

## TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CITIZENSHIP AND HOMELAND EDUCATION AND ETHICS SUBJECT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**Summary** – *In this article, the authors discuss teachers' and pupils' perspectives on civic education in Slovenian public schools. More specifically, the authors discuss various factors influencing the implementation of the subject, which since 2008/2009 has been referred to as 'Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics', previously referred to as 'Civic Education and Ethics'.<sup>1</sup> In Slovenian public schools, the subject is taught in the last triad, more specifically, in the seventh and eighth grades, but not in the ninth grade. In primary schools, the objectives of the subject are value-oriented, drawing on human rights, and originating from learners' pre-existing knowledge, abilities, and interests. Teachers derive their teaching practice from didactical principles and criteria based on the developmental period of the child, the child's experiences, personal experiences, ideas, pre-existing knowledge, interests and their fundamental needs when choosing content, individual motivation, case studies, actively including each pupil and achieving social, emotional, motivational, aesthetic, and moral ethical goals. The results of the research show that factors such as the curriculum, teaching and learning methods, teaching aids, the organisation of school life and work, the number of hours per subject, and the teacher's professionalism have an important influence on teachers' and pupils' viewpoints regarding the success of the course. Thus, this article examines the view of pedagogical practice and highlights the views of teachers and students on the implementation of this subject.*

**Keywords:** *civic education, human rights, didactic principles, teaching process, methods and forms of work*

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<sup>1</sup> The revised curriculum for 'Civic Education and Ethics', now referred to as 'Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics', was accepted at the Professional Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education on 12 June 2008.

## **Introduction**

The subject Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics, albeit with different names in the past, has a long tradition in primary schools. Before the 2008/2009 school year, the subject was entitled Civic Education and Ethics, but immediately after Independence in 1991 it was known as Ethics and Society, and even earlier it had the title of, appropriately for those times, Social Moral Education. Despite the names given to this subject, it systematically deals with ethics, citizenship education and less with homeland education in Slovenian public schools. Without a doubt, the course promotes (together with other subject areas) the development of abilities and the construction of social and moral thought, skills, motivation for and interest in ethical and social questions, and is oriented towards values and awareness of identity. One of its many goals is to emphasise the development of intellectual capacity and abilities, focused on the development of abilities in relation to complex and internally divided opinions that are the basis for moral activity. It is about developing ethical, civic and social thought, understanding and researching the definition of values and ethical principles, and developing the ethical stands and skills that are covered in the curriculum.

The purpose of this paper is to present the viewpoints of teachers and pupils on factors such as the curriculum (content and topics), the teaching and learning methods, the teaching aids, the organisation of school life and work, the number of hours per subject, and the teacher's professionalism which have an important influence on the teachers' and pupils' viewpoints regarding the successful implementation of the course. Our purpose is not to provide comprehensive answers to questions about whether or not teaching the subject has been successful, but to depict the current state in the schools included in the research study. An additional aim is to determine and compare the viewpoints of teachers and pupils regarding the importance and influence of various factors on the successful implementation of the subject at hand.

## **Theoretical underpinnings of the subject and the application of teaching methods**

The curriculum includes the contents and objectives of the subject, which have also been suggested in documents from bodies of the European Union.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> If we compare the subjects Ethics and Society, Civic Education and Ethics, and Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics, differences are evident with regard to individual content areas and in specific objectives (especially with Homeland Education) (See Miro Haček's contribution entitled "*Domovinska in patriotska vzgoja v Republiki Sloveniji*" [An Empirical Research Analysis 'Homeland and Patriotic Education in the Republic of Slovenia] published in *Vzgoja in izobraževanje* [Education Journal] 2008, no.6). Differences are also evident in the teaching approach and in the openness of the curriculum. Subject teach-

Guidelines and recommendations regarding which knowledge and how to transmit such knowledge to the individual and to members of the community through school activities and through individual subjects, in our case especially the subject of Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics, are based on international agreements, UNESCO activities and recommendations of the Council of Europe, conventions that recommend 'education for democratic values – human rights education'. In other words, human rights should be the organising principle of citizenship education. The Council of Europe recommends to its members that international agreements and conventions be used as a key reference in the classroom, and suggests that when focusing on citizenship education, teachers should encourage discussions on various questions and point out dilemmas and questions. More specifically, it says 'in civic education as well as elsewhere where values are an important issue, human rights should always be the main reference point' (Starkey, 1991, p. 22). We can determine from the European Council's (1991) recommendations that education should go wherever we encounter values and should thus include: (1) teaching and learning about human rights (cognitive level); (2) teaching and learning for human rights (developing skills); and (3) teaching in the midst of human rights (developing relations).

The turning-point in defining the European dimensions of education was in 1993 when the Council of Europe (Committee for Education) published the Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education (Brussels, 29 September 1993) and with Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty that was approved in the same year by the European Parliament. Both documents are binding for each EU Member State. The Green Paper defines the general and specific objectives of education in Europe, such as: equal opportunities for all; developing youth to achieve their full potential in their own personal development towards autonomy and critical (co-)creation of the world, to make and adapt to innovations; developing a sense of (co-)responsibility for actions in society; developing a personality that will be independent and that can define personal values; preparing for lifelong learning; training and acquiring qualifications to help the individual enter working life by being able to adapt to technological change. For this reason, education for human rights is not executed in a fragmentary or isolated way, but in a manner that is connected with global, national, local and school issues. In each school, education for human rights, in conjunction with the aforementioned subject, is the basic element of education for democracy and intercultural dialogue, as well as for the social, economic, cultural and environmental factors of permanent development (Benedek, 2006).

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ers in a modified nine-year school have greater autonomy in teaching and in the usage of various teaching methods and resources; they have at their disposal more programmes and seminars for additional professional education and training, as well as opportunities to collaborate among subject-related areas.

Milharčič Hladnik states that education for democracy in the broadest sense will only be successful if we internalise it: “We internalize a democratic stand if we experience and create it in our daily lives. A democratic relationship among peers (friends), co-workers (collegiality), democracy in families that take into consideration the specific needs of generations and gender equality, experiencing diversity when encountering various cultures as well as understanding the diversity of modern art, all of these and more form a personal democratic culture” (Milharčič Hladnik et al., 1997, p. 5). According to Centrih (2008), learning about human rights crosses the threshold of professional content, for example communicating key words, such as freedom, justice, human dignity or protection against discrimination, to communicate knowledge regarding conventions and other documents about human rights, and the historical background of human rights.

Learning for human rights denotes developing and acquiring abilities for conduct and communication that enables an individual to continually respect human rights. More specifically, it is about developing critical thinking and acquiring methods of constructive problem solving. Learning that includes the “didactical teaching of human rights, signifies an increase of social competence” (Centrih, 2008, p. 173). It is about sensitisation and reflection regarding the viewpoints of the values derived from human rights. It is about achieving the goals of recognising violations of human rights and having the abilities and willpower to eliminate them.

Teaching the subject of Civic Education and Ethics differs in its characteristics from other subjects in that: (1) the learning process should be based on situations and problems derived from everyday, real-life and from the social environment. Such issues are dealt with comprehensively, in an interdisciplinary fashion, with complete interactivity. Within such a context, we proceed from the affective and active objectives of the subject, written within the Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics curriculum. The learners become accustomed to knowing, analysing and synthesising various connections and relations within their inner environment. (2) Learners are directed initially towards problem-based thinking: knowing how to analyse interpersonal conflicts, moral dilemmas, non-conformity and differences, incidents, various ambiguities, as well as planning, implementing and valuing activities in their direct environment. It is important to have learners become acquainted with one another in dealing with challenges and to be able to analyse various viewpoints, opinions, life perspectives, and roles. The learners become accustomed to overcoming egocentrically social and moral thought, leading towards more autonomous social and moral judgements. Knowing Kohlberg (1974) and his stages of the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional development of moral judgement will assist the teacher in getting learners used to analysing dilemmas, developing values, and a value system.

The teacher has to be systematic in his work, he or she should not emphasise the learners' personality, but attempt to include all learners in the process to enhance the learner's self-esteem and train the learner to express viewpoints, opinions and values. (3) We cannot surpass Koflič's process-development model of moral education (Krofič, 1997b, p. 54-85), where, for example, intuition cannot be taught, not to role-play cases where the drafts have been prepared in advance, but to stem from concrete educational situations and to take advantage of social situations that happen unannounced and coincidentally where we "use them" towards building the lesson and to achieving the learning-educational objectives. (4) Above all, it is important, according to Marentič-Požarnik (1998, p. 66), to realise that the optimal method of learning is based on doing things by oneself, when we are actually active, which is the central idea of experiential learning, emphasising the sense of the interaction of live experiences with abstract thought and generalisations, as well as understanding the area of the cognitive and emotional field of learning. (5) Whenever in our lessons we talk about family, school, friendship, ecology, free time, studying, and so forth, we should not surpass the learner's experiences, but quite the reverse. Many times we build the lesson using learners' experiences, their pre-existing knowledge about a specific topic and we incorporate their life and school experiences into their learning. It is important to enrich and build upon these experiences (Tomič, 1997; Židan, 1993).

We have to stem from the learners' pre-existing knowledge, their abilities and interests. Of course, we have to adhere to the basic didactical principles here as well, such as: from closest to farthest, from basic to complex, from the concrete to the abstract, from specifics towards generality. During the lesson, the teacher has to adhere to many criteria, such as taking into account the developmental stage of the child, the child's experience, personal experiences, the child's ideas, pre-existing knowledge, interests, basic needs when determining the content area, the motivation of individuals, case studies, actively including each learner, as well as achieving social, emotional, motivational, aesthetic, and moral ethical goals.

It is important that teachers feel autonomous: in their profession as a teacher and as a teacher educator (Peček-Čuk, 1998, p. 237). The teacher is autonomous in choosing the form and method of teaching during lessons. Frequently, during lessons, the teacher will combine various teaching forms. One of such combinations is the *progressive duplication* or the "snowball strategy" (Mičić et al., 1998, p. 127). Justin (1997, p. 112-122) recommends that the following methods be used during lessons: Habermas's *theory of communicative action*, *Socratic dialogue*, *educational discussions*, *story-telling* as a means of moral, social and civic upbringing and *biographies*. Marentič-Požarnik (2000), among the methods and models that encourage morally relevant learning, lists methods that stem from various theoretical underpinnings. These can be combined into three groups: one puts an

emphasis on developing moral conduct (theories of social learning according to Bandura), others have an emphasis on the development of moral judgement (the cognitive approach following Piaget, Hohlberg and Oser), and the third emphasises the whole experience (the humanistic approach). Marentič-Požarnik lists the methods that encourage moral conduct, judgement and experiencing: (1) the method of clarifying values; (2) the method of analysing values; (3) discussions of moral dilemmas; (4) dialogue regarding opposing positions; (5) brainstorming, starting points or stimulators, role-playing or simulations, social games and social skills exercises, youth workshops, relaxation techniques and visualisation, the experiential approach; (6) the action approach – introducing learners to the value of important benefits (humanitarian benefits); (7) the method of project work in collaborating with other school subjects (interdisciplinarity). This method is important because it contributes to the motivation and commitment of learners in accomplishing a task: the learner is placed in an active role, he or she learns how to solve problems in new situations, comes to new understandings and knowledge, and uses pre-existing knowledge and experiences. In this way, the abilities of each individual are developed (Devjak, Peček-Čuk, 2000). The learners' active role is shown through their participation during lessons.

Child participation, as one of the most important ingredients of education, was defined in 1974 by Kohlberg in his commonly named “*just community*”. From the perspective of cognitivism, Kohlberg (1974) extrapolates the meaning of the required characteristics of the teacher (how and in which manner the teacher co-manages a community) that will connect the individual with a solid and just community through which the individual contributes in responsibly accomplishing community-established rules. It is in these rules that an individual recognises his or her interests, active (co-)participation, while at the same time provides and adds responsibilities in maintaining and carrying out these rules (Devjak, 2008).

The effectiveness of schools and the subject, whether it is named Civic Education and Ethics or Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics, depends on various factors, which are discussed by Blažič and Starc (2007). Certainly, factors such as professional leadership, a common vision and goals, a learning environment focused on teaching and learning, teaching with a purpose, expectations, positive reinforcement, advancement, the rights, duties, and responsibilities of students, as well as cooperation between the home and school, are ever more important from the perspective of this subject, which, in primary school, even though it is held for only one hour a week in the seventh and eighth grades, deals with the content and objectives of civic education and ethics.

## **Defining the Research Problem**

The research problem was connected with understanding the viewpoints of teachers and pupils with regard to the Civic Education and Ethics<sup>3</sup> subject, more specifically from the viewpoint of factors<sup>4</sup> that, according to teachers and pupils, may have a positive influence on the execution of the lesson and in achieving the objectives of the course.<sup>5</sup> Within the framework of the research study that was closed in 2003, the following research question was posed: what are the personal viewpoints of teachers and pupils regarding the various factors that influence the successful execution of the course CEE? We were interested in the following issues:

1. According to teachers' opinions, is the CEE subject at an appropriate developmental level for the pupils, does it contain too much, too little or the right amount of learning topics and what opportunities are there to achieve one's own teaching ideas in the lesson?
2. Does the subject teacher use various teaching forms and methods during the lesson, do they consider pupils when choosing a teaching method and form during the lesson, do they use different teaching aids, and what is their opinion about textbooks?
3. Do differences exist between pupils' and teachers' views on how pupils would like to work during the lesson?
4. In teachers' opinions, does the school leadership adequately consider their problems and suggestions about organising the subject differently?
5. How do pupils experience the CEE class and what are the teacher's opinions of these experiences? What attitude do teachers and pupils have to the class, what leads to disharmony, what type of teacher do pupils like and dislike? We were especially interested in the participation of pupils during the lesson.

## **Methodology**

We used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. For the qualitative portion of the research study, we used the focus group method and the method of observation (i.e. the lessons). Based on the results

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter the acronym CEE is used.

<sup>4</sup> These are: further factors; curriculum, content and topics of the subject; forms, methods and teaching aids used during the lesson; organisation of school life and work and number of subject hours; the relationship of teacher-pupil-subject.

<sup>5</sup> In this article, we limit ourselves only to the factors, even though in the research study the subject objectives were also collected.

of these methods, a suitable survey questionnaire was designed with an itemised rating scale and an opinion scale for the CEE subject teachers ( $n = 116$ ), for other subject teachers, principals and other professional school employees ( $n = 123$ ), as well as for ninth grade pupils ( $n = 326$ ). The research study included 16 primary schools<sup>6</sup> and 10 (out of 13) CEE working (subject) groups throughout Slovenia. The instruments in the research study were three non-standardised survey questionnaires for three research groups: (1) for the CEE subject teachers; (2) for principals, other subject teachers, and professional employees of the school; and (3) for the pupils. A pilot test was conducted on the functionality of the questionnaires from the standpoint of measuring the characteristics. We obtained this assessment through a practical sondage test on a trial sample of subject teachers, other teachers, and pupils.

The data were entered into SPSS-Xpc and EXCEL. Data were tested using the univariate and bivariate statistical methods ( $z$ -test,  $\chi^2$  test) where we categorised the most important data through percentages, proportions, and rank listings to accept or reject the hypotheses.

## **Results and Interpretation**

### **Factors that influence the viewpoints of teachers and pupils in the successful execution of the CEE subject**

*Factor: curriculum, content and topics of the subject*

The subject teachers were first asked whether in their opinion the CEE curriculum is at an appropriate developmental level for the pupils, whether it contains too much, too little or the right amount of learning topics and what opportunities there are to achieve one's own teaching ideas in the lesson. Concerning the curriculum, 62% of the subject teachers were of the opinion that the content of the curriculum was suitably based on the developmental level of the pupil whereas 38% were of the opinion that the content was too difficult. Similar opinions were shared with regard to the objectives: 65% of the teachers believed that the objectives were suitably situated, 18% of the teachers thought that they were too constricted and only 17% were of the opinion that the objectives were not clear enough. Of interest are also the open responses of the teachers where they wrote that the curriculum should be changed, with more added to the area of homeland education and other open topics. The curriculum would be changed by 9% of the surveyed teachers. It is not surprising that almost a third of the teachers were of the opinion that there was too much in the curriculum, particularly considering that the class meets only once weekly. Similarly, pupils thought that certain topics were excessive.

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<sup>6</sup> We included schools that were willing to cooperate and gave their consent: at the leadership level, with subject teachers and pupils' parents who were included in the research study.



Topics on politics and religion would be changed by 9% of the pupils for sexuality, addiction, and friendship. Again, others (15% of the pupils) would not change the content of the subject.

Teachers are satisfied with the opportunities to achieve their own ideas during the lesson: 43% of them considered that they have many opportunities, and only 16% believe that these opportunities are too scarce. *“With the Ethics and Society course, the quality of the lesson depends on the initiative and abilities of the teacher: how they can relate to the children, how they can relate the topic of the lesson to the children, and how good they are in listening (not subordinating), and so on.”*

*Factor: Teaching forms, methods and aids for the subject lesson*

**Table 1.** Structural Percentages and Average Values for the Factor of Teaching Forms, Methods, and Aids for the CEE Subject-Matter Teacher Group<sup>7</sup>

		Average A*	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Average B*	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
T4	Most of the time the teacher uses frontal teaching (teacher talks, pupils write)	1.23	4%	14%	81%	1.80	13%	55%	32%
T6	The teacher encourages active participation of the pupils in discussions	2.91	91%	9%	0%	2.69	69%	31%	0%
T7	The teacher sees to the implementation of various projects	2.37	41%	54%	4%	2.18	26%	66%	8%
T8	The teacher takes into consideration suggestions made by the pupils during the lesson	2.66	67%	32%	1%	2.55	57%	41%	2%
T9	The teacher prepares pupils for independent work	2.83	83%	17%	0%	2.69	69%	31%	0%
T10	The teacher prepares students to work with texts	2.54	59%	36%	5%	2.58	59%	41%	1%
T16	Uses role-plays	2.37	43%	51%	6%	2.13	21%	70%	9%
T17	Uses quizzes for motivation and assessment	2.25	36%	54%	11%	1.97	14%	68%	17%
T18	Organises pair-work	2.23	36%	50%	13%	2.23	28%	67%	5%
T19	Sees to differentiated work	2.23	33%	56%	11%	2.05	14%	77%	9%
T21	Learns and develops skills in problem solving	2.73	76%	20%	4%	2.55	57%	41%	2%

<sup>7</sup> Almost all teachers, besides teaching CEE, teach another subject. Most of the teachers also teach social sciences courses (history, geography), and others teach the first language (mother tongue), natural sciences, physical and art education. The latter group teach to add to their work obligations.

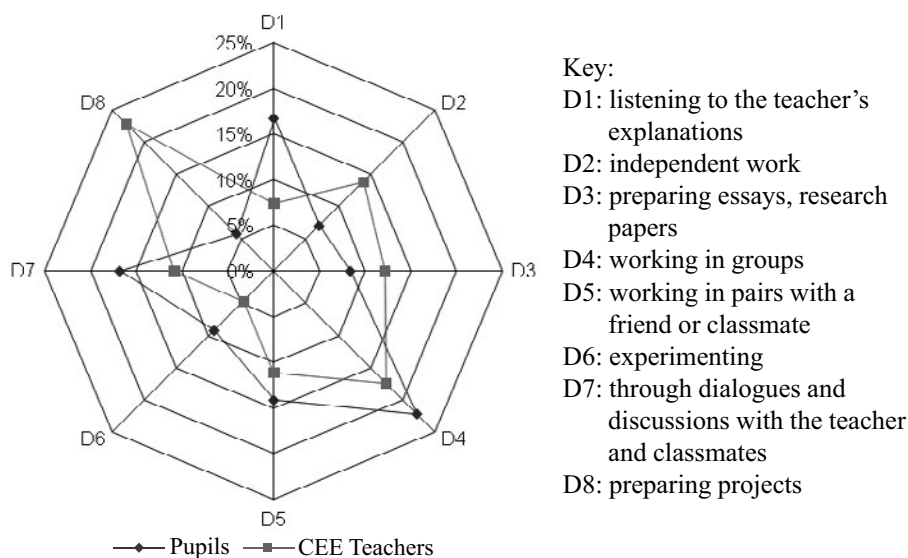
		Average A*	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Average B*	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
T23	Sees to discussions on confrontational problems in society	2.68	68%	32%	0%	2.39	39%	61%	0%
T24	Organises field trips and museum, theatre, and cinema visits	2.00	23%	54%	23%	1.65	5%	54%	41%
T25	Organises field-work	1.89	16%	58%	27%	1.46	5%	37%	59%
T26	Teaches with case studies and demonstrations	2.63	65%	33%	2%	2.38	40%	57%	3%
T27	Includes learning through the computer, TV, radio, etc.	2.42	46%	49%	4%	2.27	32%	63%	5%
T32	The teacher directs pupils to implement round tables, publish school newsletters, exhibitions, etc.	2.21	33%	54%	12%	1.97	20%	57%	23%

\*A – how important it is to consider the statements regarding implementing the subject lesson, and B – to what extent can this actually be transferred into the classroom?

Teaching methods and forms are of great importance in achieving the lesson objectives. Subject teachers are aware that frontal teaching (where the teacher speaks and the pupils listen) is not successful. As many as 81% of all teachers identified this type of teaching method as a less important teaching form. Only about 13% of teachers used this type of teaching frequently, and 14% of teachers identified this type of teaching as important or very important. The teachers assessed that other teaching types and methods are of key importance. They assessed quite highly the method of discussion (regarding confrontational problems in society), since 68% of the teachers chose this option as a very important teaching method, and where not one teacher identified it as a less important teaching method. In practice, this method is used by all teachers. For the statement *the teacher encourages active participation of pupils in discussions*, 91% of the teachers assessed this statement as very important. In the classroom, 69% of all teachers frequently encourage pupils in discussion and 31% of the teachers do this only sometimes. From the average values we can determine the ranking of teaching methods and forms that teachers believe are beneficial and important to more easily and better achieve the course objectives. The first three, besides the aforementioned method of discussions, are: *the teacher prepares pupils for independent work, teaches with case studies and demonstrations, uses role-plays, and sees to the implementation of various projects*. From Figure 1 we can see how many of these forms the teacher can actually transfer into the classroom.

Statements from the subject teachers concerning creating subject lessons were assessed more highly than they were actually transferred into the classroom. We can observe that these teachers are aware that frontal teaching is not the most beneficial way of teaching a class; however, in reality this is the most frequently used form. Perhaps the reason for its use lies in its “*economy*” or the fact that it saves time, where the teacher, from the “*lecturer’s podium*”, is able to more quickly accomplish the learning objectives than with interactive forms of learning. The question remains regarding the organisation of learning hours, interweaving learning content, and at the same time accomplishing various objectives. This is simply a question of the didactics of the subject lesson that differs from the didactics in the teaching of languages, history, geography or specific educational classes. With a similar argument, we can explain the rejection in the statement *the teacher prepares pupils to work with texts*. Only with the statement *organising pair-work* is there no difference between the ratings concerning the importance of considering the statement, assessing the achievements of the subject lesson and the extent to which we can actually transfer this into the classroom.

When we asked the pupils how they would like to see the work done during lessons, they replied: *working in groups, through dialogues and discussions with the teacher and classmates, and by listening to the teacher’s explanations*. They do not like independent work or preparing projects, which can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** How do Pupils Want to Work During CEE Lessons? Viewpoints of Teachers and Pupils

If we compare the viewpoints of pupils and teachers on how to work during the lesson, we can see that pupils and teachers differ greatly in their viewpoints. The greatest departure can be observed in statement (D8): *preparing projects*. We can see that pupils “*do not like projects*”, but their teachers are of the opposite opinion. They are convinced that pupils want this type of work. They differ in their statements about independent work and frontal teaching. In free responses, the pupils wrote that they do not like to solve workbook exercises and work individually or listen to a boring teacher. They appreciate it when the teacher tells them something interesting, what they are thinking and why they think in such a manner.

The results of the  $\chi^2$  test ( $\chi^2 = 121.45, p = 0.00, g = 7$ ) shows that there are differences between pupils and teachers on the views of how pupils would like to work during the lesson.

Part of the reason why pupils do not like “*preparing projects and independent work*” is perhaps that they are not familiar with the project method, either “*theoretically or practically*”, and they are not accustomed to using such methods. Under “*independent work*”, the pupils in their free responses about what they did not like about the subject listed solving exercises in the workbook, writing “*essays/papers*”, or independently preparing reports on a specific topic. They would rather work in “*groups*”, talk, and research together with their classmates, friends, and teachers.

Statements differ regarding *the teacher takes into consideration pupils' suggestions in the classroom*. 57% of teachers responded that they frequently take into account learners during their lessons (only 2% of the teachers never took into account pupils' suggestions), even though 99% of the teachers agree that considering pupils during lessons is important or very important. Only 39% of the pupils believed that teachers frequently take their suggestions into account, whereas only 22% stated that the teacher rarely takes them into account.

If we continue with the views of pupils, one of the pupils in their free response wrote: “*I like it when we talk, when you can say what you think, I like it when I can present to my classmates an interesting paper and I like it when I see my poster being exhibited in the classroom.*” Another pupil's response tells us (and it was not the only response of this type: “*I like it when we work differently*”, was written by 6% of the pupils) that they like to work in a different way from what they are accustomed to in their other classes, and despite novelties they like to listen to the teachers “*words*”, his explanation of the content, his views of the problems, and they like it when the teacher encourages them to think and work.

The majority of the teachers (87%) believe that they have too few teaching aids at their disposal. They noted the need for topic-based video tapes, selections from literature, slides, AV media, computers, and so on.

Most probably it is not that the listed resources are not available, but that the selection and preparation of teaching aids according to the topics in the curriculum would take the individual teacher a great amount of time and effort. However, teaching aids prepared in advance would greatly assist the work of the teacher.

As already mentioned, pupils do not like to solve exercises in their workbooks for the whole class hour, or to work on exercises individually, and they do not like the fact that they do not actually use a textbook even though they had to buy one (this was written by some pupils from urban schools). *“Certain exercises in the workbook are useless, just so the teacher has some peace from the pupils”* was a free response from one of the pupils. A pupil from one of the urban schools wrote, *“I do not like it if we talk too much – discussing. I think we do too few concrete things, in groups (posters) and too little experimenting. Too bad.”*

Factor: Organisation of work-life in school, number of subject hours and professionalism of the teacher

The fact that the subject is held for only one hour per week seems appropriate for 65% of the CEE teachers, but a third of the teachers believe that it is not sufficient. Certain teachers (65%) do not think that having only one hour of class per week causes any hurdles in accomplishing the objectives of the class. It is more important for them to be allowed freedom when organising their work, as well as having the trust and support of the school leadership. However, we should not neglect the opinion of 33% of the teachers that have a different opinion and suggest that certain items in connection with the implementation and organisation (also content wise) should be systematically arranged.

About 21% of the CEE teachers wrote in their free responses: *“Yes, for the subject, but with an agreed status, a different organisation of work-life.”* Or as stated by a teacher from Ljubljana in her interview: *“In the future, it should be clear whether or not the course will be equivalent to other subjects. This means that it should be assigned a grade/assessed, it has to be taught by a permanent member of staff (as in the case of the subjects of Slovenian, Mathematics...), and especially important it has to teach the pupils something...”*.

Many schools place the subject as the last hour of the day. Pupils are not particularly fond of this. In their free responses, 9% of the pupils wrote that they have ‘ethics’ as the sixth period, or instead of ‘ethics’ they have another class. *“We have the class during the sixth period, when we are already tired. We could research more, go to town, watch TV and see how other children live around the world”*, was written by one of the pupils.

The following worrisome data show that more than half of the teachers are of the opinion that leadership is not sufficiently concerned about the status of the subject. From free responses, 30% of all teachers wrote that what they

“*resent*” most concerning those that are responsible (not only the principals) is that they have not ensured sufficient financial means for additional pedagogic and professional education and training.

Most of the teachers would like to acquire more didactic-methodological knowledge. They are aware that they will be successful in their work only if they use new, more interesting forms and methods of teaching. More specifically, they are interested in the types of methods where they could more easily and more quickly accomplish the subject objectives, taking into account that the class is held only for one hour per week. In addition, working with adolescents in the current day and age requires the teacher to have more pedagogical knowledge. Through additional education and training, teachers would obtain skills in solving practical problems in the area of education.

More than 17% of other subject teachers are of the opinion that teachers of the CEE subject are not sufficiently trained in teaching this class. They place the blame on ‘*money*’, stating that teachers would attend further education if there were sufficient financial resources for such endeavours. Similarly, a quarter of other subject teachers (24%) believe that it all depends on the teacher of this class, whether they do it because they want to or whether they have to teach it to fulfil their working obligations.

As such, subject teachers believe that they need new, additional knowledge to assist them in solving problems in the area of educational theory and knowledge that would “*provide the opportunity*” to be more autonomous in teaching CEE. There was not one teacher who did not feel the need for additional education and training or, in other words, each of the subject teachers circled at least one area in which they would like to pursue further education and training.

Subject teachers are quite dissatisfied. A total of 42% of the teachers are of the opinion that there is too little cooperation in solving work problems among colleagues that teach the same or similar subjects in school. Almost half are of the opinion that cooperation among schools is sufficient and a little less than half stated that this was not sufficient. Teachers are dissatisfied with interpersonal collaboration at the school where they teach, as well as with cooperation with external colleagues and professionals from various institutes. Many teachers would need the assistance of a colleague to ease their work, to be more confident in performing in front of the pupils and to obtain confirmation of their lesson preparation and planning of classroom activities. The fact that half of the teachers are afraid to ask their colleagues within or outside their school (perhaps a consultant or professional) for an opinion or suggestion is a poor comment on schools, on subject work and study groups throughout Slovenia, as well as on the institutions that would otherwise be more active and concrete in this area.

*Factor: Experiencing the subject and relation of the teacher-pupil-subject*

Irrespective of their gender or the environment in which they live, pupils experience the CEE class without fear and stress. The lessons are easily managed and during lessons 43% of the pupils feel good and only 6% of the pupils experience the CEE lesson as a burden. They are quite unified in feeling that the lessons are not sufficiently demanding as they do not experience it as a personal challenge. Otherwise, 67% of the pupils are of the opinion that during lessons they feel quite cheerful and 52% of the pupils believe that the class work can be easily managed (only 6% of the children think that the subject is a burden).

**Table 2.** Pupils' and Teachers' Experience of the Lessons

	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Subject Teachers</b>	
<b>Statements</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>z</b>
Pleasant	3.17	3.24	-0.77
Exciting	2.43	2.65	-2.74
Cheerful	2.82	3.05	-2.74
Easily manageable	3.27	3.21	0.70
Without stress	3.53	3.72	-2.26
Without fear	3.78	3.90	-1.96
As a personal challenge	2.29	2.44	-1.32
Stimulating	2.79	2.97	-2.06
Undemanding	2.90	2.65	3.09

When we compared the opinions of CEE teachers on how pupils experience the CEE lessons, we determined that there are certain statistically significant differences between pupils and teachers. We determined that the teachers gave the subject a 'more' burdensome role than was perceived by the pupils. Teachers believe that the subject is more demanding (than what was actually thought by the pupils) and stimulating, more pleasant and exciting. Statistically significant differences between teachers and pupils (see *z* values) arise in statements such as: lessons are exciting, lessons are pleasant, lessons are without stress, lessons are stimulating, lessons are not sufficiently demanding.

We asked the pupils how they related to the subject: *I like the subject; I do not like the subject; I do not need this subject; I do not learn anything new in this subject; I do not have any special opinion of this subject* and so on. We asked them to justify their answers. The teachers were asked what their opinion was of the CEE class. They had at their disposal the same possible answers.

**Table 3.** Teachers' and Pupils' Relation to the Subject in Percentages

Population	I like the subject	I do not like the subject.	I do not need it.	I do not learn anything new.	I do not have an opinion of this subject	Total
Total pupils	52%	4%	10%	10%	24%	100%
Subject teachers	92%	3%	1%	0%	4%	100%
Other teachers	57%	5%	2%	1%	35%	100%
All surveyed	57%	4%	7%	7%	25%	100%

The subject is most liked by teachers of the subject (92%), whereas almost a quarter of the pupils and 35% of other subject teachers do not have a special opinion of the subject. 10% of the pupils are of the opinion that they do not learn anything new from the subject and the same percentage believe that the subject is not needed. The subject is liked or not liked mainly because of the teacher. Certain pupils are enthused by their teachers. They like their teacher and respect them, as written by the pupils: *“the teacher knows a lot, knows how to explain the material, lets you give your opinion, knows how to talk, knows how to quieten students in a way that pupils do not resent the teacher, because the teacher stands by our side and understands us, because the teacher tells us a lot of interesting things, teaches us about life, and so forth.”*

The responses from pupils on what they do not like in the lessons are interesting, particularly the following finding that pupils rarely feel bad because they do not have the opportunity to assert themselves. It does not bother them that they compete for grades and for their teacher's approval. The main causes of not feeling at ease are the interpersonal relationships, especially with their classmates. In second place come causes that could be related to *“teachers”* or *“content”*.

## Conclusion

The empirical portion of the study provides insight into the pedagogical practices of implementing Citizenship and Homeland Education and Ethics. In the conclusion we should highlight the findings of the research study that confirm that the personality of the teachers and their professional relationship towards teaching and learning are significant factors in the success or failure of all educational processes. Only when teachers realise what they are doing and how they are working will they have taken the first step towards an improved and more life-based school, and towards improved and better teaching methods. We have to consider the teacher's personal qualities, interpersonal skills, as well as so-called *“professional attributes and professionalism”*. The



results of the study show that the type of teacher the pupils desire is a teacher who knows the content material, explains the topic in an interesting way, sees to it that it is understood by all, is interested in the opinion and feelings of pupils, sees to active cooperation among all students during the lesson and stimulates collaboration and acceptance of others. From the research, we have detected certain positive advances in Slovenian primary schools and noticed certain limitations in teaching the subject Civic Education and Ethics. Among the limitations we would like to highlight is the finding that the subject teachers are overburdened with objectives: teaching as much as possible to the pupils. At the same time, they are aware that when teaching certain content areas they lack a specific manner and competences. Teachers know that various programmes for further education and training are available where they would be able to gain additional skills and an improved teaching manner; however, time, finances and the fact that they also are teaching their primary subject (e.g., the first language (mother tongue), history, geography, biology...) seems to make this impossible. Because they only have a certain number of hours per year to attend further education and training courses, they choose programmes that add to, upgrade or develop the behaviours and skills for their primary subject area. Significant positive shifts are seen in the effective planning and execution of lessons, taking into account the child's personality (integrity, individuality...), their needs and wants, providing a comfortable and pleasant class (and school) climate, and class work that takes into account the democratic concept built on values of fairness and honesty: from planning to implementing the lessons, creating school rules, the boundaries of what is allowed and not allowed – with the assistance of rational arguments.

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## MIŠLJENJA UČITELJA I UČENIKA O ČIMBENICIMA KOJI UTJEČU NA OSTVARIVANJE NASTAVE PREDMETA DRŽAVLJANSKI I DOMOVINSKI ODGOJ TE ETIKA U OSNOVNOJ ŠKOLI

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### Sažetak

*Autori u prilogu prikazuju rezultate istraživanja mišljenja učitelja i učenika o poučavanju nastavnih predmeta sa sadržajima građanskog odgoja u slovenskoj javnoj školi te utjecaj raznih čimbenika koji utječu na ostvarivanje nastave predmeta koji su od školske godine 2008/09 nazvani građanski i domovinski odgoj te etika. Prije toga ti su predmeti nazivani kratko građanski odgoj i etika. Predmeti se u slovenskoj školi poučavaju u zadnjoj trećini trajanja obavezne škole, u sedmom i osmom razredu, ali ne i u devetom.*

*U osnovnoj školi ciljevi predmeta nadovezuju se na vrijednosti koje proizlaze iz ljudskih prava i za njihovo ostvarivanje mora se, kao i kod svih ostalih predmeta, polaziti od učenikovih predznanja, sposobnosti i interesa. Pri organiziranju nastave učitelji polaze od didaktičkih načela i kriterija kao što su razvojna dob djeteta, djetetova iskustva, osobni doživljaji, učenikovo mišljenje, predznanje, interesi i temeljne potrebe učenika pri izboru sadržaja, motivacija, proučavanje slučajeva, aktivno uključivanje svakog učenika te ostvarivanje socijalnih, osjetilnih, motivacijskih, estetskih te moralnih i etičkih ciljeva.*

*Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da čimbenici kao što su nastavni program, oblici i metode rada, nastavna sredstva, organizacija života i rada u školi, broj nastavnih sati i stručnost učitelja značajno utječu na osobna stajališta učenika i učitelja o uspješnosti izvedbe nastave. Ovaj rad tako prikazuje pogled u pedagošku praksu izvođenja nastave prikazanog nastavnog predmeta i objašnjava razlike u gledanjima učitelja i učenika na ostvarivanje nastave ovih predmeta.*

**Ključne riječi:** *građanski odgoj, ljudska prava, didaktička načela, nastavni proces, nastavne metode, nastavni oblici.*