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Citizenship Education in the Netherlands: Opportunities and Challenges for Active Citizenship in a Plural and Diverse Society.

Please type or paste your abstract (200-300 words) here. The abstract should include the objective, the research questions, and the methodology and summarize the key finding and conclusions.

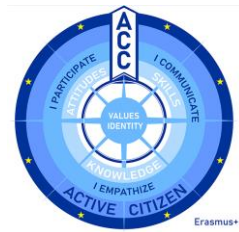
Keywords: *Citizenship Education, Active Citizenship; Pillarisation, Diversity; The Netherlands*

Introduction

The concept of active citizenship is increasingly receiving attention in Dutch education policy and implementation to learn young people how to be a responsible citizen (Daas et al., 2023; Munniksma et al., 2017; van Slageren et al., 2024). More and more, it is argued that pupils need to learn to find their way in the world and have to learn how to live in a free and democratic country and show respects towards living with others in a diverse society. It requires however the right competences to be able to actively participate in social and political life. A firm democracy requires citizens that hold and display competences to participate in society and for each to contribute actively. Additionally, the need for citizenship education arises from a strong desire to promote and enlarge social cohesion and resilience (Dijkstra, 2012). Yet debates around pressing these societal but also global concerns – such as climate change, migration, war, racism, inflation, housing ‘crisis’, infectious diseases – are omnipresent and can often be difficult to navigate due to pluriform understandings and approaches. As a result, it is difficult for young people grasp the issue and their political position.

At the same time, the extent to which young people attach value to democratic values and the democratic state of law is regularly questioned in Dutch social and political debates. Dutch secondary school pupils score less than their international peers on citizenship knowledge due to increasing inequalities, addressed as the canary in the coal mine (Daas et al., 2023). It is of no surprise that active citizenship as a phenomenon surfaces in debates regarding government policy and citizenship education. After all, who am I, who do I want to become, and where do I see myself in the future are common questions that young people deal with in the transition to adulthood. They are big and fundamental questions that if handled correctly make young people thrive. After this life stage, attitudes and orientations only change slowly. In the eye of the general public, schools eminently play a role in helping their pupils understand the world and how this is organised, and to offer guidance to pupils to experience that they play a role in societal process and can exert influence on future decision making processes.

The recent surge in interest in active citizenship however does not come from nowhere. The past decades saw an increasing interest on individual growth as a catalyst for societal change and

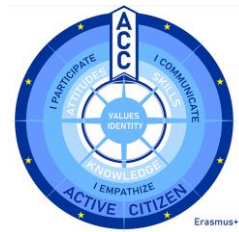


inclusive institutions. However, in an increasingly changing and polarising society due to globalisation, migration and growing inequalities, more is asked than simple individual growth. A democracy assumes, appreciates and provides space to a wide range of attitudes, views, norms and values, and lifestyles. This demands effort and commitment to understand and celebrate shared understandings and work around differences. In a tense climate, sufficient connection between young people and citizens is increasingly important to make sure collective societal interests, goals and challenges are formulated and addressed by means of well-functioning agreements.

The notion of ‘active citizenship’ can be understood as the key idea that people or an individual are/is engaged in participation in activities that shape or support a community. The key idea of active citizenship is that a person is engaged in participation in activities that support a community. The nation-state is typically in the focus of the debate but the community may also refer to local associations or communities, to European community or even to a global community. The policy discussion on active citizenship has been driven by a concern that young people, in particular, may lack the knowledge and skills to act effectively as citizens, and are often not strongly embedded within their communities. In this discussion, education is seen as a key means for ‘supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion. Learning for active citizenship is seen as part of lifelong activity in which a person constructs the crucial links between learning and action.

However, active citizenship requires citizens to develop and maintain the right competences to handle responsibility. Citizenship is thus not an achievement but an ongoing practice. Hence, empathy, participation and communication form three essential pillars of active democratic citizenship. Citizenship demands certain competences, namely knowledge, attitudes and skills, that define the ability to live together in harmony with others according to democratic principles and values.

In order to understand where and how active citizenship as a pedagogical approach is currently used in the Netherlands to educate pupils about democratic action and community involvement, this chapter is organised in several sections. In the next section, we first map Dutch pupils’ understanding and engagement with citizenship; what is their level of citizenship knowledge and to what extent do they participate actively in communities and society. We then trace how the relationship between Dutch citizens and the state has been taken up in the Netherlands historically and how this has affected citizenship education during different times. We move on to explain how active citizenship emerges in education programs, laws and recommendations, school curricula, textbooks and the secondary school classroom. We will highlight the specific opportunities and challenges that arise from our analysis in the Netherlands and translate these into so-called best practices. The last section offers a brief summary, concludes the main parts of the research and briefly discusses policy recommendations.

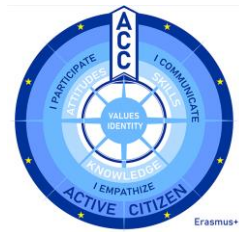


Young people and citizenship: Trends and patterns in comparative perspective

What do young people in the Netherlands think themselves about the democratic constitutional state and how do they see their own position within a liberal democracy? Based on a longitudinal research project that studies democratic values among secondary school pupils, van Slageren et al. (2024) conclude that secondary school pupils' attachment to democracy and democratic values is high. They further conclude that a parliamentary democracy – as a form of government – remains most popular among pupils and living in a democracy is highly appreciated (see also Daas et al., 2023). Young peoples' trust in media and jurisdiction is higher in 2022 compared to 2016 (Daas et al., 2023). It further appears that pupils talk more about societal issues and politics with parents, teachers and friends than earlier years (see Mulder et al., 2019; 2022). They further observe an increased interest to work in politics at later age yet political self-confidence remains the same. On the other hand, a pattern can be observed that suggests trust in government officials and politicians among pupils is decreasing. The belief that politicians do listen to themselves and their parents too seems to decrease. In relation to society and community, a tendency can be observed that suggests young people put more value on the individual over the community and society, e.g. privacy over safety, freedom of speech over hurting others, get your own way over adhering to the law.

The second conclusion van Slageren et al. (2024) identify concerns the differences in attitudes towards democracy and democratic values between different groups of young people. Secondary school education in the Netherlands is organised in three clusters: Pre-vocational secondary education ('Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs, VMBO), senior general secondary education ('Hoger Algemeen voortgezet onderwijs', HAVO) and pre-university education ('Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs', VWO). Upon entry, secondary school pupils are divided among one of these clusters. Although differences have remained stable in recent years (Daas et al., 2023), VWO pupils tend to remain more attached to the Dutch democracy, display the most political trust and political self-confidence. They are inclined to vote more often and display the most political ambition. VMBO pupils score lower on these characteristics (see also Daas et al., 2023). What is problematic is that these differences cannot be attributed to schools per se. Differences in citizenship competences can be attributed to background characteristics such as migration background, education level of parents and social economic status. These differences for example transpire in youth's willingness to vote (Daas et al., 2023). Hence, competences, values and attitudes exist prior to moving to secondary school among students and tend to remain similar throughout their secondary school period due to their personal networks.

But how do Dutch pupils fare in comparison with peers in similar countries and what do these insights tell us in relation to peers in comparable countries and compared to the global average? Based

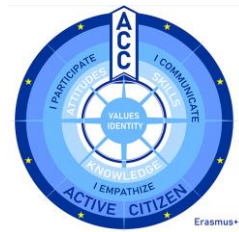


on a global study among fourteen year olds in secondary education, Daas et al. (2023) conclude that Dutch youth' citizenship competences significantly lack behind compared to other countries. The average level of citizenship knowledge among Dutch youth can be seen as low, both compared to their peers in comparable countries (e.g. Denmark, Norway, Sweden) and compared to peers internationally. One in seven pupils scores on the lowest level. Similar to internationally comparable countries, there is worrying trend that between 2016 and 2022 citizenship knowledge among young people is in decline.

Although attitudes towards citizenship and democracy are mostly positive as described above, they remain under the international average and significant lower than comparable countries. Young people do seem to attach value to voting at elections, and staying up to date with news and political discussion, but also here the importance attributed to 'conventional' (Daas et al., 2023, p.149) citizenship remains low than comparable countries. Their willingness to vote is significantly lower than comparable countries. Support to equality between men and women is similar to the international average, yet lower than their peers in comparable countries. Participation in protesting against injustices are deemed important by one-third of Dutch pupils, which is significantly lower than all countries participating in the study (Daas et al., 2023). A similar patterns can be observed when looking at support for equal rights for all ethnic groups and attitudes towards immigrants. Both variables are below the international average. What is further noteworthy is that internationally more than half of the young people involved in the study state they worry about infectious diseases, worldwide financial crisis, poverty and unemployment. In comparison, Dutch pupils on average are less concerned.

Lastly, citizenship skills and activities of Dutch secondary school pupils seem to be undervalued compared to the international average. Less than their peers, Dutch youth seem demonstrate less trust in their own capacities to actively participate in society. About two-third for example state that they cannot voice their own opinions or formulate their own arguments, in particular about a controversial or contested societal issues. Also, the attributed value to citizenship activities in the Netherlands is lower among Dutch pupils. Internationally, secondary school pupils indicate to more often participate in an activity to enact citizenship or to look up information about societal or political issues. Moreover, young people in all participating countries in the study indicate a higher interest to participate politically in the future, e.g. by joining an activist organisation or a political party, by protesting or participating in (online) discussions, petition-work or the occupation of a building.

From comparative perspective, these trends and patterns are in line with studies that suggest political engagement and participation are not considered in the general Dutch perception of what is considered 'good' active citizenship. Additionally, the findings hint at a 'classroom' status quo, i.e. both pupils and teachers indicate that they lack the capacities and tools to learn and practice what active citizenship is (Daas et al., 2023). Teachers and school principals mention that citizenship education is



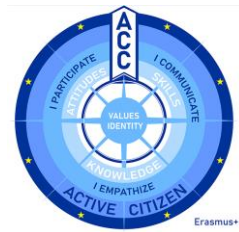
lacking behind compared with schools internationally. Teachers in the Netherlands indicate they pay less attention to diverse perspectives, and diversity and inclusion are underrepresented in schools' curriculum compared with both comparable countries and the international average. At the same time, Daas et al. (2023) note that the differences in citizenship knowledge vary between schools in the Netherlands. Munniksmä et al. (2017) therefore conclude that citizenship education in the Netherlands is stagnating and does not meet the expectations it has set itself. This in part due to a deficit of insights in the knowledge, attitudes and skills of pupils related to citizenship. Hence, for the further development of citizenship education in the Netherlands more knowledge is required about how schools can contribute effectively to the acquisition of citizenship competences, but also how this knowledge needs to be communicated with schools, education developers and policy makers to develop citizenship education that comply with the needs of teachers and pupils.

Active Citizenship in socio-historical context: The rights and responsibilities pendulum

Citizenship education is based on collectively agreed norms and values of what citizenship means, how the relationship between the state and citizens is understood and ideas around how an active citizen should behave. It is therefore important to trace the social, cultural, political and economic developments that shaped the bond between state and citizens historically. In order to properly understand current development regarding active citizenship, it is relevant to first understand active citizenship in its historical and theoretical context. Citizenship education is not a new phenomenon as such, but is one of the core goals of education in the Netherlands (Munniksmä et al., 2017). This section will illustrate that citizenship is a concept with a long history and this historical development transpires through contemporary dominant understandings. Indeed, throughout the centuries, a wide range of suppliers can be identified that shaped the citizenship landscape of the Netherlands.

Citizenship is about people living together in constellations other than the nuclear family and other familial relations. As such, looking at how people live together refers to the ways they relate to others, to communities and to institutions (Munniksmä et al., 2017). After disappearing for several centuries after the Late Antiquity, citizenship surfaces in the Low Countries (de 'Lage Landen'; now known as the Netherlands and Belgium) during the Middle Ages. Kloek and Tilmans (2002) write that citizenship in this period meant identification and membership of a local urban community. A citizen lived within city walls and as such was entitled due to this status to protection and certain privileges. At the same time, citizens were expected to use time and resources to contribute to the common interest.

Up until the 18th century citizen status remained reserved to urban communities, but the Enlightenment period brought about significant changes in understanding citizenship in what is now the Netherlands (Kloek and Tilmans, 2002). With the rise of the nation state the origin of citizenship moves from local identification to membership to a national community. Citizenship was increasingly



understood as a tool to foster nation state identification and attachment. All inhabitants of the Netherlands were considered potential citizens. A prominent role in this process was reserved for the school. Consequently, the school made her entrance as a central place of education innovation and nation building. Hence, citizenship education relied on the idea that citizens could be educated to function within the confines of a nation state in a civil way.

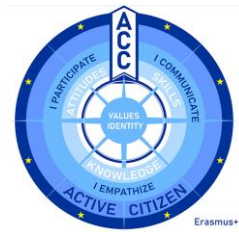
Between 1870 and 1960, ideas around citizenship, and the emergence of the Netherlands as a democratic country, was for a long period of time intertwined with the organisation of society in pillars (Dekker, 2019). Pillarisation ('verzuiling') is the vertical organisation of society in different groups determined by a combination of religious affiliation and associated political beliefs. Dekker (2019) however writes that these pillars were organised in different ways. The organisation of Catholic organisations was more homogeneous than Calvinistic and Protestant pillars, who operated more in clusters. As a response to confessional pillarisation, liberals and socialists too organised in smaller pillars. This was in part due to the fact that pillars had their own newspapers, media, unions, sport and recreational clubs, social and economic interest organisations and, importantly, schools. Dutch citizens as a result were mostly oriented towards people in their own pillar. Additionally, people identified strongly with their own regions rather than the nation. Due to the strong connection to religion, each pillar had different understandings of what a 'good' citizen is. As a result, the concept of citizenship was poorly developed and defined throughout this time to avoid friction.

Nevertheless, although religious pillars do not influence contemporary society to the same extent, the former pillarisation of Dutch society continues to leave its mark. At the time, each pillar needed the support from another pillar to form a parliamentary majority. Politicians were forced to find common ground, form coalitions and find compromises that satisfy all. Several studies have argued that pillarisation marks the start of current Dutch society that can be characterised by a consensus democracy that relies on the 'reassurance' that minorities have to work together to govern the country (De Groot et al., 2022; Dekker, 2019; Basten and van der Veen, ???).

A clear material artefact from this period of division is the Dutch constitutional law.

Grondwet 1848: Deze verdeeldheid maakte het onmogelijk om een eenduidige invulling te geven aan burgerschap. Iedere poging daartoe leidde tot verzet. Omdat het niet mogelijk was om een eenduidige invulling te geven aan dit begrip, stond het denken over burgerschap vooral in het teken van de door de Grondwet gewaarborgde vrijheid om zelf invulling te geven aan het leven

Article 23 of the Dutch constitution, known as the Freedom of Education in 1917 --. Keerpunt



Additionally, citizenship education and its current focus on active citizenship cannot be separated from past and current developments of the Dutch welfare state (Tonkens, 2009). The welfare state – and the relationship between the government and its citizens – have undergone significant changes in recent history. The end of the second world war (1945-1970) was the starting sign for the build up of the Dutch welfare state. This period was characterised by a ‘verzorgende overheid’. This implied that citizens had to be taken care of

The 1990s are characterised by a revival of the concept of citizenship due to a renewed political interest and revaluation of citizenship education. Whereas for a long time education served to train pupils to participate in the labour market, the revaluation was based on an interest of education as a contribution to society rather than only the labour market. Education got a more socialising role. This development ran parallel to broader developments within Dutch society that questioned in social and political debates whether society was moving in the ‘right’ direction. Rather than the healthy economy and individual freedom,

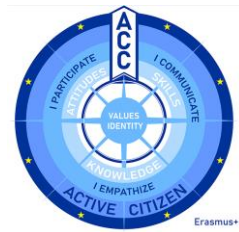
This period marks the birth of citizenship education; youth should learn at school how they should live together and how can they can be stimulated to actively participate in local and national society. Moreover, it was deemed important that young people obtained knowledge of the political and societal institutions to understand democratic logics of society.

In the 1990s, the term ‘active citizenship’ becomes more prevalent in social and political debates as a buzzword to respond changing understandings of the meaning of citizenship. Whereas the initial focus of citizenship was on securing the rights of citizens in society (‘passive citizenship’), from the 1970s onwards citizenship transforms to a focus on citizen’s responsibilities to participate in society. In part, this is due to new social and cultural relations due to the transformation of society as a consequence of migration and the continuous presence of autonomous citizens that refrain from adhering to government policy.

1994 citizenship in integration an diversity

Additionally, understandings of what citizenship entails have to be considered in the light of globalisation. Schinkel (2007) argues that the rise and revaluation of citizenship cannot be seen by as separated from an attempt to re-install the nation state as a

To conclude, current Dutch citizenship education in the Netherlands continues to be shaped by historical legacies. Various authors point out how citizenship education has always been closely



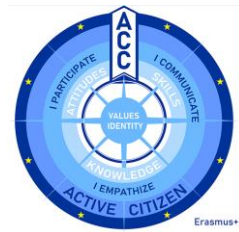
intertwined with the Netherlands being a pluralistic country in which it was important to bring together consensus among different groups and beliefs.

Recent events in the Netherlands illustrate how active citizenship as the interplay between citizens and institutional can respond more quickly to societal opportunities and challenges. During the refugee influx in 2015 and 2016 in the Netherlands and the reception of Ukrainian refugees in 2018, active citizenship provided an adequate and swift response where the government was slow and unreachable. With practical and realistic local initiatives – offering accommodation, collecting items, language practice – residents, organisations and companies got into refugee reception where a government could not or would not, which caused that refugees could anchor more quick and efficient. Government can learn from these initiatives and implicate citizens in thinking about the reception of refugees. This not only fosters social cohesion and better integration of refugees, but also takes into consideration responsible and active citizens rather than ignoring them.

But how does this affect active citizenship education in the Netherlands? “As a matter of democratic principle, both countries do not have a national curriculum because in a democratic society, the school should not be an instrument of the state. Rather, the power of the state to determine what children learn in schools should be limited to ensure the proper functioning of democracy itself. In this line of reasoning, state control over education is particularly threatening in the case of citizenship education: in a democracy it is not up to the state to determine what counts as good citizenship, nor should it devise educational practices to teach particular state mandated citizenship.” (van Rees, 2023).

This section illustrates how fostering active citizenship has developed over the years in the Dutch welfare state and how it has become a significant and crucial part of government policy. After all, the Dutch government requires its citizens to contribute actively to their own wellbeing (think about health, work or integration) and the social cohesion, safety and liveability of others. In recent years, this means that the Dutch government expects its citizens to perform duties and tasks that not too long ago were performed through governmental institutions. This section also emphasises the changing relationship between youth and the state. Youth occupy paradoxical positions when thinking through the lens of citizenship (Wood, 2022). On the one hand, they are seen as being ‘at risk’ and ‘under threat’. It follows that citizenship education is there to ‘educate’.

What ‘good’ citizenship and citizenship education is thus depends on who you ask, and when and where you ask the question.



Active Citizenship in the Netherlands – education

“Education shall be the constant concern of the Government”
(Article 23, the constitution of the kingdom of the Netherlands).

Article 23 plays a key role in defining the Dutch educational landscape (De Groot et al., 2022). Freedom of education is a constitutional right (Article 23, the constitution of the kingdom of the Netherlands). The historical document, spanning two centuries and subject to multiple revisions over time, grants schools three distinct freedoms: freedom of establishment ("vrijheid van stichting"), freedom of belief ("vrijheid van richting"), and freedom of educational organization ("vrijheid van inrichting"). Originally designed to accommodate the diverse religious factions in the Netherlands, this provision allowed these groups to establish and operate their own schools within the confines of constitutional and Dutch educational laws. Since 1917, privately operated schools have been entitled to equal funding alongside public schools. The majority of students attend publicly funded schools, with less than one percent enrolled in privately funded institutions. Consequently, most schools operate as either publicly funded and privately managed or publicly funded and publicly managed entities. Educational legislation imposes uniform standards on all publicly funded schools, irrespective of their administrative structure.

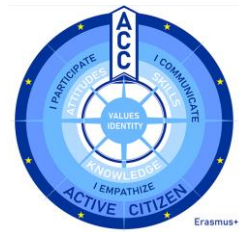
Based on the premise that pupils grow up and socialise in a both a pluriform and continuously changing society, secondary school education in the Netherlands centres around the promotion of active citizenship and social integration, and producing insight and knowledge of various social, cultural and economic backgrounds of their peers. Scientific reflection on the role of education in a democracy too has a long and rich history in the Netherlands, which has shaped significantly the ways in which citizenship has been taken up in education curriculums (van Rees, 2023). Hence, it is highly important that educational goals are not set in stone, but require continuous evaluation, debate and reformulation (Kampman, 2024). Only then can Active Citizenship education develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required for pupils to meaningfully engage in societal processes as active and responsible citizens, and to successfully move on to further education. In this section we will look closer into the ways in which active citizenship education is embedded within laws, resolutions and government recommendations; how active citizenship is understood and integrated in secondary school curricula; and various ways in which it emerges in pupils' textbooks.

It is important to note here the impact of technological development and how technology increasingly plays a role in contemporary everyday life. Young people in particular might be vulnerable to the consequences of increasing use of technology in society. Digital literacy is therefore an important component of the new design of citizenship education in the Netherlands.

In response to the ministry Education, Culture and Science (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, OCW), the executive body in the Netherlands is the Stichting Leerplan Ontwikkeling (SLO) who support secondary schools in teaching citizenship and weaving in core goals in curricula. SLO works together with teachers, school principals and other partners to analyse and develop secondary school curricula combining societal and scientific insights.

In laws, resolutions, recommendations by government, ministry of education

In the Netherlands, no single interpretation of citizenship education is prescribed. Schools are free to shape citizenship education as they see fit. This applies to the substantive elaboration of citizenship, to its connection with philosophical considerations or views on 'the good life' and to the translation of the vision of 'good citizenship' into educational content and approaches. This space arises from the



constitutional freedom of education and is reflected in the legal formulation of the citizenship task. It is only stated that schools must pay attention to citizenship.

The legal task for every school in primary and secondary education is laid down in so called *kerndoelen* (core objectives). These core objectives serve to provide both overall guidance and concrete framework to integrate citizenship education in school's educational programmes. Although they follow a clear and fixed structure, schools have the autonomy to highlight their own educational philosophy and to adjust the overarching framework based on the pupil population, school identity and local social and cultural context. Rather than a strict set of rules, core objectives

It is further important to note that the core objectives do state how an 'active' citizen should behave (Kampman, 2024). In this framework, the school is seen as a training ground on which pupils and teachers collectively gain experience and gather insights around thinking and acting democratically, and to familiarise oneself and other with democratic values as freedom, equity and solidarity, i.e. the game rules of living together in democracy.

Six main core objectives can be identified (Kampman, 2024). First, the school should be considered and organised as *a training ground* ('Kerndoel 1: School als Oefenplaats') where pupils experience, learn and practice to live in a diverse society. Next to processual core objectives, the other five core objectives address these democratic experiences through content.

Second, students learn about *society and democracy* ('Kerndoel 2: Maatschappij en Democratie') in order to make meaningful what democratic values and actions entail, but also how pupils can exert their democratic right to participate in school policy building and decision making processes.

Third, based on democratic knowledge pupils engage with *societal issues* ('Kerndoel 3: Maatschappelijke Vraagstukken') such as climate change, diversity and inequality.

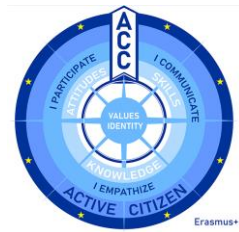
Fourth,

There are two significant dates in the development of Dutch active citizenship education, namely 2006 and 2021. In 2006 formal legislation was installed to transfer the task of providing citizenship education to schools. Since 2006, it is mandatory for schools in the Netherlands in both primary and secondary education to offer citizenship education. However, despite these intentions, the assignment for secondary schools remained unclear, which effected in schools experiencing insufficient grip on the task at hand and did not result in the aim to effectively integrate citizenship into school curricula and courses.

Consequently, later in 2021, this task allocation has been greatly tightened by the government by installing the law *Wet ter verduidelijking van de burgerschapsopdracht*. Although schools developed significant expertise since 2006 around citizenship education, societal developments between 2006-2021 are a reason to adjust the legislation. Moreover, up until the instalment of this law, schools could suffice with 'working on' active participation and social cohesion'. Currently, the range of tasks of schools have been specified more in order to stimulate and foster knowledge and respect for the core values of a democratic rule of law. A significant difference from the 2016 situation is that schools upon inspection are expected to purposefully integrate citizenship in their educational programmes and have to report on these with clearly defined and insightful learning outcomes.

At the same time, it is still not always clear what schools should or should not do in the education of citizenship as schools may formulate their own goals and possess a certain degree of freedom to in the extent to which democratic values are understood.

In this law, citizenship is defined by government policy as a set of basic skills that revolve around the development and maintenance of democratic core values: liberty, equity and solidarity. They



are basic social and societal skills that pupils need to actively participate in society. Active citizenship education is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills, but to also stimulate pupils to put citizenship knowledge and skills to practice in everyday life.

Next to the legislative framework provided by the Dutch government, secondary schools are stimulated to design appropriate citizenship education based on their philosophical and pedagogical vision. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to relate to the norms and values in their daily environment and to interact in a respectful way with different attitudes towards democratic values.

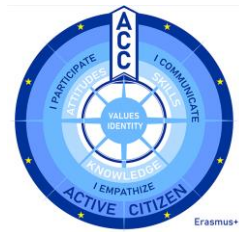
The transition at school: In secondary school curricula

Various studies illustrate that citizenship education despite the legislative framework discussed in the previous section contains a diversity of understandings and perspectives. If you want to know what citizenship or citizenship education is, it depends who you ask. Hence, Daas et al. (2023) illustrate that there are a lot of different approaches between secondary schools in the Netherlands. Another study in the Netherlands shows that government and schools tend to invest in subjects that directly contribute to an economically well-functioning society (van Slageren et al., 2024). Consequently, citizenship is not a priority and it depends on school directors and teacher whether or not citizenship education plays a significant role in the curriculum.

In textbooks

Less about state apparatus but more about everyday examples and situations of democratic citizenship (van Slageren et al., 2024)

Teacher classroom training



Specific aspects in the Netherlands (opportunities and challenges)

In contemporary political debates, citizenship is often defined using the term ‘good citizenship’ rather than ‘active citizenship’. This is problematic as understandings of what good citizenship entails can be experienced as moralising. Schinkel (2007) points out that by differentiating between active and inactive citizens, governments implicitly discriminate between citizens by making moral claims on what good citizens should look like. Moreover, it is argued that an active citizenship policy and education instrumentalises citizens which goes at the expense of their intrinsic motivation to participate and engage with society as well as remaining critical towards government policy and practices. This leads to a couple of fundamental questions and challenges regarding the relationship between citizens and government in the Netherlands.

- Differences in attitudes towards democracy and democratic values between various opleidingstypes (van Slageren et al., 2024) → segregeerde opleiding een probleem voor de toekomst.
-

This societal desire for consensus and the subsequent unclear guidelines in active citizenship education leads to two different but connected classroom situations.

A major challenge is that by not spelling out concretely what citizenship entails and considering citizenship education as an apolitical task or activity,

- Critici zeggen dat dit beleid burgers instrumentaliseert, ten koste gaat van de intrinsieke motivatie van burgers om vrijwilligerswerk te doen en ten koste gaat van de kritische rol van burgers jegens de overheid.
- Another issue within active citizenship education is the unclarity and tension that may arise in defining the goals. Since active citizenship is about participating in a society that is subject to change and transformation, relevant knowledge and skills also change accordingly. This means that deciding what to teach and what not. But how can you justify that others decide for pupils what or what not to touch upon in active citizenship education.
- This challenge becomes particularly visible when secondary school teachers communicate a certain interpretation of how citizenship should be performed in an active and responsible way.
- Open discussion climate in the classroom is a problem (Van Slageren et al., 2024).



Best practices

What exactly is effective citizenship education. Misschien hier drie cases ter illustratie.

Conclusion, summary, recommendations

Summary

Conclusion

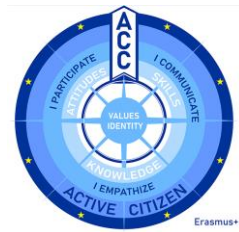
The analysis of this chapter shows that citizenship education is an apolitical activity.

Recommendation

To government, schools and students

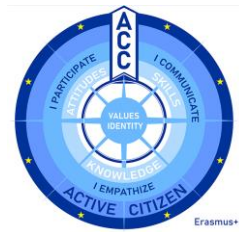
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