Readiness of Prospective Primary School Teachers to Teach Education for Democratic Citizenship

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present the results of the research on readiness of prospective primary school teachers to teach Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC). The paper presents a review of the development of the idea of EDC as well as some key differences in the implementation of EDC. The paper also presents the results of the research carried out on a sample of prospective primary school teachers in their second and final years of study at the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb (N = 137). The results have shown that students estimate that they have a low level of proficiency in the context of implementation of Education for Democratic Citizenship, while they consider that the level of their proficiency in the role of a teacher in planning and implementing EDC is somewhat higher. Although students evaluate their proficiency in the context of citizenship as quite low, they think that it is necessary to introduce it as a school subject. The results also imply the need for systematic education of prospective primary school teachers for EDC.

Key words: *competences; context of implementation; Education for Democratic Citizenship; prospective primary school teachers; teacher's role.*

Introduction

The term "citizen" has been defined in different ways throughout the history. In ancient Greece the citizen was any individual who "ruled and was ruled by someone". In Rome, a citizen was a person who had citizens' rights and liberties, while citizens in the Middle Ages were considered to be all residents of free cities who had all the

rights and liberties: labour, trade and property. Throughout history, citizens have acquired citizenship rights such as right to freedom of speech, right to own property and, in the 19th century, political rights (Diković, 2012). But as well as gaining rights, citizens gained responsibilities as individuals for the welfare of the wider community. In the European context, due to the diverse languages and context it is not easy to find a single definition of what a citizen is. What is common to all definitions is that "the citizen is always a co-citizen, somebody who lives with others" (Audigier, 2000, p. 17). Due to the fact that a citizen is a member of society or a community he/she has the rights and duties in democratic society (Audigier, 2000).

Today the term "citizen" is used to define all people living in a certain state, no matter if they are residents or non-residents. In the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) many rights have been stated that a person acquires by birth. The human rights important for this paper are the right to education (Art. 26) and the right to nationality (Art. 15). If nationality is defined as a specific long-lasting legal relation between the state and an individual (citizen), that defines the rights and responsibilities of the state as well as the individual. Therefore, we can see that it is of crucial importance to educate the youth about their rights and responsibilities since "a citizen is something that you become, not something that you are born with" (Mićanović, 2010, p. 20).

Education for Democratic Citizenship

It has already been mentioned that there is no universal definition of the term citizen, and there is no universal definition of Education for Democratic Citizenship either. As the social contexts change, so does the definition and understanding of and human rights education. Some authors believe that Education for Democratic Citizenship should focus on political education in school, and be differentiated from human rights education or peace education. It is not only in Croatia that we find issues in defining the term Education for Democratic Citizenship, which has been implemented in our school system since 1999, but in other countries as well. For example, in the UK, the terms *'civics'* and *'citizenship'* coexisted in the educational discourse at the end of the 19th century, but gained educationalists' attention at the end of the 20th century, during discussions on political education. *Civics* became a synonym for methodologically conservative political education that aims to present facts, while *citizenship* became a synonym for methodologically progressive education that aims to present facts, but also to develop skills and democratic values and attitudes (Doolan, 2005). In the UK schools "*citizenship*" is nowadays taught as a separate subject or a cross-curricular topic, as an equivalent to the curriculum for *Građanski odgoj i obrazovanje* in Croatia. In the neighbouring Slovenia it has been called *Citizenship, Homeland Education and Ethics* since 2008/2009, although it used to be called *Citizenship Education and Ethics* Devjak, Blažić & Devjak, 2009. Brett et al. (2009) state that citizenship education prepares and empowers pupils for living and acting in democratic society.

Education for Democratic Citizenship is most frequently defined as "…*preparation of people for active inclusion in the questions and issues of political community, that is, realisation of the role of the citizen, his/her attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for political participation*" (Batarelo, Čulig, Novak, Reškovac & Spajić-Vrkaš, 2010, p. 15). The goal of is to empower students to become active, informed and responsible citizens. Those citizens are aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, informed about the social and political world they live in and oriented towards the welfare of others, not only their own, are able to act and influence society and are active in the local community and responsible for their actions. White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue *"Living Together as Equals in Dignity"* (2008) states that:

"…Education for democratic citizenship is fundamental to a free, tolerant, just, open and inclusive society, to social cohesion, mutual understanding, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and solidarity, as well as equality between men and women… Education for democratic citizenship involves *inter alia* civic, history, political and human rights education, education on the global context of societies, and on cultural heritage. It encourages multidisciplinary approaches and combines the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes – particularly the capacity for reflection and self-critical disposition necessary for life in culturally diverse societies." (CoE, 2008, p. 44).

Education for Democratic Citizenship has so far in Europe been implemented as a separate subject, that can be elective or obligatory, integrated in the subjects such as Social Studies, History, Religion, Ethics, Philosophy, Geography, Languages or as a cross-curricular topic.

Civic competence is recognised as one of the 8 key competences and defined as:

"Civic competence is based on the knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights, including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations and how they are applied by various institutions at the local, regional, national, European and international levels. It includes knowledge of contemporary events, as well as the main events and trends in the national, European and world history. In addition, an awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements should be developed. Knowledge of European integration and of the EU's structures, main objectives and values is also essential, as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe." (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning, 2006/962/EC).

Audiger (2000) states two main classifications of the key competences associated with democratic citizenship. The first one includes three broad categories of competences: cognitive competences, affective competences and those connected with the choice of values and connected with action. The second classification distinguishes four dimensions of citizenship; dimensions which are based on the analysis of life in society. These dimensions are: political and legal, social, cultural and economic (Audigier, 2000).

If we analyse the goals of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) as stated in the National Curriculum for Education for Human Rights (1999) and National Curriculum Framework (2011), we can see that the goals are almost the same. However, the only thing that has changed is the social context. Now, we find our society facing Europe and European values, while a few years ago, after the Homeland War, we were focused on building our identity. If we were to condense the aims of EDC, we would get four broad goals:

– focus on developing political literacy
– developing critical thinking and analytical skills
– developing values, attitudes and behaviour such as tolerance, respect, solidarity, etc.
– encouragement for active participation in school and community (Eurydice, 2012).

National Curriculum Framework (2011) states the following outcomes of EDC in primary education: develop knowledge, skills and attitudes about dimensions of civic competence; aim to enable students for cooperation; develop communication skills; acknowledge students' strong points and according to them ensure success in further education; develop self-respect and respect for others and the different; develop ethical skills about justice, solidarity, equity, respect for other people's and your own work. The role of the teacher is maieutic; he/she leads the pupil to create his/her own conclusions, based on their own questions, answers and experience.

Table 1

Areas of EDC and teacher competences (Brett et al., 2009)

Area	Teacher competence
Knowledge and understanding of EDC	Accepting the ideas of EDC
Planning Classroom management Teaching and assessment	Experimenting with the proposed classroom activities, implementing controversial and relevant topics
Partnership and community work	Planning the lessons that include partners from the community
Implementation and evaluation of the approach	Remaining open-minded and reflexive

Generally, competences necessary for EDC/HR education are:
– knowledge (knowing what);
– attitudes and behaviours (being aware of how we act in the context and why);
– dispositions (being open to change, feeling motivation);
– procedural skills (knowing how to do);
– cognitive skills (processing information, critical thinking and critical analysis);
– experiential skills (to know how to react and adapt to the basis of previous knowledge, social skills) (Bret et al., 2009, p. 15).

Considering the need for the implementation of Education for Democratic Citizenship and keeping in mind the complexity of content and teaching methods of EDC, this research tried to identify the readiness of prospective primary school teachers to teach EDC.

Methodology
Aim

The aim of the research was to determine how well students (prospective primary school teachers) know the context of the implementation of Education for Democratic Citizenship and the role that a teacher has in this process (know-how), as well as their self-perceived competence for implementing Education for Democratic Citizenship in primary education. The research tried to discover if there were differences in the perceived knowledge and understanding of the context of implementation and the teacher's role, as well as the overall self-perceived competence according to the year of the study and the area of specialisation that students have chosen.

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant difference in the students' knowledge about the context of implementing EDC and the role of the teacher according to their year of study.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant difference in the students' knowledge about the context of implementing EDC and the role of the teacher according to their study programme.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant difference in the students' self-perceived readiness to implement EDC according to their year of study.

Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant difference in the students' self-perceived readiness to implement EDC according to their study programme.

Sample and Procedure

During regular classes, 137 students currently enrolled at the Department for Teacher Education, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb (Croatia), participated in this research. Their participation was anonymous and on voluntary basis, in line with ethical standards. Students were in their 2nd (N=69) and 5th years of study (N=68). The Department of Teacher Education currently has two study programmes: Programme for primary school teachers (programme 903) and Programme for primary school teachers and English/German as a foreign language (835). Within the common core of the study programme 903 there is an option for students to acquire additional competences in Croatian, Arts, ICT and Educational studies (modules). Students who opt for programme 835 acquire 88 ECTS points in

Table 2

Demographic characteristics of the sample

Study programme and modules	N 2nd year	N 5th year
English as a foreign language	16	15
German as a foreign language	2	5
Croatian language	14	11
ICT	14	13
Arts	11	12
Educational sciences	12	12
Total	**69**	**68**

English/German and are qualified to work as foreign language teachers in primary education. Both programmes last 10 semesters/5 years and students acquire 300 ECTS points and earn qualification level (Domović & Cindrić, 2009). Students enrolled in all of the programmes were a part of this sample.

Instrument

A translated and adjusted questionnaire "*How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: a framework for development of competences*" (Brett, Mompoint-Gaillard, & Slema, 2009) was applied in this research. The first part of the questionnaire collects demographic data (year of study, module/programme that a student is attending); the second part lists statements which are related to knowledge about the goals and the purpose of Education for Democratic Citizenship, key international framework and the need of implementation of Education for Democratic Citizenship. The third part examines the knowledge of teaching activities, basic ideas and methods of cooperation in the community, prevention of discrimination, and organisation of environment through multiple sources of knowledge. The students were asked to retrospectively rate the level of agreement with the statements regarding certain parental behaviours (15 items) on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The fourth part of the questionnaire examines the students' self-perceived competence in Education for Democratic Citizenship (on a 1-5 scale) and an open-ended question about ideas on further development and implementation of Education for Democratic Citizenship. The research was conducted in May 2012.

Results and Discussion

The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) test and Barlett's test (χ^2= 1316.68; P<0.05 = 0) proved the questionaire to be valid for factor analysis. According to factor loadings, two factors were recognised and named as: *context of EDC and teacher's role in EDC*. Context of EDC is saturated with statements on aims, purpose, international framework and the need for the implementation of EDC. *Teacher's role in EDC* explains autonomous work of the teacher, ability to organise educational process, cooperation with the community and evaluation of the process. Cronbach α coefficient is (α1 = 0.9; α2 = 0.89). The factor analysis explained 63% of total variance (Table 3).

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of the Context of EDC and Teacher's role in EDC

Factors	M	Min	Max	Var.	N	α
Context of EDC	2.063	1.803	2.482	0.059	7	0.912
Teacher's role in EDC	3.17	2.672	3.613	0.111	8	0.89

Further analysis showed that students estimate that they have better knowledge of the teacher's role in EDC (M=3.17; α=0.912) than of the Context of EDC (M=2.063; α=0.89). They report to have better knowledge about the forms of cooperative learning and using multiple sources of knowledge, prevention of discrimination and assessing

and evaluating pupils. These findings can be interpreted as a result of their overall education at the Faculty of Teacher Education, since the students learn about this in different pedagogical and methodological courses. So, these results should not be correlated directly to the concrete content of EDC. Still, these results can imply that there is a need for a course for future teachers that would provide knowledge and information about the wider context of EDC and specific pedagogical and methodological needs of EDC.

The research attempted to determine if there is a difference in the assessment of factors according to the students' year of study (Table 4).

Table 4

Differences in self-assessment of knowledge about the Context of EDC and the Teacher's role in EDC according to the year of study

Factors	Study year	N	M	Σ ranks	z	p
Context of EDC	2nd year	69	72.27	4986.5	-0.974	0.33
	5th year	68	65.68	4466.5		
Teacher's role in EDC	2nd year	69	67.59	4664	-0.418	0.67
	5th year	68	70.43	4789		

The results show that there is a significant difference in the percieved knowledge about the context and the teacher's role in EDC. Fifth-year students assess their knowledge of the context of implementation of EDC to be significantly lower than second-year students. The results do not confirm the first hypothesis. Although not significantly, fifth-year students estimate their knowledge of the teacher's role as more positive than second-year students. The reason for these results can be found in the organisation of the teacher education programme that ensures theoretical and pedagogical courses to be taught in the first three years of study, with the focus on methodological courses in the last two years of study (Red predavanja UFZG, 2012/2013). The research attempted to determine if there are differences in the assessment of factors according to the module/programme that students attend (Hypothesis 2).

The Kruskal-Wallis test (Table 5) confirmed that there are differences between specific programmes that students attend.

Students studying Primary teacher education and English as a foreign language perceive their knowledge of the context of EDC and the role of the teacher as more negative than the rest of the students, while students studying Primary teacher education and German as a foreign language perceive their knowledge of the context of EDC and the role of the teacher as more positive than the rest of the students. It is interesting to point out that the biggest difference has been found between these two groups of students when we take into consideration the fact that the Foreing language teacher academic framework has been developed as a part of the Tempus project CD-18049-2003: *Foreign language at primary level: training of teachers*. The competence model teacher competences are categorised in two broad areas: subject specific and general education competences. Subject specific competences include linguistic,

socio-linguistics and pragmatic competences, as well as intercultural competences that ensure understanding of different cultures, intercultural understanding, tolerance and understanding that language and culture are inseparable (Vizek Vidović, 2009). It is clear that these competences contain elements of civic competence. The results confirm Hypothesis 2 but also imply the need for harmonising study programmes according to the expected competences of prospective teachers.

Table 5

Differences in self-assessment of knowledge about the Context of EDC and the Teacher's role in EDC according to the study programme

	Programme/module	N	Mean Rank	χ^2	p
Context of EDC	English as a foreign language	31	53.24	13.362	0.02
	German as a foreign language	7	100.07		
	Croatian language	25	78.72		
	ICT	27	60.04		
	Arts	23	71.8		
	Educational sciences	34	77.56		
	Total	137			
Teacher's role in EDC	English as a foreign language	31	48.08	11.329	0.045
	German as a foreign language	7	80.07		
	Croatian language	25	76.08		
	ICT	27	74.09		
	Arts	23	74.04		
	Educational sciences	34	74.85		
	Total	137			

Since EDC was supposed to be implemented as a specific school subject in schools in 2011, and has been implemented in some schools as an experimental programme since 2012, with the goal of being implemented in all schools in the school year 2014/2015, it was important to find out how students perceive the level of their competence for implementing EDC in the classroom (Table 6). The results show that prospective teachers perceive that they are mostly not competent for implementing EDC in the classroom (M=2.3). These results imply a need for further research on the developed competence on a larger sample and, if necessary, changes in teacher education programmes.

The results did not confirm Hypothesis 3 and there are no significant differences between the students' self-perceived competence for implementing EDC in the classroom according to the year of study.

Table 6

Self-perceived competence for implementing EDC in the classroom according to the year of study

	Year	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	Z	p
Self-perceived competence for implementing EDC in the classroom	2nd year	69	71.06	4903	-0.649	0.516
	5th year	68	66.91	4550		

The results did not confirm Hypothesis 4 and there are no significant differences between the student's self-perceived competence for implementing EDC in the classroom according to the programme (Table 7).

Table 7

Difference between the level of self-perceived competence for implementing EDC in the classroom

Study programme	N	Mean Rank	χ^2	p
English as a foreign language	31	55.06		
German as a foreign language	7	91.29		
Croatian language	25	72.92		
ICT	27	61.22	10.561	0.061
Arts	23	78.3		
Educational sciences	24	76.25		
Total	137			

There can be different reasons for these results. They can partially be interpreted by the developed self-criticism of the fifth-year students for implementing EDC at the time of strong public debate, but they still imply insufficient education at the university level of prospective teachers in the area of EDC. What needs further attention is the fact that the level of perceived competence does not seem to be better with the students of the fifth year of their study. Similar results have been found in the research by Diković (2012) on a sample of 225 in-service teachers in the county of Istria who implement EDC in their work. Most of the in-service teachers perceived themselves to be moderately competent for implementing EDC. It is interesting to know that when answering the question *Where did you find out about the term EDC?* with the possibility of multiple choices, the teachers' answers were as follows: 2 teachers found out about it at postgraduate studies; 17 teachers at their graduate studies, 35 at their county professional development seminar for teachers; 71 teachers at their local professional development and 100 of them opted for "somewhere else". These results show that for a considerable time and in different institutions for teacher education there are not enough concrete courses that would enable easy and successful implementation of EDC.

Conclusion

Education for Democratic Citizenship prepares students for living and acting in democratic societies. Education for Democratic Citizenship aims to empower and enable students to become active, informed and responsible citizens. It is clear what a great role in this process the teachers have. Musset (2010) states that teacher education is a key to the quality of their future educational work. That is why the results of this research need to be considered from the perspective of competence and preparedness of future teachers for the development of civic and social competences of their students and pupils in schools. Despite great expectations of teachers and

understanding of their key role, teacher education in the field of civic and social competence in Croatia is still intermittent. Like in many institutions for teacher education in Europe, not enough attention is paid to the implementation of Education for Democratic Citizenship (*All European study on EDC policies*, 2004). Limited possibilities for education in the area of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Croatia are present in tertiary education in the form of elective courses with not enough lesson hours to respond to the needs of the future teachers (Rajić, 2010). The results of this research, as well as the results of Diković (2012), indicate the need for implementing Education for Democratic Citizenship during pre-service teacher education, as well as the opportunities for education for in-service teachers. For the improvement of the quality of overall education it is necessary to modify teacher education, as well as to enable further improvement of pedagogical competence of in-service teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

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Pripremljenost budućih učitelja primarnog obrazovanja za nastavu Građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja

Sažetak

Cilj rada je prikazati rezultate istraživanja o pripremljenosti budućih učitelja za provođenje Građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja u primarnom obrazovanju. U uvodnom dijelu rad donosi pregled razvoja Građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja, različite načine uvođenja sadržaja Građanskog odgoja i razvoj normativnih temelja za uvođenje predmeta Građanski odgoj i obrazovanje. Prikazani su rezultati istraživanja provedenog među studentima druge i pete godine Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu (N = 137). Podaci dobiveni istraživanjem pokazali su kako studenti slabo procjenjuju razinu poznavanja konteksta uvođenja Građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja, a nešto pozitivnije procjenjuju poznavanje uloge učitelja u planiranju i provođenju Građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja. Iako studenti navode da su slabo upoznati s kontekstom uvođenja Građanskog odgoja, smatraju kako je taj predmet potrebno uvesti u škole. Rezultati utvrđuju potrebu za sustavnim obrazovanjem budućih učitelja iz područja građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja.

Ključni pojmovi: *budući učitelji; građanski odgoj i obrazovanje; kompetencije.*