

NETHERLANDS

Education in Citizenship in the Netherlands: Research and Practice

Many find it important that schools contribute to the citizenship of students. In the Netherlands, schools have a statutory obligation to do so. Yet many schools and teachers find it difficult to develop meaningful citizenship education. On the basis of a literature review and six case studies of schools in primary and secondary education, we show that developing approaches towards citizenship education can be a demanding but also feasible task for schools. We start by describing the concept of citizenship and offering a short overview of research on citizenship competences of young people and effective citizenship education. Based on both the international literature and the case studies of Dutch schools, we then sketch the characteristics of schools relevant to citizenship education: an open school climate, curriculum content, the school's relationship with its environment and making connections with the students' everyday life.