

**ACTIVE  
CITIZENSHIP,  
CIVIC  
ENGAGEMENT  
OF YOUNGSTER  
IN THE FINLAND  
EXPERIMENTATION**

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**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

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## ABSTRACT

Important outcomes of the **APP YOUR SCHOOL** project are Digital Ateliers (DA) where pupils learn among other skills civic engagement and active citizenship. This chapter studies how DA improve civic engagement and active citizenship skills, in particular in the Finnish experimentation.

## ASSIGNMENT

Active citizenship, civic engagement of youngster and the Digital Atelier.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Did the students participation in DA reinforce their active citizenship and civic engagement? If yes, describe which capacities were reinforced and their context at Munari & Manzi pedagogy.
2. From the teachers point of view how did the DA reinforce students' active citizenship and civic engagement skills? How can these skills be applied in the classroom ?
3. What methodology did the teachers use at reinforcement of civic engagement and active citizenship and are they visible at school's learning environment and general school activities?

## GENERAL BACKGROUND

Digital teaching and learning and the use of technology are completely integrated to the Finnish core curriculum and its applications in different municipalities in Finland. **APP YOUR SCHOOL** Digital Ateliers were executed in two schools of the City of Kuopio, Nilsia upper secondary school and Juankoski secondary and upper secondary school.

The basis of integration of technology in Finnish classroom starts from the early classes 1 and 2 (7-8-year pupils). During these years pupils learn the basic digital skills. The objectives of these two classes are for example how to turn on and off the computer, how to use a personalised username and password and how to log in to and log out of the applications. In addition, the pupils are taught to recognize different digital hardware and understand their function. Furthermore, the pupils are introduced to basic programming and to expressing his/her own experiences on the use of digital media.

Integration of technology in Finnish classroom is taken to a more advanced level during classes 3 to 6 (9-12-year pupils). During these years pupils learn more advanced digital skills. The objectives of these four classes are to deepen the pupils' knowledge of the use of different hardware, software and services and understanding of their use and functioning logics. Furthermore, at 12 years the pupils are able to use the keyboard fluently, capable to produce digital text and edit it and work on folders and in the digital environments of the school. In addition, pupils are able to create and edit pictures, sound, videos and animations as well as present information through tables, diagrams and presentation programmes and platforms. Classes 3 to 6 also provide the pupils with plenty of skills while working in group as well as deepen their programming skills.

Integration of technology in Finnish classroom is taken to an advanced level during classes 7 to 9 (13-15-year pupils). During these three years pupils fulfil their advanced ICT knowledge and digital skills. After the 9th grade pupils are fluent and autonomous at applying different hardware, software and digital learning tools. Production, editing and sharing of documents, tables and graphics is fluent and pupils have also introduced themselves to the use of layout programmes. After 9th grade the pupils' skills to create, edit and transmit pictures, sound, videos and animations are at an advanced level. Secondary school also deepens the pupils' skills at programming as well as at network architecture. Learning is conducted in different subjects (language classes, natural sciences and technology classes) as well as through individual and class exercises.

## ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP DEFINITION IN THE LITERACY

Youngsters should have growth into active, responsible, and enterprising citizens.

The students should be guided to act in a pluralistic society that understands diversity and respects human rights and equality in accordance with the values and principles of democracy. Taking part in voting is an important way of active citizenship.

Students should have a knowledge base of how the society works and how citizens can be involved as well as to encourage pupils to become independent societal and economic actors.

Skills in participation and involvement as well as a responsible attitude towards the future.<sup>2</sup>

## MULTILITERACY LINKED TO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The Digital Ateliers developed in the project are from various areas of life and skills. The subjects of Digital Ateliers are not purely from the sphere of definitions earlier of Active citizenship and civic engagement of youngster and that is why we have widen the idea of those activities to multiliteracy.

Multiliteracy means abilities to obtain, combine, modify, produce, present and evaluate information in different modes, in different contexts and situations, and by using various tools<sup>1</sup>.

The pupils need multiliteracy in order to interpret the world around them and to perceive its cultural diversity. Multiliteracy supports the development of critical thinking and learning skills. While developing it, the pupils also discuss and reflect ethical and aesthetic questions. Multiliteracy involves many different literacies that are developed in all teaching and learning. The pupils must have opportunities to practise their skills both in traditional learning environments and in digital environments that exploit technology and media in different ways.<sup>1</sup>

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DEFINITION

David E. Campbell's summarization says that «the increasingly common concern among many knowledgeable observers is that one-on-one volunteering has begun to supplant action directed at collective solutions to social problems, particularly among younger people.

Volunteering, social and political participation – roughly stated – adhere to the same mechanisms and logics: firstly, the same character traits benefitting volunteering also benefit civic engagement secondly, all concepts of strong civil society are grounded in high rates of volunteering and civic engagement thirdly, recent data on volunteering in the US show a strong correlation between volunteering and civic activities.

A recent summary points to several forms of engagement, among others, voluntary work, informal political action, activities with political implications, awareness-raising, altruistic acts and general social participation. What today's young people seem less interested in is engaging in «classic» civic participation forms like officially joining an organization or voting. For instance it was measured how young people express their political views; they found their informants did not use «classic channels» like joining political parties and voting. Rather, the youths were contacting officials, the mass media and talk shows, they were signing e-petitions, boycotting, canvassing, participating in protests and trying to persuade others.

The review therefore discusses research devoted to understanding any form of engagement aimed at influencing government policy (political), as well as involvement aimed at facilitating collective action (civic action). Such a wide definition might seem unsatisfying, but recent studies do not enable us to assume clear distinctions between the outlined political and civic forms of engagement.

These developments result in four major trends in civic engagement: firstly, scholars detect a shift from face-to-face interaction in long-lasting civic groups

to mediated interaction within fluctuating networks; secondly, individuals seem to move from value-based to consumerbased relations within the civic sphere; thirdly, civic engagement is shifting from diffuse horizontal involvement to centrally coordinated activities; fourthly, there is a shift from a kind of civic engagement mediated by associations to a direct involvement, or an engagement mediated by structures that are usually not defined as «civic».

The common denominators for changes in civic engagement are the transition from «traditional/classical/old» to «modern/new», from «collectivistic» to «individualistic», from «membershipbased» to «program-based», from «regular» to «episodic», and from «institutionalized» to «self-organized» types of engagement.

As already elaborated, contemporary young people's civic involvement seems to diverge significantly from «classic» forms such as organizing in groups, forming interest groups, becoming involved in a political party, etc.

It was noted how young people express their political views; they found their informants did not use «classic channels» like joining political parties and voting. Rather, the youths were contacting officials, the mass media and talk shows, they were signing e-petitions, boycotting, canvassing, participating in protests and trying to persuade others.

Studies conducted in the USA primarily focus on «volunteering». European studies, by contrast, are more concerned with «social engagement» and «political engagement».<sup>2</sup>

## YOUNGSTER WANT TO ACT WITH CITIZENSHIP

Individuals participate in civic activities because they (perhaps subconsciously) assume it will serve their purposes. Social scientists have identified five basic categories of egoistic motivation: career reasoning, gaining knowledge, personal development, esteem enhancement and social concerns<sup>2</sup> To explain more deeply these five items we can start from career reasoning.

Youngsters want to develop their career for example by presenting themselves with manifold digital ways. Using videos is good way to make CV to be send to employer and to get a job.

Gaining knowledge is of course the basic need for students and in many DA :s it is possible to get. Let us take example of museum games where students learn history.

Personal development means basically a lot of different things but perhaps the most important development can be done with social skills with the help of DA. First the usage of DA means working in team and with gaming applications.

Esteem enhancement can be achieved by pupils by performing demanding tasks in within DA. They can show to others how well they can handle digital applications.

Social concerns are present almost in all DA. The typical learning aspect is not emphasized in DA's. The co-operation with other students is more important. This enhances social skills.

## HOW SCHOOL CAN SUPPORT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

School can train practically civic engagement and civic activity during basic education.

The school should actively encourage the pupils to reinforce the participation of each pupil. The school environment offers a safe setting for this, while basic education also lays a foundation of competence for the pupils' growth into active citizens who use their democratic rights and freedoms responsibly.

**APP YOUR SCHOOL** project has initiated several Digital Ateliers where civic engagement and civic activity can be trained at the same time as pupils learn ordinary things like languages, mathematics, history, music etc.

The **APP YOUR SCHOOL** project and developed Digital Ateliers can enhance more active citizenship skills than civic engagement skills because civic engagement is more politically oriented skill and it is not included in school education program.

## DIGITAL ATELIERS, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN FINLAND

The Digital Ateliers in Finland were experimented for the first class students of upper secondary school, in which the students have passed through the aforementioned path of digital education. In the Finnish education system the teachers have the liberty to teach their subject and the curriculum-based topics as they personally best see fit, e.g. through textbooks, digital materials or project-based learning. The very basis of the system is that in Finland there is the requirement that every teacher has to pass a Master's Degree since early 1970s. At upper secondary school this means that every teacher has a Master's Degree including 2 to 3 subjects (e.g. as a language teacher Finnish, English, Swedish, German, French, Spanish or other languages) in addition to which they have pursued pedagogical studies. The high education of teachers and their liberty to choose the teaching methods was an excellent basis for the experimentation of Digital Ateliers and their direct integration to the local curriculum in Kuopio. The teachers participating to the experimentation have shared their knowledge and experiences both through internal electronic platforms as well as at teacher trainings in Kuopio.

The basis of the **APP YOUR SCHOOL** Digital Ateliers experiment in Finland was to explore new practises of language learning with the help of technological platforms, as well as practice students' creative and collaborative skills. At the first Digital Atelier the teacher experimented the use of Kahoot questionnaires at the development of students' English language capacities, vocabulary and their co-operative capabilities. At the second Digital Atelier the main goal was to encourage students of English language in independent and self-guided learning process during which they read an original English novel of their choice and create a digital visual book review through Storybird application and using the guidelines provided by the teacher. At the third Digital Atelier the students used Padlet application at understanding the link between language and thinking as well as becoming aware of the importance of one's mother tongue in the context of the languages in the world. At the fourth Digital Atelier was experimented with Seppo.io game platform which combines experimental, project-based learning and utilising technology in a real-life environment enhancing the problem-solving, creativity, teamwork and sharing of one's know-how skills of the students. At the fifth Digital Atelier the students were introduced to Socrative, which is a classroom app for fun, effective classroom engagement. No matter where or how you teach, Socrative allows you to instantly connect with students as learning happens. Socrative can be applied to any subject although in the Finnish experimentation it was applied at English language classes. The Finnish experimentation showed that combining 21st century technological skills to everyday life and creativity of the students and teachers is very rewarding and effective at enhancing our students' skills and their preparedness for the future world of work.

## SEPPO IO

### BRIEF PRESENTATION

Seppo IO is mobile game based on the map and it can be used as learning environment or simply quiding tool in the city, museums etc.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The usefulness of Seppo IO in practicing skills in the civic engagement and civic activity depend greatly on the app which is developed. In Finland experiment of Seppo IO was an application of museum guidance case. The used application promotes civic engagement in knowing arts. This is a very nice way to get a vision to the world of art which is essential part of the civic engagement and civic activity skills. Active citizenship cannot be seen in this app.

The Seppo IO trains ICT skills and also using smart phones with applications. Seppo IO shows the basic principles of gaming technology and ideas.

Kuopio city is using the Seppo IO in encouraging people to sport and to know the living environment.

## PADLETS

### BRIEF PRESENTATION

The main goal is to encourage the students in independent data acquisition, to share new information, to gain knowledge about the subject, to develop teamwork skills, to utilize ICT in completing the tasks and sharing the results. The goal is also to study by using analogical and digital methods.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The students are encouraged to use different working environments. The main area of civic engagement in this app is ICT engagement.

## STORYBIRD

The Storybird experiment is also at art field of books. Pupils learned to write a summary of a book. This DA has a strong effect on learning art. Teacher can guide the way of work because during the process teacher has this action. Again how this can enforce the civic engagement and civic activity skills is depending the chosen subject.

### BRIEF PRESENTATION

The main goal is to encourage students in independent and self-guided learning process during which they read an original English novel of their choice and create a visual book review using the guidelines provided by the teacher. They are also encouraged to gain multidisciplinary knowledge about the author and the context of the era present in the novel, to share new information with their fellow students, to utilize ICT in completing the tasks and sharing the results. The goal is also to study by using analogical and digital methods.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The students are encouraged to use different working environments, e.g. the public library. Civic engagement in this app goes to field of culture.

## KAHOOT

### BRIEF PRESENTATION

The main goal is to revise and learn new vocabulary and structures in a fun way using interactive quizzes/games/discussions/ surveys as format to share new information, to develop teamwork skills, to utilize ICT in completing the tasks and sharing the results. The goal is also to study by using analogical and digital methods.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The students are encouraged to use different working environments, e.g. the public library. Kahoot proceed international skills like language and team working skills.

## SOKRATES

### BRIEF PRESENTATION

Socrative is a tool to make exams for students. It allows to students to answer in many different ways. Socrative is your classroom app for fun, effective classroom engagement. No matter where or how you teach, Socrative allows you to instantly connect with students as learning happens. Quickly assess students with prepared activities or on-the-fly questions to get immediate insight into student understanding. Then use auto-populated results to determine the best instructional approach to most effectively drive learning.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Sokrates app is for testing learning outcomes. Students become familiar with learning curve and can compare learning results with each other. The Sokrates gives ideas to pupils what is important in learning if they develop exams to each other.

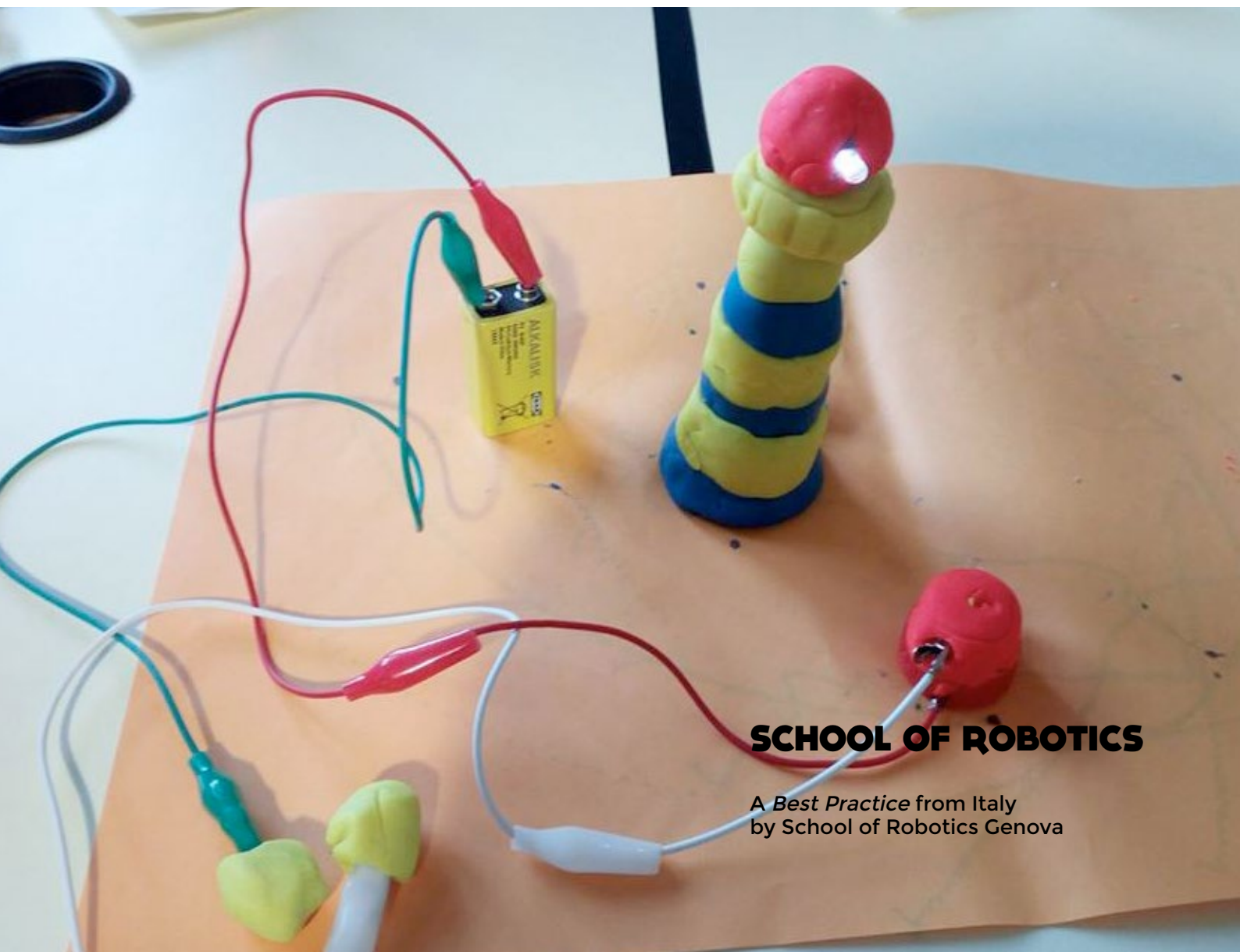
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