

Building Young People's Civic Journeys:
Strengthening Democracies through Citizenship Education

Book of Abstracts

of the 27th Annual CiCea International Conference 2026

Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association in collaboration with
the Centre for Research and Intervention in Education (CIIE)
of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences
of the University of Porto (FPCEUP)

University of Porto - Porto, Portugal
Thursday, 28 – Saturday, 30 May, 2026



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Table of Contents

About CiCea	i
About the Conference Abstracts	1
Scientific and Organizing Committees	2
Scientific Committee.....	2
Organizing Committee	2
Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ).....	3
Curriculum and Afrocentricity: Practices in Mathematics Teaching in Alagoas, Brazil.....	4
<i>Denyson Anderson dos Santos, Marta Valéria da Silva Santos, Gleber Glaucio Nascimento Soares & Álvaro Leiva dos Santos</i>	
The European Parliament Ambassador School Programme - Strengthening the Democratic Participation of Young People in Portugal	4
<i>Isabel Baltazar</i>	
Educating for Global Citizenship, Peace and Sustainability: The Moroccan Educational Model.....	5
<i>Hicham Barkia, Rajae Yacoubi, Abderrahim El Ayadi & Youssef El Madhi</i>	
“Laboratórios de liberdade (in)condicionada”: Arts-Based Research with Children Affected by Parental Incarceration	6
<i>Sara Isabel Duarte Brandão, Vicente Concílio & Carla Malafaia</i>	
Civic Education for Sustainable Development of UNESCO – Decade	6
<i>Andreas Brunold</i>	
Reading Fiction and Empathy: A Case Study.....	7
Utopian Imaginaries and Practices of Resistance from the Margins: Towards a Utopian Performative Citizenship	8
<i>Alai Carril-Zerpa, Liliana Jacott Jimenez & Cristina Fuentes-Lara</i>	
The Importance of Incorporating Human and Civil Rights Subjects into Youth Curriculum .	8
<i>Raluca Colojoară</i>	
Between Pluralism and Universalism in Citizenship Education in Canada	9
<i>Celina Czech-Włodarczyk</i>	
Beyond the Walls: Teacher Training in Religious Education for the Protection of Life	10
<i>Luciaria da Rocha Silva Sampaio, Marta Valéria da Silva Santos & Adeline Mayara Silva de Lira</i>	
Ethnic-Racial Education: The Role of NAEREM in São Miguel dos Campos/AL, Brazil.....	10
<i>Marta Valéria da Silva Santos, Álvaro Leiva dos Santos, Amauri Nascimento dos Santos, Eliane Cristina Rodrigues dos Santos e Denyson Anderson</i>	
The Civic Journeys of Conflict-Driven Mobility: Transnational Trauma and Fragmented Belonging	11
<i>Ivetta Délczegh</i>	

Fractured Body and Self-Image Reconstruction of Students with Special Needs via Karagiozis	12
<i>Konstantinos Droumpalis & Ioannis Kamarianos</i>	
Childhood in an AI World. Ethical Implications for Creating Inclusive Environments.	13
<i>Miquel Àngel Essomba & Pilar Folgueiras</i>	
Racial Literacy and Teacher Training: The Importance of Self-Declaration in SMC, Alagoas, Brazil	13
<i>Emilly Moreira Feitosa de Albuquerque, Marta Valéria da Silva Santos, Vitória Rufino dos Santos Barros, Elizabeth Regina Freire da Silva, & Eliane Cristina Rodrigues Santos, Elizabeth Regina Freire & Adriana Santos</i>	
Building Bridges: Using Interdisciplinary, Arts-Based Curriculum to Foster Local Civic Engagement.....	14
<i>Rachel Fendler & Sara Scott Shields</i>	
Portuguese Public Schools as a Space for Strengthening and Consolidating Democracy ..	15
<i>Edysandra Frisoli, Daniela Ferreira & Louise Lima</i>	
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: Intergenerational Cooperation in the workplace ..	15
<i>Márta Fülöp & Ágnes Borcsik</i>	
Citizenship in the Age of AI Algorithmic Hyperreality.....	16
<i>Georgia Gouga & Charis Georgia Kamarianou</i>	
Ignoring Shadow Education in Educational and Social Inequality: Ramifications of Ongoing Omission	17
<i>Michael Katsillis</i>	
Disruptions in a Post Truth World: Civic Journeys in a Troubled World	17
<i>Kerry J. Kennedy</i>	
What Works in Fostering Civic Capacities at School? A Cross-National Multilevel Analysis Using ICCS 2022	18
<i>Shinui Kim</i>	
Educational specialists' understanding of gender-based violence and gender stereotypes	18
<i>Kristi Kõiv, Minni Aia-Utsal, Eleriin Kão & Anu Jõgi</i>	
Beyond Online Activity: Psychosocial Profiles of Digital Citizenship and Their Links to Well-Being Across Poland, Bangladesh, and Hong Kong.....	19
<i>Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, Koon Lin Linnie Wong, Ming Ming Chiu, Ki Keith Chan, Eric King-Man Chong & Miron Bhowmik</i>	
Co-Citizens from the Start: Intersectionality-as-Praxis and Anti-Bias Education Nurturing Children's Civic Journeys in Kindergarten.....	20
<i>Karmen Mlinar</i>	
Words that Welcome: Linguistic Inclusion of Migrants in a Food-Aid Setting.....	21
<i>Maria Cristina Moreira, Mayk Rezende Barcelos & Amadú Sané Cacheu</i>	

Teaching in Tension: Teachers’ Pedagogical Judgement between Universal Democratic Values and Jewish Cultural Traditions	21
<i>Michal Muszkat-Barkan & Nimrod Smilanski Fridman</i>	
Trust, Otherness and Social Belonging in Primary School Classrooms: Children’s Perspectives from the Greek Educational Context	22
<i>Evangelia Papalexatou, Epameinondas Panagopoulos & Michael Katsillis</i>	
Navigating Diversity: The Role of Religious Literacy in Fostering Active Citizenship	23
<i>Liljefors Persson & Emma Hall</i>	
Supporting Early-Career Teachers amid Migration, Inequality, and Professional Wellbeing	24
<i>Jana Poche Kargerová</i>	
Civic Journeys and Narratives of Resistance of Two Migrant Women in Spain: An Exploratory Study	24
<i>Paula Gesher Povedano Dominguez, Liliana Jacott Jimenez & Santiago Jose Elvias Carreras</i>	
The Capacity of Youth Work in England to Equip Young People for Political Citizenship: Enablers and Barriers to Political Socialisation.	25
<i>Carole Pugh</i>	
Votes at 16: What Young People in the UK Want to Know About Politics – And What You Need to Know About This in the Next Few Years	26
<i>Alistair Ross</i>	
Beginning the Civic Journey: Early Childhood Education and the Formation of Democratic Subjectivities as Constructed by Pre-Service ECCE Educators in Greece	26
<i>Eleni Sotiropoulou, Zoe Konstantinidou & Maria Stamatoglou</i>	
Children’s Conflicts as Civic Learning Spaces in Early Childhood Education	27
<i>Eleni Sotiropoulou, Maria Ntavarinou, Ariadni Nastogianni & Dimitra Drakopoulou</i>	
Towards a Critical Geographical Education: Action Research, Democracy, and Active Citizenship	28
<i>António Sousa Soares</i>	
AI Training for Primary Teachers: Equity, Agency, and Classroom Practice	29
<i>Willian Souza</i>	
Navigating Civic Conceptualizations: Exploring Early Learners’ Perspectives on Governance and Social Structure	29
<i>Jana Stará</i>	
Flipping the Script: Tech-Driven Youth Leadership in Japan’s Aging Local Communities ...	30
<i>Kazuya Taniguchi</i>	
Trust and Well-Being in Liquid Modernity: Mapping University Students Experiences	31
<i>Rafaela Theofanopoulou, Epameinondas Panagopoulos, Anthi Adamopoulou & Ioannis Kamarianos</i>	
Joy Is Not an Add-On: Disrupting Trauma-Driven Black Narratives in Education	31

Emma Thomas

Social Cohesion through Critical Literacy..... 32
Sarah Whitehouse & Jane Carter

Developing a Citizenship Curriculum for International Students in Chinese Universities:
Policies, Practices, and Implications 32
Zhenzhou Zhao & Xingyu Yan

Virtual Papers 34

Embodied Beginnings: Breastfeeding, Gendered Care, and the Formation of Early Civic
Subjectivities..... 35
Sarah Abutaleb

A Short "How to give a Workshop on Plato in an Educational Context" 35
Ioli Andreadi

Teachers' Perspectives on the Civic Journey and Active Citizenship in Multicultural Schools
..... 36
Asimina Bouchagier, Michael Katsillis, Konstantinos Georgopoulos & Julia Athena Spinthourakis

Children's Voice as Democratic Practice: Participation, Autonomy and Active Citizenship in
Early Childhood..... 36
Afroditi Charalampous & Tryfeni Sidiropoulou

Hong Kong Secondary School Teachers' Conceptualizing and Teaching Practices on
Citizenship 37
Eric King-Man Chong

Families, Emotions, and Twice-Exceptionality: An Overlooked Dimension..... 37
Felipe Queiroz Dias Rocha

Connecting Classrooms, Building Citizens: AI-Mediated Tele-collaboration and Early Civic
Agency 38
Maria Mont Algamasilla & Melinda Dooly

Student Engagement, Participation, and Equity: Rethinking School as a Democratic Space
..... 39
Laura Fraga, Marta Rodrigues & Paulo Moreira

From Play to Participation: Inclusive Civic Learning in Public (Non-School) Spaces 40
Konstantinos Fragkotsinos & Stergiani Giaouri

Tales of Refugee Children: A Civil Journey Embracing a New Culture through Kindergarten
Community 40
Evangelia Iakovidou & I. A. Spinthourakis

The Effects of Students' Peer Observation on their Feedback Literacy..... 41
Ana Mouraz

The Representation of Gifted in the Media: The Negative Perceptions and Implications . 42
Nilüfer Pembecioğlu

Children's Digital Citizenship in the Context of Child Privacy Violations in Preschools	42
<i>Nilüfer Pembecioğlu & Aslı Karaarslan</i>	
Social Creativity as a Resource in the Experience of Stress in the Support Staff Study Process	43
<i>Sandra Rone & Māra Vidnere</i>	
Visual Literacy and Democratic Learning in Greek Early Childhood Education	44
<i>Maretta Sidiropoulou & Konstantinos Karadimitriou</i>	
Re-questioning Questions: Dialogical Citizenship Education Beyond Student-Generated Inquiry.....	44
<i>Noboru Tanaka</i>	
Youth Digital and Civic Journeys: Intercultural Engagement through the Yes Theory Community	45
<i>Eleni Theologiti</i>	
Shaping Civic Identities through Language and Literature: Philology Teachers' Conceptions of Citizenship in Multicultural Contexts.....	46
<i>Kostis Tsioumis & Konstantina Iliopoulou</i>	
The Rights of Young People as a Tool for Cultivating Citizenship: Insights from the Greek Experience	47
<i>Kostis Tsioumis & Chrysanthi Tsioumi</i>	
Critical Consciousness and Critical Citizenship: Educational Practices in the Citizenship Education Course.....	47
<i>Theodoros Vavitsas, Athina Sevi & Julia Athena Spinthourakis</i>	
Children's social-emotional competence supporting citizenship education. A study to 5th and 6th graders of a Primary School in Glyfada, Athens.	48
<i>Eirini Vegianni, Kazila Xristothea & Ntalis Stylianos</i>	
Symposia, Workshops, Round Tables, and Posters	49
Symposium: Unspoken Memory and Civic Agency: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Inherited Ruptures in Contemporary Society.....	50
<i>György Csepeli, Márk Attila Edelényi, Linda Kalocsai-Kopanyicza, Károly Ádám Búza & Ivetta Délczezh</i>	
Symposium Paper 1: Approaches to the Dark Lake Through Massively Induced Quantum Collapses.....	50
..... <i>Márk Attila Edelényi</i>	
Symposium Paper 2: Embodied Trauma and Epigenetic Pathways of Unspoken Memory	51
Symposium Paper 3: Digital Environments, Trust, and Civic Perception.....	51
..... <i>Károly Ádám Búza</i>	

Symposium Paper 4: The Civic Journeys of Conflict-Driven Mobility: Transnational Trauma and Fragmented Belonging.....	52
<i>..... Ivetta Délczegh</i>	
Workshop: Co-Creating the European Space for Citizenship Education.....	53
<i>Peter Cunningham, Andy Mycock, & Sofia A. Santos</i>	
Workshop: Humanising Citizenship Education: Tuning Relational Practice	53
<i>Roy Smith</i>	
Round Table: How Citizenship Education Issues are Seen in a World That Seems to be Undergoing Fundamental Transformation	55
<i>János Gyóri, Julia A. Spithourakis, Peter Cunningham, Liliانا Jacott Jimenez; Kerry J. Kennedy; Henry Maitles; & Sarah Whitehouse</i>	
Poster: The Integration of Refugees and Migrants in Greek Education.	56
<i>Georgia Sengouni</i>	
Citizenship Teaching and Learning	57

About CiCea

CiCea, established in 2006, is the Association focusing on citizenship education and identity formation in young people in Europe and the world. It is a dynamic and fast-expanding group of academics from across Europe -all engaged in research and scholarship on young people's social learning and their construction of identities. It is a subscription-based organization, whose members enjoy a number of distinct advantages:

Copies of our Journal: *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*

Citizenship Teaching and Learning is our academic referred journal, with material of citizenship education from all over the world. Produced three times a year, and published by the academic publishers Intellect, this is the essential journal for all academics in the field! Online access is available to all our members either Individual or Institutional.

Use of our European Research Centres

We have established eight European Research Centres across Europe - Association members can book individual study places, or group research meetings, with hosts who will help access your accommodation requirements and local education establishments for research purposes.

Access to our Research Support Grants

We run a Research Support Grant scheme, where we make supplementary funding available to help groups of members in collaborative research projects.

Eligibility for our Best Annual Publications Awards

We organise Best Publications Awards for the best research and practice publications of the year, authored by CiCea members.

Reduced rates to our Conferences

Members are eligible for a substantial reduction in the fees for our annual conference. For more details, please visit the Association website: <http://www.cicea.eu/>

About the Conference Abstracts

It is our great pleasure to present the accepted abstracts for the joint CiCea conference Young People's Citizenship and Education: Building Young People's Civic Journeys: Strengthening Democracies through Citizenship Education that will be held at the University of Porto, Porto Portugal, Thursday, May 28th to Saturday, May 30th, 2026. The conference is organized by one of the leading organizations promoting the teaching and research of Citizenship Education in Europe and the rest of the world (CiCea), in collaboration with the Centre for Research and Intervention in Education (CIIE) of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP) - a leading research institution in Portugal and abroad with 30+ years of history of developing high-quality research on key educational processes and social change to broaden the role of education in promoting equity, inclusion and active citizenship.

The principal conference theme explores children and young people's civic journeys. It seeks to examine how, when, and where they learn about and actively participate in democracy and society more widely and/or the barriers to their participation therein, over their life-course. The conference also focuses on the analysis of connections and coherence in systems of provision and practice and what measures may be taken to further encourage young people's civic learning and participation. All abstracts submitted for consideration were double blind peer reviewed by Conference Scientific Committee members (CiCea members).

A truly international representation of work on the conference theme, many of the abstracts accepted examine how and in what ways citizenship education can encourage young people to relate to, engage with, and participate in civic society, institutions, and processes. Others seek to analyze how citizenship education and educators develop to meet the evolving needs of a contemporary society characterized by erosion of youth engagement and participation in civic society, with many young people facing uncertainty, alienation and detachment from civic institutions and processes. Other abstracts focus on a range of other aspects of citizenship education and values from around the world, exploring *inter alia* curriculum design, pedagogy, psychology, youth identities, law, human rights, history, education, and policy-making. The conference is supported by the journal Citizenship Teaching and Learning. Selected conference papers will be referred to the journal for consideration for publication.

As with previous CiCea conferences, our intention is to host an international conference with insights and perspectives from around the world. Beyond the wide representation evident in our accepted proposals, we also welcome the participation and attendance of individuals and groups (academic associations, professional bodies, charities, NGOs etc.) that represent a wide range of commitment to youth activism, engagement and education.

The Conference has as its' on the ground local chair and scientific committee member, Thiago Freires, will coordinate the local conference organization at the University of Porto, in Porto, Portugal.

We have accepted abstracts for research papers, posters, symposium, and workshops that relate to this year's conference theme: "Building Young People's Civic Journeys: Strengthening Democracies through Citizenship Education". Once again, we will also be offering interested presenters who would like to participate, but cannot physically be present, the opportunity to do a 'virtual paper'. All accepted and actualized papers, symposium, workshops, virtual papers and posters are eligible for review for inclusion in the Conference General Proceedings and the Conference Selected Papers.

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Individual Paper Abstracts (*to be presented in situ*)

The following pages contain a list of abstracts accepted for presentation in situ during the 27th Annual CiCea International Conference. Papers are listed alphabetically by first author surname.

Curriculum and Afrocentricity: Practices in Mathematics Teaching in Alagoas, Brazil

Denyson Anderson dos Santos, Marta Valéria da Silva Santos, Gleber Glaucio Nascimento Soares & Álvaro Leiva dos Santos

Abstract

This study presents a quantitative investigation aimed at examining the manifestations of the coloniality of knowledge and its structural impacts on the teaching of Mathematics in municipalities in the state of Alagoas, Brazil. The central problem lies in the historical silencing of African matrices in the exact sciences, which perpetuates a Eurocentric hegemony in contemporary school curricula. For data collection, a structured and validated questionnaire is applied to an educational ecosystem composed of teachers, pedagogical coordinators, and school administrators. The objective is to map perceptions and strengthen practices that promote a plural, equitable, and rigorously critical education in relation to traditional models.

The theoretical framework seeks to articulate a historical, epistemological, and political analysis that reveals the deep roots of the exclusion of African knowledge within the field of mathematics. At the same time, strategies are outlined for the effective reintegration of this knowledge into everyday school practices, based on the principles of Law 10.639/03 and the competencies established by the Brazilian National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). Understanding Mathematics from an Afrocentric perspective requires a dual epistemic movement: first, the recovery and appreciation of ancestral and contemporary scientific contributions of African peoples and the African diaspora, restoring the humanity and intellectual legacy historically denied to them; second, the active questioning of curricular and methodological structures that maintain mathematics as a territory of exclusion.

Preliminary results indicate the need for continuing education programs that prepare education professionals to implement this decolonial transition. It is concluded that this approach goes beyond the mere inclusion of isolated or folkloric content and instead calls for a profound paradigmatic reconfiguration of mathematics teaching. This research therefore seeks to contribute to the transatlantic debate on cognitive justice and the democratization of knowledge, offering a contextualized diagnosis based on the educational reality of Alagoas for the international academic community.

Keywords: Afrocentricity; Curriculum; Ethnomathematics; Anti-racist Education; Coloniality of Knowledge

The European Parliament Ambassador School Programme - Strengthening the Democratic Participation of Young People in Portugal

Isabel Baltazar

Abstract

In this presentation we will focus on the implementation of the European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS) program and how it can work to strengthen democratic participation of young people and in particular to young people in Portugal.

The phrase "Building Young People's Civic Journeys" refers to the core mission of the European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS) program. This initiative focuses on strengthening democracies by educating students about parliamentary democracy and their rights as EU

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

citizens. The program aims to foster a culture of democracy by equipping young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate actively in democratic life. Students, known as Junior Ambassadors, engage in peer-to-peer learning and community activities to promote European values and civic responsibility. : Schools designated as "Ambassador Schools" use specialized resources to teach the impact of the EU on daily life and the role of the European Parliament. The program emphasizes a student-led approach, allowing Junior Ambassadors to plan events, conduct research, and build confidence through practical engagement. argues that structured telecollaboration can strengthen participatory dispositions from early schooling by fostering agency, dialogue, and globally oriented civic imagination.

Keywords: EPAS; Strengthening Democracies; Young People; Citizenship Education

Educating for Global Citizenship, Peace and Sustainability: The Moroccan Educational Model.

Hicham Barkia, Rajae Yacoubi, Abderrahim El Ayadi & Youssef El Madhi

Abstract

This paper reports key results from the Moroccan experience in implementing Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a national strategy for peace-building and sustainability in schools. Based on the analysis of national programmes developed through intersectoral cooperation between governmental departments, national institutions and civil society organizations, the study highlights the concrete outcomes of integrated citizenship education policies.

Findings from the APT2C programme (Support for the Promotion of Tolerance, Civism and Citizenship in Schools) and related initiatives indicate a significant improvement in school climate and a decline in violent and disruptive behaviours in participating schools. Students show strengthened psychosocial, civic and environmental competencies, including enhanced dialogue skills, respect for diversity, conflict management abilities and increased awareness of environmental responsibility and sustainable development.

Teachers and school administrators report improved professional capacities in mediation, prevention and participatory pedagogical practices. School clubs for citizenship and human rights, peer education activities and mediation units have become central platforms for student engagement and democratic participation.

A major result concerns the effectiveness of intersectoral collaboration involving education authorities, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations working in child protection and environmental education. This cooperation has enabled the alignment of national policies with school-level practices and the sustainability of educational interventions over time.

Overall, the Moroccan educational model demonstrates that Global Citizenship Education, when supported by coordinated multi-actor governance, produces tangible educational and social benefits. It contributes not only to violence prevention and peace education but also to the development of responsible and environmentally conscious citizens. These findings suggest that integrated and partnership-based approaches to citizenship education offer transferable strategies for education systems seeking to link peace, democracy and sustainability through school-based action.

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

Keywords: Global Citizenship Education; Peace Education; Sustainability Education; Intersectoral Collaboration; APT2C programme

“Laboratórios de liberdade (in)condicionada”: Arts-Based Research with Children Affected by Parental Incarceration

Sara Isabel Duarte Brandão, Vicente Concílio & Carla Malafaia

Abstract

This paper presents “Laboratórios de liberdade (in)condicionada” [Laboratories of (un)conditioned Freedom], an ongoing arts-based research project with children and young people living in vulnerable social contexts in the Porto metropolitan area. The project emerged from previous research on art practices in prison contexts and from the recognition that the impacts of incarceration extends beyond prison walls, profoundly affecting the emotional lives and everyday experiences of prisoners’ children.

The intervention is currently being implemented in two community-based institutions, involving working with young people in residential care, and with children in a priority intervention neighbourhood. Through a series of artistic laboratories, participants are invited to explore creative writing and visual arts as tools for self-expression, collective reflection, and shared knowledge production.

The laboratories are centred on the theme of freedom — its limits, conditions, and contradictions — and on the experience of having a parent in prison. Rather than focusing on narratives of victimisation, the project seeks to create safe spaces where children and young people can articulate emotions, imaginaries, and proposals related to their daily lives in educational and social contexts. Artistic practices function as listening devices, enabling participants’ voices to become visible and meaningful within and beyond institutional settings.

So far, the project has involved exploratory workshops that combine individual and collective creation, fostering dialogue among participants and opening symbolic channels of communication “across walls.” This presentation reflects on the methodological choices underpinning these practices and discusses their potential to support emotional agency, critical reflection, and alternative forms of relational continuity between inside and outside prison worlds.

Keywords: Children of prisoners; Social vulnerability

Civic Education for Sustainable Development of UNESCO – Decade

Andreas Brunold

Abstract

The term sustainability is currently emerging on an expanding scale in the most diverse social contexts and life contexts. The World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development proclaimed by the United Nations from 2005 to 2014, the coordination of which was entrusted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), requires a

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

profound social science evaluation if the high standards and education policy aims are to be met (Brunold 2006, 2015). Significantly, it is about nothing less than opening up the same educational opportunities for all people to acquire knowledge, skills and values, behaviors and lifestyles to learn which changes are necessary for a viable future and the shaping of a sustainable society. The conclusion can be drawn that the guiding principles of sustainable development can only be anchored in people's consciousness if democratic structures are permanently established.

By 2030, it is planned that all learners should acquire knowledge and skills in order to be able to contribute to sustainable development. It is therefore necessary that more attention is paid to political education for sustainable development within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals in the coming years.

The research methodology is based on an expert survey, using questionnaires translated into German, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese languages. The experts, interviewed in this study represent institutions or organizations, that are involved in educational policy, in university research and teaching contexts. The results provide a wide range of variations in assessments of the UN Decade and its characteristics of democratic potential and support. This shows that the potential democratic influences can always be assessed much more positively through sustainable development, particularly in reference to good governance, the basic and human rights, the protection of minorities, civil society participation and the separation of powers and the rule of law.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals; UN Decade; UNESCO; Civil Society; Democratic Participation

Reading Fiction and Empathy: A Case Study

Maria Fernanda Sande Candeias

Abstract

Establishing empathic relationships between human beings is a highly relevant and current topic. Considering the importance of school, an exploratory case study was developed to investigate the relationships between reading fictional narratives and empathy, based on the study of the empathic response of high school art students from a school in the São Paulo region. Two stimuli were used: a short story and an expository text. The Basic Empathy Scale (BES) was applied concurrently, and a series of interviews were conducted with students and a teacher. The results of the comparison between the short story and the expository text indicated a richer and deeper empathic response to the fictional narrative. The analysis highlighted the importance of identification with the characters, narrative immersion, and the mobilization of personal experiences in the construction of empathy. The data suggest that reading fiction can be a valuable tool for socio-emotional development and inclusion in an educational context. The research points to the need for future studies with larger and more diverse samples, exploring different literary genres and the influence of individual and contextual factors on the relationship between reading and empathy.

Keywords: Empathy; Fictional narratives; Reading; Adolescence; Art education

Utopian Imaginaries and Practices of Resistance from the Margins: Towards a Utopian Performative Citizenship

Alai Carril-Zerpa, Liliana Jacott Jimenez & Cristina Fuentes-Lara

Abstract

In recent years, the concept of utopia has regained relevance (Moylan, 2023), and as a consequence, new ways of understanding it and its function in social change have emerged (Badaan et al., 2022; Kashima et al., 2025). Recent critiques have also challenged the classical view of utopia as an exception of western modernity, bringing forward new utopian imaginaries (Daniel, 2025; Datta, 2022; Kuiti, 2022). However, the concept of utopia itself often remains anchored in rationalist traditions that assume teleological understandings of time, progress, and social change (Allen, 2015). As a result, utopias from the margins continue being overlooked. To address this, this paper draws on decolonial and posthuman perspectives (Cantó-Milà & Seebach, 2024; Soldatenko, 2025) and approaches utopia from an onto-epistemological lens (Cozza & Gherardi, 2023). Within this framework, utopian imaginaries are understood not only as representations of ideal futures but as assemblages of material relations, affect, and practice. From this perspective, the perceived absence of utopias from the margins can be explained as the result of an epistemic bias that renders certain forms of imagining and world-making invisible.

Building on this reconceptualization, the paper proposes the concept of utopian performative citizenship. Drawing on performative citizenship (Astor et al., 2023; Sime & Behrens, 2023) and citizenship utopias (Onodera et al., 2025), citizenship is approached not as a legal status but as a performative practice through which utopian imaginaries are enacted, negotiated, and transformed (López-Sala, 2022; Onodera et al., 2025). Acts of citizenship thus become spaces where futures are not only imagined but actively built.

Keywords: Utopia; Utopian imaginaries; Performative citizenship; Posthumanism; Decoloniality

The Importance of Incorporating Human and Civil Rights Subjects into Youth Curriculum

Raluca Colojoară

Abstract

Access to education should not be a privilege. This paper examines how access to education by introducing human and civil rights into youth curricula is of utmost importance.

Education is a human right, and a foundational element of both peace and dignity. These subjects and their integration into youth curricula are essential for the development of democratic values and social responsibility, as well as an active citizenship among youth.

Education on human and civil rights develops tolerance and awareness on social, justice and political issues. It helps young people understand not only their rights and role within democratic societies but encourages their participation in community life by strengthening a democratic culture.

By familiarizing young people to principles of fundamental human rights, constitutional freedoms, and civic responsibilities, education systems will be able to promote respect for

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

human dignity, equality, democratic principles and the rule of law. As such, the inclusion of human and civil rights in youth education remains a crucial instrument for building informed, engaged, and responsible citizens.

Keywords: human and civic rights; respect and dignity; youth curriculum; democracy; rule of law

Between Pluralism and Universalism in Citizenship Education in Canada

Celina Czech-Włodarczyk

Abstract

Canada's experience with multiculturalism has not always been easy, but it has become a permanent part of its history. Multiculturalism is not immutable; it is a dynamic interaction between people from different cultures, and like the contemporary economic and social reality of Canada, it is constantly changing.

Canadian multiculturalism is grounded in the Constitution and laws, and supported by provincial and federal government programs. Still, its future depends on how citizens understand the idea of living peacefully in a pluralistic and democratic society in which some feel abandoned, and others revel in diversity.

The goal of contemporary Canadian citizenship is the sharing of values within a collective, democratic community. Still, Indigenous peoples, who frequently demonstrate conceptualizations of their own group identity and nationhood that differ from those of the rest of society, provoke discussion over competing values promoted in the civics curriculum. These struggles may have profound implications for social harmony, contemporary reconciliation, and the reforms needed in Canadian provincial educational policies.

When constructing a theoretical framework for citizenship education in a multicultural society, it is worth considering how fallibilism relates to the tension between pluralism and universalism.

The concept of pluralism as a fallibilistic framework provides an essential philosophical tool for the theoretical foundations of citizenship education in a multicultural society. It finds ethical foundations shared by all and perceives them as valuable in a pluralistic and diverse society.

This presentation will present the results of a critical analysis of the official provincial school curriculum for civic education (either within social sciences or as a separate civics subject) implemented in public elementary and senior/high schools across Canadian provinces. Seven codes representing civic values considered essential in the process of school civic literacy were used to analyze the programs.

Keywords: human and civic rights; respect and dignity; youth curriculum; democracy; rule of law

Beyond the Walls: Teacher Training in Religious Education for the Protection of Life

Luciaria da Rocha Silva Sampaio, Marta Valéria da Silva Santos & Adeline Mayara Silva de Lira

Abstract

This research analyzes the fundamental relevance of continuing education for teachers within the municipal school system of São Miguel dos Campos, Alagoas, specifically focusing on the construction of pedagogical strategies for the prevention and combat of anxiety and depression—disorders that can tragically culminate in suicide within the school environment. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing structured questionnaires applied to the teaching staff to investigate how the discipline of Religious Education can function as a strategic interdisciplinary axis for emotional support, crisis prevention, and social protection.

Partial results indicate that the contemporary school is a complex setting of multi-factorial vulnerabilities. On one hand, the student body increasingly faces the devastating phenomena of bullying and social isolation. On the other hand, the teaching staff deals with professional burnout and severe emotional exhaustion resulting from the demands of the post-pandemic educational landscape. In this context, specific training for Religious Education proposes a paradigm shift that transcends traditional dogmatic syllabi, positioning the subject as a privileged space for ethical dialogue regarding human existence, subjectivity, and the absolute appreciation of life.

The research highlights that the strengthening of faith and spirituality, understood through their diverse cultural perspectives, acts as a powerful tool for psychological resilience and psychosocial support. By equipping educators to identify early warning signs and promote the practice of active listening, continuing education transforms the classroom into a safe haven of educational protection. It is concluded that consistent investment in the mental health and ethical-humanistic training of educators in São Miguel dos Campos is a non-negotiable requirement for consolidating public policies aimed at preserving life "beyond school walls". This approach successfully integrates spirituality, inclusive pedagogy, and professional care as the essential pillars of a truly humanizing and preventive educational system.

Keywords: Bullying Prevention; Teacher Training; Religious Education; Human Rights; Protection of Life

Ethnic-Racial Education: The Role of NAEREM in São Miguel dos Campos/AL, Brazil

Marta Valéria da Silva Santos, Álvaro Leiva dos Santos, Amauri Nascimento dos Santos, Eliane Cristina Rodrigues dos Santos e Denyson Anderson

Abstract

This research analyzes the performance of the Center for Educational Ethnic-Racial Actions of São Miguel dos Campos (NAEREM) as a central axis for strengthening the connection between schools and the community. The study focuses on the priority development of anti-racist public policies within the municipal education system of São Miguel dos Campos, Alagoas, Brazil. We investigate how the institutionalization of a specialized center enables not only the compliance and transposition of Brazilian Federal Laws (10.639/03 and 11.645/08) into effective curricular

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

pedagogical practices but also how it functions as a vital space for professional development, social struggle, and the promotion of equity.

The analysis covers all educational levels, from Early Childhood Education to Youth and Adult Education (EJA), demonstrating the center's effectiveness in fulfilling the public education mandate as a sanctuary for welcoming and training dedicated to combating structural racism. Through a decolonial perspective, this study highlights the importance of teacher training, the monitoring and mapping of equity across the municipal teaching network, and the study of interculturality. These elements, combined with the recovery of Afro-Indigenous identity, serve as essential pillars to enhance the curriculum and transform the school environment into a more inclusive space.

The methodology involves a qualitative approach, including documentary analysis and a report of management experiences within the local Secretariat of Education. Preliminary results indicate that the NAEREM model successfully integrates local identity with national legal requirements, fostering a representative educational atmosphere. In conclusion, the project underscores that institutionalizing ethnic-racial policies is a transformative tool for social justice and the valuation of student diversity in the Global South.

Keywords: Anti-racist Education; Representativeness; Public Policies; Teacher Training; Identity

The Civic Journeys of Conflict-Driven Mobility: Transnational Trauma and Fragmented Belonging

Ivetta Délczegh

Abstract

The war in Ukraine has led to large-scale displacement, bringing war-related experiences and emotional tensions into receiving societies. This paper examines how transnationally circulating trauma shapes the civic journeys of Russian and Ukrainian youth living in Serbia. Particular attention is given to the reactivation of unresolved historical narratives, the emergence of collective blame, and experiences of social differentiation that influence young people's perceptions of democracy, trust, and belonging.

The analysis applies the Trauma Mapping framework as an analytical lens to understand how historically rooted and war-related experiences operate through implicit, fragmented, and digitally mediated forms. This approach makes it possible to examine how collective emotions, moral uncertainty, and competing narratives shape everyday orientations toward public life beyond explicit political attitudes.

The study is based on a triangulated qualitative design combining netnography as the primary method with semi-structured interviews and contextual analysis. The strong netnographic focus extends the empirical field from the local to the global level, capturing how transnational digital discourses, diasporic communication spaces, and platform-mediated narratives influence young people's interpretation of the war and its moral meanings.

Findings indicate that civic orientations develop within a condition of fragmented belonging. Exposure to conflicting narratives, moral polarization, and digitally mediated collective emotions contributes to uncertainty, emotional withdrawal, and cautious engagement with institutions

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

and local public life. At the same time, transnational online communities provide alternative spaces of identification and selective participation.

The study argues that transnationally circulating collective traumas become long-term, socially operative yet largely invisible forces when they remain unheard and insufficiently reflected within the public sphere. From a citizenship education perspective, this highlights the importance of creating interpretive and dialogical spaces that enable the articulation and processing of such experiences, preventing them from remaining within the domain of implicit and unreflected collective memory.

Keywords: Conflict-Driven Mobility; Transnational Trauma; Digitally Mediated Belonging; Civic Orientation; Unreflected Collective Memory

Fractured Body and Self-Image Reconstruction of Students with Special Needs via Karagiozis

Konstantinos Droumpalis & Ioannis Kamarianos

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the importance of digital shadow theatre and, more specifically, the virtual text Karagiozis as a pedagogical and cultural tool capable of supporting and strengthening children with special educational needs in their transition from the experience of otherness to identity, the meaning of life and the management of social stigma. Within an ethnomethodological approach, the study uses content analysis techniques and in-depth interviews with Special Educational Needs teachers. The interviews reveal the educators' perceptions of the uniqueness of the figure of Karagiozis in the education of students with special educational needs. The interpretation of the data is based on the theory of auto-ethnopuppetry (Fisher, 2018), approaching the Karagiozis as a means of emerging narratives that allow children to make sense of their daily lives. Disability is examined here as a social construction, connected with the acceptance of diversity and the handling of ableism.

Under the lens of biopolitical theory, the conclusions confirm that the Shadow Theatre reflects the experience of the «fractured body» (Fractured Body Theory), enabling the rewriting of the identity narrative (Fisher, 2018). The analysis focuses specifically on the Karagiozis puppet's virtual text, conceptualized as a «significant other» (Mead). Through identifying with the «fractured» yet functional and resilient body of the figure, the student reshapes their self-image (looking-glass self) (Cooley). Karagiozis acts as a mirror and mediator, enabling the child to deconstruct stereotypes about disability and develop a strengthened sense of self as they participate in the school community.

Keywords: Karagiozis; Special Education Needs; Self-Image; Reconstruction; Fractured Body Theory; Stigma

Childhood in an AI World. Ethical Implications for Creating Inclusive Environments.

Miquel Àngel Essomba & Pilar Folgueiras

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is causing a change of era at all levels, and today's children will be the first generation in history that will not have known the world without it. This profound irruption into our lives is occurring with commercial purposes but without cultural meaning, and causes counterproductive effects in the cognitive, social and educational fields. Children are one of the potentially vulnerable groups that can suffer these negative effects, for example when AI instrumentalizes their interaction with social networks to promote their consumption, or their presence alters the teaching and learning processes at school. In our context, national governments are beginning to react and establish regulatory frameworks to protect children – France and Spain are leading the way in banning the use of social networks by children under sixteen – and regulate AI through a European directive. Educational institutions at all levels are also developing protocols for the appropriate use of AI in classes; UNESCO is a reference institution in this regard. However, two challenges are emerging that need to be resolved. The first, the absence of a global framework that establishes a perimeter of ethical use. The second, the lack of equity measures to prevent AI from increasing social inequality rates. How do we build an inclusive society and education in the era of AI? This is the research question of an action research carried out by the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Barcelona with funding from the Spanish government in four schools, with the participation of teachers, students and families. We wish to identify how we must relate to this new technological framework to guarantee full inclusion. In this paper we provide results from the first year of research, focused on documentary analysis and seminars to frame the state of the art and the main categories of analysis.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Inclusive education; Equity; Ethics; Childhood

Racial Literacy and Teacher Training: The Importance of Self-Declaration in SMC, Alagoas, Brazil

Emilly Moreira Feitosa de Albuquerque, Marta Valéria da Silva Santos, Vitória Rufino dos Santos Barros, Elizabeth Regina Freire da Silva, & Eliane Cristina Rodrigues Santos, Elizabeth Regina Freire & Adriana Santos

Abstract

The discussion on racial literacy in continuing education is urgent within the Brazilian educational landscape to address historical inequalities reflected in the school environment. This paper presents the experience of formative cycles focused on racial literacy in the municipal education network of São Miguel dos Campos, Alagoas. The study stems from the need to transform the filling of statistical data — such as the Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) questionnaires — into processes of identity awareness and social justice.

The primary objective is to analyze how continuing education acts as a transformative axis for pedagogical practices, strengthening diversity and equity from Early Childhood Education to the Final Years of Primary School. The methodology was based on formative cycles covering all educational modalities, involving teaching staff, families, and students. The actions focused on overcoming indifference and resistance regarding ethno-racial self-declaration, using the

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

""school floor"" as a space for recognition and belonging. With multidisciplinary support, including psychologists and social workers, the formative period promoted dialogues that allowed students to discover themselves socially and racially, understanding identity as an essential step for the exercise of citizenship.

Results indicate that situated training directly impacts the reduction of racial silencing and increases family participation. It is concluded that racial literacy, as an institutionalized policy, qualifies educational indicators and promotes an effectively inclusive school environment. This experience demonstrates that statistical data, when mediated by pedagogical sensitivity and racial literacy — understood as the critical capacity to confront structural racism — ceases to be a mere number to become an act of affirmation of human dignity and social justice in the contemporary Brazilian educational context.

Keywords: Teacher Training; Racial Literacy; Self-declaration; Equity; São Miguel dos Campos

Building Bridges: Using Interdisciplinary, Arts-Based Curriculum to Foster Local Civic Engagement

Rachel Fendler & Sara Scott Shields

Abstract

This paper draws on a 2-year study (2023-2025) that brought art and social studies teachers, from the same school, into collaboration on the development and implementation of co-taught units designed to foster civic engagement. The paper will discuss the role place-based curriculum played in developing an interdisciplinary arts and civics curriculum. We will review the motivations incentivizing interdisciplinary curriculum, as well as the roadblocks impeding its implementation. Finally, drawing on our empirical data, we will share how teachers navigated this territory by designing learning experiences that focused on local histories and places.

The study was led by a university research team from art education and social sciences education. In Year 1 (23/24), the university team facilitated a 9-month professional development series for 6 teams of local teachers. The teachers were introduced to a model of integrated action civics, which prompts students to move through cycles of historical research and change analysis. In addition, teachers were engaged in workshops that modeled how to use art making as a tool for inquiry and critical reflection, in response to monuments, archival documents, and historical figures. At the end of this series, teachers developed curriculum units that integrated the local and engaged students in a meaningful civic concept that connected to or integrated contemporary art practice. In Year 2 (24/25), teachers implemented the curriculum, documenting student reflections, changes in their attachment to community, and an evolving understanding of civic engagement.

Our findings illuminate how focusing on inquiry into local places offered a creative solution for developing interdisciplinary curricula that received student, administrative, and community buy-in. Such findings indicate a way forward for school-wide commitment to citizenship education in today's political climate.

Keywords: art education; place-based education; curriculum design; civic engagement; artistic activism

Portuguese Public Schools as a Space for Strengthening and Consolidating Democracy

Edysandra Frisoli, Daniela Ferreira & Louise Lima

Abstract

This communication stems from a decisive issue that characterizes the historical moment currently experienced by Portuguese public school and their teachers. Inspired by John Dewey's Democracy and Education, this paper positions Portuguese public schools as fundamental places for democratic life and civic learning nowadays. The literature indicates that, since the end of fascism in Portugal, educational policies have oscillated between meritocratic and democratic orientation. Recent attacks on democracy show how important it is to reflect on educational institutions and their practices. This paper conceptualizes public schools as a space for the prosperity and strengthening of democracy and citizenship, where critical thinking, divergent opinions and freedom of expression are accepted and encouraged, a place that can be the source of democratic and responsible citizenship, extending their values beyond school boundaries. It is important to highlight that schools are historically situated institutions, and because they cannot be conceived as neutral organizations or analyzed from simplistic perspectives, the schools are inseparable from the temporal and spatial context in which they exist. This communication also recognizes public schools as an unfinished democratic space in constant demand, based on a narrative review of the literature carried out to support a doctoral project in development. The purpose of this paper is to respond to the needs of this research field by providing epistemological support for intentional teacher action, and by mapping the challenges and possibilities of democratic schooling. It cannot be said that Portuguese democratic society is a guaranteed and immutable reality, and it is essential that teachers act intentionally and consciously to promote democratic citizenship, as well as conducting research and interventions in this field. Teaching, learning, intervening and investigating are political acts, and therefore it is necessary for all citizens to take responsibility, today and always, for the protection and maintenance of democracy.

Keywords: Public Education; Democratic Education; Portuguese Public Schools; Teaching

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: Intergenerational Cooperation in the workplace

Márta Fülöp & Ágnes Borcsik

Abstract

A significant part of citizens' life is spent in the workplace. The experiences in the workplace may shape their civic engagement. As life expectancy increases and birth rates decline in parallel, retaining a skilled older workforce—and, where appropriate, the possibility of employing them beyond retirement age—is becoming increasingly important. Within organizations, there are different age groups, and a key challenge for competitiveness is the most effective utilization of the varying levels of professional knowledge and competencies among employees belonging to different age groups—that is, the appropriate management of the dynamics of intergenerational relationships. This is also a key element of workplace subjective well-being.

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

One key question of OCB is what kind of relationships develop among employees of different age groups, how they can reconcile the cooperation necessary for performing work tasks with age-related differences, and what factors facilitate or hinder successful and efficient work in a multigenerational workplace. Competition among colleagues is often considered one of the barriers to workplace cooperation. The research pays particular attention to the extent to which intergenerational competition plays a role in intergenerational cooperation, when it facilitates it, and when it hinders it and in what way this dynamic, changes the employees' interpersonal relationships, loyalty and attachment to the workplace, how it changes their OCB.

During the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees under 35 and those aged 55–65 (20 and 20, respectively), which explored the everyday organizational experiences and perceptions of cooperation between the two age groups. The interviews were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In this study, the perceptions and experiences observed by the interviewees that facilitate and hinder intergenerational workplace collaboration are identified,

This research is part of a larger international research project (LEVERAGE COST-OC-2022-1-25857 – Successful Aging in the Workplace) and received funding from the Research Project Fund of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

Keywords: Intergenerational, organizational citizen, organizations

Citizenship in the Age of AI Algorithmic Hyperreality

Georgia Gouga & Charis Georgia Kamarianou

Abstract

This presentation examines the crisis of citizenship manufactured by digital narratives in the age of AI-driven algorithmic hyperreality. Drawing on Ulrich Beck's theory of the risk society, we analyze how "knife crime" in London has been transformed from a statistically declining phenomenon into a pervasive, manufactured risk that justifies the redrawing of national belonging. Beck argued that contemporary societies are increasingly organized around the management of perceived threats, where the driving force becomes "I am afraid!" rather than "I am hungry!". In this framework, the distribution of "bads" (risks) supplants the distribution of "goods" as the primary organizing principle of society. Hypertruth, a concept derived from Baudrillardian theory, refers to a condition where viral, algorithmically amplified representations become more socially significant than observable facts. As the analysis explains, hypertruth is "a kind of reality more real than reality," where simulations and representations replace the original. This digital spectacle supplants ground truth—the verifiable reality documented by empirical data and statistics. In computational social science, "ground truth" represents the causally known reality against which models and perceptions must be validated.

The manufactured risk is explicitly racialised, with posts mentioning Islam or migrants doubling since 2023, and terms like "Londonistan" proliferating in right-wing discourse. As outlined by Beck, a society that is rife with risk engenders novel forms of inequality and "social risk positions". This narrative conceptualises diversity itself as a threat. Consequently, citizenship becomes a securitised status, with national identity reified against a digitally constructed, threatening "other", fundamentally redrawing the terms of social belonging based on algorithmic amplification rather than empirical reality.

Keywords: Knife crime; Hyper truth; Diversity; A.I.; Citizenship

Ignoring Shadow Education in Educational and Social Inequality: Ramifications of Ongoing Omission

Michael Katsillis

Abstract

Shadow Education (SE), the set of extra-curricular activities specifically aimed at helping students successfully navigate the educational allocation process, is regularly associated with differential educational achievement and attainment. SE mediates the association between background inequalities and differential educational achievement/attainment. Particularly (though not exclusively) when remunerated, SE is a de facto structural impediment to equal opportunity. In this context, SE holds the potential to impede social mobility and enhance social reproduction, which is to say, perpetuate inequality.

Inequality breeds discontent. Discontent fuels reprisal. The perpetually disenfranchised depend on social mechanisms and institutions to address their needs. Societies that fail to do so risk political extremism and civil unrest. SE is still frequently treated as a novel phenomenon in Europe and the Americas. With increasing understanding and evidence of its role in contemporary society, failure to meaningfully incorporate SE into studies of educational and later status attainment and the formulation of educational and social policy are equivalent to willfully introducing unknown (and unknowable) bias into our understanding of these phenomena and how to address them.

The majority of factors persistently found (e.g., internal/external social capital) or hoped (e.g., cultural capital) to play comparable roles are overwhelmingly included in educational/social-status attainment studies. These characteristics generally have broadly agreed upon, if sometimes evolving, definitions, operationalizations, and measurements, prioritizing meaningfully capturing the phenomenon over convenience. SE, however, lacks comprehensive, consistent, and persistent operationalization and measurement.

This study uses data from multiple sources to illustrate issues plaguing contemporary reporting of SE in Europe and how they can affect our perception of SE as a phenomenon. It also provides examples of the substantive shortcomings that can result from under-reporting, misreporting, or outright omitting SE in contemporary research, how this can contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, and the potentially far-reaching societal ramifications thereof.

Keywords: Shadow Education; Inequality; Operationalization; Omission Bias; Secondary Education

Disruptions in a Post Truth World: Civic Journeys in a Troubled World

Kerry J. Kennedy

Abstract

Disruptions have been characterized as economic, geo-political, social and environmental (Kennedy, 2025). Globally, young people are also confronted on a daily basis with misinformation and disinformation. This post-truth environment, complicated even more by intersecting disruptions, raises questions about the nature and purpose of civic journeys in the twenty first century. This issue is important not only for young people but also for adults who continue to negotiate citizenship issues in these troubling environments.

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

This presentation will first review these new civic environments to highlight the issues facing citizens whether they are young or experienced. It will then propose a possible solution by arguing that 'life education,' an approach to civic values that is largely Asian in origin, can be used to promote both action and reflection as components of civic action. The approach taken will highlight three broad dimensions of life education: transcendental, protective and pragmatic. The purpose of using life education in this way is to equip citizens of all ages "to confront current and predicted disruptions with new knowledge, new skills and new values" (Kennedy, 2025, p.114). Future education must challenge the status quo and the conception of life education outlined in this paper will support such a direction as a twenty first century priority.

Keywords: disruption; post truth; life education

What Works in Fostering Civic Capacities at School? A Cross-National Multilevel Analysis Using ICCS 2022

Shinui Kim

Abstract

Previous studies suggest that schools play a crucial role in preparing young people to become engaged citizens. Amid growing concerns about democratic backsliding worldwide, demands for civic capacity are increasing, and education is increasingly emphasized as a key institution for strengthening democratic citizenship. This study examines which school-based experiences are associated with students' civic self-efficacy using data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2022. Three dimensions of school civic experiences are analyzed: learning civic knowledge, participation in civic-related activities at school, and openness of classroom climate. Employing multilevel models with data from 22 countries, this study explicitly investigates cross-national variation in the relationships between these school experiences and civic self-efficacy. The findings indicate substantial heterogeneity across countries, suggesting that the effects of civic knowledge, civic participation, and open classroom climate are shaped primarily by national-level contexts. By providing comparative evidence on how and where school practices matter most, this study contributes to more context-sensitive approaches to civic education policy and practice.

Keywords: Civic Education; Comparative Education; International Large-scale Assessment; Multilevel Model

Educational specialists' understanding of gender-based violence and gender stereotypes

Kristi Kõiv, Minni Aia-Utsal, Eleriin Kão & Anu Jõgi

Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) and gender stereotypes (GS) are central of citizenship education in schools as part of the curriculum and in teacher training. Children's understandings of GBV are previously studied, but the voices of teachers and support specialists have received limited attention. In this paper, we draw on focus group interviews conducted with practicing

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

educational specialists in Estonia to investigate how they conceptualize GBV and GS. This work was supported by the BalHar project (ID 101195249) funded by the European Commission's CERV-2024-Daphne programme as the first phase of the project. The five mixed groups created for this research project from different locations in Estonia and total 40 teachers and social support specialists were participated in the study. Participants' answers about meaning of GBV and GS were analyzed using inductive strategy through qualitative content analysis. The results highlight the societally broad nature of conceptualizing GBV as part of general violence which included different forms of violence in interpersonal relations revealing intent harm and power abuse; as well as the societal basis of GBV with the hidden nature of the phenomenon in community level. The meaning of GS was conceptualized by three general categories: Perceptions of the physical, psychological and behavioral characteristics of women and men as normative or harmful; contrasting gender-appropriate family and professional roles for men and woman; and contrasting content of women's and men's work. Thus, the words GBV and GS were used in everyday language to denote different things in terms of stereotyping with and had evaluative meaning for educational specialist. Everyday language about GBV and GS is deeply embedded in educational life and may reinforced through normalized discourse and the "hidden curriculum" used in schools. Addressing this requires changing educational environment – particularly area of citizenship education, to challenge these norms and promote non-judgemental language.

Keywords: Gender-based violence; stereotypes; conceptualization; educational specialists

Beyond Online Activity: Psychosocial Profiles of Digital Citizenship and Their Links to Well-Being Across Poland, Bangladesh, and Hong Kong

Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, Koon Lin Linnie Wong, Ming Ming Chiu, Ki Keith Chan, Eric King-Man Chong & Miron Bhowmik

Abstract

"Young people increasingly engage in citizenship within digital environments, but online activity alone may not ensure responsible, competent, or beneficial participation. Evidence is needed on qualitative patterns of digital citizenship—how online civic engagement aligns with media literacy and how these relate to well-being across contexts.

This study explored: (1) What psychosocial profiles arise from Online Civic Engagement (OCE) and Media Literacy (ML) patterns? (2) Do profiles differ in psychological well-being? (3) Do these differences persist after controlling for age, gender, ICT time, and country? (4) How does profile prevalence vary across Poland, Bangladesh, and Hong Kong?

A total of 1,298 university students from Poland, Bangladesh, and Hong Kong completed validated measures of OCE, ML, and psychological well-being. Cross-cultural measurement equivalence of OCE and ML was assessed using multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA). Profiles were derived using a two-step clustering approach (hierarchical Ward's method followed by k-means on standardized indicators). Differences between profiles were examined with ANOVA and robust post-hoc tests, profile prevalence across countries was tested using chi-square analyses, and ANCOVA assessed whether well-being differences remained after adjusting for covariates (including Profile × Country).

Four profiles were identified: Digital Leaders, Cautious Observers, Active but Careless, and Digital Outsiders. Profiles differed significantly in psychological well-being, with Digital Leaders

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

showing the highest levels and Digital Outsiders the lowest. These differences remained significant after controlling for age, gender, daily ICT time, and country, and the Profile × Country interaction was not significant, indicating comparable profile–well-being associations across contexts. Country and gender significantly influenced profile membership, reflecting cross-national differences in digital citizenship configurations.

These findings support a person-oriented perspective: the integration of engagement and literacy—rather than activity alone—is meaningfully linked to young adults' well-being, indicating a need for tailored interventions.

Keywords: online civic engagement; media literacy digital; participation; psychological well-being; global competence education

Co-Citizens from the Start: Intersectionality-as-Praxis and Anti-Bias Education Nurturing Children's Civic Journeys in Kindergarten

Karmen Mlinar

Abstract

Kindergartens, often the first public institutions to organise life beyond the family, are places where children begin their civic journeys. Through everyday routines, children learn, both implicitly and explicitly, who belongs, whose voice counts, and what is considered norm(al). Indeed, kindergartens are not isolated from broader political currents and public debates, which are increasingly characterised by populist and authoritarian discourses that frame difference as a threat and scapegoat those deemed “different”. In this context, early childhood education (ECE) must make its democratic commitment explicit—not only in words, but above all in practice.

This paper builds on intersectionality-as-praxis and anti-bias education to move beyond diversity, equity, and inclusion as buzzwords, towards democratic practice as social transformation. Intersectionality is treated not as an identity checklist nor a safe inclusion slogan, but as a prism that illuminates critical analysis and transformative action. This requires ECE to take responsibility for dismantling the interlocking hierarchies and systems of power and oppression that they themselves, more often than not, contribute to reproduce.

We argue that civic journeys fragment when institutionalised “neutral” routines silence dissent and equate good citizenship with compliance. We therefore propose children's activist participation and co-citizenship: supported, collective practices through which children build confident identities and joyful belonging, engage with difference with curiosity, notice and name unfairness, recognise exclusion, and act together to create positive change.

Six guiding principles for educators are outlined: (1) Listen without reframing; (2) Create space for difficult conversations; (3) Reject difference-blindness; (4) Move beyond the “tourist” approach to diversity; (5) Be the adult who speaks up; (6) Engage in ongoing reflection—individually and institutionally.

We conclude with implications for initial teacher education and continuing professional development, particularly in preparing educators to interrogate power and move beyond merely describing injustice to undertaking the uncomfortable, necessary work of resistance.

Keywords: Intersectionality; anti-bias education; early childhood; civic education; activist participation

Words that Welcome: Linguistic Inclusion of Migrants in a Food-Aid Setting

Maria Cristina Moreira, Mayk Rezende Barcelos & Amadú Sané Cacheu

Abstract

Globalization and increasing migratory flows pose growing challenges to host societies, particularly regarding the social inclusion of migrants. In Portugal, the Portuguese language is a central requirement for access to work, public services and civic participation, yet it often operates as a structural barrier to integration. This article presents and analyses a socio-educational intervention project developed at Porta Solidária, an initiative of the Parish of Nossa Senhora da Conceição in Porto, in a food-aid setting rarely recognised as an educational space, focused on the linguistic inclusion of migrants in situations of vulnerability.

Anchored in Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, Isabel Menezes' community intervention framework and Ignacio Martín-Baró's psychology of liberation, the study adopts a qualitative, participatory action research approach, articulating diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation of a set of Portuguese language support sessions. Between April and May 2024, four 45-minute sessions were held after working hours with around twenty adult migrants of different nationalities, focusing on functional everyday vocabulary (self-introduction, food, health, mobility). Multiple data-collection tools were used: participant observation, interviews, a reflective field journal, participatory validation of a multilingual leaflet and a final evaluation combining a satisfaction scale with open-ended written comments.

The results show that, despite the short duration and fluctuating attendance, the sessions became spaces of encounter, recognition and belonging, where language learning was intertwined with strengthened self-esteem, support networks and participants' social capital. Observable improvements were recorded in the use of simple phrases in Portuguese and an average satisfaction score of 4.8/5. The article concludes by underscoring the need for policies and training initiatives that recognise migrants as subjects of rights and knowledge, and adult education as a practice of social justice and humanisation rooted in local territories.

Keywords: linguistic inclusion; migrants; critical pedagogy participatory; action research; community-based education

Teaching in Tension: Teachers' Pedagogical Judgement between Universal Democratic Values and Jewish Cultural Traditions

Michal Muszkat-Barkan & Nimrod Smilanski Fridman

Abstract

Education for democratic citizenship rarely takes place in culturally neutral settings. In many societies, teachers are required to navigate tensions between universal democratic–humanistic commitments and particular cultural, religious, or national traditions. These tensions raise fundamental pedagogical questions: how can educators sustain democratic values such as equality, pluralism, and individual rights while also engaging with culturally rooted forms of belonging and collective identity?

This paper offers a practice-based reflection grounded in qualitative analysis of teachers' professional learning within the Teacher–Class–State laboratories, a professional development initiative aimed at strengthening civic education in a Jewish and democratic society. The

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

program draws on a “pedagogy of responsibility,” which understands teaching as ethical and professional judgment amid value conflict, uncertainty, and competing normative commitments.

The study analyzes documentation produced by 25 secondary-school teachers who participated in the laboratories between 2024 and 2026, including reflections, group discussions, and pedagogical case analyses. Using qualitative thematic analysis, it examines how teachers identify and interpret classroom situations where universal democratic commitments intersect with, challenge, or are refracted through Jewish cultural and communal traditions.

The analysis focuses on three questions:

- (1) What types of dilemmas do teachers identify in their everyday practice?*
- (2) How do they interpret tensions between universal and particular value frameworks?*
- (3) What pedagogical responses do they develop in order to address these tensions in the classroom?*

Findings highlight recurring modes of pedagogical action: facilitating deliberation around contested values, situating civic questions within Jewish textual and cultural traditions, structuring participatory classroom decision-making, and treating everyday school incidents as sites of collective interpretation.

By foregrounding teachers’ situated judgment and pedagogical reasoning, the paper contributes to broader discussions in democratic education about the role of educators in mediating between universal civic ideals and culturally embedded forms of identity and belonging.

Keywords: Teacher Professional Development; Democratic Citizenship Education (DCE); Civic Identity and Belonging; Value Tensions (Universalism–Particularism); Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Trust, Otherness and Social Belonging in Primary School Classrooms: Children’s Perspectives from the Greek Educational Context

Evangelia Papalexatou, Epameinondas Panagopoulos & Michael Katsillis

Abstract

The goal of the current study is to explore the ways in which primary school pupils understand trust and otherness in the context of their daily social world. In the current study, an interdisciplinary approach is employed, combining the perspectives of sociology on social interaction with the theories of intercultural education, aiming to explore the pupils’ perceptions in Greek primary schools on difference, belonging, and peer relations.

The methodological approach employed is based on the theories of Sociolinguistics and Sociocultural studies, which consider learning and social interaction as processes that take into account the role of language, culture, and habitual communicational practices. Moreover, the current study is based on the methodological approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which focuses on the ways in which individuals make sense of their actual experiences. The current study, therefore, aims to focus on the ways in which young people make sense of

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

trust despite differences, as well as the limits of the social world that appear in the context of their relations with their peers.

The research will employ a qualitative case study methodology and will include the main method of data collection, which is the semi-structured interviews. The research will focus on the importance of children's voices and will show ways in which language and interaction contribute to the construction of identity, trust, and belonging in the classroom.

The findings will contribute to the sociological debate on social relations and the construction of identity, and will also contribute to the field of multicultural education by revealing the ways in which trust is developed in different learning environments. The research will also show the ways in which classroom environments need to be developed to promote inclusivity and support, and to foster mutual recognition, respect for diversity, and cohesion between students.

Keywords: Trust; Otherness; Intercultural Education; Identity; Social Relations

Navigating Diversity: The Role of Religious Literacy in Fostering Active Citizenship

Liljefors Persson & Emma Hall

Abstract

Young people in Sweden grow up in a society often described as one of the most secular in the world, yet simultaneously marked by extensive religious and cultural diversity. Despite widespread secular values, religion has become increasingly visible and contested, rendering questions of religion, values, and human rights especially salient. As Ross et al. (2024) emphasise, it is crucial that individuals avoid allowing their own standpoint to dominate encounters with others. Awareness of how one's perspectives shape understanding is essential for democratic coexistence, participation, and respect for human rights.

Against this backdrop, young people need capacities to understand and navigate diversity. Such capacities involve not only knowledge but also skills including critical reflection, perspective-taking, and dialogical competence. This presentation explores how active democratic citizenship can be fostered by developing key competences within the school subject Religious Education, drawing on the concept of religious literacy (Biesta et al 2019; Crespo Lopes & Liljefors Persson 2023; Hall & Liljefors Persson, 2026 forthcoming).

The presentation offers a conceptual discussion of the forms of religious literacy required for participation in today's democratic and plural society. It draws on international policy frameworks such as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the Council of Europe's approach to democratic citizenship, which highlight the role of education in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. It also engages with findings from a European study (Ross et al. 2024), in which religion is understood both as a fundamental right and as part of broader debates concerning diversity, inclusion, and value conflicts.

The purpose of the presentation is to contribute to ongoing discussions on how education for democratic citizenship can be strengthened within the educational system, particularly in Religious Education, in a post secular and diverse context.

Keywords: active citizenship diversity; religious literacy; human rights; democracy

Supporting Early-Career Teachers amid Migration, Inequality, and Professional Wellbeing

Jana Poche Kargerová

Abstract

Early-career teachers represent a particularly vulnerable group within contemporary educational systems shaped by migration, social inequalities, and increasing institutional demands. As schools play a central role in fostering young people's civic learning and democratic participation, the professional formation of beginning teachers has broader societal implications. The early career phase constitutes a critical period of professional identity construction, during which teachers negotiate their agency, ethical commitments, and capacity to support inclusive and participatory learning environments.

This paper introduces the WANDA Reflective Method as a structured reflective framework designed to strengthen the wellbeing and professional agency of early-career teachers working in socially and culturally diverse contexts. Rather than conceptualising wellbeing as an individual psychological trait, the method situates it within relational, institutional, and structural conditions that shape teachers' everyday practice. Through guided reflection on emotionally demanding situations, experiences of inequality, power dynamics, and encounters with cultural diversity, participants critically examine how their professional actions relate to broader democratic and social justice commitments.

Drawing on examples from practical implementation, the paper explores how reflective, wellbeing-oriented support can enhance teachers' capacity to create inclusive classroom spaces that encourage students' voice, participation, and civic engagement. By reinforcing professional agency, the method contributes to preventing early career attrition while simultaneously strengthening schools' democratic functions.

The analysis argues that supporting early-career teachers' wellbeing should be understood not merely as an individual support measure, but as a structural investment in democratic education. Strengthening teachers' professional agency in contexts of migration and inequality is essential for building inclusive educational environments that enable young people's civic development and participation in diverse societies.

Keywords: Early-career teachers; professional agency; migration inequality; democratic education

Civic Journeys and Narratives of Resistance of Two Migrant Women in Spain: An Exploratory Study

Paula Gesher Povedano Dominguez, Liliana Jacott Jimenez & Santiago Jose Elvías Carreras

Abstract

This study explores the educational trajectories of two women of Moroccan origin—one as a student and the other as a mother—within the Spanish educational system. The objective is to identify their experiences of exclusion and discrimination based on gender, race and migratory status within different socio-educational contexts that legitimise these inequalities with the aim of recognising their voices and different forms of resistance.

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

Grounded in a critical qualitative research paradigm and employing a biographical-narrative methodology—particularly appropriate given the context in which this study is developed— we draw on their life stories to examine how experiences of injustice and inequality shape their civic journeys in different contexts and communities. In this case, their life stories become an epistemological tool for recognising, listening to and understanding these experiences through the participants’ own frames of reference. The researcher remains aware of her position and seeks to minimize relationships of domination or hierarchy, favouring the co-construction of knowledge. Through the collection of their voices via life stories, using tools such as visual mapping and open interviews, the study identifies experiences of discrimination rooted in the intersection of race, gender and migration status, as well as moments of transformation that become arenas for agency and resistance within school, peer, and institutional contexts. Women’s narratives show how catalysing exclusionary experiences can create transformative experiences and acts of resistance and agency motivated by the search for recognition, community networks and identity affirmation.

Keywords: Migration; Race; Education; Recognition; Resistance

The Capacity of Youth Work in England to Equip Young People for Political Citizenship: Enablers and Barriers to Political Socialisation.

Carole Pugh

Abstract

Youth work in the UK engages approximately 4.4 million young people annually, yet its contribution to political socialisation remains overlooked in English policy and research, which emphasises formal citizenship education within schools. This neglect persists despite substantial international evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of experiential education in shaping young people’s political development. Consequently, contemporary conceptualisations of lived citizenship have not been applied to youth work. Nor has youth work considered how newer theorisations of political socialisation, could reframe discussions about political and citizenship education.

This interdisciplinary study investigated how youth work supported political socialisation among young people aged 10-24 across four youth projects in a small northern city in England 2020-22. Adopting a constructivist, mixed methods design the research included focus groups with 89 young people and 21 youth workers alongside participant observation of 56 youth work sessions.

Drawing on young people’s own conceptualisations the study developed a model that maps youth work’s capacity to foster political citizenship. Findings demonstrated that youth work plays in significant role supporting political socialisation. However, this potential was constrained by barriers including uncertainty about youth work’s remit, limited practitioner confidence about discussing citizenship and political topics and perceptions that conversations about protest were prohibited. The study identified several enablers that could strengthen youth work’s contribution: clearer national policy that affirms youth works role in political socialisation, enhanced training to increase youth workers knowledge and confidence in addressing politics and citizenship; the development of resources to support discussions with young people and clearer guidance about if and how protest can be explored. The study concludes that policy efforts aimed at enhancing young people’s democratic participation must recognise and support the experiential and informal approaches embedded in youth work,

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

ensuring that youth work's capacity to equip young people for political citizenship can be more fully realised.

Keywords: youth work; political socialization; citizenship education; informal and non-formal education; youth civic engagement

Votes at 16: What Young People in the UK Want to Know About Politics – And What You Need to Know About This in the Next Few Years

Alistair Ross

Abstract

The voting age in the UK for General and Local elections is being reduced from 18 to 16 in the next month. This is a major constitutional change: in 1969 the UK reduced the voting age from 21 to 18: within 10 years every major polity in Europe had followed suit.

This paper presents early findings of a study of 15-year olds' views on this change, gathered through some 100+ deliberative discussion with small groups of students, on their feelings of preparedness for this change, and what they want to know about before they feel ready to vote.

The study began before it was definitely known when the policy would be implemented: a bill is now before Parliament, and likely to come into force later this year.

We have important lessons for the UK Governments on what young people feels about this – essentially welcoming the opportunity to make their voice know, but also many are apprehensive, feeling that their knowledge and understanding of the political parties is confusing and incomplete. Despite over being part of the Citizenship curriculum for over 20 years, this critically element had been overlooked.

These issues are very likely to arise in most other European states in the next decade: so far, only Malta and Austria allow 16-year-olds to vote in national elections – but if the past is a guide, almost every state in Europe will be lowering the voting age by 2035. This session might provoke much discussion on the steps that need to be taken to prepare many countries for lowering the voting age.

Keywords: Voting; 16-year-olds; practical political knowledge; controversial issues

Beginning the Civic Journey: Early Childhood Education and the Formation of Democratic Subjectivities as Constructed by Pre-Service ECCE Educators in Greece

Eleni Sotiropoulou, Zoe Konstantinidou & Maria Stamatoglou

Abstract

This paper examines how civic learning and democratic subjectivities are formed within everyday pedagogical encounters in early childhood education. Rather than positioning citizenship as a future status acquired through formal instruction, the study explores how

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

participation, dialogue, play and relational care function as contexts in which young children experience belonging, recognition and agency within institutional life. The aim is to investigate how pre-service early childhood educators interpret such experiences during their practicum and how they understand their role in enabling or constraining children's participation.

The study draws on theoretical perspectives that conceptualise citizenship as lived practice and enactment (Lister, 2003; Isin, 2008), alongside the distinction between socialisation and subjectification in education (Biesta, 2013). Methodologically, it is designed as a mixed-format survey combining closed and open-ended questions addressed to pre-service early childhood educators in Greece during their practicum placements. Participants are invited to describe and interpret critical incidents from practice, focusing on moments of participation, belonging and tensions between regulatory expectations and dialogic or play-based pedagogies.

Preliminary analysis suggests that future educators recognise participation as embedded in everyday interactions rather than formal decision-making processes. At the same time, tensions emerge between adult-centred institutional logics and relational, responsive practices that position children as contributors to collective life. These patterns indicate that civic learning in early childhood is mediated through daily pedagogical encounters and shaped by educators' professional judgement and preparation.

The paper concludes that early childhood education constitutes a key site where democratic subjectivities are enabled or constrained, contributing empirical insight to debates on civic participation, belonging and professional formation in ECCE.

Keywords: civic learning; democratic subjectivities; children's participation; early childhood education and care (ECCE); professional formation of educators

Children's Conflicts as Civic Learning Spaces in Early Childhood Education

Eleni Sotiropoulou, Maria Ntavarinou, Ariadni Nastogianni & Dimitra Drakopoulou

Abstract

Conflicts are a recurring and often intense part of everyday life in early childhood settings. They bring children into situations where they must respond to others, defend positions, negotiate meanings and attempt to restore relationships. This paper examines how such moments can be understood as spaces where early forms of justice, voice and collective life begin to take shape. Conflicts can be seen as everyday sites where children encounter difference, negotiate fairness and sustain collective life. The study focuses on how educators interpret children's conflicts and how these experiences contribute to the emergence of belonging and shared rules within the group.

The theoretical framing draws on perspectives that understand democracy as lived social practice, alongside relational and socio-cultural approaches to early childhood education. Conflict is approached as a relational event through which children encounter difference, negotiate expectations and position themselves within the group.

The study adopts a qualitative design based on semi-structured interviews with early childhood educators. Participants are invited to narrate concrete conflict episodes from their everyday practice and to describe how these situations unfolded, how children expressed their perspectives, how adults intervened and how relationships were eventually restored.

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

Preliminary insights indicate that conflicts often become moments where children test boundaries, claim voice and respond to the perspectives of others. Educators describe how rules may emerge through interaction, and how mediation, negotiation and repair processes shape children's developing sense of fairness and responsibility within the group.

Children's conflicts therefore appear not only as pedagogical challenges but also as formative experiences of social and civic life. The paper argues that everyday disagreements and their resolution constitute key sites through which democratic ways of relating begin to develop in early childhood education.

Keywords: children's conflicts; civic learning; negotiation and fairness; early childhood education (ECEC); relational pedagogy

Towards a Critical Geographical Education: Action Research, Democracy, and Active Citizenship

António Sousa Soares

Abstract

This action research, conducted at Externato de Santa Clara, aimed to analyse the impact of participation in the Critical Geography Group (NCG) on the development of critical thinking amongst students in Years 10 and 11 of the Professional Course in Tourism Technician, following one of the Competence Areas of the Student Profile at the End of Compulsory Education (PASEO). Structured as an extracurricular space, the NCG promoted an emancipatory pedagogical approach, articulating students' everyday experiences with urban, environmental, and social issues, in accordance with the competences defined by PASEO, namely observation, analysis, argumentation, and critical evaluation of geographical and social phenomena.

The theoretical framework was grounded in Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, Basil Bernstein's pedagogic rights, and the critical geography of Milton Santos and David Harvey, complemented by perspectives from Henry Giroux and Michael Young on powerful knowledge. This foundation reinforces the need to overcome hierarchical and alienating educational practices, promoting the construction of critical, ethical, and civic competences.

The research addressed central themes of the discipline, such as sustainable cities and housing, contextualising them in concrete terms close to the urban reality of the city of Porto. The qualitative methodology was based on participant observation, systematic recording of interventions, and analysis of debates.

The findings demonstrate that the NCG contributed to the expansion of critical thinking, ethical reflection, and civic awareness, consolidating the competences envisaged by PASEO and fostering citizens capable of understanding and intervening critically in social and spatial reality.

Keywords: Critical geographical education; Critical Geography; critical thinking; cities; housing

AI Training for Primary Teachers: Equity, Agency, and Classroom Practice

Willian Souza

Abstract

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into educational settings has raised significant questions about equity, teacher preparedness, and the conditions under which children may benefit from or be excluded from AI-enhanced learning opportunities. In contexts marked by unequal access to technologies, teachers' relationship with AI tools shapes, in part, the civic and learning journeys of the children in their classrooms.

This paper draws on a systematic literature review conducted as part of an ongoing doctoral research project investigating the contributions and effects of AI-focused continuing training actions for primary school teachers (1st cycle of basic education) in Portugal. Still in an early stage, this study maps the current state of knowledge on how AI training initiatives are designed, delivered, and received by teachers, as well as what the literature suggests about their effects on professional practice.

The review reveals a landscape in which research on AI training for teachers has focused predominantly on effectiveness studies, design and development studies, learning process and impact studies, and perception and experience studies, with comparatively little attention to the structural and contextual factors that shape how training translates into classroom practice.

The theoretical framework draws on perspectives from teacher education, educational technology, and the sociology of digital inequalities, attending to how structural conditions, including school territory and differential access to technological resources, shape teachers' appropriation of AI as a professional tool. These findings inform the design of an empirical study across four training centres in northern Portugal, two serving TEIP schools (Territórios Educativos de Intervenção Prioritária) and two non-TEIP, using a qualitative approach combining focus groups, participant observation, and semi-directive interviews.

This paper argues that equity and context must be central to how AI teacher training is researched, designed, and evaluated.

Keywords: teacher training, primary education, equity, digital inequalities

Navigating Civic Conceptualizations: Exploring Early Learners' Perspectives on Governance and Social Structure

Jana Stará

Abstract

Gaining insight into how contemporary primary school students conceptualize social frameworks is essential for establishing developmentally appropriate curricular targets and refining pedagogical strategies. This study delineates findings from qualitative inquiries involving primary-age students. The research highlights the significant methodological hurdles encountered when interviewing young participants, while also noting the predominantly ill-defined nature of their perceptions regarding state administration. Nevertheless, the qualitative evidence points to a latent capacity to introduce complex concepts of governance to this age group. By addressing these topics early on, educators can foster a primary awareness of societal

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

dynamics and the learner's position within them, ultimately cultivating a robust foundation for future civic engagement.

Keywords: Civic conceptualization; Early childhood education; Qualitative inquiry; Governance; Civic engagement

Flipping the Script: Tech-Driven Youth Leadership in Japan's Aging Local Communities

Kazuya Taniguchi

Abstract

In many Japanese aging communities, local neighborhood associations (Chonakai) often maintain a rigid hierarchy where senior citizens hold decision-making power, relegating youth to auxiliary roles. This structure limits the "Civic Journeys" of young people. However, this case study demonstrates how incorporating advanced technologies—Augmented Reality (AR), Generative AI, and Drones—functions as a catalyst to shift leadership and empower youth as primary civic actors.

Two specific initiatives highlight this transformation. First, a youth-led "AR Stamp Rally" was implemented for a community event. Young organizers used AR to manifest digital "ghosts" at local shops and collaborated with school teachers to create interactive "miniature teacher" avatars that shared keywords. This project required technical and creative expertise that the seniors did not possess, naturally positioning the youth as project leads.

Second, high school students in a local geology club utilized drones to conduct independent disaster-risk surveys, capturing footage of potential landslide areas. By combining this visual evidence with their own meteorological data, the students created poster presentations and engaged in direct policy advocacy with local government officials and community leaders. These examples show that technology is not merely a tool for efficiency, but a medium for redistributing social capital. When young people transition from "assistants" to "experts" who provide essential community solutions, they develop a profound sense of ownership and civic agency. This "Town Association 2.0" model suggests that bridging the digital divide can revitalize democratic participation in aging societies, allowing young people to lead their own civic journeys while strengthening the resilience of the community.

Keywords: Intergenerational Leadership Shift; Social Capital 2.0; Active Citizenship; Digital Empowerment; Town Association 2.0

Trust and Well-Being in Liquid Modernity: Mapping University Students Experiences

Rafaela Theofanopoulou, Epameinondas Panagopoulos, Anthi Adamopoulou & Ioannis Kamarianos

Abstract

The well-being of people is directly affected by trust, which is one of the fundamental elements in social interaction and the operation of institutions. Trust is considered a fundamental factor in the stability and engagement of the academic community in the university. Trust can be seen at the interpersonal level, including trust between peers and between peers and professors, and at the institutional level, including trust in the university. This study aims to measure the trust levels of the students in the university and evaluate their effects on the well-being of the students in the modern educational environment, which is characterized by “liquidity” and increased academic demands, and continuous social change. More specifically, this study aims to examine the effects of transparency in the institution and in the internal relations of the institution on the professional perceptions and resilience of the students through the lens of a professional social ecosystem, focusing on the undergraduate students of the Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work at the University of Patras, since they are the professionals of the future, responsible for promoting democratic values and social cohesion. So, this research examines the effects of transparency in the institution and internal relationships on professional views and resilience by reframing this department as a professional social ecosystem. The study uses the quantitative methodological approach, using a structured questionnaire distributed to the undergraduate population of the Department. The study aims to validate the relationship between well-being and high-trust learning environments by identifying factors that build and break trust. Therefore, it is the contention of the study that a trust-based academic journey is a fundamental antecedent to the future roles of students in field-defining disciplines such as Education and Social Work in the building of democratic social structures.

Keywords: trust; well-being; university students; liquidity

Joy Is Not an Add-On: Disrupting Trauma-Driven Black Narratives in Education

Emma Thomas

Abstract

Dominant educational discourses frequently frame Black stories through lenses of suffering, and social justice that can negatively impact children’s sense of identity, belonging, and possibility. This paper presents findings from an interdisciplinary research project that explores the civic journeys of young people through the lens of Black joy (Duncan et al, 2023), challenging deficit-based and trauma-dominated narratives that continue to shape how Black lives are represented within the curriculum. This project seeks to disrupt that framing by addressing this educational injustice (Sriprakash, 2022) through methods which centre, celebrate, and cultivate Black joy. This paper argues that centring Black joy offers a powerful counter-narrative to deficit models in education. It demonstrates how culturally responsive, arts-based pedagogies can create a powerful sense of belonging to spaces and places in the locality and contribute to children understanding more about their identities. As a possible form of culturally responsive pedagogy (Martin, 2017) this project’s methods could be used as one approach for teachers to bring Black

Individual Paper Abstracts (to be presented in situ)

joy into their classrooms, to better serve school communities. Shaped by the experiences, meaning making and voices of children from minoritised ethnicities, the findings have implications for curriculum design, teacher education, and school partnerships committed to more just and joyful educational futures.

Keywords: Black joy; young people; meaning-making; disrupting; children's voices

Social Cohesion through Critical Literacy

Sarah Whitehouse & Jane Carter

Abstract

*Recent protests and demonstrations in the UK have laid bare deep societal tensions. Often by the final years of primary education, children have constant access to news and social media through phones and other devices in the home. Children are consequently exposed to social and political rhetoric which can be divisive and problematic. Embedding critical literacy skills early and successfully has therefore never been more necessary. In this session we will explore a pilot project that used the power of creative critical literacy teaching to enable children to explore perspectives, identify opinions, analyse bias and to read laterally. Picturebooks are frequently used to develop empathy and explore sensitive themes, and our project further builds on this foundation by pairing picturebooks with real news media in a structured pedagogical approach. The project moves beyond conventional literacy instruction to help children 'read against' all sorts of texts that can shape the readers' opinions. Initial sessions used simple texts such as the early years picturebook *Rosie's Walk* to generate helpful critical questions which were then immediately applied to media texts including posts on X. The following sessions wove together the wonders of Jon Klassen's picturebooks and the challenges of Armin Greder's work with the *Daily Mail* and social media articles. Children's confidence with critical literacy thinking and meaning making is just one approach that can potentially support social cohesion (Bettis, 2024) when applied to a wide range of narratives including those in the news media.*

Keywords: Critical Literacy; Young people; Picture books; social cohesion

Developing a Citizenship Curriculum for International Students in Chinese Universities: Policies, Practices, and Implications

Zhenzhou Zhao & Xingyu Yan

Abstract

Recent protests and demonstrations in the UK have laid bare deep societal tensions. Often by the final years of primary education, children have constant access to news and social media through phones and other devices in the home. Children are consequently exposed to social and political rhetoric which can be divisive and problematic. Embedding critical literacy skills early and successfully has therefore never been more necessary. In this session we will explore a pilot project that used the power of creative critical literacy teaching to enable children to explore

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perspectives, identify opinions, analyse bias and to read laterally. Picturebooks are frequently used to develop empathy and explore sensitive themes, and our project further builds on this foundation by pairing picturebooks with real news media in a structured pedagogical approach. The project moves beyond conventional literacy instruction to help children 'read against' all sorts of texts that can shape the readers' opinions. Initial sessions used simple texts such as the early years picturebook Rosie's Walk to generate helpful critical questions which were then immediately applied to media texts including posts on X. The following sessions wove together the wonders of Jon Klassen's picturebooks and the challenges of Armin Greder's work with the Daily Mail and social media articles. Children's confidence with critical literacy thinking and meaning making is just one approach that can potentially support social cohesion (Bettis, 2024) when applied to a wide range of narratives including those in the news media.

Keywords: Citizenship; Curriculum Development; Transnational Education; University Students; International Students

Virtual Papers

The following pages contain a list of abstracts accepted for virtual paper presentations at the 27th Annual CiCea International Conference. Papers are listed alphabetically by first author surname.

Virtual Papers will also be made available on the [CiCea Youtube Channel](#) after the conference.

Embodied Beginnings: Breastfeeding, Gendered Care, and the Formation of Early Civic Subjectivities

Sarah Abutaleb

Abstract

Civic journeys are often conceptualized as beginning in adolescence, through formal citizenship education and political participation. However, this paper argues that civic subjectivities are shaped much earlier—within embodied, gendered, and socially regulated practices of care. Drawing on sociological and discourse-analytical research on breastfeeding, this study examines how maternal bodies become sites where norms of responsibility, visibility, belonging, and moral citizenship are constructed and negotiated.

Breastfeeding is not merely a biological act but a socio-political practice embedded in medical, cultural, and institutional narratives. Through these narratives, expectations of “good motherhood” are linked to moral responsibility, public legitimacy, and social value. Simultaneously, the regulation of breastfeeding in public spaces reveals underlying tensions between care, gender norms, and civic visibility. By analyzing how breastfeeding discourses shape early relational environments, this paper conceptualizes breastfeeding as a form of informal citizenship education that transmits norms about agency, dependency, inclusion, and social worth.

The findings suggest that democratic subjectivities are not formed exclusively in classrooms but emerge through early embodied experiences structured by gendered power relations. Understanding breastfeeding as a foundational site of civic formation expands the notion of citizenship education and invites a broader, intersectional perspective on how democracies are strengthened—or constrained—from the very beginning of life.

Keywords: Breastfeeding Discourses; Early Civic Subjectivity; Gendered Care; Informal Citizenship Education; Embodied Democracy

A Short "How to give a Workshop on Plato in an Educational Context"

Ioli Andreadi

Abstract

Through the exploration of Plato's Allegory of the Cave this workshop template explores the utilization of theatre and performance in an educational context. Presentation on the template focuses on ways in which participants are guided to meet the to reflect upon and perform a contemporary version of Plato's allegory of the Cave, creating a new short performance to be used as an example in an educational context, in order to encourage critical thought and collaboration skills.

Keywords: Robot citizen; A.I. rights; robot rights; citizenship; social robots

Teachers' Perspectives on the Civic Journey and Active Citizenship in Multicultural Schools

Asimina Bouchagier, Michael Katsillis, Konstantinos Georgopoulos & Julia Athena Spinthourakis

Abstract

This study investigates how primary school teachers perceive and approach active citizenship and the civic journey in their classrooms, focusing on the Central Primary School of Patras, Greece. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers to explore (a) how they understand the concept of active citizenship and students' civic development, and (b) what teaching practices they employ to promote students' civic awareness, participation, and engagement in democratic processes. The school context includes refugee students from Ukraine and migrant students from multiple countries, creating a diverse, multicultural, and multilingual learning environment. The research aims to provide insights into how educators navigate this diversity while fostering democratic values, social responsibility, and active participation through classroom activities and educational projects. By examining teachers' perceptions and approaches, this study highlights strategies for guiding students on their civic journey, helping them develop as informed, responsible, and active members of society. This study emphasizes the critical role of teachers in shaping students' civic development and in implementing inclusive, participatory learning experiences in multicultural primary classrooms.

Keywords: Robot citizen; A.I. rights; robot rights; citizenship; social robots

Children's Voice as Democratic Practice: Participation, Autonomy and Active Citizenship in Early Childhood

Afroditi Charalampous & Tryfeni Sidiropoulou

Abstract

Adopting a child-centered approach and utilizing Lundy's participation model, the study investigates the extent to which children express their opinions on issues related to their engagement with play and it explores the extent to which their right to free expression and being listened to in a meaningful way is taken into account in the family and educational context. The main assumption of the study is that listening to children is not simply the implementation of a fundamental right, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but at the same time constitutes an ethical and democratic practice that redefines the relationships between adults and children. The recognition of children as active and capable agents presupposes a shift in the pedagogical paradigm: from an emphasis on guidance and protection towards empowerment, participation and joint decision-making on issues that concern them. Emphasis is placed on early childhood as it constitutes a critical developmental stage during which the experience of expression and participation contributes decisively to the gradual formation of children as active citizens.

The research adheres to a mixed methods approach, as the actual words of 300 children are studied in combination with the views of 45 teachers and the 278 children's parents. The data analysis highlights a complex and often contradictory implementation of the children's participation rights. Although their right to their own voice is recognized in theory by parents

Virtual Paper Abstracts

and educators, in practice it is implemented within a framework of controlled participation, with age functioning as a central mechanism for regulating their autonomy. Therefore, the construction of democratic learning contexts -by parents and educators- within which children can express their views and participate in everyday situations from an early age, is key to the formation of active citizenship.

Keywords: Citizenship Education; Ault Education; Civic journeys; Educational Governance

Hong Kong Secondary School Teachers' Conceptualizing and Teaching Practices on Citizenship

Eric King-Man Chong

Abstract

This exploratory research project aims to investigate how Hong Kong secondary school teachers teach citizenship under the new senior secondary Citizenship and Society curriculum and new junior secondary Citizenship, Economics and Society curriculum, a public examination subject that leads to university admission which replaced the controversial subject of Liberal Studies. Citizenship education is important for fostering social discussion, group collaboration, patriotism, national identity, and the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" under Chinese sovereignty, as well as social integration, etc. A pilot study (n=41) conducted in autumn 2025 reveals alarming findings such as a higher percentage of teachers seldom teach students how to disagree with others and discuss solutions and possible actions. We will use an analytical framework that will draw on the scholarly literature on promoting citizenship and inclusive environment in schools, particularly in relation to the development of the skills and values of deliberation through classroom teaching. In their real-life and online interactions with others, students may encounter people whose viewpoints about interpersonal relationships or society differ from theirs. Participating in discussions with them will likely help them become more tolerant, informed, interested, and engaged. This study will attempt to gain critical evidence on the understanding and practice gap. The study will use a sequential mixed-method approach, collecting data through qualitative interviews, quantitative questionnaires, and non-participant observation.

Keywords: citizenship; conceptualization; teaching methods; inclusive school environment; mixed methods

Families, Emotions, and Twice-Exceptionality: An Overlooked Dimension

Felipe Queiroz Dias Rocha

Abstract

Twice-exceptionality, defined as the coexistence of high abilities and disabilities, has been predominantly examined through individual, cognitive, and school-based lenses. While educational responses and diagnostic challenges have received increasing attention, the role of families and the socioemotional dimension of twice-exceptionality remains comparatively

Virtual Paper Abstracts

underexplored. This gap is particularly evident in discussions concerning emotional development, self-concept, and relational dynamics beyond formal educational settings. This study draws on a qualitative documentary and theoretical analysis within a phenomenological-interpretative paradigm to examine how families are represented in the literature on twice-exceptionality and how socioemotional aspects are framed within these accounts. Peer-reviewed articles were selected through an initial iterative cycle of reading, allowing for the progressive delimitation of a corpus relevant to family dynamics and socioemotional dimensions. Building on existing research and prior analytical work, the paper explores recurrent themes related to family–school relationships, emotional tensions, and parental mediation processes. Special attention is given to constructs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and experiences of social exclusion, which frequently emerge in family narratives surrounding twice-exceptional individuals. The analysis suggests that families often occupy an ambivalent position: they can function both as protective environments that foster emotional development and advocacy, and as contexts marked by stress, uncertainty, and conflict due to diagnostic ambiguity and limited institutional support. Moreover, socioemotional needs are frequently overshadowed by deficit-oriented interpretations, reinforcing emotional vulnerability and invisibility, particularly across developmental transitions. By foregrounding the family as a central socioeducational agent, this paper highlights the need for more integrative frameworks that explicitly incorporate emotional and relational dimensions into research and practice on twice-exceptionality. Such perspectives may contribute to more responsive educational and support strategies across the lifespan.

Keywords: Children's voice; Early childhood; Active citizenship; Mixed methods

Connecting Classrooms, Building Citizens: AI-Mediated Tele-collaboration and Early Civic Agency

Maria Mont Algasilla & Melinda Dooly

Abstract

In contexts marked by declining youth engagement in public life, reimagining children's early civic journeys has become urgent. This paper presents findings from The Young Activists' Adventure, a three-month AI-enhanced telecollaborative project connecting primary education students in Spain and Nigeria. Together, the students learnt about the topic of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). A child-safe generative AI interface was used as a cognitive scaffold to refine questions, structure arguments, and help design activist messages. The project followed a cyclical design: inquiry, AI-supported preparation, synchronous intercultural encounters, multimodal campaign creation, community dissemination, and critical reflection.

This study explores how the carefully scaffolded AI-mediated interactions and activities created a guided space for reflection and supported the young learners' development of perspective-taking: Understanding that others experience the world differently. Through guided discussions of their partners' everyday lives, the learners could gain early analytical reasoning grounded in lived experience. Moreover, through telecollaborative engagement around the topic of SDG 6, the students began to develop civic learning and intercultural understanding. The project also extended the students' civic journeys by linking curriculum content (geography, sustainability, language learning) with transnational activism, embedded in real needs of both local communities, culminating in a transnational multimodal campaign advocating water awareness.

Virtual Paper Abstracts

This presentation will present data from transcriptions of in-class interaction and AI prompt logs, analyzed through discourse analysis and thematic coding. These are triangulated with student artefacts, and surveys. Findings show that the AI mediation supported longer, more elaborate civic discourse, more awareness of sociopolitical features (both theirs and their partners') and supported students in emergent prompt literacy, critical AI awareness and stereotype disruption. This study provides a framework for ethically integrating AI into citizenship education and argues that structured telecollaboration can strengthen participatory dispositions from early schooling by fostering agency, dialogue, and globally oriented civic imagination.

Keywords: Young learners; Virtual Exchange; Civic engagement; A.I.; Telecollaboration

Student Engagement, Participation, and Equity: Rethinking School as a Democratic Space

Laura Fraga, Marta Rodrigues & Paulo Moreira

Abstract

Student engagement with school is widely associated with academic success, well-being, and persistence in education. Beyond these outcomes, engagement also reflects the democratic quality of schooling experiences, revealing the extent to which students feel recognised, included, and able to participate in school life. In a context where concerns about youth disengagement and democratic participation are growing, understanding how schools foster meaningful participation becomes increasingly important. This study presents a scoping review of longitudinal studies on student engagement in primary and secondary education, developed within the European project LINEup: Longitudinal Data for Inequalities in Education. The review followed PRISMA-ScR guidelines and included studies published between 1995 and 2024 that examined school engagement or related constructs, used longitudinal or repeated cross-sectional designs, and focused on European educational contexts.

Twenty-nine studies met the inclusion criteria. Findings reveal a plurality of perspectives on engagement. While many studies describe engagement through behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, others emphasise constructs such as motivation, sense of belonging, well-being, and participation. Some approaches privilege observable indicators, including attendance and participation in school activities, whereas others highlight students' subjective experiences, such as recognition by peers and teachers and feelings of belonging. This diversity suggests that student engagement is not merely an individual attribute but a relational and contextual phenomenon shaped by social, cultural, and institutional conditions. Evidence indicates that when students feel heard, valued, and involved in school life, bonds with school are strengthened and opportunities for participation and citizenship expand. Rethinking student engagement therefore requires recognising schools as spaces where democratic participation is experienced and learned. Such a perspective contributes to understanding young people's civic journeys and highlights the role of education in promoting inclusion, equity, and democratic life.

Keywords: Student engagement; Democratic education; Civic participation; Educational equity; Youth citizenship

From Play to Participation: Inclusive Civic Learning in Public (Non-School) Spaces

Konstantinos Fragkotsinos & Stergiani Giaouri

Abstract

Citizenship education has been predominantly conceptualised and researched within formal school settings, often overlooking the civic significance of everyday public spaces. This paper argues that public playgrounds and other non-school environments function as formative sites of everyday citizenship, where children encounter participation, negotiation, recognition, and exclusion in embodied and spatially situated ways. Drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship in citizenship education, belonging, public pedagogy, spatial justice, and human ecology, this conceptual review proposes an integrative framework for understanding how informal public spaces shape children's civic agency. Rather than treating inclusion as an individual disposition or social skill, the paper conceptualises it as an emergent property of socio-material systems. Playgrounds are approached as civic ecologies composed of physical design, accessibility, implicit rules of interaction, adult mediation practices, peer cultures, and municipal governance structures. Through a critical synthesis of the relevant literature, the paper identifies four interrelated conditions that enable inclusive civic learning: (1) material accessibility and spatial design that support diverse participation; (2) symbolic recognition and the right to presence in shared spaces; (3) opportunities for rule negotiation and collaborative meaning-making; and (4) supportive adult and institutional mediation that legitimises children's voices. By reframing public play as a site of civic formation rather than mere recreation, the proposed framework extends citizenship education beyond the classroom and foregrounds the relational and ecological dimensions of belonging. The paper concludes by discussing implications for educators, municipalities, and community stakeholders seeking to cultivate inclusive civic journeys in everyday urban life. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates within citizenship education on participation, agency, and democratic inclusion in contemporary societies.

Keywords: Social-emotional competence (SEC); civic journey; citizenship education; Primary School

Tales of Refugee Children: A Civil Journey Embracing a New Culture through Kindergarten Community

Evangelia Iakovidou & I. A. Spinthourakis

Abstract

The integration of refugee children into early childhood education of a different culture can be challenging for both teachers and children. With this presentation, we will try to track how kindergarten communities can provide a supportive environment that helps refugee children to adjust to a new society.

Drawing on narratives, classroom experiences, and participatory activities, the study highlights how storytelling and shared experiences help refugee children express their identities, build relationships, and navigate cultural transitions.

Virtual Paper Abstracts

Since 2015, many refugee children arriving on the island of Chios have spent extended periods in temporary accommodation supported by NGOs before being relocated to mainland Greece. This presentation explores how the kindergarten community had supported these children during this transitional period and how they interacted with this new reality. The findings are based on qualitative observations and narrative documentation collected within a multicultural kindergarten setting.

Through collaborative storytelling, creative expression, and community-building activities, children both locals and refugees were able to interact and collaborate with one another within a safe and supportive school environment. Their acceptance into the new school environment was a challenging goal to achieve. In this process, the contribution, experience, and supportive capacity of the educators played perhaps the most significant role. In this presentation it is important to emphasize the importance of early childhood education as a safe environment for inclusion and intercultural coexistence in increasingly diverse societies.

Keywords: refugee children; kindergarten; integration; early childhood education

The Effects of Students' Peer Observation on their Feedback Literacy

Ana Mouraz

Abstract

The concept of feedback refers to how students understand and utilize feedback to support their own learning. Recent studies have examined its relationship with related concepts, such as student autonomy and self-regulated learning. Generally, educational interventions designed to improve students' feedback literacy focus on two key aspects: increasing the transparency of assessment processes and enhancing students' confidence, autonomy, and ability to manage perceptions and attitudes when receiving and providing feedback. However, little is known about how these interventions are developed in practice—particularly in relation to the connection between feedback literacy and the student power in operationalizing and applying learning assessment criteria and processes.

This proposal is a forward look to Project WAY results. Project WAY looked into a close connection between students' peer observation and self-regulated learning. If, on the one hand, peer observation can effectively develop observation, reflection, and self-analysis, promoting self-regulated learning, on the other hand, asking them to give feedback requires a feedback literacy that students will be increasingly aware. Thus, the main goal of the proposal is to analyse the effects of students' peer observation on their feedback literacy.

This paper will use data collected during project WAY duration, namely on the focus group carried out with students (aged 14 to 18) from 4 Schools that had experienced peer observation within classrooms.

The results and knowledge gained allow us to contribute to the discourse on the critical link between assessment transparency, student voice, and feedback literacy.

Keywords: citizenship education; multicultural education; philologists; democratic pedagogy; focus groups

The Representation of Gifted in the Media: The Negative Perceptions and Implications

Nilüfer Pembecioğlu

Abstract

Research on gifted or highly talented people reveals that giftedness is often viewed favorably by society. However, media narratives portray the gifted as marginalized at the extremes of society who behave erratically, disobey social norms, or fail to socialize enough and build positive relationships—even with their closest relatives. The way gifted people are portrayed in the media is a topic worth researching, even if it is not specifically stated which talent or skill is deemed superior to the widely held beliefs of other people. The depictions of the gifted often take the spotlight through their positioning in such media narratives, while the rest of the audience feels themselves in entertainment and leisure time activities in front of the media. Thus, media representation of the gifted can draw attention to such uncommon, unique individuals, yet this may ultimately lead to misconceptions. Although the media partly presents giftedness as an innate quality beyond the individual's control, it often portrays gifted individuals as angry, irritable, maladjusted, unstable, or withdrawn and uncommunicative, highlighting preconceived notions about them.

This study examines the educational stages of representations of gifted individuals in films, questioning the concepts of success and failure and how they are generally associated with gifted children. It also investigates whether the narratives objectively assess the actions and deeds of gifted children in relation to a sense of guilt or competence.

If the focus is on educational stages, issues such as teachers, school administrators, peer pressure, or classroom struggles may be highlighted. However, generally, in media narratives, the focus is not on the social, economic, physical, and emotional conditions of the gifted, but rather on their positioning as right or wrong within a social context. Consequently, the emphasis placed on the quality of representation in media narratives generally suppresses the concept of individual uniqueness

Keywords: Gifted, Media Representation, Children's Rights, Perception, Othering

Children's Digital Citizenship in the Context of Child Privacy Violations in Preschools

Nilüfer Pembecioğlu & Asli Karaarslan

Abstract

The groundwork for digital citizenship is being established at younger ages in the era of digitalization. This study examines the critical point where digital citizenship established, in which children are directly or indirectly involved, intersects with privacy violations in the context of preschool education. The study investigates how preschool institutions in different cultural and geographical regions worldwide use children's faces, identities, and daily activities for corporate promotion and marketing purposes.

Questioning the global and cross-cultural preschool samples and their analysis, this study explores how the commercial use of children's digital footprints becomes a major privacy infringement and a long-term security issue.

Virtual Paper Abstracts

This study argues that positioning preschool institutions as a means of promoting children through social media accounts fundamentally undermines their digital rights and future autonomy. The research aims to reveal these privacy violations through international examples and emphasizes the need to transform current practices into protective policies. Shifting the focus from parental consent to the fundamental rights of children regarding digital privacy, this study argues that a paradigm shift is necessary in how preschool institutions process children's data.

Keywords: Preschool, Privacy, Children and Privacy, Social Media

Social Creativity as a Resource in the Experience of Stress in the Support Staff Study Process

Sandra Rone & Māra Vidnere

Abstract

In contemporary higher education, both academic staff and students face increasing academic and professional demands that contribute to elevated stress levels. Social creativity—defined as the ability to generate original and adaptive solutions in interpersonal contexts—may function as a critical protective factor in stress regulation.

This study aimed to explore the relationship between social creativity and perceived stress among academic staff and students preparing for support staff roles (such as special educators, psychologists, and speech therapists).

The sample consisted of 70 participants (35 academic staff members and 35 students) primarily in the early adulthood stage (ages 19–25). Social creativity was measured using G. Fischer's Social Creativity Test (Cronbach's = 0.847), and stress levels were assessed using Professor Cary Cooper's Stress Self-Test (Cronbach's = 0.646). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients.

The findings revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between social creativity and perceived stress in both groups: academic staff (35) and students (35). Both groups exhibited social creativity levels categorized as "slightly above average" and generally reported low levels of perceived stress.

The results indicate that higher levels of social creativity are associated with lower stress experiences, suggesting that social creativity serves as an important psychological resource for professional development and emotional regulation within support staff education. The study emphasizes the need to integrate social creativity enhancement into the training and professional support of educational staff.

Keywords: social creativity, perceived stress, higher education, support staff education, early adulthood

Visual Literacy and Democratic Learning in Greek Early Childhood Education

Maretta Sidiropoulou & Konstantinos Karadimitriou

Abstract

Children in contemporary society grow up in highly visual environments, encountering images across educational, social, and digital contexts. The Greek preschool curriculum includes activities involving images—such as illustrating poems, representing classroom rules, creating digital cards, or using multimedia—yet these tasks remain largely fragmented and episodic. They are not organized within a coherent framework of visual literacy or visual media literacy, limiting opportunities for systematic engagement with images as tools for learning, expression, and participatory meaning-making.

This theoretical paper examines visual literacy as a foundational element for early democratic learning. Drawing on research in visual and multimodal literacies, early childhood pedagogy, and democratic education, it argues that images are not merely supportive materials but social and cultural texts that invite interpretation, dialogue, and co-construction of meaning.

Engagement with images can foster children's voice, agency, and collaborative meaning-making, enabling them to negotiate meanings collectively and encounter multiple perspectives. Building on this analysis, the paper proposes the adoption of a structured framework based on CLIP – Critical Visual Media Literacy and Empowerment in Greek preschool curricula. CLIP integrates image-based activities into a coherent pedagogy, combining critical interpretation, participatory engagement, and creative production, while fostering children's early democratic dispositions. By situating visual literacy within a systematic framework, preschool education can move beyond episodic exercises to strengthen dialogic, inclusive, and participatory learning practices from the outset of formal education.

Keywords: Experimental Method; Cultural Heritage; Interaction; Outdoor Education; School

Re-questioning Questions: Dialogical Citizenship Education Beyond Student-Generated Inquiry

Noboru Tanaka

Abstract

Student-generated questions are widely regarded as a cornerstone of dialogical and inquiry-based education. They are often associated with learner agency, engagement, and democratic participation. However, the educational and political significance of questioning itself remains under-theorised, particularly in citizenship education. This paper argues that democratic learning requires not only opportunities for students to generate questions, but also spaces in which those questions can themselves become objects of critical and collective inquiry.

Building on a relational conception of learning as an emergent effect of dialogical encounters, informed by John Dewey's reconstruction of experience, Paulo Freire's problem-posing education, and the dialogical philosophy of Philosophy for Children (P4C), the paper conceptualises questioning as a socially situated practice rather than a neutral cognitive skill. From this perspective, questions are not merely starting points for inquiry but expressions of underlying assumptions, values, and problem framings that shape how social issues are understood.

Virtual Paper Abstracts

Empirically, the paper analyses a dialogical citizenship education practice conducted in a Japanese middle school, where students engaged in a P4C-inspired Community of Inquiry focused explicitly on re-questioning their own questions. Rather than moving directly from student-generated questions to investigation or deliberation, the inquiry foregrounded collective reflection on why particular questions were posed, what perspectives they privileged or excluded, and how they framed social problems. The analysis shows how moments of discomfort, disagreement, and uncertainty functioned as generative conditions for learning, enabling students to reposition themselves in relation to contested social issues.

The findings suggest that citizenship education benefits from shifting the focus from voice and participation alone toward reflexive problematisation of inquiry itself. By treating questions as provisional, contestable, and socially embedded, dialogical education can cultivate forms of citizenship oriented not toward consensus or predefined outcomes, but toward sustained democratic engagement with ambiguity, conflict, and responsibility.

Keywords: social creativity; perceived stress; higher education; support staff; education; early adulthood

Youth Digital and Civic Journeys: Intercultural Engagement through the Yes Theory Community

Eleni Theologiti

Abstract

In contemporary digital societies, young people increasingly construct their civic identities through online environments and global digital communities. Platforms such as YouTube have evolved into spaces where cultural encounters, social interaction, and civic engagement intersect, creating new pathways for the development of digital citizenship. Within this context, the concept of the youth civic journey refers to the processes through which young individuals develop civic awareness, intercultural understanding, and forms of participation in increasingly interconnected societies.

This article explores how digital communities can shape these journeys through the case of the Yes Theory community and its guiding philosophy "Seek Discomfort". Initially created as a series of videos by a group of young creators on YouTube, Yes Theory gradually evolved into a global community where participants connect, organize meetups, collaborate on community projects, and develop long term interpersonal relationships. These interactions create opportunities for intercultural exchange, shared experiences, and the development of social and intercultural capital among young people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The study investigates how participation in such digital communities contributes to the formation of digital citizenship and influences young people's attitudes toward diversity, belonging, and civic participation. In particular, it examines whether community driven initiatives and intercultural encounters within the Yes Theory network can foster forms of civic awareness and engagement that extend beyond traditional educational or institutional contexts.

Despite the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping youth identities and social interactions, limited research has examined how informal digital communities contribute to civic learning and intercultural engagement. For this reason, the present study investigates the Yes Theory community as a case study in order to better understand how digitally mediated

interactions and global community projects may influence the civic journeys of young people and contribute to emerging forms of digital and intercultural citizenship in the twenty first century.

Keywords: Feedback literacy; Peer observation

Shaping Civic Identities through Language and Literature: Philology Teachers' Conceptions of Citizenship in Multicultural Contexts

Kostis Tsioumis & Konstantina Iliopoulou

Abstract

This study explores how in-service secondary education philologists in Greece conceptualize and enact citizenship education through the teaching of language, literature, and history within multilingual and multicultural school contexts. Rather than approaching citizenship as a static curricular mandate, the research examines how educators interpret and transform the National Curriculum (APS) into pedagogical practices that foster democratic values, critical literacy, and intercultural awareness.

Adopting a qualitative design, the study draws on data generated through focus group discussions with practicing philologists. The aforementioned methodology enabled the articulation of collective professional experiences and facilitated critical reflection on instructional choices. Discussions were structured around three interconnected axes: (a) the pedagogical translation of curriculum guidelines, (b) the critical selection and adaptation of textbook materials alongside development of original worksheets, and (c) the implementation of student-centered and participatory strategies, including collaborative learning and alternative assessment practices. Data were generated through three focus group sessions, each comprising five in-service philologists with varied teaching experience in diverse school contexts. Detailed field notes were taken during and immediately after each session and were subsequently organized and analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, convergences, and emerging thematic categories.

Findings indicate that participants perceive citizenship as a dynamic and dialogical process shaped by linguistic practices, historical interpretation, and engagement with literary narratives. Teachers emphasized the importance of fostering inclusive classroom environments supporting students' sense of belonging, particularly in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. However, discussions revealed tensions between homogenizing narratives embedded in official curricular materials and the need for more pluralistic and intercultural pedagogical approaches. By foregrounding teachers' collective professional voice, this study underscores the central role of the humanities in shaping civic identities within multilingual and multicultural classrooms and argues that reflective engagement with philological disciplines and participatory methodologies can meaningfully strengthen democratic culture in contemporary secondary education.

Keywords: Citizenship education; Public playgrounds; Civic agency; Belonging; Spatial inclusion

The Rights of Young People as a Tool for Cultivating Citizenship: Insights from the Greek Experience

Kostis Tsioumis & Chrysanthi Tsioumi

Abstract

The term of citizenship is not exclusively legal status, but also a behavior of active participation and political dialogue. Young people constitute a crucial group among citizens, because they transition from the typical to the substantial citizenship. The purpose of the presentation is the scrutiny of the effect that the rights of young people may have to citizenship development and the citation of examples originating from the Greek experience, emphasizing on youth councils. Individual, political and social rights are fundamental guarantees for all citizens, but specifically for young people, they are crucial for citizenship development, which will form active citizens. These rights aid young people to develop also political socialization, by raising their awareness for politics and society function, and enhance democratic education, because young people comprehend the values of democracy. In this context, emphasis is placed on youth councils, which are representative groups of young people that are active at the local level by participating in the decision-making processes of local government. In Greece, these municipal committees take initiatives on issues such as culture, employment, and social inclusion, operating an advisory role to municipalities. However, in many cases they have limited responsibilities and their proposals are not always implemented, while the participation of young people is often low. Nevertheless, they contribute significantly to strengthening citizenship, as they encourage active participation in public affairs and the development of social and political awareness. Five in depth semi-structured interviews with current and former members of youth councils will be used to explore how this participation contributes to active citizenship and to the empowerment of citizen identity.

Keywords: youth councils; active citizenship; democratic participation; citizenship education; qualitative research

Critical Consciousness and Critical Citizenship: Educational Practices in the Citizenship Education Course

Theodoros Vavitsas, Athina Sevi & Julia Athena Spinthourakis

Abstract

In this paper, we will attempt to highlight the significance of the concept of critical consciousness (conscientização), developed by Paulo Freire, through the lens of the pedagogical practice (praxis) of Citizenship taught in the fifth and sixth grades of Greek Primary Schools. More specifically, we are investigating the enhancement and cultivation of “critical citizenship”, which is the basis for the development of the critical citizen, in the education field. Based on Paulo Freire’s theory, we will contrast the “banking” concept of education with a dialogical education, which connects the school with social problems and aims to shape citizens oriented towards social justice. Using critical analysis of the existing Citizenship curricula as a methodological tool, we will call attention to the fact that the concept of critical consciousness (conscientização), as used by Paulo Freire, does not aim to the transformation of individual consciousness, but to the formation of a “collective subject”, who, through interpreting the world and developing dialogue, can shape “collective action”, necessary for social transformation and the

Virtual Paper Abstracts

emancipation of the subject. Thus, within this framework, the concept of the “critical citizen” is understood in the context of “collective action”, able to promote values such as solidarity, empathy and social justice. Finally, we will attempt to emphasize, through the “cracks” that emerge from the dominant curriculum, educational practices that direct at a liberating direction, featuring those elements on which the cultivation of the critical citizen can be based.

Keywords: Critical consciousness; critical citizenship; Citizenship Education; Conscientização

Children’s social-emotional competence supporting citizenship education. A study to 5th and 6th graders of a Primary School in Glyfada, Athens.

Eirini Vegianni, Kazila Xristothea & Ntalís Stylianos

Abstract

The issues our world faces today are interconnected and thus require a united effort from us as we make our way through our civic journey. Thus, in this globally connected world we now live, people have the need for certain skills, in order to positively engage with those connections. As schools aim to foster future global citizens and support their civic journey towards this end, children’s social-emotional competence (SEC) should be considered as a major factor that supports citizenship education. Social-emotional competence is a set of skills that makes someone achieve goals, understand and manage emotions, build empathy, forge relationships and make responsible decisions and can be applied by teaching students of any age. In this study 5th and 6th graders (N=69) of a Primary School in Glyfada, a region in the southern suburbs of Athens, were given specific experiential activities that had to do with their social-emotional competence. By measuring it with a social-emotional competence questionnaire, it was found that their SEC was higher after doing those activities. Finally, after analyzing the characteristics of active citizenship, using the method of brainstorming, students were asked to work in teams and discuss how each sector of social-emotional competence affects citizenship and their own civic journey. The aspects they expressed showed that they fully recognize that an active citizen should necessarily have his/her social-emotional competence developed effectively.

Keywords: Digital Citizenship; Civic Engagement; Intercultural Competence; Online Communities; Participatory Education

Symposia, Workshops, Round Tables, and Posters

The following pages contain a list of abstracts accepted for symposia, workshops, round tables, and posters to be presented in situ during the 27th Annual CiCea International Conference. Symposia abstracts are listed in submission order.

Symposium: Unspoken Memory and Civic Agency: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Inherited Ruptures in Contemporary Society

György Csepeli, Márk Attila Edelényi, Linda Kalocsai-Kopanyicza, Károly Ádám Búza & Ivetta Délczegh

Abstract

The mental well-being of young people in Hungary has consistently ranked among the lowest in the European Union, accompanied by increasing loneliness, weakening social ties, and declining interpersonal and institutional trust (Egyensúly Institute, 2026). While these challenges are widely discussed in relation to social change and institutional factors, less attention has been paid to a structural dimension identified by our research group: the role of generationally transmitted historical experiences that remain implicit, fragmented, and silenced, yet continue to shape young people's perceptions of trust, belonging, and social agency. Rather than focusing primarily on individual attitudes or institutional factors, the approach examines how socially operative layers of unresolved, historically rooted collective experiences influence moral orientations, emotional responses, and perceived possibilities for action among younger generations.

The panel presents an interdisciplinary research perspective that explores how these hidden layers become visible across different social contexts relevant to citizenship education. The first contribution conceptualizes the Dark Lake and its implications for understanding the relationship between historical experience and civic agency. The second examines the civic and moral implications of transgenerational Holocaust memory. The third investigates how professionals working with socially marginalized and self-harming youth interpret culturally and historically embedded vulnerabilities and how these interpretations shape possibilities for social integration. The fourth analyses how digital environments mediate collective memories and conflicts, influencing trust, reality perception, and engagement with public issues. The central argument of the panel is that fragmented and unprocessed collective experiences can constrain civic participation by reinforcing uncertainty, emotional withdrawal, and limited agency. Addressing these hidden dimensions through reflective and context-sensitive approaches may support more coherent civic learning pathways. Integrating trauma-sensitive perspectives into citizenship education can contribute to strengthening critical reflection, dialogue, and democratic participation among young people in complex and polarized social environments.

Symposium Keywords: Collective Trauma; Silenced and Fragmented Memory; Transgenerational Memory; Marginalised Youth; Digital Public Sphere

Symposium Paper 1: Approaches to the Dark Lake Through Massively Induced Quantum Collapses

Márk Attila Edelényi

Abstract

The present review proposes to list and analyze some trauma related opinion polls, carried out under different historical circumstances representing divergent ideological regimes: socialism and capitalism, in Hungary. The main aim is to appreciate how opinion and opinion polling changed through time in relation to centrally relevant historical traumas and to other mayor collective traumas. Through this evaluation the objective is to see the related, trauma formed,

Symposia

dark lake and its changes. This assessment thus seeks to understand what impact quantitative research can have on the dark lake and also how this interference may modify the dark lake's general social impact.

Symposium Paper 2: Embodied Trauma and Epigenetic Pathways of Unspoken Memory

Linda Kalocsai-Kopanyicza

Abstract

This presentation introduces the methodological framework of a planned interdisciplinary research project examining bodily manifestations of trauma in relation to historically transmitted and cognitively inaccessible experiences. Focusing primarily on women's embodied experiences, the study explores how unresolved collective and familial traumas may appear through physical symptoms, stress-related patterns, and historically recurring bodily expressions. The paper discusses whether epigenetic approaches may provide new methodological possibilities for identifying trauma-related patterns among younger generations, including cases in which individuals have no conscious awareness of inherited experiences. The presentation argues that combining trauma-sensitive qualitative interpretation with emerging epigenetic perspectives may contribute to understanding the hidden social transmission of unresolved historical trauma.

Symposium Paper 3: Digital Environments, Trust, and Civic Perception

Károly Ádám Búza

Abstract

Drawing on digital ethnographic observations, this paper examines how online environments shape young people's engagement with historically rooted collective experiences. Platforms circulate emotionally charged and fragmented representations of past conflicts and grievances, often outside coherent narrative frameworks, contributing to uncertainty and declining institutional trust. At the same time, digital spaces create new points of access where implicit and previously silenced experiences become visible and shareable. These environments therefore both intensify fragmentation and open possibilities for recognition. The findings point to the need for citizenship education approaches that scaffold contextualisation, critical interpretation, and guided dialogue, angling fragmented digital encounters to become resources for reflective meaning-making and informed civic engagement.

Symposium Paper 4: The Civic Journeys of Conflict-Driven Mobility: Transnational Trauma and Fragmented Belonging

Ivetta Délczegh

Abstract

This paper examines how transnationally circulating trauma shapes the civic orientations of Russian and Ukrainian youth living in Serbia following the war in Ukraine. Using the Trauma Mapping framework, the study explores how fragmented historical narratives, collective emotions, and digitally mediated experiences influence perceptions of trust, belonging, and civic participation. Methodologically, the research combines netnography, semi-structured interviews, and contextual analysis, extending the empirical field beyond the local Serbian context into transnational digital spaces. The findings suggest that polarized online environments and competing narratives contribute to uncertainty and cautious engagement with public life, while transnational online communities may provide alternative spaces of identification and selective participation. The paper argues that unresolved and insufficiently reflected collective experiences may remain socially operative when they persist within the domain of implicit and unreflected collective memory.

Workshops

Workshop: Co-Creating the European Space for Citizenship Education

Peter Cunningham, Andy Mycock, & Sofia A. Santos

Abstract

The European Space for Citizenship Education (ESCE) is a Council of Europe initiative that aims to contribute to fostering democratic values and principles for Education for Democratic Citizenship, and advancing quality through innovation practices in formal and non-formal educational settings in Europe, across the lifespan. This chimes with the aims of Cicea, and with the theme of this conference – Building Young People’s Civic Journeys: Strengthening Democracies through Citizenship Education. This focus reflects current concerns and the need to address democratic backsliding and polarisation, and declines in civic participation; the need to reaffirm commitment to shared principles and stronger democratic cultures; and the need for deeper collaboration between states, educators, young people, NGOs, and civil society.

In more detail, the ESCE is built on three pillars: Principles (rooted in Council of Europe standards that emphasise democracy, inclusion, pluralism, and human rights); Quality (developing a European quality framework that aims to support innovation and reflective practice, and build capacity for effective citizenship learning); and Cooperation (encouraging multi stakeholder dialogue, facilitating cross border collaboration, and supporting a European community of practice). Conference offers great opportunity to advance this agenda, drawing on delegates expertise and experience in the field of citizenship education research and practice, from a range of academic disciplines, geographical contexts (both within and beyond Europe), and practice settings (both formal and non-formal).

The workshop will involve participants working collaboratively in small groups to explore from their own perspective, what “quality citizenship education” means in practice; to generate ideas to strengthen cooperation across sectors and countries; and discuss when, how, and where citizenship education is provided, and ideas to build a stronger Civic Journey with citizenship education at its core. A plenary session will gather key messages in relation to quality criteria, cooperation needs, and civic pathways. It is envisaged that the work of all small groups will contribute to a workshop report, and that this will be a useful resource to help advance the aims of the ESCE.

Keywords: European Space, Democratic Values, Formal & Informal Educational Spaces

Workshop: Humanising Citizenship Education: Tuning Relational Practice

Roy Smith

Abstract

Experiences and understandings of citizenship vary widely, as do approaches to citizenship education. Formal approaches that emphasise legal rights, institutions, and responsibilities can appear abstract to young people, particularly when these discussions seem disconnected from their everyday lives. When this happens, young people may feel alienated from civic learning and disengage from democratic processes. Yet young people encounter questions of justice, belonging, and authority regularly in their interactions with others. These experiences often shape their developing ideas of citizenship more powerfully than formal instruction.

Drawing on research into youth participation and democratic socialisation, this workshop explores the relational conditions that support experiential forms of citizenship learning. Using

Workshops

the metaphor of “tuning,” participants will examine how different aspects of educational practice influence democratic learning environments. These include levels of formality, authority and direction, the role of educator expertise, approaches to knowledge and communication, and the values and attitudes that shape interaction.

Participants will analyse short scenarios drawn from research and practice, experimenting with different “tunings” of these elements to explore how changes in relational practice affect the educational experience. While there may be no single ideal tuning, this exercise encourages reflection on how educators shape the conditions in which democratic learning occurs. The workshop aims to generate insights relevant to the practice and training of teachers, youth workers, and others involved in citizenship education. By “tuning” relational approaches to education, participants are invited to consider how humanising education may create the conditions through which democratic citizenship is experienced rather than simply explained.

Keywords: Citizenship Education; Democratic Socialization; Youth Participation; Relational Practice; Experiential Learning

Round Table: How Citizenship Education Issues are Seen in a World That Seems to be Undergoing Fundamental Transformation

János Gyóri, Julia A. Spinthourakis, Peter Cunningham, Liliana Jacott Jimenez; Kerry J. Kennedy; Henry Maitles; & Sarah Whitehouse

Abstract

The main objective of the European Union's The BRiDGE project (2023-1-LT01-KA220-HED-000158095), which ran from 2023 to 2025, was to bring educational research, education policy and practice closer together in order to improve both research and practice. An important element of achieving this objective was the creation of two thematic journal issues within the framework of the project in the European Journal of Education Policy and Practice. In the 2026/2 issue of the journal, under the title "From broad perspectives to specific programs: How citizenship education issues are seen in a world that seems to be undergoing fundamental transformation", 7 studies were published, covering the most important contemporary topics of citizenship education.

Our round table section will be chaired by János Gyóri, the guest editor of the thematic volume, and the authors expected to participate in the introductory discussion include Julia Athena Spinthourakis, who was the co-editor of the Editorial of the issue together with the guest editor, as well as Peter Cunningham, Liliana Jacott, Kerry J. Kennedy, Henry Maitles and Sarah Whitehouse.

The section focuses on the question that is also the subtitle of the thematic issue of the journal: how citizenship education is seen in a world that seems to be undergoing fundamental transformation

Keywords: Round Table, Citizenship Education, Changing World, Fundamental Transformation

Poster: The Integration of Refugees and Migrants in Greek Education.

Georgia Sengouni

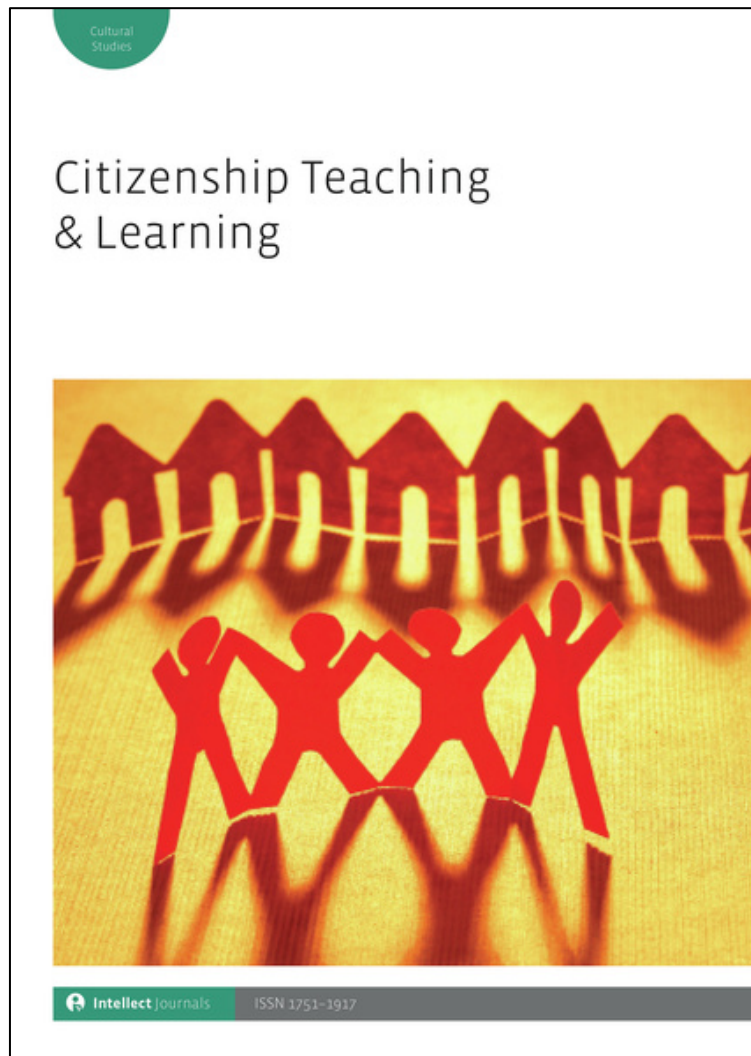
Abstract

Throughout the years, many countries have accepted within their society's persons seeking a different 'home' and doing so by leaving their home countries. Whether they are refugees or immigrants, the reasons they have left vary and, in many cases, determine the status by which they will be received in the countries to which they come. Their 'new' status also plays into not only how they are greeted, but also what services they will be offered and more fundamentally how these services will enable them to become active and productive citizens in their new homes.

In the case of Greece, refugees and immigrants constitute a significant population group in Greek society. The reasons that lead individuals to leave their country of origin and settle in another vary considerably. A central focus of academic research concerns the extent to which these population groups succeed on integrating into Greek society. Within this context, the Greek state has introduced legislative measures aimed at facilitating this integration. The purpose of the present study is to identify the actions implemented by the Greek state to promote the integration of refugees and migrants into Greek education and, by extension, into Greek society.

Keywords: Integration; Refugees; Immigrants; Greek Education; Reception Classes

Citizenship Teaching and Learning



Citizenship Teaching & Learning is global in scope, exploring issues of social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. It is a double-blind peer reviewed journal that advances academic and professional understandings within a broad characterization of education, focusing on a wide range of issues including identity, diversity, equality and social justice within social, moral, political and cultural contexts.

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