

Citizenship Education and Teacher Training. Research and Practice in Italy

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Abstract

Since 2008-2009, the discipline "Citizenship and Constitution" was introduced by the Law 169/2008, in all Italian schools. From pre-primary to upper secondary school, the intention has been to promote the formation of social awareness and critical consciousness to educate good citizens. The culture of Citizenship and Constitution has assumed then a permanent, structural character in schools. The concept of citizenship has gone through various definitions, it is prevailing the idea of uniting citizenship with the content of the Constitution, thereby reinvigorating the map of common values. More recent is the concept of active citizenship, interpreted in terms of participation and social and civil action in the local, national and European community. The university curriculum of teacher education contemplates the discipline 'Intercultural Pedagogy and Citizenship Education' in order to prepare students to become responsible teachers towards social critical themes such as the question of human rights. This article presents results on the cultural relevance of learning Citizenship values as part of curricula both in school and at University and gives the essential reasons to prepare students to become teachers for a school able to orienting children towards democratic citizenship.

Keywords: citizenship education, italian constitution, teacher education, human rights, university curriculum

Introduction

The research entitled 'Practice/Research in Citizenship Education in Teacher Education' is carried out within the European project known as 'CiCe, Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe, the Erasmus Academic Network/Jean Monnet Working Group 7 Research and Practice: The links for Citizenship Education' (Cunningham, 2018). The research arise out of joint action of five European Universities that deal with teacher training and Citizenship Education. The five Universities are Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy; the University of West of Scotland, United Kingdom; Riga Teacher Training and Education Management Academy, Riga, Latvia; Malmö University, Sweden; and the University of the Peloponnese, Greece.

The purpose of the research is to produce a *Guide for teachers* involved in facing problems and challenges being experienced in society, in which migration and terrorism require new strategies and educational practices (European Union Education Ministers, 2015).

In Italy (Batini, 2012; Corradini, 2014) the introduction of citizenship education (CE from now on) in school and university curriculum is one of the most relevant urgency. It is a common idea that the future of democracy of modern school systems depends on the education of young generations to responsibility, justice, and human rights (Jonas, 1984; Frazer, 2009, Gifford, 2016; Jagland, 2016). To this regards, scientific research gives results on the development of the political identity of young people in changing societies and focus on what States are promoting in the school system to educate for CE (Ross, 2015).

To this end, it is deemed necessary to know: a) the status and evaluation of Citizenship Education in preparatory teaching programmes at University; b) the current status and evaluation of the teaching of CE, and related topics, in primary schools; and c) prospects for improving the training offered on CE at University and school levels.

As recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Council of Europe, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the Organization of American States, the "education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are vital for the

achievement of peaceful, sustainable and inclusive societies based on respect for the human rights of every person (Tibbitts, 2015, p. 7). It is also in accordance with this idea that the survey is promoted.

Survey method and tools

The training of primary school teachers at the *Università degli Studi Roma Tre*, Italy, entails a five-year study period and provides for the compulsory teaching of Intercultural Pedagogy and CE in the third year of the course.

The survey includes a quantitative section, using a questionnaire consisting of 10 closed questions, and a qualitative section, prepared with a focus group of 7 questions. The intention is to detect the research and practice of CE by asking students directly to reply to the questions selected.

The students report on their university preparation, school internship experience and professional expectations as pertains to CE. The questionnaire comprises three exploratory areas: 1) trust in the institutions, both universities and schools, that teach CE; 2) goals of CE and competences of teachers; 3) the relevance of human rights education within the teaching of CE.

The focus group resumes the three exploratory areas of the questionnaire, at this moment dwelling on the meaning of CE and the identity of a good citizen. The focus group was carried out via Skype and was made up of students, all female, with the following characteristics: they are attending the fourth or fifth year of the university study course; they completed the course and passed the examination on Intercultural Pedagogy and CE; they are currently writing their graduate's thesis on CE and intercultural education; they have teaching experience in pre-primary and primary schools as student-teacher internship or they have teaching experience in pre-primary and primary schools as in-service teachers; they are currently in Erasmus mobility and are replying from abroad.

Sample groups

The sample that replied to the questionnaire is made up of students from the first, third and fourth study years. The number of students enrolled in the Initial Teacher Training course in academic year 2015/2016 is 317 first-year; 249 third-year; 203 fourth-year.

Respondents to the online questionnaire posted in the platform of the university were: 178 first-year students; 183 third-year students; and 211 fourth-year students of the study course. In percentages, the three sample groups represented as follows the study course.

For the first year, 56% of the entire student population enrolled; for the third year, 74% of the entire population enrolled; and for the fourth year, 104% of the entire population enrolled. The greater presence of fourth-year respondents concerned the addition of some students who were recovering credits.

Quantitative results from the questionnaire

Trust in the institutions

Q. 1: *According to your own university experience of learning CE at your University, how would you judge the pedagogical and didactics support you receive?*

Most of the students give a positive evaluation of what the University supplies. Support is usually useful (45%) and always useful (17%) towards developing a project when students begin employment as a teacher in school. The rest of the students tend to be critical (28%) and negative (10%). The average ($A=3.95$) affirms an assessment of usually useful.

Q. 2: *What suggestions would you give a primary school teacher to improve the teaching and learning of CE?*

52% of the students suggest to pay special attention to raising awareness of human rights in theory and practice; 22% choose to introduce a variety of topics related to peace education and 11% opt for discussing justice in modern-day societies. Social and political issues and studying the Constitution are not of great interest (15%).

Prevailing among the other options is the statement that it is important to develop practical projects in the classroom so that children can learn how to become part of the community and interact within it positively and functionally.

An additional suggestion is to be interested in the world events that surround the children and sensitize them to discussion, criticism and in-depth thought.

Q. 3: *In what way is your university working to prepare you to be an active citizen in society?*

Approx. half of those replying, 51%, agrees about providing professionally qualified teachers for good preparation in theory and practice; 27% find it important to organise a University curriculum related to the primary school curriculum of CE; 22% is talking about opportunities of action research while they are studying at University, and they consider important to have the chance of changing common discriminatory points of view about tolerance, cultural diversity and human rights.

Goals of CE and teachers' competences

Q. 4: *According to your own university experience in the practice of teaching in primary school, what is the general frequency of teachers' competences in CE?*

The five competences considered in the survey are:

- teachers know well the subject-matter they are teaching;
- teachers respect the responsibilities they undertake;
- teachers allow students to express their own opinion, they do not impose their opinion in discussions;
- teachers provide clear explanations of the lesson;
- teachers announce the evaluation criteria before examination and test.

Although part of all of the five competences has been amply assessed, the average (A) allows for listing them by rank:

2. teachers observe the responsibilities they undertake (A=3.79);
4. teachers provide clear explanations of the lesson (A=3.70);
3. teachers allow students to express their own opinions; they do not impose their opinion on discussions (A=3.67);
1. teachers are quite knowledgeable about the subject matter they are teaching (A=3.66);
5. teachers announce the evaluation criteria before every examination/test (A=3.53).

According to the students' judgment, responsibility and the ability of teachers to provide a clear explanation of the lesson are very important. Less attention concerns the procedure of the evaluation in which criteria are not introduced before the test.

Q. 5: *How often do teachers in service adopt actions regarding concepts, contents, the meaning of CE?*

The list of 13 options are formulated concerning emotional, cultural, social, pedagogical life of the school context seen from the perspective of what teachers are doing:

1. teachers link school activities with cultural activities outside of school;
2. teachers try to put themselves in children's shoes;
3. teachers adapt the lesson's content to each classroom and children needs;
4. teachers offer children the opportunity to improve themselves beyond the classroom;
5. teachers motivate children to study;
6. teachers encourage interaction and cooperation within the classroom;
7. teachers link the various subjects they teach;
8. teachers make children feel comfortable, by creating a climate of calmness and understanding;
9. teachers use the proper teaching material and not just the written text;

10. teachers apply different teaching methods;
11. teachers help children to process their method of learning;
12. teachers are willing to be in touch with children's families;
13. teachers in school collaborate for issues of instruction.

Most of the actions adopted by primary school teachers regarding CE are placed on a level between usually and sometimes, as the average shows, according to the ranking below:

4. teachers offer children the opportunity to improve themselves beyond the classroom (A=3.72);
6. teachers encourage interaction and cooperation within the classroom (A=3.71);
8. teachers make children feel comfortable, by creating a climate of calmness and understanding (A=3.70);
5. teachers motivate children to study (A=3.65);
12. teachers are willing to be in touch with children's families (A=3.60);
13. teachers in school collaborate on issues of instruction (A=3.60);
3. teachers adapt the lesson's content to each classroom and the children's needs (A=3.55);
11. teachers help children process their method of learning (A=3.47);
7. teachers interconnect the various subjects they teach (A=3.46);
9. teachers use suitable teaching material and not just the written text (A=3.42);
10. teachers apply different teaching methods (A=3.37);
2. teachers try to put themselves in the children's shoes (A=3.32);
1. teachers link school activities with cultural activities outside of school (A=3.22).

As we can see in the structured list of the questionnaire the first item "teachers link school activities with cultural activities outside of school" received from students less relevance. It probably means that teachers like to consider a variety of activities for children in school, see item 4 "teachers offer children the opportunity to improve themselves beyond the classroom", but not necessarily outside the classroom. Teachers are not fond of creating a formal link between school and territory.

Teachers present themselves as experts in offering the best opportunities for the development of children.

There are still some difficulties in understanding the expectations of children who desire to explore new learning opportunities. Teachers find obstacles in attributing a value to the connection of school context with the cultural activities developed outside of school and in the form of outdoor learning.

Q. 6: *The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning mentions a three-fold meaning of civic competence. Read the section concerned. Carefully evaluate to what extent the primary school context in your country is putting into practice civic competence, skills for civic competence and full respect for human rights as a priority in the official system of education.*

Rank and average classify the assessments regarding *The Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council* (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006). The assessments regarding the Recommendation change the rank of the three-fold meaning of civic competence, according to the average. Indeed, the number is written before the sentence, 1. 2. and 3., follows the mention in the original document, and the position does not correspond to the one collected with the questionnaire.

The item number 1 mentioned in the first place in the original document goes in the second position according to the results of the survey. Item number 2 goes in the third position. Item number 3 goes in the first position. Last sentence, or item, becomes the first in the evaluation of the respondents.

3. Full respect for human rights including equality as a basis for democracy, appreciation, and understanding of differences among value systems of different religious or ethnic groups lay the foundations for a positive attitude. This means displaying both a sense of belonging to one's community, country, the EU and Europe, in general, and to the world, and a willingness to participate in democratic decision-making at all levels. It also includes demonstrating a sense of responsibility. As well as showing understanding of and respect for the shared values. They are necessary to ensure community cohesion, such as respect for democratic principles. Constructive participation also involves civic activities, support for social diversity and cohesion and sustainable development, and a readiness to respect the values and privacy of others (A=3.80).

1. Civic competence is based on knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights. Including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations and how various institutions apply them at local, regional, national, European and international levels. It includes knowledge of contemporary events, as well as the main events and trends in national, European and world history. Besides, an awareness of the aims, values, and policies of social and political movements should be developed. Knowledge of European integration and the EU's structures, main objectives and values is also essential, as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe (A=3.66).

2. Skills for civic competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain and display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and broader community. This involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community or neighbourhood activities as well as decision-making at all levels, i.e. local, national and European, specifically through voting (A=3.59).

Results show how the content of competence which mentions the "Full respect for human rights" received the most relevant assessment in the survey.

The "Knowledge of the concepts of democracy" and "Ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain" are comparatively less important. Even though in the original document they are written before the quotation of respect for human rights.

Human rights education

Q. 7: How is CE placed in the curriculum of teacher education at your University?

80% reply that at the University, CE is a compulsory subject for all students; 14% state that CE is not a compulsory subject for all students, some can choose it as an optional subject and credits are given for the course that is useful for an academic career; 6% say that at the University, CE is not a compulsory discipline and it cannot be chosen as optional subject and no credits are given that are useful for an academic career.

The real situation is only the first one, and evidently, one out of five of the students do not even know the official curriculum.

Q. 8: According to the university experience how were teachers aware of the relevance of teaching children CE?

According to university experience matured during the classroom training in school, 70% of the students replied that teachers are aware of the fact that by law CE is a compulsory subject for all children; 20% of students say CE is not considered a compulsory subject for all children and it is possible to verify an optional presence of CE in the classrooms; 10% of the respondents say that CE is not considered a compulsory subject for all children and in the classroom, there is no sign of the discipline.

The Italian Law 30 October 2008, no.169 Article 1 states that from the beginning of the 2008/2009 school year, staff training actions are activated aimed at acquiring the knowledge and skills related to "Citizenship and Constitution" in the first and second cycle of education, within the historical-geographical and historical-social areas.

Similar initiatives are also present in pre-primary school. The survey demonstrates how it is still difficult to find awareness of teachers to the relevance of CE in primary schools. Only when teachers are sensitive to the teaching of CE it is possible to find related classroom activities.

The relationship between awareness, curriculum and CE activity is positive. The conscious teacher builds the CE curriculum and promotes educational activities concerning the values of citizenship and Constitution.

Q. 9: *According to university experience how often do teachers in service propose activities related to CE in their classrooms?*

The question was subjected to a temporal assessment scale of 1 to 7: Almost every day 7%; Once a week 23%; Once a month 33%; Once every three months 12%; Once per semester 12%; Once per year 7%; Never 6%.

The average (4.53) shows that teachers propose activities regarding CE; the larger part (33%) propose CE activities at least once a month and about one-fourth (23%) propose these activities at least once a week.

Q. 10: *Approximately how many children are in the primary school classroom where you are doing your practical training?*

Reported are the frequencies of the presence, in the school, of disabled children, immigrants, children belonging to racial, ethnic or linguistic minorities, or belonging to more than one typological category.

The most substantial quantitative experience concerns the presence of 1 to 3 children, above all, the disabled (no. 122) and from ethnic minorities (no. 99).

Philosophy and Pedagogy of CE

At the end of the structured questions, space has been left free to allow for observations on the questionnaire as a means to explore the state of CE in school and university contexts. Some of the comments are reported here below according to the students' reflection.

Phrases are codified in two sections and six categories. The first section comprehends the sentences related to CE as philosophy and conception of the world, characterised by words such as vision, values, life. The following three categories belong to the first section: 1. the sense of the world citizenship for each human being; 2. the awareness of the value content in CE and the poverty of the institutional offer; 3. the conception of sustainability expressed in the meaning of increasing the level of quality of life.

First section: CE as philosophy and conception of the world

1. the sense of the world citizenship for each human being
2. the awareness of the value content in CE and the poverty of the institutional offer
3. the conception of sustainability expressed in the meaning of increasing the level of quality of life

The second section comprehends the sentences related to CE as pedagogy and education characterised by words such as curriculum, inclusion, teaching. The following three categories belong to the second section: 1. compulsory presence of CE in school and university curricula; 2. areas and themes which specifies the CE education such as disability, inclusion, multicultural education; 3. teaching and learning CE from the perspective of teacher's tasks.

Second section: CE as pedagogy and education

1. compulsory presence of CE in school and university curricula
2. areas and themes which specifies the CE education such as disability, inclusion, multicultural education
3. teaching and learning CE from the perspective of teacher's tasks

Examples from the *First section: CE as philosophy and conception of the world* considered as 1. *the sense of the world citizenship for each human being* are the following sentences:

- It is very important to teach CE because there must be a reason for living for the future people of the world.

- Teachers should teach more about real world situations and focus less on ancient theories, ancient cultures. History is very important towards understanding how the course of society and the world went, but more important is to learn of the present situation. Children need teaching about the reality that surrounds them and the rights they have as citizens.

- Nowadays, as globalisation changes the world, CE becomes a tool against both discrimination and psychological terrorism and should be implemented in schools and life.

Examples from the *First section: CE as philosophy and conception of the world considered as 2. the awareness of the value content in CE and the poverty of the institutional offer* are the following sentences:

- The content of the questionnaire is interesting because it supplies the possibility of reflecting on the value of CE.

- The teaching of CE in primary school helps to educate the child to certain principles and rules useful for being part of its living environs. Good university education is required, to become good teachers able to pass on these values to children.

- The questionnaire is presented as a useful means for investigating the trend and the intensity with which schools face CE.

- The questionnaire is useful for getting an overview of CE and linking school to the University.

- The questionnaire is useful for detecting the degree of interest of teachers today in CE. As students, we need more actions than words to spread interest in this topic.

Examples from the *First section: CE as philosophy and conception of the world considered as 3. the conception of sustainability expressed in the meaning of increasing the level of quality of life* are the following sentences:

- During the practice of teaching in primary school, students visited two different schools, one located in a little town close to Rome, and another one located in the suburb of Rome. The two schools have projects about CE in their educational offer. Although, both schools state a great interest in the importance of educating children to become active citizens, in practice the variety of topics related to CE is quite poor. Students would like the schools to organize meetings with families to involve them in the CE of their children and explain to them the importance of knowledge of human rights.

- The questionnaire helps to understand the importance of CE. It is necessary to improve CE in teacher education because teachers need to update the perspective of lifelong learning as well as to learn some practice to become an active citizen. To act as a good citizen, students and children need to learn the right actions, not just the right words.

- The issue of CE is still poorly treated in many schools.

- Instead of asking questions about research in this field, there should be more attention paid to *how to teach in practice* in schools. It would be simple if the university would teach students to be able to do this in their way of working with children.

- This questionnaire allows to reason and reflects on aspects of daily life that affect a child's education. These aspects are important in shaping active citizens, able to help each other in times of need and work together.

Examples from the *Second section: CE as pedagogy and education considered as 1. compulsory presence of CE in school and university curricula* are the following sentences:

- The questionnaire can be useful for examining the initial training of teachers and improving knowledge of the curricula related to citizenship and the responsibilities of the teachers to impart this knowledge.

- We can have a real image of the CE in schools only through information and knowledge provided by questionnaires and direct observation in the classroom.

- It is important to submit this questionnaire to the teachers to make them sensitive to this topic.

- We need more teaching of CE in our university curriculum, mostly on matters of human rights and immigrant children.

- The questionnaire is a valid tool to investigate on CE as a key discipline for school and the future of the students.

Examples from the *Second section: CE as pedagogy and education considered as 2. areas and themes which specifies the CE education such as disability, diversity, inclusion, multicultural education, migrant children* are the following sentences:

- The course aims at developing knowledge and skills to prepare a future teacher in intercultural and citizenship education. Through the questionnaire, the main points of teaching are highlighted with a focus on the preparation of students' criticism.

- CE in Teacher Education is becoming more efficient. The problem is to assimilate well the cultural and social diversity of every gender at school and beyond. It is necessary to make stronger the teaching of CE in all disciplines. It is essential to try to change the teachers' mindset, the way of viewing things and considering human relationships. Because our awareness is never enough. Only this can be a way to face the increasingly dynamic world, in which we all live.

- The questionnaire is a training experience to reflect on the importance of CE and mostly in teacher education. Today in the classroom we have children who come from different countries and teachers need to have the skills and knowledge to foster encounters with others.

- CE is very important, especially in modern and multi-ethnic societies. Teachers must have good preparation and must communicate this knowledge to children at all times.

Examples from the *Second section: CE as pedagogy and education considered as 3. teaching and learning CE from the perspective of teacher's tasks* are the following sentences:

- It is very useful to share ideas and opinions about CE to improve teacher education.

- Hopefully, this research will increase the study of civic education, particularly in schools.

- It is necessary to encourage the use of teaching strategies to accommodate the disabled or foreign students. The previous generation was not adequately trained in this regard.

- It is vastly important for teachers to be trained in CE during their academic careers.

The contents of the sentences reveal a high sense of criticism. The students have knowledge of the problems in teaching and learning CE and matured a dialectic position towards the institutions still too weak in providing for qualified teachers and adequate resources. The hope for a change arises as a real possibility parallel to the process of globalisation and for the increasing mobility of peoples.

Qualitative remarks made by the focus group

For the conversation in the focus groups (FG from now on), the following 7 questions were asked:

1. What do you know about CE?
2. Where did you find info about CE?
3. What do you understand by the term CE?
4. What was your learning experience of CE in school?
5. How was it personally significant to you?
6. What is your attitude towards your country, EU countries, and other countries?
7. What do you understand by "good citizenship"?

Concerning the first question: *What do you know about CE?* The students believe that knowledge of CE coincides with the meaning of CE. What they learned at school represents the actual meaning of CE.

CE is explained as the ability to manage to live in a group and respect the rights of each person in it. Some add that it means the sense of belonging to the country, not just recognizing the laws and observing them, but also knowing how to live and coexist with others.

It is brought to light the importance of the curricular aspects. CE is not just a step of the study cycle, it is a cross-curricular subject. It is to be taught at all school levels, in all subjects. It must educate children and adolescents to take an active part of a globalised world and understand their duties and rights in a new global context. There is a strong awareness of how sharing the thoughts and respect the thoughts of others leads to mutual knowledge and then to the world coexistence.

There is a strong sense of the teaching profession, in those who say that CE means helping children understand the society in which they are raised. But also accepting others, by learning about different cultures in the classroom. It is up to the teacher to facilitate this relationship among persons of different cultures, who have different ways of thinking.

In one of the FG, what emerges most of all is the relationship with the formation of a Democracy. CE is when an individual interacts with others and the environment. The person wishes to actively participate in building a democratic society. Fundamental are the values of civil coexistence, democracy and human rights of equality, freedom and social justice.

Concerning the second question: *Where did you find info about CE?* The sources mentioned are:

- the Italian Constitution jointly with the Declaration of Human Right and other Conventions;
- elementary school on matters of Civic Education, in which there were concepts about how to live in civil society;
- after school, in the university course;
- as a daily experience, indeed we should realise that citizenship does not mean so much the way of living in our country it has to take into consideration what is happening, throughout the world;
- in addition to the Constitution of one's own country, it is necessary to look at all of the Conventions worldwide, that is, of the UNO and the rights of children and adults, in general;
- the first concepts of CE were introduced in history classes in primary and middle schools, but, above all, by the narration of family member, often the grandfathers, then at university in the course on Intercultural Pedagogy and for personal information;
- introduced in history classes in primary and middle schools, but, above all, by a family member, often the grandfathers, then at university in the course on Intercultural Pedagogy and for personal information;
- in forums and university books.

Concerning the third question: *How do you can explain what do you understand by the term CE?* Explaining and understanding CE concerns educating, helping to assure that children can learn proper behaviours and lifestyles. These things allow them to live democratically within a group and a community. By knowing the rights they have and the duties by which they are to abide.

There is also a reference to concepts and the specificity of lessons. Concepts are given not only by the teacher but also by community relationships. The environment in which one lives is perceived by the pupil useful to live in society. Children become responsible and open to other world cultures. They mature full rights and duties, but they are also able to accept other cultures that build part of the environment in which we live.

The task of the teacher is to make the children understand that CE is not a school subject, like history and geography, but an education that will serve them for life. Apart from school, the family, parents, other people, associations and circles the children are also responsible. As for the teacher, the fundamental idea that must be communicated to the child is to respect other people. They should go beyond differences in thought and culture, and also respect conflicting aspects in both micro and macro contexts.

Critical elements concern experience that cannot be only given in the classroom. When teacher draws out the educational plan becomes must ensure that the child understands what respect means, and to what extent every person is different from him and also similar to him, thus the child learns to establish an open, mutual relationship with the others. Diversity and cooperation become the threshold concepts in the curriculum, indispensable to build the profile of active citizen.

In another FG a girl speaks of creating a favourable environment for developing these civic, social, and intercultural skills. Preparing the environment and context is important to develop these principles. It happens also through activities that can promote comparison, as well as by studying topics related to the rights and duties of citizens.

Concerning the fourth question: *What was your learning experience of CE in school?* School more than university supplies consistent examples of CE. The students' experience at school was boring but quite meaningful in education to become active citizens. Instead in the recent teacher training experience, students complained about the scarce involvement in

positive actions on CE. At the university, the most relevant change emerges when students try to be active in what they study and orient the final thesis in themes where the good of the community is the main argument.

Scholastic teaching tends to be treated on the legislative level and the approach to the Constitution is only marginal. Students usually complain they did not receive true teaching in CE, meaning useful and interesting teaching, in any of the levels at school. The first approach considered true was the one had during the university course. At the university, they learned theories, but there was no practice at all. Thus school teaching of CE is judged insufficient and the university teaching of CE is still abstract, far away from life.

In the Erasmus mobility, students learned the practical aspect. In a group of foreigners, it is easy to experiment with a sense of active citizenship. Erasmus students developed a curious attitude towards other cultures and ways of living. This is at the basis of every subject-matter in some of the European countries and it is an issue that is part of the system of education.

It is necessary to go beyond solely learning the articles of the Constitution by rote and look at practical life. Students remember the simple reading of the constitutional articles in the classroom in elementary school, and one aspect, more practical, consisting of small projects about the environment. They never did anything practical as concerns citizenship. It has always remained something abstract and students think this is the greatest shortcoming in the Italian school system, where citizenship remains theory, just a series of articles and not something that is applied to everyday life. Also, the child learns that articles are not applied in everyday life of the person. Students received a more in-depth viewpoint at the university. There they read and closely examined the thoughts of some authors concerning the rights and duties of man, not only respect for himself but, above all, in relations with others in society and the world.

There is frequently a connection of CE to projects about environmental education and the presence of this teaching at all levels and ages. Children understand the importance of this subject. Even the youngest can understand the main concepts of freedom and citizenship and the importance of sharing.

Concerning the fifth question: *Is it personally significant to you?* The university experience is among the most significant. Teacher training is helping students, also involving the children in the values of citizenship together with Erasmus that was the greatest lesson in this respect; Erasmus is an experience that changes the students' life.

Students remember that the lessons at school was boring and only now they become aware of the importance of knowing what is stated in the Italian Constitution. But students admit that they understand much more when they are in a foreign country. Abroad there is an enormous reciprocal exchange every day. In this way, young people learn in practice the meaning of being with others and understand a way of living other than their own, so it is a completely different experience from that of school.

CE is the basis of education to value; it allows for gaining responsibilities and supports solidarity and participation in the local community.

Concerning the sixth question: *What is your attitude towards your country, EU countries, and other countries?* Faced with the many problems crossing Europe, there are surely things to be changed. Picking out the positive aspects, students think that in Europe, one should choose the positive things, learning from another culture and vice versa for mutual enrichment.

What happens in Europe does not help Italy. Students realize that there are foreign policies that do not treat Italy well and they would prefer to live outside the European Union.

It is apparent that there is a true need for citizenship. Starting with children who are the future, and of being open to change things, relationship with European countries is of total openness and faith that something is changing.

The international comparison does not favour Italy. For instance, the students positively quote previous experiences in other countries, where the economic and civil level is higher. Despite this, Italian students love Italy, even though they realise that there are no opportunities. They complain about the lack of open attitude to new ideas and towards a hypothetical alternative development and understand that the question of rights could be in danger.

While living abroad students feel they are growing both socially and civically. This means knowing how to integrate what is positive in different countries. For example, in some countries, the lifestyle is different from Italy, as regards regulations and rights. Some countries appear much more organised as far as citizenship is concerned and this consideration becomes a

very positive social experience for young people who find Italy less organised. Of course, the knowledge of other cultures and about the EU countries, the experience of dialogue and appreciation of differences are real teachers' tools to avoid the discriminations which are sometimes present in schools. Thinking of the fact that the EU rose from 5 to 28 member States it is clear that the concept of citizenship is broadened. Thus, when one speaks of citizenship, it is necessary to think of being citizens of the world. Students feel they are part of a total unit and they are ready to give their contribution. This is not just from a Constitutional standpoint, but also as regards the rules derived from common sense and common action.

One good practice of CE is the introduction of other European languages, apart from English, into the second and third grades of the primary school, especially when it is organised in collaboration with the families.

Concerning the seventh question: *What do you understand by "good citizenship"?* The good citizen is who:

actively respect others for the common good;

comprehends the active participation of all persons in building a civil society, in the sense of taking care of what is shared;

is a critical person, in a positive sense, open to the world, and a citizen able to socialize and be responsible;

knows how to observe the laws and is a responsible citizen for the environment, waste, food, and health education knows how to manage all of the responsibilities in daily life.

Being a good citizen means knowing how to relate to others, in addition, to be active in one's own country and being active in the world. Students reveal that we should feel citizens of the world and we should learn how to contribute to the country where we choose to spend our life. In this way, all of us seriously participate in the world wellbeing.

Good citizenship is created in school through CE and by educating children to flexible, critical, creative thought. Citizenship and Constitution as a teaching subject cannot be relegated to only one hour per week. But is a transversal subject that comprises many aspects, many other subjects, so teachers should also have good training. Schools should use explicit strategies to boost commitment. Also by including the parents by openly inviting them to take part in school activities. There is an important factor of multi-dimensionality of the school. Interviews on these topics should be carried out with pupils and parents to learn together what cooperation means to us. It is necessary to have serious views so that this matter is perceived globally by everyone. It cannot be relegated to textbooks but has to be experienced in the first person in a real context.

Conclusion

The following general considerations can be drawn from the areas of the survey. It is possible to observe a substantially positive position towards the prospects of teaching CE. It is deemed that both school and university curricula should be boosted. Institutions are required to introduce more opportunities for active training linked to the experiences in the daily lives of the children, parents, families and the local community.

There are general complaints about a lack of connection between the theory and practice of CE. Teachers at school and at university are expected to work more on matters of human rights, social justice, political and social issues, tolerance and cultural diversity.

At school, there are high levels of responsibility concerning the importance of CE. Teachers are substantially careful when working with children, even beyond the usual school homework.

The trust in changing the institutions is felt considerably, particularly for the possibilities that may concern today's children, who are being educated to become tomorrow's good citizens.

Knowledge of the regulations is important, but not exclusive because the concept of observance of the rules alone is not enough to build the common good. Experience and exchanges are needed and an open, welcoming way of thinking is part of great expectations.

The practice of citizenship requires solid theoretical training and opening up to the world is united with an efficient organisation in the own country. It is not valid the idea to be a worldwide spirit and act irresponsibly in their own life context.

Teachers have vital tasks concerning education to be a good citizen and encouragement to do something for others. The expectations of the positive effects of CE are high as concerns the possibilities of improving society and the criticism concerns the structural inefficiencies in both Italy and Europe.

To conclude, the discipline of CE can be part of the University curriculum aims to form students at the primary school teacher's profession. In schools, the teaching of CE is often disregarded and the prospects for improving the training depends on a single teacher who is fond of values-oriented education.

The survey refers to a situation in which CE is compulsory discipline at the University of Rome Tre, Italy, and students must seat the exam in their third year of course.

Even though the CE is compulsory, not all students are aware of the relevance of this training to become a good teacher prepared to educate children for active citizenship and the knowledge of the Constitution. In schools, the teaching of CE should reinforce learning CE and human rights. The survey reveals how these themes are disregarded due also to lack of in-service teacher training which needs to receive a stronger institutional impact.

The Italian University and the primary school are working hard to reach the goals of global citizenship preparing the new generations for peaceful societies based on knowledge and respect for the human rights of every person.

Recommendations

The school politics should promote a stronger impulse to the CE curriculum introducing the proper evaluation of learning civic competences of children and teenagers. Teachers need to have the possibility to count on the best reward of their work in favour of the development of a democratic society. In this way, they will feel the certainty of their commitment to the education of the new generations. Teachers deserve a better offer which allows them following postgraduate courses acquiring the coherent title of higher specialisation. It is necessary that they are recognized as an expert in CE.

It is quite urgent to start the CE from pre-primary school with an educative well-measured offer to the level of children. Schools are part of the educative community and their main mission is to prepare children to feel community encouraging them to active participation in social life. The experience of living together peacefully teaches to respect the other person who is part of our common world. This is the best way to educate against the violence and the aggressiveness.

The salvation of the world depends on our investment in educating for inclusion and sustainability. The space of CE is vast and extremely important to prefigure a future in which human rights are the priority in the scholastic system of all countries. Governments and The Ministries of Education should orient towards a relaunch of the CE with the introduction of civic and political education as a compulsory subject in all schools.

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