



BUILDING CITIZENS OF THE THE FUTURE: INTEGRATING CIVIC COMPETENCIES INTO THE CURRICULUM.

Aura Cristina Rosas Mazuera
Jenny Del Rocio Pulsara
Claudia Bacca Navarro

University of Nariño

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Abstract.

This research aims to analyze the inclusion of civic competencies in the educational curriculum from early childhood to upper secondary education. Through a documentary review, effective pedagogical strategies for forming critical, participatory, and socially committed citizens are examined. Various studies indicate that the transversal integration of these competencies into the educational process enhances peaceful conflict resolution, the development of critical thinking, and active participation in society.

Findings highlight that methodologies such as community-based learning and digital technologies have proven to be key tools for civic education. However, factors such as inadequate teacher training and inequalities in access to technological resources remain significant obstacles. Additionally, evidence suggests that civic education contributes to reducing school conflicts and strengthening democratic coexistence in educational institutions.

It is concluded that strengthening educational policies that ensure the integration of these competencies into curricula is essential. Promoting active methodologies and practical experiences that foster responsible and participatory citizenship is crucial. Furthermore, future research should explore the long-term impact of civic education in adulthood and the role of social media in shaping civic awareness.

Keywords: Civic competencies, civic education, educational curriculum, community-based learning, civic formation, democratic participation, school coexistence.

Resumen.

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo analizar la inclusión de las competencias ciudadanas en el currículo educativo desde los niveles iniciales hasta la educación media vocacional. A través de una revisión documental, se examinan las estrategias pedagógicas que han demostrado ser efectivas en la formación de ciudadanos críticos, participativos y comprometidos con su entorno. Diversos estudios indican que la integración transversal de estas competencias en el proceso educativo favorece la resolución pacífica de conflictos, el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico y la participación activa en la sociedad.

FORMANDO A LOS CIUDADANOS DEL FUTURO: INTEGRANDO LAS COMPETENCIAS CÍVICAS EN EL CURRÍCULO.

Los hallazgos destacan que metodologías como el aprendizaje basado en la comunidad y el uso de tecnologías digitales han demostrado ser herramientas clave para la enseñanza de la ciudadanía. Sin embargo, factores como la falta de formación docente y la desigualdad en el acceso a recursos tecnológicos siguen representando obstáculos significativos. Asimismo, la evidencia sugiere que la educación cívica contribuye a la reducción de conflictos escolares y al fortalecimiento de la convivencia democrática en las instituciones educativas.

Se concluye que es esencial consolidar políticas educativas que garanticen la integración de estas competencias en los planes de estudio, promoviendo metodologías activas y experiencias prácticas que fomenten una ciudadanía responsable y participativa. Además, se identifican líneas futuras de investigación sobre el impacto de la educación ciudadana en la vida adulta y el papel de las redes sociales en la construcción del pensamiento cívico.

Palabras clave: Competencias ciudadanas, educación cívica, currículo educativo, aprendizaje basado en la comunidad, formación ciudadana, participación democrática, convivencia escolar.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The development of citizenship competencies within the educational system represents both a challenge and an unavoidable necessity in contemporary societies. The formation of active, democratic, and responsible citizens requires an education that goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to incorporate critical, communicative, and problem-solving skills from the earliest educational levels (Winthrop, 2020). Several studies have shown that the inclusion of these competencies in the school curriculum can strengthen civic participation and promote respect for diversity and peaceful coexistence (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2022).

Despite the importance of this topic, in many educational systems, citizenship competencies remain confined to specific subject areas, lacking a cross-cutting approach that would allow their effective application across diverse learning contexts (López-Meseguer, 2025). As a result, students face difficulties in developing critical skills for evaluating information, managing conflicts peacefully, and fulfilling their role within a democratic society (Chittum, Enke, & Finley, 2022).

The current research aims to analyze the relevance of including citizenship competencies in the educational curriculum, from early grades to vocational secondary education. It is intended that these competencies be integrated across all areas of knowledge, promoting active participation and the development of negotiation and conflict resolution skills in children and young people (Guevara Ortiz & Buenaño, 2021). In this regard, successful international experiences will be examined, and pedagogical strategies that have supported the development of critical citizens committed to their context will be identified (Mena, 2022).

In addition to providing a theoretical framework on the teaching of citizenship competencies, this documentary review is supported by prior research that has assessed the impact of these approaches on students' academic and social development (Cantillo & Polo, 2024). Thus, it aims to contribute to the debate on the need to strengthen these competencies within the curriculum, ensuring that education not only prepares students for the labor market but also for the full exercise of their rights and civic duties (Merino & García, 2024).

The following sections analyze the impact of learning strategies on the consolidation of a civic culture, the role of technology in the development of citizenship competencies, and the pedagogical models that have demonstrated greater effectiveness in promoting democratic values.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The development of citizenship competencies in the field of education has been widely recognized as a fundamental need for shaping individuals who are capable of actively participating in society (Ruiz & Chaux,

2005). According to these authors, education should not be limited to the transmission of technical and scientific knowledge; rather, it should include the strengthening of democratic values, communication skills, and conflict resolution—essential elements for harmonious and equitable coexistence.

In this regard, Winthrop (2020) points out that civic education is a critical component in the development of democratic societies. The absence of a structured approach in educational institutions can lead to low levels of civic participation and limited knowledge of individual rights and duties. In countries with educational models that prioritize the development of citizenship competencies, greater engagement in democratic processes has been observed, highlighting the importance of including these elements from early childhood to vocational secondary education.

The importance of integration of citizenship competences into the curriculum.

Several studies have shown that the incorporation of citizenship competencies into the school curriculum has a positive impact on students' development. Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2022) argue that playful learning can promote the development of critical skills for citizenship, such as empathy, cooperation, and informed decision-making. Furthermore, these pedagogical strategies enhance students' retention of key concepts, facilitating their application in real-world contexts.

Guillén and Pérez (2021), in their research on the development of citizenship competencies among primary education students in Bogotá, found that participation in social impact projects and the integration of conflict resolution activities in the classroom foster a sense of responsibility and belonging in students. This confirms that citizenship education should not be treated as an isolated subject but rather as a cross-cutting axis across all areas of knowledge.

Teaching methods and their impact on citizenship formation.

Different methodological approaches have been proposed to strengthen the teaching of citizenship competencies. Chittum et al. (2022) highlight the importance of community-based learning, which engages students in practical experiences within their immediate

environment. This strategy not only improves their understanding of civic concepts but also allows them to directly experience the challenges and opportunities involved in active participation in society.

Another effective method is the use of Virtual Learning Objects (VLOs), which are key tools for teaching civic values and promoting critical thinking. Morales, Gutiérrez, and Ariza (2016) explain that the implementation of VLOs in educational settings encourages reflective analysis and the development of students' argumentation skills, providing them with tools to engage in social and political debates in a well-founded manner.

On the other hand, Trujillo and Champutiz (2022) propose a teaching model based on coexistence and peace, in which media secondary education students learn about the importance of tolerance and dialogue as essential mechanisms for conflict resolution. The application of this model at the Institución Educativa Municipal Cabrera in Pasto showed significant improvements in how students approached disagreements, demonstrating a greater capacity for negotiation and peaceful resolution.

Citizenship formation and its relation with critical reading.

Critical reading is a fundamental aspect of citizenship education, as it enables students to analyze information, evaluate sources, and understand different points of view. Hoyos and Espitia (2020) argue that the mediation of critical reading in citizenship formation contributes to more informed decision-making and the development of autonomous thinking. In this regard, fostering the ability to distinguish between reliable information and misinformation is crucial in an era characterized by an overabundance of data.

The development of citizenship competencies not only impacts social and political participation but also directly influences coexistence within educational settings. Audor (2023) highlights that programs designed to foster these competencies in the school context have resulted in a decrease in violence and conflicts among students, promoting an environment of respect and cooperation. Likewise, Cerón, Nandar, and Mejía (2019) argue that peaceful coexistence within the school environment remains a challenge that must be addressed through comprehensive strategies, including school mediation, emotional education, and the development of empathy as a fundamental component of the educational process.

Educational policies and their role in promoting citizenship competencies.

The design of public policies aimed at strengthening civic education is essential to ensure equitable, high-quality education. According to Quiroz (2022), government initiatives focused on developing student leaders within educational institutions are an effective strategy for fostering leadership and decision-making skills in young people.

From a global perspective, organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO have promoted strategies for integrating citizenship competencies into national curricula, emphasizing the importance of an education that prepares active and responsible citizens at all stages of learning (Winthrop, 2020).

The analysis of the existing literature leads to the conclusion that the integration of citizenship competencies into the educational curriculum is an urgent necessity for strengthening democracies and building more equitable societies. Civic education not only contributes to the development of individual skills but also promotes peaceful coexistence and active participation in collective decision-making. The reviewed studies have demonstrated that strategies such as community-based learning, the use of educational technologies, and the promotion of critical reading play a key role in the consolidation of an informed and engaged citizenry. Finally, a call is made for the implementation of educational policies that prioritize the development of civic values from an early age, thereby ensuring a lasting impact on future generations.

III. DISCUSSION.

The analysis of literature demonstrates that the integration of citizenship competencies into the educational curriculum is a fundamental strategy for strengthening democratic participation and social coexistence in school institutions. The documentary review carried out shows that, despite the existence of multiple pedagogical approaches and educational policies aimed at this objective, challenges in their effective implementation persist (Ruiz & Chaux, 2005). Several studies have identified that the teaching of these competencies cannot be limited to specific subjects, but

it must permeate all areas of knowledge, promoting a comprehensive and cross-sectional formation in students (Winthrop, 2020).

A central point of this discussion lies in the need to design active methodologies that foster the internalization of citizenship values through experience. In this respect, Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2022) argue that playful learning promotes the retention of social skills such as empathy, respect, and cooperation, essential competencies for participation in a democratic society. This approach, complemented by strategies like community-based learning, has shown positive results in the formation of critical and reflective citizens (Chittum et al., 2022). Nevertheless, its implementation faces obstacles such as a lack of teacher training and the rigidity of curricula, aspects that limit the effectiveness of these initiatives (Guillén & Pérez, 2021).

On the other hand, technological mediation has emerged as a key tool in the teaching of citizenship competencies. Recent research has pointed out that the use of Virtual Learning Objects (VLOs) facilitates the construction of critical analysis and decision-making skills in digital environments (Morales, Gutiérrez & Ariza, 2016). Nevertheless, the unequal access to these technologies and the lack of digital literacy in some educational sectors represent barriers that must be approached to ensure an equitable and effective implementation (Hoyos & Espitia, 2020).

The review also reveals a direct relationship between the development of citizenship competencies and improvements in school coexistence. Studies such as Audor (2023) have shown that institutions that incorporate civic education strategies into their curricula tend to exhibit lower rates of conflict and school violence. In line with these findings, Trujillo and Champutiz (2022) argue that the development of citizenship competencies related to coexistence and peace among upper secondary education students has a positive impact on how they solve differences and interact within their environment. This supports the hypothesis that civic education not only fosters active citizens in the political and social spheres but also contributes to the creation of more harmonious and collaborative learning environments.

However, the lack of unified educational policies continues to be one of the main limitations in consolidating an effective model of citizenship education. Quiroz (2022) emphasizes that, although government programs aimed

at strengthening student leadership and democratic participation in schools exist, these efforts remain fragmented and insufficiently systematic. Therefore, educational institutions and regulatory bodies must work together to establish clear guidelines that promote the teaching of citizenship competencies as a fundamental pillar of the curriculum.

IV. CONCLUSIONS.

Finally, the argument developed in this study is grounded in a solid conceptual framework supported by recent, high-impact research in the field of education. The internal coherence of the article allows for a logical articulation of the importance of citizenship formation, the challenges in its implementation, and the opportunities for improvement within the educational system. The empirical evidence validates the relevance of incorporating citizenship competencies from early childhood to vocational secondary education, ensuring that students develop essential skills for their integration into society. The urgency of strengthening these initiatives is undeniable, given that the future of democracies depends, to a large extent, on the capacity of new generations to exercise their citizenship critically and responsibly (Winthrop, 2020).

The analysis carried out throughout this research reaffirms the need to integrate citizenship competencies into the educational curriculum in a cross-cutting and sustained manner. The reviewed literature demonstrates that their teaching contributes significantly to strengthening school coexistence, democratic participation, and students' critical thinking. However, the implementation of these approaches faces multiple challenges, including a lack of teacher training in citizenship education strategies and the rigidity of curricula, which limits their effective application in the classroom.

One of the most relevant findings of this study is the evidence that methodologies such as community-based learning and the use of digital tools are key to teaching citizenship competencies. The incorporation of Virtual Learning Objects has proven to be an effective mechanism for developing analytical skills and fostering informed debate among students. Nevertheless, the digital divide remains a factor that hinders equitable access to these resources, highlighting the need for educational policies that ensure their implementation at all educational levels.

Likewise, the development of citizenship competencies has been shown to be a determining factor in reducing conflicts in school settings. Previous research indicates that institutions with citizenship education programs exhibit lower rates of school violence and an increased culture of dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. This underscores the importance of adopting formative approaches that not only prioritize the learning of rights and duties but also promote experiences of active participation within school environments.

In terms of educational policy, it is concluded that strengthening governmental guidelines for the teaching of citizenship competencies is essential. Although initiatives to promote student leadership and democratic education exist, their impact has been limited due to a lack of consistency and continuity in their implementation (Quiroz, 2022). Therefore, the formulation of long-term strategies is recommended to ensure the integration of these competencies from early childhood through vocational secondary education, adopting an approach based on students' practice and direct experience.

Despite the progress achieved, this research presents certain limitations that should be addressed in future studies. First, further exploration of the impact of citizenship education on adult life is needed to determine whether the knowledge acquired during schooling translates into active participation in society. Similarly, it would be relevant to analyze the role of new technologies and social media in citizenship formation, given that they have become key spaces for the construction of democratic discourse and social mobilization.

Finally, this documentary review opens up avenues for future research to explore in depth how civic education can contribute to the development of citizens who are more engaged with their environment and capable of addressing contemporary social challenges. A call is made to the educational community and public policymakers to continue promoting research in this field in order to consolidate educational models that respond to the needs of present and future societies.

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