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The essence of civic upbringing and its necessity in the school

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Background

The basis of civic upbringing is developing a free, creative and responsible personality in families, at school and within society. As a result of civic upbringing, Latvia will have creative, social responsible people with independent way of thinking, for whom the future and independence of Latvia will be of primary importance. The task of civic upbringing is to helping students lead in social process in the national economy, economics, politics, culture and the ethnic traditions of the peoples inhabiting Latvia.

Variety must be respected for social development in a period of globalisation – variety that can be economic, political, social, religious, ethnic, human mobility and receptiveness, enterprising and daring.

According to Kilpatrick (1988) it is a human problem to retain feelings of continuity and loyalty to a whole. A dynamic change in individual professional activity and self-realisation is taking place. Processes of change create new social values, necessities, problems and social differentiation. Tolerance, respect for other cultures, ethnic inclusion and overcoming ethnocentric attitudes are all of importance in forming civic attitudes.

What is the perspective of civic future society in Europe?

According to Eurobarometer inquiry (April 2003), 15 to 24 year-olds in the EU candidate countries are less tolerant and liberal than their peers in 'old' Europe. The attitudes of young people towards ten social innovations, connected with the values of a post materialistic society, were sought. Young people were asked to record their attitudes to euthanasia, capital punishment, and measures to prevent the poor from having large families and other issues of social importance. Several results were surprising: far from giving what might be socially preferred answers, young people from the EU candidate states were willingness to be seen as intolerant.

Intolerance is based on prejudice and prejudice, and serves to create new stereotypes. The alienation from the state caused by social stratification is falling, but the affiliations shown by non-Latvian (alien) youth leads to anxieties, as shown by the Naturalisation Office and the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, in *On the way to civic society 2000 – 2001*, surveying 1004 citizens and 1005 aliens across Latvia.

The education of society and of young people is important to promote the development of respect and understanding of difference and civic responsibility. Latvia must realise the educational potential and pedagogical possibilities to overcome ethnic differentiation and affiliation as it joins the EU, as well as assessing the roles of school and family in

the process of forming a nation, and evaluating the attitudes of future pedagogues and their ability to help solve important social problems.

Social and economic changes in Latvia impact on all aspects of personality development, and have direct influence. Society is mainly focussed on individuality and independence. These are new requirements for personalities – people must be able to set independent goals and to make a free choice, they must be self-reliant.

We want people capable of critical thinking, socially responsible, with united basic values. Latvians must be willing and able to listen to different opinions, solve problems for themselves and society, and have direction in social processes, politics, culture and the market economy.

Formation of civic attitude in gymnasium

The upbringing of the new generation must be based on the idea of developing a free, creative and responsible personality. The formation of civic attitudes starts in the family and must be intentionally continued at school.

Evaluating society and education we can conclude that the formation of civic understanding and attitudes is of basic importance, and that this aims for students to understand their state, its processes and changes. This covers not only state-wide events, but those in local surroundings (class, school, village, city). The task of pedagogues is to present social life that helps students realise Latvia place in the world, and secure a sense of belonging to Latvia and its society, developing skills and habits needed for a democratic and open society.

The aim of civic upbringing are:

- to form socially responsible people who take an active part in social life of Latvia;
- to form a democratic and consolidated civic society;

Tasks for the secondary school:

- to strengthen the awareness of personal, national and European identity;
- to form the skills of critical analysis of social historical experience;
- to prepare students for life in society - taking civic responsibility, participating in the administration of society and making political decisions;
- to develop a critical and dialogical way of thinking.

The political situation in the country is that our society has split into Latvian and Russian language speakers. Discussions in the mass media are emotional, and there is a lack of a scientific approach. What is significant for us all, and our students, living in the same country and moving towards Europe?

So the aim of civic awareness is to form a humane, independent, responsible positive personality, capable of critical thinking and making decisions. Attention is being given to ways of changing helplessness to optimism, developing students' skills of discussion,

teaching skills of socialisation, efficiency, persistence, finding and reaching their aims, all of which are significant elements in the formation of modern civic awareness.

Theoretical guidelines

Educationalist Dirba (2003) stresses that the formation of civic consciousness and the ability to get on well with those who are different means an emphasis on the common and the uniting. Several writers who have analysed fear of the unknown and the psychological origins of fear have concluded that people transfer personal uncertainties to 'the other' as threats, thus protecting their own image from self-criticism. Features that contrast with self-image are pushed out and projected on the stranger. The image of the stranger depends on the image of the self. Division into 'ours' and 'strangers' intensify in periods of social and economic change and of political crisis.

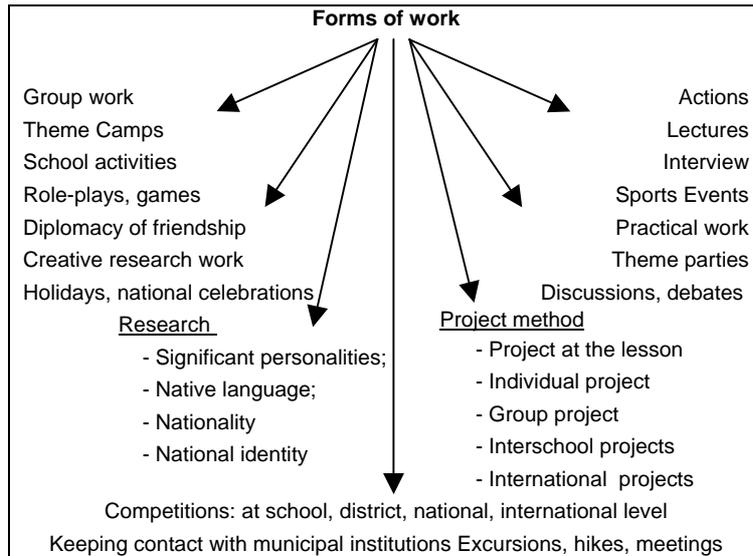
In Latvia the philosophy, methodology and understanding of civic consciousness is particularly essential. Intercultural educational principles correspond with the social ideals of the 21st century in Europe. Cultural pluralism, with the corresponding legislation, gives incentive to many cultural educational developments, such as educational programmes that take account of the needs of minority schools.

Education for civic incorporation is quite a new areas of pedagogy, based on the increased contacts between peoples and nations all over the world, and the formation of civic society as a result of migration and cultural enrichment. Migration processes have considerably changed the ethnic structure of Latvian society, making it necessary to get on well with different people. The result is a growth in civic understanding.

One of the developmental dimensions in the multicultural society is its progression from ethnic to national and global. According to Banks (1992), ethnic studies grew from ethnic explanations of identity. It is a gradual process of development, where society (school, mass media, etc.) plays a significant role with possibilities and support to the individual to clarify ethnical and cultural identity and to form civic understanding.

Practical output and possible solutions

The period of 16 to 23 years of age is considered by some to be the most important in the life of a person. This is the time when opinions have formed the character and ways of thinking (Ushinsky, 1990). Tendencies and value orientations formed in this period of youth can be obstacles to social maturity (Kogan, 1981).

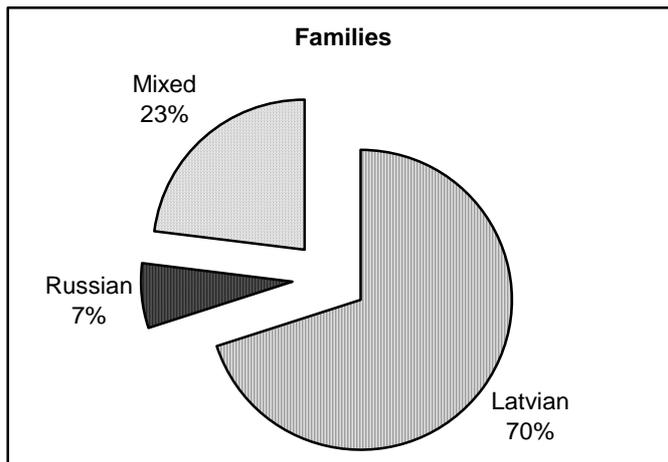
Figure 1: Forms of work in civic upbringing in gymnasium (16-19 years olds)

The ideals for the 21st century in Europe are harmony, participation in social processes, tolerance and respect towards the different, and the preservation of the diversity of cultures and languages. At the same time it is a characteristic of post-modern societies to be changeable and fragmentary and to deny traditions. The process of globalisation is ruining social and ethnic traditions.

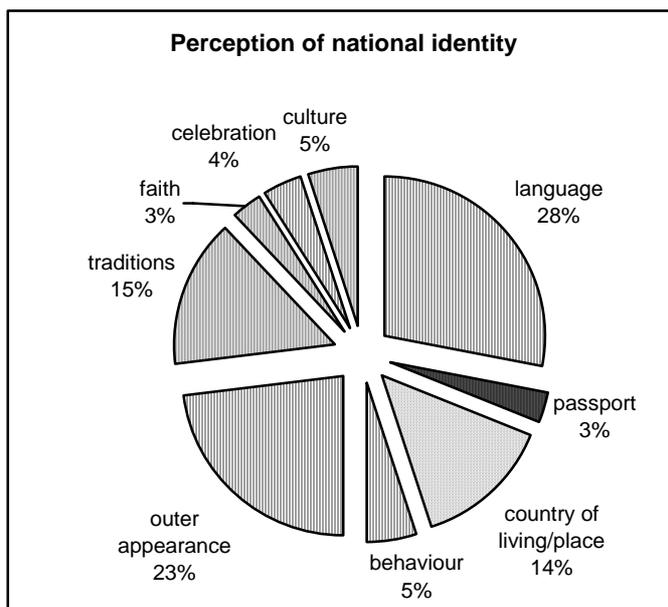
An OECD (1998-2000) investigation showed that pupils become strangers at school. A third of school children have problems of adjustment at school and a quarter miss unpleasant lessons. This data forces us to think of current problems in school, their reasons, and to analyse the quality of pedagogical work and find new pedagogical work strategies.

The investigation into the awareness of one's own identity was made in 2004. 460 gymnasium students were interviewed, 70% were from Latvian families, 23% from mixed nationality families and 7% from Russian families.

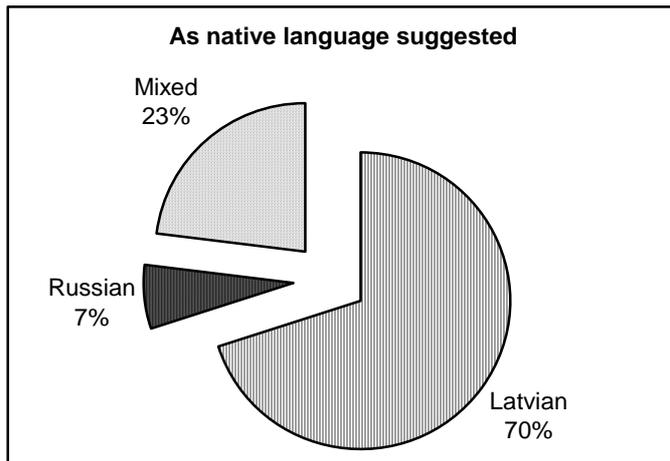
Our investigation showed that among the Russian-speaking students it was the personalities of their own culture were dominating, for example, they would cite the works of Tolstoy, Pushkin and others.

Figure 2: Families

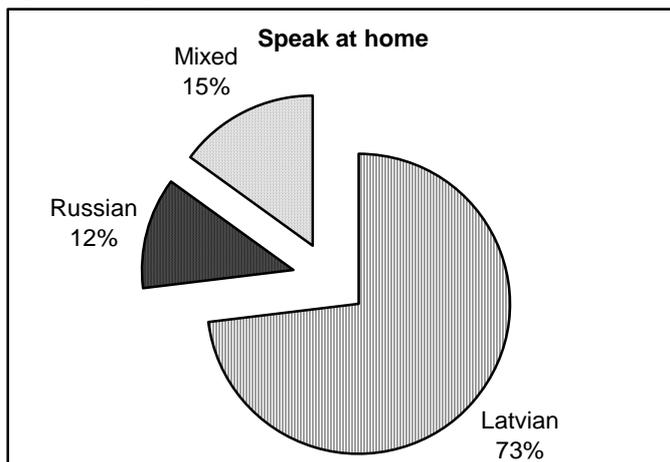
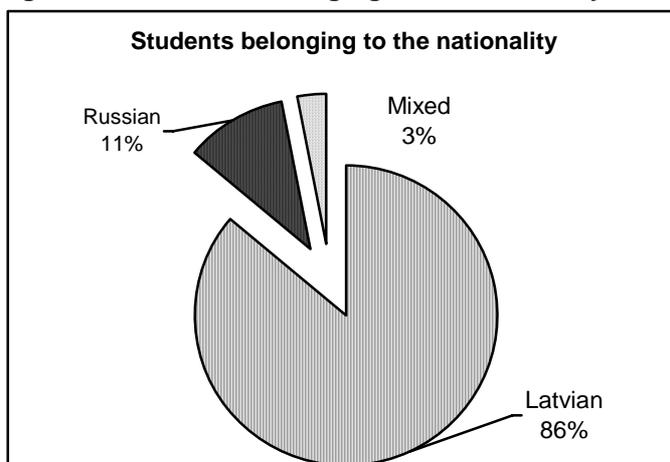
We found out that celebrating state holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, and Maslennica were celebrated in both cultures. There were many common proverbs and sayings used by both nationalities. For those whose native language was Russian, it was essentially to mention Vaira Vike-Freiberga as one of the most important person in Latvia, as well as many other politicians. This is a proof that these young people belong to the state of Latvia.

Figure 3 Perception of national identity

Belonging to the nation was also clearly seen as being shown through the use of language – 28% of all students gave this as a way of identifying nationality. Adhering to traditions was referred to by 15%, and the country of residence by 14%.

Figure 4: As native language suggested

All the students interviewed stated that they could speak Latvian: all Russian-speaking students can speak Latvian.

Figure 5: Speak at home**Figure 6: Student's belonging to the nationality**

When examining home languages, 15% speak just Russian, and 11% use both Russian and Latvian. Yet only 11% describe themselves as feeling Russian. It is, therefore, not always language, which denotes the national identity.

According to the data presented, 12% of the students affirm they speak Russian at home and the native language is declared by 10% of them, so 2% speaking Russian at home do not assert it as native language.

There are differences between the nationalities. 346 respondents speak about the following differences: language, traditions, culture, national festivities, behaviour, religion. The most significant thoughts about differences are:

- Language spoken, traditions, holidays, money banknotes, etc.;
- Folklore, culture, traditions, etc.;
- Different national costume, mentality which appears in various situations;
- Diversity in culture, ethnic features, religion;
- Latvians are the best hockey fans but they have slow temperament in other things,
- Differences in language, in religious beliefs;
- People differ a bit from their outer appearance, but their essence differs;
- Every nation is different, there can be various impressions about the same nationality;
- Each nation has its own habits, behaviour and atmosphere;
- Every nation is interesting.

Students expressed statements that nationalities do not differ from each other:

- A person can be much better than your own nationality people, so we can't see the Difference among the people;
- There are no differences – if you live in Latvia you belong to the country. It is not essential what is written in your passport, it is important how you feel and where you belong to.

Table 1: Work directions of civic upbringing

Direction of civic upbringing
1. I – active personality (action, courage, self-confidence)
2. I – stable and ready for non-standard situations (courage + skills)
3. I – relevant to my family, school, town, country, nation (relevance of responsibility)
4. Healthy lifestyle
5. Formation of the carrier. Groundwork
6. Offers of the Ministry of Education.

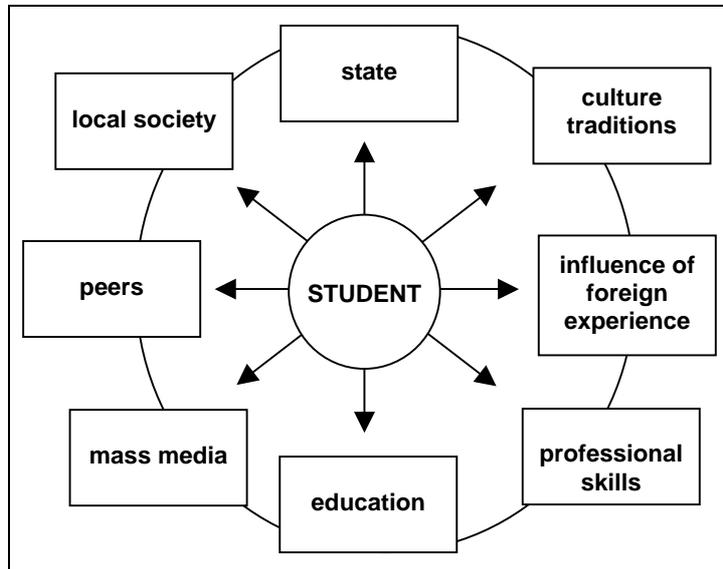
School administration can contribute to civic upbringing through:

- internal school regulations:
- school audit;
- development of teacher's professional quality;
- completion of school educational programmes and subject teaching programmes;
- organising student's summer camps and co-operation with other educational establishments.

Teachers contribute to civic upbringing through:

- creating moral attitudes towards people;
- managing the teaching process of students;
- using examples from the history, geography, culture, science of Latvia;
- developing students' communication skills;
- forming civic consciousness of students.

Figure 7: Impacts in civic upbringing



Class teachers enable civic upbringing during and outside lessons using:

- programme “On the way to the civil society”;
- feeling of pride about Latvia;
- explaining the meaning of the term “Fatherland”;
- motivating the importance of Latvian language;
- introducing students with Latvian folk traditions and festivities;
- acquaintance with Latvia during excursions and cultural activities.

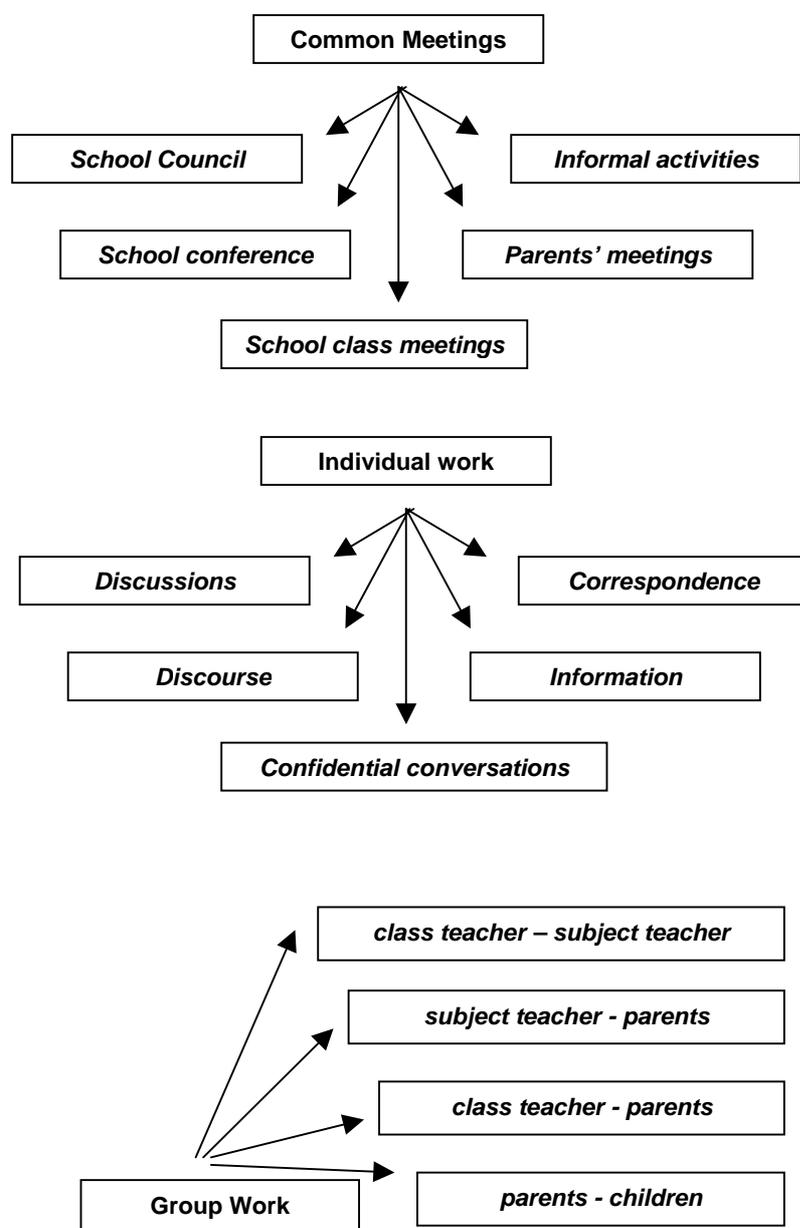
The school's student's parliament helps civic upbringing by:

- using the net of social contacts;
- joining public social organisations (girl guides, new guards);
- participation in school activities, and outside the school.

The integration of the society through citizenship shows potential attractiveness and generosity. Only a systematic, purposeful and well-timed process of information exchange and upbringing can promote and preserve civic understanding, ethnic values

and harmonic relationship in schools today. This will avoid misunderstandings and stereotyping in society.

Figure 8: Cooperation forms in civic upbringing



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