclose magic scenarios. They just open some doors which lead to the world of “interesting practices”: small or big examples that we have found meaningful and interesting, that we have shared and discussed asking ourselves questions that we have considered fruitful in order to improve our actions as educators. We do not even want to call these “best practices”, aware as we have increasingly become that the notion itself of “good” and “best” may only be defined in the very context where the practice is enacted. We have been very committed to capture from the lively and often passionate exchange of experiences that have occurred in the SEEDS project what was interesting and might provide hints or originate new ideas and inspirations. We were not as interested in looking for “the models” which may or should be borrowed across contexts.

Our keys deal with visible and sometimes invisible mechanisms. In many ways, the issue of visibility/invisibility in relation to citizenship education attracted our attention from the very beginning of the project. One dimension of visibility/invisibility arose in our first meeting, when we listened to the story our colleague Andreas Holvik told us:

It was a cold winter day on a little island outside the coast of Norway. A young student had prepared his lesson. His name was Inge Eidsvåg. Since he started as a teacher last summer, he had followed the book page by page. Today it was time to learn about butterflies.

He was well prepared, and behind the teacher’s desk he had even put some illustration charts.

Eidsvåg held up the first illustration and asked his class: Does anyone know the name of this butterfly? Nobody answered. He waited and just before he was going to give the answer himself, he saw a little hand back in the classroom. He was surprised because the hand belonged to Astrid – a girl who never said anything in his lessons. “Astrid, do you really know the name?” he asked. The class turned round and looked at her. They had never heard Astrid answering a question.

Astrid blushed deeply, but said; Yes, teacher I know the name. It is a swallowtail. Mr. Eidsvåg held up another illustration chart, and Astrid gave the correct answer. Again and again.

When the day was over, Astrid stopped in front of her teacher, looked at him and said: “Thank you for seeing me teacher!”

Astrid’s grandfather, it came out, had a big collection of butterflies and she knew everything about them. Suddenly, after a long series of dark days, something sparks in the little girl’s mind. The opportunity to show

some expertise finally makes her brave enough to overcome her “destiny” of silence.

“Thank you for seeing me teacher!”: even braver for her unexpected success, Astrid dares to confront her teacher. We never knew whether there was a shadow of challenge in Astrid’s thank you, we would have maybe wished so. Perhaps, however, hers was only a shy gratefulness. What was clear to us was that Astrid had to count too much on serendipity to be able to make her voice heard.

And Andreas’ skilful and passionate tale, with its ordinary but touching simplicity, became the project’s story and led us to many questions. How many citizen-pupils experience a destiny of invisible silence in the very school life which should lead them to build up their participation in society? How can pupils’ voices be elicited in an authentic way?

The chapters by Emanuela Brumana, Virginia Ginesi and Maria Cristina Zarrella and by Vlastimil Fiala have tackled different aspects of these issues, focusing on the practical problems of capturing pupils’ voices and finding a real place for pupils’ action inside the school. What they illustrate provides evidence of a multifaceted dilemma which was the object of an intense debate among the SEEDS’ participants: while pupils should be the main actors of school life, there is often too little at stake for them in the school decision- making processes. Nor does a sharp, direct request of participation work when it is not carefully rooted in a deep culture of participation which should be mirrored by the functioning of the whole school and by the behaviour of all its actors, first of all teachers. The devil, one says, is in the detail: indeed we met quite a few little devils in the school described by the pupils. One of them was a teacher walking into a classroom while chewing gum after she had blamed the pupils for doing that during the lessons the day before.

Interestingly, and paradoxically, dealing with pupils’ voices and visibility in school life led us to confront the very most “invisible”, or spoken about, aspects of what happens in schools. The examples of practice we presented and reflected on during the development of the project were therefore tackled from the perspective of describing the more visible, but also the hidden and indirect aspects of the processes. Many learning adventures, tools and materials were discussed within the SEEDS’ framework: the ones we selected for this book, presented by Bjarne Hansen and Linda Velle Sjøen and by Anna Babra and Maria Ojuel, provide evidence of this approach.

We were lucky to have the opportunity to run a very intensive European course where our “keys” could be put on show and inspire the learning activities, as Rosangela Baggio and Gianfrancesco Musumeci and Francesca Brotto have explained in their chapters. Even in a short school visit, when carefully planned, there may be space for capturing hidden aspects leading to tricky questions.

We were curious to see how they could work outside the project culture we had produced with our cooperative work. Had we just been talking to ourselves or could we allow ourselves to talk to a broader educational world?

As our precious critical friend Maria do Carmo Climaco has reported, indeed the course was a bench mark test for most of our work. The participants’ appreciation was a great reward for all of us. We liked their nice words and their congratulations but, above all, we felt gratified by the deep expressions of participation that the criticism we had tried to elicit on their part allowed to emerge. Indeed we had the feeling that our team had become bigger and the short space of a course had been able to produce the sense of belonging for which we had worked. It has been the first precious treasure our keys have disclosed!



The SEEDS' members in their last day of work by jane & michaela

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Table of products

<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Where can be found</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Democratic Citizenship and Global Education	A presentation about the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	jane.jones@kcl.ac.uk
Citizenship Education in Northern Ireland: lessons from Belfast	A presentation about the practice of citizenship education in Northern Irish schools	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	jane.jones@kcl.ac.uk
The school: site of polyvocality	A presentation about the multiple voices that need to be acknowledged, recognised and listened to in school	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	jane.jones@kcl.ac.uk
From the Curricula Debate to the Citizenship Curriculum	A presentation about the new educational law including citizenship education as a specific subject	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	ababra@xtec.cat mojuel@xtec.cat
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Catalonian Exploratory Case studies	Questionnaires used in the explorative case studies to discover multidimensional citizenship practices in the school culture	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	ababra@xtec.cat mojuel@xtec.cat
Citizenship	Global project on citizenship education in a primary school	http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?pid=27332&p_ex=Ciutadania&p_alg=CEIP%20loan%20Mir%F3&p_niv=2219&p_are=5639&p_tip=VIDEO&p_num=3	ababra@xtec.cat mojuel@xtec.cat
Cooperative Learning	Project on cooperative learning in a primary school	http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?pid=27333&p_ex=treball%20cooperatiu&p_num=3	ababra@xtec.cat mojuel@xtec.cat

Schooldays for Peace	Video	Project on citizenship education in a secondary school	http://www.edu3.cat/Edu3tv/Fitxa?p_id=27334&p_ex=jornades%20per%20la%20pau&p_num=3	ababra@xtec.cat mojuel@xtec.cat
Case studies from 2 schools in Norway	Ppt	School evaluation and criteria's for adapted learning connected to citizenship	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	andreas@karmoyped.no ivs@karmoyped.no
Report from 2 case studies in Karmoy - Norway	Report	A pilot project on external evaluation of adapted learning and of the school as a learning organization. Description of criteria's, methodology and results.	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	andreas@karmoyped.no ivs@karmoyped.no
How can we achieve genuine pupil participation	Video	Active involvement of the pupils in their learning process, different learning activities and various ways of learning	http://www.karmoyped.no/seed/s/	andreas@karmoyped.no ivs@karmoyped.no
The walk to school	Video	School culture and values	http://www.retestresa.it	info@retestresa-it
The first spiral of the case study	Word.doc	Case study guidelines and outlines to investigate participation, relationship, rights, responsibility at school.	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	emanuela.brumanana@gmail.com
Do students wish to play an active role in changing schools?	Video	Humpolec Case Study – Students' Conference 14 September 2006	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	fiala@gymhu.pex.cz
The explorative case study	Word.doc	Report of the three explorative case studies in Italy	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	emanuela.brumanana@gmail.com

The development of active citizenship in Italy	Word.doc and PPT	Citizenship education at school in Italy: reflections about the recent norms.	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	g.f.musumeci@virgilio.it emanuela.brumana@gmail.com
Citizenship projects at school in Italy	Word.doc	“Together is better” “Experiencing democracy: the pupils’ town council” “The floor to the students”	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm http://www.scuoledechioduno.it	chiudunobolgar@tiscali.it emanuela.brumana@gmail.com
My opinion	Word.doc	A pupil questionnaire about the school	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	emanuela.brumana@gmail.com
Leadership and school culture		A comparative study in three European countries: England, Italy and Portugal	http://www.seedseuroproject.org/materials.htm	gbarzano@tiscali.it