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14. How an integrated approach to citizenship education can help schools contribute to the citizenship competences of their students

Manja Coopmans and Geert ten Dam

INTRODUCTION

To a large extent, citizenship competences are acquired outside of school: at home, through friends, on the street, at work, at the football club, or at another type of leisure or religious association. The ICCS studies indicate that the relatively minor influence that schools have applies mainly to citizenship attitudes and skills, but it applies to citizenship knowledge, too (Isac et al., 2014; Schulz et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2018). In the experience of adolescents themselves, citizenship is often not learnt at school, as the opportunity to gain democratic experiences is rather limited in school (Biesta, Lawy, & Kelly, 2009; Nieuwelink, Dekker, Geijssel, & ten Dam, 2016). In the words of a Dutch student: “Most teachers will want to pretend they are listening to you but then will brush you off by saying ‘I will take care of it’ and then do nothing about it” (Nieuwelink et al., 2016, p. 184).

Nevertheless, the contribution of education to citizenship is significant for two reasons. Firstly, citizenship competences during adolescence correlate with citizenship knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour later in life (Neundorf, Niemi, & Smets, 2016; Prior, 2010; Russo & Stattin, 2017; Shehata & Amnå, 2017). This applies, for example, to people’s support for democratic values or their inclination to participate in politics (Eckstein et al., 2012; Hooghe & Wilkenfeld, 2008; Prior, 2010; Quintelier & Van Deth, 2014). The relevance of the so-called formative years for the development of citizenship competences makes it clear that schools have at least a part to play in this. Several studies indicate, for example, that teachers can encourage civic engagement among adolescents (e.g. Wanders, Dijkstra, Maslowski, Van der Veen, & Amnå, 2020).

Secondly, the literature shows that, when it comes to many aspects of citizenship, there are clear differences between groups. Parents’ level of education, in particular, plays a role: the higher their level of education, the higher, for example, the citizenship knowledge of their children and the greater their children’s interest and trust in politics (see, e.g. Coopmans et al., 2020; Janmaat & Hoskins, 2022; Schulz et al., 2018; Stals et al., 2022; ten Dam, Dijkstra, Van der Veen, & Van Goethem, 2020). Such differences are an indication of social inequality. Schools can increase these differences, but they can also make them smaller (Deimel, Hoskins, & Abs, 2020). In the case of socially vulnerable students in particular, education professionals can make a difference. Teaching adolescents – whatever their sociocultural background – how to function successfully in a democratic society is a task for all schools, and promoting the core values of democracy is a joint responsibility.

Gradually, a picture is emerging of how schools can or cannot contribute to students’ citizenship competences. The insights obtained from this still-young tradition of research into

the effects of citizenship education can give teachers and school leaders tools for their actions, thereby contributing to the quality of citizenship education. This chapter deepens our understanding of successful school factors with the help of a Dutch study that uses a comprehensive school effectiveness model of citizenship education (Coopmans et al., 2020). We describe the interrelated role of a wide range of citizenship education elements, ranging from education policy and the professional learning environment to teaching approaches and school climate. We start, however, with an overview of what we already know about the different ways in which schools can foster citizenship competences based on the existing literature.

THE ROLE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: WHAT DO WE ALREADY KNOW?

In the Classroom

Much of the research into the impact of citizenship education focuses on what happens in the classroom, such as the type of citizenship themes that are addressed or the type of classroom discussions that take place. If we look at the research into teaching practices in the context of citizenship education, such as teachers' pedagogical practices, teaching methods and the activities offered, we encounter the following findings. Active, experience-based ways of learning – such as simulations of elections, role-plays, internships and extra-curricular activities – appear to positively contribute to the development of various citizenship competences and more general social and political engagement among students (Donbavand & Hoskins, 2021; Hoskins, Janmaat, & Villalba, 2012; Keating & Janmaat, 2016; Maurissen, 2018a; Teegelbeckers, Nieuwelink, & Oostdam, 2023). The United Kingdom's (UK) CELS study indicates that active "learning by doing" activities also have a lasting positive impact on adolescents' political engagement (Keating & Janmaat, 2016). This finding is in line with a previous United States (US) longitudinal study, which likewise found that participation-oriented activities (in this case, voluntary work) had a lasting impact (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007; McFarland & Thomas, 2006).

At the same time, the effectiveness of these kinds of curricular and extra-curricular approaches depends on the specific outcome measure that is being considered (Teegelbeckers et al., 2023), as well as on the extent to which attention is paid to discussing the content of and reflecting on the experiences gained during these activities (Knowles, Torney-Purta, & Barber, 2018; Reichert & Print, 2018; Van Goethem et al., 2014). The review study of Teegelbeckers and colleagues (2023) indicates that, among other things, teacher-oriented instruction with classroom discussion has an impact on students' citizenship knowledge, while small-group work is more likely to foster students' political engagement. In the context of citizenship education, engaging in discussion is not only a pedagogical approach but also a goal in itself. Being able to share experiences and perspectives and put yourself in someone else's shoes is a skill that is crucial to people's ability to function adequately in a democratic society (Hess & Avery, 2008; Parker & Hess, 2001).

The extent to which students benefit from an approach that aims to enhance citizenship knowledge or critical reflection during classroom discussions does appear to depend on the extent to which students are already familiar with discussing issues in the context of citizenship education (Coopmans & Rinnooy Kan, 2023). This is associated, among other things,

with students' sociocultural backgrounds. Students from high SES families are generally more familiar with free discussion of societal issues and also more frequently regard the classroom environment as open for discussion (Hoskins, Huang, & Arensmeier, 2021; Mennes, 2023).

Another element that appears to play a role in the effectiveness of citizenship education is the degree of autonomy that students perceive (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Teaching methods in which students experience a sense of ownership and can make decisions themselves regarding the content of the lessons, for example, are conducive to the development of students' citizenship knowledge, skills and attitudes (Coopmans et al., 2020; Torney-Purta, Wilkenfeld & Barber, 2008). It is nonetheless crucial that a balance is found between, on the one hand, supporting autonomy and, on the other, offering sufficient structure. The latter aspect in particular must be carefully aligned with the learning level of the student (Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010).

Finally, the importance of the classroom environment in a more general sense is also frequently addressed in research into citizenship education. Multiple studies indicate that an open and democratic environment in the classroom – with an emphasis on a safe ambience, in which students feel free to form an opinion and in which there is room for their voices to be heard and for them to listen to the voices of others – is essential for the development of students' citizenship competences (Campbell, 2008; Geboers, Geijssel, Admiraal, & ten Dam, 2013; Knowles, Torney-Purta, & Barber, 2018; Maurissen, 2018b). The same applies to the relationship between student and teacher. Teacher support is not only one of the strongest predictors of school belonging (Allen et al., 2018), but students who feel more positive about their relationship with their teacher are also more positive about their citizenship competences (Isac et al., 2014; Sincer et al., 2022) and more civically engaged than students who are less positive about these relationships (Sampermans, Isac, & Claes, 2018; Wanders et al., 2019).

The Role of the School

Besides teaching practices and classroom environment factors, school leadership, the education policy and the professional learning community within a school are also important for the achievement of educational objectives (Scheerens, 2016). A meta-analysis of the impact of school leadership on students' performance indicates, for example, that school leadership does not have a direct impact on students' results but rather an indirect impact through educational policy (Kyriakides, Creemers, Antoniou, & Demetriou, 2010). "Effective schools", in this case, are able to develop policies and take concrete action to improve their educational practice and learning environment, for example, by offering professional development for subject teachers.

The above is likely to apply to citizenship education, too. Students in schools that have a clear vision for enhancing citizenship, for example, are more positive about their citizenship qualities and reflect more frequently on citizenship themes than in schools with a less clear vision of citizenship (Dijkstra, Geijssel, Ledoux, Van der Veen, & ten Dam, 2015). Moreover, in schools where teachers more frequently play an active role in the school's leadership team, students generally score higher on citizenship knowledge and social engagement (Reichert, Chen, & Torney-Purta, 2018). Likewise, in schools where students have a stronger sense that teachers instil a democratic ethos – that is, that they are honest, respectful and inclusive – students not only appear to perceive a more open discussion climate (Maurissen, Claes, & Barber, 2018) but also appear to attach more importance to current and future societal objectives that

contribute to democracy, such as helping people in need or improving inter-ethnic relationships and tolerance (Flanagan et al., 2007).

It is thus not only important that schools offer students practice opportunities in class, such as via mock elections, but also that they provide students with an opportunity to experience democracy in practice, for example, by letting them have a voice in the functioning of the school through a student council. In a study amongst Dutch secondary school students, students' voice experiences at school were shown to be positively related to their attitudes towards contributing and listening democratically (Rinnooy Kan et al., 2023). The UK's CELS study also found support for the (lasting) impact school councils can have on students' political engagement (Keating & Janmaat, 2016). At the same time, ICCS 2016 data from various European countries shows that participation in democratic activities at school, for example, a school council, is more frequent amongst students with high educational aspirations and from families with high socio-economic status, thereby perpetuating political inequality (Kempner & Janmaat, 2023; Mennes et al., 2023). All in all, not one aspect determines the effectiveness of a school concerning enhancing students' citizenship. Research increasingly points to the importance of an integrated or "whole school" approach to citizenship education (Donbavand & Hoskins, 2021), whereby citizenship is woven into all aspects of a school: from school management to teaching practices in the classroom and from teacher behaviour to collaborations with the wider local community. An experiment in the US indicates that students who go to a school with a whole-school approach regarding citizenship education are more likely to vote later in life, compared to schools that have not adopted this approach (Gill et al., 2018). It is all about the interplay between different educational aspects.

AN OVERARCHING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS MODEL FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

What has been lacking so far is a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution that schools can make to students' citizenship. In the literature, the relationship between the various building blocks is often conceptualised with the help of *school effectiveness models* (see also Opdenakker, 2020). The advantage of these models is that they can illustrate both the direct and indirect effects of a range of characteristics of schools and educational approaches in an integrated way. School effectiveness research also has its critics (e.g. Biesta, 2016). It is naive, for example, to suppose that it is possible to determine the effectiveness of a school in general. Different educational objectives require a different approach, and trade-offs can also come into play (Van de Werfhorst, 2014). It is therefore important to note that only if a desired educational objective is precisely specified can it be established which activities contribute to it or not.

In recent years, various school effectiveness models have also been proposed for citizenship education (Dijkstra, De la Motte, & Eilard, 2014; Isac, Maslowski, Creemers, & Van der Werf, 2014; Scheerens, 2011). Despite their specific focus on citizenship, these models are still fairly general in nature. The intended citizenship competences to which the various educational factors combined are supposed to contribute are not specified in detail. Moreover, the models have only scarcely been used in research and have therefore not yet been extensively empirically tested (Donbavand & Hoskins, 2021).

This is not surprising, because in order to use such an overarching school effectiveness model for citizenship education, large-scale datasets are needed, containing an enormous amount of information on, amongst others, school policy, the curriculum, the experiences of students at the school, and so on. The analyses of such a model also require the participation of a large number of schools and students. Moreover, whilst large-scale studies enable us to draw comparisons between groups of students and between schools, they also imply the use of standardised tests and questionnaires, which makes it difficult to grasp the underlying beliefs of students and education professionals on which they base their answers. This disadvantage is intrinsically linked with effectiveness research, particularly in normative domains such as citizenship. This does not mean, however, that we should disregard effectiveness research, on the contrary, as the next sections will show. It does mean that we should be cautious in our interpretations of one single study or model and – in our aim for a comprehensive picture – always strive to *combine* the various insights different studies and approaches have to offer.

In the sections below, we explore the effectiveness of schools in the field of citizenship, with the help of an integrated, or comprehensive, school effectiveness model. We use information derived from the Dutch research project *Understanding the Effects of Schools on Citizenship* (ESC; for more information, see Coopmans et al., 2020). In 2016, 82 secondary schools in the Netherlands took part in the ESC study. At each school, questionnaires on citizenship and citizenship education were completed by school leaders, team leaders, teachers and students (ninth grade, aged 14 on average).¹

The intended educational objectives were operationalised in terms of students' citizenship competences. The conceptualisation is derived from Ten Dam and Volman (2007) who, based on an extensive literature review, identified four social tasks that can be considered representative and meaningful for adolescents' citizenship practices between the ages of 11 and 16: acting democratically, acting in a socially responsible manner, dealing with conflicts and dealing with differences. The measurement tool that was developed, the Citizenship Competences Questionnaire, sets out the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills of students for each social task (see ten Dam et al., 2020, see also Geboers et al., 2013; ten Dam et al., 2011). Knowledge was tested using multiple-choice items (163 items in total, 40 for each student), with three response options. Students were asked, for example, when a country could be called undemocratic. The answer categories were (a) if political parties criticize each other; (b) if people have to pay high taxes; and (c) if people are not allowed to criticize the government (the correct answer is "c"), or "All children have a right to: (a) education, (b) choose who they want to live with, (c) an allowance" (the correct answer is "c"). Attitudes, skills, and reflection were measured on 4-point Likert scales with survey style items. The general question accompanying the attitude items (24 items) is "How well does this statement apply to you?" Sample statements are: "I like knowing about different types of religions" or "People should listen carefully to each other, even when they have different opinions". The basic form of the skill (i.e. self-efficacy) questions (15 items) is: "How good are you at..." and then, for example: "finding a solution which everyone is satisfied with for a disagreement" or "making clear what you want in a discussion". The basic form of the reflection questions (28 items) is: "How often do you think about...", for example, "whether students are listened to at your school" or "what you can do for people who are less well off than you".

The focus on social tasks emphasizes the relevance of the context in which citizenship competences are deployed. Since our research was carried out in the Netherlands, it relates to the social contexts that are relevant for Dutch students. However, the themes that play a role

here – for example, diversity, democracy, equality and inequality, and social trust – are fundamental to modern democratic society, as is clear from the attention paid to these themes in other Western European, democratic societies (see, e.g. Eurydice, 2017).

Different Components of a School Effectiveness Model

Figure 14.1 shows a schematic overview of the school effectiveness model that was used. The model includes school policy around citizenship education, the professional learning environment at school, the teaching practices used by teachers and the perceptions of students concerning the school and classroom environment. School policy was identified by asking school leaders how important they believe citizenship themes such as learning about democracy and other cultures are, how citizenship education is organised (e.g. is there a continuous learning pathway and are there concrete commitments about it) and the extent to which citizenship education is a regular feature on the agenda during meetings.

To gauge the professional learning environment, we asked teachers to what extent they feel supported by the school's leadership (e.g. are their opinions and ideas taken seriously), to what extent they agree with each other about the way they design their teaching and engage with each other, and to what extent they have confidence in (the school work and competences of) their students.

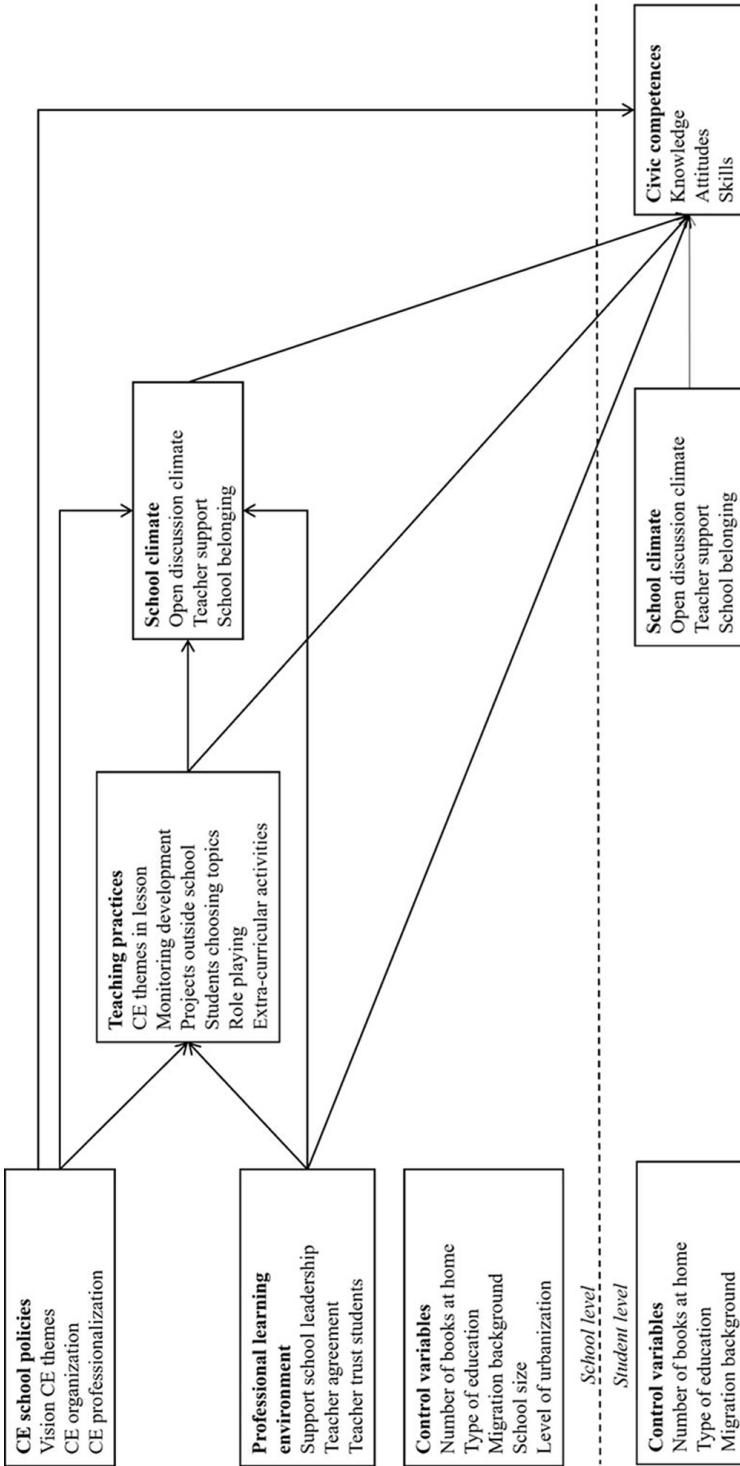
To gain more insight into teaching practices, teachers answered questions about the time they spend on citizenship themes in class and the extent to which they monitor the (development of the) citizenship competences of their students. They were also asked whether students themselves are allowed to suggest topics for discussion and whether they use role-plays, research projects outside school (interviews with residents, for example) and extracurricular activities.

Finally, we looked at the school climate by asking students about their experiences with other students and teachers, the extent to which they felt that their views were taken seriously and whether there was scope for their own topics, divergent opinions and different perspectives in class (a so-called open discussion climate).

Levels and Inter-relationships Within a School Effectiveness Model

In the school effectiveness model of citizenship education, a distinction was made between the school level (e.g. the average amount of time spent on citizenship themes by teachers or the average school climate as perceived by students) and the student level (e.g. how individual students perceive the school climate). In addition, we took into account the specific context of the school, including type of education, school size and students' sociocultural background. We included these factors at both the school and student level (see Figure 14.1).

We also looked at indirect, potentially cumulative, relationships. An example is the relationship between school policy and students' citizenship competences. A clearly formulated vision of citizenship education can, for example, correlate with a greater focus on citizenship themes in class or an open discussion climate. If the classroom climate or the focus on citizenship themes subsequently correlates with the citizenship outcomes of students, this is an *indirect* effect of school policy.



Source: Authors.

Figure 14.1 Schematic overview of the comprehensive school effectiveness model for citizenship education

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

What patterns did we find in our Dutch study? We took a step-by-step approach. We started by looking at the correlations between the different educational elements at the school level. How do school policy and the vision of the school leadership correlate with the teaching practices at a school and with the professional learning environment as perceived by teachers? How do these then correlate with the school climate as perceived by students? Next, using structural equation modelling, we investigated what direct and indirect relationships are evident between these educational elements and students' citizenship knowledge, attitudes and skills.²

How do the Different Elements of Citizenship Education Correlate with Each Other?

Our findings indicate numerous positive relationships between school policy on citizenship education and teaching practices regarding citizenship (for the correlations, see Coopmans et al., 2020). In schools where, according to the school leader, there is a greater focus on citizenship education and the organisation thereof – during meetings, through concrete agreements or the formulation of a continuous learning pathway – teachers not only more frequently address citizenship themes in class, they also invest more time in gaining insight in (the development of) students' citizenship competences. Moreover, extracurricular activities in the context of citizenship education (i.e. outside of the curriculum) are also organised more often at these schools.

In addition, we see positive links between the professional learning environment in terms of the social and professional experiences of teachers and the school climate as perceived by students. In schools where teachers more strongly feel like their voice is being heard by the school's leadership and where teachers are more in agreement with each other about how they design their teaching and engage with each other, students are more positive about their relationship with their teachers. Moreover, students are more likely to feel that there is an open discussion climate in schools where teachers have more confidence in (the school work and competences of) their students.

In addition to the various positive relationships present in the model, there are also several negative relationships. Interestingly, in schools where teachers pay more attention to citizenship in class, teachers are less in agreement with one another regarding the design of their teaching. They disagree, for example, on how the quality of their teaching and the performance of their students should be assessed. They also disagree on the effort they expect each other to put in their teaching, as well as on how they would like to engage with each other and with students. The fact that teachers at school focus more explicitly on citizenship in their teaching does not necessarily appear to lead to more agreement on what citizenship education at school should entail.

Moreover, in schools where teachers have less confidence in students, and where students themselves also perceive the school climate as less positive, teachers focus more on registering and enhancing the citizenship competences of their students.

Citizenship Competences of Adolescents and their Relationship with Citizenship Education

Table 14.1 depicts the average scores and standard deviations for students' citizenship competences. As far as citizenship knowledge is concerned, adolescents have the most knowledge about social tasks relating to acting democratically and acting in a socially responsible manner. "Acting democratically" refers in this context to having an understanding of democratic principles and institutions and knowing what acting democratically implies; whereas understanding how to "act in a socially responsible manner" means understanding social norms, that is, statutory or unwritten rules regarding social interaction. Students' knowledge of "dealing with differences" scores the lowest. It appears that cultural differences, social conventions in different social situations and knowing when prejudice and discrimination are at play are still relatively unfamiliar territory for adolescents.

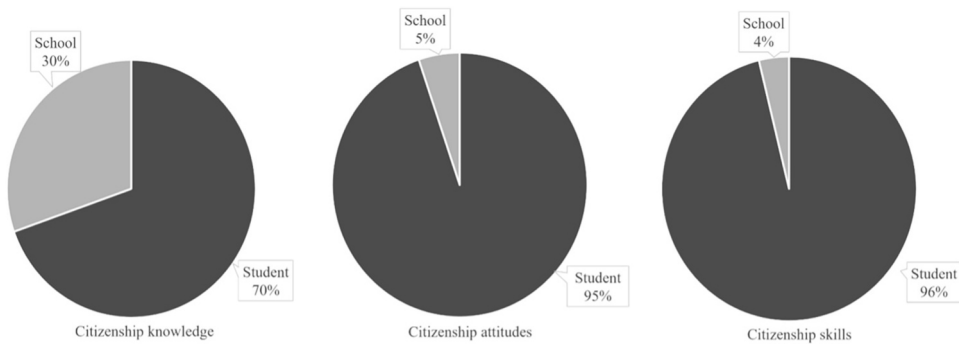
Table 14.1 Citizenship competences: average scores and standard deviations

	Knowledge ^a	Attitude ^b	Skill ^{c, d}
Total	.99 (1.16)	2.85 (.43)	2.97 (.38)
Acting democratically	.94 (1.21)	(1) 3.16 (.55)(2) 2.56 (.68)	(1) 3.07 (.57)(2) 2.92 (.54)
Acting socially responsible	.92 (1.31)	2.90 (.48)	2.91 (.47)
Dealing with conflicts	.84 (1.29)	2.95 (.50)	-
Dealing with differences	.77 (1.27)	2.70 (.66)	3.01 (.46)

Note: ^a While the scales of attitude and skill range from 1 to 4, the minimum and maximum values of knowledge vary from -4 to 4. Therefore, they are not comparable. ^b The attitude "acting democratically" has two subscales: (1) wanting to hear everyone's voice; and (2) wanting to make a critical contribution. ^c The skill "acting democratically" has two subscales: (1) being able to put forward your point of view; and (2) being able to listen to another's point of view. ^d The skills "acting socially responsible" and "dealing with conflicts" form one scale.

Adolescents' scores for citizenship attitudes and skills are also the highest in the field of "acting democratically". This applies in particular to the components "willingness to listen to other people's views" and "being able to put forward your point of view". Adolescents are also relatively positive about their ability to deal with differences, whereas they rate their attitude in this regard less highly. In a similar sense, they are also less positive about their *inclination* to make a critical contribution than about their estimated ability in this regard.

Figure 14.2 illustrates the differences in citizenship knowledge, attitudes and skills between students and between schools (based on the average of the students at that school), using intraclass correlations. It is noticeable that the differences between students in terms of their citizenship knowledge, attitudes and skills are relatively large, while those between schools are relatively small. The school has the greatest impact on students' citizenship knowledge, particularly their knowledge of how to deal with differences, deal with conflicts, and act democratically.



Source: Authors.

Figure 14.2 Differences between schools and students in terms of citizenship competences

Schools vary significantly less in terms of the average citizenship skills and attitudes of their students. The greatest difference between schools can be found in the attitude component “dealing with differences” and the smallest in the (democratic) skill component “being able to listen to other people’s views” (for more detailed information, see Coopmans et al., 2020). The fact that the school seems to contribute a great deal to students’ citizenship knowledge is a picture we also see in other national and international studies (e.g. Isac et al., 2014; Malak-Minkiewicz & Torney-Purta, 2021; Munniksma et al., 2017; Schulz et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2018).

So, how do schools make a difference? The comprehensive school effectiveness model indicates that the *school policy* on citizenship education does not appear to correlate with students’ citizenship knowledge, but it does correlate with their citizenship skills and attitudes. In schools where there is a greater focus on citizenship education – during meetings, for example – students are generally more positive about their citizenship skills and attitudes. It is noticeable, however, that in schools where school leaders attach more importance to citizenship themes, students rate their citizenship skills less highly. On the one hand, therefore, we see that a greater focus on citizenship education at the school level correlates with more citizenship skills and more positive citizenship attitudes among students, while, on the other hand, a greater focus on citizenship education by the school’s leadership correlates with poorer citizenship skills among students. The focus on citizenship may be motivated not only by the importance that school leaders attach to this educational objective but also by their judgement that the skills of their students in this field are inadequate.

Similarly, the *professional learning environment* does not correlate with students’ citizenship knowledge, but it does correlate with their citizenship skills and attitudes. Students are more positive about their skills in schools where teachers are more positive about their school leadership, and students are more positive about their citizenship attitudes in schools where teachers are more positive about the degree of mutual agreement about educational vision and engagement. Students are also generally more positive about their citizenship skills and attitudes in schools where teachers say that they have more confidence in the work and abilities of

their students. The social and professional experiences and behaviours of teachers thus appear to be important for students' citizenship competences.

If we look at *teaching practices* in schools, we find both positive and negative relationships with students' citizenship knowledge, skills and attitudes. In schools where students feel that they have more ownership over the citizenship themes that are addressed in class, students have more citizenship knowledge and are more positive about their citizenship skills and attitudes. So, it appears that a sense of autonomy is important for the development of citizenship competences. Also, in schools where extracurricular activities in the field of citizenship are organised more frequently, students have more citizenship knowledge and rate their citizenship attitudes and skills more highly. The use of role-plays in class, in particular, makes a positive contribution to students' attitudes toward citizenship.

It is furthermore noticeable that in schools that focus more extensively on registering and enhancing their students' citizenship competences, students' knowledge, in particular, is comparatively low. This also applies, to a lesser extent, to students' citizenship attitudes and skills. Here too, a potential explanation could be that, in schools where students' citizenship competences are regarded as inadequate, the attention paid to them is relatively high.

Finally, we see the importance of the school and classroom climate. A school climate in which students feel a sense of belonging, with their classmates and with the school, is positively related to students' citizenship knowledge and attitudes. We also find more positive citizenship attitudes in schools where students feel, to a larger extent, that there is room for open discussions with mutual respect. These findings are consistent with those of international research (Geboers et al., 2013; Knowles et al., 2018; Maurissen, 2018b), although the effects found in our study are less pronounced. One explanation for this could be that, in our integrated school effectiveness model, we looked at the different educational aspects (school climate, professional learning environment, teaching in the classroom) in relation to each other. Consequently, individual effects of educational elements may be less significant or even absent (because, for example, they are explained by the link with another educational aspect). Additional analyses indicate that all three aspects of the perceived classroom climate at the school level relate positively to students' citizenship competences when examined in separate univariate models (see Coopmans et al., 2023, Appendix F).

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we focused on how schools can contribute to students' citizenship competences. Several review studies point to the importance of the school climate, the curriculum and teachers' pedagogical practices (e.g. Geboers et al., 2013; Teegelbeckers et al., 2023). The included research generally focuses on the relationship between one or more individual educational elements on the one hand and students' citizenship outcomes on the other. With the help of a school effectiveness model specific to citizenship education, we have taken the first steps towards a more comprehensive understanding of this field. Since effectiveness in general terms cannot be determined, we have described and operationalised the desired outcomes as specifically as possible, namely: students' citizenship competences situated in the daily social practices of young people and defined in terms of the knowledge, attitudes and skills that they need to adequately fulfil four social tasks – acting democratically, acting in a socially

responsible manner, dealing with conflicts and dealing with differences (ten Dam & Volman, 2007; ten Dam et al., 2011; ten Dam et al., 2020).

What does this comprehensive school effectiveness model for citizenship education tell us? Firstly, our study confirms that schools can make a difference. This difference manifests itself primarily in the greater citizenship knowledge of students in schools where specific attention is paid to citizenship education, although we also saw (smaller) impacts on students' attitudes and skills. This result is in line with other studies (e.g. Isac et al., 2014; Malak-Minkiewicz & Torney-Purta, 2021; Munnikma et al., 2017; Schulz et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2018). Time and again, it becomes clear that schools contribute relatively most to students' citizenship knowledge. The added value of a comprehensive approach is that it identifies the *interplay* of factors that constitute the effectiveness of a school concerning citizenship competences. By way of conclusion, we summarise the key findings once again.

Schools that pay more attention to their citizenship task in their school policy (e.g. concrete agreements, a continuous learning pathway, making it a regular agenda item at meetings) also appear to focus more explicitly on citizenship in the classroom. Teachers address citizenship themes more frequently, organise extra-curricular activities more often and have more insight into the knowledge, skills and attitudes of their students. The students themselves are also more positive about their citizenship competences. One question that we cannot answer is whether a school's policy causes teachers to take citizenship education seriously or whether teachers who are passionate about citizenship leave their mark on school policy in this regard. It is likely that, at the school level, there is an interaction between school policy and teachers' actions. This also holds for the relationships between school aspects and student outcomes. We know from other research that differences in citizenship competences are largely related to students' socio-cultural background. We theoretically consider the associations found in our study between school characteristics and student outcomes to be the result of the interplay between education and students, for example, as teachers align their activities with their perceptions of students' competences and engagement, and students, in turn, interpret the educational offerings from their own background and meaningfulness (Wardekker, Boersma, ten Dam, & Volman, 2012). Because we rely on cross-sectional data, no causal interpretations can be made.

We found that an open, democratic and social climate among students and teachers is also important. The classroom environment, as perceived by students, appears to correlate with the social and professional experiences of their teachers. Students are more positive about the relationship with their teachers in schools where teachers feel that the school's leadership takes their opinions seriously, listens to their ideas and values their efforts to improve teaching and learning. These teachers are also more in agreement with their colleagues about how they shape their education and engage with each other. At the same time, disagreements can also be seen as a crucial element of a democratic school climate. In fact, they can function as important learning moments (Lozano Parra et al., 2022), although this does depend upon the alignment of teachers' and students' approaches to what is referred to as multi-perspectivity (Wansink et al., 2023). Whilst these studies focus on differences in the classroom, we can expect this to also apply to the professional learning community in the broader school context.

The confidence that teachers have in the school work and abilities of their students also affects the classroom environment. Students feel more at ease with teachers who have a lot of confidence in their students. They feel like they are part of the school, they feel listened to and they feel like they are taken seriously. They also experience a more open discussion climate

with room for their own topics, different opinions and diverse perspectives. Therefore, students who are more positive about their classroom environment are also more positive about their citizenship competences.

Here too, some nuance and critical reflection are appropriate, as the classroom environment as perceived by students is not only dependent on the interplay between in-school factors but is also determined by students' sociocultural background. The fact that students from high SES families are more used to discussing issues at home (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019) and more frequently perceive the classroom environment as more open to discussion (Hoskins et al., 2021; Mennes, 2023), probably also means that they, in turn, actively contribute to a more open discussion climate.

Finally, paying attention to citizenship at school does not necessarily go hand in hand with alignment in the team on how this citizenship education should be designed or implemented. On the contrary, in schools where teachers address citizenship more frequently in class, teachers also more frequently indicate that their views differ in this regard. They have different ideas about the effort or input that they expect from each other, as well as how to interact with each other and with students. This is not surprising: clear opinions and enthusiasm are probably more likely to reveal potential differences within the team. A shared vision does, however, benefit citizenship education.

All in all, an integrated approach to citizenship education is of great importance if a school is to make a real contribution to students' citizenship competences. This involves an approach that not only focuses on the classroom context (such as the teaching practices used and the perceived classroom environment) but also pays attention to the organisation of citizenship education and the professional learning environment for teachers, precisely to facilitate students' learning.

At the same time, we note that, overall, the differences between schools are generally small. This reflects that citizenship competences, particularly skills and attitudes, are to a large extent learnt outside school. However, it is also an indication that schools are not focusing sufficiently on citizenship education and rarely develop an integrated approach that takes into account the interplay between different educational elements. This is certainly true for Dutch schools, where government supervision of the quality of citizenship education in schools is minimal (Dijkstra et al., 2021; ten Dam, Chapter 4 of this book). Moreover, it cannot be assumed that the pursuit of citizenship goals is an explicit part of the mission of education. Especially in recent years when the learning achievements of Dutch students has been declining and teacher shortages are mounting, more and more education professionals, politicians and policy makers are arguing that the primary responsibility of schools is to enhance students' literacy and numeracy skills, and that the incorporation of citizenship objectives leads to undesired curriculum overload.

In conclusion, we highlight a few limitations of the study discussed in this chapter, which require further investigation. First of all, we only had cross-sectional data at our disposal. As a consequence, we could only map associations, not causality.

Secondly, in determining students' citizenship competences, we used standardised measurement tools. This enables a comparison between schools and students but, does not, by definition, do sufficient justice to the meanings students themselves attach to citizenship, nor does it cover the specific emphases that education professionals themselves intend to place.

Unlike qualitative research methods, such as, for example, the use of open interviews or rubrics, surveys and tests leave little room for students to elaborate on their personal

understanding and beliefs (see Daas et al., 2016). The outcome measures that we used – citizenship competences – were carefully developed based on the literature, but we did not ask teachers and school leaders to what extent these were also their objectives and to what extent their actions were focused on them. This too requires additional qualitative research.

In addition, in our study, we controlled for several background characteristics of students (e.g. SES and migration background), as well as school type, but we did not investigate specifically how the sociocultural background of students and the track that they are in affects the school's approach. In education systems in which there are de facto different educational pathways for groups of students, often in separate schools (Van de Werfhorst, 2017), it is all the more important to examine how schools can contribute to the citizenship competences of *their* students.

NOTES

1. In total, we analysed the answers of 49 school leaders, 62 team leaders, 643 teachers and 5,172 students. On average, school leaders and team leaders had been working at their current school for 13 years and teachers for 11 years. Of the 5,172 students, 44 per cent were following one of the prevocational tracks and 56 per cent were following one of the tracks that prepare students for university education. The study consists of a representative sample of students and schools in the Netherlands.
2. More information on the theoretical framework of the model that was investigated, the correlational analyses and the multilevel structural equation modelling that was used can be found in Coopmans et al. (2020).

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