

# Teachers' perceptions and attitudes as preventers of diversity: the case of citizenship education in Ukraine and Poland

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# Teachers' personal epistemologies

- Personal epistemologies are commonly taken to include individual beliefs, views, and attitudes about a particular subject; hence, they can be considered a “personal knowledge framework”. (Schulz R., 2014).
- Teachers may hold well-developed, potentially powerful belief systems about education that are incompatible with established bodies of knowledge from relevant fields, such as the educational and learning sciences (Menz et al., 2021).
- Beliefs are likely to influence their interactions with educational theories and research (Ferguson et al., 2022).
- Beliefs act as a filter for experience and practice and directly impact attitudes of educators toward specific educational issues and topics. The study of personal knowledge frameworks may explain gaps between policy and practice.
- The linkage between education and democracy at the educator level is important as it may have far-reaching implications for the delivery of teaching and learning that subsequently influences how students relate to, and do, democracy (Lund & Carr, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) within the classroom, the school and, more broadly, at the societal level.



Dorota Zdybel. **Mapping teachers' personal epistemologies—Phenomenographical approach.** Thinking Skills and Creativity 38, 100722, 2020.<sup>2</sup>





## All-Ukrainian survey "Democracy in education: examining the experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of democracy in primary teacher education in Ukraine"

- 274 students (fourth and fifth years of study)  
and 110 teacher educators of  
specialty 013 "Primary education"

- Teacher educators and students (future primary school teachers) from six  
Ukrainian Pedagogical Universities:

National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (Kyiv),

Donbass State Pedagogical University (Slovyansk),

"Chernihiv Collegium" National Shevchenko University (Chernihiv),

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsyubynsky State Pedagogical University (Vinnitsia),

Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (Ivano-Frankivsk),

Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University

**II. Questionnaire answers: teachers**  
**The total number of respondents is 110.**

**2.1. Basic information**

**Your age**

*Table 1.1. Age of respondents*

Age	Number	%	
up to 30 years	6	5,5	■
31-40	32	29,1	■
41-50	36	32,7	■
51-60	29	26,4	■
61 and above	7	6,4	■

**Gender**

*Table 1.2. Gender of respondents*

Gender	Number	%	
Female	103	93,6	■
Male	7	6,4	■

**Teaching experience**

*Table 1.3. Teaching experience*

Number of years	Number	%	
less than 10 years	11	10,0	■
11-20 years	40	36,4	■
more than 20 years	59	53,6	■

**Your education level**

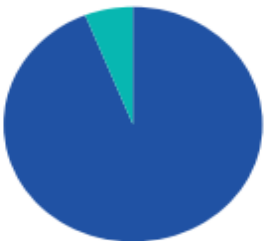
*Table 1.4. Level of education*

Education level	Number	%	
Master	14	12,7	■
PhD	88	78,2	■
Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences	8	7,3	■

*Figure 1.1. Age of respondents*



*Figure 1.2. Gender of respondents*



*Figure 1.3. Teaching experience*



*Figure 1.4. Level of education*



The average  
portrait of a  
modern teacher  
educator



## 2.4. How democratic do you consider the educational system in which you received your education?

Select one answer on the scale (1 – not very democratic; 5 – very democratic)

*Table 2.2.4. The level of democracy in the education system in which you study*

Mark	Number	%	
1	18	16,4	very low
2	24	21,8	low
3	37	33,6	middle
4	25	22,7	high
5	6	5,5	very high

*Figure 2.2.4. The level of democracy in the education system in which you study*



## 2.2.5. How democratic do you consider the educational system in which you work in?

Select one answer on the scale (1 – not very democratic; 5 – very democratic)

*Table 2.2.5. The level of democracy in the education system in which you work*

Mark	Number	%	
1	9	8,2	very low
2	13	11,8	low
3	32	29,1	middle
4	42	38,2	high
5	14	12,7	very high

*Figure 2.2.5. The level of democracy in the education system in which you work*



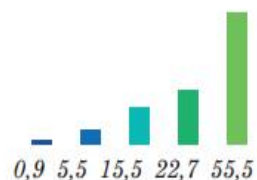
## 2.2.6. Do you think that teachers should teach democracy?

(Teachers should teach about democracy) (1 – they definitely shouldn't; 5 – they definitely should do it)

*Table 2.2.6. Teachers should teach about democracy*

Mark	Number	%	
1	1	0,9	definitely shouldn't
2	6	5,5	should not
3	17	15,5	rather they should
4	25	22,7	should
5	61	55,5	definitely should do it

*Figure 2.2.6. Teachers should teach about democracy*



The study showed a positive dynamic of democratic transformation of the educational space. The questionnaire for teacher educators asked about the level of democracy in the education system in which they studied and in which they are teaching now. Thus, 16.4% of teachers believe that the level of democracy was very low, 21.8% – low, 33.6% – medium, 22.7% – high, 5.5% – very high at the time when they were educated. And now, the educational system in which they work has the following level of democratization: very low -8.2%, low – 11.8%, medium – 29.1%, high – 38.2%, very high 12.7%.

Comparison of teachers' answers of different ages to the question  
„How democratic do you consider the educational system in which you received  
your education?“

Age	Average value	Median	Number
up to 30 years	3,57	4,00	7
31–40	3,13	3,00	32
41–50	2,44	3,00	36
51–60	2,72	3,00	29
61 and above	2,71	3,00	7

The assessment of the democracy of the  
education system in which the youngest teachers  
(up to 30 years old) are trained  
is higher than all those who are older.

# Understanding the concept of "democracy"

The “thin” notion of democracy and teaching “about” democracy dominate in the Ukrainian pedagogical education.

- "thin" understanding of democracy implies giving the most attention to the elections and institutions of liberal democracy, providing teachers with the skills and knowledge to teach democracy (Biseth, 2018).
- "thick" understanding of democracy goes beyond electoral and legislative processes, the rule of law and fundamental civil rights, and seeks to develop students' understanding of collective citizenship and civic action. A "thick" understanding of democracy implies the emergence of a "social citizen", an individual who is constantly interacting with others and capable of reflection (Zyngier, 2012).

5.5% of teachers  
characterize  
democracy as  
equality

For 29% of teachers,  
democracy is associated  
with freedom of  
speech/expression

61% of teacher educators  
understand the concept  
of “democracy” as a form of  
government/power of the people





## "good" citizenship

Westheimer (2019) posits three models of "good" citizenship:

- personally responsible citizen;
- participatory citizen;
- social justice-oriented citizen.

only 6.3% of respondents characterized a "good citizen" as a person oriented to justice

The definition of 23.4% of respondents belongs to the second type of "good citizen", who actively participates in public life

67.3% of respondents believe a "good" citizen is a law-abiding citizen

As indicated by Myers (2016) and Westheimer (2019) the lack of agreement on the models to be developed makes that in practice a model focused on developing good character and promoting patriotic attitudes is promoted, making invisible models that value the development of critical thinking and democratic attitudes.



**Table 2.** Comparison of teachers' answers of different ages to the question "Are you politically involved?"

Age	Average value	Median	Number
up to 30 years	1,71	2,00	7
31–40	2,00	2,00	32
41–50	2,33	2,00	36
51–60	2,24	2,00	29
61 and above	4,00	4,00	7

**Table 3.** Comparison of teachers' answers of different ages to the question "Do you consider yourself to be an actively engaged citizen?"

Age	Average value	Median	Number
up to 30 years	2,86	3,00	7
31–40	3,09	3,00	32
41–50	3,11	3,00	36
51–60	3,41	3,00	29
61 and above	4,00	4,00	7

## Active citizenship and political participation

- The vast majority of respondents state that they are not politically involved, but consider themselves active citizens.
- The older the teacher, the more he/she is involved in political life, with up to 40 years political activity is rather low, from 40 to 60 years it is almost unchanged and is average, and for people over 60, political activity is well above average. Correlation analysis (according to Spearman) showed a weak direct correlation at a high level of significance ( $r = 0.25$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ) between age and level of political activity.
- The civic activity of teachers increases with age: from the activity of the average level to 30 years and to rather high activity at the age over 60. Correlation analysis (according to Spearman) showed the presence of weak direct correlation at a sufficient level of significance ( $r = 0.21$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) between age and level of civic engagement.

# Level of personal civic activity

The level of personal civic activity influences the process of teaching democratic citizenship. We found a statistically significant difference between the distribution of responses of teachers with low and high civic activity ( $p = 0.003$ , Mann-Whitney U-test). Half of the low-activity teachers chose an intermediate answer (3 points) to the question about the amount of attention they paid to citizenship education. Teachers with a high level of activity often gave 4 and 5 points, i.e. highly appreciate their attention to this issue.

**Table 4.** Comparison of answers to questions "How much attention do you pay to teaching citizenship in teacher education?" teachers with high and low civic activity

Level	Average value	Median	Number
Teachers with low civic activity	2,94	3	24
Teachers with high civic activity	3,54	3	41

Score	teachers with low civic activity %	teachers with high civic activity %
1	8,3	2,4
2	20,8	14,6
3	50,0	36,6
4	8,3	19,5
5	12,5	26,8

# Challenges to developing citizenship education

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46% of teachers reported various organizational barriers as major challenges to teaching democratic citizenship.





# Alienation of knowledge about democracy

Research showed the presence of some alienation of knowledge about democracy and narrowing it down to a separate discipline – the introduction of a separate subject, additional hours for teaching. The survey showed that for 16.5% of teachers the introduction of democracy in the educational process is associated only with the introduction of a separate subject, additional hours, and their teaching. Only 4.5% of teachers see improvements in the implementation of democracy through an interdisciplinary approach.





20.1% of students noted that the authoritarian style of teaching and unwillingness to change is one of the main obstacles to improving the teaching of democracy.

In turn, only 13.6% of teachers outlined this problem as an obstacle.

- A 1925 poster by Rodchenko A. extols 'Books for all branches of knowledge.'

Rudiments of the Soviet system

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# Challenges to democracy in universities during war







In the midst of military operations, schools and education facilities continue to be at risk. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine reported that 3062 educational institutions have been damaged by bombing and shelling, while 265 have been completely destroyed.



1. Are the manifestations of gender inequality in higher education tangible and how are they expressed?

2. Has (and how) the state of gender equality in higher education in Ukraine changed since the beginning of the war?

# **New inequalities in higher education in times of war**

3. Have new types of inequalities appeared and how university professors feel new social expectations?

Timeframe: 9-14 of July, 2022

Number of respondents: 54 professors of 14 Ukrainian universities

Method of survey: online questionnaire, shared within research networks



# New Inequalities

## Men and mobility

35% of respondents reported on new types of inequality and discrimination appeared in Ukraine during the war.

Male professors have a deferment from service in the Armed Forces but cannot go abroad (as men 18-60 are prohibited from leaving, with some exceptions).

According to some male professors, their career suffers from this.

At the same time, male professors can voluntarily join the ranks of the Armed Forces, and some have already done so. Some male faculty (who do not serve in Armed Forces) complain that the "professor-military serviceman" is now a socially supported ideal that they do not live up to.

Добавить нижний колонтитул





- 40-49, male, over 20 years of teaching experience

***Men, regardless of their ability to fight, must not leave the country***

- 50-59, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience

***I am waiting for my mobilization to the ranks of the Armed Forces***

- 30-39, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience

***Expectations of society - a teacher serving in the Armed Forces***



- 40-49, female, up to 20 years of teaching experience

***Expectations relate to requests from management that a woman-professor, a woman-manager should be in the workplace, even though she is primarily responsible for the children. There is a conflict - whether the children are safe or whether to stay at the workplace***

- 30-39, female, up to 10 years of teaching experience

***Expecting another contribution to the victory, since I do not fight: volunteering, donating***

- 40-49, female, over 20 years of teaching experience

***They expect you to work more and get less money. After all, it's war***

- 30-39, female, up to 10 years of teaching experience

***Expectation to work overtime***



# New Inequalities

## Distance work

52% of respondents mentioned the different attitudes of the university administration toward employees who are physically present at workplaces and those who perform work remotely (moved to safer regions/countries).

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## Male, 40-49, up to 20 years of the university experience

- *Artificial pressures to create a "critical, mandatory need to be at work in person", which is actually resolved in the online format if desired*

## Female, 40-49, up to 20 years of the university experience

- *The management, especially the male part, does not think about where a woman should send her children when she goes to work, and what she should do if she has no one to leave the children with. No attention is paid to safety at work.*

## Female, 20-29, up to 5 years of the university experience

- *Division of women in the presence of children, if a woman has children, she are treated with more understanding than those who have not yet given birth*





# Developing responsible citizenship in university: case of Poland

Timeframe: March 1 – May 10, 2023

Number of respondents: 51 university professors (37% women, 63% men) from 18 Polish public and private universities

Method of research: Professors were suggested to answer the questionnaire (online questionnaire, shared within research networks) and the participation in an interview and focus group was an optional variant, 51 university professors filled in the questionnaire and 17 university professors were interviewed, 2 focus groups were conducted.



# The most important citizenship values

47% responsibility

41,2 % -  
cooperation with  
others and  
solidarity

35, 3 % - active  
participation in  
social life

17, 7 % -  
patriotism

17, 7 % -  
respect (for laws,  
environment,  
society)

17, 7 % -  
critical thinking

11, 8 % -  
tolerance.

11, 8%-  
democracy

# What are the most important citizenship skills that should be elaborated during studies in university

35,3% of respondents mentioned political participation

29,4% - critical thinking

23,5% - cooperation, group work

29,4% - responsible behavior

11,8 % - creativity

23, 5% - communication skills

**30-39, male, up to 5 years of teaching experience**

Responsible citizenship for me is the conscious exercise of the rights guaranteed to me by the constitution of my country and the fulfillment of the obligations imposed on me by the achievements of civilization and the heritage of the political culture of my nation

**50-59, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience**

Performing my family and professional duties, getting informed about social and political development in my country, voting in political elections, publicly expressing my views

**30-39, female, up to 10 years of teaching experience**

fulfilling duties, acting for other people and animals, behaving in accordance with the values and principles

**40-49, female, up to 20 years of teaching**

We can look to this term in a wide extent. Firstly, it is connected to our responsible attitude to our environment and society, on the other hand it is connected with the responsibility for people, for example help them to overcome digital exclusion, managing cultural diversity, discrimination prevention, increasing quality of life in society

Individualistic citizenship. To be a citizen is to act responsibly, complying with the rules. 70, 5 %

Participatory citizenship. To be a citizen is to collaborate, contribute and cooperate with the environment in which you live, as part of a whole. Awareness that the action you take affect others. 17,7%

Democratic and transformative citizenship. To be a citizen is to think and critically question the rules and problems of social environment in which one lives, developing skills and strategies to change reality, in search of social justice. 11,8%

**30-39, female, up to 5 years of teaching experience**

Responsible exercise of citizens' rights

**40-49, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience**

possessed human rights, respecting them by themselves and society, the state, and the economy

**30-39, female, up to 5 years of teaching experience**

For me, it means active participation in public life (voting in elections at the state and local level, paying taxes, civic activity - e.g. participation in protests, demonstrations, activity related to caring for the environment, ecology).

**30-39, female, up to 10 years of teaching**

First, it taking care on other people and environment. It is about being together with people, taking care on relationships, being kind and honest with other people, being attentive to many problems, being active in a democratic way as we are responsible for the shape of our country



# Local citizenship

The study showed the predominance of local discourse in the university professors' understanding of the concept of education for responsible citizenship.

Defining the concept of responsible citizenship 33,3% of university professors highlighted the importance of local engagement, using the narratives such as "local activity", "commitment to the country you live in", "activity for the local community", "national identity", etc.

While no one of the professors mentioned the global or even European dimension of citizenship or its components. The findings of this study support previous research that pointed out that citizenship education in Poland emphasizes preserving tradition, transmitting national heritage, and emphasizing the history and knowledge of the country, its institutions, and law (Kopińska, 2019) and statements reported in the study "Implementation of citizenship education actions in the EU"(2021), which states that recent shifts in citizenship education in Poland can be termed 'preaching national orientation'.

30-39, male, up to 5 years of teaching experience: "Responsible citizenship is first, belonging to one's country, and national identity, second, pride for one's country, third, awareness of the historical and geographical features of one's country."

40-49, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience "Responsible citizenship is commitment to the country in which one lives, enriching its civilization achievements, serving with one's knowledge, skills and attitudes."

# Challenges faced by university professors in implementing citizenship education

a) *Low civic activity of young people.* 47% of professors outlined low activity of students, lack of interest and indifference of young people, and social exclusion as the main challenges in developing responsible citizenship during university studies.

50-59, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience:

“The main obstacle is the passivity of students, indifference to the events of social life, individualism”.

30-39, male, up to 5 years of teaching experience: “The main challenges are axiological challenges - students are less and less interested in acting for other people”.

# Challenges faced by university professors in implementing citizenship education

b) *Challenges of politicization and lack of university autonomy.* 41,2% of professors mentioned the lack of academic freedom and excessive political regulation at university as well as overall ideological narratives as important challenges.

50-59, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience “It is difficult to overcome the challenges of ideologies. Young people tend to hold quite extreme views on social questions and their attitudes are very emotional”

30-39, female, up to 5 years of teaching experience: “The biggest challenges are problems related to restrictions on academic freedom and independence of universities. Discussing some topics with students (for example, LGBT community issues) can cause a negative reaction from university authorities.”



# Challenges faced by university professors in implementing citizenship education

## c) Financial issues.

35,3 % of professors noticed that financial challenges are in place.

40-49, male, up to 20 years of teaching experience "Knowledge must be constantly developed and improved, and not satisfied with the knowledge already obtained. This requires financial resources, which are sometimes lacking."

30-39, female, up to 5 years of teaching experience: "Challenges related to financial problems associated with limiting opportunities, for example, expanding one's own knowledge and sharing experiences, for example, during conferences."

# Lack of attention to the digital dimension of citizenship and media literacy

11,8 % of Polish professors indicated some aspect of digital citizenship and media literacy in regard to citizenship education.

“Forming responsible attitudes early through the family, school, the media, and social environment is essential.... When we give examples that refer to facts, preferably the most recent ones, such as those that have been talked about recently in the media, we better influence students' consciousness.”

“Helping others to overcome digital exclusion is important part of being responsible citizenship.”

What can/should be done to improve democracy in Ukraine?\

## How to improve the education / training of education for democratic citizenship in educational curricula of pedagogical universities?

Only 2 Ukrainian professors (1,8%) mentioned media as facilitator to citizenship education. No one indicated any digital dimension of citizenship education (digital tools, digital citizenship, etc).

“It is worthwhile to begin to form democratic values of the country, organically including this work to the programs; broadcast democratic values to society through appropriate measures, content of the media and the Internet, to form an active civic position of adult and youth.”

“Introduce courses in schools / colleges, trainings, cover the topic on the media, hold meetings and debates To raise the cultural level of citizens.”





# Thank you!

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