



MECHANISMS FOR THE FORMATION OF SOCIALLY ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCIES OF STUDENTS IN THE CONTENT OF ACADEMIC SUBJECTS IN PRIMARY GRADES

Rustambekova Nigora Abduganisovna

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Abstract: This article explores pedagogical mechanisms for developing socially active citizenship competencies in primary school students through academic subjects. It highlights the theoretical foundations, didactic principles, and integrative approaches necessary for embedding civic education in early learning. The study identifies specific subject content, instructional strategies, and classroom practices that cultivate students' civic responsibility, democratic behavior, and social engagement from an early age. The research advocates for value-based and activity-oriented learning to ensure the holistic formation of citizenship competencies during foundational years of education.

Keywords: socially active citizenship, primary education, civic competence, integrated learning, values education, classroom practice, pedagogy, curriculum design.

Introduction. In the rapidly evolving socio-political context of the 21st century, cultivating active, responsible, and engaged citizens has become a central aim of education systems globally. In particular, primary education holds a unique position in shaping the foundational values, attitudes, and behaviors of children. Early exposure to the principles of democratic society, rights and responsibilities, social justice, and civic engagement is critical to the development of socially active citizenship competencies.

While citizenship education is often addressed in secondary education, its formation must begin in the primary grades, where students first learn to cooperate, respect diversity, and participate in group life. Academic subjects in early grades—language, mathematics, science, and social studies—can and should serve as platforms for instilling these values through targeted pedagogical mechanisms.

The Concept of Socially Active Citizenship Competence in Primary Education. Socially active citizenship competence refers to a student's ability to understand and exercise their civic rights and duties, respect others, and engage positively in community life. In primary education, this competence is typically expressed through:

- Respect for rules and authority
- Empathy and cooperation with peers
- Understanding of fairness and justice
- Willingness to help others
- Early forms of participation in class and school life

These early behaviors serve as a prototype for more developed civic behaviors in adolescence and adulthood. Therefore, embedding citizenship learning in the curriculum of academic subjects is essential to the holistic development of students.

Analysis and result. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations. The formation of citizenship competencies in early education draws from several interrelated educational theories:

Constructivism. Constructivist learning theory posits that students build knowledge through experiences and social interaction. In primary education, this means learning citizenship through real-life classroom scenarios, collaborative work, and reflective activities.

Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura (1977), children learn behaviors by observing and modeling others. Teachers play a critical role by demonstrating democratic values, respectful communication, and social responsibility.

Humanistic Education. This approach emphasizes the development of the whole child—intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Citizenship competence aligns with humanistic goals such as self-actualization, respect for others, and community belonging.

Integrated and Interdisciplinary Learning. Early education lends itself well to thematic or project-based learning, where different subjects are integrated. This approach allows for the contextual and natural development of citizenship-related topics.

Mechanisms for Embedding Citizenship Competence in Academic Subjects

Language and Literacy. Language subjects are ideal for teaching empathy, conflict resolution, and communication. Through stories, discussions, and role-play, students explore moral choices, diversity, and cooperation.

Mechanisms include:

- Reading stories with social themes (e.g., fairness, friendship).
- Class discussions on behavior and decision-making.
- Writing personal reflections or letters about community issues.

Mathematics. While not traditionally linked to citizenship, mathematics can develop critical thinking, responsibility, and collaboration through cooperative problem-solving and data interpretation.

Mechanisms include:

- Group math tasks promoting cooperation.
- Analyzing simple statistics related to school or community life.
- Using math to understand fairness and equity in everyday contexts.

Science and Nature Study. Science fosters curiosity and responsibility for the environment and health—key aspects of civic life. Early environmental education promotes stewardship and social responsibility.

Mechanisms include:

- Projects on recycling or environmental protection
- Observing the effects of pollution
- Class garden initiatives that involve collective work

Social Studies. This subject is the most directly connected to civic education. Students explore roles in the family, community, and school; learn about rules, leadership, and shared responsibilities.

Mechanisms include:

- Simulations of voting or class councils.
- Mapping community helpers and their roles.
- Comparing classroom rules to community laws.



Instructional Strategies and Classroom Practices. To activate these subject-based mechanisms, certain pedagogical strategies must be employed:

Active and Participatory Learning. Learning activities must go beyond rote memorization to include games, discussions, drama, and collaborative projects. This encourages students to engage, express opinions, and negotiate.

Values-Based Education. Explicit instruction in values such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and tolerance should be integrated into daily lessons and reinforced through praise, feedback, and recognition.

Democratic Classroom Management. The teacher's management style should model democratic principles—sharing decision-making, encouraging voice, and resolving conflicts through dialogue.

Reflective Thinking. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their actions, behavior, and experiences in light of civic values. Journals, drawings, or teacher-led conversations serve this purpose.

While subject content is key, the broader school culture and family support are equally important:

- School-wide initiatives like student councils, charity drives, and eco-clubs reinforce lessons from academic subjects.
- Parental involvement ensures that civic messages are reinforced at home.
- Role modeling by teachers, administrators, and parents creates a consistent environment for learning civic behavior.

Despite the potential of early grades for citizenship formation, several challenges persist:

- Limited teacher preparation in citizenship pedagogy
- Overcrowded curricula with little time for integration
- Resistance to addressing social issues at young ages

Recommendations:

1. Include civic education strategies in teacher training programs.
2. Revise national curricula to integrate citizenship learning across subjects.
3. Provide schools with age-appropriate civic learning materials.
4. Foster partnerships between schools, families, and communities for holistic citizenship formation.

Conclusion. The development of socially active citizenship competencies must begin in the early years of schooling. By intentionally integrating civic values and practices into academic subjects, educators can lay the foundation for lifelong civic engagement and social responsibility. Primary education offers a unique opportunity to cultivate a new generation of learners who are not only academically capable but also ethically grounded and socially active. The formation of socially active citizenship competencies in primary school is not only possible but essential for nurturing future generations of engaged, responsible, and ethical citizens. By embedding civic values and participatory practices into the content of academic subjects, educators can leverage everyday learning to foster respect, cooperation, critical

thinking, and social responsibility in young learners. Language, mathematics, science, and social studies all offer rich opportunities to contextualize citizenship through age-appropriate themes and interactive methods.

The effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on intentional pedagogical strategies, supportive school environments, and collaboration with families and communities. While challenges such as curriculum overload and insufficient teacher training remain, thoughtful integration of citizenship education into primary education offers a powerful means to strengthen democratic culture from the earliest stages of schooling.

Developing socially active citizens is not an isolated goal—it is a foundational aspect of quality education in a democratic society. When children are encouraged to act with empathy, take initiative, and contribute positively to their communities, the classroom becomes a microcosm of the democratic world we seek to build.

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