



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Bureau
of Education

Global citizenship education: Opportunities and challenges from the perspective of curriculum

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International Bureau of Education (IBE)

Established in 1925, in 1929 became the first intergovernmental organization in the field of education



IBE team, 1929

Fully integrated into UNESCO in 1969, and Centre of Excellence in Curriculum since 2011



International Conference on Education (ICE)

1934



2008 (48th session)



Curriculum...

A set of syllabi and study plans organized on a disciplinary basis by educational cycles and levels?

But also the main instrument that articulates development aspirations and education goals, as it packages the essential and desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be acquired through education and needed to live in and change the society and world that we aspire to shape

Global citizenship education (GCE) increasingly emphasised

One of the 3 priority areas ('**foster global citizenship**') outlined in the United Nations Secretary General's **Global Education First Initiative** (2012):

“Education must fully assume its central role in helping people **to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies**. It must give people **the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century**”

GCE included in the Education 2030 agenda

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) of ‘ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all’ (one of the SDGs adopted in September 2015) includes the following target:

“By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through ESD and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, **global citizenship**, and appreciation of cultural diversity...”

UNESCO approach to GCE: examples

“It is a **framing paradigm** which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable.”

“It employs **concepts, methodologies and theories already implemented in different fields and subjects**, including human rights education, peace education...”

“It also acknowledges the role of education in moving beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to **build values, soft skills and attitudes** among learners that can facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformations.”

“It **enriches the concepts and content of all subjects and fields of education** by widening their dimensions.”

Sources: UNESCO, *GCE Curriculum Framework* (Paris, 2014); UNESCO, *GCE: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century* (Paris, 2014); S. Tawil, *Education for global citizenship: A framework for discussion*, UNESCO ERF Working Papers n° 7 (Paris, August 2013).

Key characteristics of 21st century citizens

- **Awareness of the wider world** and a sense of own role both as a citizen with rights and responsibilities, and as a member of the global human community
- **Appreciation of the diversity** of cultures and of their languages, arts, religions, and philosophies as components the common heritage of humanity
- **Commitment to sustainable development** and sense of environmental responsibility
- **Commitment to social justice** and sense of social responsibility
- **Willingness to challenge injustice**, discrimination, inequality and exclusion at the local/national and global level in order to make the world a more just place
- **A set of competences** such as critical thinking, system thinking, collaboration, communication, problem solving, enquiry skills, empathy...

Evolving approaches to citizenship education

From more 'conservative'	To more 'progressive'
Civics education	Citizenship education
Education <i>about</i> citizenship	Education <i>through/for</i> citizenship
Reproduction of social order	Transformation/ Adaptation to change
Conformity / Compliance	Action & civic engagement
Content-led	Process-led
Knowledge-based	Principles-based
Didactic transmission	Interactive approaches Critical interpretation

Source: S. Tawil, *Education for global citizenship: A framework for discussion*, UNESCO ERF Working Papers n° 7, Paris, 2013.

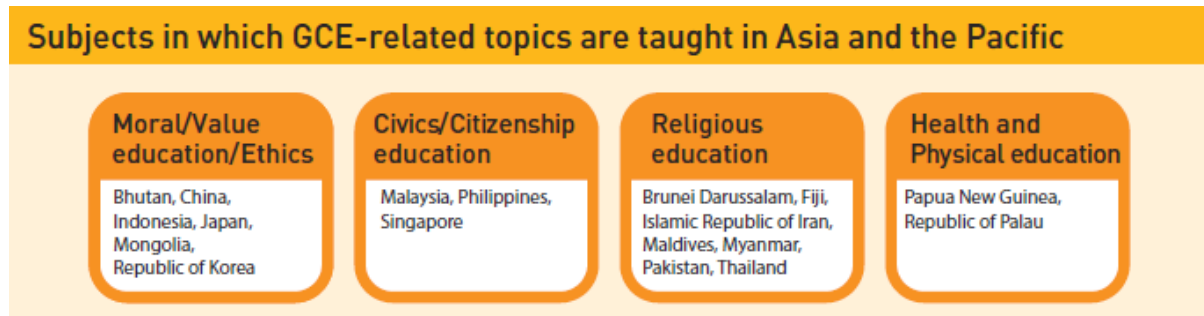
Civic and citizenship education in Latin America

Traditional civic/citizenship education	Citizenship education in existing post-2000 curricula
Focus on political institutions	Double focus: political institutions + 'current problems of society' and competences for conflict-processing
Offered in higher grades of (general) secondary education	Encompassing primary and secondary education
Directed to the acquisition of knowledge (focus on content)	Directed to acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes in contexts of practice with predominance of participative and democratic relations

Source: C. Cox et al., *Citizenship education in Latin America: Priorities of school curricula*, IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues n° 14, Geneva, June 2014 (available in Spanish and English).

Operationalizing GCE: examples

- As **specific content within existing subjects/academic disciplines** (world history and/or geography, human rights education, peace education, social studies, environmental studies, education for conflict resolution, for international understanding...)



Source: UNESCO, *GCE: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century*, Paris, 2014.

- As **cross-curricular dimension or theme** (e.g. across all disciplines)
- As **separate, stand-alone subject** or discipline (global citizenship education, global education, international education...)

GCE: issues, tensions and challenges

- From a legal perspective, 'citizenship' is a notion strongly associated with **membership to a national political community** (nation-state) and involving rights, freedoms, duties and responsibilities within such a community
- A **number of tensions** involved (local/global, singularity/universality, global solidarity/individual competitiveness...)
- GCE: **diverse definitions, approaches, understandings**, theoretical perspectives, themes and orientations, also with regard to collective identity, sense of belonging and civic engagement
- From the curriculum perspective, **various ways to operationalize GCE** (cross-curricular, specific content of subjects, separate subject...)
- A number of **issues and challenges relating to the assessment and measurement** of GCE learning outcomes (knowledge and skills, dispositions and attitudes, behaviours), especially across countries

Competences, competencies, 21st century skills...

In recent years different organizations, including partnerships and consortia, have defined and endorsed key competences or core skills frameworks using different emphases, groupings and terminologies. This may contribute to generating ambiguity and uncertainty.

cognitive and 'non-cognitive' skills

key competences, competencies, competences, cross-curricular competencies, generic competencies, transversal competencies, core competencies, basic competences...

4 Cs, 7Cs

essential skills, basic skills, foundation skills, core skills, cross-curricular skills, life skills, key skills, 21st century skills
21st century competencies...

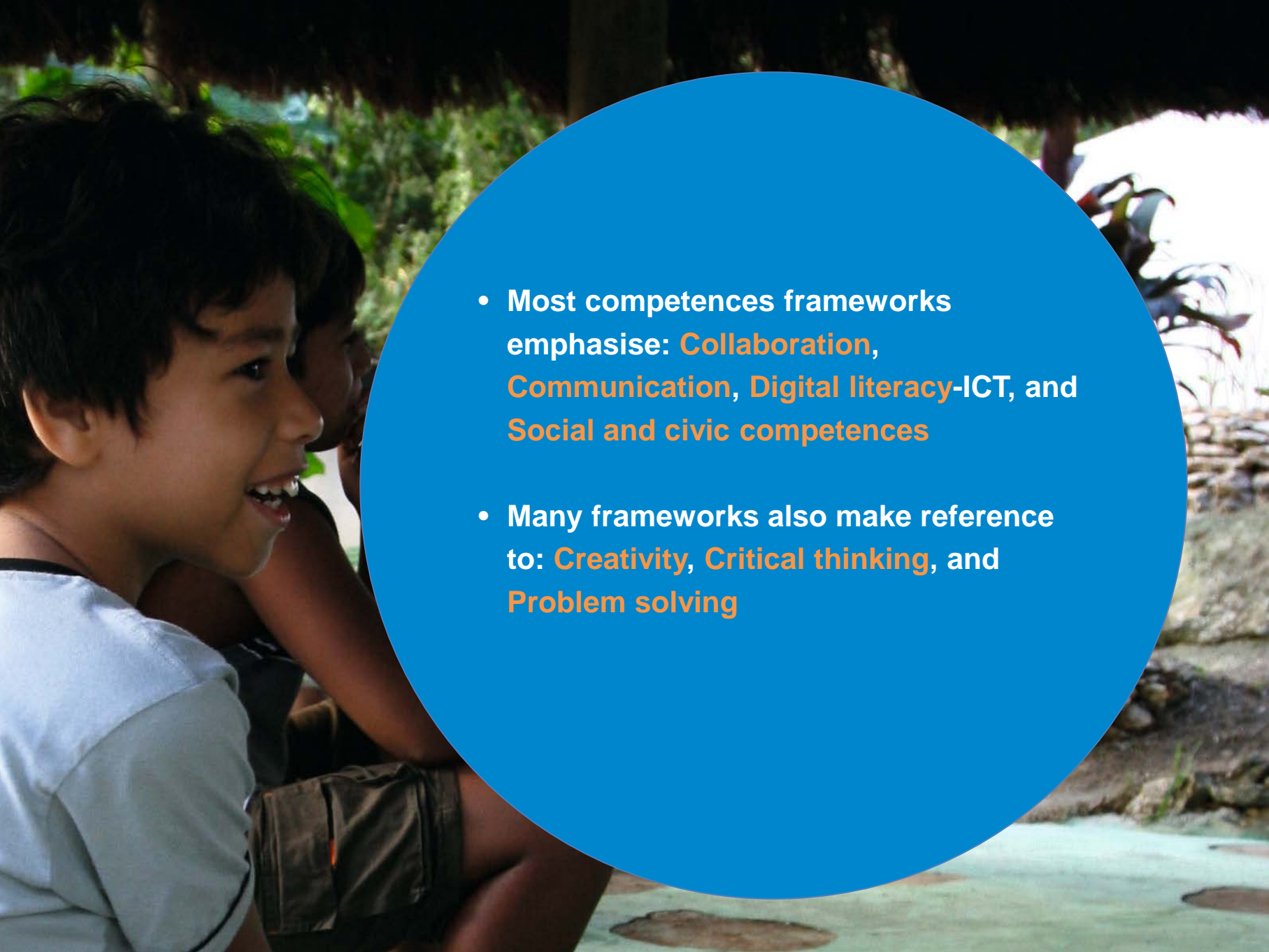
ways of thinking,
ways of working,
tools for working,
living in the world

soft and hard skills

general/essential capabilities, transversal capacities, citizenship skills, overarching learning outcomes...

Why competences?

- Profound transformations in the economy and society (**knowledge economy**)
- **Globalization** (commerce, finances, economy, migrations... increasing interdependence)
- **ICT development**
- **Progressive shift of attention** → from educational inputs to outcomes (**from access to learning**)
- **A more integrated approach to learning** (not only academic knowledge and cognitive development, but also social and emotional learning, values, attitudes...) and growing attention devoted to the **applied dimension** of what has been learned

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- Most competences frameworks emphasise: **Collaboration, Communication, Digital literacy-ICT, and Social and civic competences**
 - Many frameworks also make reference to: **Creativity, Critical thinking, and Problem solving**

Issues relating to competences

- Depending on the context, the **same competences can be interpreted in many different ways** ('critical thinking', 'creativity')
- Many competences are viewed as being, to some extent, **transferable**, even if it is **not yet clear the range of contexts across which these competences should transfer** and how teachers can support learners in transferring competences across disciplines
- Some competences tend to be seen as closely related to traditional subjects, while others tend to be viewed as more transversal in nature: **the distinction between subject-based and transversal competences is not yet clear**
- The **role and place of competences** within the existing discipline-based curriculum and **how core subjects and other subjects are expected to contribute to their development**: still an open and controversial issue

Competences: pending challenges

- ❑ It is necessary to **change the organization of the teaching and learning process** as well as **teacher education** and professional development (if teachers have to support students in developing competences, they are expected to have acquired these competences)
- ❑ Need to establish and implement **new assessment systems** (personal attributes and attitudes are rarely assessed, and the focus is still concentrated on knowledge and skills in a few subjects or disciplines)
 - ❑ It is essential to **assess all the components of a competence** (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) to the greatest extent possible in the range of **'real life' contexts**

Cross-cutting issues: an approach to curriculum integration

Typically cross-cutting/cross-curricular themes or issues are viewed as a means to:

- ✓ reduce fragmentation and **connect programmatic content** across disciplinary boundaries
- ✓ **enrich the curriculum without overloading it** through the introduction of additional teaching subjects
 - ✓ facilitate **interdisciplinary thinking and collaborative learning**
 - ✓ promote **teamwork among teachers** from different disciplines and facilitate **collaborative approaches** to planning learning experiences (especially in general lower and upper secondary education)
 - ✓ deal with **issues that are relevant to students' future** and also contribute to the **development of transferable competences**

Some challenges relating to the implementation of cross-cutting themes/cross-curricular dimensions

- ✓ Quite often teachers already have to deal with a 'congested' or overloaded curriculum: **difficult to find enough time and space for cross-curricular themes**
- ✓ Teachers, students and parents may have **the perception that these themes are an addition, and therefore not really relevant**, especially if what students have learned is not formally assessed or is not a component of high stake examinations (which is frequently the case)
- ✓ **Limited teacher awareness, experience and expertise** may represent a sizeable obstacle to the implementation of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach
- ✓ At the secondary level, the **well-rooted disciplinary structure** of the curriculum and the **discipline-based qualifications of teachers** can represent a powerful barrier to cross-curricular teaching and learning

Challenges

- Necessity of adopting and implementing a **holistic approach to learning**
- Need to consider the **applied dimension of knowledge** (what we know is as important as what we can do with that knowledge)
- Necessity of entirely **rethink** the traditional **disciplinary structure of the curriculum**, the organization of **learning experiences**, the **teaching approaches**, and the **assessment systems**





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**Thank you!
Grazie!**