

REVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED TEXTBOOK "I, CITIZEN TO BE"

I would like to start this review with a more general question: why doesn't the historian know what to do in "civic education"?

For a long time, politicians and education bureaucrats have imagined that civics and history are linked, but either it was not understood exactly how, or the link was based on notions of romantic nationalism. Therefore, when we talk about school civic education, we also need to reflect on the unresolved problems of school history education. There are, in my opinion, at least six of them:

1. Fact-checking or methodological empiricism: lots of experts on details and not many generalizing and connecting epochs and regions;
2. The problematic relationship of empirical history and its source studies to the literature, culture and history of ideas - history is presented in too much of a detached way from other disciplines and their field of knowledge. In the current search for interdisciplinary integration and cooperation, this is one of the unresolved challenges;
3. The lack of a modelling history and its problematic relationship with sociological and political science approaches. Civic education is also lost between these three streams;
4. Methodological nationalism and anachronism: history seen through the lens of the modern nation (Alvydas Jokubaitis has already spoken about the "error" in the Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania);
5. The chaos of cognitive and educational values (it is imagined that more lessons on partisans will mean more patriotism) or the unresolved relationship between History, Geography and the Study of Homeland;
6. A flat perception of the role of philosophy and not learning the lessons of Leonidas Donskis' civic education.

The textbook "I, Citizen to Be" avoids at least some of these problems, in some respects by offering solutions and in others bypassing them. The textbook is certainly not overloaded with facts and is not at all tied to the "historicist" paradigm of civic education - a new refreshing approach. What is different is that it avoids the problems associated with history by abandoning historical issues altogether. For example, poverty or barter - why not at least briefly show the historical dynamics of these phenomena? Since the claim is to integrate the textbook not only into ethics lessons but also into history or geography, such an addition is naturally desirable (although not necessary).

The textbook aims to find the links between civic education, ethics and economics. The approach taken is to go through the phenomena and the topics that define them, and the young person's relationship with the world around him. It is arguable to what extent the blurring of disciplinary boundaries is fashionable in contemporary education, but the textbook succeeds in its chosen direction. It is based on events, and at the centre of these phenomena is the young person, with his or her values, expectations and choices. This is a humanistic approach - and although there is already some talk of post-humanism in Lithuanian education, humanism is still lacking in our country, and it is far from exhausted.

The material in the textbook is taught in clear language. Thanks to the flexible content of the textbook, teachers can model the topic according to the structure of their lesson and the level of their students, and can assign tasks to students individually or in groups, and monitor their progress. The infographics and video clips provide an introduction to the topic and its issues, which are then developed in other segments. In short, teachers get a handy tool for their work and students get quality content.

The textbook is not afraid to take on global issues (ecology, media, social networks) and, in small steps, relate them to local contexts and the perspective of a young, growing person. Civics are combined here with the concerns and worries of young people, which is commendable. But the aim is not a declarative or abstract value-based civic awareness, but a civic awareness that grows out of a sense of responsibility for one's own actions, an awareness of one's freedom and subjectivity. In other words, civic education is finally not about institutions, history or loud declarations of value, but about personal moral choices.

However, I would also like to draw attention to certain aspects and limitations of the textbook that could be improved. At least one important topic on citizenship is not directly addressed - neither citizenship nor ethnic or other identities are directly addressed. What does it mean to be 'civic' if one does not have a relationship with one's own state? And early adolescence is precisely the time when one defines one's own self, seeks (in)fitting in, participating in communities and understanding one's place in the world. The title of the textbook seems to promise: young (not yet voting), but already civic, participating, active, engaged. This, of course, does not have to be a romantic fairy tale or indoctrination. It is worth thinking about what would be a phenomenon or theme that a young person would recognise that would help them approach this issue?

Another problem is that there is neither an introduction nor a "user manual" for teachers and students. If the authors of the textbook give a tutorial on how to work with and use the textbook - great! But if you want to start working with it on your own? There is a lack of clarity about what

is done, how it is done and why it is done - so extra reflection and thinking time is needed when trying to get to grips with the textbook. This is, however, an easily remedied gap.

The good thing is that a digital textbook is a flexible media form, so improvement based on feedback from reviewers or teachers is always possible. As a practical and user-friendly teaching tool, it can certainly be recommended to teachers and schools.

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