

Preparing culturally literate citizens through dialogue and argumentation: rethinking citizenship education

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Cultural literacy, as a set of values and dispositions developed through dialogue and constructive argumentation with people representing different cultural identities, is an essential skillset of a twenty-first-century citizen in any part of today's world. Especially within the current European landscape of continuous immigration and change, the fluidity and rhetoricity of identity construction require a notion of citizenship education that can adapt to this dynamic process. Moreover, the practical aspects of being a citizen in its authentic, global, democratic sense are not sufficiently emphasized within current curricula. In this paper, we present an innovative citizenship education curriculum based on dialogic, argumentative and cultural literacy skills, which addresses this gap through proposing discursive practices of cultural identity construction at a collaborative level (small group or whole class) inspired by wordless texts (picture books and animated films) on core civic cultural values such as tolerance, empathy and inclusion. Through applying a design-based research methodology with teachers from three education levels and four European countries, we conclude that dialogic lesson plans aiming at the development of cultural literacy dispositions can act as an innovative and adaptive citizenship education curriculum in diverse contexts.

Keywords: citizenship; cultural literacy; dialogue; argumentation

Introduction

The changing nature of belonging and citizenship in nowadays fluid societies, as caused by the increased migration, refugee flees and the recent pandemic, calls for a re-conceptualisation of citizenship as a set of critical practices, and not a set of pre-constructed identities (El-Haj, 2009; López & Carretero, 2012; Guerrero, Pérez & Arfelis, 2019). The need for perceiving the formation of identities as an ongoing, dynamic process rooted in interaction rather than a pre-conceived characteristic is now more urgent than before, so that democracy flourishes as an everyday practice of constructive confrontation and integration. The place of an active perspective on

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cultural literacy rooted in dialogue and argumentation in the core of modern citizenship education curricula is argued in this paper.

Thus far, cultural literacy has been defined as the capacity to understand and participate fluently in a given culture (Hirsch, 1987), presupposing access to and understanding of the background knowledge that the author or speaker assumes the reader to have (Hirsch, 1983, 1987). Complementing this traditional conception of cultural literacy, a new definition of cultural literacy as a critical citizenship practice implies a dynamic and continuous dialogical process of co-construction of meanings and mutual negotiation of identities and points of view (Maine *et al.*, 2019). Too often cultural literacy is reduced to intercultural communication competencies focused on tolerating and respecting the Other's ethnical culture (Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 2017). Instead, it should go beyond these universal moral duties and focus on the actual enactment of those competencies through participation in processes of negotiation, care and understanding. The idea that a dynamic, dialogue-based, 'always-in-the-making' (Thayer-Bacon, 2003) approach of cultural literacy can fulfil the goals of a global citizenship education curriculum is the driving idea of this paper.

Global citizenship education 'is a learning process focusing not only on *what* students learn but also *how* they learn—about themselves and others, to learn to do things, and interact socially—encouraging active and participatory roles' (UNESCO, 2014, p. 18). Under such a perspective of citizenship education, a democratic way of life is possible, one is that is not limited to 'a participatory conversation about just anything,' but it is 'directed toward intelligent and reflective consideration of problems, events, and issues that arise in the course of our collective lives' (Beane & Apple, 2007, p. 8). Only through such an active reflective participation in a collective consideration of issues with dialogue and critical thinking, can values of democratic life be enacted, as learners become actual meaning makers, rather than knowledge consumers (Beane & Apple, 2007; UNESCO, 2014). Although this idea is considered the core of active, critical citizenship (Arthur & Davison, 2000), it is only partially represented in the citizenship education curricula, the majority of which approach criticality from an ideological or conceptual perspective, rather than a dynamic approach of engaging learners in democratic practices (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Even when they do so (e.g. Osler & Starkey, 1999; Andreotti, 2011), a concretisation of the types of practical experiences students can engage with, in order to develop their global civic identities and the moral and critical values that come along, is lacking. In this paper, we argue that those active and critical citizenship education practical experiences largely correspond to cultural literacy practices.

Towards re-defining citizenship education as a cultural literacy practice

Until recently, citizenship education placed an emphasis on promoting civic duties (i.e. voting, understanding and following rules) and responsibilities (Keser *et al.*, 2011). However, the changes happening in the world proved to be fundamental challenges to 'traditionally held notions of citizenship education' (Keating *et al.*, 2009, p. 146). The most recent definition of citizenship education as a practice fostering 'harmonious co-existence' and 'mutually beneficial development' of both individuals and

communities (European Commission, 2017, p. 11) is more associated with the identity of a 'critical' or 'virtuous' rather than de facto citizen (see Barrue & Albe, 2013), with the corresponding purpose of preparing students for informed participation in public dialogue about questions of justice and morality (Waghid, 2005). Moreover, such participation must be active, informed, critical and responsible (Kolstø, 2008; Osler, 2011), must include practical experiences rather than content-based teaching (European Commission, 2017, p. 11), and must go beyond the nation-state civic duties promoting a more global approach of what it means to be a virtuous, critical citizen.

Considering citizenship education as the mere construction of a single civic, legal, or moral identity within a given context is highly problematic, also because of the great variety of co-existing cultures (ethnical, national, religious, etc.) in the current European and global landscape. Within a multicultural society promoting values of democracy and cohesion, a divergent approach to identity construction is necessary (Ivanič, 2006). This implies a fluidity in the concepts around identity (e.g. Europeanness, Britishness, etc.), as well as a dynamic interplay and explicitness of the grounds behind the identification of individuals bearing one identity or another (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). The role of the other in this dynamic interplay is undeniable. First, it is through dialogically engaging with others, that our own beliefs, understandings and presuppositions appear at a conscious level through making them explicit in the various discourses around concepts and topics of common interest (Zahavi, 2014). Then, it is through experiencing this otherness that our internally constructing identities become objects of discussion, negotiation and decision making (Haste, 2004). Therefore, civic engagement and deliberation are not just a process of knowing the importance of active participation in the social issues and the promotion of the common good, such as voting, volunteering, etc. Through a definition of citizenship education as a dialogic cultural literacy practice, decision making becomes a process of active inclusion and consideration of others' identities in one's own identity construction, co-construction and re-construction.

If cultural identities are conceived in their fluidity, how can we then be (come) tolerant to diversity? Tolerance, often replaced by the more appropriate concept of 'respect' (Council of Europe, 2016), is one of the main attitudes required for a culture of democracy (another way to refer to 'civic culture,' see Almond & Verba, 2015). Tolerance or respect refers to the 'recognition of the dignity, rights and freedoms of the other and a relationship of equality between the self and the other' (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 40). From a civic culture perspective, it may also refer to the tolerance of ambiguity, as an attitude towards accepting and embracing uncertainty, complexity and unfamiliarity (Council of Europe, 2016). Both definitions of tolerance may sound abstract, or even disrespectful (tolerating something/someone even when not wanting to); therefore, the contrary term of 'intolerance' is often used as a synonym of prejudice and stereotyping. Getting deeper into the actual meaning of tolerance as a civic attitude, one cannot avoid referring to dialogically listening to each other, through developing a 'caring sensitivity' towards what others say (Cornwell & Orbe, 1999). The more authentic the caring, the more genuine the dialogic interaction, in the sense of being open to what each party contributes (Kreber *et al.*, 2007).

Therefore, citizenship education reinforcing cultural literacy as practice is about developing active listening, caring sensitivity and genuine openness about others' viewpoints, without judging them as right or wrong.

Finally, citizenship education ideally is about practicing democracy, and such democratic participation is rooted on dialogic empathy and multiperspectivism, essential characteristics of cultural literacy. A democratic society is, above all, an empathising society that 'can embrace and express the variety and complexity of wounds, indignities, and exclusions' of its members, and 'find ways by which dissimilar people with distinct, sometimes divergent, interests can come together and find common ground' (Purpel & Shapiro, 1995, p. 145). From a dialogue-based cultural literacy perspective, this search for a common ground does not mean abandoning one's own values, interests, and viewpoints for the sake of 'meeting' the other. Through making one's premises explicit and committing to them, parties in a dialogue allow for consistency to be checked but also, and mainly, are allowed to understand what is behind the Other's reasoning (Gilbert, 1995). *Understanding* that different viewpoints on the same issue may exist, and be equally valid, is one aspect of empathy as a dialogic cultural literacy attitude (Maine *et al.*, 2019). *Dealing* with these different perspectives (for example through constructing two-sided arguments integrating the other's point of view, trying to understand the other's commitments through asking for clarifications, etc.) is another crucial aspect. Dialogue and argumentation then become essential tools for recognising and dealing with multiple perspectives. Figure 1 shows a conceptual framework of citizenship education goals when perceived as a cultural literacy practice.

The place of dialogue and argumentation as a central practice within citizenship education

In recent years, a large body of literature argues in favour of dialogic and argumentative teaching practices as processes that enhance learning (Howe & Abedin, 2013). Stemming largely from sociocultural perspectives (e.g. Vygotsky, 1962), learning in this field is viewed as a social activity, emphasizing talk as the key mechanism for learning. By engaging in dialogue, speakers negotiate meaning, resolve misconceptions and co-construct knowledge (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Nevertheless, the quality of dialogues can vary, so increasing the quality of talk can increase the quality of collective thinking, which can, in turn, enhance learning (Webb, 2009; Vrikki *et al.*, 2019). In the context of teaching, dialogues can take place either between the teacher and students (teacher-whole class, teacher-student groups, teacher-individual students) or between students (in group-work/pair-work contexts). A lesson that supports dialogue is one where students have opportunities to contribute to discussions, listen to others' ideas and extend them by building on them or challenging them, justify their opinions, identify links between ideas and try to resolve disagreements. Similarly, teachers encourage this type of dialogue by creating opportunities for students to engage in productive discussions, posing questions that ask for elaborations or reasoning, and identify discrepancies to trigger further discussions.

An essential component of productive dialogues, and a type of dialogue per se, is argumentation. Argumentation is viewed as a verbal, either written or oral and social activity aimed at justifying or defending a standpoint for an audience (van Eemeren



Figure 1. Citizenship education as cultural literacy

et al., 1996). Argumentation is also defined as a process of social construction of knowledge, in which people collectively discuss and decide on the construction of shared social knowledge, but it can also be an individual process in which an argument is seen as a conclusion supported by at least one reason (Angell, 1964). Therefore, argument and argumentation have two different aspects, an individual and a social (Billig, 1996; Jiménez-Aleixandre & Erduran, 2008). The individual aspect of the argument refers to articulating a point of view (Jiménez-Aleixandre & Erduran, 2008) whilst the social aspect involves two or more people, and aims to persuade others (Evagorou & Osborne, 2013).

Skills in dialogue and argumentation seem to be central for achieving the goals of citizenship education. In order 'to prepare students for their future participation in society' (Schuitema *et al.*, 2019, p. 441), students should be ready to participate in public dialogue about questions of justice and morality (Waghid, 2005). Such topics trigger the emergence of different, often contrasting, perspectives and this requires participants to be able to deal with these multiple perspectives. Dealing with multiple perspectives involves the ability to reflect on, evaluate, challenge and compare them against other perspectives, in order to identify the degree of convergence and divergence between arguments. These skills are important for strengthening arguments. For example, studies in science education that place an emphasis on citizenship education and argumentation discuss the role of argumentation in enabling citizens to participate in public debate and decision making (Sadler, 2011; Barrue & Albe, 2013).

Methods

Research goal and question

In this paper, we present a multi-country design-based research study leading to the development of an innovative, transversal and cross-curricular citizenship education programme. This programme, based on the enactment of cultural literacy, dialogue and argumentation practices of young students aged from 5 to 15 years old, was designed with the following goal: to develop *virtuous* and *critical* citizens through engaging them with contents and practices that relate to cultural literacy values and dispositions (i.e. tolerance, empathy, inclusion, etc.). Our leading research question is the following:

- Can a research-based innovative curriculum proposal in citizenship education based on cultural literacy, dialogue and argumentation be successfully adapted and implemented by teachers of different grades and countries?

Research design

The study presented here is part of a larger European project called ‘Dialogue and Argumentation for cultural Literacy Learning in Schools’ (DIALLS, n.d.). The project aimed at the emergence and development of young people’s cultural identities through their discourse, as well as the production of cultural artefacts, at three educational levels: pre-primary, primary and secondary. As a result of the project, a Cultural Literacy Learning Programme (CLLP) was proposed as an innovative citizenship education curriculum based on dialogue and argumentation.

For the development and implementation of the curriculum, the study followed a design-based research approach, according to which educational scientists produce ‘new theories, artifacts and practices that account for and potentially impact learning and teaching in naturalistic settings’ (Barab & Squire, 2004; p. 2). Through collaborating with practitioners throughout the design-implementation-evaluation cycle of the study (see Figure 2), the researchers were able to provide insights into the local dynamics, while at the same time they drew connections to theories and theoretical assertions, continuously refining them to produce ontological innovations (Barab & Squire, 2004; DiSessa & Cobb, 2004). Our design-based research approach consisted of three main phases, as explained below.

Phase 1: Curriculum development. Phase 1 involved the designing and piloting of the materials, namely a 15-lesson curriculum for each age group (giving a total of 45 lesson plans). For this purpose, the research teams collaborated with small groups of local teachers (thereafter called ‘developers’) in four countries: United Kingdom, Cyprus, Lithuania and Portugal. To increase the curriculum’s applicability among different countries and age groups, Partners 1 (UK) and 2 (Cyprus) closely collaborated for the planning and testing of lesson sequences designed for 5-6 and 8-9 year-olds, whereas Partners 3 (Lithuania) and 4 (Portugal) collaborated for the planning and

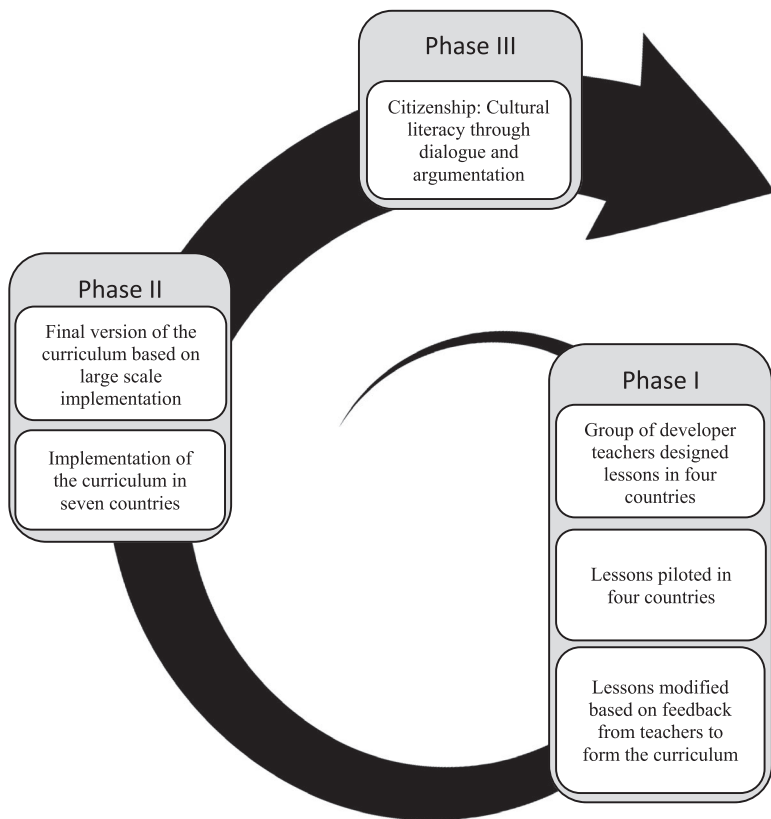


Figure 2. Phases of curriculum development

testing of lesson sequences designed for 14-15 year-olds. The inter-team collaboration for the first pair of countries (United Kingdom and Cyprus) consisted in one partner designing and the other piloting and vice versa. The inter-team collaboration for the second pair of countries (Lithuania and Portugal) involved the co-design of sessions between the two countries' teams of developers for one lesson sequence, and peer-review of half of the lesson sequences after their implementation by teachers from the other country.

Participants. For Phase 1, the four partners recruited teachers as 'developers' with expertise and/or a special interest in dialogue, argumentation and cultural literacy, and whose pedagogical practice was known to be exemplary. Importantly, as they were all class teachers, they were able to offer very practical advice, trialling different techniques with their own classes to refine the lessons and piloting and reviewing lesson sequences developed by other partners. A total of 20 teachers were recruited to work as developers: four from the United Kingdom, five from Cyprus, five from Portugal and six from Lithuania. Three of them were pre-primary school teachers, six were primary school teachers, and 11 were secondary school teachers. The developer

teachers came from different types of schools (rural, urban and sub-urban), which enabled the research group to test the lesson sequences in different school settings.

During the first meeting developers became familiar with the goals of the study and discussed the three pillars of the curriculum, namely cultural literacy, dialogue and argumentation. After the initial discussion the developers asked for more information about the three pillars, and therefore a booklet was prepared with theoretical frameworks and access to cultural texts (wordless films and picture books selected by the research team in an earlier phase) which were used as springboards for students' dialogue and argumentation. Each research team met regularly with their local developers with each meeting lasting between 2 and 3 hours and for a total of at least six meetings. Each development meeting focused on discussion of the main cultural literacy and dialogue objectives to be met by each lesson sequence, co-design activities either guided by the researchers or in small groups, as well as reflection on piloted lesson sequences and ways of adapting them. As result of this phase, the curriculum materials and methods were designed as presented below.

Curriculum materials. The proposed curriculum draws on the affordances of non-verbal, multimodal texts, namely picture books and short animated films. By including only wordless picture books and films, the visual is emphasised over the verbal as an equalising influence on a transnational and transcultural readership. Wordless texts promote discussion between readers; their use 'demands a heightened co-authoring role that requires taking risks with the imagination, activating intertextual and cultural knowledge and trusting in the reader's' ability to make sense of the story' (Arizpe *et al.*, 2014, pp. 37–38). Wordless texts (both picture books and films) raise potential questions about culture, identities and heritages. They offer a stimulating springboard for dialogic discussions as readers interpret their meanings. Wordless texts are not just aimed at young children; they can be highly ambiguous and complex in their meaning potential, and therefore perfect for children, adolescents and young adults (Serafini, 2014).

A key feature of the wordless text is that the reader (of film or book) must co-construct the narrative along with the visual sequence of images, to successfully make sense of the text as a whole. The effect of this is twofold. First, readers are encouraged to take risks in their meaning-making process. Second, readers need to consent to that process, unlike the linear model of comprehension that the funnel of a verbal narrative enforces. The matter is more complex with wordless films. By definition, a film is durational; this bracketed temporality imposes a linear sequence on an otherwise purely visual narrative. As Maine (2015), referring to Kress, notes, 'In writing, as each word leads the next, there is a specific temporal reading pathway (...) Images, on the other hand, afford alternative spatial pathways of reading' (p. 23). Nevertheless, the linear reading pathway is reaffirmed by the grounded use of each text, whether it is a picture book or a film, because in the proposed curriculum the teacher is likely to lead the reading process in a large group environment. This will permit a spatial, as well as linear, reading pathway, hence building upon the various merits of more typical understandings of visual literacy (see e.g. Maine, 2015).

Curriculum methods. As discussed earlier, dialogue and argumentation are integral parts of citizenship education pedagogy, since through them students learn to deal with multiple perspectives and to develop cultural identities. Detailed lesson plans, therefore, include activities both at the whole-class level, where the discussion is mainly driven by the teacher, and at student group level, where students have more opportunities to participate in dialogue and are more accountable for how the dialogue unfolds. These activities are designed in ways that promote productive dialogues and good argumentation.

Each lesson has a pre-set objective for dialogue and argumentation that emerges from the literature on dialogue and argumentation; a pool from which these objectives were drawn is presented in Figure 3 below.

The objectives presented in Figure 3 vary in their complexity and, thus, difficulty for teachers to incorporate and students to use. For this reason, the selection for each lesson was based on this complexity, with simpler and easier to implement objectives used in initial lessons and more complex objectives appearing in later lesson plans of the curriculum.

A typical activity designed for group work context revolved around ‘talking points.’ Talking points are typically statements ‘that may be factually accurate, contentious or downright wrong’ (Mercer *et al.*, 2009, p. 363). The aim of talking points activities is to encourage ‘thoughtful discussion, analysis and reasoning’ (Dawes, 2012, p. 1), in an effort to support an argument for or against the talking point. Such activities promote argumentation as students need to evaluate alternative perspectives and opinions and select a solution that is supported by evidence and explanation (Cho & Jonassen, 2002). In this case, evidence is considered to consist of beliefs, values or personal experiences that support what students claim. In this curriculum, therefore, it is considered important, in terms of argumentation, for students to understand that: (a) their claims have to be supported with reasoning (e.g. their beliefs, emotions and opinions), (b) they need to explain how their evidence (e.g. their beliefs, emotions and opinions) is linked to their claim, and (c) they need to be able to explain why they disagree with someone else, by explaining their reasoning.

The lesson plans also included suggestions for questions to be posed by the teacher. The type of questions determines the extent to which a lesson is dialogic. This is evidenced by the large number of professional development programmes that focus on improving the questioning skills of teachers (e.g. Lefstein & Snell, 2014). A typical teacher-student interaction, which is still encountered in many contexts today, follows the traditional triadic ‘Initiation-Response-Feedback’ format (Edwards & Mercer, 2012) where a teacher poses a question with a pre-determined answer to students, a student replies and then the teacher responds by evaluating the correctness of the answer. While this type of interaction is inevitable in classrooms, authors favouring dialogic lessons argue for maximising more open-ended interactions. Such interactions would involve teacher questions that:

- require extended responses and not just one-word answers (e.g. What do you think about the main character of the story?)
- invite students to make predictions (e.g. What do you think this text will be about?)

Listening to others
Respecting others
Everyone contributing
Explaining why your evidence (e.g. personal belief, emotion, experience) supports your claim
Building on others' ideas
Linking/coordinating ideas
Justifying answers using evidence/supporting what you believe (reasoning can come from facts, personal experiences, emotions etc)
Challenging ideas
Asking for clarifications/negotiating meaning
Trying to understand the others' point of view/ Relating to others' ideas
Evaluating ideas/Discussing alternatives/ Considering alternative point of views
Anticipating or replying to alternative ideas
Reaching consensus when appropriate

Figure 3. List of dialogue and argumentation objectives pursued by the CLLP lesson sequences

- invite students to elaborate on their ideas with probe questions or clarification questions (e.g. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?, What do you mean...?)
- invite students to build on each other's ideas (e.g. What do you think about X's idea?)
- invite students to provide evidence/reasons that support their opinions (e.g. Why do you think that?, Is there any evidence in the text that supports that?)
- invite students to explain their thought process (e.g. How did you get to that answer?)
- invite students to make links with previous lessons/experiences (e.g. How can this be linked with the lesson on ...?)

To ensure that productive discussions would occur in these lessons, a climate for dialogue is a pre-requisite. The classroom needs to be a safe environment where students can express themselves without being judged and where all ideas are accepted for consideration. In this environment, students should be able to challenge ideas respectfully. Changing the classroom climate to become a space for dialogue and argumentation is not a task that happens instantly. In order to work towards this

dialogic ethos, the development of ‘ground rules for talk’ (Littleton & Mercer, 2013) were included as part of the programme. This activity involves teachers with their students establishing rules on how they should interact. These rules set the boundaries on what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in the discussions in a certain classroom, while also ensuring that the type of dialogic activities students engage with, will connect to the types of talk and argumentation desired for discussing issues of morality and ethics. Participants in a dialogue are free to negotiate their own rules based on what they feel is most important, but some examples of rules may include: ‘Everyone contributes to the discussion,’ ‘All ideas are respected and considered’ and so on.

Data collection. In Phase 1, a Developer Teacher Assessment Form aimed to collect data on teachers’ reflections during the piloting of the lessons. Specifically, it asked teachers to consider the relationship between the teaching strategies and student participation and learning, what they had noticed about students’ use of dialogue and argumentation, and whether they had a particular success or problem. These were completed electronically and shared between partners for consideration.

Phase 2: Curriculum implementation. Participants. In Phase 2, teachers in seven countries (Germany, Israel, and Spain were added at this phase) engaged in teacher professional development with an emphasis on introducing cultural literacy, dialogue and argumentation in their classes and implementing the curriculum prepared in Phase 1. The curriculum was implemented at a larger scale in 287 classrooms, comprising a total of 5042 students as shown on Table 1.

Data collection. Teachers’ reflections and feedback on the implementation of each lesson was collected in two ways: (a) through an online Lesson Implementation Assessment Form asking for technical details of each lesson implementation (e.g. number of students attending, whether the lesson was fully complete or not, etc.); and (b) through teachers’ reflection diaries required as part of the teachers’ professional development evaluation in two of the participant countries, namely Cyprus and Portugal.

Phase 3: Curriculum evaluation. Phase 3 took place at the end of the implementation phase and it aimed to collect teachers’ overall evaluation of their experiences with this curriculum. In this Phase, the participants were the same as in Phase 2.

Data collection. In Phase 3, an online Teacher Evaluation Questionnaire was developed and administered online at the end of the curriculum implementation. Teachers were asked to voluntarily respond to 12 closed questions concerning: (a) the extent to which teachers implemented the curriculum lessons effectively, b) their intentions for the future, and c) the impact of these lessons on their students. In addition, open-ended questions concerned the highlights of implementing the programme, the extent to which the programme changed their practice, and possible difficulties and challenges faced. The complete questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

Table 1. Number of classrooms and students participating in the implementation

	UK	Portugal	Germany	Lithuania	Spain	Cyprus	Israel	Total
<i>Classrooms</i>								
Pre-primary	22	6	16	3	7	25	8	87
Primary	22	6	17	3	7	25	30	110
Secondary	16	10	17	14	7	10	16	90
Total	60	22	50	20	21	60	54	287
<i>Students</i>								
Pre-primary	720	181	22	30	100	520	250	1823
Primary	720	167	115	40	125	575	225	1967
Secondary	240	328	230	200	115	50	89	1252
Total	1680	676	367	270	340	1145	564	5042

Main results and considerations

Curriculum adaptation (Phase 1): Teachers' ideas influenced the structure and implementability of the curriculum

An overview of the submitted responses to the Developer Teacher Assessment Forms shows that teachers' feedback during the piloting phase focused on: (a) discussing constraints of design ideas related to pedagogical choices (i.e. choice of activities, length of activities) and (b) identifying practical issues linked to students' ideas and their own concerns from discussing the controversial issues with students.

Regarding the first aspect, an example is related to the choice of activities and comes from the feedback exchanged between developer-teachers from different countries. One of the secondary school lesson plans, based on the short animated film 'Enough' by Anna Mantzaris (2017)¹ was initially designed by the Lithuanian developer teachers, and was subsequently adapted by the Portuguese developers. One of the main comments of the latter group was related to the recursiveness of the proposed pedagogical activities, which could lead to adolescents' loss of interest. Therefore, a differentiation of the tasks and the questions used as prompts for discussion was integrated in the final lesson plan template. Another important aspect of teachers' feedback from the piloting phase, which also emerged in the implementation phase (see below), was the duration of the proposed lessons, which seemed to exceed the 45 minutes typically allocated to a lesson. This issue was resolved during the CLLP teacher professional development programme, where the research teams explained that lesson plans should be seen as suggestions for classroom work on dialogue, argumentation and cultural literacy goals and that it was teachers' responsibility to adapt them according to their needs and constraints. Whether this was successful or not is explained in the next section.

Regarding the identification of practical issues, developer teachers' feedback mainly involved identifying moral constraints regarding the main messages transmitted by the cultural text and the capacity of their students to constructively deal with those. This was, for example, the case for the lesson plan created for the book 'On the trail' by Anna Ring (2016).² Researchers' initial idea for suggesting this book was its

potential to promote pre-primary students' understanding of empathy through putting themselves in the main character's shoes: a cat who steals from a family in order to feed its hungry kitten. During the piloting phase, teachers from Cyprus expressed their concerns about the potential difficulty of 5-year-old children to understand that showing empathy towards the other does not necessarily mean justifying their acts; in other words, teachers claimed that it was likely that students would remain with the idea that stealing is good. This concern was taken into account in the final lesson plan proposed as part of the CLLP, in which both small-group and whole-class discussion activities were focused on the extent to which our judgement of someone's action may change, or not, after we understand their reasons. In this way, the cultural literacy goal of empathy was on the spot, without the challenge of whether to resolve or not a moral dilemma.

Creative implementation (Phase 2): Teachers continued adapting the lessons and materials to their needs and styles

In order to examine teachers' implementation and evaluation of the curriculum, qualitative (through teacher diaries) and quantitative data (through the Lesson Implementation Assessment Forms) were collected. Here, we will focus on the qualitative findings given their informative value regarding teachers' adaptability to and adaptation of the curriculum pedagogical materials.

Content analysis of a total of 137 teacher diaries of Phase 2 participants revealed that: (a) Teachers continued to adapt the lesson plans according to the pedagogical and technical characteristics of each class; (b) Teachers collaborated with each other at a classroom or school level in order to accommodate the lesson plans to the best degree possible; and (c) Teachers' difficulties in the adaptation and implementation of lesson plans were mainly due to the fact that their teaching programme did not allow for as much time as they wanted to devote to each lesson plan; however, they found ways to creatively deal with this constraint. Table 2 presents some representative responses of teachers from two countries regarding their ways of adapting (to) the CLLP curriculum.

Post-implementation (Phase 3): How teachers perceived curriculum efficacy in promoting dialogue, argumentation and cultural literacy goals among their students

A total of 136 teachers from all participant countries responded to the Teacher Evaluation Questionnaire administered at the end of the implementation phase. Implementation teachers overwhelmingly reported that they enjoyed using the pedagogical materials ($M = 4.78$, $SD = .50$). In terms of the success of the lessons, they reported that both the cultural objectives of the lessons ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .73$) and the dialogue and argumentation objectives ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .74$) were met in their teaching. It is worth noting that teachers adapted the lesson plans to fit the needs and time available for their lessons ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .67$). The impact of the curriculum on these teachers is reflected in their responses to the second set of questions. The teachers largely reported that they plan to use the materials ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .88$),

Table 2. Representative responses from teachers on the adaptation of the CLLP curriculum

Category	Representative quotes
Teachers' adaptation of lesson plans	<p>'The lesson needed 80' to be fulfilled. I first introduced the dialogue and argumentation goal and then shared the book with the kids. Due to time constraints, I omitted the activity where they have to retell the story to their partner' (pre-primary teacher, Cyprus)</p> <p>'I stopped the movie ("Going fishing") at 0.55' to ask students what they think would happen and to situate it within the frame of sustainable development and environmental education' (low secondary teacher, Portugal)</p>
Teachers' collaboration with each other	<p>'The work dynamic with my colleagues is based on co-reflecting on students' manifestations during the class in ways to promote a greater quality in their discussions both in small groups as well as in whole class' (low secondary teacher, Portugal)</p> <p>'We would even discuss the lessons both before and after the implementation with colleagues over the phone' (primary teacher, Cyprus)</p>
Teachers' ways of dealing with heavy teaching programme	<p>'Due to the lack of time, I tried to combine the lesson plan with the Greek grammar learning objectives that need to be taught at the 3rd grade' (primary teacher, Cyprus)</p> <p>'Again, even with the use of 90 minutes, students did not complete the cultural artefacts, which then formed part of their homework (...) The artefacts will be assessed and their assessment will be part of their grade in Natural Sciences, as the topic of Sustainability is part of the contents covered by this course' (low secondary teacher, Portugal)</p>

create more dialogic lessons ($M = 4.48$, $SD = .73$), and engage their students in cultural literacy lessons ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .80$) in the future.

In regards to their students, the same teachers reported that their students enjoyed the materials ($M = 4.62$, $SD = .53$), engaged in dialogue and argumentation ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .54$) and engaged in discussions on cultural literacy topics ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .65$). The teachers reported that their students' oral skills were improved due to these lessons ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .73$) and that they learned to respect each other's ideas ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .63$). However, in the qualitative analysis of the survey's open answers some constraints emerged when it came to students' engagement in dialogue and argumentation. These difficulties were overcome with practice and along with a better understanding of the same by the teachers themselves, as revealed in several teachers' open answers, such as the following:

I did not know that it was possible to use dialogue and argumentation with younger students and during the PD I had the opportunity to acquire the skills of facilitating dialogue in a way that was easy, and provoked interest for my 5-year-old students. (pre-primary teacher, Cyprus)

After the implementation of the lessons the students in my class learned how to take turns during a discussion and offer their points of view. I am simply standing at the side of the class now

watching students that would never offer their ideas before, turn into great speakers. (primary teacher, Cyprus)

Students are not mature yet, they have difficulty in thinking abstractly. However, I do feel there were improvements as compared to session 1. The images (of the book) woke up experiences that students tried to share with each other, although their final reflections manifested a somehow simplistic approach. From my part, there was the need to motivate their need for a more autonomous and reflective work, so that the discussion became more participative. (low secondary teacher, Portugal)

Overall, the findings from the three design cycle phases reveal that both teachers and students from different countries and different age groups were able to successfully enact the dialogue, argumentation and cultural literacy objectives of the designed curriculum. Along with these objectives, several other benefits emerged, all of which aligned with citizenship education goals, such as opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other and students' capacity to express themselves. Among the constraints, time was the most highlighted one, especially for secondary school students.

Conclusion

The curriculum presented in this paper falls within similar theoretical approaches highlighting the notion of citizenship as a democratic practice that needs to be enacted rather than learnt about (Waghid, 2005; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Schuitema *et al.*, 2019). We add that this enactment may be successfully operationalised through a connection between *cultural literacy* (Maine *et al.*, 2019), *dialogue*—presupposing social literacy skills—(Arthur & Davison, 2000), and *argumentation*—presupposing critical literacy skills—(Johnson & Morris, 2010). Overall, we argue that a curriculum focusing on cultural literacy enactment through dialogue and argumentation fulfils the main objective of an 'effective and transformative' citizenship education, which was described by Banks (2008) as helping students 'to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to function effectively within their cultural community, nation-state, and region and in the global community' (p. 129). We do this through fostering students' dialogical and critical thinking skills on issues that call for an active application of moral and social values, based on students' prior experiences which relate to the age-appropriate cultural texts selected as stimuli of each lesson sequence. In addition, the fact of those cultural texts (picture books and animated films) being wordless opens the space for constructive dialogue among students, as it broadens the possibilities of interpretation of the ideas and messages transmitted of these multimodal texts (Serafini, 2014), and therefore, facilitates the variety and diversity of viewpoints and arguments emerging through discussions.

Teachers' agency, that is, the degree to which the teachers feel accountable towards the enacted curriculum, plays an important role within educational reform initiatives, related or not to citizenship education (Schweisfurth, 2006; Severance *et al.*, 2016; Leeman *et al.*, 2020). Through actively participating in all phases of a design-implement-evaluate design cycle, our teachers enacted the designed curriculum based on their own perceptions and felt challenges regarding the existing local curricula and ways of introducing the dialogic lesson sequences as an integral part of their

every pedagogical practice. This was not always easy mainly due to time constraints, especially in the secondary school. Albeit this difficulty, related to teaching ‘informal’ versus ‘formal’ skills, not yet officially recognised as equally important as subject matters, the curriculum was assessed as highly efficient both for its implementability as well as for its efficiency in terms of materials, methods and goals.

An appropriate classroom climate and school culture are key in establishing a context where students feel confident to express their opinions even though their views may differ from those of others. The teacher’s role is complex, demanding and key when promoting and guiding productive classroom dialogue and argumentation (Evagorou & Dillon, 2011). Teachers should recognise the need to change their practices and allow students to control the dialogue happening in the classroom (Wolfe & Alexander, 2008). This is especially important when discussing controversial issues that include different viewpoints and moral and ethical aspects (Sadler, 2011). During the implementation of the lesson plans, the implementation teachers showed what is known as ‘adaptive expertise’ (Hammerness *et al.*, 2005), balancing between innovation and efficiency, while at the same time showing willingness to learn from others (colleagues and students themselves). This balance was expressed through an increased understanding of the need for change of the usually existing non-dialogic, linked to formative assessment lesson goals towards dialogic, inclusive and interactive classrooms (see also Rapanta *et al.*, 2021, for more information about this aspect). This understanding often conflicted with the challenge of adapting the pre-constructed lesson plans to their own pedagogical habits, without deviating from the desired goals of dialogue, argumentation and cultural literacy learning, and within organisational and administrative limits (e.g. lack of time for dedicating to the curriculum). Finding the balance between innovation and efficiency was a challenge for most teachers, although overall they managed to be creative and adapt to the circumstances as our mixed-method analysis showed.

Lawy and Biesta (2006) argued that official policy and practice discourse focusing on citizenship-as-achievement, referring to the *de facto* citizen status, is no longer appropriate for the twenty-first century. Instead, they suggest a model of citizenship-as-practice, which ‘not only encompasses problems and issues of culture and identity but draws these different dynamic aspects together in a continuously shifting and changing world of difference’ (p. 37). However, they did not say how such a theoretical model can be enacted in terms of teaching and learning how to become critical and virtuous citizens. The curriculum presented as part of our study is one way of doing so.

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No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

Data availability statement

No publicly available data is associated with this research. However, data can become available upon request.

NOTES

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JdPp3JgG10&t=7s>

² <https://www.anna-ring.com/work/onthetrail>

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APPENDIX

Teacher Evaluation Questionnaire

1. The cultural objectives outlined in the lesson plans were achieved.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

2. The dialogue and argumentation objectives outlined in the lesson plans were achieved.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

3. I adapted the lesson plans to fit the needs and time available for my lessons.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

4. I encouraged my students to justify their ideas.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

5. I encouraged my students to evaluate different opinions.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

6. I plan to create more dialogic lessons in the future.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

7. I plan to engage my students in cultural literacy lessons.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

8. I plan to use the DIALLS materials next year in my teaching as well.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

9. My students engaged in dialogue and argumentation during the DIALLS lessons.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

10. My students were able to understand the deeper meaning of the stories.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

11. My students learned to respect each others' ideas.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

12. My students were able to engage in discussion on cultural literacy topics.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Open-ended Questions

What were the highlights of implementing the programme in your class?

To what extent did the programme change your practice? In what ways?

What were the difficulties and challenges of implementing the programme in your class?

If you have any additional comments regarding the implementation of the programme, please add them here.