



Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios
Educativos (Colombia)

ISSN: 1900-9895

revistascientificas@ucaldas.edu.co

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Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos (Colombia), vol. 10, núm. 1, enero-junio,
2014, pp. 49-66

Universidad de Caldas
Manizales, Colombia

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NEW AND PERSISTING CHALLENGES FOR HISTORY, SOCIAL STUDIES AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN FINNISH COMPULSORY EDUCATION – HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT ASSESSMENTS AND RESEARCH

Arja Virta*

Virta, Arja. (2014). "New and persisting challenges for history, social studies and citizenship education in Finnish compulsory education – highlights from recent assessments and research". *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos*, No. 1, Vol. 10, pp. 49-66. Manizales: Universidad de Caldas.

ABSTRACT

The article presents the main findings of studies carried out at the national and the international level, related to the teaching of History and Social Studies in compulsory education in Finland, and also shortly describes some considerations about these subjects' curricula. The objectives for these two subjects, as well as the assessment criteria, in the present Curriculum for Elementary School have been designed for the development of cognitive competences since 2004. Furthermore, the purpose of these subjects is to contribute in the development of the students' active and responsible role in society. Adolescents' knowledge, their participation and attitudes related to citizenship, politics and society were investigated in two large scale international evaluations. Of interest is also the first national evaluation study (2012). Recent research provides contradictory messages about adolescents' development. The cognitive development is at a good level, although the national assessment indicates problems in skills related to the learning of History and Social Studies. There are also new challenges that emerge from studies such as certain level of gender differences related to knowledge and attitudes. Finally, on the basis of

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Recibido 4 de febrero de 2014, aceptado 15 de abril del 2014.

this general overview, the article proposes some conclusions related to the teaching and the training of History and Social Studies teachers.

KEY WORDS: history education, social studies, citizenship education, adolescents' civic attitudes.

NUEVOS Y PERMANENTES RETOS PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA HISTORIA, LAS CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y LA EDUCACIÓN PARA LA CIUDADANÍA EN LA ENSEÑANZA OBLIGATORIA EN FINLANDIA. CONCLUSIÓN DE RECIENTES INVESTIGACIONES

RESUMEN

El artículo muestra los principales hallazgos de estudios realizados a nivel nacional e internacional acerca de la enseñanza de la historia y las ciencias sociales en la educación obligatoria en Finlandia y, también presenta de manera corta algunas consideraciones sobre el currículo de estas asignaturas. Los objetivos de estas dos asignaturas, como también los criterios de evaluación, en el presente currículo para la Educación básica desde el año 2004 se encuentran delineados para el desarrollo de habilidades cognitivas. Además el propósito de estas asignaturas es contribuir a desarrollar un rol activo y responsable de los estudiantes en la sociedad. El conocimiento de los adolescentes, su participación y actitudes relativas a la ciudadanía, la política y la sociedad fueron investigadas en dos evaluaciones a gran escala. Las recientes investigaciones dan un mensaje contradictorio acerca del desarrollo de los adolescentes. El desarrollo cognitivo esta en un buen nivel, aunque la evaluación nacional indica que existen problemas en habilidades relativas al aprendizaje de la historia y las ciencias sociales. Hay también nuevos retos que emergen de estudios como cierto nivel de diferencias por género relativos a los conocimientos y actitudes. Finalmente, a partir de esta Mirada general, el artículo propone algunas conclusiones relativas ala enseñanza y a la preparación de los profesores de historia y ciencia sociales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: educación histórica, ciencias sociales, educación para la ciudadanía, actitudes cívicas de los adolescentes.

INTRODUCTION

This article deals with history and social studies education in Finnish basic education, which is the official term referring to compulsory education for age groups seven through sixteen years old. History and social studies are independent subjects in the Finnish school curricula unlike for instance the subject cluster social studies in American schools. In the present article, thus, social studies refers to a subject combination including elements of civic education, economy, sociology and law. Citizenship education is not a formal school subject in Finland but rather resembling an overall project related to education with focus on citizenship values and skills such as democracy, participation, human rights, and citizen's responsibilities (Solhaug, 2013). Its main goals are embedded in the syllabi of many school subjects. Both of these school subjects, history and, to an even higher degree, social studies, contribute in many ways to citizenship education although this relationship is not straightforward due to the nature and different traditions of these subjects.

As a starting point of this article, there will be a description of the syllabus for these subjects and their objectives and main principles. The main part of the article deals, on basis of the findings of a few recent empirical studies, with some current challenges and contradictions that are related to the objectives of these subjects. The first of these is related to the cognitive goals of history and social studies education, with special reference to the achievement of cognitive skills. The second key theme comprises civic attitudes, interest and self-efficacy. All these, knowledge, interest, attitudes, and self-efficacy, can be regarded as components of democratic competence, or citizenship competence (Ekman, 2007). Furthermore, the article pays attention to gender differences in all these components. It also stresses the importance of discussing gender issues, an approach that has been almost neglected in Finnish history, social studies and citizenship education.

After this overview of research findings, conclusions are made about what challenges and constraints these research findings imply for the development of school education and teacher education.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES AS SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND THEIR RELATION TO CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Both history and social studies are obligatory school subjects in the compulsory school (basic education). For decades, they formed a loose subject coalition that

was called history and social studies, and had a common curriculum although the contents of each were not integrated. In the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCCBE, 2004), they were separated into two subjects, and students' achievements are assessed independently in each of them. However, both subjects are still as a rule taught by same teachers who took history as their major and social sciences as a minor subject. The decision to separate history and social studies was based on their different nature, both relying on different academic disciplines. It can also be interpreted as an attempt to improve the status of social studies education, because the politicians were willing to encourage citizenship education and make young people more engaged in politics and societal issues. There was a common uneasiness, based on the national studies of voter turnout and the young generations' weak engagement, as well as on the results of the IEA Civic Education Study 1999 (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz, 2001).

History education begins in most schools in grade 5, when the pupils are 11 years old, and continues normally up to grade 8, while social studies is taught in grade 9, for 15 year old students. Social studies is not included in the syllabus of earlier grades, when this text is written, but the Finnish Government's decision (2012) regarding the new distribution of lesson hours per subjects will change the situation, as social studies will become a subject for lower grades. Social studies will be allocated two hours totally for grades 4 to 6, which can mean that it will be taught for instance only in grade 4. On basis of this decision, the National Board of Education is currently working on new core curricula, which will be finished 2014 and implemented after 2016 (http://www.oph.fi/english/curricula_and_qualifications/basic_education).

The current syllabus of history follows a chronological structure, from prehistoric times up to the present. Grades 5 through 6 deal with phenomena from prehistory up to the French Revolution, and in the history of Finland, from prehistory to the end of Swedish regime in Finland in the early 19th century. Grades 7 and 8 continue from the early 19th Century ending with the most recent times. There is a clear focus on modern history and on the most recent history, which is actually also related to the contents of social studies. The syllabus of grade 8 deals for instance with the political turmoil of the 20th century, including also the key events of Finnish history (achievement of independence, the Civil War, the Second World War). The history of Finland is dovetailed with European and world history. Since the early 1960s, also the history of continents other than Europe has received more attention (Virta & Nikander, 2011; Virta, 2013).

The objectives of history education emphasize the skills of history and the understanding of the nature of historical knowledge. The pupils should learn to acquire and use historical information and sources, be able to formulate opinions, understand interpretations, explain human activity and also estimate future alternatives on the basis of their knowledge of historical changes. A key concept in the present history curricula is historical consciousness, which involves seeing the continuum between past, present and future (Rüsen, 2004). The history curriculum has a connection to citizenship education, with the aim of supporting the construction of students' identities and students' development into active citizens. The construction of national identity is no more included in the text describing the subject and its goals, but it is possible that the selection of topics carries this message.

The challenges, goals and expectations for school history are versatile and they change over time. Finding a balance between questions dealing with how and what or contents and skills, has been topical for a few decades in Finnish history education. These are, of course, not dichotomous distinctions, and contents and skills are intertwined. This increasing emphasis on skills-based history education is an international trend (Stradling, 2001; Van der Leeuw-Roord, 2003), and it is also epitomized in the trend of creating systematic sets of assessment criteria, which have been used in Finnish compulsory education since 1999, first as recommendations, and after NCCBE 2004 as obligatory. The next section will review research findings that deal with the evidence of how the skills-based approach has been implemented in schools.

Social studies is by its nature a multi-disciplinary school subject, and its content is based on the different branches of social sciences – political science, economy, social policy, sociology and law (Elio, 1993; Löfström, 2001). The function of these sciences for the school subject is not only related to actual contents, but perhaps even more to the way of thinking and basic concepts. As Löfström, Virta and Van den Berg (2010) remind, this diversity of the contents makes it difficult to fully pay attention to the nature of all the background domains. However, on the level of compulsory education, the actual content drawn from social sciences can, as well, be rather thin and instead the contents comprise broadly practical knowledge about society and its different sectors. Instead, the social studies syllabus contains a great deal of descriptive instruction about institutions, structures and processes in society.

The key topics in the social studies curriculum are individuals as members of a community; welfare, participation and decision-making (political system,

administration, media), security of the citizen, managing one's own finances, economics and economic policy. In the practice of teaching, attention is also given to society at the micro-level, and on how adolescents for instance encounter decision-making situations and economic issues in their everyday life.

The main purposes of social studies for the Finnish compulsory school are to support students to become active and responsible actors in society, and to provide them with basic information about the structure and functions of society and with skills needed when acting as a citizen. They should also learn "to obtain and use information about society and economic life critically". Furthermore, social studies should contribute to students' growth as tolerant, democratic citizens and give them experience of social action and the democratic exercise of influence (NCCBE, 2004). As can be concluded from these objectives, social studies in Finland has a double character, as perhaps in any school system: on the one hand socializing students to the citizenship, and on the other hand, introducing the students into the analytical and critical thinking typical of social sciences (Ochoa-Becker, 2007). In spite of the recognition that social studies has as the core subject of citizenship education, its status as a school subject has in the Finnish school traditionally been relatively weak, compared for instance to languages and science. The number of lessons, however, increased from two to three per week in NCCBE 2004, and the new curriculum, which will be implemented from 2016 on, will improve the situation to some degree.

All in all, there are certain similarities in the overall objectives of history and social studies, such as the focus on skills and critical thinking, and on growth as active citizens. Especially the concept of active citizenship has been for some years a topical educational issue in Europe, with the purpose of preparing students for democratic participation.

Interestingly, although values are emphasized in the objectives, in the criteria for assessment, the value-based purposes of social studies are not included in the criteria. The criteria are classified under topics "Acquisition and Use of Social Information" and "Understanding Social Information", referring to the formal skills of the subject. The character of the criteria for history is similarly connected to thinking skills. This contradiction is probably explained by the difficulties of assessing the goals that deal with values (Löfström et al., 2010). In fact, many of the goals of social studies, such as active citizenship, will not be fully observable until the future when the students are adults, and what really can be counted as the result

of social science lessons will be highly uncertain. It must also be borne in mind that the assessment criteria are purely formalistic in the sense that they do not point out any factual content that the students should possess after the basic education, but merely refer to the capacity of dealing with information and evidence.

EVIDENCE AND CONTRADICTIONS CONCERNING CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCE

The purpose of this section is to consider, on basis of Finnish research and international research related to Finnish schools, a few questions that are critical or at least challenging in the syllabi of history and social studies curricula. The first question is what evidence we have about how well the objectives emphasizing the skills of history and social studies are achieved in compulsory schools. This is also related to student assessment, and the criteria of assessment. The second question deals with the adolescents' attitudes towards politics and society, because active citizenship has been underlined in NCCBE 2004 and its subject specific syllabi. Additionally, the recent researches give rise to some further considerations about dealing with questions of gender equality and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in schools.

The following analysis is based on ICCS 2009 study (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr & Losito, 2010), and its predecessor Civic Education Study (CIVED) 1999 (Torney-Purta et al., 2001), and the first national evaluation of outcomes of history and social studies education conducted by the National Board of Education (Ouakrim-Soivio & Kuusela, 2012). Furthermore, there are some recent doctoral theses and other research reports that are vital.

Knowledge

Finland participated in two large scale international evaluations (CIVED, 1999; ICCS, 2009) that investigated adolescents' knowledge and attitudes related to citizenship, politics and society. According to these studies, the 14-year old Finnish adolescents could be characterized as having very good knowledge of society, but weak interest in this field. In ICCS 2009, altogether 3300 Finnish adolescents participated in this study from 176 schools, and among individual participants, there are of course a variety of profiles. Finnish adolescents obtained in ICCS 2009 the average of 576 points in knowledge items, and shared the best ranking with the Danes, while the international average was 500. The results were approximately on the same level

as in the 1999 study, but slightly better. Girls performed significantly better than boys in the 2009 study, but the differences between schools were very small. The percentage of top-level performers in the Finnish sample was high by international comparison, and the percentage of low performers was small (Schulz et al., 2010; Suoninen, Kupari & Törmäkangas, 2010).

The target group in the international studies CIVED 1999 and ICCS 2009 were grade 8 students, and quite paradoxically, in Finland this age-group had not yet received systematic civic or social studies education. This suggests that critical thinking skills and information about society, as well as attitudes, may have filtered through from school education, from citizenship education in a broad sense, and from other subjects such as history. The achievement level can partly be related to their family background and the parents' interest in political and social issues (Suoninen et al., 2010; cf. Suutarinen, 2006a).

These results can be compared and partly contrasted with those of the national evaluation 2012, which was conducted by the Finnish National Board of Education for the first time in the history of the subject history and social studies (Ouakrim-Soivio & Kuusela, 2012). The participants (ca 4700) were grade 9 students, 15 year of age, from 109 schools. Test items were constructed on basis of the assessment criteria in the NCCBE 2004 focusing on the skills of history and social studies. In history, the purpose was thus to measure historical empathy, the use and interpretation of sources, understanding time, causality and multiple perspectives, and drawing conclusions. The social studies items were designed to measure the following goals: the critical interpretation of statistics, graphs and messages from media, explaining societal issues, understanding the multiple alternatives and consequences related to political and economic decision making, as well as understanding the ethical points of view.

The findings differ from those of the ICCS 2009 Study, and indicate that the level of performance was not quite excellent in the cognitive dimension. It must be remembered that the national assessment had different starting points, based on the national curriculum and the subject-specific objectives and assessment criteria, while the ICCS embraced citizenship education in a broader sense and academic items made only a small part of the test battery.

Where the Grade 9 students performed fairly well in history, were items dealing with concepts of time, but they had difficulties with items related to various skills, such

as interpreting sources and understanding causality. The average performance was about 50 per cent of maximum credits, but the variance was broad. The level of performance in social studies was mediocre, but better than in history, and the average percentage of credits was 64. The participants succeeded best in items which required argumentation about societal issues, but critical interpretation of media, statistics and graphs was more difficult, as well as items considering the alternatives of political decision making.

In this study, both in history and social studies items, the girls performed slightly better than boys, but boys had better confidence in their skills and knowledge than girls. Boys had weaker results especially in open-ended items in which they were required to produce written answers. This finding is consistent with the results from PISA literacy tests, as well. Those participants who planned to continue in upper secondary school, and were in general more academically oriented, had better success than those who planned to choose vocational education (Ouakrim-Soivio & Kuusela, 2012: 64-67). Similar results regarding the differences in knowledge about politics were also obtained by Elo (2009), in a study where he compared the societal knowledge of students in upper secondary schools and vocational programs.

As Van den Berg (2012: 88) remarks, history education has obviously emphasized knowledge and the understanding of the broad lines of history, instead of developing the skills of working with historical information. There is still much to do as to the skills-based methods of learning and teaching. This is confirmed by the findings of the recent doctoral dissertation of Ouakrim-Soivio (2013), elaborating the data of the national evaluation. It is evident that the assessment criteria for history and social studies are not implemented in a consistent manner in schools. The credits of school-based assessments did not correspond with the students' performance in the national evaluation, especially when the comparisons were made on school level, although when compared across the whole data on student level, the correspondence was good. In other words, some teachers could give good marks on basis of classroom-assessments, but the students' performance in the national test was poor, and vice versa. On basis of argumentation analysis, Ouakrim-Soivio's conclusion is that the national evaluation is a more powerful indicator of students' performance than the assessments that were conducted by teachers. Furthermore, this implies that the assessments in schools are in contradiction with the principle of students' assessment on equal and reliable basis.

Evidence of achieving the skills of critical thinking and dealing with evidence is given by Vánttinen (2009), whose doctoral thesis was based on a teaching project in which historical sources were used systematically for a fairly long period. According to the results, the source-based teaching methods were suitable for lower secondary classes. Vánttinen selected sets of sources and designed tasks, beginning in grade 7 with fairly easy documents, proceeding in grade 8 to more difficult ones, in which pupils were challenged to compare contradictory sources and be sensitive to bias in the texts. However, this teaching method is challenging and requires profound expertise in subject matter. In another study (Rantala & Van den Berg, 2013), in which upper secondary school students had to evaluate contradictory evidence, the participants were able to see the differences between sources but could not compare them as to their reliability.

The “what” and “how” are not mutually exclusive questions in history and social studies, although the focus of educational discussion recently has been more on the skills and critical competences. There is also evidence that good knowledge is often related to an individual’s capacity and motivation for participation (Elo, 2009; Rapeli & Leino, 2013). Therefore it can be significant for adolescents’ political behavior and reflective attitude in the future.

Self-efficacy and self-confidence

One of the key dimensions of democratic competence is political self-efficacy and citizenship self-efficacy. Self-efficacy means the person’s individual assessment of his/her knowledge of politics and capacity to participate in society; it is connected with self-confidence, and thus creates basis for participation and interest in politics (Ekman, 2007: 12-14, 161-162; cf. Peltola, 2007: 87-88; Suoninen et al., 2010: 8). In spite of their good academic performance, the Finnish adolescents expressed very low and cautious self-assessments of their political and societal capacity and knowledge, and their scores were below the international average, which indicates weak self-efficacy. One explanation for these low self-estimations may be that the adolescents had not yet studied social studies or civic education as subjects, and they really thought that they did not know enough. Finnish boys had significantly stronger self-confidence than the girls although the girls’ academic outcome was better. Similar observations can be made on basis of the national evaluation study as well (Ouakrim-Soivio & Kuusela, 2012). This corresponds with studies that have approached gender differences in performance, motivation and self-assessments in general (Niemi-virta, 2004).

Attitudes and interest

In the national evaluation study, the 9 grade students had fairly favorable attitudes towards the subject social studies. A good deal of the respondents also liked the subject and the lessons and thought it was useful and, actually, social studies was estimated higher than history in this item (Ouakrim-Soivio & Kuusela, 2012: 45). On the other hand, in the ICCS 2009, as well as the Civic Education Study 1999, the Finnish adolescents expressed their strong disengagement towards politics. The questions were formulated in a different way, and the purpose was different. However, this reveals an interesting discrepancy. Politics and societal topics in general were not interesting but students found that the contents of social studies interested them. Of course, the subject contains other contents than politics as well, and certainly the teachers had succeeded in adapting the contents into a fairly practical level in their lessons, so students felt that it had relevance for their lives at the moment and in the future. The content perhaps was not transferred over the lessons, in their minds.

As to the Finnish adolescents' low interest in political issues, there were no remarkable gender differences. The level was also similar in the Swedish, Norwegian and Belgian data (Schulz et al., 2010: 118). There are a number of previous studies, indicating similar disinterest and disengagement in politics and social issues among young people (Elo, 2012). Most of these, however, deal with older age groups, above all those who already have right to vote in elections. It seems that young people's eagerness to vote in the long run stays at a lower level than that of older generations (Wass, 2008). Voting is no longer seen as an important channel for influence. There are also a number of Youth Barometers indicating similar results. What is also crucial, is how the concepts of politics and participation are defined. Adolescents' political engagement can be underestimated, if it is defined from a narrow perspective of conventional participation (Weller, 2007).

The Finnish adolescents expressed trust in the institutions of the Finnish society strongly compared with the international average. They trusted the police, army, and the courts of justice but not so much the political parties or the European Commission. Furthermore, they did not follow media very actively, nor did they seem to discuss politics or societal issues with their parents or friends very often. They did not feel that they could have very many opportunities to have influence on decisions at schools. All in all, this suggests that the level of motivation for politics is low, although that for civic lessons is relatively high.

Gender differences as a problem

All in all, the gender differences in ICCS and CIVED were fairly similar, which implies that the differences are fairly persistent. In cognitive performance, the girls were slightly better, but had weaker confidence in their performance, both academic and participatory. Similar gender differences were indicated in previous large-scale international studies, such as PISA literacy studies (Linnakylä & Välijärvi, 2005).

Good cognitive performance in political issues is important because it can be related to interest and open possibilities for having influence in society. Gender differences in this sense are not favorable, because, combined with disinterest, this may imply that the girls cannot fully implement their cognitive capacities. Perhaps the biggest problem in the boys' results is not their weaker performance, and the differences were quite small in the national evaluation. Instead, there are challenges related to the attitudes (cf. Arnesen, Lahelma & Öhrn, 2008).

In many respects, the girls and boys had fairly similar attitudes. However, in certain issues the boys indicated on average stronger conservatism and intolerance than the girls. They agreed about the liberty of expressing opinions and other political liberties. However, in their opinions about the equality of gender and the rights of minorities and immigrants, their attitudes differed sharply. In all countries that participated in the ICCS 2010 study, the female participants were more sympathetic to the principle of gender equality than the males, and the Finnish girls resembled in this respect the Scandinavian ones, but the Finnish males were more negative than other Scandinavians. Furthermore, the boys agreed more strongly with items measuring patriotism than girls. They agreed more strongly than girls with the statement that Finland is a better country to live in than most other countries, and they also thought that the Finns should be proud of their achievements. This may be related to the stronger self-efficacy they seemed to have.

DISCUSSION

Conclusions about the schools and teachers

The findings of the studies that were presented above challenge the school and its citizenship, history and social studies education, although the ICCS results as such do not directly relate to subject-specific education but more to school life in general.

An interesting question is how much these differing attitudes can be understood against the background of the general atmosphere in the society.

The findings challenge to reflect on the problems related to values in history and social studies, as well as the importance of dealing with them. Everything seems to indicate that Finnish history and social studies education has been strongly academically oriented, and furthermore, more focused on knowledge than cognitive skills. There are indications of some discrepancy in teachers' understanding of the objectives and assessment criteria, which was observed in the national evaluation of history and social studies. There was also a clear contradiction in the assessment criteria and the school-based assessments. It seemed to be that teachers in different schools did not implement and interpret the criteria consistently.

The emphasis on the cognitive dimensions may be partly due to the system of assessment which does not deal with value-related issues. The assessment methods in general are nowadays fairly versatile, more material based (using written documents, statistics and graphics), especially in the assessment of learning and studying. It is impossible to use students' values as the basis of assessing achievements as such, but instead, their capacity of dealing with values and ethical issues.

The focus on cognitive aspects is suggested also by the results of the survey of teachers' and principals' conceptions that were investigated with a questionnaire in the ICCS study. When the Finnish teachers and principals ranked the goals of civic education, about 80 percent of them thought that the most important objective of citizenship education is to "promote students' critical and independent thinking" and the next ones were caring and valuing the environment and the skill of conflict-solving. Most of the high-ranking objectives were related to knowledge: knowing about citizens' rights and duties and about social, political and societal institutions. They gave very little emphasis to objectives such as "giving the students skills for political activity in the future" or "capacity to defend one's own opinions", or "support effective strategies to fight against racism and xenophobia" (Suoninen et al., 2010). These rankings suggest that the socio-ethical purposes of social studies may be overshadowed by the emphasis on cognitive purposes. There is no strong tradition of discussing politics and societal questions in the lessons (Suutarinen, 2006b). The ethical and participatory dimensions of social studies are thus still a challenge for future development of the curriculum.

The civic values, related to human rights, equality and democracy, are actually shared starting points behind the national curriculum, and therefore deserve attention in Finnish civic education. The problem may still partly be the well-known fact that the official curricula can be taken as curriculum poetry – there is not enough pursuit to make civic values operational, as a part of everyday life. It may also be that the teachers are very careful, and obviously want to be neutral and objective in fear of guiding too much their students' attitudes. Although indoctrination must be avoided, perhaps it would be wise to revise this cautious orientation. History and social studies education should under no circumstances accept a relativism that enables the strengthening of undemocratic, intolerant and unequal attitudes. There must be courage and readiness to confront such ideas – perhaps best by interrogating and posing questions (Kennedy, 2006).

The Finnish girls performed on average fairly well but had weak sense of self-efficacy or self-confidence. This was expressed both in ICCS and the national evaluation. Confidence about one's own capacity would be extremely important in a world of uncertainty (Virta, 2012). Therefore it should be fostered. Interactive construction of social identity is a process in which students themselves have an active role, and it can have a positive impact on adolescents' interest in society (Elo, 2012).

Perhaps the question is that social studies and citizenship education have not followed fully the changes in society. It may be that school still too much focuses on the traditional forms of society; also citizenship is changing. Expressions of political and societal activity are changing. This has been already recognized in curriculum development, but it is possible that more emphasis should be laid on other channels than the traditional participation and representative democracy.

Conclusions for teacher education

What is a challenge for a school and for a teacher is challenge also for teacher education, which should prepare teachers to act in an adequate way. This seems to be the case also in citizenship education. The findings that have been described above give rise to some reflections about changes that are needed in teacher education, especially in history and social studies, but also in a broader sense. These challenges are here described only tentatively.

Obviously, there is need to make skills based teaching more established in history and social studies, because the students did not perform well in items that required

using documents and making conclusions. It may be that the assessment criteria are still an innovation that teachers do not know well enough. This implies that discussion is needed within the profession of history and social studies teachers, and as well in pre-service and in-service teacher education. Special attention should be given to motivating students to study society and politics. Political self-efficacy and self-confidence are new or so far neglected topics in Finnish citizenship education. What is needed is developing pedagogy directed to strengthening students' self-efficacy. An issue related to this is discussion about what kind of citizens we are educating and what an ideal model of teacher education.

Developing teacher education seems to be a general and easy solution to the problems, but that is not so simple, either. A crucial question is how teacher educators renew their repertoire and expertise, becoming able to reshape teacher education to meet with the changing challenges.

The basic qualification of Finnish teachers for primary and secondary schools is the Master's degree. Primary school teachers major in educational sciences, while subject teachers, who usually major in their teaching subjects, take only 60 credits in pedagogical studies, including educational science, subject didactics and teaching practice. Thus, the educational part of subject teachers' program is rather modest, taken the various challenges related to subject-specific requirements and general school questions the prospective teachers encounter in their professional lives. History and social studies teachers are expected to carry special responsibility for educating active citizens, or at least for enabling their students to become active citizens. Therefore, teacher education should be developed in the direction that makes it possible for the future teachers to fulfill this requirement. A key issue, therefore is, what kind of citizens the teachers are – if not perhaps actively participating themselves, then at least alert citizens who are engaged in politics and civic questions.

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