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Assessing young people's citizenship attitudes using rubrics

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ABSTRACT

Schools' role in the development of students' attitudes towards society is increasing deliberated, which also leads to question how these attitudes can be assessed. Assessment instruments typically use Likert-type items to measure the extent to which students agree or disagree to certain statements. In this study we aim to evaluate an alternative approach to assessing citizenship attitudes: using rubrics. The theoretical framework describes how we conceptualized attitudes towards acting democratically, acting socially responsible, and dealing with differences at four levels. Students in Dutch general secondary and vocational tertiary education were asked to assess which level they felt best described their attitudes, and to explain why. The results show students are generally implicitly supportive of democratic principles, show a willingness to help others, and respect people's differences. We find several differences between students' attitudes based on their background. The implications of using a comprehensive assessment of citizenship attitudes are further discussed.

1. Introduction

Education is widely considered to contribute to students' development of the competences necessary to act as citizens in democratic societies (cf. Friedman, 1955; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996). The development of these competences concerns inter alia teaching ways of democratic decision-making and workings of laws and institutions, developing the skills to participate in democratic processes, and developing democratic attitudes. The latter is the topic of this paper. The democratic attitudes of citizens – hereafter referred to as citizenship attitudes – pertain to how citizens feel about their rights and responsibilities in relation to others and society at large. Citizenship attitudes are relevant to both the collective and the individual (cf. Rychen & Salganik, 2003). They affect the collective by helping to sustain democratic societies by supporting democratic ideas, values and practices (cf. Dahl, 1998; Eckstein, 1966; Welzel, 2007) and they affect individuals' ability to act effectively as socially competent citizens in a democratic society (Ten Dam & Volman, 2007).

The term attitudes is used widely in research, and commonly refers to positive or negative feelings about concrete or abstract ideas, persons, situations or events (Allport, 1935). We distinguish attitudes from values, with attitudes being personal rather than collective. We further consider attitudes to be a holistic concept, encompassing cognition, affect and connotation and composed of specific beliefs, feelings and action tendencies (Ajzen, 2005). More specifically, citizenship attitudes refer to such attitudes as the willingness to engage in democratic

processes, but also to views of social justice (cf. Council of Europe, 2016). These not only concern attitudes towards societal issues such as immigration, but more broadly towards 'living together' in a democratic society.

Adolescence is generally regarded as a period of 'impressionable years', in which young people's citizenship attitudes are more susceptible to change than in later life. Various studies have shown that citizenship attitudes developed in adolescence grow more stable over the course of a person's life (Abdelzadeh & Lundberg, 2017; Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Hooghe, Dassonneville, & Marien, 2015; Russo & Stattin, 2017), and that education can have a lasting impact on development of these attitudes (Claes & Hooghe, 2017; Keating & Janmaat, 2016). However, we still know little about how students develop their citizenship attitudes during adolescence. For example, it is not clear how students develop support for democratic attitudes during secondary school (Geboers, Geijssels, Admiraal, Jorgensen, & Ten Dam, 2015; Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010). Students' background characteristics also appear to play a role. Students' citizenship attitudes have been shown to differ with respect to gender, age, cognitive level, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background (Geijssels, Ledoux, Reumersman, & Ten Dam, 2012; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010; Schulz et al., 2017).

The development of students' citizenship attitudes is generally assessed using surveys with multiple-choice questionnaires (e.g. Keating et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2010, 2017). This type of assessment has proven very effective in studies involving large groups of students to

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provide a standardized measure of their citizenship attitudes. Students are typically asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with certain statements. However, they are generally not asked why they make a certain choice. This means that their underlying beliefs or arguments are difficult to assess with such instruments (Daas, Ten Dam, & Dijkstra, 2016; cf. Duckworth & Yeager, 2015).

These limitations are for example reflected in the call for ‘performance assessment’ or ‘authentic assessment’, in which students’ competences are assessed in a more direct relation to their performance on complex tasks (Wiggins, 1990). Citizenship attitudes too may be considered complex, because these attitudes develop in relation to a changing context and are subject to multiple viewpoints e.g. to the question what constitutes ‘good citizenship’ (Dijkstra, De la Motte, & Eiland, 2014; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Studies stressing the complexity of open-ended tasks emphasize the need for assessment that allows openness of student responses, and rubrics are put forward as an instrument that could facilitate such an approach (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007).

A rubric is essentially a matrix consisting of two dimensions: the assessment criteria and the levels of proficiency. Each cell in this matrix specifies a level of expected performance. Rubrics are increasingly common in educational assessment (cf. Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). However, this approach has rarely been used to measure citizenship competences (cf. Daas et al., n.d.). In general, rubrics are used to clarify learning goals, communicate those goals to students, act as guidelines to provide progress feedback to students and assess learning results (Andrade, 2005). There are no clear-cut theoretical limits to the dimensions a rubric may contain; however, the number of proficiency levels is typically three to five. The number of assessment criteria can range from a single criterion (i.e. holistic rubrics) to over twenty (i.e. analytical rubrics; cf. Mertler, 2001).

In this study we aim at a comprehensive method for assessing students’ citizenship attitudes by using a rubrics based approach that provides opportunities for students to include information about their personal views and experiences with citizenship attitudes. We ask students not only to assess their level of citizenship attitudes, but also to explain why they feel that level in the rubric best describes them. This way students’ explanations not only allow us insights into their self-assessed level of citizenship attitudes, but also to identify dissonance between the indicated level and the explanation they provide. Since earlier studies assessing citizenship competences have shown that students’ citizenship attitudes vary with their background, we will also investigate whether these differences are also found when assessing citizenship attitudes using rubrics. The aim of this study is to evaluate what assessment using rubrics can tell us about students’ citizenship attitudes. To this end we aim to answer three questions: 1) *What level do adolescents assess their citizenship attitudes to be?*, 2) *To what extent are they able to adequately explain their citizenship attitudes?* and 3) *To what extent do the citizenship attitudes of adolescents relate to their individual background?* The next section will describe how we developed three rubrics, each describing four levels of citizenship attitudes.

2. Theoretical framework

Citizenship is a much debated concept, and different meanings and conceptualizations are possible depending on the contextual framework (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Notwithstanding these differences, citizenship can broadly be considered to refer to the way citizens live together in democratic society. Consequently, citizenship attitudes might for example be focused on engagement with politics, or focused on promoting social cohesion among citizens (Cogan & Morris, 2001). Our study is conducted in the Netherlands, and Dutch citizenship education policy can be considered to focus on living together with others in society (Daas, 2014). To develop rubrics for the assessment of citizenship attitudes we use the framework developed by Ten Dam,

Geijsel, Reumerman, and Ledoux (2011). These authors developed a measurement instrument for citizenship competences by considering four ‘social tasks’. The authors refer to social tasks as activities that students are likely to perform as young citizens. We have selected three of these: acting democratically, acting socially responsible and dealing with differences. With this conceptualization of citizenship competences, and more specifically the citizenship attitudes of students, we link up with a tradition in which citizenship is not only seen as relevant to the students’ future role as citizens but is also regarded as relevant to the everyday lives of young people and visible in the situations they may likely encounter (cf. Rychen & Salganik, 2003; Ten Dam et al., 2011). The premise is that development of citizenship and citizenship attitudes takes place in social contexts.

The attitudes for each social task are described in levels A through D. As will be discussed more fully in the next section, level A describes attitudes that can be considered legitimate, but assumes living together in society – the focus of the investigated attitudes – as unproblematic. Level B reflects what can be considered attitudes that are implicitly supportive of democratic principles. Level C describes attitudes that can be considered explicitly and deliberately supportive of democratic principles. Level D describes attitudes that are sensitive to complex situations, and supportive of promoting democratic attitudes among others. In an educational setting, moreover, particularly levels A and D could signal to the teacher and students that they need more support or greater challenges respectively. The complete rubrics are included in Appendix A (translated from Dutch).

2.1. Acting democratically

Democratic citizenship is reflected in daily life in the way people act democratically when making decisions. A robust democracy means all citizens are involved in and participate in decision-making. According to Ten Dam et al. (2011, p. 357) “a young person with such attitudes wants to hear everyone’s voice, enter into a dialogue and make an active, critical contribution.” Attitudes towards acting democratically thus do not refer to wanting to make the best decision, but rather to wanting to make the decision in the best possible way (cf. Barber, 1984). This therefore not only involves wanting to actively engage in decision-making, but also attitudes such as being sensitive to minority viewpoints and interests. Students can develop multiple considerations to take into account when making decisions, such as being sensitive to differing contexts and choosing to find consensus, vote or deliberate (Nieuwelink, Dekker, Geijsel, & Ten Dam, 2016). The descriptions of attitudes towards acting democratically therefore focus on considerations that students take into account in the decision-making process, where students with a more developed attitude are more sensitive and willing to take more considerations into account.

Level A describes an attitude that regards democratic decision-making as instrumental and unproblematic. Rules, once agreed upon, can be considered permanent, and convictions about decision-making are susceptible to the ‘tyranny of the majority’. These students take (a limited selection of) democratic principles into consideration separately. Level B describes an attitude that supports the inherent value of acting democratically through support for democratic principles (e.g. equality and open debate). These students take multiple democratic principles into consideration. While this attitude supports democratic citizenship, it does not include an active interest in democratic processes. These attitudes may be considered similar to what Amnå and Ekman (2014) refer to as ‘standby citizens’, who might appear passive, but are willing to participate if needed. Level C builds on level B by describing a disposition to actively engage in democratic processes and a willingness to consider less-well represented viewpoints and interests (cf. ‘active citizens’, Amnå & Ekman, 2014). This level also emphasises that critical reflection on democratic decisions is important. Democratic processes are not only considered necessary to decision-making, but valuable in and of themselves. Level D is considered superior to level C

in that it also advocates promoting an open democratic attitude in others and being sensitive to complex situations.

2.2. Acting socially responsible

Citizenship education is often envisioned to promote social cohesion and responsibility (cf. Council of Europe, 2010). Social responsibility stems from a commitment to contribute to the well-being of others and society for a greater good (Berman, 1990; cf. Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Acting socially responsible is aimed at promoting a sustainable way of co-existing with others and the environment. According to Ten Dam et al. (2011, p. 357) “a young person with such attitudes wants to uphold social justice, is prepared to provide care and assistance, does not want to harm another or the environment as a result of his or her behaviour.” These attitudes underline that citizens in a democratic society share a common purpose (Barber, 1984). Students with a more developed attitude show more sensitivity to the wants and needs of others around them and to the principles underlying their actions, particularly reciprocity and sustainability (cf. Kohlberg, 1981).

Level A describes an attitude that considers social responsibility from the perspective of peaceful co-existence. It supports tolerance of others, but there is no explicit support for collaboration or common purpose. Rather, people should essentially not harm one another. Level B is distinguishable from level A because it describes an awareness of the value of collaboration and helping others. There is a sense that people need to contribute to a greater good. Level C builds on level B by including a more active desire to contribute to the lives of others and the environment. There is a sense of being part of a community in a general sense, and the need for balancing personal and common interests. Level D describes an attitude that focuses not only on students' own attitudes but also on promoting a supportive attitude among others.

2.3. Dealing with differences

Democracy, by valuing individual freedom, presupposes plurality, that is, the existence of differences (cf. Van Gunsteren, 1998). Different viewpoints have to be accepted, represented and upheld for a democracy to function. By extension, differences between people have to be acknowledged, while fundamental human rights require that all people are considered equal. Democratic citizens develop attitudes on how they regard these different viewpoints, convictions, customs or ways of living. According to Ten Dam et al. (2011, p. 357) “a young person with such attitudes has a desire to learn other people's opinions and lifestyles, has a positive attitude towards differences.” Some of the most significant contemporary debates in modern democracies pertain to issues involving ethnic, cultural, religious or sexual differences. As participants in a democratic society, young people are expected to develop attitudes towards dealing with these and other differences (cf. De Groot, 2011; Van Gunsteren, 1998). Students with a more developed attitude show more sensitivity to the backgrounds and implications of differences between people, and are more reflective of their attitudes towards others.

Level A describes an attitude that recognizes differences but essentially maintains that minorities should adapt to the majority. Level B focuses on a sense of equality: while people may differ, they are essentially equal. Differences should be allowed to exist within the boundaries of rules, but are generally considered as a deviation from the norm. Level C includes the sensitivity required to deal with differences and openness to those differences. This differs from the previous levels because differences are considered relevant in their own right. Level D describes an attitude that besides the sensitivity included in level C also includes the relevance of careful consideration of one's own attitudes in dealing with differences and a readiness to adapt these attitudes. Level D also again involves promoting these attitudes among others.

2.4. Differences in citizenship attitudes

Previous studies have shown citizenship attitudes differ based on students' background characteristics (Geijsel et al., 2012; Keating et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2010, 2017). Several differences between students due to background characteristics emerge from these earlier studies. We pay specific attention to the studies by Munniksma et al. (2017) which like our study is based on data from Dutch students, and Geijsel et al. (2012) which moreover uses the same theoretical framework by Ten Dam et al. (2011) as our study. Notably, all these studies use standardized surveys based on questionnaires (using Likert-type items) to assess citizenship attitudes.

Girls, by and large, score higher than boys on most measurements of citizenship attitudes. These differences are found in the International Civics and Citizenship Studies (ICCS; Munniksma et al., 2017; Schulz et al., 2010, 2017), the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS; Keating et al., 2010) and in studies conducted in Dutch schools involving the three social tasks that are the focus of the present study (Geboers et al., 2015; Geijsel et al., 2012). In the study by Geijsel et al. (2012), girls scored the same as the boys on attitudes towards acting democratically and higher on attitudes towards acting socially responsible and dealing with differences.

The Dutch education system is highly tracked, with up to seven different tracks in general secondary education. These tracks are often aggregated to pre-vocational, pre-professional, and pre-university tracks. Students in higher educational tracks often score higher on measures of citizenship attitudes (Geijsel et al., 2012; Munniksma et al., 2017; Schulz et al., 2010, 2017). In the study by Geijsel et al. (2012), students in higher educational tracks scored higher on attitudes towards all three social tasks.

With respect to age differences, some earlier studies suggested that students' citizenship attitudes develop non-linearly, with support for some attitudes increasing while support for others decreases (Geboers et al., 2015; Keating et al., 2010). Geijsel et al. (2012) found that older students in Dutch schools score similar to younger students on attitudes towards acting democratically and lower on attitudes towards acting socially responsible and dealing with differences.

Several studies found a relation between students' ethnic background and their citizenship attitudes, with students with a migration background generally scoring higher depending on the attitude measured (Eckstein, Jugert, Noack, Born, & Sener, 2015; Geijsel et al., 2012; Munniksma et al., 2017). In the study by Geijsel et al. (2012) students with a migration background (based on their mother's country of birth) score higher on citizenship attitudes towards all three social tasks.

3. Methods

3.1. Instruments

The rubrics for citizenship attitudes were developed as part of a larger study in which we developed rubrics on ‘acting democratically’, ‘acting socially responsible’, and ‘dealing with differences’ (for more information, see Daas et al., n.d.). Each of these rubrics describes four levels of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The rubrics were developed over the course of two years, during which draft versions were discussed with teachers, students, student teachers, teacher trainers, and researchers. The contents of each rubric are based on the theoretical framework by Ten Dam et al. (2011), empirical studies of students' citizenship competences (e.g. Geijsel et al., 2012; Keating et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2010), and theories of (development of) citizenship competences (see Theoretical Framework).

3.2. Data

The data were collected as part of a study conducted in the Netherlands in which we evaluated the feasibility of using rubrics to

assess citizenship knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Daas et al., n.d.). The present paper focuses specifically on students' self-assessment of citizenship attitudes. Fourteen teachers from eleven schools with a total of 601 students in 28 classes collaborated in the study. All students self-assessed their attitudes for one of the three social tasks. Because not all students filled in the background questionnaire, we report the results for 567 students for whom the selected background characteristics are available. Teachers could choose which social task to assess depending on their curriculum, so the number of students for each social task is unevenly distributed: 130 for acting democratically, 160 for acting socially responsible, and 277 for dealing with differences.

Students were either in the fourth year of general secondary education (64 percent) or the first year of tertiary vocational education (36 percent). Tertiary vocational education consists of four tracks. Our sample consists of students from the highest track of vocational education (*mbo-4*) and the pre-professional secondary education track (*havo*). While the groups we selected can be considered to represent the 'low' and 'high' tracks, the entrance requirements for students in these particular instances are the same.

To investigate differences due to student characteristics, we asked students to answer several background questions (see Table 1). Fifty-three percent of students were female. The proportion of females in vocational education is somewhat skewed between social tasks. Our 'acting democratically' sample included students attending the IT vocational education programme, and most students in that sector are male. Similarly, the 'dealing with differences' sample included two classes in the fashion programme that consisted of mostly female students.

The students in general secondary education were around 15 years old on average, while the students in vocational education were around 17 years old on average. This age difference could be expected because of the one-year grade difference between these groups, and it is common to find older students in vocational education in the Netherlands (Cedefop, 2016). Because there are limited possibilities for analysing the effects of age differences in view of the high correlation between age and level of education, we dichotomized age to reflect relative age within educational level: in secondary education students up to 15-years-old were considered 'relatively young', in vocational education students up to 17-years-old were considered 'relatively young' (see Table 2).

To investigate the differences between students due to their ethnic background, we asked them in what country they were born and the native country of both their mother and their father. Five percent of students were born abroad. Of both fathers and mothers, 26 percent were born abroad. Foreign-born mothers came from 45 different

countries and foreign-born fathers from 40 countries, with about half having been born in Morocco, Surinam or Turkey. We classified students with either one or two foreign-born parents as having a migration background, which constitutes 34 percent of our sample.

3.3. Approach

In Dutch education, the promotion of citizenship is not limited to specific school subjects but is addressed school-wide. However, in general secondary education citizenship is (also) specifically discussed as part of *maatschappijleer* (civic studies). In vocational education, a similar subject is called *loopbaan en burgerschap* (career and citizenship). For this study, we collaborated with fourteen teachers of *maatschappijleer* in secondary education and *loopbaan en burgerschap* in vocational education. Each teacher chose what social task was to be assessed, based on the topics discussed in class during that period. For example, students studying 'parliamentary democracy' (a mandatory theme in the civic studies curriculum) were assessed on acting democratically. Students were presented with the rubric by their teacher and asked to 1) indicate which level best described them, 2) explain why they believed this was so, and 3) give an example. To help them give relevant answers, students were prompted with the following cue: 'I believe... for example...'

The explanations provided by the students were assessed to evaluate if the explanation was relevant to the social task and, if so, was adequate for the level selected. If both were the case, it seems plausible that the student is at the indicated level. Nearly all (94%) of explanations were considered relevant, and about half (48%) of the explanations were considered relevant and adequate (for more information, see Daas et al., n.d.).

Assessment using rubrics – and especially holistic rubrics – is typically less standardized than questionnaires (cf. Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Because assessors can differ in their judgement of student performance in relation to rubrics, each explanation was assessed three times, and decisions on relevance and adequacy were based on simple majority agreement. The explanations were assessed by the first author and by two of three trained assessors in rotation. Mean inter-rater agreement was 93 percent for relevance, and 75 percent for adequacy. However, particularly for relevance these numbers are affected by chance. Cohen's kappa corrects for inter-rater agreement by chance. Mean Cohen's kappa was 0.49 for relevance and 0.51 for adequacy, indicating moderate agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Jonsson and Svingby (2007) conducted a review of inter alia inter-rater reliability of using rubrics and find reported kappa values between 0.20 and 0.63, with only a couple of values below .40. However, these values are not directly comparable, since in our study assessors evaluate students' own assessment rather than using the rubrics to assess students' performance.

3.4. Analyses

The structure of the data and the data collection do not allow for a single model of analysis. The 567 students included in our analyses only assessed their attitudes on one of three social tasks, which means our total sample consists of three subsamples. We have two dependent variables for each student: their self-assessed attitude level on one of the social tasks, and whether the explanation they provided was relevant and adequate. All variables used are either categorical or dichotomous. We thus use log-linear analysis for contingency tables to analyse the data.

Firstly, we investigate what level students assess their citizenship attitudes to be, irrespective of their personal background. Using a log-linear model without interaction effects allows us to estimate the odds of a choosing a particular level. We repeat this process for only those students who provided an adequate explanation with their self-assessed level. We use χ^2 -tests to evaluate whether the distribution of students

Table 1
Distribution of data according to student characteristics (N = 567).

	N	%
<i>Social task</i>		
Acting democratically	130	23%
Acting socially responsible	160	28%
Dealing with differences	277	49%
<i>Educational level</i>		
Secondary	363	64%
Vocational	204	36%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	269	47%
Female	298	53%
<i>Relative age</i>		
Younger	355	63%
Older	209	37%
<i>Country of birth parents</i>		
Both Netherlands	348	66%
Other	176	34%

Table 2
Distribution of data according to student age (N = 564).

Educational level	Actual age								Relative age		Total
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 +	younger	older	
Secondary	12	210	113	28	0	0	0	0	222	141	363
Vocational	0	3	59	71	31	18	7	12	133	68	201
<i>Total</i>									355	209	

over the levels changes when comparing their self-assessed levels to only those supported by adequate explanations.

Secondly, we are interested to what extent citizenship attitudes of adolescents relate to their individual background. Due to the limited sample sizes and research methods, we could not include all variables for each of the three social tasks. We therefore built three models. The models were fitted both to the self-assessed level and to only the data from students who provided an adequate explanation. The independent variables of interest are the educational level, gender, age and migration background of the students. The number of cells in a full contingency table (i.e. the dimension) is Attitudes (4) x Educational level (2) x Gender (2) x Age (2) x Migration background (2) = 64. Table 3 shows the variables included in the models for each social task. Due to the relatively small sample size compared to the number of cells in the contingency tables, several cells contain a zero count. These pose a problem when considering complex interactions in log-linear models (Clogg & Eliason, 1987). We therefore only included baseline (single factor) effects and two-factor interactions in the models.

4. Results

4.1. Acting democratically

A total of 130 students assessed their attitudes towards acting democratically, 55 of whom provided an adequate explanation to the level they selected. Fig. 1 shows the distribution over the levels for both groups, and Table 4 shows the results of the log-linear analyses. When self-assessing their attitudes towards acting democratically, students are more likely to choose level B, marginally more likely to choose level C, and less likely to choose level A or D. When considering only those students who provided an adequate explanation, students are more likely to choose level B or C, and less likely to choose level A or D. The distributions for self-assessed and adequately explained levels are unequal because the scores are lower when only those students who provided an adequate explanation are considered ($\chi^2 = 12.32$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.01$).

We further investigate differences between students based on their background characteristics. The number of cells in the full contingency table (i.e. the dimension) is Attitudes (4) x Educational level (2) x Gender (2) = 16. We use the same model for the set of 55 students who provided a relevant and adequate explanation. Table 5 shows the results of both analyses.

When we first look at the levels students assessed themselves the results confirm that students are more likely to assess themselves at

Table 3
Variables included for analyses.

	Acting democratically	Acting socially responsible	Dealing with differences
Educational level	+		+
Gender	+	+	+
Age		+	+
Migration background		+	+

Fig. 1. Distribution of students over levels on attitudes towards acting democratically.

Table 4
Students' attitudes towards acting democratically.

	Self-assessed		Adequate explanations	
	coef.	odds ratios	coef.	odds ratios
(intercept)	1.86		0.91	
Attitude A	−0.48** (0.20)	0.62	−0.25 ** (0.31)	0.78
Attitude B	0.84*** (0.14)	2.32	0.97 *** (0.23)	2.64
Attitude C	0.18 (0.16)	1.20	0.51** (0.26)	1.66
Attitude D	−0.54*** (0.21)	0.58	−1.23 *** (0.45)	0.29
Secondary	0.32*** (0.09)	1.37	0.24* (0.14)	1.27
Boys	0.19** (0.09)	1.21	0.02 (0.14)	1.02

Notes: The coefficients are constrained to sum-to-zero. The italicized coefficients are redundant, but added for clarity. * Significant at $p < 0.10$. ** Significant at $p < 0.05$. *** Significant at $p < 0.01$. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 5
Relations between student background and attitudes towards acting democratically.

	Self-assessed		Adequate explanations	
	coef.	odds ratios	coef.	odds ratios
(intercept)	1.40		0.41	
Attitude A	−1.00** (0.44)	0.37	−0.52 (0.40)	0.60
Attitude B	1.07*** (0.20)	2.92	1.12*** (0.27)	3.07
Attitude C	0.38* (0.22)	1.47	0.63** (0.29)	1.88
Attitude D	−0.45* (0.27)	0.63	−1.24** (0.54)	0.29
Secondary	0.64*** (0.16)	1.89	0.35 (0.30)	1.42
Boys	0.74*** (0.23)	2.10	0.48 (0.31)	1.61
Secondary : Boys	−0.66*** (0.15)	0.52	−0.79*** (0.20)	0.45
Secondary :	−0.09 (0.24)	0.91	−0.95 (0.71)	0.39
Attitude A				
Secondary :	−0.10 (0.16)	0.91	0.17 (0.35)	1.19
Attitude B				
Secondary :	−0.02 (0.19)	0.98	0.31 (0.36)	1.36
Attitude C				
Secondary : Attitude D	0.21 (0.24)	1.23	0.48 (0.56)	1.61
Boys : Attitude A	0.94** (0.45)	2.55	0.13 (0.70)	1.13
Boys : Attitude B	−0.36* (0.20)	0.70	−0.34 (0.34)	0.71
Boys : Attitude C	−0.38* (0.22)	0.68	−0.14 (0.35)	0.87
Boys : Attitude D	−0.20 (0.25)	0.82	0.35 (0.56)	1.42

Notes: The coefficients are constrained to sum-to-zero. The italicized coefficients are redundant, but added for clarity. * Significant at $p < 0.10$. ** Significant at $p < 0.05$. *** Significant at $p < 0.01$. Standard errors in parentheses.

Fig. 2. Distribution of students over levels on attitudes towards acting socially responsible.

level B or C than level A or D. Boys are more likely than girls to choose level A, and marginally less likely to choose level B or C. The results do not show differences in attitudes between students enrolled in general secondary or vocational education. The sample includes a relatively large percentage of secondary school students and boys. Because the vocational education sample included a large proportion of boys (due to the IT students included), there is a negative relation for the proportion of boys in secondary education.

The results for the 55 students who provided an adequate explanation show that few effects are significant due to the small sample size. Here too, students are more likely to score level B or C than A or D. The only other significant relation is the proportion of boys in secondary education, again due to the sampled population in vocational education.

4.2. Acting socially responsible

A total of 160 students assessed their attitudes towards acting socially responsible, 97 of whom provided an adequate explanation to the level they selected. Fig. 2 shows the distribution over the levels for both groups, and Table 6 shows the results of the log-linear analyses. When self-assessing their attitudes towards acting socially responsible, students are more likely to choose level B, and less likely to choose level D. Of the 97 students who provided an adequate explanation only 1 scored level D. We therefore excluded this student from the log-linear analysis. When considering only those students who provided an adequate explanation, students are more likely to choose level B, and less likely to choose level C. The distributions for self-assessed and adequately explained levels are unequal because the scores are lower when only those students who provided an adequate explanation are considered ($\chi^2 = 59.40$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.01$).

To investigate differences between students based on their background characteristics the number of cells in the full contingency table (i.e. the dimension) is Attitudes (4) x Age (2) x Gender (2) x Migration background (2) = 32. Educational level is not included since all students were in secondary education. We use the same model for the students who provided an adequate explanation. Table 7 shows the results for both analyses.

The self-assessment results confirm that students are more likely to assess themselves at level B than the other levels. Boys are less likely

Table 6
Students' attitudes towards acting socially responsible.

	Self-assessed		Adequate explanations	
	coef.	odds ratios	coef.	odds ratios
(intercept)	1.27		1.08	
Attitude A	0.07 (0.16)	1.07	−0.15 (0.18)	0.86
Attitude B	1.14*** (0.13)	3.12	0.90*** (0.15)	2.47
Attitude C	−0.22 (0.18)	0.81	−0.75*** (0.21)	0.47
Attitude D	−1.00*** (0.24)	0.37		
Boys	−0.08 (0.08)	0.93	−0.09 (0.10)	0.91
Younger	0.26*** (0.08)	1.29	0.16 (0.10)	1.17
Dutch	0.16** (0.08)	1.18	0.35*** (0.11)	1.43

Notes: The coefficients are constrained to sum-to-zero. The italicized coefficients are redundant, but added for clarity. * Significant at $p < 0.10$. ** Significant at $p < 0.05$. *** Significant at $p < 0.01$. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 7

Relations between student background and attitudes towards acting socially responsible.

	Self-assessed		Adequate explanations	
	coef.	odds ratios	coef.	odds ratios
(intercept)	1.15		0.92	
Attitude A	0.16 (0.18)	1.18	0.06 (0.23)	0.94
Attitude B	1.22 *** (0.15)	3.40	1.02*** (0.20)	2.78
Attitude C	−0.39 (0.24)	0.68	−0.96*** (0.32)	0.38
Attitude D	−1.00*** (0.29)	0.37		
Boys	0.00 (0.11)	1.00	−0.06 (0.15)	0.94
Younger	0.23** (0.11)	1.26	0.11 (0.13)	1.12
Dutch	0.08 (0.12)	1.08	0.45*** (0.16)	1.56
Boys : Younger	−0.09 (0.08)	0.92	−0.17 (0.11)	0.84
Boys : Dutch	0.01 (0.09)	1.01	−0.04 (0.12)	0.96
Younger : Dutch	−0.05 (0.09)	0.95	−0.04 (0.12)	0.96
Boys : Attitude A	0.33* (0.17)	1.40	0.55*** (0.20)	1.74
Boys : Attitude B	−0.11 (0.14)	0.89	−0.10 (0.16)	0.90
Boys : Attitude C	−0.52** (0.21)	0.60	−0.45** (0.23)	0.64
Boys : Attitude D	0.30 (0.26)	1.34		
Younger : Attitude A	−0.13 (0.17)	0.88	−0.12 (0.19)	0.89
Younger : Attitude B	0.07 (0.13)	1.07	0.12 (0.15)	1.12
Younger : Attitude C	0.20 (0.20)	1.22	0.00 (0.21)	1.00
Younger : Attitude D	−0.13 (0.25)	0.87		
Dutch : Attitude A	0.05 (0.17)	1.05	−0.25 (0.22)	0.78
Dutch : Attitude B	0.12 (0.14)	1.13	−0.10 (0.17)	0.91
Dutch : Attitude C	0.39* (0.20)	1.48	0.35 (0.28)	1.41
Dutch : Attitude D	−0.57** (0.26)	0.57		

Notes: The coefficients are constrained to sum-to-zero. The italicized coefficients are redundant, but added for clarity. * Significant at $p < 0.10$. ** Significant at $p < 0.05$. *** Significant at $p < 0.01$. Standard errors in parentheses.

than girls to score level C, and marginally more likely to score level A. Students of whom both parents are born in the Netherlands are marginally more likely to score level C. We found no differences between younger and older students. The sample included a relatively high percentage of younger students.

Table 7 also shows the results for the 96 students who provided an adequate explanation. In this case too, students are more likely to score level B. The students who provided an adequate explanation included a relatively high percentage of students with a native Dutch background, which was not the case for the total sample. In line with the results for the total sample, boys are more likely to score level A than girls.

4.3. Dealing with differences

A total of 277 students assessed their attitudes towards dealing with differences, 122 of whom provided an adequate explanation for the level they selected. Fig. 3 shows the distribution over the levels for both groups, and Table 8 shows the results of the log-linear analyses. When self-assessing their attitudes towards dealing with differences, students are more likely to choose level B or C, and less likely to choose level A. When considering only those students who provided an adequate explanation, students are more likely to choose level B or C, and (marginally) less likely to choose level A or D. The distributions for self-assessed and adequately explained levels are unequal because the

Fig. 3. Distribution of students over levels on attitudes towards dealing with differences.

Table 8
Students' attitudes towards dealing with differences.

	Self-assessed		Adequate explanations	
	coef.	odds ratios	coef.	odds ratios
(intercept)	1.07		0.21	
Attitude A	−1.16*** (0.19)	0.31	−0.38* (0.21)	0.69
Attitude B	0.33*** (0.11)	1.39	0.52*** (0.17)	1.67
Attitude C	0.92*** (0.10)	2.52	0.93*** (0.15)	2.53
Attitude D	−0.10 (0.13)	0.91	−1.07*** (0.28)	0.34
Secondary	−0.15** (0.06)	0.86	−0.12 (0.09)	0.89
Boys	−0.15** (0.06)	0.86	−0.30*** (0.10)	0.74
Younger	0.33*** (0.06)	1.38	0.25*** (0.09)	1.29
Dutch	0.39*** (0.06)	1.48	0.42*** (0.10)	1.52

Notes: The coefficients are constrained to sum-to-zero. The italicized coefficients are redundant, but added for clarity. * Significant at $p < 0.10$. ** Significant at $p < 0.05$. *** Significant at $p < 0.01$. Standard errors in parentheses.

scores are lower when only those students who provided an adequate explanation are considered ($\chi^2_{\text{difference}} = 60.41$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.01$).

The number of cells in the full contingency table (i.e. the dimension) is Attitudes (4) x Educational level (2) x Gender (2) x Age (2) x Migration background (2) = 64. We use the same model for the set of 122 students who provided an adequate explanation. Table 9 shows the results for both analyses.

The self-assessment results confirm that students are more likely to assess themselves at level B or C than A or D. The interactions show no differences in attitudes according to level of education, gender, age or migration background. Because the vocational education sample included two classes of fashion students (with mostly girls) and several classes of business services (with a relatively higher percentage of students with a migration background; CBS, 2016), there are positive relations for the proportion of boys and students with Dutch parents in secondary education.

The 126 students who provided an adequate explanation are again more likely to score level B or C than A or D. We find two significant relations between student background and their attitudes. Students in general secondary school are more likely to score level B, and boys are more likely to score level A. Both effects were not present for the full sample.

5. Conclusion

In this study, we used rubrics to assess students' citizenship attitudes. The theoretical framework describes the rationale for the three rubrics we developed, each describing four levels of attitudes towards one of three social tasks. The levels from A to D reflect an increasing complexity in students' attitudes towards the social tasks. In order to evaluate the use of rubrics to assess citizenship attitudes we aim to investigate (1) what level students assess their citizenship attitudes to be, (2) to what extent they are able to adequately explain their citizenship attitudes, and (3) to what extent their citizenship attitudes relate to students' individual background.

Students assessed their own attitudes by choosing the level they felt best described themselves and explained their choice. Fig. 4 shows the odds ratios for the levels based on students' self-assessment. Fig. 5 shows the results for only those students who also provided an adequate explanation. The distributions over the levels for the three social tasks show slightly different patterns. However, in all three cases students were more likely to select level B or C than A or D.

Students were most likely to score level B on attitudes towards acting democratically, and least likely to score A. This creates a picture of students generally being implicitly supportive of democratic principles and acting democratically. Boys were more likely to assess their own attitudes level A, which means they tend to more often consider

Table 9
Relations between student background and attitudes towards dealing with differences.

	Self-assessed		Adequate explanations	
	coef.	odds ratios	coef.	odds ratios
(intercept)	1.00		0.11	
Attitude A	−1.13*** (0.22)	0.32	−0.29 (0.26)	0.75
Attitude B	0.24* (0.14)	1.27	0.39* (0.22)	1.47
Attitude C	0.95*** (0.12)	2.58	1.03*** (0.18)	2.80
Attitude D	−0.06 (0.15)	0.95	−1.13*** (0.36)	0.32
Secondary	−0.22** (0.09)	0.80	−0.21 (0.15)	0.81
Boys	−0.03 (0.09)	0.98	−0.23 (0.14)	0.79
Younger	0.23*** (0.09)	1.26	0.19 (0.13)	1.21
Dutch	0.41*** (0.09)	1.50	0.37*** (0.14)	1.45
Secondary : Boys	0.26*** (0.06)	1.29	0.23** (0.10)	1.26
Secondary : Younger	−0.06 (0.07)	0.94	−0.11 (0.10)	0.90
Secondary : Dutch	0.13** (0.07)	1.14	0.09 (0.11)	1.10
Boys : Younger	−0.09 (0.07)	0.92	−0.03 (0.10)	0.97
Boys : Dutch	0.03 (0.07)	1.03	−0.09 (0.11)	0.92
Younger : Dutch	0.03 (0.07)	1.03	−0.00 (0.11)	1.00
Secondary : Attitude A	−0.19 (0.20)	0.83	−0.27 (0.24)	0.77
Secondary : Attitude B	0.17 (0.12)	1.19	0.39** (0.18)	1.47
Secondary : Attitude C	0.11 (0.11)	1.11	0.13 (0.17)	1.14
Secondary : Attitude D	−0.09 (0.14)	0.91	−0.25 (0.32)	0.78
Boys : Attitude A	0.29 (0.19)	1.34	0.47** (0.23)	1.60
Boys : Attitude B	−0.11 (0.12)	0.90	−0.29 (0.19)	0.75
Boys : Attitude C	−0.11 (0.10)	0.90	0.02 (0.17)	1.02
Boys : Attitude D	−0.08 (0.14)	0.92	−0.20 (0.32)	0.82
Younger : Attitude A	−0.18 (0.19)	0.83	−0.22 (0.22)	0.80
Younger : Attitude B	0.12 (0.14)	1.13	0.16 (0.18)	1.17
Younger : Attitude C	0.11 (0.10)	1.11	0.06 (0.16)	1.06
Younger : Attitude D	−0.04 (0.13)	0.96	0.00 (0.29)	1.00
Dutch : Attitude A	−0.07 (0.21)	0.94	−0.07 (0.24)	0.93
Dutch : Attitude B	0.21 (0.13)	1.24	0.19 (0.20)	1.21
Dutch : Attitude C	−0.05 (0.11)	0.92	−0.01 (0.16)	0.99
Dutch : Attitude D	−0.09 (0.14)	0.91	−0.11 (0.30)	0.90

Notes: The coefficients are constrained to sum-to-zero. The italicized coefficients are redundant, but added for clarity. * Significant at $p < 0.10$. ** Significant at $p < 0.05$. *** Significant at $p < 0.01$. Standard errors in parentheses.

democratic decision-making unproblematic and instrumental, but this relation disappeared when only considering students who provided an adequate explanation. When only considering students who provided adequate explanations students are more likely to score level B or C, but less likely to score level D. These students show (implicit) support for democratic principles and (in the case of level C) an intention to actively apply these in discussions.

Students were also most likely to score level B on attitudes towards acting socially responsible, and less likely to score level D. This creates a picture of students generally supporting the value of collaboration and a willingness to help others. They are least likely to also strive to promote these attitudes among others. When only considering students who provided an adequate explanation students remain most likely to score level B, but less likely to score level C or D. Students of whom both parents were born in the Netherlands were less likely to choose level D, but this effect disappeared when only considering students who provided an adequate explanation. Boys were less likely than girls to choose level C. When only considering students who provided an adequate explanation this difference remained and boys were also more likely to score level A.

Students were most likely to score level C on attitudes towards

(a) Differences between students' attitudes towards acting democratically

(b) Differences between students' attitudes towards acting socially responsible

(c) Differences between students' attitudes towards dealing with differences

Fig. 4. Odds ratios for students' self-assessed attitudes towards each social task. (For interpretation of the references to colour in the text, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

Note: Red bars indicate odds-ratio significantly different from 1:1 ($p < 0.05$).

(a) Differences between students' attitudes towards acting democratically

(b) Differences between students' attitudes towards acting socially responsible

(c) Differences between students' attitudes towards dealing with differences

Fig. 5. Odds ratios for students' adequately explained attitudes towards each social task. (For interpretation of the references to colour in the text, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

Note: Red bars indicate odds-ratio significantly different from 1:1 ($p < 0.05$).

dealing with differences, and least likely to score A. This creates a picture of students generally valuing and being sensitive to differences. We found no differences between students' self-assessed attitudes based on their background. When only considering students who provided an adequate explanation students remain most likely to score level C, but least likely to score level D. For this subset students in secondary school were more likely to score level B, and boys more likely than girls to score level A.

The explanations that students provided to answer why they felt they are at a certain level were adequate in nearly half the cases. In all three cases students who selected a higher level had more difficulty to provide an adequate explanation, which also reflected the higher complexity and sensitivity required for higher levels. With slightly more than half of students not providing an adequate explanation these results call for further support for students in elaborating their attitudes and supporting rationale.

We found several differences between students' citizenship attitudes based on their background characteristics. Similar to survey studies using questionnaires, we found that the differences in student attitudes are generally in favour of girls. Various other studies found that students from higher educational tracks score higher on citizenship attitudes (e.g. Geijsel et al., 2012; Munniksma et al., 2017), but these results were not confirmed in our study. Nor did we find any differences for students' age. Other studies also show small or no differences due to students' age, or a development of attitudes in both positive and negative directions depending on the topic (Geijsel et al., 2012; Keating et al., 2010). Finally, we also investigated whether students' migration background related to their citizenship attitudes. We only found a marginally significant relationship. The diversity in our sample (parents were born in 57 different countries) might explain why there does not appear to be a clear relationship.

For a reliable assessment of students' citizenship attitudes assessors have to agree on their interpretation of the different levels. In our rubrics students' attitudes are described in relation to three different social tasks. While these social tasks are more specific than the more broad concept of citizenship attitudes, they still consists of a multitude of contexts to which these can relate depending on individual students' situations. The intent of the rubrics was to consider the social task holistically, and to leave room for personal interpretations and convey to students that there is no single correct answer (cf. Mertler, 2001). However, these types of rubrics often leave more room for interpretation, and generally score lower on inter-rater reliability than analytical rubrics that divide a task into a set of smaller criteria (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Given this lower reliability the rubrics can be considered less suitable for high stakes assessment.

The assessment of citizenship attitudes in this study specifically focused on its application in education. With most students assessing themselves at level B or C, teachers can use these results to identify stronger (level D) or weaker (level A) students. The fact that the students' self-evaluations and the arguments they provided can be used to assess the adequacy of the self-evaluation shows that the instrument is, in principle, relevant to students' learning processes because it can be used to gain insights in both the existence of discrepancies between the selected level of attitudes and the quality of argumentation. We therefore conclude that the rubrics approach we developed yields results suitable for potentially supporting the learning process, though further studies are needed to investigate any actual effect of the rubrics on student learning (cf. Black & William, 1998; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). The instrument appears less suitable for more generally descriptive goals. About half the students did not provide an adequate explanation for their selected level of attitudes, which complicates any inferences on their actual level. Questionnaires relying on a set of Likert-type items also appear to allow for the identification of smaller differences than the four-category scale on which our rubrics rely. However, in view of the patterns appearing in some of the results, a larger sample size could have also led to finding more

significant differences.

6. Discussion

Students' citizenship attitudes towards the three social tasks have been assessed in other studies using Likert-type items on a questionnaire (Geijsel et al., 2012; Ten Dam et al., 2011). On these items, students typically indicate the extent to which they agree to a set of statements. Students who show more support for e.g. democratic principles score higher. In the theoretical framework we have described how higher levels of citizenship attitudes can also be considered from a perspective of – inter alia – more sensitivity for tensions between different principles (e.g. between freedom and equality). By using a comprehensive assessment of students' citizenship attitudes these tensions are inherently part of the instrument. The theoretical framework describes the rationale for the four levels in more detail. The results also show that students had more difficulty providing an adequate explanation for higher levels of citizenship attitudes, where a lack of sensitivity or complexity in students' explanations would render it 'inadequate to support the self-assessed level'.

One of the concerns we anticipated was if students' self-assessment would sufficiently spread over the different levels. Most students assigned themselves level B or C for all three rubrics, with around half students scoring level B on attitudes towards acting democratically and acting socially responsible, and around half scoring level C on dealing with differences. The results show that the levels to which students assign themselves are suitable for identifying students with particularly high or low scores, as well as offering the majority of students a perspective of a higher level. However, the rubrics appear less suitable to identify differences between the large group of students scoring B or C, and the sensitivity of the instrument at these levels might be improved.

Although the rubrics were developed in parallel, we cannot directly compare students' outcomes. Each student assessed his or her attitudes on only one of the social tasks, and while the rubrics were designed in the same manner, we cannot exclude that scoring high on attitudes towards one social task is easier than scoring high on another. A possible follow-up would therefore be to assess students' attitudes towards multiple social tasks in order to allow these comparisons.

One of the benefits of using rubrics to assess citizenship attitudes is that they allow for students to provide personally relevant answers. Students could consider their personal situations and how they feel that citizenship attitudes are relevant to their lives. On the other hand, students' explanations were generally only a few sentences long, and since assessment relies on the quality of students' explanations we feel that supporting and motivating students to elaborate their answers deserves continued attention. Half of the students provided adequate explanations, with most of them staying close to the description and examples given in the rubrics. We did not further investigate the lack of quality of the explanations and the underlying reasons, which most likely include the complexity of the task, overestimation, a lack of motivation for writing, and the low-stakes nature of the assignment. While it is impossible to differentiate between these factors based on the results, we do know that the rubric was presented in most classes as an auxiliary assignment, and students may not have been inclined to put in their best effort. If this conjecture is correct, it seems likely that the present findings actually undervalue the instrument's usefulness and that its application in a less exploratory and informal settings will show stronger results.

In conclusion, policy-makers continue to emphasize the importance of citizenship education. There is an on-going need for understanding the development of students' citizenship attitudes over time and the role that schools can play in this respect. The assessment of citizenship attitudes and the availability of valid and reliable measurement instruments is an important condition for increasing this understanding. Several instruments are available in the form of various large-scale standardized surveys measuring citizenship attitudes for descriptive

purposes. However this hardly, or not at all, applies to instruments focusing on facilitating student learning (Daas et al., 2016). This study has shown a rubrics-based approach could make a contribution in this respect. While several issues remain that are in need of further attention, rubrics have shown to be a worthwhile instrument for a comprehensive assessment of citizenship attitudes in relation to the personal experiences of students.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary material related to this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.05.002>.

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