

The Citizenship Education Assignment in Dutch Secondary Schools:

A qualitative research regarding teachers' perspectives on citizenship education programs
and to what extent can *Dreamocracy* help teachers fulfil the citizenship education
assignment.



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Abstract

Since 2006 citizenship education is compulsory in Dutch education system. Through semi-structured interviews of nine social studies teachers of different levels of secondary education and one of Dreamocracy's main program developers, the current study aimed to gain an insight into the extent in which Dreamocracy can support social studies teachers on the fulfillment of the citizenship education assignment. Dreamocracy makes use of Kolb's experiential learning cycle to influence students' agency, described in the current study as students' active participation within society. The four steps within this cycle are: 1) concrete experience, 2) reflective observation, 3) abstract conceptualization and 4) active experimentation. Teachers were asked about their needs and perspectives regarding external citizenship education programs in general and about their perspectives on the working elements of Dreamocracy 1) simulation, 2) reflection and 3) storytelling by real world experts. Results show that the working elements of Dreamocracy are promising, however there is a mismatch between the implementation of Dreamocracy and the needs and perspectives of social studies teachers. It is expected that a match can be achieved if Dreamocracy give teachers an active role within their program, transform the program into a series of lessons that can be implemented structurally, and if they include the fourth step of Kolb's experiential learning cycle in every version of the program by including activities where students apply the knowledge and skills gained during the program.

Keywords: Citizenship education, active citizenship, teacher's needs, experiential learning theory, Dreamocracy

Samenvatting

Al sinds 2006 is burgerschap een verplicht onderdeel van het Nederlandse onderwijs. Met behulp van semi-gestructureerd interviews van negen maatschappijleerdocenten uit alle niveaus binnen het voortgezet onderwijs en één interview met één van de programmaontwikkelaars van Dreamocracy, wil dit onderzoek antwoord geven op de vraag: In hoeverre kan Dreamocracy maatschappijleerdocenten in het voortgezet onderwijs ondersteunen bij het vervullen van de burgerschapsopdracht? Dreamocracy maakt gebruik van de experiential learning cyclus van Kolb om de ‘agency’ van studenten te beïnvloeden, beschreven in de huidige studie als de actieve participatie van studenten binnen de maatschappij. De vier stappen in deze cyclus zijn: 1) concrete ervaring, 2) reflectieve observatie, 3) abstracte conceptualisatie en 4) actieve experimenteren. Docenten zijn bevraagd om hun behoeftes rondom externe burgerschapseducatie programma’s in het algemeen te delen. Daarnaast, zijn docenten bevraagd om hun perspectieven te delen over drie werkende elementen van Dreamocracy 1) simulaties, 2) reflecties en 3) verhalen vertellen door real world experts. De resultaten tonen aan dat de werkende elementen van Dreamocracy veelbelovend zijn, maar er is een discrepantie tussen de implementatie van Dreamocracy en de behoeften en perspectieven van maatschappijleerdocenten. Er wordt verwacht dat een match bereikt kan worden als Dreamocracy leerkrachten een actieve rol geven binnen hun programma, het programma omvormen in een reeks lessen die structureel geïmplementeerd worden, en als ze de vierde stap van de experiential learning cyclus van Kolb opnemen in alle versies van Dreamocracy door activiteiten te doen waarbij studenten de tijdens het programma opgedane kennis en vaardigheden toepassen.

Keywords: Burgerschapsonderwijs, actief burgerschap, behoefte docenten, experiential learning theory, Dreamocracy

The citizenship education assignment in Dutch secondary schools

Different European countries, including the Netherlands, have introduced compulsory citizenship education into school curricula in order to “support students in becoming active, informed and responsible citizens, who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and for their communities at the local, regional, national and international level” (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, p. 9). In contemporary Western literature citizenship is related to democracy (Eidhof, 2019; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018) where it is seen as being actively involved in society at local or national level (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

In the Netherlands the citizenship education assignment has three key points (SLO, 2015a). The first one is that the education assumes that students grow up in a multiform society. This means that schools have to teach children that they live in a society where differences exist (e.g., religion, educational level and politics). The second point is that education should be aimed at ensuring that students have knowledge of and become acquainted with different backgrounds and cultures of their peers. The third point is that education should be aimed at promoting active citizenship. Active citizens possess democratic skills, they think critically and participate in democratic activities (Eidhof, 2019; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018).

Research has shown that promoting democratic skills in school can be an effective way to promote the active participation of adolescents (Feldman, Pasek, Romer, & Jamieson, 2007; Reichert & Print, 2018). People are not born as democratic citizens (Eidhof, 2019) and democratic skills are not transferred from one generation to another (De Winter, 2011; Reichert & Print, 2018). These skills need to be practiced, understood and internalized by the individuals within a society. An effective way to teach students these skills is through active participation techniques (Akella, 2010; Keating, Kerr, Benton, Lopes & Featherstone, 2009).

For example, at school students can acquire critical thinking skills by debating, discussing and reflecting on different topics (Guérin, Ploeg, Sins, 2013; Kim, Parks & Beckerman 1996; SLO, 2015b) such as democracy and dictatorship. An empirical study done by Tonge, Mycock & Jeffrey (2012) showed that adolescents who received citizenship education in school are more likely to be engaged with society (e.g., volunteering, voting or debating).

Despite the mentioned benefits of implementing citizenship education in school curricula (Munniksma et al., 2017; Tonge et al., 2012), the Dutch citizenship education assignment is still not clear enough for schools and teachers (Munniksma et al., 2017; Onderwijsraad, 2012). A cross-cultural study done by Lee & Fouts (2005) including five different countries showed that ‘good citizenship’ remains a subjective construct. While teachers from primary school were inclined to relate ‘good citizenship’ with taking care of others, secondary school teachers were inclined to relate ‘good citizenship’ with democracy in general (e.g., voting, discussing and debating). Moreover, results from a longitudinal study done in England shows that teachers experience the implementation of active participation techniques to promote citizenship as time-consuming (Keating et al., 2009). Besides this, they also lack knowledge, skills and resources to implement this optimally. In line with this, Radstake & Leeman (2010) did a qualitative study regarding teacher’s perception on citizenship education in the Netherlands and found that more than half of the participating teachers did not feel they are optimally equipped to fulfill the citizenship education assignment. Just like Radstake & Leeman (2010) study, several studies have focused on teacher’s perception on the implementation of the citizenship education assignment and not on what is still lacking to successfully form active citizens.

With a focus on contributing to make adolescents active democratic citizens, the citizenship education program *Dreamocracy* was developed. Dreamocracy’s developers worked with refugees who shared their thoughts on democracy with them which helped them

understand the value democracy through someone else's perspective. Through brainstorming together with refugees, field experiences and somewhat literature the first concept of the program was developed. The name Dreamocracy came from the idea of dreaming of democracy. Within this program students between the ages of 10 and 18 of all educational levels except special education are confronted with exercises and stories that gives them the experience on what living in a non-democratic society is like. Dreamocracy's goal is to teach children the value of democracy by experiencing three main topics: diversity, equal opportunities and freedom of speech and opinion (Dreamocracy, 2019). Students experience and get to think about how a democratic society works (e.g., negotiate and discuss) and they are also encouraged to think critically about the current democracy. These activities are carried out by refugees or Real World Experts (RWE) as they are called within the program. Different than other programs such as *Verhaal van een vluchteling* (Critical Mass, 2019), RWE's do not tell their flight story but their story prior to fleeing. They are dedicated to teaching children about dictatorship, lack of freedom and how democracy is not something that naturally exist but something that is created and sustained together with the community.

Dreamocracy had a pilot year in 2017-2018 and since then it has been mostly implemented in secondary schools (Dreamocracy, 2019). The program is a practice-based program, where with the feedback of teachers and students together with the knowledge of the developers, the program is continuously modified to reach best practices through expert knowledge and experiences (Van Yperen et al., 2017). However, it still remains unclear for the organization to what extent Dreamocracy fit the perspectives and needs of teachers regarding the citizenship education assignment. Therefore, the current research study aims to answer the following question: *To what extent can Dreamocracy support social studies teachers on the fulfillment of the citizenship education assignment in Dutch secondary schools?* To answer the main question the current research is split into two different studies.

Study 1 aimed to provide a descriptive indication of Dreamocracy by describing the four core elements of the program as suggested by Van Yperen, Veerman & Bijl (2017, p. 38): 1) goals, 2) targeted audience, 3) approach and 4) context. The first core element focuses on what the program wants to achieve. The second core element is the targeted group where it is explained to which particular group the program is aimed for. Within the approach, the strategies, techniques, frequency, duration and phases of the program are described for a thorough understanding of the content. The last core element describes the context in which the program can be implemented optimally (i.e., what is needed).

By describing these core elements Dreamocracy is able to climb to stage 1 of the effect ladder, which is an intervention developmental model (Van Yperen et al., 2017). This model aims to support program developers in the practice-based development of their intervention by offering concrete guidelines in how to achieve different stages of evidential value. The effect ladder has five different stages and within each stage there are suggested research methods on how to achieve the stage. Furthermore, during the description of the third core element in study 1 a first attempt is made for an initial theoretical substantiation of Dreamocracy. A theoretical substantiation is particularly important to describe because it explicitly states how and why the action carried out in the program leads to the goal within the targeted group in that particular context (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004).

Moreover, study 2 aimed to answer the following question: *What are teachers' perspectives on citizenship education programs and the three elements in Dreamocracy's approach?* Firstly, study 2 aimed into gain insight in teachers' perspectives on and their needs regarding external citizenship education programs in general. Secondly, teachers were asked about three important elements of *Dreamocracy* which stem from the third core element described in study 1.

In the following sections the method and results of study 1, and the method and results of study 2 are described separately. Afterwards, in the discussion section both studies will be taken together to answer the main research question, which is: *To what extent can Dreamocracy support social studies teachers on the fulfillment of the citizenship education assignment in Dutch secondary schools?*

Study 1

Method

Design & Participant

A qualitative design with a semi-structured interview was chosen for this study due to the explicit focus on the interviewee's perspectives, thoughts and reasonings (Baarda, 2013; Boeije, 2010; Galletta & Cross, 2013). For this first study the Dreamocracy's main program developer was interviewed due to her significant role in the development of the program. Furthermore, a document analysis was done, and a literature review was held to get an insight in and provide an initial theoretical substantiation of the elements within Dreamocracy.

Instrument

For the semi-structured interview, a topic list was made based on Van Yperen et al. (2017) four core elements to reach stage 1 on the effect ladder: 1) goals, 2) targeted audience, 2) approach and 4) context (Appendix A). Furthermore, for the literature review Google Scholar and Scopus were used to gather relevant literature. The following keywords were used: citizenship education, experiential learning, simulation, experience and transformative knowledge, use of narrative. Articles that were not from social sciences (e.g., engineering) were excluded. This exclusion criteria reduced the literature significantly. Furthermore, articles prior to 2009 were also excluded. Afterwards the articles were first scanned by reading the title, the abstract and the conclusion to see if it fits the subject scope within this

research. The information gathered from the chosen literature served as the first step towards a first attempt on theoretical substantiation of Dreamocracy.

Procedure & Analysis

The interview was held by the researcher self and there was no second interviewer present. Before the interview started, the researcher had an informal conversation with the participant. The participant was reminded that the interview is being recorded and that although there was no known risk the interviewee has the right to stop the interview at any given moment. The analysis of the interview with the main program was done through NVivo 12 by categorizing the data in open, axial and selective codes. The analysis led to some uncertainties which were followed by up further questioning to clarify the data and increase the validity of the data (Baarda et al., 2013).

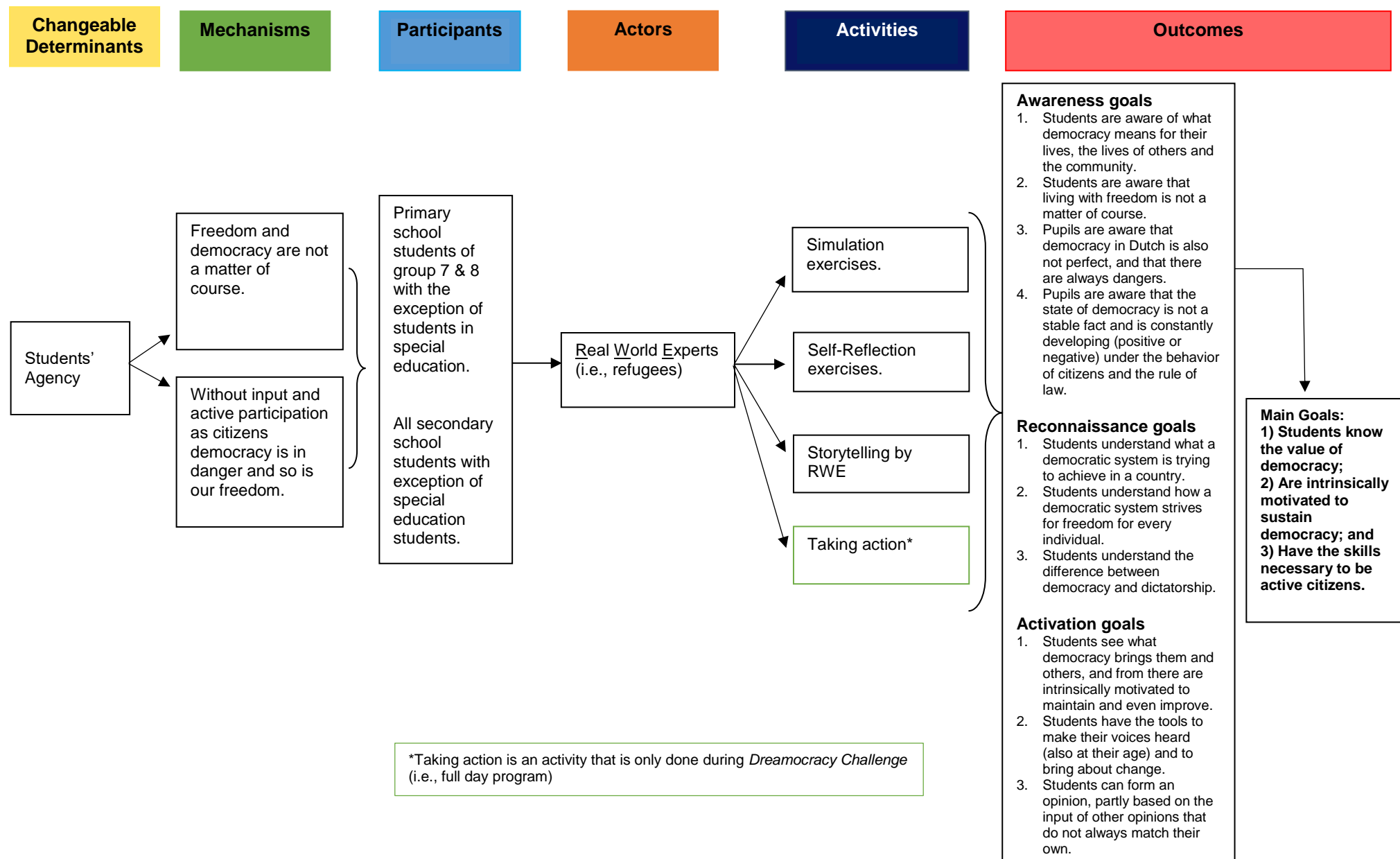
Furthermore, prior to the description of the four core elements (Van Yperen et al., 2017), the researcher, with the input from the program developer and from document-analysis, made a first attempt to map *Dreamocracy* out by developing a logic model (Figure 1). This model is “helpful for program design or improvement, identifying projects that are critical to goal attainment, redundant, or have inconsistent or implausible linkages among program elements” (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999, p. 3).

Results

The development of the logic model identified student’s agency as the changeable determinant within Dreamocracy. Within the current research study students’ agency is defined as: “participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy” (Hoskins, 2006, p.4). Although there is no well documented empirical evidence, there still is some evidence that participating and experiencing democracy can have an effect on student’s agency as defined above. One review study shows the importance of having the school as a

Figure 1

Dreamocracy's Logic Model: Revaluating and reformulating the value of democracy



participatory space where students can practice and implement their knowledge to the contribution of students' citizenship skills (Mager, & Nowak, 2012). From this review including 32 different empirical studies results show the positive correlation between students who are actively involved in decision making in classrooms and at school, and their democratic and citizenship skills (e.g., voting and debating). However, a longitudinal study done on citizenship education in England from 2001 to 2009 found that to achieve active citizenship of students, citizenship education activities have to be structurally implemented (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy & Lopes, 2010). These activities must be constantly practiced otherwise the experiences cannot be transformed into knowledge (Huyghen, 2007).

In the upcoming paragraphs the four core elements of Dreamocracy are described. The third section will be more detailed and longer than the others as it will provide a description of Dreamocracy's approach and will provide an initial theoretical substantiation for the program's approach.

Effect Ladder Stage 1: Descriptive Indication of Dreamocracy

Goals.

Based on document analysis, a total of 10 goals were identified split in three categories (figure 1). However, after complete analysis of the interview and the documents these 10 goals were reduced to three main goals. The first goal Dreamocracy wants to achieve is for students to reevaluate democracy. Dreamocracy aims to make students aware that democracy is not a matter of course. The program developer states: *"what we currently have is all taken for granted because it is too long ago that we have fought for freedom"*. The second goal of the program is for students to be intrinsically motivated to sustain democracy. The program aims to win students over for them to take action in order to sustain democracy. At last, the third goal is for students to attain the skills necessary to sustain democracy. Upon completion of the program, participants are expected to discuss the concept of democracy

from critical perspective. Further skills were not explicitly mentioned in the document analysis nor in the interview.

Targeted audience.

Dreamocracy's initial target group was *'[...] only for secondary education. We have had that in mind from the start and it must fit for all classes, all levels'*. The program developer explained that most of the development happened in secondary education. However, they implemented the program in one primary school, and it was well received by the teachers as well as by the students. After this, Dreamocracy's targeted audience broadened to include students in primary school of group 7 and group 8 (Dreamocracy, 2019). At the moment Dreamocracy is working on the further expansion of their targeted group to include mbo students.

Approach.

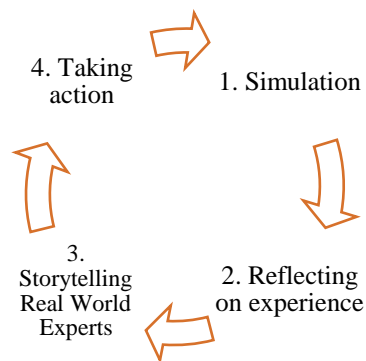
When it comes to structural features the program has three different versions. The 45 minutes (regular class-hour) version, the 3 hours version which is the most implemented program (half-day program; *Dreamocracy Experience*), and the 5 hours version (full-day program; *Dreamocracy Challenge*). The program is a one-time program and there are no follow-ups with teachers or students after the program. Moreover, Dreamocracy makes use of 'confrontation with the opposite' in the mentioned target groups as the strategy to reach their goals: *'[...] it is mainly about the confrontation of 'If I want it that way, and you want it that way, how are we going to achieve the same goal?'* There are four elements used to arouse the confrontation with the opposite and influence students' agency: 1) simulations, 2) reflection, 3) storytelling and 4) taking action. It is important to mention that the latter is only implemented during the *Dreamocracy Challenge*, thus it is not implemented frequently.

These four aforementioned elements resonate with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory cycle which are: 1) having a concrete experience, 2) reflecting on the

experience, 3) concluding what you learned from the experience and 4) actively experimenting with what you have learned (Figure 2). The experiential learning theory was developed to help understand human's way of learning and developing (Kolb, 1984; Yardley, Teunissen & Dorlan, 2012). Learning happens through experience or as Kolb (1984) stated, "*knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience*" (p. 41). In the following part the four elements of Dreamocracy, based on the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984), are thoroughly described.

Figure 2

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle based on Dreamocracy program.



Adapted from Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Simulation. Dreamocracy has different exercises in their program where students can for example experience democracy and dictatorship. Simulation within this research takes the definition of Krain & Shadle (2006): '*Simulations place students within a reasonable representation of a real environment within which political or social interactions occur*' (p. 53). An example of an exercise that lets students experience both worlds is the *indoctrination and fake elections* exercise where they are confronted with a bold statement. After discussing with classmates or sitting in silence reading propaganda, students receive a ballot to cast their vote for or against the statement. However, the results are manipulated and go against the student's expectations. This immediate experience exposes students to corruption and the

lack of freedom of speech which evokes different emotions and thoughts among them. From a study done by Lo (2015), results show that students experience political simulations as a way to practice their skills and implement their knowledge. Even though student were aware that it was a simulation, they still had real emotional experiences which contributed to the development of skills and the acquirement of knowledge. Another study with pretests and posttests done by Krain & Shadle (2006) showed that students who experienced an extended simulation of world hunger performed statistically significant better on a knowledge quiz about world hunger than students who received the lecture and participated in a discussion session.

Reflection. Dreamocracy's reflection exercises are structured in a PowerPoint slide that is shown to the students after each exercise. A guided reflective process as this is also known as debriefing (Fanning & Gaba, 2007). For example, after the *indoctrination and fake elections* exercise students are asked: *What did we want you to experience in this exercise?* *What does democracy mean for your life when you look back on this assignment?* With these kinds of questions, students are expected to think critically about their own experiences and the experiences of their fellow students. Coulson & Harvey (2013) mentioned that it is crucial to have a guided reflective session because otherwise students can be overwhelmed by the experience and the learning objectives will not be achieved. Furthermore, research shows that professionals with content and pedagogical knowledge is important for the debriefing of students (Kleickmann et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986; Sutherland, Stuhr & Ayvazo, 2016). Content knowledge is knowledge about the topic being presented in the classroom or in a lecture (Kleickmann et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986). Pedagogical content knowledge is knowing how to present the subject to students (i.e., teaching strategies) and knowing about students' (mis)conceptions.

Storytelling by RWE. After the *fake elections and indoctrination* exercise, RWE's tell students about the president elections in their home country. Storytelling is also known in literature as the use of narratives (Osler, 2015). Research shows that teachers make use of narratives to stimulate their students to think about and empathize with others around the world. During storytelling students get to know that in other countries there are not several parties of which one can choose from and that the elections are just for social media and not because the country is truly democratic. The feelings these stories transmit resonate with the thoughts and feelings that arise in students during the simulation exercises, for example feeling angry due to the lack of freedom of speech. The identification students experience during the story has an effect on students' held beliefs and attitudes towards the world, also known as narrative persuasion (De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders, & Beentjes, 2012). An empirical study done by Hoeken, Kolthoff & Sanders (2016) shows that identification is a mechanism for narrative persuasion and in turn increases students' empathy and understanding towards other groups.

Taking action. Students are encouraged to take action in Dreamocracy program. Citizenship is learning by doing (Dahlgren, 2009) and in the last part of Dreamocracy students are asked to solve a problem or approach a challenge with a better understanding of the subject by zooming in on the situation in the Netherlands by choosing to focus on either a democratic life or democratic systems. After students agree on a concrete situation they want to improve, they are then asked to set up a campaign video tackling the situation. If students believe that nothing needs to change, they are then asked to set up a campaign to alert citizens on the danger of taking democracy for granted. In this last phase students are actively using the knowledge they gained during the program and are applying this to a new situation of their choice. A case study done in Nicaragua shows that adolescents were more able to influence policy makers, when they had experience with implementing their democratic

knowledge and skills in school (Shier, Méndez, Centeno, Arróliga & Gonzalez, 2012).

Another research done in five different countries shows that by using the classroom as a practice ground, students are better able to adhere new knowledge, skills and attitudes in comparison to the passive classroom activities (Jarkeiwicz & Leek, 2016). This study shows that when students are encouraged to use their voice and share their perspectives on how a challenge or problem should be approached or solved it can positively reinforce their active participation in their community. During this exercise students practice with a real life challenge and are able to let their voice be heard and thus complete the experiential learning cycle.

Context.

The context in which the program is implemented is in regular classrooms at schools. There are three things a school is expected to provide: a computer, a beamer, internet connection and tables with chairs for the students. Dreamocracy makes use of online quiz website and thus students are expected to use their cellphone. If students do not have a mobile phone or do not have access to the internet, Dreamocracy provides an offline version of the quizzes. Every other material is provided by the program itself. Some examples of these are tape, satay sticks, coloring material, scissors, ballots and Lego blocks. Teachers are encouraged to participate in the program but are not obliged to do so. Although the teacher does not have a specific role within the program, the presence of a teacher is important in case a sensitive topic of discussion arises.

In the following section the results of study 2 will be presented. This study aimed to answer the following question: *What are teachers' perspectives on citizenship education programs and the three elements in Dreamocracy's approach: simulation, reflection and storytelling?* The fourth element, taking action, was not included in the study 2 because the

most implemented program of Dreamocracy is the *Dreamocracy Experience* and within this version of the program there is no exercise that embodies the fourth element.

Study 2

Method

Design

A qualitative design was chosen for study 2 due to the explicit focus on teacher's perspectives regarding citizenship education programs and on the three most implemented elements of Dreamocracy forthcoming from study 1: 1) simulation, 2) reflection and 3) storytelling. A qualitative design with semi-structured interviews is suited because there is room for the interviewer to give structure and there is room for the teachers to express themselves and bring new topics to the conversation (Baarda, 2013; Boeije, 2010; Galletta & Cross, 2013). This sample was categorized as a convenience sample. Due to the sample being a convenient one the results cannot be generalized to the population, as the results are only applicable to the sample itself (Bornstein, Jager & Putnick, 2013).

Participants

A total of 10 Dutch social studies teachers from four different regions and eight different schools in the Netherlands took part in this research (Table 1).

Only the participants of region 2 were all from the same school. Five participants were male, and the other five were female. However, one interview was lost due to recording fallacy.

The researcher was unable to retrieve the data which led to the researcher leaving this participant out of the data analysis.

Table 1

Overview of interviewed teachers.

Region	Participant	Sex	Teaching to level(s)	Years teaching
1	P1	Male	Mavo/Havo/Vwo	3
1	P3	Female	Vwo	5
1	P7*	Female	Havo/Vwo	6
2	P2	Male	Vmbo	4
2	P9	Female	Vmbo/Mavo	4
2	P10	Female	Vmbo/Mavo	3
3	P4	Male	Mavo/Havo/Vwo	18
3	P5	Male	Havo/Vwo	4
3	P8	Male	Havo/Vwo	24
4	P6	Female	Havo/Vwo	1

*Note**. A transcription of this interview was not possible due to recording fallacy. Therefore, this interview was left out of the data analysis.

Instrument

For the gathering of the interview data with the teachers a topic list was made based on the findings in study 1. The topic list was split into three sections: 1) citizenship education at your school, 2) teachers needs and perspectives regarding citizenship education program and 3) teachers' perspectives on three most implemented elements of Dreamocracy (Appendix B). The first topic aimed to get an insight into what is being done in the schools and how do teachers think about citizenship education. The second topic aimed to understand what teachers need from external education programs and what their perspectives regarding these programs in general. At last the third topic aimed to get an insight into teacher's thoughts and perspectives on the three most implemented elements of Dreamocracy. Example of questions asked were: *What do you as teachers pay attention to when you look for external*

education programs besides the costs? and What is your opinion on the use of 'simulation' as a learning method within Dreamocracy?

Procedure

A database with contact information of all secondary schools in four different regions was made. The regions were chosen based on Dreamocracy's school recruitment plan. As a second step towards the recruitment of participants, the database was sent to the Dreamocracy team where they added known contacts. At last, contact with social studies teachers were sought within the researchers' own network.

The interviews were held by the researcher self and there was no second interviewer present. Before the interview started, the interviewer had an informal conversation to get acquainted with the participants. The participants were reminded that the interview was being recorded and that although there was no known risk, they have the right to stop the interview at any given moment. Participants received a letter where they had to sign to give consent and where their anonymity was guaranteed. During the interview with the teachers the validity of the data was increased by asking further questions upon receiving an answer and/or by giving examples, repeating and summarizing what the interviewee said (Baarda et al., 2013). Furthermore, the reliability of this research was increased due to the recording of the interview, where it was possible to repeat the collected data several times to prevent misunderstandings or assumptions (Baarda et al., 2013).

Analysis

Data analysis began right after the first interview. Through an iterative process approach new data was analyzed to see what the new findings are, what is not yet clear and take this for further questioning. The data analysis guided the data collection, also called the iterative process (Baarda et al., 2013). The data was imported into NVivo 12 where the analysis took place using open codes and axial codes. These codes were further reviewed by

another researcher to enhance the validity of the data, also known as investigator triangulation (Baarda et al., 2013; Boeije, 2010).

Results

1) What are social studies teachers' needs and perspectives on external citizenship education programs?

Perspectives on Citizenship Education.

Firstly, every participant mentioned the importance of citizenship education for their students. Every participant believes that having citizenship education embedded in the curriculum is essential to transfer the Dutch norms and values to the students. Furthermore, a majority of the participants mentioned that citizenship education should not only be a part of social studies, but it should be a responsibility carried by the whole school. Participants explicitly expressed a desire for interdisciplinary projects and programs to enhance students' understanding of citizenship.

On the other hand, participants also mentioned that the citizenship education assignment is vague and that before the interdisciplinary teamwork can be realized there has to be a consensus between teachers and educationalists on what citizenship is. Participant P4 expressed: *"For example, that everyone consistently works on a certain citizenship formation according to a certain idea and program and now it often happens as separate projects that have value but are not focused on each other and that have no knowledge of each other [i.e., subject]"*.

Opportunities of External Citizenship Education Programs.

Every participant explicitly mentioned that in their opinion a program is of added value when it offers something (e.g., an experience or a method) that the participants themselves cannot provide for their students. Lack of time, energy, money, skills or resources were the most common reasons mentioned of not being able to provide something for the

students. Two of the reasons that jumped out were lack of time and lack of skills. Participants mentioned that as teachers their workload is high and because of this they have little or no time to develop creative activities for their students. Subsequently, lack of skills can also reinforce them to make use of external programs. For example, participant P9 mentioned that simulation is a method she would not easily dare to implement by herself: *“that must be so well directed, so well thought out that I would not dare”*.

Moreover, the most common example of an experience participants gave is inviting an expert (i.e., visiting lecturer) in the classroom to tell something about his or her particular field of experience. Besides inviting experts to share experiences and knowledge with the students, the participants also said that they explicitly look for programs that enhance the citizenship skills of students. Participant P9 explains: *“I think we already have theory, but I think you should give the schools more opportunity to actually experience.”* Most of the participants made similar expression referring to the subject social studies as being too theoretical. Furthermore, participants even expressed that by inviting programs not only their students learn, but they as teachers are also challenged, and this encourages them to keep learning. Participant P5 explicitly mentioned that he is not so skilled in leading debates and therefore he is inclined to look for programs that can offer this particular activity. At last, half of the participants mentioned that they would prefer an active role while the other half said that it depends on what is expected from them.

Threats of External Citizenship Education Programs.

Even though participants were positive about external programs, there were also some concerns. Although duration time is not the first thing teachers look at when they are searching for citizenship education programs, time still seems to play an important role. Firstly, the majority of the participants prefer a program endures as long as a normal class-hour (e.g., 50-60 minutes). When a program is longer than the conventional class time, it can

lead to practical challenges which then lead to stress and tension between the teachers of other subjects, because: *“all other subjects feel pressure from the final exams, so they want to perform good there. I understand that too. So mainly I choose things that I can do in my own lessons time”* (P5).

Furthermore, participants also expressed their concerns on the difficulty of adding more things to their planning. Participants said that there are not much free timeslots during a schoolyear to do something with external citizenship education programs. Thirdly, a majority of the participants were also aware that a program of short duration time does not have an impact on the further development of their students' skills. Participant P4 states that: *“when it comes to skills you often have to do several lessons. And then it is more about skills so the person should come visit more often, it must be someone who really provides training.”*

2) What are teachers' perspectives on the three working elements of Dreamocracy?

Simulation.

All participants mentioned that they are positive about using simulations as a learning method for their students. One of the benefits of simulation mentioned by participants is that students learn faster when they are actively involved in a situation. Furthermore, teachers also mentioned that they truly believe that for example a simulation on democracy and dictatorship can enhance students' understanding of these two abstract concepts. For example, P6 states: *“I think it has a greater impact to use such methods than just having a theoretical lesson about corruption and propaganda”*.

On the other hand, this same participant was not completely convinced that the simulation exercises provided by Dreamocracy are suited for her class. She said that students from vwo 5 can easily see that it is a simulation and think for example, *“oh they are trying to teach us what corruption means”* (P3) and that therefore the effect of the simulation decreases. Furthermore, in accordance with the findings of the first question participants were

concerned about the effect these simulations can have on the students depending on their level. Especially participants teaching at vmbo level said that their students tend to react very hard on situations or they can make uncomfortable remarks during these experiences.

Reflection.

The participants explicitly said that reflecting on the simulation is crucial for the students. Without reflection or follow-up discussion students may perceive the simulation as ‘just a game’ or even as the ‘standard’. Participants also mentioned the importance to guide the discussion didactically according to the level of students. Participant P4 gave a clear example on how a discussion session can be organized for vmbo level students: *“For example with a red or green card to show if you are for or against a statement. You have to make it didactically a little interesting”*.

Furthermore, participants were somewhat skeptical about the fact that the real world experts are the ones who lead the reflective discussion. Here participants mention the importance to have someone who can handle the group well and someone who is able to react on and interact with the students: *“So it must also be someone who can stand well in front of the class, that is really very important. [...] I do not see the added value to let the refugee do that”* (P3). Moreover, participants believe that by reflecting on the experience students are challenged to think critically on the knowledge they have about the world. Participants expressed that many students think that the Netherlands is a developed country so there is no need to change things. However, by reflecting upon the situation students are able to understand how complicated democracy is and that their input is needed.

Storytelling.

According to the participants this can be the most beneficial element of the program. First of all, the stories of refugees are something the participants do not have or have not experienced themselves which makes it of added value according to them. Every participant

mentioned that having a real world expert in class to tell their story can stimulate students to be more tolerant towards refugees because students think: “[...] *often that refugees come here to fill their pockets*” (P2). Participants believe that when the real world experts tell their personal story, students will be able to comprehend the reason behind the decision’s refugees make: “*when you talk about refugees that is very far from students’ world. But precisely such an experienced expert that can make it come closer to them*” (P8). Every participant mentioned that during their social studies classes they put on films or share stories of refugees with their students. However, when the person is in the classroom participants believe that it can have a greater impact on students (e.g., their feeling, their perceptions and their attitudes).

However, participants do mention that it is important to have someone who is a good storyteller. Participants had experience with refugees or other visiting lecturers of advanced age that did not talk loud enough or did not make the story interesting enough for the students. At last, a small minority of the participants also mention that the stories told during a program should not be too distant from the students’ knowledge or perceptions. Otherwise it will be difficult for students to place this within their frameworks.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to see to what extent Dreamocracy can support social studies teachers on the fulfillment of the citizenship education assignment in Dutch secondary schools. Firstly, in study 1 the four core elements of Dreamocracy were described with the help of the program developer and document analysis. Moreover, through literature review an initial attempt was made in study 1 to a first theoretical substantiation for Dreamocracy based on the experiential learning cycle of Kolb (1984). In study 2 teachers were asked about what their perspectives and needs are on external citizenship education programs and also about their perspective on the three working elements of Dreamocracy. In

the following paragraphs the results of these two studies are taken together and the main research question is answered.

Teachers and External Citizenship Education Programs

Current findings show that teachers feel that the theoretical part of citizenship education is already covered. However, teachers stated that school should make more room for the developing and implementation of citizenship skills. In line with this perspective, research shows that active participation of students enhances students' ability to voice their opinions and take action (Keating et al., 2009; Reichert & Print, 2018) which in turn complies with the third goal of the Dutch citizenship education assignment, promoting active citizenship (SLO, 2015a) and the three main goals of Dreamocracy. Furthermore, results show that inviting an expert does not only benefit the learning of students, but it can also benefit teachers. From current results and previous research, it is known that teachers do not always feel they have the necessary skills to offer their students citizenship education optimally (Keating et al., 2009; Radstake & Leeman, 2010). Through observation teachers can also learn from external programs how to implement new learning methods in their classes (Bandura, 1977; Geeraerts, Tynjälä & Heikkinnen, 2018).

Moreover, current results show that time is a complicated subject. Teachers find it important that the knowledge and skills students acquire during a program endures. From previous research it is known that for a citizenship program to be effective it should be implemented structurally (Keating et al., 2010) and it should also be repeated through time (Huyghen, 2007). Dreamocracy is a one-time implemented program with no follow-up sessions which means that it does not meet these criteria. Furthermore, teachers mentioned the difficulty of implementing an external program within their schoolyear schedule, especially a long program. Thus, to facilitate the match between Dreamocracy and social studies teachers and make sure the knowledge and skills gained by the students endure, the

program can be transformed into a series of lessons of one class-hour which makes it easy to structurally implement it and where repetition can take place.

Teachers and the Three Elements of Dreamocracy

Current findings suggest that the teachers were positive about the three elements questioned, however they were skeptical about the implementation of these elements.

Teachers believe that learning through experience can enhance the understanding of abstract concepts such as dictatorship and corruption more than by explaining it to the students.

Kolb's experiential learning cycle supports this idea of experiencing and learning.

Furthermore, Krain & Shadle's (2006) findings about showed that students' knowledge was enhanced through simulation in comparison to students who received a lecture and discussion session. Moreover, teachers were concerned about the match between Dreamocracy and their students. Within the document analysis of Dreamocracy there was no information available about how the programs are customized per targeted group and the literature used was not specified per targeted group. Research shows the effective implementation of a program it has to match the specific targeted groups' needs, knowledge and skills (Kok, 2014; Molleman & Hosman, 2015; Van Yperen, Wilde & Keuzekamp, 2014). However, it is important to mention that the teachers who were most concerned taught on vmbo level and all three worked at the same school. It remains unclear if this concern is school specific or if it can be generalized to all vmbo level students. Furthermore, current findings show that a teacher did not believe that the simulation exercises suited her vwo-5 class because they can easily detect that it is a simulation. Contrary to this, Lo (2015) found that even when students knew that they are part of a simulation they still experienced real emotions. Thus, this simulation awareness does not impede students from gaining new knowledge and skills about citizenship.

Before transforming experiences into new knowledge, students must reflect on the experience (Kolb, 1984). Findings suggest that teachers attach great importance to the follow-up discussion session where students are encouraged to think critically about their experience. Results also show that teachers attach great value to a well-structured follow-up discussion. These findings are in accordance with Coulson & Harvey (2013) who found that without a guided reflective session (i.e., follow-up discussion), students can be overwhelmed by the experience and are then hindered in the process to transform experience into new knowledge. Subsequently, results show that teachers believe that this step should be led by a competent person. Teachers were not very positive about the idea of having the real world experts lead the discussions. In line with this, research shows that a guided reflection should be led by someone who has content knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge (Kleickmann et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986; Sutherland et al., 2016). As mentioned in the before, teachers do not have a concrete assigned role within Dreamocracy. However, teachers are the ones who have the pedagogical content knowledge and real world experts are the ones who carry the content knowledge. Thus, it can be expected that if Dreamocracy mixes the content knowledge of real world experts with the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers, students will be better able to transform their experiences into knowledge (Kleickmann et al., 2013).

After the reflective session, students are able to translate their new knowledge to a more general situation in the world through the personal stories of the real world experts. Current findings suggest that teachers believe that after the simulation of for example dictatorship and the reflection on that experience, students are more able to connect with the storyteller. In accordance, research shows that this identification with the real world experts is of importance for the narrative persuasion where students are challenged to adapt their held beliefs (De Graaf et al., 2012) about for example democracy, dictatorship and refugees.

Current research shows that teachers believe that after hearing the story of a refugee, students' empathy towards refugees increases and can understand where the decisions of the refugees to flee from their home country came from. Hoeken et al. (2016) support these findings. They stated that through narrative persuasion students broaden their knowledge about other groups and this enhances their empathy towards these groups. Moreover, results from the current research shows that teachers state the importance of a match between the storyteller, the story and the targeted group. Teachers state that the storyteller should not only have an interesting story but should also be competent. Thus, once again stressing on the importance of the delivery of the story to the specific group, also called pedagogical content knowledge (Kleickmann et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986; Sutherland et al., 2016). One way the real world experts can achieve this pedagogical content knowledge is through professional training by qualified teachers.

Even though the fourth step of Kolb's experiential learning cycle was not part of study 2, it is important to address that from step 1 to step 3 students gain new knowledge. However, in none of these steps students are asked to apply the new knowledge to a new case. Research shows that when schools serve as practice ground for democracy, students are better able to voice their opinion and are motivated to take action (Jarkiewicz & Leek, 2016; Shier et al., 2016). Dreamocracy should aim to include this last step into every version of the program to be able to complete the cycle by including an exercise where students actively apply the knowledge and skills they gained during the program. Kolb's experiential learning cycle explicitly mentions the importance of completing the cycle in order to achieve new skills. Thus, it is expected that if this last step is included Dreamocracy will be better able to achieve the third main goal: for students to attain the skills necessary to sustain democracy.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the current research study that need to be addressed. Firstly, the data was gathered by only one researcher which may have an effect on data-collection bias and thus reducing the validity of the collected data (Boeije, 2010). Secondly, the participants were not randomly selected which makes the comparison of the results of current research with others studies difficult. Moreover, according to a research done by Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006), data saturation can be reached with 12 interviews, in which 92% of all the codes from the 60 held interviews were found. However, due to the lack of time current research had only 9 interviews which means that the information gathered is insufficient to answer the research question optimally.

Future Research

With the current research new insights were gained regarding the citizenship education assignment and how teachers can be best supported. With this said a first recommendation for future research is to focus on best practices for the development of democratic skills for students in secondary education. A second recommendation for future research is to reproduce this research study with a bigger sample so data saturation can be reached to prevent neglect of valuable data. A complete picture of teachers' perspectives can bring external programs and teachers together where goals can be concretized and linked to each other. Furthermore, it is suggested to do research so Dreamocracy can continue to stage 2 on the effect ladder to achieve a theoretical indication. At this stage the program will have a complete and supported intervention theory which explains why their actions lead to their goals. At last, it is suggested to pay more attention to teachers' recommendations for the program and how this can best fit their needs and perspectives.

Conclusion

All in all, it can be concluded that Dreamocracy's working elements are promising in literature as well as through teacher's perspectives. However, there is a mismatch between the implementation of the program and social studies teachers' needs and perspectives. It is important to match the goals of both parties, program and social studies teachers, to be able to optimally fulfill the citizenship education assignment. Some steps can be taken to achieve a match between these two parties. First, it can be expected that if Dreamocracy give teachers an active role within the reflection parts in their program students will be better able to transform their experiences into knowledge. Secondly, to facilitate the match between Dreamocracy and social studies teachers, the program can be transformed into a series of lessons of one class-hour which makes it easy to structurally implement it and where repetition can take place. At last, it can also be expected that students' agency will increase when the last step of Kolb's experiential learning cycle is implemented in every version of the program by including activities where students apply the knowledge and skills gained during the program. Research shows that when schools serve as practice ground for democracy, students are better able to voice their opinion and are motivated to take action.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Topic list program developer

Introduction

- The purpose of this interview
- Informed consent
- Thanking for the participation

Background information

1. Name and background of developers
2. Origin of Dreamocracy
 - a. When did Dreamocracy start?
 - b. How did Dreamocracy start?
 - c. How long did it take to develop?
 - d. What is the origin of the name?
3. For which target group was Dreamocracy originally intended?
 - a. How was this extended to other target groups?
 - b. Has the program already been implemented in these groups?
 - c. Are there any exclusion criteria?
4. What is the goal of Dreamocracy?
5. Which theory did you use to substantiate the program?
 - a. If any, why this one?
6. Did you take other programs in consideration when developing Dreamocracy?
 - a. What makes your program different than the others?

Approach and implementation

7. What is the phasing of the program? (How does it start, what follows and how does it end)
8. Which activities does Dreamocracy have?
9. Which techniques are used?
10. Which materials are used?
 - a. Why these?
11. What is the duration time of the program? (3 versions: Challenge, Experience, Class-hour)
12. Do you offer anything after the program has been implemented?
13. How do you ensure the quality of the program?

Appendix B: Topiclist Social Studies Teachers

Introduction:

- Introduce myself
- Purpose of interview
- Consent + recording

Start recording

Topic 1: *Citizenship education at your school*

1. When you think about citizenship education, what is your first thought?
2. Why do you think citizenship education is important for your students?
3. What type of citizenship education do you want to achieve with the students?
4. What activities are currently being done here at school with regard to citizenship education to achieve this (these) goal(s)?
5. What is your opinion on the current offering of citizenship education here at your school? Would you like to see changes, which changes?

Topic 2: *Citizenship education programs*

6. Have you ever booked an external citizenship education program?
 - a. If yes: Can you tell me something about your experience with this?
 - b. If not: Why not? Any specific reasons?
7. Who takes care of this within the school?
8. What do you as teachers pay attention to when you look for external education programs besides the costs?
 - a. How important are the following things?
 - i. Goals
 - ii. Duration
 - iii. Content
 - iv. Methods
 - v. Role teacher

Topic 3: *Three working elements of Dreamocracy*Give a little introduction of the program

9. What is your opinion on the use of 'simulation' as a learning method within program?
 - a. *Simulation within Dreamocracy:* Students see a bold statement. Half of the class

is asked to discuss this statement and the other half sits in silent and receives a propaganda. At the end the students vote. However, corruption takes place. For example, if there are 26 students in class, the results are 25 students for and 6 against the statement.

- b. What is your opinion on this?
- c. Do you think it works?

10. What is your opinion of self-reflection exercises as a learning method?

- a. *Situation Dreamocracy*: After the simulation exercise students are asked to reflect on what they have just experienced. As I already mentioned, the real world experts are the ones who carry out the program, so they are also in charge of doing this.
- b. What are your thoughts on this?

11. What are your thoughts on having a real world experts in class to tell the students about their story as political refugees?

End:

12. Is there anything you would like to share with me about this topic?

- Thank you for taking part in this interview.
- Stop recording.