

CIVIC COMPETENCES FOR AN ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Developing citizenship in schools

The European Framework tells us that “Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment”¹. Of the eight competences listed in the recommendations as being key competences for life-long learning, number 6, social and civic competences, is that which should have been acquired by all students by the end of compulsory schooling.

But developing citizenship in schools, that is, developing social responsibility and participation, active citizenship for the betterment of the community, is no easy task, also because citizenship itself is so complex it is hard to decide both where and how to intervene. Firstly, the school must be, or start to be, perceived as an educational *community*, one within which students are offered the opportunity to grow and develop not only at the academic but also at the human and cultural level². A school’s task is to seek to form future citizens, able to identify and develop the necessary skills and competences which will help them to “*participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life in an increasingly diverse society*”³. To do this no school can act alone but must, of necessity, open itself to the surrounding area, cooperate and work with other institutions and establish links with other sectors, areas of society so as to enable students to become active citizens. Developing citizenship is a shared task, shared by students, teachers, headmasters and headmistresses, non-teaching staff, all other institutions, public bodies, local government: in brief, the whole community, both inside and outside the school.

With the introduction of the School Reform in Italy, in September 2010, Constitution and Citizenship will at last become a specific, compulsory subject within the school curriculum: currently it is being taught “within” other subjects. However, citizenship is far too all-encompassing to be confined to one lesson per week; rather, it should become a recurring theme, embedded within all activities, both inside and outside the classroom. However, curriculum (programming) flexibility affects what teachers will be able to achieve and education systems in Europe allow teachers very different degrees of freedom to innovate within annual programming, but this is not an insuperable problem, as there are so many ways of developing citizenship in schools, at all levels, from primary up that space can be found. The various projects described here are just some of those activated in Liceo Brocchi⁴ in the attempt to develop number 6 of the eight key competences described in the European Framework those social and civic competences that all young people should have acquired before leaving formal education⁵.

The first project described here is called *Network Project Constitution Glocal-Mente*⁶ and was set up in response to the up-coming 2010 School Reform. It involves two school networks, province wide and inter-regional, and focuses on four main themes: (1) Democracy and participation; (2) Identity and Otherness, (3) Humans and their Rights and (4) Equality and differences⁷. The project

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006/0962/EC) on key competences for lifelong learning. The *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework* is an annex of a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. It was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 30 December 2006/L394.

² *Documento di indirizzo per la sperimentazione dell’insegnamento di “Cittadinanza e Costituzione”, 4 marzo 2009, p.14*

³ Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework *ibidem*

⁴ See Appendix 6 for a brief description of the school and ongoing projects or <http://www.liceobrocchi.vi.it>

⁵ See Appendix 1 for notes on competences and their reflection in the projects discussed. Notes taken from this site: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00100018.pdf

⁶ *Glocal* = Global + Local.

⁷ Main topics/issues: (1) Knowledge of documents -Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Italian Constitution, European Charter of Fundamental Human Rights and Regional and local laws; (2) Intercultural Dialogue, Non-discrimination, Shoa, Apartheid, Struggle against racism, Xenophobia; (3) Environment and Sustainable Development, Peace, Bioethics; (4) Equality, Equal Opportunities, Democracy and Participation. For the full programme (in Italian) contact <http://www.liceobrocchi.vi.it/>

aims to educate for active citizenship, democracy and responsible participation (as being fundamental social values from a glocal perspective); “for peace, equality, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue, respect for the environment and for sustainable human development. It also seeks to promote knowledge and awareness of the principles and values of the Italian Constitution⁸, the European Charter for Human Rights, and the other key documents studied, as well as developing the critical capacities of a student-citizen who respects shared values at a global, international and local level = GLOCAL. This means creating a climate of sharing and solidarity at school, actively applying the values identified in the legislation analysed, promoting respect for human rights and dignity in every situation and encouraging active, responsible, informed participation both at school and in local organisations / bodies.

Teaching strategies mainly focus on *cooperative learning* methodologies (pair and group work, projects, active learning) and on interdisciplinary programming: each teacher of the class decides what part of their programme falls under the “umbrella” subject of the module or, could be made relevant to the argument of a module. If there is something, it goes into the class ‘pot’ and students are encouraged seek links between subjects. For example, citizenship, Constitution and human rights interdisciplinary modules are being taught this year in many 4th year classes⁹.

For the GLOCAL project, the whole *Consiglio di classe*¹⁰ is involved in planning, carrying out learning activities and in evaluating the competences acquired. As regards teaching materials, the list might seem familiar: meetings with experts, films, documentaries, videoconferences, case studies, Web quests, analysis of current events and issues, simulations, role plays etc., but it is allied with learning by doing, learning first hand through experience, observation and informed research, making what is being learnt more relevant to students’ everyday lives and subjective experiences, hence, more interesting for them. The project is being monitored through evaluation of the process, of the final results and, importantly, through student feed-back.

One innovative project that is currently underway in another school, an *Istituto Comprensivo* in Padua¹¹ should be mentioned here. The project aims to educate 11–14 year olds for active citizenship, democracy and responsible participation both in the classroom and through direct participation in the democratic process. Students study similar texts to those in the Brocchi project, (adapted to their level) and then put what they have learnt in the classroom directly into practise outside the school. They are encouraged to identify the problems, or things they would like changed or introduced, within their local community. They draw up proposals and meet a member of the Local District Council. They then submit their proposal to the Council and follow its progress from suggestion to decision. This particular project has been designed for younger secondary school students but ideas and the methodology have no age limit.

The next project also adopts a more “hands-on” approach in order to develop citizenship skills of representation, mediation and participation. This project, *La Meglio Gioventù*¹² (the Best of Youth), aims to educate students in group management and representation skills; to encourage active participation in student bodies at all levels; to render students as autonomous as possible; and, in the long term, to hand over organisation and management of the project to the students. *La Meglio Gioventù* started in September 2006 targeting newly elected 1st year student class representatives.

⁸ As an Italian Education Ministry Document stated: “living in a complex and disorientating society, even in the micro-society of a school ... means developing the capacity to give a meaning to existence and communal life and dialectically elaborating the constructs of personal identity, solidarity, freedom and responsibility, competition and cooperation ... the Constitution offers a solid foundation of shared values ... and should not be seen as an abstract unchangeable document students must learn ... but as a living reality within students’ lives in and out of school”. (*Educating for citizenship according to the Constitution in multicultural contexts. Documento di indirizzo per la sperimentazione dell’insegnamento di “Cittadinanza e Costituzione”, 4 marzo 2009, p. 13*)

⁹ e.g. - in one 4th year class - *Interdisciplinary module: Educating for Citizenship - focusing on Human rights: Subjects involved*: Latin, German, Spanish, English, History, Philosophy

¹⁰ *Consiglio di classe* = all the class teachers.

¹¹ Istituto Comprensivo Due Carrare, Padova (ITALY) - <http://www.istitutocomprensivoduecarrare.it>

¹² *La Meglio Gioventù* - title from a poem by Pasolini - is a family saga focussed on 2 brothers. The film recounts their life-stories in the period 1966 – 2003 and seeks to highlight the interaction between the personal and the political, the ways in which small events may become turning points affecting choices made by individuals.

That year, three teachers managed the project¹³, organising workshops for the students so as to explain both the role and functions of a representative and to teach basic principles of group management. In 2007, it was this original group, now 2nd years, who talked to the new 1st year representatives, explaining what would be expected of them and offering themselves as tutors. The following year, 2008, students from both the original and the second group both organised and ran the workshops for the newly elected 1st years. A stable tutor group had begun to form and, in 2009, the students took over. In the words of a founder member: *"This year (2009) we students started back with the first year classes doing the training course ourselves. We started by showing a film, "The ONDA" and debated what we had seen... We simulated an Assemblée di Classe¹⁴... and... would block the "assembly" when problems occurred, (and) advise how these problems could be resolved should they occur in a real Assemblée. After, we accompanied them to every first experience at Brocchi... and have become a sort of tutor for them, someone they can call on whenever they need explanations or information"*¹⁵. Most students would agree with their spokeswoman that participating in the project has been a very positive experience, that they have acquired new skills and confidence in interpersonal relationships, mediation, organization and decision making and, have "grown up"... and "found friends". Their main complaint is that "not everyone at school knows about this project, or maybe just isn't interested. Out of 2000 students only about 30 meet regularly to work. Our aim now is to involve the whole school in our meetings"¹⁶. Teachers agree with students that there is often a problem with disseminating information and they also say that many students find it hard to see the project as a part of "education". However, they do report one very positive outcome: a strong, stable group has formed, willing and able to organize activities and to act as tutors to other students. The project is continuing – mainly under student management.

Developing citizenship also entails promoting a culture of legality as a crucial step both towards participatory citizenship and towards developing the social and civic competencies required for life-long learning¹⁷. The two projects briefly described below take up the question of "Mafia". The first project, *"Percorsi di Cittadinanza e della Legalità"* (Paths towards Citizenship and Legality), started in September 2005, and aims to educate for legality. A province-wide network of five senior secondary schools and four other institutions¹⁸ are involved. Up to five students (aged 17/18) are selected from each institution: students who must be willing to make a commitment to disseminating what they learn in their schools / organisations and communities. After a series of local preliminary meetings in each school and a Province level meeting in Vicenza, the group spends a week in Palermo (Sicily). During their stay they meet local magistrates, talk to students of their own age to learn about others' experiences, visit important sites strongly associated with the battle against the Mafia and a cooperative, now cultivating land confiscated from the Mafia. The week ends with a round table, presided over by a member of the Anti-Mafia Commission¹⁹. The current programme (2009-10) will include a meeting with the Chief Magistrate of the Province of Vicenza and work with Miloud²⁰ and other activities before the students go to Palermo in Spring. All who have so far taken part in this project, both teachers and students, have found that first person experience, meeting the people directly involved and understanding their reality as well as visiting sites that are engraved in recent Italian history has increased their commitment to promoting justice, legality and democracy. Indeed, students started organising meetings and discussions in their classes, schools and communities very soon after their return.

¹³ Rough assessment of the %age of teacher involvement in organising and managing the project:

2006 - 100%, 2007 – 70%, 2008 – 40%, 2009 – 5%: a strong student group had formed

¹⁴ *Assemblea di Classe* = regular meetings organised by each class during the school year to allow students to discuss problems, proposals. Chaired by the class representatives. Teachers are not involved in the meeting (unless invited).

¹⁵ Quotation from a student - see power point for full text

¹⁶ Idem.

¹⁷ See the provisions of Law no: 169 of 30.10.2008 regarding "Citizenship and Constitution"

¹⁸ 1) The Provincial Education Offices (Vicenza), 2) *Consulta degli studenti* (Student Committee for the Province); 3) *Pastorale giovanile* (Church organisation) and, 4) *Cooperativa Sociale "Il Mosaico"* (for students with learning difficulties)

¹⁹ See Appendix 3 (or the power point) for a fuller description of the March 2009 programme in Palermo.

²⁰ Miloud started working with children living on the streets in Bucharest Romania 1992. UNICEF awarded him a prize in 1999 for his work for children's rights. He has set up the PARADA Foundation <http://parada.ifrance.com/> to organise his work in many countries. A film about his activities entitled Pa-ra-da was presented at the Venice Biennale in 2008.

The second legality project the school is involved in is an Anti-Mafia Education Project that was originally set up in 2005 for 16 – 19 year old students in Sicily²¹. In 2009 the project was opened to secondary schools throughout Italy. The course consists of five video conferences which aim to offer students the cultural tools to understand and recognise Mafia and to encourage anti-mafia critique and consciousness. About 60 schools in Sicily (4 to 6 thousand students) have been involved every year in the video conferences. Students all over Italy watch and listen to a “lesson” taking place in Palermo and are able to intervene directly in the debate at the end of the session.

However, it is not only what you learn, but also how you learn it that is important in developing citizenship skills: sometimes the means through which students acquire knowledge can be as effective and important in obtaining results as the knowledge itself. Both peer tutoring and cooperative learning are excellent vehicles for transmitting ideas, attitudes of cooperation and openness towards the other. For example, in Liceo Brocchi, both the increased use of co-operative learning strategies, fundamental to CLIL²² methodology, and a peer tutoring project²³, appear to be encouraging attitudes (or the habit) of respect and cooperation (civic and social competences) among students at the school. The peer tutoring project, where students agree to regularly help another student in difficulty with their studies, has proved undeniably effective, if not in some cases even more effective in terms of results, than the more formal teacher led remedial courses organized in the past. Indeed, since January 2009, peer tutoring has become the official policy/strategy for most remedial teaching and support for students in difficulty at Liceo Brocchi²⁴.

Last, but not least for developing citizenship skills and competences is student mobility, all mobility, but in this case, the more egalitarian school exchanges. These serve not only to improve language competences but also, if not more importantly, to combat prejudice and develop a variety of social skills. Sharing the life of a family in another country, experiencing education system gives students first-hand knowledge of another social-cultural reality. Exchanges also offer an opportunity for students to work together on a project, cooperating and sharing knowledge²⁵. On a recent exchange with a school in Germany the project theme was “Europe–yesterday, today and tomorrow”²⁶. Students from Germany, Italy and the Netherlands worked together, in English, German and Italian. Working on a common theme unites students and tends to highlight similarities between individuals, cultures and values, rather than emphasizing differences. However to share information and learn about another’s culture implies knowledge of one’s own culture and identity!

Hilary Creek - Dec 2009

²¹ *Progetto Educativo Antimafia*. See Appendix 4 for 2009 Programme:
http://www.piolatorre.it/progetti_educativi_antimafia/default.asp

²² CLIL = Content Language Integrated Learning, teaching subjects directly in an FL.

Currently Liceo Brocchi is involved in 2 Comenius projects on CLIL: 1) **C**CLL **C**ommon **C**onstitution and **L**anguage **L**earning (2008 – 10), a multilateral network involving 12 countries (teachers and educators from 16 Education Institutions) DE (c) (2), AT, BG (2), CZ, FI, IT, HU (2), NL, PL (2), RO, EST, UK which is developing CLIL modules in English and German to teach about European citizenship and the European Constitution – testing them in the diverse countries involved; 2) **A**RC **A**ction **R**esearch on **C**IL, a Comenius Multilateral Partnership (2009 –11) involving teachers and groups of students from 4 countries - IT (c), DE, ES, PL which aims to plan, construct and test modules for stds 15-17 years in the main common disciplines which could form the basis of a (European) common curriculum and promote integration through language and through the study of common topics for students. Modules developed at 2 levels A2+ and B1+ CEFR in English, German, Spanish, Catalan, Italian and Polish; EQF will be used for assessment.

²³ Comenius 1 project: **E**FFECT - **E**ducation for **F**uture **E**uropean **C**itizens by **T**utoring – (2007 – 2009)

²⁴ *Corsi di recupero*: remedial courses for students in difficulty used to be held by teachers after school hours – but there is no more funding available. Liceo Brocchi has now set up a permanent peer tutoring project at school. Students are asked to volunteer as tutors. A teacher (or the *Consiglio di Classe*) proposes peer tutoring to his/her students, selects the peer from his/her class (or from another), organises teaching materials and timetable for the student tutor. Student tutors receive basic training in their role and are assigned a student-pupil. The families of both tutors and tutees are informed and must give their formal assent. The tutor is provided with a register to record attendance and content of lessons and receives a credit at the end of the school year for their work.

²⁵ In Italy any Exchange must, of necessity, be accompanied by a didactic project, of some type or another, with an outcome/product.

²⁶ “Europe–yesterday, today and tomorrow”: yesterday=history of the EU; today=the student exchange as a concrete experience; tomorrow=perspectives for the future of Europe For more about this project (IT March 2009, DE April 2009) see <http://www.liceobrocchi.vi.it>

APPENDIX 1

Defining Competence 6

Notes taken from: *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning*

(http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00100018.pdf)

6) Social and civic competences: Defined as equipping individual to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life in increasingly diverse society. To encourage individuals to participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation. Include:

“Competences such as personal competences (knowing and respecting yourself is an essential prerequisite to getting to know and respecting, the other), interpersonal ones (relating to others, negotiating towards solutions, trying to understand the point of view of the other) and intercultural competences and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation”.

Competence Specifications	associated Project (Brocchi)
Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this social competence are defined as being “linked to personal and social well-being which requires an understanding of how individuals can ensure optimum physical and mental health, including as a resource for oneself and one’s family and one’s immediate social environment, and knowledge of how a healthy lifestyle can contribute to this”.	<i>environment projects looking e.g. at how the local / regional authorities deal with public and community issues; nutrition, sourcing;</i>
For successful interpersonal and social participation it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments	<i>Exchanges, international projects, MEP YPAC etc. projects on legality; La Meglio Gioventù: a training project for group management;</i>
It is equally important to be aware of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality and non-discrimination, society and culture.	<i>(Project on Gender Inequality for the European Year of Equal Rights); exchanges / pupil mobility</i>
Understanding the multi-cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of European societies and how national cultural identity interacts with the European identity is essential.	<i>European citizenship projects; exchanges, international projects, (taught CLIL modules)</i>
The core skills of this competence include the ability to communicate constructively in different environments, to show tolerance, express and understand different viewpoints, to negotiate with the ability to create confidence, and to feel empathy.	<i>peer tutoring; cooperative learning; La Meglio Gioventù: learning how to behave, how to negotiate in a group</i>
Individuals should be capable of coping with stress and frustration and expressing them in a constructive way and should also distinguish between the personal and professional spheres.	<i>La Meglio Gioventù: learning how to discuss and negotiate; exchanges Simulations (MEP, YPAC)</i>
The competence is based on an attitude of collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. Individuals should have an interest in socio-economic developments and intercultural communication and should value diversity and respect others, and be prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise.	<i>Exchanges; student mobility between countries; MEP, YPAC etc. international projects: sharing information and learning about another’s culture implies knowing about your own; projects on legality,</i>

APPENDIX 2

LA MEGLIO GIOVENTÙ

2009: the 4th year of the project in the words of one of the founder members of the group

“This year we students started back with the first year classes doing the training course ourselves. We started by showing a film: The ONDA, after which a lively debate started about the pros and cons of groups and about various scenes in the film which students had reacted to in very different ways, and not just the first year students present.

We simulated a class assembly, giving roles, at random to every student, such as a class representative, an active student, an annoying one, a lively one, a shy one, a teacher, etc. and asking them to act out that role. We would block the “assembly” when problems occurred, of incomprehension, and discussed / advised how these problems could be resolved should they occur in a real *Assemblea di Classe*.

After, we accompanied them to every first experience at Brocchi: the first institute assemblies, the first class assemblies and their first class representative elections. We have become a sort of TUTOR for them, someone who they can call on whenever they need explanations or information”.

Vittoria - November 2009.

APPENDIX 3

“Percorsi di Cittadinanza e della Legalità”

Programme Palermo – 28 February to 3 March 2009

- 1) Meeting with Head-teachers, teachers and students from 3 Licei in Palermo, Termini Imerese, and Bagheria to discuss the issue of Legality.
- 2) Visit to Brancaccio, Corleone and Cinisi - places associated with three anti-mafia activists who were killed by the Mafia - Placido Rizzotto, Peppino Impastato and don Pino Puglisi.
- 3) Meeting with Rita Borsellino at the place where her brother, a Magistrate, Paolo Borsellino and all members of his escort were killed by a Mafia car bomb.
- 4) Meeting with the Chief Magistrate of Palermo, dott. Alessandro Marangoni, to learn about the history of Mafia organisations and to reflect on the importance of each and every one of us respecting the law.
- 5) Visit to Capaci, where the car with Giovanni Falcone a Magistrate, his wife, and all members of his escort were blown up and killed on the motorway.
- 6) Visit to a Cooperative which is cultivating land confiscated from the Mafia.
- 7) Round Table on “The culture of legality and development”, with G. Lumia from the National Antimafia Commission.

APPENDIX 4

ANTIMAFIA EDUCATION PROJECT

Centro di studi ed iniziative culturali Pio La Torre Onlus
Via Remo Sandron 61 90143 Palermo Telefono/Fax +39 091.348766

Programme of videoconferences 2009-2010

1. **23.10.2009** Between past and present, what is the Mafia today in the era of globalisation?
2. **23.11.2009** Historical social and political opposition to the Mafia and the rebellion of the entrepreneurs.
3. **20.01.2010** The role of women in criminal organizations and in the Anti-Mafia.
4. **25.02.2010** Ecclesiastical hierarchies and the Mafia phenomenon: from silence to antimafia
5. **24.03.2010** The role of information and victims in the struggle against the Mafia: from investigative journalism to phone call interception.

See: http://www.piolatorre.it/progetti_educativi_antimafia/2009-2010.asp for details

APPENDIX 5

Liceo G. B. Brocchi is in Bassano del Grappa, a small town at the foot of Monte Grappa in the Province of Vicenza, Italy. It was founded 1819, in the cloisters of an old Monastery, now in 2009 it has 2050 students, 179 teachers and 44 Administration and Services personnel. It is named after an early 19th century scientist and naturalist, Giambattista Brocchi, who came from Bassano. It has two sites – one occupies a 17th Venetian Palazzo and the other, now the main site is close by and has three buildings in a campus. The school offers 5 courses of study: Classics, Modern Languages, Scientific, Scientific Technological and Social sciences. The catchment area extends over 63 local districts and 3 provinces. The school is a *Scuola Polo per Licei Classici* (Pole School). There are 5 Licei Pole schools, one for each course type (e.g. Classics, Artistic, Scientific ...) in Italy and they act as trailblazers for experimentation. Brocchi offers students various: **Courses:** (1) Language certification courses for English, French, German and Spanish, is a sub-centre for the Cambridge EFL Examinations and a Trinity Exam Centre. (2) “Sandwich” courses: Scientific-Technological and Scientific courses are currently part of a project where work experience and school alternate. (3) work placement (stage) in the local area or abroad for 4^o year students. (4) Career information (5) 2 post diploma courses and is an accredited centre for two such courses aimed at young adults and covering subjects such as Marketing; Secretarial skills (with languages), Computers and IT and Personnel development. (6) ECDL European Computer Driving License: 7 courses are running this year (2009–2010).

Ongoing (citizenship) related projects:

- 1) A long-term project working to reduce the numbers of students dropping out of the school system.
 - 2) A long term project working on the theme of Equality and equal opportunities for women supported by the Veneto Region, the Local and Provincial Councils and various Universities. Two conferences were organised for the European Year of Equal Opportunity in 2008. The Acts are available in English and Italian.
 - 3) La Meglio Gioventù – student representation and participation (see article for description)
 - 4) 2 Legality projects Anti-Mafia (see article for descriptions)
 - 5) 2 Comenius projects: a) Multilateral 12 nation project CCLL (2008-10), which is developing CLIL materials on European constitution and citizenship, now in its 2nd year, and b) Comenius schools partnership (2009-2011) also developing CLIL materials. (A peer tutoring Comenius 1 project has just ended (2007-09), as has another Comenius multilateral schools project on Tourism and Sustainability (2006-08)).
- Liceo Brocchi is also lead school in the *European Schools Council*, a network of schools in the Province, elementary, middle schools and senior schools, who are starting to work together and share projects. Already 4 schools of the network are “sharing” an ongoing Leonardo project that enables students to do a 5 week work *stage* in Britain, Spain, France and Austria - 90 students went in 2008.
- 6) Peer tutoring project (see note 24).

Other ongoing activities seeking to develop “*Cittadinanza*” citizenship skills among students, with a particular emphasis on Europe and on European Citizenship, are:

MEP - Model European Parliament (member since it began)

YPAC - Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention (member since it began)