

**VIDEOCONFERENCE
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION DAYS
3-4 NOVEMBER 2020**

Conference report (draft)

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Vitor Tomé

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Synthesis

This document is the draft report on the Council of Europe videoconference titled "Digital Citizenship Education Days", which took place on 3-4 November 2020, in conjunction with the "États généraux du numérique pour l'éducation", organised by the French Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports on 4-5 November 2020.

Author

Vitor Tome

Supported by:

Alessandro Soriani
Edward Huddleston
Pascale Raulin-Serrier

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	WHAT	4
3	WHO	4
4	WHEN	5
5	WHERE	5
6	HOW	6
6.1	OFFERING SUPPORT TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS	6
6.2	CERTIFYING COMPETENCES	6
6.3	TRAINING TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND FAMILIES	6
6.4	TALKING WITH TEACHERS	7
6.5	RESEARCHING	7
6.6	INOVATING	7
6.7	ANALYSING DIGITAL PRACTICES	7
6.8	DESIGNING NEW CURRICULA	8
6.9	INFUSING DCE IN THE CURRICULA	8
7	WHY	8
8	WHAT FOR	8
9	COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S NEXT MAIN STEPS ON DCE	9

1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the draft report on the Council of Europe videoconference titled “Digital Citizenship Education Days”, which took place on 3-4 November 2020, in conjunction with the “États généraux du numérique pour l’éducation”, organised by the French Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports on 4-5 November 2020.

The videoconference brought together policy makers and practitioners including educators and school administrators from around Europe aiming to:

- Raise awareness of digital citizenship education and promote its development across European schools
- Provide an opportunity for education policy makers and practitioners to exchange views and share experiences of current developments in digital citizenship education in their own countries
- Consider the challenges and opportunities for digital citizenship education presented by the current crisis, and in particular, how policy and practice might be adapted to the needs of hybrid and distant forms of learning
- Present the work of the Council of Europe’s digital citizenship education project
- Mobilise education policy makers and practitioners to team up and support the development and promotion of digital citizenship education.

The conference introduced the Council of Europe’s Digital Citizenship Concept. Two keynote speakers, Dr Mike Ribble and Dr Renee Hobbs, provided their perspectives on digital citizenship, followed by three parallel sessions (five speakers each) aiming to explore and discuss about the following topics:

- Teacher training
- School practices
- School policies

The preliminary findings of the Digital Citizenship Education Survey conducted in May and June 2020 to learn more about parents’ views of digital citizenship were also presented on Day 2, which closed with the presentation of the final draft report on the conference.

Besides the Introduction, this report is organized in seven areas titled “What”, “Who”, “When”, “Where”, “How”, “Why”, and “What for”. The report closes referring the Council of Europe’s next steps on Digital Citizenship Education.

2 WHAT

This first section relies on the definitions of Digital Citizenship and Digital Citizenship Education. **Digital Citizenship** "... is hand in hand with Media Literacy and critical thinking" (Sjur Bergan, Renee Hobbs), consists on "...the continuously developing norms of appropriate, responsible, and empowered technology use" (...) to participate in a manner for the common good" (Mike Ribble), i.e., on "...the capacity to participate actively, continuously and responsibly in communities (local, national, global, online and offline) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural and intercultural)" (Michael Remmert).

Digital Citizenship Education refers to “the empowerment of learners of all ages through education or the acquisition of competences for learning and active participation in digital society to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities online, and to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law in cyberspace” (Recommendation CM Rec (2019)10).

3 WHO

DCE is everyone's responsibility, a key task for all stakeholders such as policy makers, teachers and school leaders, parents, students, associations and other.

Policy makers role were highly emphasized, namely the following two recent documents resulting from **Council of Europe’s** initiatives:

- a) Recommendation [CM Rec\(2019\)10](#) of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.
- b) [Ministerial Declaration](#) "Citizenship Education on the Digital era" (2019).

There was also a broad consensus around the idea that parents are key in the DCE equation, as referred by Parents International:

- a) School transformation should offer citizenship opportunities to engage in DCE as part of the continuum
- b) Trust and responsibility are values that need to be part of the school culture
- c) Learning by doing should be promoted as main approach
- d) We all are learners and educators - schools and families need to understand each other's realities.

Parents' role was also on spot because of the consultation with European parents (n=21042), implemented by the Council of Europe (DCE expert group) in May-June 2020, whose main results were presented on 4th November, stressing out that parents are willing to assume their role on DCE, but they need support to overcome several obstacles such as:

- a) There is a gap among families regarding access to digital devices and to good Internet connection
- a) Many parents are not talking with their children about online activities and content they find online
- b) Parents are asking for activity proposals that they can implement with their children, a website specifically aimed at them (multimedia-based content, namely on videos), and a rating system for websites that they can use to support their children.

4 WHEN

DCE was already a key need before the pandemic, it became even more urgent during the pandemic and it will continue as a crucial area after the pandemic, what demands the urgent organization of new and agile strategies to implement it in the next future.

A good example of this need is the community project "School changes, new scenarios", organized, leaded and implemented by the Agrupamento de Escolas do Cerco (Porto, Portugal), based in a low social economic level in an area of extreme poverty and social exclusion. The project is focused on news reporting practices and teaching skills of news literacy and it was important for the community living in the neighbourhood of the school grouping, especially empowering people on tackling disinformation, misinformation and malinformation.

Before the pandemic, the main subjects of the news stories were focused on school topics, city life, and community issues. During confinement, the project continued and the pandemic itself became the main subject. According to teachers' perception, children, students, and community members developed and are still developing their critical competences regarding media, showing that the project should continue after the pandemic.

5 WHERE

DCE should be implemented in all areas, whether they are formal, non-formal or informal learning contexts. Two examples referred how it was implemented in European schools involved in the pilot-project "DCE in Schools", organized by the DCE expert group in partnership with the DCE Promoters Network:

In Ukraine (11 schools involved), three main activities were developed:

- a) The sourcing and collation of materials and resources to use in schools, since the lockdown period itself had led to a boom in new resources, for parents as well as for teachers and pupils
- b) The provision of webinars both for information and awareness-raising among teachers, and, at least in one case, as an opportunity for 'student voice'
- c) The creation of a dictionary of digital terms

In Turkey (10 schools involved), the core activities were focused on awareness-raising among students and skills-building among teachers in the field of digital citizenship education. Some examples are:

- a) Creating content for digital books
- b) A pupil survey of internet safety
- c) An in-school pupil conference on privacy and security issues relating to digital technology
- d) Digital storytelling using QR codes publicised in public spaces
- e) Developing a blog page for a YouTube channel
- f) A pupil debate on the pros and cons of internet use and visual and textual analyses of online advertisements
- g) Initiatives in in-service teacher training focused on developing the digital competences of teachers, mainly through webinars, helping them to create digital environments geared at teaching and learning during lockdown and the creation of learning materials for online use in Turkey.

6 HOW

Different stakeholders can support DCE implementation in various levels, for instance supporting teachers getting over fear of making mistakes as it occurred during confinement (Renee Hobbs), reinforcing DCE in the curriculum, grating it the same importance as English or History have, and planning its gradual implementation (Mike Ribble), having in mind that trainers should use technology that children already use in real-life contexts (Donatella Solda, Anne Lehman).

A bunch of several ways to support the implementation of DCE were presented during the conference, as follows:

6.1 OFFERING SUPPORT TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Apart from its activity on sensitize national governments and other policy makers, the Council of Europe offers support in other core areas, namely:

- a) Pedagogical resources aimed at trainers and suitable for formal and non-formal learning contexts (a 10-minute presentation made at the beginning of the Parallel session A is available here)
- b) Direct national support from the DCE Promoters Network, which currently involves 30 members in 25 European countries (a 10-minute presentation made at the beginning of the Parallel session B is available here)
- c) Organizing and promoting school policies (a 10-minute presentation made at the beginning of the Parallel session C is available here)
- d) Resources for parents and consultation with parents (here)

6.2 CERTIFYING COMPETENCES

The Public platform PIX.FR, produced and made available by the French ministries of school and higher education, is a reliable tool for self-evaluation of digital competences, and includes a system to certify teachers' digital competences integrated with EU's DigComp.

The platform offers three levels of assessment of the digital competences:

- 1) Digital skills (PIX tests)
- 2) Digital skills (PIX tests) + teacher functions
- 3) Reflective analysis

6.3 TRAINING TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The Centre de liaison de l'enseignement et des médias d'information (CLEMI, France), established in the 80's, has a key role in the French Media Education landscape, namely:

- a) Producing pedagogical resources and acting as a go-between for the educational community and media professionals
- b) Training 30000 teachers annually via a strong network of 32 regional academic coordinators
- c) Monitoring the implementation of the French Training Standard on MIL for teachers and trainers (based on learning by doing methodologies).
- d) Acting as a continuum between school and parents by producing special materials for families
- e) Organizing the annual Press and Media Week at School where students experiment how to investigate like a journalist.

6.4 TALKING WITH TEACHERS

Virtually Viral Hangouts, a series of daily talks with teachers carried out by the **Media Education Lab (Rhode Island University, US)**, organised in four steps:

- a) Feel Safe (reducing teachers' anxiety regarding digital technology use)
- b) Emphatic listening (developing norms for dialogue and discussion among teachers)
- c) Guided & Open Inquiry (building teachers' Media Literacy skills)
- d) Care & responsibility towards others (taking advantage of the generated interconnectedness among teachers, promoting media production in group).

Teachers increased confidence in online self-expression, increased familiarity with digital tools, and improved emotional coping & life satisfaction

6.5 RESEARCHING

"eRISK project", a piece of qualitative research undertaken by **Bordeaux University (France)** on the attitudes and understandings of novice teachers (n=3130) around digital citizenship. It included interviews with new teachers, and workshops with groups of 15-year-old students comparing their perceptions with those of their teachers. The most significant finding of the research was that although the new teachers involved were 'digital natives' and confident of their expertise in this field they tended to have a narrow view of what might be involved in digital literacy in schools. Teachers tended to largely understand digital education largely in terms of alerting students to the 'psycho-social' dangers of using digital technology. Concerning the implications for the education of future teachers, results pointed the need to focus on real-life ethical issues raised by the use of digital technology in everyday life and development of students' competences to explore these issues critically.

6.6 INOVATING

The **Centro Zaffiria (Italy)** presented a set of DCE actions (focused on Media Education) during confinement, such as:

- a) Fostering students to use their smartphones actively
- b) Using Zoom's conference grid to create artistic installations
- c) Use public advertisements' boards to showcase students' works
- d) Use social network like Instagram, Tik Tok with different purposes
- e) Use ICT in a divergent way, in real-life contexts.

6.7 ANALYSING DIGITAL PRACTICES

The international association **Media Animation (Belgium)** pointed out the need of rethink and reflect on digital practices, namely:

- a) About the GAFAM dominant position
- b) If is there an accessibility paradox? When the hardware disappears, does it lead to digital illiteracy?

- c) On the “Ready to use” educational applications and services: do these pre-packed materials hinder teachers' reflexivity?
- d) Stop having an alarmist approach towards "screen exposure", and "balance between noble and futile media practices".

6.8 DESIGNING NEW CURRICULA

As it did two European research and/or EdTech hubs, such as **Future Education Modena (FEM, Italy)**, which is currently trying to scaling up, at national level and through a new platform, a Digital Education curriculum developed in three steps:

- a) Looking at the international situation and mapping out core topics for the Italian context (divided into five key areas)
- b) Putting together (with the Ministry of Education) a coalition more than 100 partners (e.g.: universities, government bodies, private companies, NGO) already working in this area, with a view to scaling up what was already available and offering it to schools
- c) Funding new activity in schools, both in co-operation with universities and a third partner to develop 25 innovative learning experiences and to provide activities for digital citizenship education in extra-curricular hours.

The **Zurich University (Switzerland)** is also finalizing a new competency-based curriculum on data protection named “Secrets are allowed”, whose activities were designed to make the children reflect about privacy, some of them consisting of roleplaying simulations crafted on children's culture. This curriculum will be available soon [here](#).

6.9 INFUSING DCE IN THE CURRICULA

The **Georgian Ministry of Education** has adopted a new National Curriculum in September 2020, which includes two subjects that cover all the relevant DCE:

- a) Computer technologies (Primary level) where topics included are the balance between virtual and real life / Rights online / Norms of informational ethics / Privacy online / Safety online
- b) Civic education (Secondary level) with other topics such as Cyberbullying / Empathy / Hate speech/ Online harassment

In addition the new Teachers' Qualification Standard (main document for teacher policy in Georgia) establishes that teachers have to be aware of DCE and take into account i) Personal data protection principles; ii) Information verification principles; iii) Cyber hygiene; iv) Prevention of cyberbullying and hate speech in the virtual learning environment; v) Netiquette principles.

The ten Council of Europe dimensions are integrated into the new Ukrainian curriculum, adopted in September 2020, which includes learning outcomes specified for each grade. Besides this important development, the **Ukrainian Ministry of Education** is currently working on introducing Digital Citizenship Education into pre-school as the next step forward in Ukraine.

7 WHY

Why is Digital Citizenship Education so crucial and urgent? Why are we so committed to discuss on this topic?

“We are here because of disinformation, propaganda, exploitation of our emotions, conspiracy culture, global protests, extremism and violence that results from that” (Renee Hobbs)

8 WHAT FOR

Digital Citizenship Education is a thorough way to prepare digital citizens, which is a current need, since “More than prepare someone for the future, schools must empower learners to shape the future” (Sjur Bergan). In the digital citizenship society citizens must be “safe, savvy and social learners, able to analyze, evaluate, create and apply what they learn”, evolving this way “from literate users to fluent users” (Mike Ribble), capable to be active

actors that are continuously preserving and defending Democracy, Human Rights, Rule of Law, i.e. accomplishing the Council of Europe's main missions.

9 COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S NEXT MAIN STEPS ON DCE

According to Michael Remmert, Head of the Education Policy Division, the **Council of Europe's** next steps regarding Digital Citizenship are the following ones:

- Model DCE curriculum
- Online training program for teachers
- Expansion of the DCE Promoters network
- DCE website as a hub for online resources
- Policies on digital education