



Learning to Learn and Civic Competences: different currencies or two sides of the same coin?

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EUR 23360 EN 2008

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JRC 45123

EUR 23360 EN

Language: EN

Catalogue number: LB-NA-23360-EN-C

ISBN: 978-92-79-08961-9

ISSN 1018-5593

DOI: 10.2788/72764

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

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Printed in Italy

Abstract

In the context of the European Union Framework of Key Competences and the need to develop indicators for European Union member states to measure progress made towards the 'knowledge economy' and 'greater social cohesion' both the competences learning to learn and civic competence have been identified as important, and research projects developed. However, what has yet to be discussed are the links and the overlaps between these two competences. Based on the development of research projects on these two fields, this paper will compare the two sets of competencies. It will describe how the values and dispositions that motivate and inform civic competence and learning to learn are related to each other, both empirically and theoretically. Both these competences are tools for empowering the individual and giving them the motivation, autonomy and responsibility to control their own lives beyond the social circumstances in which they find themselves. In the case of civic competence; the ability to be able to participate in society and voice their concerns, ensure their rights and the rights of others. In the case of learning to learn to be able to participate in work and everyday life by being empowered to learn and update the constantly changing competences required to successfully manage your life plans. The development and measurement of both these competences invoke and require values which promote democracy and human rights.

Introduction

The necessary learning outcomes for success or indeed survival for countries, regions and the world itself have received increasing interest from the European Commission and international bodies (OECD and UNESCO). In this paper we explore two key competences: learning to learn and civic competence. We assess the implications of the similarities and differences between them for education and lifelong learning today. This paper is informed by a number of ongoing research projects in this field. Two of the projects are based on European wide networks and are led by the European Commission Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning on the topics of civic competence and learning to learn¹. The other research projects have been developed at the University Bristol on the topic of Learning Power and the formation of values in young people (Deakin Crick, 2007, Deakin Crick and Joldersma, 2006, Arthur et al., 2006, Deakin Crick et al., 2004).

We begin this paper with a discussion of the notion of ‘competence’ as an increasingly important type of educational outcome and we explore the differences between a competence and academic or skill-based outcomes which have traditionally tended to dominate schooling systems in the latter part of the twentieth century. We then go on to describe contemporary understandings of civic competence and learning to learn competence. Finally we argue that both sets of competencies are informed by a set of core moral values which themselves are grounded in a generic notion of responsibility for a sustainable social world.

What is a competence?

A competence refers to a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world, in a particular domain. One’s achievement at work, in personal relationships or in civil society are not based simply on the accumulation of second hand knowledge stored as data, but as a combination of this knowledge with skills, values, attitudes, desires and motivation and its application in a particular human setting at a particular point in a trajectory in time. Competence implies a sense of agency, action and value.

To understand competences the spotlight is on the accomplishment of ‘real world tasks’ and on a multiplicity of ways of knowing – for example knowing how to do something; knowing oneself and one’s desires, or knowing why something is important as well as knowing about something. This is similar to Delor’s 4 pillars of learning developed for UNESCO: ‘learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do and learning to be.’ (Delor, 1996). Importantly competencies are expressed in action and by definition are embedded in narratives and shaped by values – this action, or way of doing something is more important or desirable than that one because it leads to a particular end. Just as a competence is recognised in the context

¹ For further information see the CRELL website
http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/WP/research_area.htm#Active%20citizenship%20in%20a%20learning%20context

of the real world the development of competences are also based in real world experiences and take into account the full spectrum of learning opportunities (informal, non-formal and formal learning) throughout the life span.

Perhaps the most thorough recent exploration of the concept was undertaken by the OECD in the DeSeCo². Drawing on this work, the term competence was defined by Rychen and Salganik

‘as the ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilisation of psychosocial prerequisites (including cognitive and non-cognitive aspects)’

and as the

‘internal mental structures in the sense of abilities, dispositions or resources embedded in the individual’ in interaction with a ‘specific real world task or demand’. (2003:43)

They go on to describe the internal structures of a competence as including dimensions of ‘knowledge, cognitive skills, practical skills, attitudes, emotions, values and ethics and motivation’ (2003:44).

Thus they propose a holistic model of competence, which spans a range of human processes and actions and incorporates cognitive, affective and volitional elements, as well as an ethical dimension, implying moral agency and desire. Significantly the site of a competence is at the interface between the person and the demands of the real world. Competencies are broader than knowledge or skills, and are acquired in an ongoing, lifelong learning process across the whole range of personal, social and political contexts. The term competence is strongly value dependent (Westera, 2001) because a competence is expressed in action in the real world, for example a person could be a competent thief, a competent mechanic or a competent carer.

What are Key competencies?

One of the challenges for education is to identify competencies which are key to successful life in the 21st Century – and competencies for learning to learn and for citizenship are widely accepted candidates. Canto-Sperber and Dupuy (OECD, 2001) refer to key competencies as competencies indispensable for the good life. In the same report the anthropologist Goody writes that *‘the major competencies must be how best to spend one’s work and leisure-time within the framework of the society in which ones lives’* (OECD, 2001:182).

The DeSeCo programme identified four analytical elements of key competencies: they are multifunctional; they are transversal across social fields; they refer to a higher order of mental complexity which includes an active, reflective and responsible

² OECD Program Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

approach to life; and they are multi-dimensional, incorporating know how, analytical, critical, creative and communication skills as well as common sense. Within this project a number of OECD countries were asked to list which competences they considered to be key competences. Four groups of competencies were frequently mentioned in the country reports: (i) Social Competencies / Cooperation; (ii) Literacies / Intelligent and applicable knowledge; (iii) Learning Competencies / Lifelong Learning; and (iv) Communication Competencies (Trier, 2002).

European Union countries, in the context of the Lisbon process and the knowledge society, have equally taken an interest in defining and developing key competences. A Recommendation on key competencies for lifelong learning adopted by the Council on Education and the European Parliament in December 2006 (Council, 2006) sets out eight: (i) Communication in the mother tongue; (ii) 2) Communication in foreign languages; (iii) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; (iv) Digital competence; (v) Learning to learn; (vi) Social and civic competences; (vii) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and (viii) Cultural awareness and expression.

Integrating traditionally separate domains

There has been a tendency in education systems to view knowledge as the acquisition of cognitive skills and understanding and to see this as distinct and separate from personal, social and moral development, with separate resourcing and assessment frameworks. The former are sometimes described as 'hard' or 'cognitive' outcomes, which are easier to measure, whereas the latter are described as 'soft' or 'affective' outcomes, which are subjective and difficult to assess. This, we argue, is a legacy from the Enlightenment project and the pursuit of independent inquiry in which value was measured by the degree of mastery of, say, universal laws of nature or their applications, language, or social structure.

This model of competence requires the cumulative development of a range of cognitive, affective and motivational capabilities, through experience over time and these capabilities are deeply inter-related. For example the distinction between values, attitudes, beliefs and knowledge is not simple. (Rokeach, 1968) argues that

'values are a type of belief, centrally located within one's belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave, or about an end-state of existence worth or not worth attaining'(1968:124)

He claims that a person can have thousands of beliefs, hundreds of attitudes but only dozens of values, which fit into a hierarchical system in terms of their relative importance. Once a value is internalised it becomes a criteria for guiding action. Beliefs attitudes and values can all be consciously conceived or unconsciously held, and have to be inferred from what a person says and does. They operationalise affect, cognition and volition or desire. At the same time, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, through deep learning also requires cognition, affect and volition. Bateson (1972) and Argyris (1982) present three distinct levels of learning and

inquiry. In the second level learning arises from reflection, from observing how one is making choices, and what frames of assumptions are involved in learning by rote and its extensions. At this level the acquisition of new knowledge may lead to broad changes in a person's life and changed worldviews.

This dualism of the cognitive as opposed to the personal, affective and experiential is no longer tenable for education systems in the information age. The rapid cycle of 'innovation–use–development' has accelerated change and its dissemination, and destroyed the boundaries separating traditionally 'autonomous' domains of science and art, nature and culture, globality and locality, personal and public (Castells, 2000). Indeed, such interventions in human fortunes have been described by many as body-invasive, as 'incorporations' (Canguilhem, 1992), 1992). However Steinberg and Kincheloe, (1998) complain that schooling continues to be dominated by a style of teaching that imparts facts to students:

'Such teaching fits seamlessly into the dominant epistemology of western science that has fragmented the world to the point that many people are blinded to particular forms of human experience' (1998:12).

This, they continue, undermines our capacity to recognise the connections between our actions and our surroundings, between the subjective and the objective, and between personal development and achievement. *'Contemporary schools still emphasise quantities, distance and locations, not qualities, relationships or context' (ibid)'*.

We argue that the concept of 'competence' provides us with a way of identifying educational outcomes which are consistent with the demands of society for education in the information age because, conceptually it integrates the academic and contextual, the universal and local, the objective and the subjective, the cognitive and the affective, facts and values.

What is civic competence?

Civic competence is the complex mix of the sum of the different learning outcomes which are necessary for an individual to become an active citizen. It is a combination of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which enable people to act successfully in civil society, representative democracy and everyday life based on democratic values. The European Commission's Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning defines civic competence thus:

"Civic competence is based on 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 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..."
(Council, 2006 p.17 annex, paragraph 6b)

Skills for civic competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. This involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community or neighbourhood activities as well as decision-making at all levels, from local to national and European level, including through voting. There is a plethora of lists of competencies necessary for active citizenship, for example Veldhuis, 1997, Audigier, 2000, Crick 1998.

Building on lists developed so far the CRELL Research Network on Active Citizenship for Democracy has proposed the following detailed list of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as necessary for active citizenship:

- Knowledge: human rights and responsibilities, political literacy, historical knowledge, current affairs, diversity, cultural heritage, legal matters and how to influence policy and society;
- Skills: conflict resolution, intercultural competence, informed decision-making, creativity, ability to influence society and policy, research capability, advocacy, autonomy/agency, critical reflection, communication, debating skills, active listening, problem solving, coping with ambiguity, working with others, assessing risk;
- Attitudes: political trust, political interest, political efficacy, autonomy and independence, resilience, cultural appreciation, respect for other cultures, openness to change/difference of opinion, responsibility and openness to involvement as active citizens, influencing society and policy;
- Values: human rights, democracy, gender equality, sustainability, peace/non-violence, fairness and equity, valuing involvement as active citizens.
- Identity: sense of personal identity, sense of community identity, sense of national identity, sense of global identity.

What can be said from all the various lists is that civic competence is a complex mix of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes and dispositions, and requires a sense of identity and agency.

The operational model of civic competence developed by CRELL (Hoskins et al 2008) to measure civic competence, using the available data from IEA CIVED 1999³ and based on a factor analysis of all the data together, contains four dimensions; citizenship values, social justice values and attitudes, participatory attitudes and

³ For more information concerning the IEA CIVED data see <http://www.iea.nl/cived.html>

cognition about democratic institutions. Citizenship values were comprised from two sub-dimensions: attitudes towards conventional citizenship and attitudes towards citizens who participate in social movements. Social Justice is a combination of three sub-dimensions: women's rights, minority rights and social justice at school. Participatory attitudes were a combination of five sub-dimensions: self-efficacy, intended participation in the community, protest and vote and participation at school. Cognition about democratic institutions is a combination of three scales: knowledge of political institutions and how they work, skills in particular on how to interpret the media and a combined dimension on knowledge and attitudes of how democracy works (Hoskins 2008).

What is learning to learn competence?

Just as civic competence is the sum of the individual learning outcomes necessary for active citizen, learning to learn competence can also be understood as that complex mix of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and dispositions which support the individual in becoming a lifelong learner engaging with learning opportunities throughout the life span, both formally and informally.

The Recommendation on the European framework of key competence (Council 2006) contains the following definition of the concept learning to learn:

'Learning to learn' is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skill as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence. (Council, 2006, P. 16 paragraph 5, annex.)

This holistic definition includes values, attitudes and dispositions *and* knowledge, skills and understanding, and incorporates the concept of self awareness and agency. It includes the concept of learning relationships, context, story and motivation.

A focus on learning to learn is important because it leads to 'intentional learning' (Black et al., 2006). Intentional learning implies a novel sense of agency and choice on the part of the learner, and involves self awareness, ownership and responsibility. Black et al are reluctant to reduce the concept of 'learning to learn' either to an individual quality or to a set of strategies. They argue that it is impossible to separate learning to learn from the process of learning itself, focusing on the term 'learning practices' that incorporate intra- and inter-personal processes. Likewise (Bereiter and

Scardamalia, 1989) argue that intentional learning goes beyond the acquisition of study skills and strategies and requires practices which invoke the need for the learner to take responsibility for their own learning, and to do this in a way that involves peers. This requires students to be motivated to learn, to be intentional, to be aware of themselves and others as learners and to regulate their own learning. (Hautamaki et al., 2002) also emphasise the importance of learner agency and self-regulation.

In a key text which summarises forty two theoretical frameworks for thinking and learning which have been used since the second world war, Mosely and colleagues (2005) identified seven of these which they describe as ‘all embracing’ frameworks which seek to provide a comprehensive account of how people learn and think in a range of contexts, rather than just deal with one aspect of learning, such as cognition. What is common to these seven is that they treat the learner as a ‘whole person’, who thinks, feels, hopes and has a sense of self as ‘chooser’ or agent in his or her own learning journey. They all, to some degree, see the learner as a person in relation to other people, capable of communicating and collaborating with co-learners, and learning from experience. They acknowledge that the learner is ‘embodied’, although they don’t explicitly look at the location of the learner in a particular community, with its own social practices, traditions and worldviews.

Mosely and his colleagues go on to identify the principles used in all forty two of the frameworks they examined in their handbook. These are:

Domain

Area of experience

Subject area

Content

Types of objective

Types of product (including knowledge product)

Process

Steps/phases in a sequence or cycle

Complexity

Level in a hierarchy

Type of thinking or learning

Quality of thought or action

Psychological aspects

Stage of development

Structural features of cognition

Nature and strength of dispositions

Internalization of learning

Orchestration and control of thinking

Degree of learner autonomy

Level of consciousness

(Mosely et al. 2005)

This framework maps out the principles that are relevant to learning to learn competences, and most contemporary approaches to learning to learn can be understood through it. However, as with civic competence, there is a plethora of

terminologies and lists of elements which together constitute learning to learn. The following example is from Northern Ireland's Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework:

Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making	Searching for meaning, deepening understanding, coping with challenges
Being creative	Imaging, generating, inventing, taking risks for learning
Working with others	Being collaborative, being sensitive to others feelings, being fair and responsible
Self-management	Evaluating strengths and weaknesses, setting goals and targets, managing and regulating self

(Partnership Management Board, 2007)

The European Learning to Learn Test operationalises the definition of the Recommendation on learning to learn (Council 2006). The framework model is based on three dimensions of Cognition, Metacognition and Affective aspects of Learning to learn.

The affective dimension is comprised of 3 sub-dimensions;

- 1 Learning motivation, learning strategies and orientation towards change
- 2 Academic self-concept and self-esteem
- 3 Learning environment

The cognitive dimension is based on the 4 sub-dimensions;

- 1 Identifying a proposition
- 2 Using rules
- 3 Testing rules and propositions
- 4 Using mental tools

The concept of meta-cognition is comprised of 3 sub-dimensions;

- problem solving (metacognitive) monitoring tasks,
- metacognitive accuracy
- metacognitive confidence

The similarities that exist between the two European operational models of civic competence and learning to learn can be seen in the affective dimensions of self-efficacy and motivation and positive attitudes towards engagement. Thus empowerment and engagement of the individual is a horizontal element of both lifelong learning and active citizenship⁴. The cognitive aspects of problem solving occur to some extent in both of these measurements although this plays a more central role in the learning to learn competence. The differences are clearest in the knowledge required for civic competence and the values behind the action solidarity and human rights. However, the wider values involved in learning to learn have yet to be defined within the working model and this could be highlighted as a gap in the current Learning to Learn Test rather than a difference. This does not mean that we are

⁴ One would expect that in such parallel needs a coherent pedagogical approach of 'experimental learning' and 'learning by doing' would be the most effective.

arguing that one test and model could measure both competences or in fact that these competences are the same thing our argument is that civic competence and learning to learn are complementary and subsequently that active citizenship and lifelong learning are coherent and inter-related social outcomes. It is likely that those who are good in one are also good at the other.

Active Citizenship and Learning to Learn: twin sides of the same coin?

So far we have discussed the nature of a competence as a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world, in a particular domain. We have shown how education in the 21st century requires not just a few ‘add on skills’ but attention to the development of competencies – *within which* certain skills, values, attitudes, knowledges and understandings are required. These competencies will be expressed in real life contexts, by individual agents and have ethical implications. Key competencies which are widely agreed to be important include both civic competence and learning to learn.

The idea that learning can lead to profound change in individuals, and communities is an important link between these two core competencies because both the notion of competence as we have described it, and the notion of personal and social change, are historical, contextualized, and value dependent: they imply a sense of direction leading towards a ‘desired end’. In a discussion of key competencies for life in the 21st century, (Haste, 2001) identifies an overarching ‘meta-competence’ of being able to manage the tension between innovation and continuity. This is something which schools need to nurture and develop in their learners and, in our opinion, this is a pre-requisite too for both lifelong learning and active citizenship. She argues that in order to be able to manage this tension people need these additional competencies:

- Adaptively assimilate changing technologies
- Deal with ambiguity and diversity
- Find and sustain community links
- Manage motivation and emotion
- Moral responsibility and citizenship

In a practical educational framework the Crick (1998) Report in the UK identified four distinct elements of Citizenship Education, which it suggested should be reached by the end of compulsory schooling which they broke down into key concepts, values and dispositions, skills and aptitudes, and knowledge and understanding. The skills in particular relate to cognitive and social learning processes, while the values and dispositions relate to moral concerns some of which are reminiscent of Smith and Spurling’s (1999) moral components of lifelong learning.

Smith and Spurling developed a holistic notion of lifelong learning that includes an empirical element that describes the scope of lifelong learning and a moral element that reflects four principles of conduct. They suggest that the emphasis should be on

continuity, intention and unfolding strategy in personal learning, and that linked to these are four principles of personal commitment to learning, social commitment to learning, respect for others' learning and respect for truth.

Smith and Spurling further argue that there are four discourses that support this definition of lifelong learning, which are linked conceptually with the values of democratic debate. These have to do with the value of group learning (Clark 1997), in which the key dynamic is that individual members feel a sense of common purpose in the group, while at the same time feel that the group recognises and values their individual contribution and potential. Secondly, they argue that personal and social commitment to learning produces 'public goods' which are vital to everyday social and economic life (Gray, 1999), and they suggest that, underlying this view of lifelong learning, is a theme, which is consistent with a widespread ethical concern for equality of opportunity in lifelong learning. Fourthly, they indicate that the moral principles of lifelong learning, especially those of respecting others' learning and respecting truth, affirm Friere's (1972) idea of learning as a 'naming of the world'. Thus, in mapping out an overall picture of what lifelong learning involves, Smith and Spurling begin to develop ideas about learning identity, or the active learning agent within community. This concept of learning identity is important because it underlies the notion of a range of learning capabilities.

Civic competence and Learning to Learn competence are both concerned with the development of personal values, attitudes and dispositions, identities, knowledge, skills and understanding. Understanding the extent to which these overlap is important for contemporary pedagogy in a post mechanical age, in which new technologies have transformed the division of labour and the relationship between the human and natural environments. They rendered obsolete the notion of a 'job for life' and with it the mid 20th century meanings of words like profession, skill and learning. It follows that young people must be empowered to adjust to and take advantage of this novel condition of humanity. Instead of expending all their learning power on rote storing of solutions to eternal problems and 'facts' in their brains, students must acquire methods of retrieving and manipulating knowledge and information. They must be able to recognise and manage their own learning processes and pathways, defining them in terms of simple local parameters and sharing them with others on a time scale dictated by the event itself. They must be able to learn on the problem and to use self-assessment to control the direction, intensity and standard of their work and in doing so contribute to the sustainability of life on this planet.

Relationship between higher order thinking skills and active citizenship

A useful model in relation to citizenship education, particularly as it relates to the findings of the first review, is that proposed by Fogarty and McTigue (1993). They identified three phases in the attempt to define and teach thinking skills. These were: skill acquisition (e.g. Marzano and Hutchins, 1985) critical and creative thinking as required for problem-solving (De Bono, 1985), and 'thoughtful application' (Brown and Palinscar, 1982).

Clearly, skill acquisition and critical and creative thinking are important for decision-making and lifelong learning, as required in a rapidly changing world. Yet it is the third kind of thinking skill, that of ‘thoughtful application’, that seems to be the most relevant to citizenship education. Fogarty called this kind of thinking ‘the thoughtful classroom / the mindful school’. It is the level of thinking required to shift from a direct instruction model that focuses on skill development to a level of thinking where learners actively process the information in order to construct knowledge and meaning. This third level or phase of thinking requires thoughtful abstraction of information for application and transfer of learning. Fogarty and McTighe argued that the thoughtful classroom and school is one where students develop ‘productive problem-solving strategies, mindful decision-making tactics and creative, innovative thinking’ (1993:165).

Fogarty argued that there has been an evolutionary path in the thinking skills movement from skill acquisition, to meaning-making and finally to application and transfer. He called this the ‘three story intellect’: the first story is where teachers are concerned with teaching the specific skills of thinking, such as creative skills and critical skills; the second story is where teachers are concerned with providing opportunities for students to practise those skills with appropriate tools, such as co-operative learning structures and graphic representations; and the third story is where teachers help students to anchor their learning, using the processing methods structured into second story skills and they build up concepts, skills, attitudes and strategies for lifelong use, and application in diverse academic, social and personal settings throughout their lives. He suggested there is an overlap between creative and critical thinking, which draws on the affective domain and leads to the application and transfer of knowledge. These he suggested are significant curricular outcomes for the thoughtful classroom and the mindful school. They are identified in Figure 1.2 and show a relationship between creative and critical thinking, and affective development.

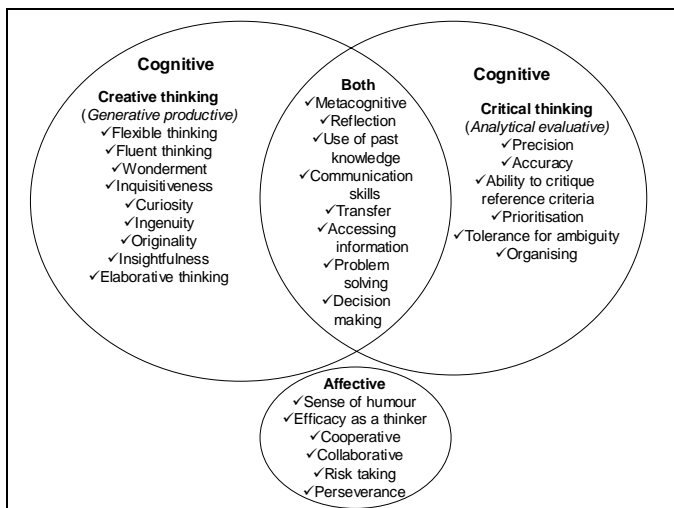


Figure 1.2: (Fogarty and McTighe 1993)

Empirical evidence for the relationship between the two competences

Further evidence of the link between the two competencies can be found in two systematic reviews of evidence about the impact of citizenship education on the provision of schooling (Deakin Crick et al., 2005, Deakin Crick et al., 2004). One of the main outcomes of these two reviews of research evidence was to highlight the relationship between a learner centred pedagogy, which stimulates the development of learning to learn competence and ‘intentional learning’ and the skills, values, attitudes and dispositions for active citizenship. The following search terms were used to identify empirical studies which dealt with both competencies:

Citizenship Education

Moral and social responsibility
Community involvement
Political literacy
Human rights education
Education for diversity
Spiritual moral social and cultural development
Personal development
Character education
Emotional and social literacy
Values education
Service learning
Active learning
Conflict resolution
Peer mediation
Community participation
Responsible action
Civics
Preparation for adult life

Learning

Creative thinking
Critical thinking
Meta-cognition
Experiential learning
Meaning-making
Inter- and intra-personal awareness, including empathy
Communication skills
Collaboration
Problem-solving/decision-making
Values awareness

Achievement

Cognitive outcomes (e.g. logical, linguistic, mathematical)

Personal outcomes (e.g. inter and intra-personal development)

Social outcomes (e.g. relationships with groups, societies, communities, organisations and the world)

Moral and political outcomes (e.g. political literacy, political knowledge, ethical decision-making)

The combined finding from the synthesised studies finally selected through this process for data analysis, demonstrate that the quality of dialogue and discourse in the classroom is essential both to learning to learn and to citizenship education, that such discourse is connected with learning about shared values, human rights and issues of justice and equality. They show that a facilitative, learner-centred pedagogy, characterised by trust and respect, integral, contextualised values education, and personal meaning making is crucial both developing both learning to learn competence and civic competence. Central too are problem based thinking, and context based, real life learning.

They demonstrate that developing civic competence can enhance students’ ability to make meaning of and connections between their personal stories and society and improve their higher order creative and critical thinking skills, their communication skills and their overall academic achievement.

Character formation and citizenship

A recent UK study of 551 16-19 year old students demonstrated a positive relationship between core moral values, students' level of achievement and their learning dispositions (Arthur et al., 2006). In other words, students in this study who reported a high level of what the study identified as 'character dimensions' were also more likely to have a high level of learning dispositions and in addition they were more likely to be higher achievers in terms of exam results.

The findings of the study led to a holistic, dynamic and critical model of character formation. The study identified that the following personal dimensions of character were important to these young people:

- 'Spiritual and religious engagement' – awareness of my own spirituality; the importance of religion or faith in developing my values and character
- 'Living my virtues and values' – reflecting and acting on my moral values; standing up for what I believe in
- 'Political engagement' – understanding and participating in our political system and debate
- 'Identity in relationship' – having a healthy and stable sense of my own identity and relating positively to others
- 'Ambition, meaning and purpose' – having a strong sense of my own meaning and purpose in life and the will to fulfil it
- 'Critical social justice' – minding strongly about personal or social injustice and wanting to correct it; caring for the environment
- 'Challenge and responsibility' - willingness to take responsibility and persevere in challenging others and facing challenge
- 'Critical learning and becoming' – knowing I am growing and changing and can become a better person even if at personal cost; being honest with myself and valuing honesty from others
- 'Community engagement' – getting on with my neighbours and being actively involved with my community

The character dimensions which were significantly related to exam achievement, through correlation statistics and Analysis of Variance computations, were 'living my virtues and values' 'political engagement' 'critical social justice', 'challenge and responsibility' and 'community engagement'. In addition, 14% of the variance in average point score in GSCE was accounted for by five character dimensions in a regression computation.

The same study explored the relationship between the values, attitudes and dispositions, which support and strengthen a person's capacity to learn and to go on learning, and the dimensions of character emerging from the study. The learning profile data was drawn from the Effective Lifelong learning Inventory and its seven dimensions of learning power (Deakin Crick et al, 2004) : changing and learning; meaning making; critical curiosity; creativity; learning relationships; strategic

awareness and resilience. The statistical analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between all nine character dimensions and learning power.

Conclusions

What we can conclude is that the two key competences, civic competence and learning to learn have a large degree of commonality which, considering that both are essential for individual and societal success, provides important implications for education systems and the development of lifelong learning opportunities.

From the evidence that we have drawn on in this paper, what we can say is that Civic competence and Learning to learn competences are both a requirement in relationship to real world tasks, for example, the need to learn how to learn in the knowledge society and the need to have the voices of citizens heard in a Europe concerned about democratic deficit. Each competence has not only a cognitive element but a strong affective dimension and should be treated as a quality of a whole person. Critical thinking, creativity and the values of equality and justice are, from the research presented in this paper, considered important dimensions of both. The values, in each case, are attributed as the basis for action – civic competence leading to active citizenship – learning to learn leading to active learning or lifelong learning. Both competences are learned most successfully through learner centred pedagogies and through an environment built on trust and respect, which is engaged with wider communities. Academic success has also been correlated with both competences.

What the evidence has suggested is that civic competence and learning to learn are competences that enable or facilitate citizens into action. Presumably whatever their circumstances, once these competences are learned, individuals have the tools to create positive social change either by helping themselves politically, to empower their communities and assure their rights or through actively pursuing the necessary learning opportunities to develop the relevant knowledge and skills for new or better employment. What we could suggest is that perhaps the ‘desired end’ to which these policies are linked is social inclusion driven by empowered and responsible active citizens and active learners. The implementation of the learning opportunities on offer to young people or indeed to all individuals will determine to what extent all citizens can benefit from learning these competences to avoid increasing social exclusion.

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European Commission

EUR 23360 EN – Joint Research Centre – Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen

Title: Measuring Civic Competence in Europe

Author(s): Bryony Hoskins and Ruth Deakin Crick

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2008 –22. – 21 x 29.70 cm

EUR – Scientific and Technical Research series – ISSN 1018-5593

ISBN: 978-92-79-08961-9

DOI: 10.2788/72764

Abstract

In the context of the European Union Framework of Key Competences and the need to develop indicators for European Union member states to measure progress made towards the 'knowledge economy' and 'greater social cohesion' both the competences learning to learn and civic competence have been identified as important, and research projects developed. However, what has yet to be discussed are the links and the overlaps between these two competences. Based on the development of research projects on these two fields, this paper will compare the two sets of competencies. It will describe how the values and dispositions that motivate and inform civic competence and learning to learn are related to each other, both empirically and theoretically. Both these competences are tools for empowering the individual and giving them the motivation, autonomy and responsibility to control their own lives beyond the social circumstances in which they find themselves. In the case of civic competence; the ability to be able to participate in society and voice their concerns, ensure their rights and the rights of others. In the case of learning to learn to be able to participate in work and everyday life by being empowered to learn and update the constantly changing competences required to successfully manage your life plans. The development and measurement of both these competences invoke and require values which promote democracy and human rights.

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