

## TRAINING OF CITIZEN COMPETENCIES IN BACHELOR OF EDUCATION STUDENTS

SANDRA PUERTO<sup>1</sup>, JAYSON BERNATE<sup>2</sup>, LAURA ROJAS<sup>3</sup>, JAYSON MENDOZA<sup>4</sup>

Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencia y Tecnología UMECIT<sup>1</sup>

[https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=G7Ou\\_HMAAAAJ&hl=es1](https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=G7Ou_HMAAAAJ&hl=es1)  
sandra.prt@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>

Corporación Universitaria Minuto Dios UNIMINUTO<sup>2</sup>

<https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=RNn70WwAAAAJ&hl=es2>  
jbernate1@uniminuto.edu.co<sup>2</sup>

Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencia y Tecnología UMECIT<sup>3</sup>

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=HWOgNGUAAAAJ&hl=es3>  
laurarojas.est@umecit.edu.pa<sup>3</sup>

Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencia y Tecnología UMECIT<sup>4</sup>

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=XZUXLQsAAAAJ&hl=es4>  
jaysonmendoza.est@umecit.edu.pa<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract** - *Citizenship competencies play a crucial role in shaping future graduates by developing critical, intercultural, and ethical skills essential for navigating today's diverse society. Effective integration of these competencies into graduate programs requires a holistic approach combining various pedagogical strategies. By fostering critical thinking, empathy, civic engagement, and professional ethics, citizenship competencies prepare graduates to be active and responsible citizens. This training not only benefits individuals but also contributes positively to community and societal well-being. Educational institutions must recognise the importance of citizenship competencies and collaborate to integrate them effectively into curricula. Ultimately, future professionals equipped with these competencies are poised to make significant contributions to building a fairer, more equitable, and democratic society.*

**Keywords:** *citizen competences, society, higher education, formation*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of civic competencies among students undertaking a Bachelor's degree in Education is crucial in preparing future educators to face the challenges of an increasingly complex and diverse society. In today's context, characterized by rapid social, political, and technological changes, it is imperative that educators acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to promote active, engaged, and ethical citizenship. This paper aims to explore the importance of this training in the educational field, analyzing various theoretical and practical perspectives from eminent authors in the field. Bernate and Puerto (2024)

The concept of civic competencies encompasses a variety of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values that enable individuals to effectively participate in democratic society. According to Delors (1996), civic competencies include critical reflection, respect for diversity, teamwork, and a willingness to engage in civic life. These competencies are not only essential for exercising citizenship in a democracy but also contribute to the personal and social development of individuals.

In this regard, authors like Torney-Purta et al. (2001); Bernate et al. (2020) have highlighted the importance of civic education in shaping responsible and engaged citizens. According to these authors, civic education involves not only imparting knowledge about political institutions and democratic processes but also developing skills for active participation in public life and fostering democratic attitudes. Thus, civic education contributes to strengthening democracy and promoting social cohesion. The development of civic competencies is particularly relevant in higher education, where future educators have the opportunity to critically reflect on their role in society and acquire the necessary tools to promote active citizenship in their future students. In this regard, authors like Shulman (2005) have emphasized the importance of integrating content related to civic and ethical competencies into teacher training programs. According to Shulman, teachers should not only transmit academic knowledge but also promote the holistic development of their students, including their formation as responsible and engaged citizens.



The development of civic competencies in Bachelor's degree students in Education can be achieved through various pedagogical strategies that foster critical reflection, active participation, and civic engagement. In this regard, authors like Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) have stressed the importance of experiential learning and authentic problem-solving in developing civic competencies. According to these authors, students learn best when they have the opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-life situations and reflect on their own experiences.

Community service is another important strategy for developing civic competencies, allowing students to actively engage with their environment and contribute to the community's well-being. According to Eyler and Giles (1999), community service benefits not only the community but also the students, who develop a sense of civic responsibility and acquire skills for teamwork and social problem-solving. Thus, community service becomes a powerful tool for fostering engaged citizens.

Curricular integration is another key aspect of developing civic competencies in Bachelor's degree students in Education. According to authors like Reimers and Chung (2016); Bernate (2021), it is important for teacher training programs to incorporate content related to civic competencies across the curriculum so that students have the opportunity to develop these skills holistically. Moreover, it is essential for teachers to know how to effectively integrate this content into their daily educational practice.

Debate and discussion in the classroom are other pedagogical strategies that can promote the development of civic competencies in students. According to authors like Levine and Lopez (2002); Bernate and Vargas (2020), debating controversial issues allows students to develop critical thinking, argumentation, and conflict resolution skills, while fostering respect for diverse opinions and tolerance. Thus, debate and discussion become powerful tools for promoting a civic culture in the classroom.

In addition to these pedagogical strategies, it is important for teachers to serve as role models by demonstrating civic behaviours and attitudes in their daily educational practice. According to authors like Pianta and Hamre (2009); Bernate et al. (2020), teachers play a fundamental role in shaping responsible and engaged citizens, as their example influences the attitude and behaviour of their students. Therefore, it is important for teacher training programs to include reflection on professional ethics and civic engagement as an integral part of preparing future educators.

In summary, the development of civic competencies in Bachelor's degree students in Education is crucial in preparing future teachers to face the challenges of a democratic and diverse society. Through various pedagogical strategies, teacher training programs can promote the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable students to effectively participate in civic life and contribute to the well-being of the community. In this regard, it is essential for teacher training programs to incorporate content related to civic competencies across the curriculum and for teachers to serve as role models by demonstrating civic behaviours and attitudes in their daily educational practice. This contributes to the formation of educators committed to building a fairer, more democratic, and participatory society.

## 1. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the article is grounded in the reflective qualitative method. Sánchez Silva (2005) defines it as follows: "The reflective tradition privileges values, norms, and creates behavior patterns that favor an analytical and critical attitude aimed at reviewing and evaluating ideas, assumptions, theories, and conventional methods" (p.116). Moreover, according to Edmund Husserl (cited by Menéndez, 2012), reflection is fundamental in phenomenology, analyzing experiences in an organized way as one of its main tasks.

## 2. MAIN PRECURSORS OF CITIZENSHIP SKILLS IN THE WORLD

**John Dewey:** Dewey was an American philosopher, psychologist, and educator whose work has significantly influenced progressive education. In his book "Democracy and Education," Dewey advocated for an education that prepares students for democratic life, emphasizing the importance of active participation in the community and the development of skills for solving social problems.

**Paulo Freire:** Freire was a Brazilian educator and philosopher known for his pedagogical approach focused on critical consciousness and the liberation of the oppressed. In his work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Freire emphasized the importance of education as a practice of freedom and advocated for a pedagogy that promotes active student participation in transforming their social reality.

**Nel Noddings:** Noddings is an American philosopher of education recognized for her work in ethics of care and moral education. In her book "Educating Citizens for Global Awareness," Noddings argues for an



education that promotes empathy, care, and social responsibility as essential components of citizenship formation.

**Michael Fullan:** Fullan is an educator and expert in school leadership known for his focus on the effective implementation of educational change. In his book "The New Meaning of Educational Change," Fullan highlights the importance of developing distributed leadership capacities among teachers to promote a school culture that fosters civic participation and commitment to continuous improvement.

**Linda Darling-Hammond:** Darling-Hammond is an American educator recognized for her work in education policy and teacher quality. In her book "Preparing Teachers for a Changing World," Darling-Hammond emphasizes the importance of teacher training including the development of social and emotional competencies, as well as skills for collaborative work and community problem-solving.

**Peter Senge:** Senge is a researcher and author known for his work in organizational learning and systemic leadership. In his book "The Fifth Discipline," Senge emphasizes the importance of promoting a shared vision and commitment to continuous learning in educational organizations, key elements for fostering a culture of civic participation and collaboration.

**Howard Gardner:** Gardner is an American psychologist known for his theory of multiple intelligences. In his book "Five Minds for the Future," Gardner identifies the competencies necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century, including disciplined mind, synthesizing mind, creative mind, respectful mind, and ethical mind, all of which are essential for citizenship formation.

**Roger Hart:** Hart is a researcher recognized for his work in children's and youth participation. In his book "Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care," Hart highlights the importance of involving children and young people in decision-making that affects their lives and communities, contributing to their development as active and engaged citizens.

**Marina Subirats:** Subirats is a Spanish sociologist and expert in education known for her work in gender equality and civic education. In her book "Educación para la ciudadanía. Democracia, capitalismo y Estado de bienestar," Subirats analyzes the tensions between civic education and contemporary political and economic systems, advocating for an education that promotes critical civic participation and gender equality.

**Ronald Heifetz:** Heifetz is an expert in adaptive leadership and organizational change. In his book "Leadership Without Easy Answers," Heifetz explores the challenges of leading in complex and changing environments, emphasizing the importance of promoting a culture of learning and continuous adaptation in educational organizations, essential elements for fostering civic participation and commitment to improvement.

These ten references offer a variety of perspectives and approaches on the role of civic competencies in the pedagogical formation of teachers. Their works and contributions have significantly influenced the understanding and practice of civic education in different contexts and have provided valuable guidance for the training of educators committed to building a fairer, more democratic, and participatory society.

### 3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF CITIZEN COMPETENCIES TO PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

To Citizenship competencies play a fundamental role in the pedagogical formation of future educators, as they contribute to the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are essential for their professional performance and their contribution to the construction of a fairer and more democratic society. Below are some of the most significant contributions that citizenship competencies offer in pedagogical formation:

**Development of critical and reflective thinking skills:** Citizenship competencies promote the ability to critically analyze and reflect on social, political, and ethical issues. This skill is essential for educators to objectively evaluate different perspectives and make informed decisions in their pedagogical practice.

**Promotion of empathy and intercultural understanding:** Citizenship competencies foster empathy towards the experiences and perspectives of others, as well as an understanding of cultural and social diversity. This is fundamental for educators to establish meaningful relationships with their students and create an inclusive environment in the classroom.

**Fostering respect for human rights and diversity:** Citizenship competencies promote respect for fundamental human rights and diversity in gender, culture, religion, and sexual orientation. This is crucial for educators to create a safe and respectful school environment where all students feel valued and accepted.



**Training for peaceful conflict resolution:** Citizenship competencies include skills for resolving conflicts peacefully and constructively, promoting dialogue and negotiation. This is essential for educators to effectively manage conflicts in the classroom and foster a positive coexistence among students.

**Promotion of civic and democratic participation:** Citizenship competencies promote active participation in civic and democratic life, both within and outside the school environment. This includes participation in community activities, exercising the right to vote, and commitment to social justice. Educators who possess these competencies can inspire their students to participate actively and responsibly in society.

**Preparation for ethical practice in teaching:** Citizenship competencies include the development of ethical awareness and a commitment to professional integrity. This is fundamental for educators to make ethical decisions in their pedagogical practice and act as role models for their students.

In summary, citizenship competencies offer a solid foundation for the pedagogical formation of future educators, preparing them to face the challenges of an increasingly complex and diverse society. By developing critical thinking skills, promoting empathy and respect for diversity, fostering peaceful conflict resolution, encouraging civic and democratic participation, and promoting ethical practice in teaching, citizenship competencies significantly contribute to the formation of educators committed to building a fairer and more equitable society.

#### 4. TRAINING OF CITIZENSHIP SKILLS IN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

In today's society, education faces the challenge of preparing citizens capable of addressing the complex challenges of an ever-changing world. In this context, citizenship competencies emerge as a fundamental aspect in the formation of future graduates, as they not only contribute to individuals' personal and professional development but are also essential for building a fairer, more democratic, and participatory society. In this reflection, we will explore the importance of citizenship competencies in shaping future graduates, highlighting their contributions in various spheres of social, political, and professional life.

Citizenship competencies encompass a variety of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values that enable individuals to effectively participate in civic and democratic life. In an educational context, these competencies play a crucial role in preparing future graduates to assume their role as active and engaged citizens in society. According to Delors (1996), citizenship competencies include the ability to think critically, respect diversity, work in teams, and engage in civic life. These competencies are not only essential for citizenship in a democracy but also contribute to individuals' holistic development.

One of the key aspects of citizenship competencies is their contribution to the development of critical and reflective thinking skills in future graduates. According to Kuhn (1999), critical thinking involves objectively analyzing and evaluating information, identifying biases and prejudices, and developing well-founded arguments. This skill is essential for future graduates to effectively address the social, political, and ethical issues they will encounter in their professional practice. Furthermore, critical thinking enables them to question assumptions and make informed decisions in complex and ambiguous situations.

Another important aspect of citizenship competencies is their contribution to the development of intercultural skills and empathy in future graduates. According to Bennett (2009), intercultural competence involves the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures, understanding and valuing their perspectives and experiences. This skill is crucial in an increasingly globalized world, where cultural diversity is a prevalent reality. Additionally, empathy towards the experiences and perspectives of others is essential for establishing meaningful and respectful relationships in professional and social settings.

Citizenship competencies also contribute to the development of civic and democratic engagement in future graduates. According to Barber (1984), civic engagement involves actively participating in the political and social life of the community, exercising rights and civic responsibilities. This skill is crucial for promoting social change and contributing to the common good. Furthermore, democratic engagement involves respecting the principles of equality, freedom, and justice, and actively and responsibly participating in democratic decision-making processes.

Training in citizenship competencies also has significant ethical implications for future graduates. According to Noddings (2003), ethical education involves reflecting on the values and moral principles that guide our actions and developing a sense of responsibility towards others and the world at large. This skill is crucial for promoting respect for human rights and the dignity of all individuals and for acting ethically and responsibly in all areas of professional and social life.

The integration of citizenship competencies into the education of future graduates presents several challenges and opportunities. According to Levinson et al. (2007), the effective implementation of citizenship education programs requires a comprehensive approach that combines different pedagogical strategies, such as experiential learning, authentic problem-solving, and community service. Additionally, it is essential for training programs to incorporate opportunities for critical reflection and open dialogue on relevant ethical and social issues.

In conclusion, citizenship competencies play a fundamental role in shaping future graduates, contributing to the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are essential for their professional performance and their contribution to the construction of a fairer, more democratic, and participatory society. By promoting critical thinking, empathy, civic and democratic engagement, and professional ethics, citizenship competencies prepare future graduates to address the challenges of an increasingly complex and diverse world and to make meaningful contributions to community well-being and social progress.

### CONCLUSIONS

The Citizenship competencies are fundamental in shaping future graduates, as they contribute to the development of critical, intercultural, and ethical skills necessary to tackle the challenges of a diverse and globalized society.

The effective integration of citizenship competencies into graduate training programs requires a holistic approach that combines diverse pedagogical strategies and opportunities for experiential and reflective learning.

By promoting critical thinking, empathy, civic and democratic engagement, and professional ethics, citizenship competencies prepare future graduates to be active, responsible, and engaged citizens in building a fairer, more equitable, and democratic society.

Training in citizenship competencies not only benefits future graduates in their personal and professional development but also has a positive impact on the community and society as a whole by promoting values of inclusion, respect, and democratic participation.

It is essential for educational institutions and graduate training programs to recognise the importance of citizenship competencies and work collaboratively to effectively integrate them into the curriculum, ensuring that future professionals are prepared to make meaningful contributions to the welfare and progress of society.


### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Article from a doctoral thesis

### REFERENCES

- [1] Barber, B. R. (1984). *Strong democracy: Participatory politics for a new age*. University of California Press.
- [2] Bennett, M. J. (2009). *Defining, measuring, and facilitating intercultural learning: A conceptual introduction to the Intercultural Education Double Supplement*. *Intercultural Education*, 20(S1), S1-S13.
- [3] BERNATE, J. A. (2021). *Tendencias en los sistemas educativos del siglo XXI Trends in the educational systems of the 21st century Tendências nos sistemas educacionais do século XXI*. *Sophia*, 17(1).
- [4] Bernate, J., Bejarano, B., & Cardozo, D. (2020). *Cotejo de las competencias ciudadanas en estudiantes de Licenciatura en Educación Física*. *Mendive. Revista de Educación*, 18(3), 647-660.
- [5] Bernate, J., Fonseca, I., Betancourt, M., & Romero, E. (2020). *Analysis of citizenship competences in students of Physical Education degree*. *Revista PODIUM*, 15(2), 202-220.
- [6] BERNATE, J. A., & PUERTO, S. C. G. (2024). *CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRAXEOLOGICAL MODEL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CITIZEN COMPETENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION*. *Russian Law Journal*, 12(1).
- [7] Bernate, J., & Vargas, J. (2020). *Challenges and trends of the 21st century in higher education*. *Rev. Cienc. Soc*, 26, 141-154.
- [8] Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [9] Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [10] Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within*. UNESCO Publishing.
- [11] Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. The Macmillan Company.
- [12] Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* Jossey-Bass.
- [13] Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed (30th anniversary ed.)*. Continuum.
- [14] Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change (4th ed.)*. Teachers College Press.



- 
- [15] Gardner, H. (2009). *Five minds for the future*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- [16] Hart, R. A. (1997). *Children's participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care*. UNICEF.
- [17] Heifetz, R. A. (1994). *Leadership without easy answers*. Belknap Press.
- [18] Kuhn, D. (1999). A developmental model of critical thinking. *Educational Researcher*, 28(2), 16-26.
- [19] Levinson, M., Sparkes, A. C., & Powell, S. (2007). *Citizenship and citizenship education in a global age: Politics, policies, and practices*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [20] Levine, P., & Lopez, M. H. (2002). *Debating the issues: American and European perspectives on immigration*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- [21] Noddings, N. (2003). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education (2nd ed.)*. University of California Press.
- [22] Noddings, N. (2005). *Educating citizens for global awareness*. Teachers College Press.
- [23] Pianta, R. C., & Hamre, B. K. (2009). Conceptualization, measurement, and improvement of classroom processes: Standardized observation can leverage capacity. *Educational Researcher*, 38(2), 109-119.
- [24] Reimers, F., & Chung, C. K. (Eds.). (2016). *Teaching and learning for the twenty-first century: Educational goals, policies, and curricula from six nations*. Harvard Education Press.
- [25] Torney-Purta, J., Schwille, J., & Amadeo, J. A. (2001). *Civic education across countries: Twenty-four national case studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).
- [26] Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday/Currency.
- [27] Shulman, L. S. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 134(3), 52-59.
- [28] Subirats, M. (2009). *Educación para la ciudadanía. Democracia, capitalismo y Estado de bienestar*. Ediciones Península.