

Abstract

L'essentiel

L'intégrale

Citizenship education

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Over the last ten years or so, the concept of citizenship education has been present in institutional declarations and research work in education. Recommended by the Council of Europe since 1997, it is primarily the concept of **Education for Democratic citizenship (EDC)** that is encountered in institutional discourse and research literature. Another very present concept, **active citizenship** means pupil participation at various levels of society, from the class to the town. The third approach, education for **global citizenship** – a fuzzy concept, imported from the English-speaking and northern European worlds – tends to obliterate the political dimension of citizenship education, in the name of a universalist ideal. Another point leading to tension: the possible contradiction between the objectives of EDC and an implementation focused on *national citizenship*, in the name of history, in recent democracies, or in reaction to current events (the attacks of 2001 or 2005).

So the reality of democratic citizenship education is not the same from one country to another. The way the country operates, from a political, economic or social standpoint, impacts the way that EDC is introduced into curricula or the way the school is organised. Between civic education, which can fit into the conventional educational model, and an education in active citizenship, which requires the timetables to be adapted, commitment from teachers and pupil motivation, there are many educational choices to be made, and these feature in debate and analysis by researchers.

Competencies related to citizenship education more or less find their place in the curricula, but often come into conflict with educational knowledge and disciplines.

Too often, citizenship education is a resource at the service of educational peace; as of primary school, pupils learn about “living together”. Teachers must manage the tension between seeking to standardize pupils’ behaviour and getting them to acquire a critical spirit, with the collateral risks of dissension.

The use of qualifiers such as “democratic”, “active” or “global” should not make us forget that the goal of citizenship education **is also to train citizens, aware that they are living “in the city” with its laws, its political organization, its history and its diversities.**

To quote this Dossier:

FEYFANT Annie (2010). « L'éducation à la citoyenneté ». *Dossier d'actualité de la VST*, n° 57, October.

On-line: <<http://www.inrp.fr/vst/LettreVST/57-octobre-2010.php>>.

This document is a brief abstract of the Dossier d'actualité.

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<http://www.inrp.fr/vst>,
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“Dossiers d'actualité”.

Education for Democratic Citizenship

“Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE) is a set of practices and activities for equipping young people and adults to play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society”.

Council of Europe, 2010.

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