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RESEARCH

Civic Competencies in the Relaciona T Dimension of the Construye T Program

Las Competencias Ciudadanas en la dimensión Relaciona T del Programa Construye T

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Abstract

This paper shows the importance of training citizens, specifically to young people in High School Education in Mexico. For this purpose, a systematic review of the Construye T Program was carried out, which includes a dimension called Relaciona T, focused on skills development of social awareness and collaboration. The objective is to classify citizenship competencies from a theoretical perspective in the aforementioned dimension. For this purpose, the steps proposed by Torgerson (2003, cited in Flores-Crespo) for a systematic review were used. The main results indicate that it was possible to classify citizenship competencies in social awareness and collaboration skills. Even though these competencies are not explicit, they can be promoted through the lessons offered by the program.

Keywords: youths, citizenship competencies, construye T program, systematic review.

Resumen

En este trabajo se muestra la importancia de formar ciudadanos, específicamente a la juventud escolarizada de Educación Media Superior en México, para ello se realizó una revisión sistemática del Programa Construye T, el cual incluye una dimensión llamada Relaciona T, enfocada en el desarrollo de las habilidades de conciencia social y colaboración. El objetivo consiste en clasificar las competencias ciudadanas desde una perspectiva teórica en la dimensión mencionada anteriormente. Para ello se utilizaron los pasos propuestos por Torgerson (2003), para una revisión sistemática. Los principales resultados indican que sí es posible clasificar las competencias ciudadanas en las habilidades de conciencia social y colaboración, aun y cuando no están explícitas dichas competencias, pueden ser promovidas a través de las lecciones que ofrece el programa.

Palabras clave: juventud, competencias ciudadanas, programa construye t, revisión sistemática.

1. Citizenship education

The development of citizenship in individuals is an important factor for their academic, personal, and socio-emotional formation, as it allows them to be informed about events affecting society, the economy, the environment, education, and more.

Moreover, it is expected to foster critical thinking when analyzing and making decisions that impact themselves and others. Citizenship education in young people, specifically, is crucial for their personal development and the social impact they can generate. Youth are considered the most globally interconnected population group, which enables immediate interaction with what happens both in their place of residence and in other parts of the world. Furthermore, they benefit from international organizations that propose programs and projects where they are included as key actors. In particular, young people in education stand out, as they have the opportunity to experience and develop these programs.

1.1 Since when have citizens been educated?

Citizenship has gained increasing relevance due to changes in global systems. Over 100 years ago, some universal benefits for people began to be consolidated. The upper classes were the first to receive them; later, and with much effort, these benefits gradually reached more marginalized groups.

Citizenship models contribute to individuals' development by enabling and guaranteeing certain benefits. Some contemporary models of citizenship include: liberal citizenship: characterized by the defense of liberty, the instrumental use of public morality, and individualism; republican citizenship: focused on correcting inequalities, based on the idea that citizens are made rather than born, it emphasizes their education; communitarian citizenship: the community is prioritized over the individual; multicultural citizenship: emphasizes disadvantaged social groups such as women, migrants, or minorities (Horrach, 2009). Marshall's model of citizenship (1949) promotes equality and highlights citizens' rights, usually grouped as follows:

- Civil rights: consist of the rights necessary for individual freedom—personal liberty, freedom of expression, thought and religion, the right to property, to enter valid contracts, and the right to justice (the right to defend and assert one's rights on equal terms with others through legal procedures). Institutions associated to courts.

- Politic rights: guarantee the right to participate in political power as a member of a politically authoritative body or as an elector of its members. Parliaments and government councils.

- Social rights: every citizen has the right to a minimum level of economic welfare and security, and to live the life of a civilized being according to the current standards of society. Education systems and social services.

Additionally, Marshall postulates that there is a basic type of equality associated with the concept of full membership in a community (or citizenship), which is not inconsistent with the inequalities that differentiate various economic levels in society.

> The global aim of educating citizens aspires to democracy. According to Sartori (2012), "the people who decide by the principle of absolute majority are, most of the time, a body that represents the people and generally reflects the popular majority that elects it. In the end, it is still valid that the people, as counted by the principle of absolute majority, are divided into a majority that takes all and a minority that loses everything. Which allows the majority, if it so desires, to reduce the minority to impotence. This must not be allowed" (p. 9).

However, attempting to achieve this at a global or national level with every citizen may be complex, which is why this work emphasizes educated youth, specifically in upper secondary education. Bolívar (2016) states: "A democratic education, in the dual sense of educating for democracy and in democracy, is both a goal and a means of education. In a democratic society, it is the obligation of public education to prepare future citizens to actively participate in civil and political society without the risk of exclusion, which implies ensuring that the entire population acquires the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation and social inclusion" (p. 71). He also notes that citizenship education should not be limited to a single subject but should be a task of the entire educational institution. Bolívar highlights the importance of classroom processes, school climate, and community service in citizenship formation, for example: teaching values such as honesty, responsibility, and freedom, and promoting participatory processes: critical reflection, debates, cooperative learning, among others. The school should be organized democratically, which builds a sense of belonging and the use of methodologies that lead to the practical application of democratic values and service-learning as an ideal methodology for civic practice. This combines participation with

community service and the teaching of knowledge and values.

1.2 Citizenship education programs

To provide a current overview of citizenship education worldwide, Table 1 presents some programs implemented in various countries, as published by the Inter-American Development Bank (2019). While these programs are categorized under citizenship, they also address topics such as emotional skills, youth employment, violence prevention, gender, and the environment.

1.3 The Construye T Program

In Mexico, the Construye T program focuses on the development of socio-emotional skills, while also addressing other areas such as citizenship education. This program began in 2008 under the name Programa de Prevención del Riesgo en la Educación Media Superior (PPREMS), with its main goal being to combat school dropout. However, a year later, the program was renamed Construye T, and the Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD) joined to provide logistical, financial, and organizational support, among others. The main objective remained the same. It was not until 2014 that the program underwent a favorable transformation with the integration of socio-emotional skills, aiming to strengthen schools' capacity to develop these skills in students

Table 1. Citizenship programs

Program	Objective
Programa de ciudadanía y liderazgo (Paraguay)	The program develops in three stages. In the first, youth identify problems in their community. Then, over seven days, they detect solutions through fieldwork, reconnecting with their surroundings, family, school, and community. In the second phase, they are trained in art, sports, technology, etc. In the third phase, they apply what they have learned by supporting primary school teachers with programs in sports, art, programming, etc. Developed by Fundación Scholas Ocurrentes de Paraguay (cited by Mateo, 2019, p.180). Competency: Citizenship to develop leadership.
TransFórmate (Colombia)	Offers young victims of armed conflict (ages 16–29) opportunities to strengthen their abilities for social, productive, and income-generating activities. Includes a module on socioemotional skills and technical training leading to a vocational title over 12–18 months. Developed by the Ministro de Trabajo Colombiano (cited by Mateo, 2019, p.181). Competency: Citizenship for youth victims of violence.
Sácale tarjeta roja a la violencia (Perú)	Aims to encourage students to stand up to bullying, support victims, and report violent acts. It includes theoretical workshops, practical activities, and informational materials. A digital platform was also developed for anonymous reports by students, parents, and friends (Gutiérrez et al., 2018, cited in Mateo, 2019, p.182). Competency: Citizens against school bullying.
Aulas para la paz (Colombia)	Combines several components: in-class sessions for 2nd to 5th grades on civic competencies (aggression, conflict, empathy, anger management, assertiveness); a family component with home visits to teach parents the same skills; and mixed groups combining aggressive and prosocial students (Chaux et al., 2017, cited in Mateo, 2019, p.183). Competency: Citizens against school bullying.
Súbete (Uruguay)	An environmental education program that encourages children and youth to use creativity and energy to participate in community sustainability projects (cited by Mateo, 2019, p.183). Competency: Environmental citizenship.
Amor del bueno (México)	Aims to promote a critical stance against gender violence, fostering inclusive, egalitarian, and non-violent coexistence among youth. Includes student workshops and improvements to school climate (Sosa Rubi et al., 2016, cited in Mateo, 2019, p.184). Competency: Citizenship for gender equality.

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2019).

and thus improve the school environment in public upper secondary education institutions participating in the program (PNUD, 2019). Table 2 presents the conceptual framework of Construye T. The program is structured into dimensions, each comprising general skills that are further broken down into specific skills.

Table 2. Conceptual framework of Construye T.

Dimension	General skills	Specific skills
Conoce T	Self-awareness	1. Self-perception
		2. Self-efficacy
		3. Recognition of emotions
	Self-regulation	4. Emotion management
		5. Delay of gratification
		6. Tolerance to frustration
	Determination	7. Achievement motivation
		8. Perserverance
		9. Stress management
Relaciona T	Social awareness	10. Empathy
		11. Active listening
		12. Perspective taking
	Relationship skills	13. Assertiveness
		14. Interpersonal conflict management
		15. Prosocial behavior
Elige T	Responsible decision-making	16. Generation of options and consideration of consequences
		17. Critical thinking
		18. Consequence analysis

Source: Own elaboration based on PNUD (2019). Desarrollo (2019).

The general skills listed in the table above are distributed throughout the three years of upper secondary education. Additionally, an extra skill is included under the Elige T dimension: Perseverance, which addresses topics related to life planning. Figure 1 shows how the skills are distributed by semester, each with 12 classroom lessons.

The previous figure shows the six skills covered during the six semesters of high school. As can be seen, each skill has 12 lessons, which in turn have 6 sessions. This is designed so that one session is worked on each day, with a duration of 20 minutes. For this work, only the lessons on social awareness and collaboration corresponding to the "Relate T" dimension were taken. The results section will show the sessions in which the civic competencies were classified.

Until 2018, the Construye T Program was implemented in 9,729 federal and state public upper secondary education institutions (PNUD, 2015). As mentioned earlier, this program does not directly address citizenship; its main focus is on the development of socio-emotional skills. However, it aims to identify the elements of citizenship it includes, information that is even implicitly found within the program.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to classify the civic competencies contained in the Construye T Program within the Relaciona T dimension, specifically in the lessons on the skills of social awareness and collaboration.

2. Civic competencies

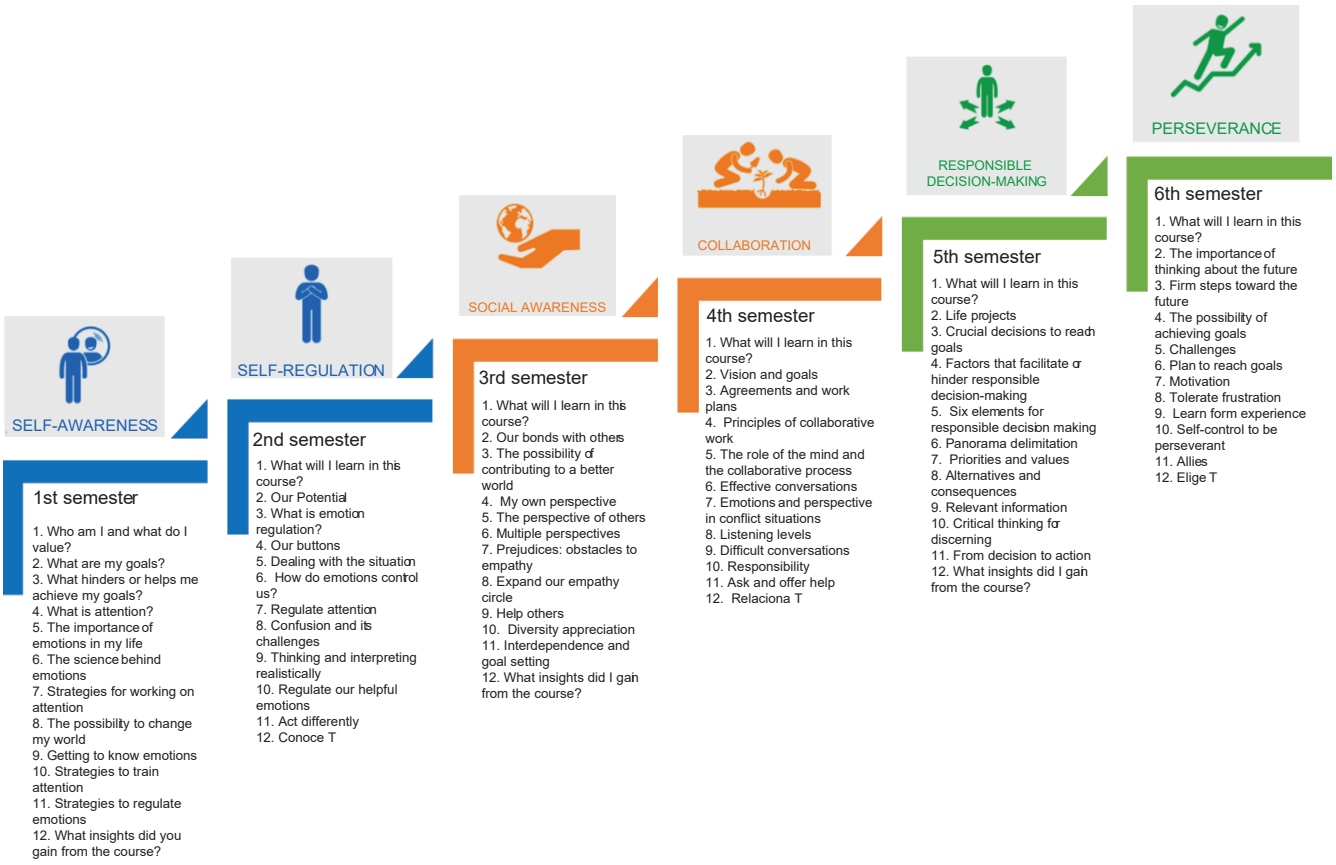
To identify civic competencies, the perspective of Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004) was adopted. They propose a civic education based on five principles: 1) covering all the competencies necessary for civic action; 2) providing multiple opportunities to practice the competencies; 3) integrating civic education transversally in academic areas; 4 involving the entire educational community; 5) evaluating the impact.

Ruiz and Chaux (2005) define civic competencies as the "set of integrated cognitive, emotional, and communicative capacities and skills related to basic knowledge (contents, procedures, mechanisms) that morally and politically guide our civic action (p. 32)". It is important to highlight that citizenship must be exercised autonomously and not imposed by others; this would be the fundamental goal of civic education. The components of civic competencies are defined below.

- Knowledge (CO): refers to the "understanding of information, procedures, strategies, and contents that people need for the exercise of citizenship" (Ruiz and Chaux, 2005, p. 44). The author proposes that the knowledge to be learned at school should include: fundamental rights, the Constitución Política, mechanisms, procedures and instances of democratic participation, strategies and mechanisms for conflict resolution, among others.

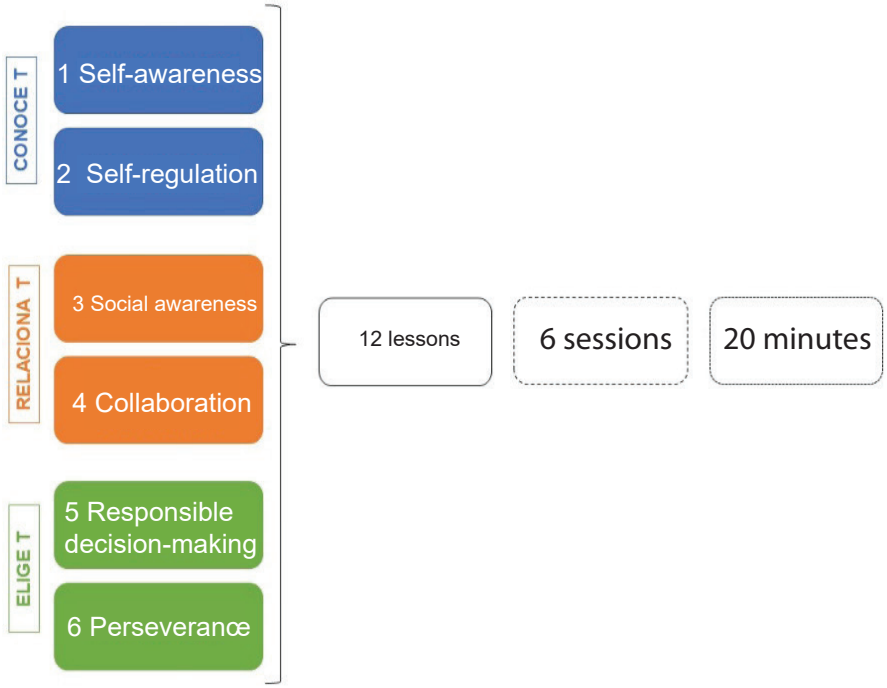
- Cognitive Competencies (CCG): the "capacity to carry out various mental processes, in this

Figure 1. Lessions per semester in the Cosntruye T program.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Construye T (2021)

Figure 2. Distribution of the Construye T Program.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Construye T (n.d.)

case, to exercise citizenship". Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004, pp. 21-22) propose some cognitive competencies:

* Perspective taking: achieving agreements that benefit everyone.

* Interpretation of intentions: properly evaluating the intentions and purposes behind others' actions.

* Generation of options: imagining many ways to resolve a conflict.

* Consideration of consequences: the effects that solution alternatives may have.

* Metacognition: the capacity to reflect on oneself.

• Emotional Competencies (CE): "capacities necessary to identify one's own emotions and those of others and respond constructively" (Ruiz and Chaux, 2005, p. 40). The following emotional competencies are proposed by Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004, p. 23)

* Identification of one's own emotions: recognizing and naming emotions.

* Management of one's own emotions: ability to control emotions.

* Empathy: ability to feel or understand what others feel.

* Identification of others' emotions: identifying what others may be feeling.

• Communicative Competencies (CCM): "skills that allow constructive dialogue with others, communicating our viewpoints, positions, needs, interests, and ideas in general, and understanding what other citizens seek to communicate" (Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez, p. 24). The authors also propose the following communicative competencies:

* Active listening: paying attention to what others say and showing that one is listening.

* Assertiveness: expressing needs, interests, positions, rights, and ideas clearly.

* Argumentation: the ability to express and support a position.

• Integrative Competencies (CI): "these are broader and more encompassing competencies that, in practice, articulate knowledge and cognitive, emotional, or communicative competencies" (Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez, 2004, p. 24).

According to Ruiz and Chaux (2005), the exercise of citizenship in and from the school entails three challenges: 1) living peacefully and constructively with others, 2) building agreements and rules collectively for the common good, and 3) building society based on differences, not despite them.

Although the Construye T Program does not have an integrated reference framework on civic education, its reference framework.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology

To meet the objective of this research, a comprehensive methodology was developed based on a systematic review of the existing information about the Construye T Program.

> According to Sánchez-Meca (2010), the systematic review "is a type of scientific research through which the scientific literature on a topic is reviewed based on a question that is clearly and objectively formulated, using systematic and explicit methods to locate, select, and critically assess the relevant studies related to that question, and applying systematic protocols to collect data and information from those studies in order to reach valid and objective conclusions about what the evidence says regarding the topic" (p.54).

To carry out the systematic review, a series of steps proposed by Torgerson (2003) were followed. These consist of: 1) designing a protocol to establish the theoretical, empirical, and conceptual foundations of the topic. This also involves establishing the research question, objectives, search methods, validation, summary, quality, and synthesis; 2) defining the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of materials, specifying whether only experimental studies written in a particular language will be considered; 3) the protocol must be peer-reviewed to begin the literature search in key specialized journals; 4) mapping, which involves describing and classifying the studies found in the initial review. This step refines the search for the definitive bibliographic material to be used in the systematic review; 5) once the

material has been identified, the relevant information must be extracted using a data sheet; 6) after extracting information from the selected studies, a "synthesis" is conducted. This can be qualitative if the data do not allow for numerical synthesis; 7) the final phase of the systematic review involves interpreting the synthesized information.

4. Results

Throughout the research process, the steps of the systematic review were followed; however, this paper only presents step seven of the systematic review, which consists of interpreting the synthesized information. What follows is the identification of citizenship competencies within the Relaciona T dimension: social awareness and collaboration. For this purpose, the citizenship competencies proposed by Chaux (2004) were used as a reference: 1) knowledge (CO), 2) cognitive competencies (CCG), 3) emotional competencies (CE), 4) communicative competencies (CCM), 5) integrative competencies (CI).

As mentioned in Figure 2, each socioemotional skill (social awareness and collaboration) contains 12 lessons, and each of these includes six sessions. To perform the identification, a random session from each lesson was selected, and its objective and content were compared with the definitions of one of the citizenship competencies proposed by Chaux (2004). Table 3 shows which citizenship competencies are found in the sessions related to both social awareness and collaboration.

As shown in Table 3, the selected sessions could be identified with citizenship competencies, except for lesson 12 of Social Awareness and lessons 10 and 12 of Collaboration. The most frequently found competency in the sessions was Knowledge (CO). This suggests that young people are expected to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their rights, duties, and human values, but also gain tools to resolve conflicts and solve problems. Cognitive competencies (CCG) were found in three sessions. According to Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004), this would allow students to take perspective, interpret intentions, generate options, consider consequences, and develop metacognition. Emotional competencies (CE) were also identified in three sessions. In addition to recognizing their own emotions, students will be able to identify the emotions of others, develop empathy, manage their emotions, and handle situations (Chaux, Lleras, & Velásquez, 2004).

Similarly, communicative competencies (CCM) were found in three sessions. This would enable young people to argue their ideas, communicate assertively, and listen to others. On the other hand, integrative competencies (CI) were identified in four sessions. According to Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004), these competencies integrate knowledge, communicative, cognitive, and emotional skills. Therefore, it can be inferred that the sessions where these were found offer students a more comprehensive education.

Although Construye T focuses on socioemotional skills (HSE), it also achieves other objectives, such as promoting citizenship competencies. The program has significant reach in terms of institutions, students, teachers, and administrators. For this reason, it was chosen over other programs to explore the elements of citizenship education it may contain in. It is unknown whether the actors involved in the program truly develop both HSE and CC in their daily lives. This would represent an important area of research for further monitoring the program's outcomes.

5. Conclusions

For the identification of citizenship competencies, the Construye T Program was chosen because it represents one of the most comprehensive interventions that can be applied to young students in Upper Secondary Education in Mexico. The objective of classifying socioemotional skills within citizenship competencies from Chaux's (2004) perspective was achieved, which indicates that students can develop communicative, cognitive, and emotional competencies when completing Construye T activities, specifically in the Relaciona T dimension. However, to determine whether young people apply these competencies in daily life, further research would be necessary.

The relevance of this lies in the fact that, although the reference frameworks of Construye T and Citizenship Competencies are different, both aim to foster the integral development of young people. That is why it is said that citizenship competencies are implicitly addressed in the program. So far, no similar studies have been found that attempt to

Table 3. Citizenship competencies found in Relaciona T lessons

Lessons	Social awareness (3rd semester) Sessions	Competencias ciudadanas
1. What will I learn in this course?	1.5 We are a community	CCG
2. Our bonds with others	2.4 Living together with empathy	CE
3. The possibility of contributing to a better world	3.6 Plan to foster constructive relationships	CI
4. My own perspective	4.3 And the other's perspective?	CCM
5. The perspective of others	5.5 Loving is: speaking and listening	CCM
6. Multiple perspectives	6.3 My perspective and others	CI
7. Prejudices: obstacles to empathy	7.5 Do I have prejudices?	CO
8. Expand our empathy circle	8.5 Others' point of view	CE
9. Help others	9.2 If you fall, I'll help you up	CCG
10. Diversity appreciation	10.3 Inclusion promoters	CO
11. Interdependence and goal settings	11.3 Solving problems as a community	CO
12. What insights did I gain from the course?	-	-

Lessons	Collaboration (4th semester) Sessions	Citizenship competencies
1. What will I learn in this course?	1.3 Collaborating at schoo	CO
2. Vision and goals	2.6 Let's create a collective work plan	CI
3. Agreements and work plans	3.5 Let's reach agreements	CI
4. Principles of collaborative work	4.4 Responsibilities and commitments	CO
5. The role of the mind and the collaborative process	5.2 My attitude makes an impact	CE
6. Effective conversations	6.1 Solution proposal	CCM
7. Emotions and perspective in conflict situations	7.4 Thinking differently	CCG
8. Listening levels	8.6 Listening at work	CCM
9. Difficult conversations	9.6 Building agreements	CCG
10. Responsibility	-	-
11. Ask and offer help	11.3 Helping helps me	CCG
12. Relaciona T	-	-

Source: Own elaboration

compare, classify, or identify whether any emotional education program includes aspects of citizenship education.

It is very important to clarify that classifying citizenship competencies within the Construye T Program and arguing that they are integrated into its lessons does not mean they are put into practice. When we speak of competencies, it is assumed that the individuals involved must carry them out. In this case, the competencies are only identified within the structure of the program. There is not enough evidence to state that young students in Mexico apply citizenship competencies (CC) and socioemotional skills (SES) in their daily lives. What can be confirmed is that, at the very least, young Mexican students have a program that guides and supports them in developing such competencies and skills so they can put them into practice.

In 2020, the Construye T Program published a new implementation guide on Práctica y Colaboración Ciudadana, for the development of citizenship competencies. It focuses on civic and socioemotional education for sustainable development. The relationship it describes between SES and citizenship is that socioemotional education is a key factor for civic practice and collaboration. For example, respect, recognition, and appreciation of diversity can be promoted through social awareness

and collaboration skills. Likewise, social awareness can be developed through empathy to understand others, while collaboration enhances assertive communication and teamwork.

The guide proposes a methodology for developing projects that includes participatory diagnosis, planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Construye T, 2020). This guide considers the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals; therefore, it seeks to integrate elements of the international context and bring them closer to education. So far, the projects that may arise from this guide are unknown, as it is relatively new and was released during the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be interesting to see and participate in future projects that may emerge.

In summary, the Construye T Program offers a wide variety of resources for school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the school community, among others. So far, the development of socioemotional skills remains its main objective. To this end, innovative content has been added that responds to the current needs of young people in Mexico. It is worth noting that it would be important to take advantage of the program's promotion and coverage to ensure its implementation in all public schools and offer it to private schools as well, since all students have the right to receive socioemotional education. Regarding citizenship competencies, it would be advisable to follow up on the proposed activities for their development. Incorporating more specific aspects such as democratic environments, citizen participation, and knowledge of certain rights and obligations could further equip young Mexican students for success both in school and in their broader social environments.

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UNIVERSIDAD DE SONORA

Interdisciplinary Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences

RESEARCH

Civic competencies and a proposal for a democratic school by students of Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Sonora

Competencias ciudadanas y propuesta para una escuela democrática por estudiantes del Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Sonora

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Abstract

This article reports on the four aspects of citizenship competences: knowledge, behavior, values, and attitudes in a group of young high school students, and their proposal for a democratic school. Democracy and state of law were used as the two specific dimensions of citizenship. The data was gathered with a survey answered by 477 students enrolled in their senior year in a public school in the urban area of Hermosillo. According to the results, the students have a working knowledge about their rights, obligations, and the concept of democracy. They privilege respect above other values and report few chances to participate at school. Based on their written narrative, the school doesn't have a democratic environment hence they propose to integrate students in the decision-making process on regards to evaluation criteria, school life and topics of courses they can take part in. Thus, the results let us infer that the new generation of citizens is passive and reproduces an established structural system in which they can sometimes express their opinion but cannot participate actively in its changes.

Keywords: Education, democracy, citizenship, competencies, high school education

JEL code: I2, K36, I21, I28

Resumen

El presente trabajo muestra los cuatro aspectos de las competencias ciudadanas: conocimientos, comportamientos, actitudes y valores de jóvenes estudiantes de educación media superior, y su propuesta de una escuela democrática. La indagación se delimitó a dos dimensiones que forman parte de la formación en ciudadanía: democracia y estado de derecho. Los datos se recabaron con una encuesta que respondieron 477 estudiantes que se encontraban cursando el último año de bachillerato en una institución pública del área urbana en Hermosillo, Sonora. De acuerdo con los resultados obtenidos los estudiantes poseen conocimiento sobre sus derechos, sus obligaciones y el concepto de democracia. Privilegian el respeto sobre otros valores y reportan pocas acciones de participación. Conforme a la narrativa escrita de los jóvenes, expresan que la institución educativa en la que se encuentran no cuenta con un ambiente democrático por lo cual proponen una mayor integración estudiantil en la toma de decisiones respecto a la forma de evaluación, la organización de la vida escolar y los temas de los cursos a participar. Con los resultados obtenidos se puede vislumbrar la generación de ciudadanos pasivos que reproducen un sistema jerárquico establecido que, si bien opinan, no se involucran de manera activa en propiciar cambios.

Palabrasclave: Educación, democracia, ciudadanía, competencias, educación media superior

Código JEL: I2, K36, I21, I28

Introduction

One of the enduring concerns of humankind, since the origins of modern societies, has been the formation of citizenship. This concern remains relevant today under a rights-based approach that promotes democracy and fosters a culture of peace (UNESCO, 2015 and 2021 The Mexican State has incorporated elements aimed at this type of civic formation into its curricula and educational programs from preschool to upper secondary education, attempting to respond to demands set by international organizations through the Sustainable Development Goals included in the 2030 Agenda. However, the content integrated into these curricula offers little analysis of the real-life situations experienced in schools and surrounding communities. Thus, public policy regarding citizenship remains limited to moral values and principles that are rarely practiced in educational environments or in the spaces where students live and interact.

In this national context, around 5% of the Mexican population reaches the age of majority each year, as established by the Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Diputados, 2021), and 80% of them enroll in upper secondary education. Ideally, these students should understand the logic behind the formal rules that govern social interaction to coexist, express opinions, and participate in decision-making processes led by the government to maintain or improve life in society. Furthermore, they participate in elections to choose whether to keep or replace their municipal, state, or national leaders, thus contributing to participatory democracy, a culture of peace, and the promotion and enforcement of the rule of law.

At the same time, the experience of attending high school enables the development of skills and knowledge that contribute to personal, family, and even community social progress. In this sense, this level of education becomes a space for emotional, cognitive, and social maturity, where individuals take on responsibilities and begin to shape themselves as reflective subjects (Weiss, Guerra, Hernández, Grijalva, & Avalos, 2008).

Youth is the most powerful force for driving social change; young people need to strengthen, redirect, and redefine their knowledge, values, attitudes, and actions to foster democracy. Their role as active agents can be redefined by altering their relationship with the political sphere and society at large (Giroux, 1993). Having access to data about this population allows for the design of higher education programs that promote participatory democratic citizenship, as well as non-formal education initiatives for those who do not continue their studies, in order to guide public policy toward youth empowerment Based on the above, this study aimed to assess the civic competencies of high school students in Hermosillo, with the goal of understanding the skills that young people possess to meet the demands of their status as citizens. This publication seeks to present and discuss findings regarding the civic competencies developed by pre-citizens and to amplify their voices by sharing their proposals for a democratic school, based on a sample of students from the Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Sonora, located in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico.

1. Conceptual framework of the research

The concept of citizenship has multiple definitions and has been employed as a strategy to address a variety of social challenges (Aragón, 2015). In this study, it is understood as a social construction of personal identity situated within a sociopolitical context that, as such, is linked to a democratic way of life. This includes the personal and family spheres and incorporates individuals' experiences, the recognition of human rights, and the struggle for new spaces where people can act as political agents in various social domains. To educate citizens, a competency-based educational approach is used. In this framework, civic competencies are understood as knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and values (Marco, 2003)—elements that come together in the formation of citizenship and constitute the pedagogical model implemented in Mexican schools (Fernández, 2013).

Consequently, it is formally recognized that schools should educate students as citizens by promoting knowledge of fundamental human rights, encouraging participation and representation, and fostering values-based attitudes applicable across diverse social settings (Aragón, 2015; Heater, 2007; Mejía & Perafán, 2006). These attitudes and values are either reinforced or challenged by those promoted within families, society, and the media.

A review of previous studies reveals that research

on civic competencies varies in its approaches, methodologies, and even the subjects addressed within different academic disciplines. Noteworthy examples include national-level studies conducted in countries such as Colombia, Spain, and Argentina (Astiz, 2007; Ruiz & Chaux, 2005; Marco, 2003). In Mexico, the most extensive studies found have been carried out by governmental institutions (INE, 2016; IFE, 2013). Other studies focus on specific aspects of civic competencies, such as political knowledge (Saldierna, Muñiz, & Marañón, 2017), political participation through voting (Gómez, Tejera, Aguilar, Ramírez & Díaz, 2012), or citizenship as a general topic. Within the framework of upper secondary education in Mexico, the curriculum is designed to develop citizens for a democratic society (DGB, 2017), emphasizing participation, civic and ethical awareness, recognition and respect for the rule of law, and prioritizing respect as a core value. The reviewed literature was organized into two thematic dimensions: democracy and the rule of law.

1.1 Democracy

The term democracy refers to a political system and regime that requires a way of life based on peaceful coexistence and assertive communication. It relies on a series of procedures and institutions as tools to acknowledge the essence of both the individual and the collective, to regulate power, to claim and safeguard rights, and to integrate society into a community with cultural and historical awareness. This understanding may sometimes contrast with the concept of universal rights (Sartori, 2012; Touraine, 2000). f the citizen participates actively, they become involved in the formation of democracy and the fulfillment of obligations; otherwise, democracy can be reduced to a system of political organization where a minority holds power over the majority.

According to Salazar and Woldenberg (2020), the principles governing democracy in Mexico are: a) popular sovereignty, a way of organizing political power where the people are both the object and subject of government; b) majority rule and the protection of minority rights, where, through mechanisms such as voting, leaders are elected to represent the majority, but to be democratically legitimate, they must also include and guarantee the rights and participation of minorities; and c) democratic political representation, in which the representatives elected by the people are responsible for making political decisions, or alternatively, a plebiscite may be used to seek the direct opinion of the citizens.

Toro (2000) adds further principles of democracy, including secularity, as a constructed social order; self-foundation, in which laws and norms are determined by society and for society, aiding in living, complying, and protecting rights; uncertainty, since there is no single ideal model and citizens of each state must determine it themselves; ethics, aiming to preserve and strengthen human dignity through rights; complexity, as it includes all interests; and The public sphere, which is built from society. Democracy is also embedded in values understood as norms to be shared by the entire population and institutions (Salazar & Woldenberg, 2020; Sartori, 2012; Touraine, 2000). The three core values on which democracy in Mexico rests are liberty, equality, and fraternity (Salazar & Woldenberg, 2020).

A fundamental axis in building a democratic nation is the school, as it is responsible for shaping future citizens and preparing them to actively participate in decisions that concern society as a whole. School enrollment implies institutional integration, which entails adapting to a broad normative culture through knowledge of rules (which are mandatory within the school community). Students internalize these through attitudes they adopt and ultimately apply in specific actions that allow them to function within the school environment (Bolívar, 2016).

This integration process represents an exercise in participating in collective decisions and actions that contribute to civic formation (Taddei, 2019). This preparation must aim to equip students with knowledge that enables them to better understand their environment, while also promoting critical and reflective thinking, as well as encouraging students to take part in decision-making processes.

Participation is a concept that synthetically expresses a way of being and acting in response to diverse worldviews. In this formative process, media and digital social networks play a fundamental role in shaping the content and how young people access information—information that shapes their thinking and, above all, determines whether they act or remain passiveAmong the studies on youth and democracy, the work by Caro, Pivatto, Quinteros, Sema, and Torrejón (2012) stands out. They note that

young people's level of understanding of democracy directly affects their participation. Likewise, youth apathy and disaffection toward political issues have been addressed by Ávila and Díaz (2017), Gómez, Tejera, Aguilar, Ramírez, and Díaz (2012), Olivera (2009), Saldierna, Marañón, and Muñiz (2015), and institutions such as the IFE (2013), IMJUVE (2012), and INE (2016).

In this regard, youth are immersed in and constantly negotiating various sociopolitical phenomena, which contributes to shaping and reshaping their understanding of democracy and citizenship. Education—particularly formal educational programs—is a tool the state can use to counter negative sociocultural influences and the impacts of capitalism, to develop an ideal model of citizenship and democracy.

In this sense, there are formally established educational programs that serve as the basis for teaching in the public education system from preschool to upper secondary level. These programs achieve a certain level of impact, depending on the context in which individuals are being educated.

1.2 Rule of law and the culture of legality

The rule of law, in its simplest sense, refers to the set of laws and rules that encompass the various rights intended to maintain order. Meanwhile, the culture of legality focuses on the citizens' understanding of their rights, their efforts to comply with the rules or laws that govern them, and the tangible effects that either the exercise or lack thereof can have on society (Laveaga, 2000). The author argues that both the rule of law and the culture of legality entail the necessity for individuals to understand the construction of the political system in their country of residence, as well as the governmental institutions, power structures, and hierarchies that form the state. On a broader level, this also includes understanding the functions of each institution and of the state itself, along with knowledge of socio-economic, ethical, and social integration.

Given the status of some study subjects as pre-citizens, they have limited access to government agencies, which does not exempt them from understanding the functions of different organizations and how they can influence them. For example, they can request legal advice or, if necessary, initiate proceedings with the Procuraduría de la Defensa del Menor y la Familia. However, they are protected under the Ley General de los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes, which establishes that they have the right to: life, survival, and development; priority; identity; family life; substantive equality; non-discrimination; living in conditions of well-being and healthy integral development; a life free of violence and access to social security; inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities; education; rest and recreation; freedom of ethical convictions, thought, conscience, religion, and culture; freedom of expression and access to information; participation; association and assembly; privacy; legal security and due process; the right to migrate; and access to information and communication technologies, including broadcasting and telecommunications services, such as broadband and the Internet (SEGOB, 2014). The right to education is also enshrined in Article 3 of the Constitución Política Mexicana, and extends beyond the age of majority, including access to higher education, which is the responsibility of each state.

Other rights that contribute to achieving a state of well-being (Aragón, 2015) and must therefore be known by citizens include the right to work, education, and health (Marshall, 1950). Article 123 of the Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos stipulates every individual's right to dignified and socially useful work. Additional aspects are addressed in the Ley Federal del Trabajo. Meanwhile, Article 4 of the Constitución establishes the right to health protection.

As full citizens, Cortina (1997) argues that it is necessary to exercise citizenship by participating in public discourse, staying informed, and engaging in dialogue. If dialogue fails, individuals must be aware of other mechanisms, such as civil society organizations, which can influence, impact, or persuade government institutions through advocacy (Canto, 2002). Citizens must also be aware of the various institutions where they can claim the guarantees of their rights and those of others (Aragón, 2015). Among the studies on the culture of legality conducted in Mexico, a noteworthy one is by Arango, Leyva, Marañón, and Lozano (2017) in Monterrey, Nuevo León. It examined cultural and legal knowledge and citizen participation. The study found a general "approving" knowledge of the rule of law and justice but identified low engagement and interest in community life and public social issues.

1.3 Values

The Mexican educational system has incorporated various types of values throughout different educational stages, including ethical, religious, moral, human, and political values, depending on the historical context (Latapí, 2003). Citizenship education tends to focus on human values, especially those found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO, 1948), which remain relevant to the current sociohistorical moment as they have yet to be fully established in practice or legislation in many countries. In Mexico, Article 3 of the Constitution, which addresses the right to education, highlights the values of freedom, justice, and respect. From a political perspective, the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE) (Salazar & Woldenberg, 2020), drawing on Article 1 of the DUDH, emphasizes the core democratic values of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

The value of freedom, which appears in both educational and democratic contexts, has two meanings: the first is the capacity for self-regulation; the second refers to acting without the interference of other individuals, bodies, or organizations, as long as such actions are within the bounds of the law, respecting the rule of law responsibly and without endangering popular sovereignty (Salazar & Woldenberg, 2020; Touraine, 2000). Equality refers to the idea that all citizens have the same rights and obligations under the law, with no distinctions in political terms or social status (Salazar & Woldenberg, 2020). The same authors note that fraternity is linked to behaviors and coexistence among citizens characterized by cooperation in the face of conflict. Differences and contradictions should be resolved through peaceful and legal means, and, if necessary, through tolerance and acceptance of others' differences.

The challenge of promoting values within the education system was analyzed by Latapí (2003), who explains that teaching values is complex: from identifying and defining them, understanding their etymology, to ensuring that students live them. In this regard, Moreno and Peniche (2020) argue that teaching values in high school is challenging due to adverse contexts, but it is possible through collaboration with parents and society. They emphasize the importance of fostering the value of solidarity.

Although there are theoretical frameworks that help define different values, these are abstract constructs established socially and culturally, and they reflect individual interests (Garay et al., 2008). As such, they may vary depending on how each student has internalized and applied them. Similarly, their definition depends—due to the principle of curricular autonomy—on the designers of the core programs and later on those who shape the materials provided to students, whether in the form of learning modules or textbooks.

2. Methodological design of the research

The study was structured based on Stake's (2004) standards-based educational evaluation research proposal. To understand the integration of citizenship competencies in general high school programs, a surface or manifest content analysis of the curriculum was conducted, starting with the national base programs (DGB, 2017) and extending to the learning modules used by the Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Sonora. Based on the findings and various theoretical contributions, the knowledge, attitudes, values, and actions framed within the dimensions of democracy and the rule of law were identified (Table 1).

Based on this structure, the research instrument was developed: a questionnaire designed specifically for this study. It consists of 45 questions divided into four sections: the first section addresses knowledge, the second covers behavior, the third examines attitudes and values, and the fourth gathers information on socioeconomic level (AMAI, 2018). Each section includes questions related to democracy and the rule of law. The instrument underwent two pilot tests at institutions within the same high school subsystem and with a population similar in terms of sex, age, and socioeconomic status. The reliability analysis for all questions in the instrument resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.875, and a standardized Cronbach's Alpha of 0.878.

Data collection took place in October 2019, within the classrooms of the Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Sonora, Villa de Seris campus, during class hours. This institution holds a valid certification in the Padrón de Calidad del Sistema Nacional de Educación Media Superior (COPEEMS, 2019), which indicates that it applies current federal programs, has qualified staff, and offers appropriate

Table 1. Citizenship competencias and the four components that compose them

Competency aspect / Dimension	Knowledge	Behavior	Attitudes	Values
Democracy	Definition Separation of powers Principles Civil duties	Participation	Perception of democracy in the country	Value system
Rule of law	General law on the rights of children and adolescents Right to education Right to health Right to work	Culture of legality	Acceptance of illegal activities	

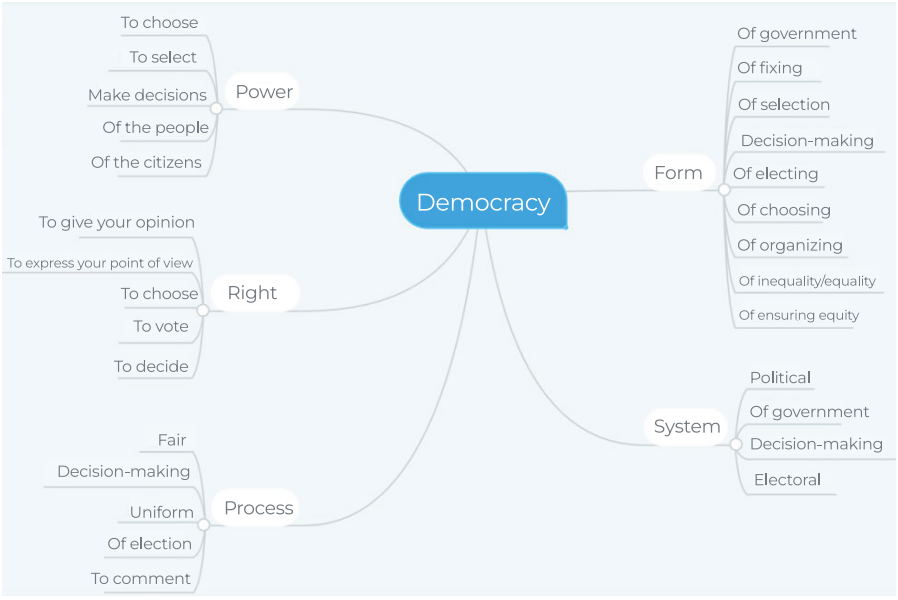
Source: Own elaboration.

facilities to promote a proper learning environment.

Students enrolled in the fifth semester were selected, considering that by this stage they had already completed most of the subjects related to the axis of citizenship education. Out of a population of 541 enrolled students across both morning and evening shifts, 477 questionnaires were collected. Among the study participants, 51.6% were female and 48.4% male. Respondents reported being between 16 and 19 years old, with the highest concentration at 17 years old (76.2%). Nearly half of the sample belonged to a high socioeconomic level (43.8%), meaning that heads of household had professional or postgraduate education, fixed Internet access at home, and invested part of their income in education. A smaller percentage belonged to the upper-middle level (28.9%) and the middle level (15.9%); these households also had Internet access and made educational investments, though to a lesser extent, according to AMAI's (2018) classification criteria. Throughout the study, participant anonymity was preserved with respect to names and any other identifying information, and participation was voluntary.

The data collected were entered into the SPSS statistical software, where frequency and measures of central tendency analyses were performed. Open-ended question responses were exported and subjected to qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis, from which primary and secondary analytical categories were developed.

Figure 1. Diagram showing the terms related to democracy



Source: Own elaboration.

3. Analysis of the results obtained

3.1 Democracy

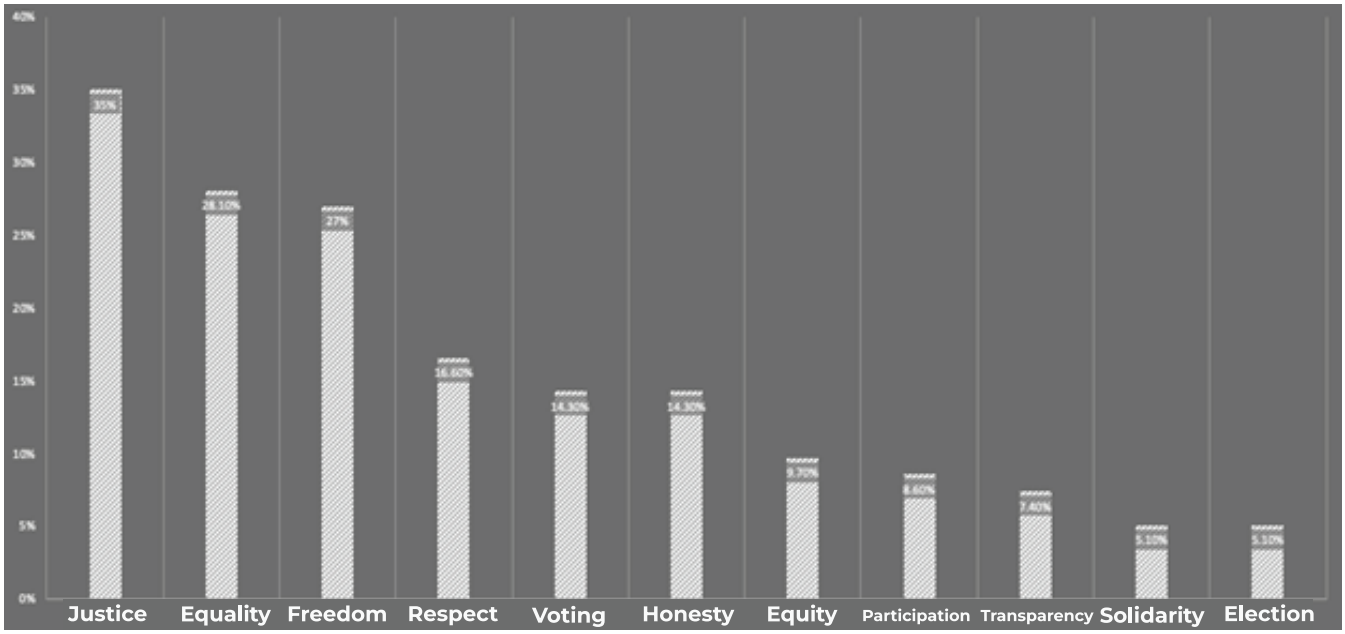
To explore how young people define democracy, they were asked to write down their own definition of the term. At the first level of analysis, five core concepts were categorized based on their frequency of appearance in the responses, listed from most to least frequent: form, system, power, right, and process. At a second level, these concepts were associated with other semantic elements. These associations reflect certain features of democracy described by Sartori (2012), such as rationality, political freedom, and diversity. They also align with the principles of democracy in Mexico outlined by Salazar & Woldenberg (2020), which include popular sovereignty, electoral mechanisms, and political representation. Figure 1 shows the associative relationships for each concept.

From the collected discourses, two student responses stand out, even though they do not directly relate to any of the categorized concepts, as they convey a strong emotional sentiment: "It is something that makes all of us participate", stated participant 506241; while participant 502223 wrote that it is "something that divides us. Additionally, agents involved in decision-making were identified. Based on the number of mentions, four categories emerged in descending order: everyone (indicating broad participation), the people (to choose, give voice and power), individuals, and the majority. This suggests that, within young people's construct of democracy, the community is prioritized as a collective interest over individual concerns, consistent with definitions reviewed by Touraine (2000).

Students were asked to write down the three branches of government. Of the 305 written responses, 236 corresponded to the correct answer in different orders: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial, which accounts for 49% of correct responses. In another open-ended question, students were asked to write three principles of democracy. In order from most to least mentioned, they answered: justice, equality, freedom, respect, voting, honesty, equity, participation, transparency, solidarity, and election. The corresponding percentages can be seen in Figure 2.

Regarding the civic duties included in the constitution, participants mostly identified registering in the electoral roll (96.5%), followed by voting in elections and popular consultations (85.9%), performing military service (62.3%), and registering in the municipal cadastre (58.2%). Meanwhile, less than one-third mentioned holding elected office at the federal or state level (29.1%). The fact that the majority of respondents did not identify this duty indicates an emphasis on rights but neglects the responsibilities and/or obligations that citizens have to hold public office and engage in political matters, a situation that can cause

Figure 2. Principle of democracy mentioned by students with their respective response percentages



Source: Own elaboration.

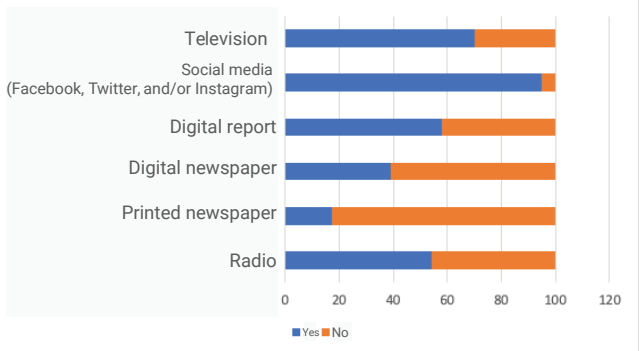
imbalance and promote passive citizenship (Aragón, 2015; Heater, 2007).

The type of participation that young people choose includes, first, signing petitions, collecting signatures, or sending a written request to an authority (60.5%); second, requesting support from a guardian or representative (58.5%); and third, collecting donations to support disaster victims (51.8%). The least selected option was painting walls (3.2%).

Students are motivated to participate in political activities when it serves as a protest against an injustice (68.6%). A total of 59.1% stated that they are motivated when some benefit is obtained, 54.1% are motivated when asked by their parents, 48.3% would be encouraged if their friends were involved, and 43.8% if they consider it an obligation. There is a certain degree of involvement with socially relevant issues. This suggests that they are aware of these mechanisms and are willing to use them if necessary.

A citizen interested in what happens in their community — young students reported that they stay informed about what is happening in the country mainly through Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram (94.7%), television (70.2%), and by accessing digital reports (58%). The remaining information sources used are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Percentage of students who reported using various media outlets



Note: N=480
Source: Own elaboration.

Studies such as those by Saldierna, Marañón, and Muñoz (2015) agree that the primary source of information consumption among youth is through digital social networks, a characteristic aspect of new generations and their ubiquitous integration of Internet use. However, television is still present before digital reports or newspapers are accessed. Television serves as a tool of media control and a source of anti-values (Latapí, 2003), which is why it is essential that these pre-citizens develop critical thinking and question the information they consume.

Attitudes were gathered from situations based on students' opinions about democracy in the country. Through the statement: "I am disenchanted with democracy in Mexico," students chose the response that best expressed their opinion from four options. The highest percentage selected "partially agree" (40.3%), followed by "totally agree" (33.3%). The other two options — "partially disagree" and "totally disagree"— received the same percentage (13.2% each). These results show that the majority (73.6%) perceive a discouraging situation regarding how democracy is conducted in Mexico. In contrast, the statement "I'm not interested in politics" showed a similar distribution among "totally agree" (21.6%), "partially agree" (29.6%), "partially disagree" (23.9%), and "totally disagree" (24.9%). Regarding politics, students' stance is polarized in terms of interest.

When combining a cognitive aspect based on a construct of what democracy is and how it functions with a negative sentiment toward it—and even toward politics—, it appears that students do not internalize political participation as an obligation for building democracy. This suggests that, in terms of democratic political culture, their attitude resembles a culture of subordination, which is undesirable in citizenship education.

The values identified during the review of learning modules or textbooks used by the students in the sample are: friendship, fraternity, honesty, equality, justice, liberty, respect, responsibility, solidarity, and tolerance. This list was provided to the students, and they were asked to select the three most relevant ones and rank them by importance.

Respect ranked first (44.4%), followed by honesty (15.9%), and liberty in third place (15.7%). The latter aligns with democratic and human rights values but is considered less relevant by the students. Other values related to collective well-being, such as equality and fraternity (the latter receiving no mentions), were less prominent. However, their choices reflect the prevalence of the formal discourse found in educational materials, which prominently

highlight respect, making it difficult to determine whether it is genuinely practiced in daily life or simply a reproduction of school discourse. Students' individual constructs regarding the selected values were not explored—this remains a pending topic.

Democracy is concretely enacted through citizenship. For this to happen, a structure of social organization must exist, and, as students expressed, the collective should prevail over the individual. Additionally, rights must be respected and aligned with current laws (Touraine, 2000). These aspects tie into the rule of law.

3.2 Rule of law

Regarding the rule of law and knowledge of the General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents—relevant given the average age of the surveyed population—, it is notable that two rights were not widely recognized: being a priority due to being minors and the right to migrate, as responses were divided.

Table 2 shows all the results obtained. The shifting trends highlight items that are not rights but were included for control purposes: being discriminated against, skipping school, being forced to follow a religion, and having belongings searched by authorities.

In terms of knowledge of Mexican legislation regarding the rights to education, health, and work, 70.2% identified Article 3, which refers to education. In contrast, only 41% identified Article 4, which addresses the right to health. Article 123, which covers the right to dignified work, was recognized by 70.4%. In this case, it is important to build on the knowledge students already have and incorporate into educational policies the relevant articles, institutions, and means by which young people can access these rights—either to enforce or demand them.

On the other hand, the students also identified the rights to be acquired as Mexican citizens. They were able to recognize having a birth certificate (71.4%), obtaining information about what is happening in the social context through various media (78.1%), analyzing the information obtained and requesting clarification or further details (81.5%), respecting people living in conditions of social inequality or who have different religious beliefs, sexual orientations, political ideologies, or customs (84.5%), and having a fair and impartial trial (87.7%). However, only 49.1% identified serving as an election booth representative as a citizen right. When individuals behave within the limits of the rule of law, we refer to a culture of legality. Regarding this, participants were asked about legal or illegal activities in the State of Sonora, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Percentage of students who identified rights included in the general law on the rights of children and adolescents

Name of the right	Is a right	Not a right
Life, survival, and development	94.5	5.5
Being a priority	30.3	69.7
Having an identity	96.4	3.6
Living in a family	86.9	13.2
Exercising and defending my universal rights	96.9	3.1
Living in well-being and integral healthy development	97.7	2.3
Living a life free of violence and having personal integrity protected	97.3	2.7
Protection of health and social security	99.0	1.0
Inclusion of children with diasbilities	86.5	13.5
Rest and recreation	75.2	24.8
Freedom of expression and access to information	97.7	2.3
Participation	93.1	6.9
Association and assembly	84.8	15.2
Privacy	78.7	21.3
Migration	50.6	49.4
Access to Information and Communication Technologies	90.6	9.4

Note: Valid percentages reported. N=480.
Source: Own elaboration.

Most young people were able to differentiate legal activities. It is important to point out that the only item with a high rate of incorrect responses was same-sex marriage, which is currently illegal according to the legislation of the state of Sonora, even though other states have legalized it. From a generational perspective, Twenge (2017) notes that young people tend to accept and view same-sex marriage as something common and as a right for sexually diverse minorities. In this case, the response reflects a tension and a possible lack of awareness between what is legally established and what students believe should be protected by law.

Table 3. Percentage of students who identified legal and illegal activities in the state of Sonora

Legal and illegal activities	Legal	Illegal
Drinking in public spaces	8.9	**91.1**
Bribery	3.4	**96.6**
Abortion	9.3	**90.7**
Graffiti	5.6	**94.4**
Same-sex marriage	45.0	**55.0**
Paying property taxes	**90.4**	9.6
Buying stolen goods	10.1	**89.9**
Corporal punishment by parents	36.1	**63.9**
Smoking marijuana	8.8	**91.2**
Using hard drugs	2.1	**97.9**
Littering	19.1	**80.9**
Buying antibiotics with a prescription	**91.9**	8.1
Driving under the influence	1.7	**98.3**
Speeding	1.5	**98.5**
Electricity theft	2.3	**97.7**
Internet/cable theft	13.0	**87.0**
Driving with a license	**97.1**	2.9

Note: Bold text indicates the correct response.
Source: Own elaboration.

The rule of law in a community does not always match what is desired or considered correct (Díaz, 1998). A similar situation is seen with corporal punishment by parents. Although violence and physical punishment are illegal, more than one-third of the respondents believe it is legal, indicating potential cultural acceptance.

In the list of legal and illegal behaviors students admitted to engaging in, the most reported were *drinking alcohol at home, driving a motor vehicle without a license*, and *participating in physical fights*. On the contrary, the top three activities they denied engaging in were *selling stolen or suspicious items, using drugs other than marijuana, and buying stolen goods*. The rest of the data is shown in Table 4.

Choosing to engage in legal or illegal behavior is an exercise of freedom; however, when engaging in illegal activities, this conflicts with democratic values, where freedom must align with the rule of law (Salazar & Woldenberg, 2012; Sartori, 2012). An important aspect of attitudes is the willingness to

Table 4. Percentages of students reporting having engaged in improper and/or illegal behavior

Behavior	Yes	No
Drank alcoholic beverages at home.	41.5	**58.5**
Drank alcohol in public places.	29.6	**70.4**
Smoked weed.	10.6	**89.4**
Used other drugs.	6.7	**93.3**
Took money from parents without permission.	24.6	**75.4**
Used a fake ID	9.4	**90.6**
Gave money to a public official in exchange for a favor.	8.4	**91.6**
Ate food in a store without paying.	9.2	**90.6**
Drove without a driver's license	40.4	**59.6**
Verbally threatened someone.	42.9	**57.1**
Participated in a physical fight.	33	**67**
Shared images/videos of others without consent.	25.8	**74.2**
Bought a stolen item.	8.2	**91.8**
Sold a stolen or suspicious item.	3.4	**96.6**
Hit a younger person.	23.7	**76.3**
Mocked someone for physical differences or language.	28.2	**71.8**

Note: N=480.
Source: Own elaboration.

report an illegal act. Students were presented with the following scenario: if a student is with friends at a store and one of them steals something, what would they do? Most said they would ask the friend to pay for it, but if ignored, they would do nothing and move on (58.7%). About 28.9% said they would both ask and report the behavior to an authority, 10.3% would ignore it completely, and 2.1% would report it without saying anything to the friend.

These findings suggest a weak civic commitment to the rule of law, either by demanding compliance with the law or defending the rights of those affected. Although students are aware that driving without a license is illegal, many still do it. These illegal behaviors point to self-regulation issues, which are crucial for peaceful coexistence (Marco,

2003; Chaux, 2005). Still, it is unclear whether these behaviors are socially tolerated (Laveaga, 2000) or whether they represent attempts at social inclusion or peer acceptance (Bauman & Leoncini, 2018), or even part of adolescent development where they challenge authority.

3.3 Proposal for a democratic school

The responses provided by the students when asked to suggest ways to promote a democratic school can be categorized into the following: a) Formal aspects, referring to curricular, power, or hierarchical changes and evaluation tools; b) school dynamics, proposing and organizing activities, campaigns, and initiatives; and c) agents, referring to actors in the school community and changes they wish to influence.

Some responses reflect the need to be heard or acknowledged, for example, by asking for spaces where they can express themselves freely or be considered in decision-making processes. One student shared: "I would like them to take us more into account when it comes to our safety; some people have trouble arriving because of the rain, etc "(Respondent 501228).

Others mentioned wanting to participate in defining school rules, planning events, improving cleanliness and surveillance, and expressed that current activities are imposed by adults. Students also questioned uniform rules, the ability to wear long hair (especially for boys), and wanted inclusion campaigns. This suggests elements of authoritarianism at school that restrict students' freedom of expression. One respondent wrote: "that students' opinions are truly considered, and our identity is respected" (Respondent 502103).

Few comments addressed academic improvement, but some students requested to choose their teachers, to have quality instruction, greater inclusion of the entire school community (including administrative staff and parents), to provide feedback on teachers, and to have a complaints box.

Students also criticized the behavior of some peers, "first, students need to be better people. We should start by improving them morally, then encourage their participation." (Respondent 501201), respondent 502145 added: I believe we would have greater influence if we changed the mindset that students have the power to change their situation".

These responses overwhelmingly indicate that high school environments are authoritarian, with decisions made by directors or teachers without considering students' freedom, identity, or representative organization. These observations align with Ortiz (2014) and the OEI report (2017). Similarly, Ravelo-Medina and Radovic-Sendra (2016) state that although students are willing to participate, school structures do not allow them to. These findings are supported by Razo (2018). Such school experiences may foster either active or passive citizenship (Dehdar, Sayegani, Arbab, Arzhandeh, Roshanray, Raeisi & Kuhi, 2019). To promote active citizenship, as proposed by the goals of upper secondary education, it is necessary to enable student participation and decision-making in ways that help them fully practice their rights (Martínez, 2005).

Educational institutions are evaluated by national and international bodies and are expected to meet specific learning outcomes. Budget allocations often depend on these achievements. This pressure results in a short-term vision among teachers and administrators, who focus on delivering and assessing curricular content. However, civic education is a long-term objective that may not yield immediate results, such as passing grades or access to scholarships, but it contributes to rebuilding the social fabric, reducing violence, fostering a culture of peace, and strengthening democracy through informed, critical, and engaged citizens.

Conclusions and implications for youth citizenship education

Socially, students exhibit democratic civic competencies aligned with the rule of law and collective well-being. However, the school environment restricts their intent to participate and limits their freedom of expression, decision-making, and self-identification. Rather than serving as a space for public participation, the school replicates hierarchical and restrictive models that foster passive citizenship.

Some social and economic implications are tied to a lack of knowledge of rights such as health, work, and migration. This may place them in vulnerable positions when entering the workforce, as they may not demand their rights. Strengthening self-regulation is essential to support legal

decision-making and prevent actions that harm individuals and society, such as bribery or petty theft. Civic competencies can also enhance youth employability.

Civic engagement requires citizens to hold political representatives and institutions accountable. Following the pandemic, most public agencies have official accounts that students can use to make inquiries, complaints, or even legal claims.

While young people prefer digital social interaction due to the ubiquity of technology, civic education can also be extended into those spaces by promoting participation in forums, debates, or other platforms. They should be equipped with media and information literacy and critical thinking skills to identify cyberbullying and stay safe online. They can also demand that such spaces for interaction exist offline.

This research should be extended to teachers and school administrators to determine if they are adequately prepared to create democratic learning environments. While federal regulations set many constraints, some degree of pedagogical and administrative freedom remains that could be leveraged for this purpose.

Building on Heater's (2007) idea that citizenship education must address current dilemmas, it is crucial to outline a clear direction for education in preparing youth to become active citizens. For example, they should be informed about rights-protecting institutions like the Human Rights Commission and the Mexican Youth Institute, where they can participate in projects, access training, and learn about employment, health, and civic participation. In addition, they must develop behaviors, attitudes, and values that go beyond emotional responses and instead act consciously for the common good.

Empathy and tolerance should be reinforced, including discussions on inclusive language, such as the use of the neutral suffix -e in Spanish. A suggested extension of this research is to study non-conventional participation, as described by Contreras-Ibáñez, Correa, García, and Barragán (2005). It is necessary to explore how adolescents exercise democracy outside of school and to give them the opportunity to engage in democratic practices. Therefore, an experimental study is recommended to implement an active democratic citizenship education program and measure its effects on students' behaviors and attitudes.

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Interdisciplinary Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences

RESEARCH

Building citizenship at the University: A proposal for coexistence and conflict resolution

Construyendo ciudadanía en la universidad: Una propuesta para la convivencia y resolución de conflictos

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Abstract

Higher Education Institutions have the commitment to provide comprehensive education to students, which means that quality education cannot be achieved without including the development of citizenship competencies. These competencies are grouped into three areas: coexistence and peace, democratic participation and responsibility, and plurality, identity, and appreciation of differences. Since conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction, it is essential to develop skills that allow for peaceful resolution.

Therefore, this paper presents a proposal to promote citizenship competencies through coexistence and peace, by teaching conflict resolution through the development of collaboration skills. The proposal is structured around two main components: a needs assessment conducted with a sample of university students, and a theoretical foundation based on the constructivist approach, using collaborative learning as the method. From this approach, creative, meaningful, and integrative teaching strategies are derived.

The objective of the proposal is to develop skills for collaborative conflict resolution, emotional management, improvement of interpersonal relationships, and assuming leadership roles without authoritarianism an essential aspect for students' academic performance and their future role in society. The conclusion highlights the need for universities to provide students with opportunities and spaces that encourage participation and interaction with various educational stakeholders, with the primary goal of building citizenship.

Keywords: citizenship education, coexistence, conflict resolution, university students.

Resumen

Las Instituciones de Educación Superior tienen el compromiso de formar integralmente al estudiantado, por lo que no es posible aludir a una educación de calidad si no se contempla la formación de competencias ciudadanas. Estas se agrupan en tres ámbitos: convivencia y paz, participación y responsabilidad democrática y pluralidad, identidad y valoración de diferencias. Dado que el conflicto es

inevitable que se presente en la interacción de los individuos, es relevante desarrollar habilidades que permitan resolverlos de manera pacífica. Por ello, el presente trabajo presenta una propuesta para promover competencias ciudadanas a través de la convivencia y la paz, enseñando la resolución de conflictos a partir de la promoción de habilidades para la colaboración. La propuesta se estructuró a partir de dos aspectos: un diagnóstico de necesidades en una muestra de estudiantes universitarios, y teóricamente se retoma el enfoque constructivista, teniendo como método el aprendizaje colaborativo de las que se derivan estrategias didácticas creativas, significativas e integradoras. La propuesta tiene por objetivo el desarrollo de habilidades para resolver conflictos de manera colaborativa, el manejo de las emociones, la mejora de las relaciones interpersonales y asumir el rol de liderazgo sin autoritarismo, aspecto fundamental para el desempeño del estudiante y su futuro rol en la sociedad. Se concluye que es necesario que las universidades ofrezcan a los estudiantes instancias y escenarios para promover la participación y la interacción con los diferentes actores educativos, con el fin principal de construir ciudadanía.

Palabrasclaves: formación ciudadana, convivencia, resolución de conflictos, universitarios.

1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have a significant commitment to the comprehensive training of young professionals. This means equipping them not only to solve problems but also to develop generic competencies that enable them to function in professional, personal, and social spheres.

Citizenship Education (CE) is an integral part of this training process because, in addition to being considered a life skill, it strengthens attitudes, values, and skills related to individuals' interaction with their environment. It encourages an active, participatory, and dynamic role within the university and broader society. Good academic performance alone is not enough to be considered a good citizen; rather, active, transformative, and critical engagement is required (Venet, 2019).

Many of today's problems stem from a lack of respect for diversity, exclusion, intolerance, and violence. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a stance opposed to these attitudes, which contradict public policies advocated by organizations like UNESCO (2015) and national development plans such as Mexico's 2019–2024 National Development Plan (PND, 2019). As Martínez (2006) states, a quality university education cannot be claimed without including learning about and for citizenship.

Although CE is often included in institutional documents at the university level, there is a lack of real formative actions. This is because, as León (2020) argues, universities have traditionally been tasked with producing disciplinary knowledge and practical problem-solving skills, with less emphasis on attitudinal components. Citizenship is not built naturally; HEIs must create interactive spaces that prepare students to live together with others, respect individual differences and human rights, and actively practice citizenship. Thus, citizenship education can be understood as "disciplinary technical knowledge in the service of community development" (p. 377) in other words, any process that teaches individuals to live in community with the aim of integrating and participating, considering elements such as commitment, communication, knowledge of rights and responsibilities, and their exercise.

At the university level, this involves spreading, defending, and exercising human rights as the foundation for peaceful coexistence, participating in political life, and critically understanding society, its institutions, and its norms. It is essential that university students adopt values that enable them to practice behaviors and comply with norms that improve daily interactions within educational institutions. This includes involving students in decision-making processes, the creation of rules, and awareness of the main issues affecting their educational community so they can engage peacefully in efforts to improve coexistence (Ortiz & Lemus, 2020).

Practicing citizenship in and from school presents various challenges. In response, Colombia's Ministry of National Education (MEN, 2011) proposed a set of citizenship competencies, defined as an integration of attitudes, knowledge, emotions, and cognitive skills necessary for participatory citizenship. A study by Mescua, Ramos, Ramírez, Cruz, and Caycho (2020) among university students found that they

scored at average levels in these areas, highlighting the need to emphasize learning strategies and the development of emotional skills. They point out that today, teaching involves not only the transmission of knowledge but also emotional components.

When exploring the competencies universities seek in their graduates, a consensus emerged around the importance of knowledge for practicing citizenship such as intercultural awareness, understanding the consequences of decision-making, empathy, reflection, critical thinking, and emotional skills like assertiveness, constructive dialogue, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation (Hamra, 2020). These are essential for building participatory and democratic competencies.

Citizenship competencies are divided in three areas: 1) peaceful and constructive coexistence with others who may have different or even opposing interests, goals, or objectives 2) the creation of agreements and consensus around rules and decisions that govern people and aim to promote the common good, 3) the practice of citizenship itself, which involves building a society based on mutual respect. In this sense, citizenship competencies are the abilities that help individuals constructively face each of these challenges (Murillo y Castañeda, 2007; Ruiz y Chaux, 2005; MEN, 2014.).

For the purposes of this work, the focus is on the area of education for coexistence and peace, which is understood as the ability to work with others, resolve differences, and manage conflicts that arise in school interactions within educational institutions (Fierro, 2011, in Verdeja, 2013). These elements are interconnected, as coexistence provides a practical component and social harmony to democracy in the school environment. It promotes collaborative work through respect and non-discrimination, mutual support, the promotion of human rights, dialogue, appreciation and acceptance of others, and even ecological awareness in interactions with the environment (Montoya, 2008).

According to Chaux (2012), there are eight competencies for peaceful coexistence: anger management, empathy, perspective-taking, generation of options, consideration of consequences, critical thinking, active listening, and assertiveness. Three of these are related to emotions (anger management, empathy, and assertiveness), while the rest are integrative competencies that help guide emotional motivations, serving as a cognitive counterbalance to emotions. This shows that in building citizenship, we also build coexistence and sustainable security through the reduction of aggression, conflict resolution in schools, and the reduction of bullying.

In this regard, Chaux (2012, cited in Zuta, Velasco, and Rodríguez, 2014) proposes five pedagogical principles for achieving civic learning:

1. Learning by doing: This means that conflict resolution is learned by actually resolving differences and trying to do so when necessary not just by hearing about it.

2. Meaningful learning: Refers to designing situations in which students can relate the content to real life and find meaning and usefulness in their surroundings, either through real or simulated situations.

3. Progressive increase in learning complexity: When teaching civic competencies, challenges should gradually increase in complexity, but always be solvable and attainable.

4. Self-efficacy: Giving students confidence that they are capable of solving the problems they face in everyday life, which closely relates to the previous point.

5. Intrinsic motivation: It is important that students value the use of these skills in their daily lives and are not forced to use them; they should perceive the benefits in their lives, in how they relate to others, and in their commitment to a more just society.

One of the goals of Citizenship Education is for individuals to coexist peacefully and constructively. This does not mean that harmony or the absence of conflict must always prevail, as in any social group with diverse interests, goals, and ideals, it is complex to avoid disagreements. Instead, the expectation is that conflicts be resolved without aggression and in a way that benefits all parties, and that individuals assert their rights and those of others and turn to regulatory bodies when necessary (Mejía and Perafán, 2006).

A conflict arises when there is incompatibility between individuals who, due to their differences, are unable to reach agreements this is inherent to human interaction (Pinilla and Mendieta, 2013). Conflicts should not be viewed as negative but

rather as opportunities for learning and personal development within society, offering the chance to promote different types of learning that support students' development by creating spaces for reflection (Baldovino and Reyes, 2017).

In light of this, it is extremely important to recognize the skills students have to resolve conflicts, which are developed daily in school interactions and are known as Conflict Resolution Styles. These are defined as an individual's tendency to behave in the face of incompatibility in thoughts, behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes with another person, aiming to find solutions that satisfy all parties involved (Holst, Galicia, Gómez, and Degante, 2017).

Thomas and Kilmann (2014) categorize these styles using the intersection of two variables:

1. Assertiveness, understood as the ability of a person to address and resolve conflicts.

2. Cooperation, referring to the willingness to resolve conflicts with the support of others.

Based on the level of these traits in individuals, five styles are identified:

1. Competing: High assertiveness but low cooperation, where the person acts to satisfy their own interests at the expense of the other party.

2. Collaborating: A balance between assertiveness and cooperation. This can be considered the ideal style, as it focuses on teamwork to resolve conflicts by exploring disagreements and seeking creative solutions (Luna, 2018).

3. Compromising: A moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation, aiming to find a timely and mutually acceptable solution by establishing a middle ground.

4. Avoiding: Neither assertive nor cooperative; the individual avoids the conflict, postpones its resolution, or simply withdraws.

5. Accommodating: Low assertiveness and high cooperation; the individual yields to the desires and interests of the other party, often obeying or acting altruistically.

Carreño and Rozo (2020) conducted a systematic analysis to identify strategies developed to foster coexistence and peace through education, which are organized into four categories: 1) prevention, including actions to manage emotions, strengthen values, and promote dialogue, tolerance, and respect, 2) participation, involving projects to raise students' awareness of their democratic responsibilities, such as organizing pedagogical assemblies 3) intervention, referring to actions taken to reduce acts of violence and 4) use of technology, which acts as a cross-cutting element to support the creation of digital and virtual spaces focused on peace within instructions.

In light of the perspectives on conflict resolution as a set of skills to improve school coexistence and peace within educational institutions, and as a foundation for students' participation in their educational environment, a program has been designed to promote conflict resolution through dialogue, collaboration, empathy, leadership, and affective engagement. The proposal is based on the pedagogical principles of constructivism and collaborative learning.

2. Foundation of the proposal

Two aspects guided the formulation of the proposal: 1. An evaluation of conflict-resolution styles and a description of how students perceive school coexistence at the Higher Education Institution (HEI) and 2. Once areas needing improvement were identified, a theoretical foundation was established to understand the best way to teach these skills to university students. Both elements are described below.

3. Evaluation of school coexistence and conflict resolution

A needs assessment was conducted using a mixed-method research approach. Quantitative data, which allow for generalization to other populations, were gathered and supplemented with qualitative perceptions from students regarding coexistence and conflict resolution, deepening the understanding of the subject (Creswell, 2009).

For the quantitative component, the Thomas and Kilmann (2014) "Modes of Conflict Handling" instrument was administered via a Google Forms survey to identify students' predominant conflict-

resolution styles. Data were analyzed with SPSS, scoring raw responses to determine percentages for each style. Results showed that the compromise style predominates, along with a tendency to avoid conflict; collaboration scored in the mid-low range, indicating that students seldom work in teams to resolve issues affecting school coexistence.

Qualitatively, a two-hour focus group was conducted via Microsoft Teams to explore students' perception of school coexistence and conflict resolution at the HEI, based on their experiences. Analysis in Atlas.Ti v.9 identified two major categories: school coexistence and conflict resolution. Students perceived generally pleasant interactions with peers and some faculty, crediting institutional spaces for interaction. However, they cited the need for accessible protocols for resolving conflicts and extracurricular activities that enhance institutional participation. They also pointed to how emotions influence conflicts and a lack of teamwork leadership skills. Differences in thought, beliefs, and ideas on social issues were reported as sources of conflict between students and teachers (Chávez, 2021).

In conclusion, students need to participate in extracurricular activities that build better interpersonal, emotional, and leadership skills, enabling effective conflict resolution and contributing to their comprehensive development and the construction of citizenship in HEIs.

4. Learning approach and method

Constructivist principles provide a solid foundation for integrating relevant elements into the teaching-learning process. The core idea emphasizes the social relationships students form within educational institutions, which strengthen and refine the skills they've developed academically (Schunk, 2009).

The aim is to empower students to take charge of their own learning process, guided by a teacher, fostering critical thinking and enabling reconstruction between new information and prior knowledge (Aparicio & Ostos, 2018). The teacher's role becomes one of systematically organizing didactic content to create conditions conducive to the effective achievement of learning outcomes.

According to Ortiz and Hincapié (2019), content organization should meet four essential criteria: 1) logical sequencing of topics and activities; 2) motivation to participate; 3) a clear focus on the skill being taught 4) explicit articulation of the learning objectives. These elements shift the learning paradigm away from traditional methods, aiming to show the practical relevance of skills being developed and their application to real-life situations.

Constructivism supports structuring contexts that center on socialization, as opposed to traditional models that no longer suit students' current needs. Educational institutions often provide many social spaces where knowledge related to professional training should be shared. Dialogue helps give meaning to knowledge.

Supporting this with collaborative learning as an alternative teaching method aligns with constructivist ideals. When creating a didactic sequence, the following features based on Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1999, cited in Iborra & Izquierdo, 2010) should be included:

1. Positive interdependence. Deriving goals and purposes in collaboration with students, helping to define the group's identity and recognition, while providing the necessary guidance for students in the strategic distribution of the resources available in the classroom, specifying the role and tasks that each one must carry out during their time in the educational institution.

2. Face to face interaction. Promoting student interaction through group techniques, in which they collaborate with one another to achieve the objectives set by the teacher, fostering empathy, solidarity, respect, and effort.

3. Individual accountability. Establishing activities where students identify their own scope and limitations, supporting them when necessary to overcome the obstacles they consider important for their learning, and reinforcing the knowledge they have already developed.

4. Emphasis on the development of social skills. Enhancing behaviors such as communication, conflict resolution, negotiation, leadership, assertiveness, among others, by encouraging the expression of ideas among students.

5. Group-self reflection. Providing a space for reflection at the end of the session so that the group of students can analyze and compare the learning they had before the session with

what they developed afterward, identifying and describing the strengths and areas for improvement that need to be addressed.

Under this logic, the didactic sequences structured for the educational program must promote constant interaction among students. To achieve this, the learning strategies aligned with this perspective include: interactive games, which allow the development of collaboration skills within educational settings, including activities that promote reflection, comprehension, and analysis of the didactic sequence's content (Padilla, 2011).

Role-playing also encourages student participation by having them interpret situations linked to real-life contexts, making explicit the characteristics of the individuals being portrayed, providing the necessary logic to represent the skill that is intended to be developed (Urbina, Medina, and Calle, 2010; Holguín, 2018). On the other hand, case studies contribute to the development of students' critical thinking by analyzing real situations, allowing them to understand the origin of various problems, the variables involved, as well as the possible solutions they can offer based on their knowledge (Tamayo, 2011).

Encouraging student participation in debates, discussion forums, as well as the creation of didactic workshops and study groups aimed at developing skills related to a common issue faced in their educational institution raises student awareness about the importance of teamwork and peer collaboration to achieve shared objectives (Scagnoli, 2006; Betancourt, Guevara, and Fuentes, 2011; Andrés and Labrador, 2014). Based on this analytical logic, an educational innovation program was developed, aiming to train university students in collaboration skills when offering solutions to conflicts within the educational community.

5. ConVive: Learn to resolve conflicts by collaborating with others

To promote students' holistic development, this educational innovation program was developed to build conflict-resolution skills among university students with the primary aim of improving school coexistence in HEIs. It follows the proposal by Torrecillas, Martínez, Olmos, and Rodríguez (2016), which outlines the logical sequence needed for developing these skills:

1. Identification of conflicts and resolution styles.

2. Management of personal emotions during conflict.

3. Management of interpersonal relationships within the institution.

4. Cultivation of collaborative environments in the institution.

The program is structured into eight sessions; two per module lasting between 1 and a half and 2 hours. Through role-play, case studies, interactive games, and forum participation, students develop the following expected learning outcomes:

1. Identifies the elements that constitute a conflict in university school coexistence through a role-playing activity, within a space for reflection on the conflicting situations experienced in school life.

2. Describes the characteristics of the collaborative conflict resolution style through a case study, stating alternative solutions to conflicting situations that occur in school coexistence.

3. Interprets the sensations experienced in their body when facing a conflict through an interactive game, mentioning the emotions felt.

4. Practices the techniques for regulation and expression of affective states by Steven Hayes ("Say Yes," "Impossible Game," "Simple Meditation," and "Moving in Slow Motion") through an interactive game, to establish skills that allow effective control of emotions and feelings.

5. Analyzes the interests and lack of interest of their classmates through a case study that fosters positive interpersonal relationships within the educational community.

6. Selects the main characteristics that allow them to trust their classmates through a role-playing activity, in order to distinguish the actions that promote better school coexistence.

7. Presents the personal traits that make them a leader when collaborating with other classmates through an interactive game that promotes better collaborative environments among students in the university community.

Each activity is monitored and evaluated through qualitative instruments such as checklists, rating scales, and evaluation rubrics, allowing the identification of the cognitive processes that students have gone through in the construction of their learning.

For the evaluation of the program, it is proposed to use a battery of instruments (see Table 1), which allows the quantitative measurement of the students' skills before and after implementation, obtaining relevant information regarding the functionality of the program to promote and develop alternative solutions to conflicts among university students.

Table 1. Instrumentalization battery for the pre- and post-evaluation of participants in the "ConVive" Program.

Name of the Instrument	Author	Dimensions	Number of Itrms
School Coexistence Questionnaire	Nicolás, 2015	"Coexistence and Satisfaction within the Educational Institution"	13
		"Behaviors that May Generate Conflicts in School Coexistence"	10
		"Conflict Resolution in School Coexistence"	7
Conflict Management Modes	Thomas and Kilmann, 2014	Assertiveness Cooperation	15 15
Difficulties in emotion regulation scale (DERS-Spanish)	Marín, Robles, and Andrade, González 2012.	Capacity to regulate affective states	8
Leadership styles survey	Castillo, 2010, in Reyes, 2012.	Decision-making processes. Communication systems. Interpersonal relationships. Systems of rewards and punishments.	5 5 5 5

Additionally, two work manuals are provided: one for the student, which explains in detail the informational content related to the skills to be developed throughout the program's implementation, reinforcing the learning process; and another designed for the instructors, explaining the logic of each didactic sequence, offering guidance on how to locate the relevant information in each presentation used, as well as how to implement each designed activity.

6. Conclusions

Building citizenship through the proposal of an innovative educational program that contributes to the formation of university students toward horizons beyond those specified in academic curricula strengthens the idea of fostering a more critical, understanding, empathetic, supportive, and collaborative society, in which professionals maintain a stronger social awareness of their impact on the community where they developed.

Taking coexistence into account within the logic of Civic Education makes it possible to understand how citizens can feel connected to their community and thus promote unity to achieve shared goals that benefit everyone. It also emphasizes that conflictive situations will always be present in daily interaction, making it relevant to learn alternatives focused more on collaboration than competitiveness.

The results of the program's foundation show the importance of reinforcing in university students a set of emotional skills for conflict resolution, which, as Chaux (2012) states, are pillars for building citizenship.

Even though these are fundamental, they are not the only components for constructing citizenship, given that students reported difficulties regarding the existence of clear procedures at their institution for resolving conflicts in other settings, particularly when agreements cannot be reached. Therefore, it is not only necessary to work on the individual but also on institutional levels to create spaces for coexistence and conflict resolution through clear norms and attention protocols, as mentioned by Mejía and Perafán (2006). Institutions must thus have mediation spaces where institutional actors can go when needed.

For this reason, the inclusion of innovative educational programs that support the realization of this idea among university students represents a significant advance in how diverse spaces can be created in Higher Education Institutions. These spaces should offer sufficient conditions for dialogue, reflection, participation, and the

involvement of individuals within their university community.

The proposal presented in this work was designed to fulfill that purpose. Each work session was structured so that the student would be an active agent in constructing their own learning, considering their constant participation both individually and in collaboration with classmates through games, case studies, creation of forums or workshops, among other elements, positioning them as peers. In doing so, a proposal is put forth based on consistent principles, competencies, and methods aimed at promoting citizenship within a culture of peace.

Therefore, offering these spaces in the form of extracurricular workshops, or as official components of degree program curricula, will contribute to the achievement of the institutional goals of each Higher Education Institution, while also aligning with international and national recommendations regarding the transformations that education must consider going beyond the traditional threshold that has long prevailed in the educational system.

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