

Education of Teachers for the Implementation of the Citizenship Education in Finland and Estonia

Ivan Beroš

Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Croatia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Civic Education

Competence Profile

ICCS 2016

Initial Teacher Education

Professional Development

ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the education of teachers for the implementation of Citizenship education in Finland and Estonia included in the IEA International Civic Education Survey - ICCS 2016. The analysis of the approach to the teacher education for implementation of Citizenship education is based on three theoretical concepts – initial teacher education, teacher competence profile, and teacher professional development. The goals of the analysis are to determine the framework of initial education, the structure of the competence profile, and the modalities of professional development of teachers for implementation of the CE in analysed countries. Research is based on qualitative methodology and method of document analysis. In Finland, initial teacher education for implementation of the CE is based on the assumption and practical support for the principles of democracy and human rights, and in Estonia future teachers are educated for the implementation of the CE through a dual path. Professional development of the teachers is realized through joint action of state agencies and civil society, and the impact ratio of these actors varies between analysed countries with actors of civil society having a dominant role. The teacher competence profile for the implementation of the CE in case of the Finland is explicit and it combines methodical, pedagogical, didactic, social, and moral competence. In case of Estonia some elements of competence profile are implicitly present in the Estonian Qualifications Framework.

1. Introduction

In the joint document by ILO and UNESCO (2016, p. 21) Recommendation *concerning the status of teachers* the term teacher refers to “all persons in schools who are responsible for teaching students.” Due to the multitude of tasks the teacher performs in the teaching process, his work is marked in various ways, so the teacher becomes “the organizer and director of the teaching process, analyst of his and the student's work, builder of collaborative relations, rationalizer, initiator and researcher, creator of pupils creative expression, programmer, mentor and co-ordinator, seeker and provider of information” (Mihaliček, 2011, p. 390). With changes in the process of planning and programming the educational system and accepting the theory of curriculum teachers also became “creators and evaluators of curriculum” (Baranović, 2015, p. 18).

* Corresponding author E-mail address: ivan.beros@gmail.com

Cite this article as:

Beroš, I. (2022). Education of Teachers for the Implementation of the Citizenship Education in Finland and Estonia, *European Journal of Teaching and Education* 4(1):14-24. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ejte.v4i1.745>

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The importance of teachers for quality of the educational process is stressed in the history of education, thus classic of educational theory J. F. Herbart defines teachers as *guides of the moral development of students* (English, 2011), Dewey emphasises the importance of teachers in encouraging the development of critical thinking and imagination (English, 2016), and contemporary educational efforts emphasize the importance of teachers at the national and international level. The leading international actor in emphasizing the importance of teachers for the quality of the educational systems is UNESCO, which continuously works on promoting the importance of teachers and their professional training (ILO & UNESCO, 1966/2016; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Van Nuland, Knandelwal, 2006; Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). *The report by the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the 21st century* (Delors, 1998) grants the teacher a major role in raising the quality of educational systems worldwide, resulting in efforts aimed at developing the teaching profession and professionalising teachers (Day, 2002; Sachs, 2016; Goodwin, 2020).

1.1. Teacher Education in a Comparative Perspective

Following the described tendencies this paper presents the results of comparative qualitative research to determine the framework of education of future primary school teachers for the implementation of Citizenship Education (CE) in Finland and Estonia. The objective was operationalized through three research questions:

- a) How is the initial teacher education for the implementation of CE conducted in Finland and Estonia?
- b) What is the teacher competence profile for the implementation of CE in Finland and Estonia?
- c) How is the teacher professional development for the implementation of CE conducted in Finland and Estonia?

1.2. Starting Points of the Analysis

International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) provides a framework for discussion about CE in a global context offering relevant and methodologically high-quality data that enable comparison of the manner of implementation and the outcomes of the CE at the level of the national educational system. Part of the ICCS intended for teachers who implement the CE is conducted through *the Questionnaire for teachers* and provides part of the data for the comparison of initial education, competence profile, and professional development of teachers for implementation of the CE in participating countries. In this paper, ICCS data were supplemented by data from Eurydice's *Citizenship Education at school in Europe 2017*, which through the fourth chapter (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, p. 133-163) provides data on initial education and professional development of teachers for implementation of the CE a to Estonia and Finland.

As the starting point of the analysis, Finland and Estonia were compared concerning the results of students in 2016. ICCS in eight categories for whose results teachers play an important role. These categories are: students': discussion of political and social issues at school, sense of citizens self-efficacy, perception of the value of participation at school, expected participation, perception of the importance of conventional citizenship, perception of the importance of social-movement related citizenship, perception of openness in classroom discussions, and perception of student-teacher relations in school (graph 1)

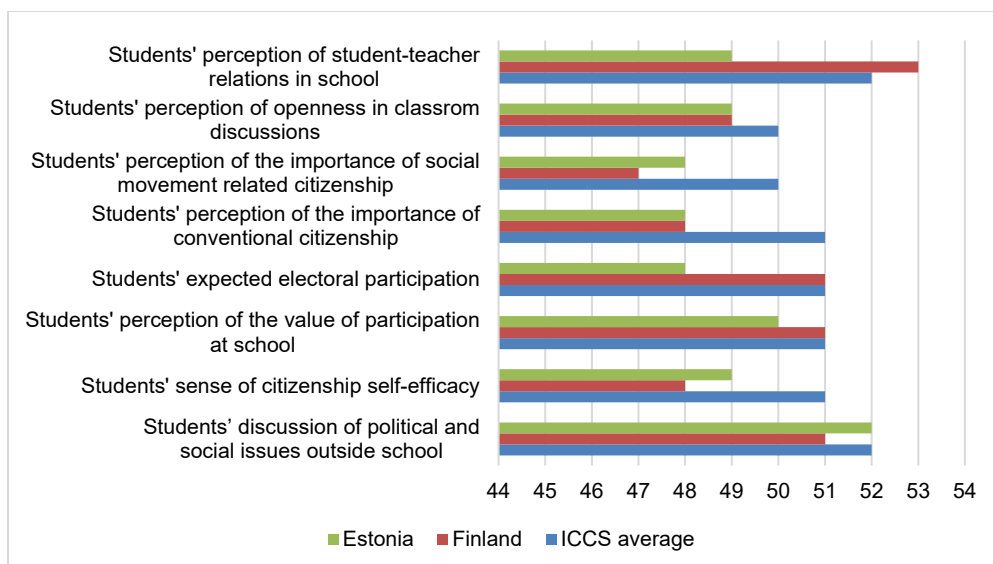


Figure 1. Comparison of Finnish and Estonian students' results in selected ICCS 2016 categories with average

Source: Adapted from Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, Agrusti & Friedman, (2018)

2. Materials and Methods

Qualitative methodology and analysis of documents method was chosen as the most appropriate method for providing answers to research questions. The research examined teacher education in a comparative perspective and thus used a comparative method. This combination of research methods is the most appropriate way to answer the research questions (Beroš & Pongračić, 2019).

2.1. Sources, Processing, and Encoding of Data

Research questions and three theoretical constructs were used as an orientation in the selection of data sources (Bouillet, Domović & Pažur, 2020). The criteria for the selection, analysis, and grouping of data were:

- Focus on CE
- Initial teacher education for the implementation of the CE
- Teacher professional development for the implementation of the CE
- Teacher competence profile for the implementation of the CE

These topics are based on three theoretical constructs *initial teacher education for the implementation of the CE* refers to the acquisition of formal qualifications by graduating from a university which enables entry into the teaching profession (Kostović-Vranješ, 2016). *Teacher professional development for the implementation of the CE* combines the concepts of teacher education and lifelong learning, and at the theoretical level denotes “all activities in which teachers participate during their careers that are designed to improve their professional activity” (Day & Sachs, 2005, p. 3). *Teacher competence profile* is “an upgrade of the qualification framework, based on the determination of the type and level of competencies required to perform a specific job and serves as an orientation to employers and creators of educational programs” (Vizek-Vidović, 2009, p. 37). Teacher competence profile consists of different competencies, including civic competence (Blazević, 2016), and following the aforementioned, it is the task of institutions that perform initial teacher education to make sure that it develops civic competence.

Finland and Estonia participated in the IEA *ICCS 2016*¹ and in the European Commission's *Citizenship Education at School in Europe 2017*, so the two aforementioned reports constitute primary sources of data. Secondary sources of data comprise national guidelines for teacher education and comparative reports on the educational status of teachers in the analysed countries.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Initial Teacher Education for Implementation of the CE

3.1.1. Finland

In Finland, all teachers, except teachers of vocational schools, are educated at the university level under national regulations steaming from “*Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004) that defines the qualification framework*” (Rautiainen, Vanhanen-Nuutinen & Virta, 2014, p. 15) which contains educational qualifications relevant for the organisation of study programs in which “teachers acquire psychological and pedagogical teaching competences. The Ministry of Education and Culture regulates the system of responsibility and rights for institutions issuing degrees in various fields of educational sciences” (Rautiainen et al., 2014, p. 15).

The system of initial teacher education is based on the assumption and practical support for the principles of “democracy and human rights which have the status of an important part of initial teacher education. Practical implementation of these principles represents a joint and binding responsibility for university teachers that they should follow while designing university courses (Niemi, 2016). As guiding principles democracy and human rights have the task of harmonizing the national system of initial teacher education, and of supporting efforts aimed at eliminating inherent fragmentation of the initial teacher education system caused by its historical development (Rautiainen et al., 2014).

Education of all, and by that logic education of teachers who implement the CE is based on several basic principles. Initial teacher education programs are conducted at the university level and are research-based, they have a high social status, society has faith in education as a civilizational force, various content of initial teacher education programs result in a 'multi-professional qualification' and initial teacher education programs offer a safe future (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2013).

3.1.2. Estonia

The general part of the initial teacher education in Estonia underlines as one of the objectives the need to “deepen the understanding of the plurality of attitudes and the need for tolerance and democratization” (FTT, paragraph 2, in Jakobson et al., 2019, p. 49) of future teachers. The uniqueness of initial teacher education for the implementation of the CE in Estonia lies in the possibility of a dual path. Future teachers can be educated for the implementation of the CE through an integrated graduate teacher study program or a graduate study program for specific teaching areas, including the area of specialization for the CE teacher (Jakobson et al., 2019). The Estonian educational system is decentralised and teachers have a high degree of autonomy, which means they are responsible for the development of the CE curriculum (Eisenschmidt, Laura & Sillavee, 2019) and the development of their professional competencies. In addition to encouraging continuous professional development State, through the Ministry of Education, strive to positively influence the development of necessary professional competencies in Estonian teachers to achieve the best possible implementation of the CE in practice (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017). The latest efforts by the State aimed at raising the level of competencies of teachers were expressed through a professional standard for teachers aiming

¹ Data presented in this paper were obtained from the *Becoming Citizens in a Changing World: IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 International Report* (Schulz et al., 2018).

at improving the quality of teachers' professional development during their careers (Pedaste, Leijen, Poom-Valickis & Eisenschmidt, 2019).

3.2. Teacher Professional Development for the Implementation of the CE

3.2.1. Finland

The importance of the CE and its position within the educational system in Finland is clearly expressed in the *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education*, which states that "basic education is based on respect for life and social justice. Basic education strengthens the ability of students to defend these values (respect for life, social justice) and the ability to appreciate the inviolability of human dignity. Basic education also promotes [ideas] of well-being, democracy, equality, and justice (National core curriculum for basic education 2014, Chapter 2.2, in: Rautiainen, Männistö & Fornaciari, 2019). Professional development of teachers for implementation of the CE in Finland is carried out by individuals from different sectors of civil society using 'weakly bonded networks' such as different clubs, youth associations, religious organisations (Hansen & Rantala, 2009, p. 145). The importance of educating the educators (Thornton, 2001; Cochran-Smith, Grudnoff, Orland-Barak & Smith, 2020) is emphasized, i.e. the individuals conducting these training must acquire the competencies required by the teacher trainers.

3.2.2. Estonia

In Estonia, the development of professional competencies and professional development form an integral part of the teacher's lifelong learning process, as they are at the core of the *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020* (Ministry of Education and Research, [MoER] 2014). In addition to the educational system actors of the civil society have the most important role in the professional development of teachers for the implementation of the CE, since they organise various forms of professional development training and provide support for teachers (Danau & Pauly, 2019). The Institute *Jaan Tonisson*, whose mission is to promote and strengthen civil society in Estonia,² also plays an important role in the process of teachers' professional development for the implementation of the CE. In cooperation with various civil society stakeholders, Institute conducts research and organises conferences aimed at teacher professional development for the implementation of the CE.

3.3. The Teacher Competence Profile for the Implementation of the CE

The teacher competence profile represents "the determination of the type and level of competencies necessary for performing a specific job and serves as an orientation to employers, and creators of educational programs" (Vizek-Vidović, 2009, p. 37). The initial momentum of the teacher's competence profile was derived from documents created at the level of European educational policy and various national educational policy based on the *top-down* model as a result of initiatives and incentives from different bodies of the Council of Europe and the European Union (Lončarić & Pejić Papak, 2009). As described by Lončarić and Pejić Papak (2009, p. 3) the process started with a *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* (EC, 2005) and *Tuning educational structures in Europe: Summary of Outcomes – Education* (Gonzalez & Wagenaar, 2005), followed by *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (Commission of the European Communities, 2008) and *Teacher Education in Europe: An ETUCE Policy Paper* (Romer, 2008). The question that arises is what is the relationship between the teachers' competence profile and the implementation of the CE in analysed countries?

²(<http://www.jti.ee/en/civic-education-centres/>) Accessed 4th May 2021.

3.3.1. Finland

The Finnish National Framework for Qualification (FINQF) was formally adopted on 1st March 2017 and according to it the qualification of elementary school teacher represents the 7th level of the FINQF (Louko & Blomqvist, 2018). According to FINQF, individuals educated at this level should understand comprehensive and highly specialized concepts, methods, and knowledge corpus that correspond to professional knowledge of the profession that is used as the basis for independent action and/or research. ... Creatively solve demanding problems through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and/or innovation aimed at developing new knowledge and methods and independently perform demanding tasks of the profession using international cooperation. Manage things and/or people and assess the activities of individuals and groups. Accumulate factual and practical knowledge and methods of practical skills of the profession and assume responsibility for the development of others. Have the ability for lifelong learning and always take into account the ethical aspects of professional activity and the importance of the community when dealing with different people in educational and working communities and other groups and networks (Louko & Blomqvist, 2018, p. 54). Elementary school teachers get initial education at educational science programs that strive to achieve a balance between personal and professional competencies (Sahlberg, 2010). The professional qualification of elementary school teachers is based on “four different subareas: professional knowledge, expertise in learning and teaching, social and moral competencies, and various skills necessary for the practical work of teachers” (Mikkola, 2016, p. vii). Armi Mikkola describes the competence profile of Finnish teachers as follows.

Teachers should be versatile experts in their fields, be acquainted with every aspect of education and schooling. Teachers need knowledge of content related to pedagogical knowledge. Furthermore, teachers should be prepared to design long-term curriculum for the attainment of their educational goals and not limit their work exclusively to the development of specific aspects of curricula. Understanding the integral nature of the processes of education and schooling is important for the development of the curriculum. Finally, teachers should also be acquainted with the networks of different experts involved in the creation and development of knowledge and curriculum in areas that represent the focus of the teacher's professional activities (Mikkola, 2016, p. vii).

From the description, it is obvious that the competence profile of Finnish teachers combines methodical, pedagogical, and didactic competencies, and by emphasizing social and moral competence (Mikkola, 2016) the education focus is placed on social objectives that are reflected in the desire for a high degree of social cohesion and social justice (Sahlberg, 2016; Toom & Husu, 2016; Tirri, 2016). The educational policy wants teachers that can implement these goals in practice so the “programs of initial teacher education are placing special focus on the social and moral responsibility of teachers” (Niemi, 2016, p. 36).

3.3.2. Estonia

According to the Estonian Qualifications Framework (EQF), there are different levels of teacher education,³ and this paper deals with elementary school teachers which according to the EQF represents level 7. When analysing the proposed competence profile to be adopted during initial education Estonian educational policy emphasizes the development of the comprehensive competence profile (methodological, pedagogic, and didactic competencies) of future teachers. According to the EQF, teachers educated at the seventh level in the field of didactic competencies possess highly specialised knowledge in the professional field of work, specialised problem-solving skills required for research and/or innovation to develop new knowledge and professional skills, and integrate knowledge from different scientific fields

³https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-qualifications-framework-24_en Accessed 4th May 2021.

relevant to the professional field of work (Ministry of Education and Research [MoER], 2019). In the field of methodical competence, “they have developed capabilities necessary for management and transformations of complex learning and teaching contexts that require the use of innovative strategic approaches” (MoER, 2019).

4. Conclusion

The paper aimed to determine the outlook of conducting initial education and professional development, as well as the structure of the competence profile of teachers for implementation of the CE in Finland and Estonia. The results show that in the analysed countries there are similarities and differences within the observed categories, which can be explained by a different understanding of the role of the educational system in the development of democratic citizens and practical living experience of democracy. When trying to explain obtained results it is important to raise the question of how citizens of the analysed countries evaluate the democracy they live in every day? In Finland, around 25% of the people are dissatisfied with the state of democracy and in Estonia, this is the case for about 45% of the people (Foa, Klassen, Slade, Rand & Collins. 2020, p. 12). Data show that there is a continuous growth in the share of the population dissatisfied with the democracy they face every day in Estonia and Finland (Foa et al., 2020).

Given the above-mentioned data, it can be concluded that the CE should play an important role in increasing the share of the population satisfied with daily democracy and actively taking part in it. The precondition for the practical realization of the abovementioned is the active participation of citizens in various forms of democracy in practice, where the socialization role of civil society actors is extremely important (Putnam & Leonardi, 1993; Putnam, 2000). In the analysed countries, the education of students for assuming the role of democratic and active citizens is achieved through the national educational system and civil society (Beroš & Pongračić, 2018). There are some differences in the methodology of conducting CE in schools, but the results of the *2016 International Citizenship Education Survey* do not indicate that there are significant differences in the results of students from Estonia and Finland in the categories of citizen self-efficiency, conventional citizenship, participation in school and the school climate. The only significant difference in results shows that Finnish students assess student-teacher relations as significantly more positive than Estonian students.

When considering the content aspect of initial teacher education, the important difference between Finland and Estonia lays in the fact that during initial education future teachers in Estonia can choose a specialization for the CE teacher. In Finland, the content of the CE is satisfactorily present in the teacher's initial education, and it is one of the main elements that permeate the entire system of initial teacher education. The teacher competence profile for implementation of the CE is closely related to initial teacher education. In the analysed countries there are different situations regarding competence profiles of teachers. Whereby in Finland the competence profile is explicitly elaborated in the case of Estonia the competence profile is implicit and can be extracted from the EQF.

Both in Finland and Estonia teachers' professional development is realized through joint action of national agencies in charge of teacher's professional development and interested actors of civil society. It follows from the analysis that in Estonia and Finland the role of civil society is stronger than the efforts of national agencies, which can be explained by the observed decline in the trust of citizens of the analysed countries in daily democracy (Foa et al., 2020) and the democratic deficit particularly present in the young segment of the population (Stevick, 2009; Rautiainen & Rähä, 2012). An important role of civil society in the professional development of teachers for the implementation of CE can be explained by the fact that the role of the State in teacher professional development in Estonia and Finland is not significant.

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