

Education in Citizenship and European Values through eTwinning

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In a world in which we must face many social, political and cultural challenges, the core values of the European Union, such as inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination, are more important than ever. In the current context of a diverse and constantly changing Europe, schools play a fundamental role in transmitting these principles, together with other values such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, as revised by the Treaty of Lisbon. This treaty strengthened the role of European citizenship and promoted inclusive education committed to the common European project. Along these lines, the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching stresses the importance of transmitting these values in education.

In this context, eTwinning projects present themselves as a valuable tool for promoting the European dimension of teaching. Through collaborative work between schools from different countries, pupils develop a critical, intercultural awareness and commitment to the values of the European Union. Thus, the eTwinning community actively contributes to educating a European citizenry that is caring, participatory and respectful of diversity.

This article shows the possibilities offered by eTwinning projects to promote reflection on and experience with the fundamental values of the European Union in real shared educational contexts. Examples of eTwinning projects are presented, the final outputs of which demonstrate pupils' commitment to these values and their application in real-life situations, thus reinforcing their sense of belonging to the European community and their involvement as active citizens. It also explores how collaboration activities in international teams allow students to experience these values in a practical way, through cooperative work, intercultural dialogue and consensual decision-making between students from different countries.

European values in action through eTwinning

The eTwinning platform provides an educational environment that allows students to participate in real, meaningful collaborative projects, in which they must communicate effectively in different languages, make decisions and resolve conflicts in a cooperative way. This type of experience places them in authentic learning contexts, where they develop key skills for democratic life such as dialogue, active listening, empathy and co-responsibility, while at the same time experiencing first-hand the European values of respect, diversity and intercultural cooperation.

Moreover, eTwinning projects address cross-curricular issues of great social and global relevance, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, human rights and inclusion. This

thematic approach, worked on from a European perspective, fosters students' critical awareness and connects them to the challenges affecting their local communities and the world as a whole. Thus, the eTwinning platform encourages an active and committed attitude towards the social and environmental problems of our time.

In short, eTwinning projects represent a unique opportunity to integrate European values into the curriculum in an experiential way, connecting learning with the reality of the 21st century. Thanks to their international scope, collaborative approach and ability to address global issues, they are an effective way to educate for active citizenship, solidarity and commitment to a common future.

Developing civic competences through eTwinning

eTwinning projects enable students to develop the following civic competences aligned with European values:

- **Democratic participation**, promoting teamwork, shared decision-making and co-responsibility.
- **Respect for diversity**, fostering intercultural understanding and inclusive attitudes based on equality and equity.
- **Critical thinking and conflict resolution**, addressing relevant social issues from an ethical perspective.
- **Digital and civic literacy**, promoting the responsible use of digital tools in collaborative environments.
- **Global awareness and solidarity**, reinforcing the sense of belonging to a European community and commitment to the common good.

Examples of eTwinning projects that develop civic competences and European values



Image by Mercedes Casuso based on the "Assemblywomen" project logo. Creative Commons License (CC BY-SA)

The project "*The assemblywomen: women's voices from ancient to modern times*" reflects two fundamental pillars of European values: critical thinking and diversity. Taking Aristophanes'

comedy “Assemblywomen” as a starting point, the students, divided into collaborative teams, investigate the evolution of the role of women throughout history and its impact on modern society, developing these values in the following way:

- Diversity is at the heart of the project: the teaching team brings together experienced eTwinners with new colleagues, fostering an inclusive and supportive professional environment.
- The curricular integration of multiple subjects (Latin, Greek, English, Theatre, Philosophy, Civic Education) makes diversity an enriching resource.
- Working in international teams of students with diverse interests and ages helps them to appreciate cultural differences and to practice tolerance and mutual respect. The students themselves form the teams in a democratic exercise of choosing the women to investigate.
- The entire structure of the project is designed to encourage critical thinking. Students do not simply collect information; they compare, analyse and question the role of women over time.
- Through interviews with inspirational women in their communities and comparisons with ancient figures, asking provocative questions for a final questionnaire, participating in reflection forums and explaining their choices, students go beyond a superficial understanding and think independently and deeply.
- The pages on internet safety help students understand the tools that make the information age possible and how to use them appropriately, especially AI.

In this process, students and teachers exercise active European citizenship, respecting differences and thinking critically in meaningful dialogue. Classical culture is the bridge to a focus on contemporary values of equality, inclusion and respect. It is not just about the past but about building a future where diversity is a strength and critical thinking a tool for change.



*Image by Mercedes Casuso based on the logo of the “Mens sana in corpore sano” project.
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A similar work process comprises the project “*Mens sana in corpore sano*”, linked to the eTwinning theme of the year “School Well-being” and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Students become agents to improve well-being at their school by working in international teams, choosing the work topics, creating collaborative products shared with the entire educational community (e-book on well-being, surveys, exhibitions, challenges) and devising Olympic events that take place during the field trips. The Erasmus-eTwinning synergy reinforces the connection between the work carried out and the field trip experiences, promoting the exercise of active citizenship committed to sustainability, tolerance and inclusion.

Examples of collaboration activities in eTwinning that promote European values



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This image captures a sequence of six collaborative activities from the “*Dade's Journey of Change*” and “*2024: A Trip Through Anniversaries*” projects, in which students from different countries work together around themes such as climate change and 2024 anniversaries such as the passage of the US Civil Rights Act and the recognition of inspirational women like Nina Simone and Frida Kahlo. It describes how these activities develop civic competences and European values:

1. Netiquette standards are agreed upon to promote safe, empathetic and respectful communication in digital environments, fostering respect for others, responsibility and active digital citizenship.
2. The joint creation of the project avatar reinforces the sense of belonging, a common European identity and the importance of teamwork in representing shared ideas.
3. The formation of international teams focusing on climate change enables students to reflect on global challenges, develop environmental awareness and promote collaborative action for sustainable development.

4. The joint creation and democratic choice of the project image encourages participation, intercultural dialogue and shared decision-making, bringing students closer to the principles of European democracy.
5. The involvement of civil rights experts in the project “2024: A Trip Through Anniversaries” connects learning with key historical figures, promoting respect for human rights, equality and justice.
6. Finally, creating biographies of inspirational women in international teams promotes gender equality, an appreciation for women role models in history and cross-cultural cooperation.

Throughout this article, we have shown how eTwinning projects are an effective tool for integrating the fundamental values of the European Union into the school context, promoting active, critical and caring citizenship. Through collaborative work and an intercultural approach, students develop essential civic competences and become involved in building a fairer, more democratic and inclusive society. Thus, eTwinning connects learning with reality, turning education into a tool for social transformation and strengthening the European values of respect, diversity and cooperation, essential foundations for the future of a united Europe and a more caring and committed world.

LINKS:

[Twinspace of the project The Assemblywomen: women's voices from ancient to modern times](#)

[Good practice: eTwinning and promoting European values](#)

[Good practice examples: “The Assemblywomen: women's voices from ancient to modern times”](#)

[Twinspace of the project “Mens sana in corpore sano”](#)

[TwinSpace of the project *Dade's Journey of Change*](#)

[TwinSpace of the project *2024: A Trip Through Anniversaries*](#)

[Link to collaborative activities from both projects](#)

REFERENCES:

European Union. (2007). *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community*. Official Journal of the European Union, C 306.

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