



ENGAGE

Citizenship Education with Children aged 8- 12 in Spain – Theoretical Analysis

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HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

The Statutory Law of Education (LOE) of 2006, introduced into the Spanish curriculum, “*Education for citizenship and human rights*” (EFC), a subject that, grouped together as a set of subjects under different denominations, and varying the contents based on the ages of the pupils, would be distributed throughout different courses from Primary Education, Obligatory Secondary Education and the Baccalaureate.

The creation of that Law did not specifically appear in the manifesto which the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) presented at the elections of March 2004 and which they won by an absolute majority. However, the manifesto argued the need to drive education in values, the introduction of new curricular content such as human rights and constitutional and democratic values; even contemplating the possibility of introducing subjects related to the gender perspective. In addition, it approached the need to press measures and actions linked to attending to the needs derived from an increasingly multicultural society, and to impel the education of European citizenship. In short, the manifesto raised a series of themes and contents that would later be included in the curriculum of EFC: many coming from the European educational institutions, with others specific to PSOE.

In October 2004, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) published the document: “*A Quality Education for all and among all. Proposals for the Debate*”, with the postulates of the educational reform which it intended to undertake. It was reform that would translate into a Law destined to replace the Law of Quality of Education, produced by the previous government of the Popular Party (PP), which was approved only with the exclusive votes of the political group that maintained the government, and whose schedule of implementation was suspended by the PSOE in May, after it came to power.

In its prologue, it had made a passionate defence for active citizenship, describing the challenges faced by the Spanish education system and setting forth the measures to resolve them. With the title: “*What values and how to teach them*”, dedicated a section to Education in Values, indicating that its objective was, “*to contribute to educating people so they can live in a climate of respect, tolerance, participation and freedom, and who are able to build a concept of reality that simultaneously integrates knowledge and its ethical and moral value*”.

Among the other questions defended was that, in a democratic society, education in values should necessarily refer to those values enabling the development of citizenship and the development of attitudes of respect, tolerance, solidarity, participation and freedom, and that they must appear within the objectives and tasks of the educational system.



The document coincided with sections dedicated to the Education in Values of the socialists' law of education of 1990, the General Statutory Law of the Education System (LOGSE), which continued in force and meant a profound modification of the Spanish education system. In addition, it established, as an educational objective for the year 2010, the promotion, within the scholastic community, of the learning of democratic values and citizen participation to achieve an active citizenship, in accordance with the Lisbon Strategy agreed by the governments of the European Union (EU).

Its diffusion promoted a passionate debate in which numerous groups representing associations and organisations of all types participated. From the very first moment controversy arose, as the intention of the Ministry to introduce a subject or area destined to deal with the education of values triggered the wrath of the most conservative sectors of Spanish society, especially those sectors that, during Franco's era, had monopolised and imposed their values, through education, on the rest of society.

A few months later, the MES published a "*Report on the Debate*" with a summary of the contributions that had been received. On the section of the Education in Values, it indicated the need for education in this subject, based on the important and decisive social changes that required specific preparation of the citizen to assure the survival of democratic values and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. For this, action was proposed in three areas: "*in the education plan of the school, in the teaching practice of all the subjects and (which was innovatory) the creation of a new educational subject for citizenship that would be taught in the final cycle of primary education by the teacher, and, in two courses of obligatory secondary education and in a baccalaureate course by teachers in the geography, history and philosophy departments*" (MES, 2005, 73-74).

The arguments against the new subject were grouped under two considerations. The first described it as indoctrination, a violation of the paternal right to the education of their children, foreign to the democratic systems and it was considered that the values proposed could be spread through the areas of Society, Culture and Religion. The second, defended the need for education in civic and democratic values, but it was proposed that it be done transversely, with the teaching of the pupils encompassing everything, through the educational plan of the school and be included in the curriculum of all the subjects.

When presenting the Law in the Congress, (30.11.2005), the Minister made a summary of the new subject affirming that "*the LOE reinforces the education of values, ensuring that, in addition to its inclusion in a transverse manner in the curriculum, there is a specific space for its analysis and debate. As is common in most of the European countries and as recommended by international bodies such as the Council of Europe, education for citizenship is incorporated into the obligatory education to communicate ethical, individual and social values to those generations that are going to live in a developed, democratic, diverse and complex society*".

Among the reasoned arguments in the parliamentary debate in favour of the new subject, those are highlighted which maintained that:



- * The subject would contribute to improve the teaching in values to youth through the reflection on human rights and the values of equality between sexes, races and cultures.*
- * It was an appropriate space to expressly address the values associated with a democratic conception of social and political organisation.*
- * It would have two dimensions: one personal and the other social. The staff would promote the personal maturity of the student, as an integrated person promoting values such as self-esteem, responsibility, freedom and dignity. The social dimension, would promote values such as respect, tolerance and other values such as the democratic participation and knowledge of their own individual rights.*
- * It would enable the teaching of coexistence and how to resolve conflicts.*
- * It corresponded to a European Education Policy that was common to several European countries.*
- * It constituted a response to the targets set by the EU concerning education policy, the ultimate purpose of which was to make Europe the most dynamic economy in the world, based on knowledge.*
- * It was proposed that a civic education would follow the promotion of active citizenship, a circumstance that had already been raised previously by the Popular Party (December 2004), following the recommendations of the Council of Europe, which impelled measures to make the year 2005, the "Year of European Citizenship through Education".*

The arguments used to reject the new subject were justified by:

- * The inclusion of elements of the Gender Ideology, an aspect that was introduced into education with the intention of defending the equality between men and women.*
- * The relationship between the EFC and affective sexual education, and faced with the introduction of measures intended to promote and increase sexual information for young people in the new subject, the opposition expressed strong reservations.*
- * It was considered an unnecessary and imposed subject, as it had not been requested by the parents, the families nor by society.*
- * It was a subject susceptible to political manipulation and indoctrination, as it was not endorsed by any scientific or academic discipline. For that reason, the subject was equated to the "National Spirit Formation" of the Francoist school.*
- * It was presented as a subject opposed to religious education, which would displace it from the education system.*

With all consultative and legal requirements fulfilled, the Congress approved the new Law in May 2006 by 181 votes to 133. Once again, consensus was not obtained for a law on education.

The PP found suitable instruments in the Law and the new subject to destabilise the socialist govern-



ment. After announcing its rejection of the new subject, it ceded the confrontational role to the organisations and associations piloted by the Catholic Church, although at no time did it announce that it would lodge an appeal with the Constitutional Court on the matter, perhaps because the implementation of the Law responded to diverse supra-state recommendations approved with the support of various Spanish governments of the PP.

** In 1997, with Esperanza Aguirre as Minister for Education, the Declaration of Heads of State and the Government of the Council of Europe, proclaimed EFC as a main priority of its political and education programme, developing a programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship concerned with “all the practices and activities designed to help all the people, children, youths and adults, to participate actively in democratic life, accepting and practicing their rights and responsibilities in society”. The programme had the priority objectives of: a) to raise awareness of how education can contribute to developing democratic citizenship and participation, promote social cohesion and intercultural understanding, and the respect for diversity and human rights; b) to make Education for Democratic Citizenship a priority objective of the educative policy of the Member States, applying reforms in all levels of the system.*

** In 1999, with Mariano Rajoy as Minister for Education, the Committee of Ministers of the EU adopted the Declaration and the programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship.*

** In 2000, the 20th Session of the Permanent Conference of European Ministers for Education was held, with Pilar del Castillo as Minister, and in which the results and conclusions of the Education for Democratic Citizenship Project were approved.*

With the PSOE in power, with María José San Segundo as Minister, the Council of Europe declared 2005 as the European Year of Citizenship through Education, and the EU designated the development of European citizenship as one of its main priorities of action, sponsoring the study of education for citizenship in the 30 European countries that comprise the EURYDICE network. The declaration alluded to something scandalous for the Spanish groups opposed to the implementation of EFC: “For the good of social cohesion in Europe and a common European entity, the students in the teaching institutions, must receive specific information on the meaning of citizenship, the types of rights and duties that this entails, and on what to do to behave like a good citizen” (EURYDICE, 2005. 8).



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WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE DEFINITION OF THE CURRICULA?

The autonomic system of the Spanish State establishes that together with the Ministry of Education, the Autonomous Communities have sufficient competencies and capacity to determine their own curricula, from common minimums established by the Courts and the Government of the State which they can complement.

This structure and autonomic capacity in educational matters originated confrontations between the communities governed by the PSOE and the PP when specifying EFC curricula and applying them. The autonomous communities governed by the PP: Castilla-León; Valencia; Madrid; La Rioja and Murcia, adopted measures that delayed, prevented or transformed the sense of the new subject; Galicia and the Balearic Islands also adopted them, but as the PP lost power after the autonomous elections, they were quickly modified. The exception was Navarra, where, even though governed by a party assigned to the PP, and in spite of strong support of the Catholic Church, there was little opposition and its government maintained an independent position.

The institutional opposition was carried out without a prefixed plan, because although they agreed in principle, each autonomous government acted in an unco-ordinated manner. The first action was oriented to modifying the curriculum of the subject, as was indicated by the Regional Minister for Education of the Community of Madrid: *"... the Communities of the Popular Party logically have the obligation to accept the Law, but as this Law precisely leaves important competencies to the Autonomous Communities when producing the study plans, the curricula, we have hence reached agreement. We have agreed to have common lessons ... and which, for example, the Education for Citizenship has a common content, a content that has already been produced and which is based basically and fundamentally on the Constitution"* (Peral, 2007).

The second was aimed at delaying its implementation, since the decree state frame, contemplated that the autonomous authorities could implement its teaching in the 2007-08 or 2008-09 academic year, either in the 2nd or 3rd year of Obligatory Secondary Education (OSE): *"We have also made common decisions regarding the years in which it will be taught. It is going to be taught in 5th year of Primary Education, beginning in the 2008/2009 academic year. Evidently, there will be elections before this, and it may be that the Spanish government as at September 2008, will not be the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Also it will be taught in 2nd year of OSE, apart from the obligatory nature to teach Ethical-Civic Education in the 4th year of OSE. We are also going to adhere to the minimum contents demanded by the Law, that is to say, only one and a half hours will be taught in Primary Education, and one hour in Secondary Education"*. (Peral, 2007, pp. 15-16). On placing the EFC subject in the 2nd year of OSE the PP showed their hope to win the next elections and abolish the law.



The curricular modifications suppressed the aspects more questioned by the Catholic Church, such as the references to the questions of gender, or those related to the family models. The MES appealed them, and began administrative disputes which were agreed with the latter.



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TO WHAT AGES IS IT DIRECTED? COMPARE THIS DURATION WITH OTHER EUROPEAN SYSTEMS.

A) Starting situation

The LOE established that the subject of Education for Citizenship and Human Rights (EFC) was to be studied, under different names, in some of the courses of Primary Education, Obligatory Secondary Education and Baccalaureate.

1. *In Primary Education (educational stage that includes the period from 6 to 12 years of age), in one of the two courses of the third cycle of the stage (at 11 or 12 years of age), with the name of **Education for Citizenship and Human Rights**, for one and a half hours per week.*
2. *In Obligatory Secondary Education (OSE) (12 to 16 years of age), on two occasions:*
 - a) *In one of the three first courses of the stage (at 13, 14 or 15 years of age), all the students would have to take the subject of **Education for Citizenship and Human Rights**, for one hour per week, and*
 - b) *In the fourth course of OSE (at 16 years of age) with the name of **Ethical-Civic Education**, also for one hour per week.*
3. *Finally, it was also to be taught in the 1st year of the Baccalaureate (educational stage attended between 16 and 18 years of age) with the name of **Philosophy and Citizenship**.*

Its purpose consisted of offering all the students a space for reflection, analysis and study about:

- a) *the fundamental characteristics and operation of a democratic regime,*
- b) *the principles and rights established in the Spanish Constitution and universal treaties and declarations on Human Rights,*
- c) *the common values that constitute the basis of democratic citizenship in a global context.*

But the commitment of the LOE to place the subject of EFC in the curriculum, was complemented with the maintenance of a transverse approach: this specific education should not conflict with the democratic practice that should inspire the whole of school life and which is to be developed as part of the education in values which must transversally impregnate all the school activities. The new subject would allow some of the aspects relating to community life to be dealt with in depth, contributing to form citizens.



B) Transition to the present situation

The initial situation established in the LOE has been modified on two occasions. The first took place after the general elections of November 2011 and the triumph of the PP with an absolute majority. In January 2012, in his first appearance in the Congress, the new Minister, José Ignacio Wert, announced imminent changes in the subject, anticipating that it would be replaced by a new subject “**Civic and Constitutional Education**” alleging that from its beginning, the EFC had been accompanied by controversy and had created a deep division in society and the educational world. In addition, he considered that its content went beyond that which corresponded to a true civic education, agreed with the directives of the Council of Europe. Instead, he proposed a subject whose syllabus was free of controversial questions and not susceptible to fall into ideological indoctrination. A subject that was oriented to provide the pupils with knowledge of the Constitution

In accordance with those declarations, in August and December of 2012, the MES published two Royal Decrees that modified those that established the minimum lessons of EFC in the different educational levels. With those modifications, the contents that were considered more controversial were eliminated from the curriculum, on the understanding that they were the origin of the controversies and the appeals before the courts and the administration. (Valencia, 2013).

One suppression that did not calm the spirits of the objectors, which they attempted, was the elimination of the subject which they considered unacceptable through being a “moral of the State” (Professionals for Ethics, 2012).

Nevertheless, the Decrees did not include mere cuts, they also contained subliminal aspects that demonstrated the ideological bias of the Government and those who inspired them:

- * the terms girls and boys were suppressed, using only the masculine plural as a generic term*
- * only the recommendations of the Council of Europe were indicated as causes for the study*
- * the only reference to homosexuality was eliminated, it being one of the most conflictive points for the opponents of the subject and the bishops. It referred to the rejection of homophobia*
- * questions were erased that alluded to social conflicts or tensions, such as the “social activities that contribute to enable a just and supportive society”*
- * other concepts were included, such as exclusive nationalism, terrorism, the role of the private economic initiative “in the generation of wealth” or the respect for intellectual property.*

Along general lines, the new design emphasised the respect for the legal and constitutional limits which the citizens had to follow, replacing the previous contents by much more generic references.

However, this was only the beginning. The following step, of much more importance for the subject, consisted of suppressing the new **Statutory Law of Improvement of Educational Quality** (LOMCE)



which was going to be the new obligatory subject, **Civic and Constitutional Education**, which in the first draught of the LOMCE replaced the conflictive subjects of EFC and Ethical-Civic Education of the LOE. With the new regulation, the following were eliminated from the curriculum:

- * *Education for Citizenship and Human Rights from Primary Education.*
- * *Education for Citizenship and Human Rights from OSE.*
- * *Ethics and Citizenship from the 4th year of OSE.*
- * *The concept of Citizenship from the subject of Philosophy and Citizenship from the 1st year of the Baccalaureate.*

Instead of those, the LOMCE has introduced the subject of **Social and Civic Values** (SCV), which will be taught in each of the six courses in Primary Education, and the subject of **Ethical Values or Religion**, which will be taught in each of the four courses of Obligatory Secondary Education.

However, another very important contribution of the LOMCE has been the appearance of the subject of Religion, which, in addition to recovering full academic value, it is established as an alternative to the same. This is to say, the pupils will have to choose between Social and Civic / Ethical Values or Religion, at the choice of the fathers, mothers or legal guardians.

In their place, the LOMCE has opted fundamentally for the transverse approach. Thus, in the introduction of the regulation, the following is established: "In the context of the methodologic change that this Statutory Law advocates, it approaches this need [that of teaching pupils in EFC] transversely when incorporating civic and constitutional education into all the subjects during basic education [the period of obligatory education; that is to say: from 6 to 16 years of age], in such a way that the acquisition of social and civic competencies is included in the daily dynamic of the teaching and learning processes, and thus strengthens, through a joint approach, its possibility of conveyance and its guiding character.

The new Royal Decree on basic Primary Education teaching of the LOMCE (2014) gives reasons for including the subject of **Social and Civic Values**:

- * to guarantee the universal right of boys and girls to receive an education that allows them to develop to the maximum of their possibilities, to educate them in respect of human rights and fundamental liberties and to prepare themselves to assume a responsible life in a society free and tolerant of difficulties.
- * to reinforce the preparation of the people to act as participant and involved citizens in the improvement of cohesion, defence and the development of democratic society.



* the concern to improve the quality of the education of all the pupils, promoting the development of educational processes that strengthen individual participation to achieve collective aims.

Although the autonomous communities can extend the content of the subject, the Decree establishes three thematic blocks.

- 1. Identity and dignity of the person, destined to deal with subjects such as the dignity of the person, the value of team work, self-esteem, understanding and decision making.*
- 2. Empathy and respect in interpersonal relations, where themes are approached such as social and interpersonal skills, especially the skills for dialogue.*
- 3. Social coexistence and values, which deal with values such as team work, solidarity, respect for rules, social justice, moral judgements, the rights of the child, equality between men and women, the responsible use of energy sources and road security, among others.*

With respect to OSE, the Royal Decree that develops the subject, **Ethical Values**, establishes that this subject must have the objective of equipping the students with the necessary instruments of rationality and objectivity so that their value judgements have the rigour, coherency and rational basis that they require, in order that their choices are worthy of guiding their conduct, their personal life and their social relationships. To achieve this, the curriculum is structured around three axes:

- 1. To fulfil the constitutional mandate, which determines the objective of education as the full development of the human personality, regarding the democratic principles of coexistence and the fundamental rights and liberties which must be interpreted, according to that established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the international agreements ratified by Spain, with the aim of promoting its diffusion and development, guaranteeing its fulfilment by all humanity.*
- 2. To contribute to strengthen the autonomy of young people and to prepare them to become the main agents of their own development, learning to construct, by means of free choice and a rationality based on ethical values and the investment of their own effort, their own thought and their own life plan, assuming in a conscious, critical and reflective manner the exercise of freedom and control over their own existence.*
- 3. To favour the construction of a free, egalitarian, prosperous and just society, by means of the active participation of aware citizens and respectful of the ethical values on which coexistence and democratic*



And which is developed in five thematic blocks:

1. *The dignity of the person.*
2. *Understanding, respect and equality in interpersonal relationships.*
3. *Ethical reflection.*
4. *Justice and politics.*
5. *Ethical values, the Law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international treaties on Human Rights.*
6. *Ethical values and their relationship with science and technology.*

C) The reactions of Autonomous Communities to the new subject.

As occurred when the LOE was implemented, when the MES announced the first cut in the EFC, it was the Autonomous Communities that showed their disagreement with the measure and announced that they would take compensatory measures. The most recalcitrant was Andalusia which had not modified the original content of the subject and announced that the contents that the MES had cut, would be introduced in the autonomous curriculum making use of their legislative quota. Later, when the LOMCE established the new subjects of Social and Civic Values and Ethical Values, Andalusia announced that it would introduce EFC as an alternative subject.

After autonomous elections were held in March 2015, and with the PP losing power in some autonomous communities, the new governments have announced they will reintroduce EFC in their curricula. Once again conflict seems assured.

In short, from 2006 to the present, EFC in Spain has experienced a strong regression that has led supra-national organisations such as the UN, to request the Spanish government to recover the subject, on considering that the disappearance of Education for Citizenship is a “retrograde measure” that hinders the teaching of “human rights of women as an inalienable part of the civic ethics of the States. This subject is an essential tool”. (El Mundo, 08.07.2015)



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WHAT EDUCATIONAL FOCUS IS USED? WHAT ARE THE COMPETENCIES THAT IT IS HOPE THE STUDENTS WILL ACQUIRE?

One of the most surprising questions is the absence of studies that provide true and reliable data on the implementation of EFC in schools. In spite of the intensity of the debate, an enormous amount of theoretical papers have been produced on the nature and advantages of its implementation; it has also stimulated research on the legal aspects that are derived from the demands presented before the courts, but in fact, very little is known about how the processes of education and learning in the classrooms take place, or about the results obtained.

At the National level, we only know of the existence of two studies that approach the situation of the teaching of EFC in Spain: the report of Amnesty International of 2013, entitled “*Education in Human Rights in Spain. Something more than a subject*” and that of the HEGOA Foundation of 2011 entitled: “*Education for Citizenship: Report on the situation in eight autonomous communities*”. In fact, the information that both studies contribute leaves much to be desired on the subjects that interest us here¹.

The empirical study made by the CIVES Foundation for the ENGAGE project gave some opinions of Primary Education teaching staff on the subject:

* The methodology of education and learning of the subject of Education for Citizenship must be based on:

- Work in collaborative and co-operative groups.
- Experience and debate.
- Participation as a principle.
- Inclusive Education.

* It would also be very advisable to use the following methodologic criteria when teaching Education for Citizenship:

- Experience of human rights: Education in human rights must be made by and for the action.
- Connection with the real life of the school and the surroundings: Give preference to the daily facts that take place in the school as a teaching element of the first order.
- Importance of the atmosphere and organisation in the school: Promotion of the active participation of the teaching staff, pupils and fathers and mothers in the democratic management of the school.
- Globalising and interdisciplinary approaches (projects).
- The learning-service.

¹ Although confined to the Andalusian sphere, it is possible to mention the doctoral thesis of María Puig Gutiérrez (2011) “Schools and education for citizenship: experiences in Andalusia” which approaches aspects related to the implementation of the subject.



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CONTENT: WHAT SUBJECTS ARE DEALT WITH?

Also, the mentioned empirical study made by the CIVES Foundation for the ENGAGE project, shows that the EFC should imbue the students with knowledge, competencies and understanding on:

** Equality between men and women. To value and to respect the differences of the sexes and the equality of rights and opportunities among them. To reject the stereotypes that suppose discrimination between men and women.*

** Education in the exercise of tolerance and freedom within the democratic principles of coexistence, as well as the prevention of conflicts and the peaceful resolution of such.*

** To know, to understand and to respect different cultures and the differences between people, to critically analyse and assess the existing inequalities and to practise solidarity between people and groups. Interculturality.*

** To strengthen citizen responsibility, consolidating attitudes of respect and prevention, in the sphere of road security, responsible consumption, in the face of situations of risk and catastrophe, respect living species and the environment, training for peace, co-operation and solidarity between peoples, defence of the heritage, the social role of taxes, the role of the army, etc.*

Also, the teaching staff state that the EFC is a suitable space for the teachers to teach and the pupils to learn:

** About the fundamental characteristics and the operation of a democratic regime, the principles and rights established in the Spanish Constitution and in the Treaties and Universal Declarations of Human Rights.*

** About the characteristics of the institutional and political system of the European Union, giving importance to those aspects that show the need to construct an active European citizenship that is able to exert and to defend their rights and democratic responsibilities at the level of European society.*

** About democratic memory. Study and knowledge of the historical background of democratic development and citizenship rights in Spain.*



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DO TEACHERS RECEIVE SPECIFIC TRAINING TO TEACH EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP?

The empirical study made by CIVES shows that:

- * Currently, there barely exists an offer of permanent training for the teaching staff in matters related to the subject of EfC.*
- * The teaching staff consider that specific permanent training is required.*
- * Directed to future education professionals, it is necessary to include the study of the teaching of EfC in the training plans of the Higher Education Institutions (Universities), both Spanish and European.*

This circumstance had already been indicated by the mentioned report of Amnesty International: the scarce attention that was given in Spanish Universities to training in EfC during the Initial Training of the teaching staff.