

## Effective Teaching Practice: Peer Tutoring in Education for Active Citizenship

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### Abstract

This paper deals with active learning and participation at school, outlining a new version of an already known teaching/ learning practice: the peer tutoring, which can be performed in all learning fields, individually and in groups, face to face and on line. The research question is about the best methods of empowering students for a good peer tutoring in the field of active citizenship.

The Purpose of the Study is examining approaches of effective teaching / learning practices to promote civic competences at school, especially through the work of the Students Councils. Links are made with the European project SPACE (Students Promoting Active Citizenship in Europe), currently performed by 6 European partners from 4 countries, where students are expected both to learn and to give advices to peers.

The research methods are: analyzing studies on the topic (Biesta, 2007; ten Dam, 2011), included the most important international Surveys (Eurydice, 2012, ICCS, IEA 2009, 2016) on education of citizens, and comparing the activities for promoting active citizenship in the partner schools of the SPACE project on the basis of a common frame describing both working process and expected outcomes. The findings are related to the strategies for developing active participation, firstly on the indicators of competence in cognitive, social and civic fields, and on descriptors of participation which are shared among teachers and students referring to the different experiences of the schools in the European project partner countries: Spain, Italy, Lithuania, United Kingdom.

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**Keywords:** Peer tutoring, citizenship education, active learning.

### 1. Introduction

This study brings together two areas of substantive concern: active learning through peer tutoring and education for citizenship through participation of learners at school, aimed at developing the competences needed by students for active citizenship in a European context.



The overarching research question is about the best methods of empowering students for participation at school implementing peer tutoring face to face, and on line, individually and in groups, at national and international level. It is a difficult practice, full of potential risks; it requires solid preparation of teachers and pupils, keen school management, and regular monitoring.

I'll focus on three questions: active learning and peer tutoring, education for active citizenship, and student's participation at school. The research methods are: analyzing studies on the topic, especially the most important international Surveys on education of citizens: Eurydice 2012, ICCS IEA 2009, 2016, and comparing the teaching /learning activities for promoting active citizenship in the partner schools of the European project Erasmus plus SPACE (Students Promoting Active Citizenship in Europe): Italy, Lithuania, Spain, United Kingdom.

At the heart of this work is a vision of young people who are actors in their learning, committed for the common good at school and in society. Very often students are not viewed as capable of participating in the management of their own classroom communities, and schools do not usually provide opportunities for them to make meaningful decisions in school.

Having been part of civic-related activities at school has been suggested as factor influencing future citizenship engagement (Pancer, 2015; Putnam, 2000), while passive behavior at school may be a premise for political passivity.

Students can do more than just talk about democracy, they can cooperate successfully, making informed and responsible decisions.

## **2. Problem statement. Active learning and participation at school**

There is a gap in our society among school learning and competences needed in the adult life, included those for the working sector. Young people pass several (minimum 9) years at school in the European countries, and they need developing transversal skills together with knowledge. It is important that they experience abilities in different fields, assuming active roles, not only practicing passive behavior.

### *2.1. Active learning and peer tutoring*

Active learning is useful for quality results and at the same time for responsible behaviour. John Dewey (1859–1952) argued that ‘give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results’ (Dewey, 1915, 3).

Peer tutoring is a form of active learning in which learners help each other and learn themselves by teaching (Goodlad & Hirst, 13).

Student tutors have long been implemented to help other students in the schools; the first systematic approaches to peer tutoring are credited to Andrew Bell (1753-1832), and Joseph Lancaster (1778-1938) more than two centuries ago; it was prompted partly by a need to avoid the cost of teachers.

Peer tutoring schemes have been used in a variety of contexts and school levels, for every subject and at each grade level in any regular classroom setting, among children of the same age or cross ages.

Rosa Agazzi (1866–1951) implemented successfully peer tutoring practices at the kindergarden grade level (Agazzi, 1961), in a collaborative learning environment, and this is still in use in a big number of Italian kindergardens.

The SPACE version of peer tutoring implies an active role by both tutors and tutees, and can be performed on line as well, among different schools of the own country and of different nations.

Peer tutoring supports and supplements traditional large group instruction or individual direct teaching. It can be organized with students with a range of ability levels, needs and school experiences; it offers a possible solution to some of the challenges faced by teachers such as larger class sizes, and higher academic achievement demands, anyway, what is most important is the empowerment of learners, and the development of responsibility habits (Frankl, 1946), overcoming the risk of always delegating to other people decisions and tasks.

Peers can be more powerful teachers than adults because they are on an equal footing and are less judgmental. Within the peer tutoring session students are more relaxed, open to ask questions. In the cases of participation at school governance, school mates are the only ones in the position to find the right way to involve students.

### *2.1.1. Aims of peer tutoring*

In peer tutoring, students learn from their peers reaching higher learning and greater retention in the considered educational/subject areas through individualized attention, closeness with the instructor, influence of a role model. They significantly enhance the collaborative learning experience, learn to listen to others, to improve social interaction and language development. In case that peer tutoring takes place on line, ICT skills are practiced and improved too.

Peer tutoring encourages shy or unmotivated/ reluctant students to interact with classmates, to practice skills.

Students gradually learn to play a new role, an active part in their own learning, developing a commitment to their individual success; it encourages and demands creativity, independence, and self-esteem.

There are several peer tutoring styles including: Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) (Spencer, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003), Class-wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) (Harper & Maheady, 2007) and Classroom Student Teaching Teams (CSTT), Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT). A special form of peer tutoring is “Learning by Teaching” (LdL stands for the German label “Lernen durch Lehren”), which has been developing by the French professor Jean-Pol Martin in Eichstätt (Germany) since the 1980’s, and has been continuously improved and extended from pure language classes to other areas of learning and living (e.g. Martin, 2001). A network of several hundred teachers has been built integrating LdL in various subjects and various school-types using distance communication.

### *2.1.2. The role of the teacher in peer tutoring*

The shift from assuming complete control to sharing the responsibility of building an active learning environment does not mean abdicating adult responsibility or teacher guidance. The role of the teacher consists in preparing, supporting, moderating and supervising.

Preventing discipline problems and properly answering to the myriad needs of students requires proactive, not reactive, thinking and actions. The teacher will equip students with the competences they need before tutoring others and for active participation; s/he also needs to carefully determine his or her own boundaries for the students' role in the classroom community, and to clearly communicate these boundaries to the students, implementing methods for encouraging acceptable behaviours.

Classroom meetings are a useful way to introducing students to the ways in which tutors can practice their tutorship activity, and in which the tutees play an active role as well. At the start, students should be given opportunities to take small steps, for meeting one learning assignment, describing clearly defined tasks, expected outcomes, and assessment forms, providing detailed instructional materials for tutors and tutees.

In the project SPACE teachers have the task to care that students will be empowered for their own councils, will be trained as assessors for other schools/colleges.

### *2.1.3. Task of the pupils in peer tutoring*

Peer tutors play the helper role, learn and teach how to learn, get a feeling of competency and increased self-esteem, they develop responsibility, and social skills, promoting an active community of learners. They practice teaching skills in a micro-teaching environment during part of the school time. In general they give instructions, organize study groups, hold review sessions, and provide one-on-one attention to learners at different stages and at different speeds, consider the individual needs of different tutees, individually or in small groups, give them immediate feedback, show gains in motivation toward learning, and school achievement.

The student tutor develops teaching and presentation skills, creates a setting that supports children's learning, think of appropriate teaching methods to convey their topic, research and prepare appropriate materials, including technology as a learning aid. On line platforms (moodle, trello etc.) may be used as well. The help can be offered in problem solving, and study skills, in social relation and in active participation as well; peer tutors can help students by modeling effective patterns of thinking and strategies for addressing difficult problems.

Peer tutors learn ways to monitor the performance of their tutees, to identify tutees' levels in order to be able to help them. They learn to devise methods of evaluating individual academic performance, charting their own progress. Participating in the own evaluation doesn't mean giving a mark, it means understanding the own strengths and weaknesses.

Tutoring is a student-centered activity; both students and peer tutors should play an active role in establishing and fostering a collaborative learning relationship, sharing responsibility for much of their own learning experience.

### *2.1.4 Peer tutors and tutees*

Peer tutors can be selected according to different criteria in order to reach the goal, it can be academic achievement, or special experience/skills. Important is that everybody assume a role of tutor in turns, switching roles regularly, after a due preparation in different fields, so that each one knows how to give and receive. That facilitates peer tutoring raising self-image of less able or underachieving

students, and prevent that tutors are not accepted. Even students who are below grade level are expected to find a field of expertise where tutoring schoolmates, discovering own qualities, developing competences to put on disposal to others.

To becoming good peer tutors, students need to prepare, and master the needed competences very well, to coach students in their understanding of concepts and skills, although they are not expected to know the answer to every question; they may also refer to appropriate resources.

Tutees should also be ready to taking charge of their learning; they have to come to meetings with their tutors having first attended class and looked over the reading assignment, bringing all relevant materials with them, including texts, and class or reading notes. While participating in peer tutoring, tutees are expected to continue utilizing teaching assistants' office hours (if available), attending review sessions, and increasing time spent studying independently and in groups.

Students in peer tutoring need to be proactive, taking initiative and seeking out the academic assistance they need at the first sign of difficulty. They should be communicative and empathic as well; should be sensitive to students' challenges, recognize that learning takes time, and understanding that mistakes are a part of the process. They may share their own recent experiences facing challenges, making mistakes, demonstrating a respectful and caring attitude toward tutees. Peer tutoring is successful due to reasons at the social-emotional as well as at the cognitive level.

## *2.2 Education for Citizenship*

As for the scope of participation, far from the statement of the UNConvention for the Rights of the Children, Article 12, student participation in school governance is limited to mainly trivial operational matters. Commonly, schools are more inclined to inform students and, in the best cases, to consult them rather than confer real participation and powers to them. This doesn't help to reach the goal of preparing students for active citizenship which is deemed beneficial to society.

Students are rarely allowed to engage in important school matters, and mostly don't master the needed competences for an effective participation.

Lawy and Biesta made a distinction between citizenship-as-outcome and citizenship-as-practice. In the first view, the central question is the baggage that young people must acquire to participate as adults in society. Citizenship-as-practice emphasises that young people learn to be citizens and interact with others via participation in social and cultural practices that are part of their daily lives (e.g. family, leisure, school, work) (Lawy & Biesta, 2006).

### *2.2.1. Definitions of social and civic competence*

SPACE partners adopt the definition of Social and civic competences, given by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006) on key competences for lifelong learning, where Social and civic competences is defined as 'equipping individual to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life in increasingly diverse society. (European Parliament, 2006).

These include: "Competences such as personal competences (knowing and respecting yourself is an essential prerequisite to getting to know and respecting, the other), interpersonal ones (relating to

others, negotiating towards solutions, trying to understand the point of view of the other) and intercultural competences and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.

Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation” (European Parliament, 2006)..

Education for citizenship implies cognitive and attitudinal strands, and behavioral aspects (Bombardelli, 1993), it concerns students’ knowledge, conceptual understandings, interests, skills and competences, values and beliefs, and exercise of rights and responsibilities; it ranges from socio-cultural to political and economic dimension, all closed connected among each other.

The largest international survey, the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (ICCS/IEA) study (Schulz et al., 2010) adopts the term civic and citizenship education.

Civic education focuses on knowledge and understanding of formal institutions and processes of civic life (such as voting in elections). Citizenship education points on knowledge and understanding and on opportunities for participation and engagement in both civic and civil society. It is concerned with the wider range of ways that citizens use to interact with and shape their communities (including schools) and societies (Schulz et al., 2010, 22).

### *2.2.2. The contexts of schools and classrooms*

Civic-related learning and civic engagement are influenced by the context in which civic and citizenship education occurs, family, society, school and classrooms, as well as the peer environments.

The differences between the structure, the management, the curricula, and the traditions of education systems, included the civic-related training of the teachers, affect considerably the outcomes of education.

Civic participation of the individual students is located within the contexts of the local community that, in turn, is embedded in the wider regional, national, and international contexts.

Students’ learning outcomes in the field of civic and citizenship education are not only a result of teaching and learning processes, but also the result of their daily experience, they depend upon the possibilities they have to experience the classroom and the school as a democratic learning environment through participation, and classroom climate, as well as through the quality of the relationships between teacher and students, and among students.

School climate and culture may contribute to the development among students and teachers of a sense of belonging to the school, thereby enhancing the commitment and motivation that these groups have toward improving school educational activities (Knowles, & McCafferty-Wright, 2015).

### *2.2.3. Active participation at school*

Concerning the implementation of school civic mission through student participation in school governance, we know from the study Eurydice 2012 that “school has formal channels to collect

students' opinions, such as Student Council", anyway they involve a small number of pupils and, in several countries, like Italy and Spain, it seems not to be embedded in the daily life of the pupils, although there are official structures (Consulta degli studenti in Italy).

I compared the teaching /learning activities for promoting active citizenship in the schools of the SPACE partners (Italy, Lithuania, Spain, UK) using a frame for working process and results, mapping the main approaches, exchanging good practices for mutual learning. In UK and in Lithuania student councils are a daily resource, and there is a consolidated expertise; in Italy and Spain student councils are not a consolidated tradition and teachers have to reach gradually the aims of active citizenship.

Cooperating in school government, students move from mouthing the traditional complaints to taking personal responsibility for improvement. They learn how to make wise choices, assume responsibilities, and explore the relation between one's actions and the consequences that follow. They learn that everybody should contribute to common good and that not everything can be expected from 'above'.

The Students' attitudes toward civic participation looks encouraging. ICCS 2009 used a set of items reflecting student attitudes toward the value of student participation in civic-related activities at school; most students across participating countries valued student participation at school (Schulz et al., 2010).

#### *2.2.4. Participation Activities*

Students at the school age are mostly not yet old enough to have access to many forms of citizenship participation in society. They are generally unable to vote or run for office in "adult politics", but they experiment as students to determine what degree of power they have to influence the ways schools are run (Bandura, 1997).

They join active involvement in those civic forms open to this age group, such as school-based activities, youth organizations, or community groups, included relatively new forms of engagement campaigns in virtual networks through new social media.

The student councils may perform a range of activities at different levels of decision making and involvement. Dürr outlined the following classifications: Participative Structures, Participative Learning, Participation in the Social Life of the School, and Participation Beyond the School (Dürr, 2004). The project SPACE includes participation in school governance as well.

Students can eventually develop the confidence and skills to consult on the implementation of ideas, make decisions such as suggesting actions to improve the classroom or school, providing recommendations for solutions or courses of action, and/or for their working rules (the organisation of teaching and of evaluation, possible chances to choosing learning topics or/and teaching methods, daily life questions as the schooluniform etc.). They can perform tasks for school order and good organisation, like respecting rights and duties, cleaning, gardening, cooperation for preventing/managing conflicts, fighting bullism.

The student councils can organise various campaigns (environment, media information and dangers in virtual networks etc.); they may help with promoting special events and activities (human rights, teachers day, European day, sustainable development), or special initiatives chosen by the pupils as

excursions, project days or –weeks. The student groups can be actively involved in a local community project linked to educational matters, may volunteering,

It is of fundamental importance that the school authorities, when receiving the proposals by the pupils, accepts them or explain clearly in constructive way why the proposals are not acceptable.

### 3. Findings

This research is linked to an ongoing project SPACE which lasts 2 years until August 2017, and the findings are interim results of a work in progress, related to the different experience of the schools in the European project partner countries.

Regarding the research questions: active learning and peer tutoring, education for citizenship, and student's participation, the most important findings are the methods for developing competences in cognitive, social and civic fields, and the indicators for monitoring competence which are shared among teachers and students.

#### 3.1. *The project SPACE*

SPACE (Students Promoting Active Citizenship in Europe) is an Erasmus plus project, performed by a Consortium of 6 EU partners: Callington Community College (UK), Università di Trento (I), The Alec Reed Academie, London (UK), Centro de Profesorado de Alcalà de Guadaìra Alcalà' (ES), Alytaus miesto savivaldybes administracija (LT), Alytaus Putinu Gimnazija (LT), under coordination of UK. It aims on promoting active citizenship in the partner schools where students are expected both to learn and to give advices to peers. In the project SPACE, experienced members of school councils help pupils and assess their participation work in other schools.

The project will give young people the tools to develop as young citizens and encourage them to take an active part in their school. It will support greater European understanding as participants will work collaboratively in cross border groups. Locally there will be increased student engagement through giving young people a voice and a clear framework by which students can work to actively engage in improving their school setting.

The project will enable participants to develop basic and transversal skills to prepare young people for the work place as well: communication, collaboration, leadership, evaluation, and working in teams with a variety of partners from backgrounds different to their own. Implementing effective student councils and the competences needed for this task allows for empowerment of young people across Europe through modeling the democratic process and preparing them for their future participation in elections. It means learning democratic rules through implementation of the project activities suggested in the Tool Kit in several participation opportunities (debate, forum, assembly, student council etc.).

Improving competences of learners in 'working in team for democratic participation' implies knowledge and affective behavioral competences/ attitudes.

One of the innovative aspects of this project is the creation of a system of assessment for student councils to develop citizenship skills that can be applied across Europe, using common

frames describing both working process and expected outcomes in the main fields: the Matrix of competences at school and the Kite marks for active citizenship.

### *3.1.1. The SPACE tree*

The SPACE tree is a meaningful mind mapping, to visualize the main components of education for active citizenship through active learning and participation.

Using the analogy of a tree, which develops a strong root system before it can grow healthy leaves, flowers and fruits means that pupils first learn the competences to cooperate and that they run student councils when they are able to do it practising Skills/Attitudes (roots), Knowledge (leaves), Methods (flowers), to reach Results (fruits).

In the roots and the leaves are the foundation from which the social and civic learning grows: SA. Skills/Attitudes, SA.a Communication, included listening, argumentation, presentation; SA.b. self esteem/ emotional Literacy; SA.c. Cooperation; SA.d. Leadership; SA.e. Evaluation.

The flowers indicate Knowledge and reasoning: K.a. understanding the society; K.b. concept of democracy; K.c. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), articles 12 and 13; K.d. terminology; K.e. ability to collect and use information.

The results are listed as fruits: R.a. School Improvement; R.b. Involvement in projects; R.c. Respect of Diversity (European Dimension); R.d. Campaigns as: Respect of the Environment; R.e. Action chosen by the School/ Pupils (example: School Journal, consumer awareness, Human Rights etc.).

They are reached through the Methods of active participation: M.a. Debate; M.b. Forum; M.c. Student Council; M.d. Assemblies; M.e. Links to other Student Councils.

Working in teams includes the competences outlined in the Matrix of competences in cognitive and affective/ behavioral field.

### *3.1.2. The Matrix of competences*

The Matrix of competences (MoC) is used as a means to raise awareness, to define, and assess the required competences. A set of measurable common criteria is used to recognise the work of effective student councils, the basic and transversal skills for working in teams: knowledge, communication, cooperation, leadership, evaluation.

It is a list of competences, with examples of operationalisation of them for supporting development and monitoring of skills. It is consistent with the SPACE tree, the Kite marks and the Toolkit.

The *assessment and evaluation* of social and decisional processes give students an opportunity for greater involvement in their schools and colleges, and for deeper understanding of what is needed to make a strong student council. It requires reflection, besides observation and evaluation techniques in order to recognise productive meetings and constructive participation.

The complexity of the operationalisation of the main competences for active citizenship requires several ‘container concepts’; we “dissect” the participation role into items, indicators of observable behavioural, determining the proficiency level of each competency required; of course the items are overlapping, and they are reported without being repeated in each section. The proficiency levels are: Level 1 (red) Improvement needed; Level 2 (yellow) Meets Expectations; Level 3 (green) Very good.

The Matrix of competences (MoC) is offered by the teachers and discussed/ adapted together with the pupils.

### 3.1.3. *The items of the Matrix of competences*

The MoC helps to understand and foster the factors of engaged involvement, and contribution to the common work. It starts from *knowledge* and reasoning: information seeking, interpreting and using, included numerical data, tables; complex thinking; applying knowledge; terminology; documented, critical, and strategic thinking; explorative behavior, and problem solving.

It focuses on *teamwork* and *cooperation* requiring: motivation; self esteem/confidence; responsibility, and reliability; punctuality; respect of social written and unspoken rules for social interaction; empathy, and non-aggressive attitude; attention to others, especially the disadvantaged ones; informed and responsible decision making; entrepreneurship and initiative; balance among individual and team goals; time management.

A good *communication* includes: respect; listen to each other; oral, written and digital communication; argumentation; articulating the own point of view and understand others' thoughts, intentions, emotions, points of views; adapting communication to diverse audiences; body language, etc.

Student *leadership* implies: awareness of group dynamics, managing; enhancing individual and organizational effectiveness; carefully preparing meetings; openness to feedback; negotiating, dealing with conflicts, assuming responsibilities, exploring the relation between one's actions and the consequences that follow; concern for others, jointly searches for good solutions.

The *intercultural and European* dimension means working with a range of partners from different backgrounds; dealing with social, cultural, religious, age, gender differences; avoiding discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes; international exchange; sense of belonging; breaking down barriers and misconceptions of the partner countries and foster positive attitudes towards all countries in Europe.

SPACE supports learning of *democracy*, fostering respect of democratic rules, democratic decision making, voting, respecting the outcomes of the vote.

We use the items listed in the MoC in hermeneutic way, not in mechanic form, therefore the observers should have a discussion to agree the interpretation of the behaviour required with the observed students.

### 3.1.4. *The Kite Marks/ Awards*

A European Kite mark/award is established with three levels of achievement, from Bronze, to Silver to Gold so that students can develop and refine their skills. The criteria build from basic skills in terms of running and leading a student council to more far reaching skills.

The extent to which students are involved in decisionmaking processes depends upon the official rules of the school system and upon the school administration which must be aware of the importance of listening students voice and approve the plans for giving students the opportunity to experience democratic participation.

The Awards are assigned to the Student Councils/ Groups for the achieved competences and for the work done: Competences, Procedures, Links within the school, and Links beyond it. The decision is

taken by the teachers, after discussion with the pupils, according to transparent criteria based on the items of the Kite Mark.

### *3.1.5. Kite Mark items*

The Council Procedures are described with the following items: 1. The school allows people to work in a Councils/ Groups, even among different classes and ages. 2. Members of the Councils/ Groups are elected democratically each year, by secret ballot. 3. All decisions of the student Councils/ Groups are taken democratically either by elected members of the council or by all students, according to shared, democratic and clear rules. 4. Student Councils/ Groups meetings are held on a regular basis.

5. The meetings are held effectively with a shared “order of the day”. 6. The student group has a member of staff who coordinates. 7. The council’s agenda is set by the student Councils/ Groups and the coordinator/ by the class group. 8. All members are equal and have the same chance to participate and input their ideas.

The Council links within the school are 1. School authorities are aware of the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child. 2. The school community is involved in student group events. 3. There is a venue and time identified to meet. 4. A link teacher is appointed by the senior management team to support the class councils and provide feedback to senior management. 5. The decision of the student group are effectively communicated to the school. 6. Representatives keep interactive contacts with all pupils. 7. People who mabe affected by the council’s proposals will be consulted and their views are taken into account. 8. The student Council/ Group is accountable to the school regulatory body.

The Council links outside/ beyond the school are 1. The meeting and the activities, the decisions are clearly communicate using different media. 2. Students will be empowered to actively participate in small-scale local projects that will have an impact on their own schools. 3. There is a link with the Municipality. 4. Student Councils/ Groups interact with other SPACE schools, getting feed back. 5. Student Councils/ Groups interact with other schools. 6. The student group promotes their views via news letters, websites or social media.

The items of the Kite Mark are a form of internal evaluation, and students are awarded with Bronze, or Silver or Gold, being a symbol of the achieved results.

## **4. Conclusions**

Through active learning, peer tutoring and participation in school governance students develop competences in cognitive and affective/ behavioral field, they experience communication and cooperation skills, become competent learners, raise motivation, and responsibility.

The research about active learning and participation at school, using the SPACE observation tools, helps empowering learners to achieve good results in the development of their competences when they have the opportunity to take responsibilities in active, partially autonomous roles.

Exploring strategies to teach students to better learn, supporting peer tutors and tutees for active participation is a highly challenging practice for schools; it requires clear guidelines, indicators of working process, and regular monitoring by the teachers and by the learners as well. Is is not only a

question of templates and forms, it is much more a competence and commitment task, a common work based on the believe of possible improvement. Through active citizenship students learn that "they make a difference", facilitating the nurturing of democratic citizens.

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