



Erasmus+ Project DeCiTeL: Democratic Citizenship Teaching and Learning

D2.1: Report of the First Workshop

Project Duration: 3 Years

Project Type: Erasmus+ Teacher Academy

Prepared by: EIP Lab

Date: July 2025

DECITEL is an Erasmus + Teacher Academy project (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PEX-TEACH-ACA Project ID 101196495) and co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Workshop preparation and development.....	6
3. The main workshop result: 12 Design Principles for the training supply of DECITEL	17
4. The “citizenship processes” at the centre of the Teachers Academy design.....	22
5. Organisation and collaboration principles.....	24
6. The road to the second workshop	25

1. Introduction

The DECITEL Teacher Academy, its purpose and concrete objectives

Citizenship education is rapidly evolving and incorporating several new dimensions that were not covered by traditional civic education: digital transformation, SDG and global citizenship, inclusion challenges and respect for diversity, education to peace and conflict transformation are all contributing to broadening the scope and increasing the relevance of citizenship education. At the same time, representative democracy is facing important challenges (polarisation and extreme populism, disinformation and decreased attendance to elections, etc) and citizens' participation in decision making is frequently recommended as potentially the best strategy to contrast the signs of crisis that are concerning the EU, among many other institutions.

DECITEL intends to contribute to these challenges by addressing teaching professionals and providing a systemic answer to their learning needs in this domain.

The Teacher Academy specific objectives are:

- To create the conditions for a sustainable Teacher Academy Alliance, delivering joint degrees and open to further extension at the end of the first three years, as part of the European education area
- To develop a framework of teachers competences and reference learning paths based on the existing EU and international standards, through the setting up of a collaborative Observatory of teachers' needs in this area
- To collaboratively develop learning modules and lesson plans in several languages on citizenship and peace education, transformation of conflict and participatory didactics leading to civic competences
- To develop and distribute a toolkit for the creation of Urban Learning Ecosystems for the practice of democracy and civic participation, involving schools, teachers training institutions, local administrations and civil society organisations
- To study and experiment ways to quickly upscale good practice through existing teachers training networks and a systemic and meaningful use of digital technology, including to support hybrid forms of mobility for teachers
- To document and systemically evaluate the innovative practice generated by the project in partner schools, and the progression of first experiments towards large scale diffusion and institutionalisation

The system view and the related projects from which DECITEL emerged

The DECITEL ERASMUS Teacher Academy has not been conceived as a self-standing project with a beginning and an end after three years, but as a long-term investment of all partners, and a catalyst for aggregation of existing and future initiatives.

DECITEL is an Erasmus + Teacher Academy project (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PEX-TEACH-ACA Project ID 101196495) and co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

In particular, it builds on the results of previous projects and offers the opportunity to use and disseminate instruments, lessons learnt and learning modules that partners have developed through the federative efforts that a Teacher Academy supports and makes possible.

The CITIZED Policy support action is the direct source of the DECITEL TA: it investigated the state of the art of Citizenship Education in several EU countries, it analysed teachers learning needs and started to develop an online training supply for teachers on some highly required competences. These initial efforts are now integrated in the preliminary phases of development of the DECITEL Teacher Academy. In addition to these practical actions, CITIZED identified five key challenges, on which stakeholders' consultation and policy workshop took place in several countries:

1. Bringing CE into the agenda
2. Moving from good purposes to good implementation
3. Balancing international reference frameworks with bottom-up initiatives at local level
4. Teachers' Education and professional development
5. Assessing learning outcomes of Citizenship Education: why and how

Policy recommendations were formulated according to these five challenges, and in particular the recommendations related to Challenge 4 may be considered the founding ground for the DECITEL Teacher Academy: they stressed the importance of a whole school approach for CE (including the non-formal education sector), the need to make CE a compulsory subject in initial Teacher Education, the opportunity of creating a professional profile of "CE Facilitator" at school, and creating a multimedia and multilingual resource platform containing film, games and other resources which may be used to stimulate debate and project work at school.

The LICEAL (Linking Citizenship and Employability in Adult Learning) project, which is going to conclude its activities when this deliverable is written).addresses the issue of establishing a learner-oriented approach to adult learning, in which employability, social inclusion and citizenship education are not separate components delegated to different systems of actors, but re-united to face the challenge of our time and allow learners to develop agency and ownership of their personal, professional growth and active citizenship development...

Other projects, like UPPER (systemic UPscaling of Peace Education pRactices), Peace Games, MUST-a-Lab (Multi-Stakeholder Labs for migrants and stakeholders) provided reviews of good practices, instruments and learning resources which prepared the ground for DECITEL implementation.

Other projects on citizenship education are conducted/prepared by partners to develop the Body of Knowledge and the Body of Expertise that are required to feed and update the Teacher Academy.

The aim of the workshop and the present report

The workshop held in Istanbul in May 2025 had the aim of creating the necessary concentration and interaction among all partners' teams, to explore the main current challenges of citizenship education, redefine its scope and components and, very important in operational terms, agree a set of design principles and collaboration model on which the education and training supply of DECITEL will be based. This report illustrates the main results of the workshop, which constitute the starting point for the whole content-related and methodological development of the Teacher Academy. A second workshop will take place at the end of Year 1, to jointly define a Roadmap for the development and sustainability of the DECITEL TA.

2. Workshop preparation and development

The virtual meetings

Three online meetings took place in the weeks before the workshop, including a pre-kickoff and a kickoff meeting. These meetings were an occasion to introduce all the partners and clarify the role and contribution of each partner in the project, as well as to review the objectives and planned unrolling of the project. This was an important phase to put everyone on the same page with regard to the context and main objectives of the workshop.

The review of national citizenship education in the partner countries and in EU/international policies

In preparation for the workshop, all partners were asked to prepare a review of their respective national contexts in terms of citizenship education practices and policies, as well as how these national contexts connected with European and international frameworks and initiatives.

The workshop agenda and development

The workshop took place over the course of the first two days of a three-day meeting in Istanbul, hosted by Boğazici University.

The meeting began with an open discussion allowing each partner to explain what they think are the most important aspects of the project. Each partner then took the floor to summarise the state of the art of citizenship education in their country, including recent policy changes and reforms, decisional competences and approaches in each context. From this discussion emerged a common concern for the discontinuity in policies and frequent changes in programmes, especially alternating between cross-curricular approaches and the standalone teaching of CE: this all creates confusion among school principals, teachers and learners. Furthermore, partners also highlighted how nationalist trends and nation-centered approaches inhibit a global perspective of CE: this is an issue which this Teacher Academy aims to address in its work.

A World Café with four separate themes was held on the second day's morning session to work on the present problems of citizenship education. Four groups were created to focus on four different issues:

- Discontinuity in political leadership and curriculum directives affecting CE
- CE in Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- Non-formal education and extra-school CE
- Motivation of learners

Results of parallel sessions

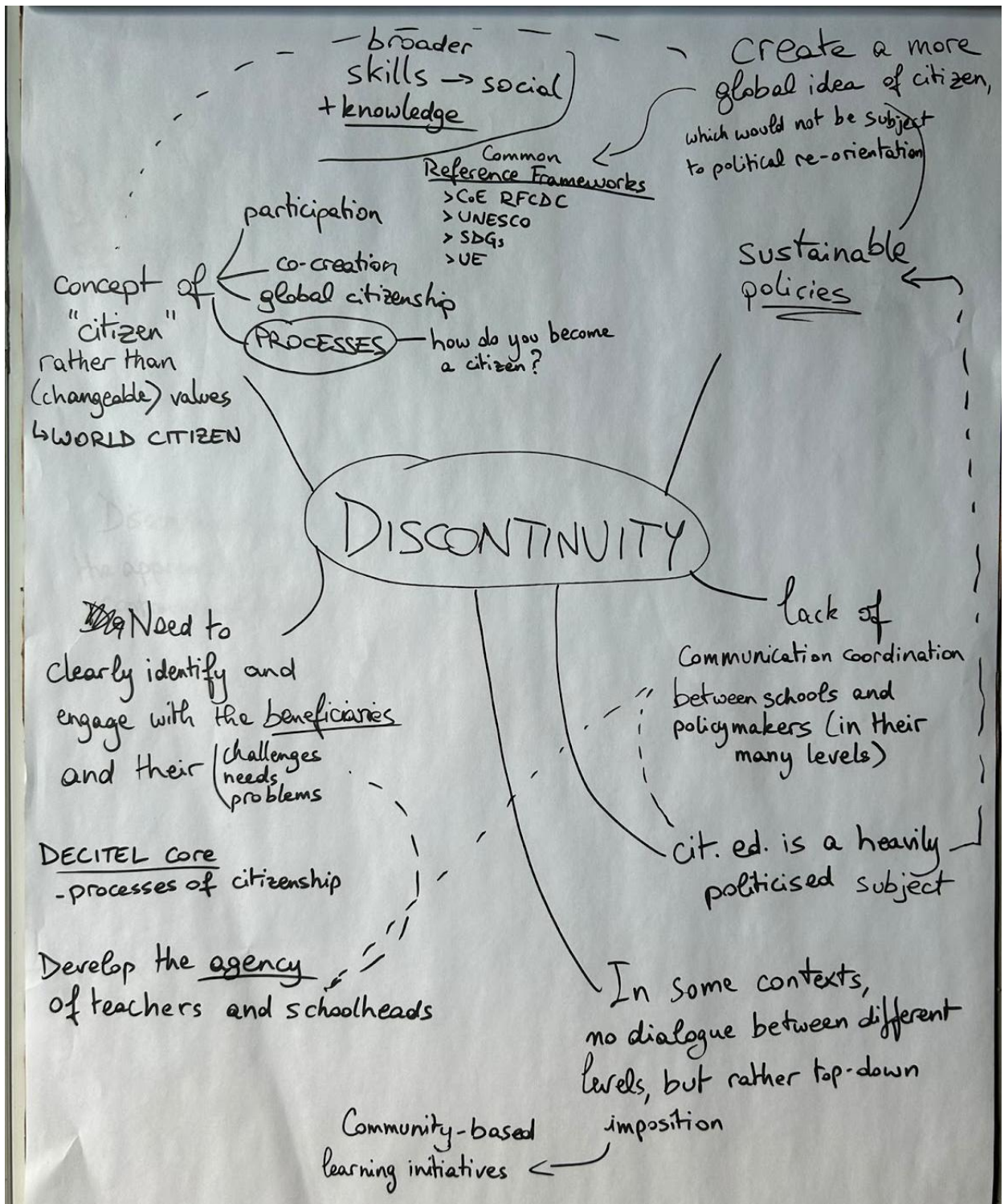
DECITEL is an Erasmus + Teacher Academy project (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PEX-TEACH-ACA Project ID 101196495) and co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

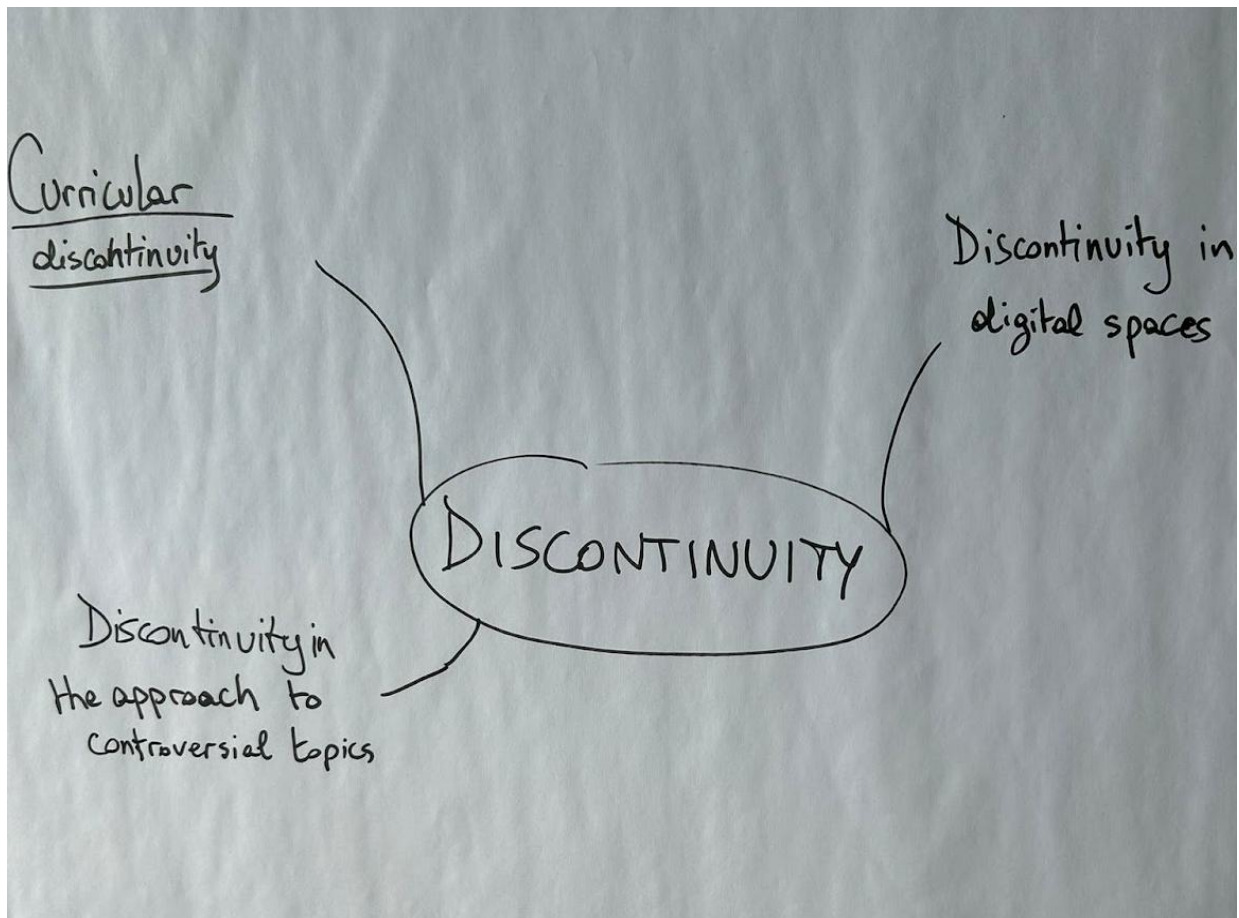
Discontinuity of political leadership and implications on curriculum directives

The discussion led to breaking the issue down to several interconnected issues of discontinuity. The first issue is that citizenship education is by nature a heavily politicised subject, and the values around which the teaching of citizenship is built can change through time and from one geographical or political context to another. A proposed solution for this is to shift the focus of citizenship education to centre around the concept of citizen itself, starting from a reflection on what makes a citizen and emphasising the processes that lead to becoming a citizen. This allows to use a global idea of citizenship which would not be subject to political re-orientation.

The core of the activities of the DECITEL Teacher Academy should therefore be the development of this concept of world citizen. To support this work, it is useful to turn to common reference frameworks as base elements for the construction of a “global citizen”: examples of this include Sustainable Development Goals and the work of the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

In addition to discontinuity in the content of the teaching of CE, there is discontinuity at policy level, with fast-changing curricula, often worsened by a lack of communication and coordination between different levels of actors in CE: the dialogue between schools and policymakers is faulty and in some cases non-existent, as schools perceive new policies as top-down impositions; furthermore, the many levels and hierarchies of policymaking on this subject are an obstacle to effective communication on this issue. Empowering teachers and school heads and developing their agency was identified as a key aspect of the Teacher Academy’s activities, engaging with the beneficiaries’ needs and challenges. This can also be supported by the development of new teacher-facilitator roles with backing from institutions to strengthen teacher capacity, extending beyond traditional subject-specific teaching, encompassing broader educational responsibilities.





CE in Vocational Education and Training

Vocational Education and Training presents some specificities with respect to general education: students are frequently belonging to social groups at risk of marginalisation and/or to cultural minorities, teachers have mostly a technical background and lack the core juridical, historical and political culture that is traditionally required to teach Citizenship Education, employers are seldom very focused of making their apprentices and future employee active citizens.

If these factors may constitute a limit to CE traditional teaching, they may become a stimulating factor for “practicing” teamwork and project work, considering together new technical problems and possible solutions, thus developing the practical competences and the attitudes of open collaboration. Enterprises are also showing growing interest in employing mature individuals able to listen and learn, to collaborate, to negotiate and take responsibility, so it is possible to imagine specific approaches to develop CE also in workplaces

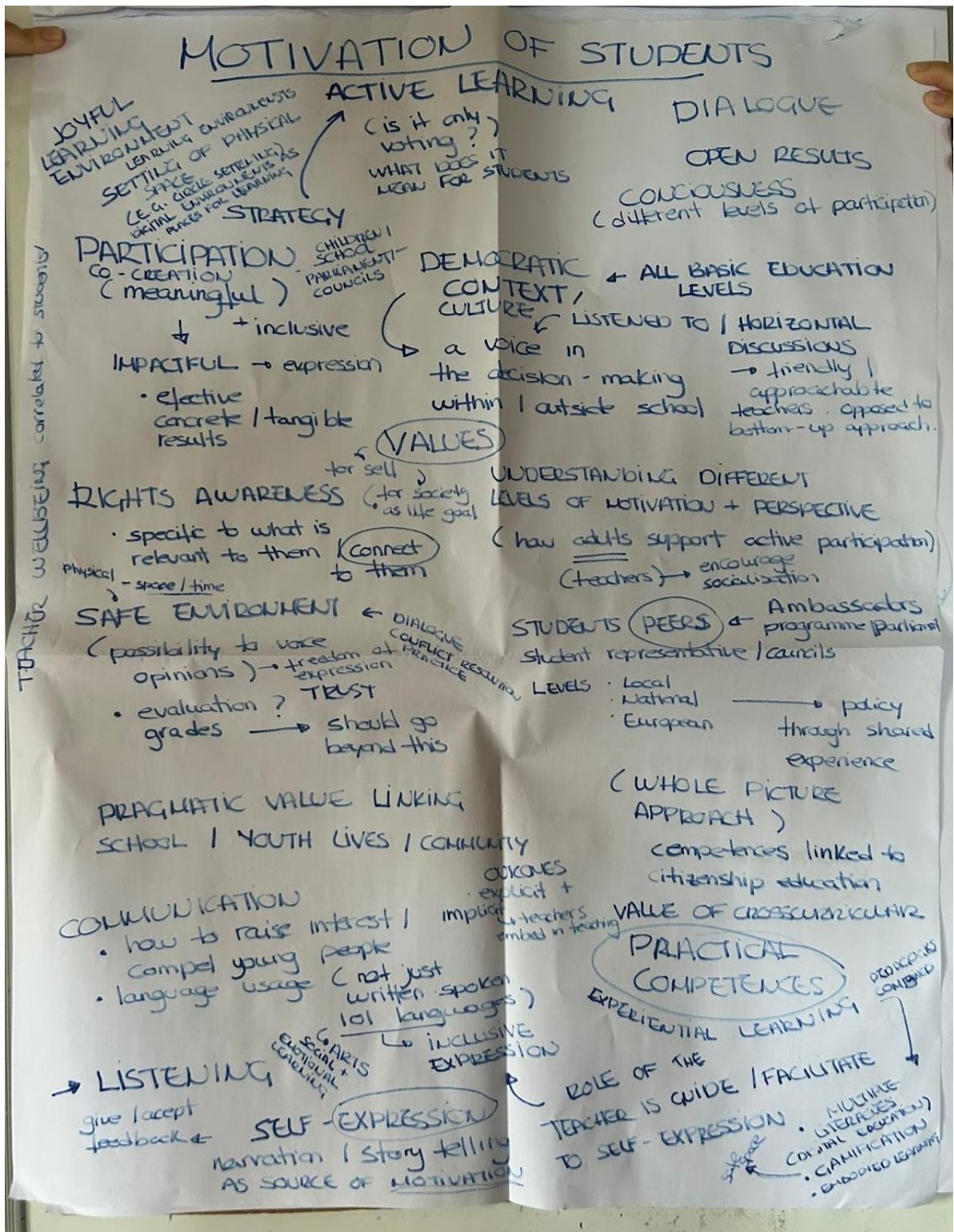


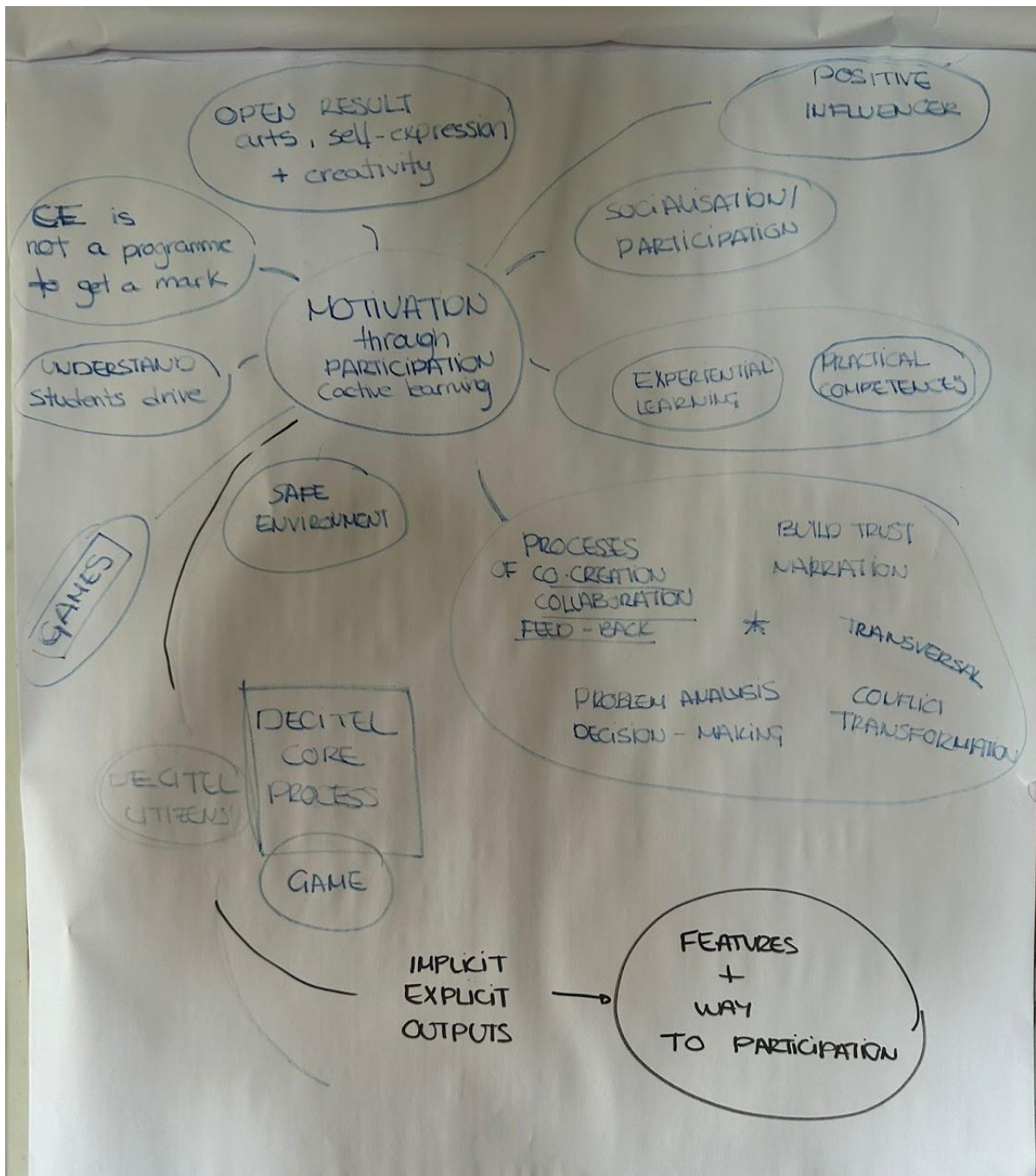
Non-formal education and extra-school CE

Non-formal education contexts offer more flexible, participatory, and context-sensitive approaches, allowing learners to engage in real-life issues such as social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability. However, challenges include limited resources, inconsistent curricula and difficulty to develop uniform approaches, and a lack of trained facilitators with expertise in civic engagement. Additionally, political sensitivities or community resistance may hinder open discussions on controversial topics. The DECITEL Teacher Academy should develop a systemic approach which includes several actors of the community, for instance by involving external experts on specific topics of interest, organising teacher training with the support of local NGOs, and fostering experiential learning methods such as micro-projects for civic education, debates and simulations to develop the learners' civic and social skills.

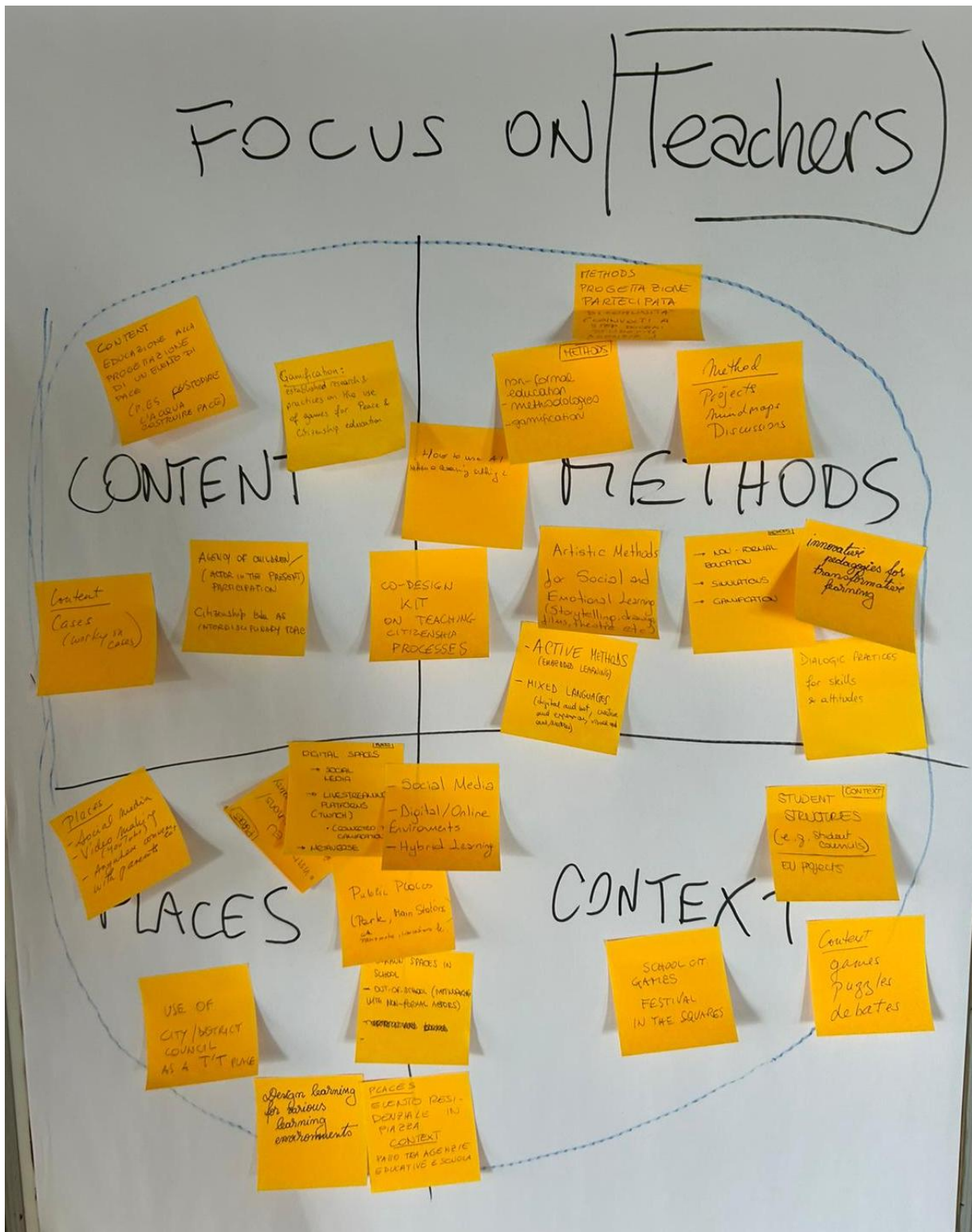
Motivation of learners

Motivating learners towards Citizen Education is not easy if traditional “lecturing and testing” methods are proposed and no importance is given to CE learning results when marks and final judgements on learners are formulated. Only a substantially new, active and practical approach to CE can constitute an attraction factor for many children. Making CE an opportunity for expression and creativity, education to decision making and interaction between groups with different preferences and interest may represent a winning strategy to bring CE closer to students everyday's life and a significant motivation factor.





In the afternoon the focus of the workshop moved on the analysis of the TA' target groups: future teachers in their academic paths and in-service teachers. The "persona" approach was used to identify groups of teachers with different profiles, attitudes and interest in learning more on DCE and ways to support learners to acquire the related competences.



DECITEL is an Erasmus + Teacher Academy project (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PEX-TEACH-ACA Project ID 101196495) and co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

PERSONAS

IN THE

Judith

Loves children

Kindergarten or Primary School

Pedagogy

Following a teacher model

FOCUS

Alt. Methods

Socio-relational skills

Network

INTERNSHIP OR EXP. WITH SENIOR CE Teacher

TOOLS + GAMES

John

Science

PEDAG. PRINCIPLES

ALT. METHODS

DIGITAL GAMES / TOOLS

- ALTERNATIVE METHODS

DIGICT - BUSINE. COAST

- PARTICIPATION LEADERSHIP

Carlos

Ed. Science

Primary or Sec

DISRUPTIVE / CRITICAL THINKER

ALT. METHODS - PROJECT WORK

NEW SPACES

CO-DESIGN

in school / ORATE

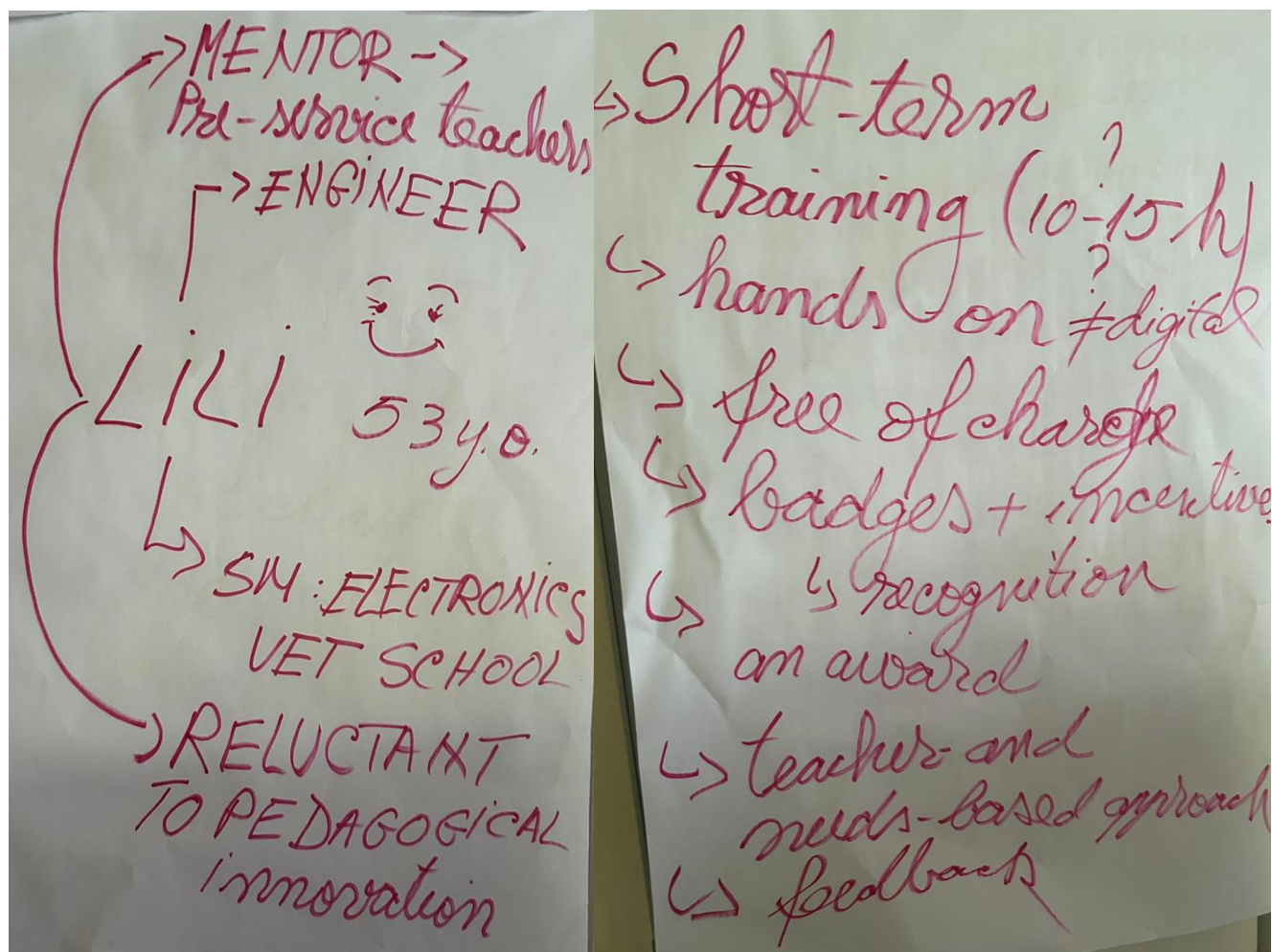
Catherine

Dropped into teaching

job

Soc School

HOW TO ATTRACT
THEIR ATTENTION?



3. The main workshop result: 12 Design Principles for the training supply of DECITEL

After the reporting of all groups, a first list of design principles was drafted and presented for discussion among partners, receiving a substantial consensus and some initial suggestions to modify the order and the wording of the principles. They summarise not only what directly emerged from the different sessions, but also other ideas that were expressed in the national reviews and in the general debate that preceded the workshop.

These principles are now the main ground on which the partners are starting the design of the reviewed curricula and new education and training supply that, from 2026, will be concept- and field-validated by the partners in their respective territories, but also, in many cases, at transnational level. Their number and formulation are still open for improvement, but the Design Principles already summarise the main characterising elements of the Teacher Academy that is currently under development.

The picture below represents the original proposal, the following list tries to express the principles in a more articulated and narrative way;

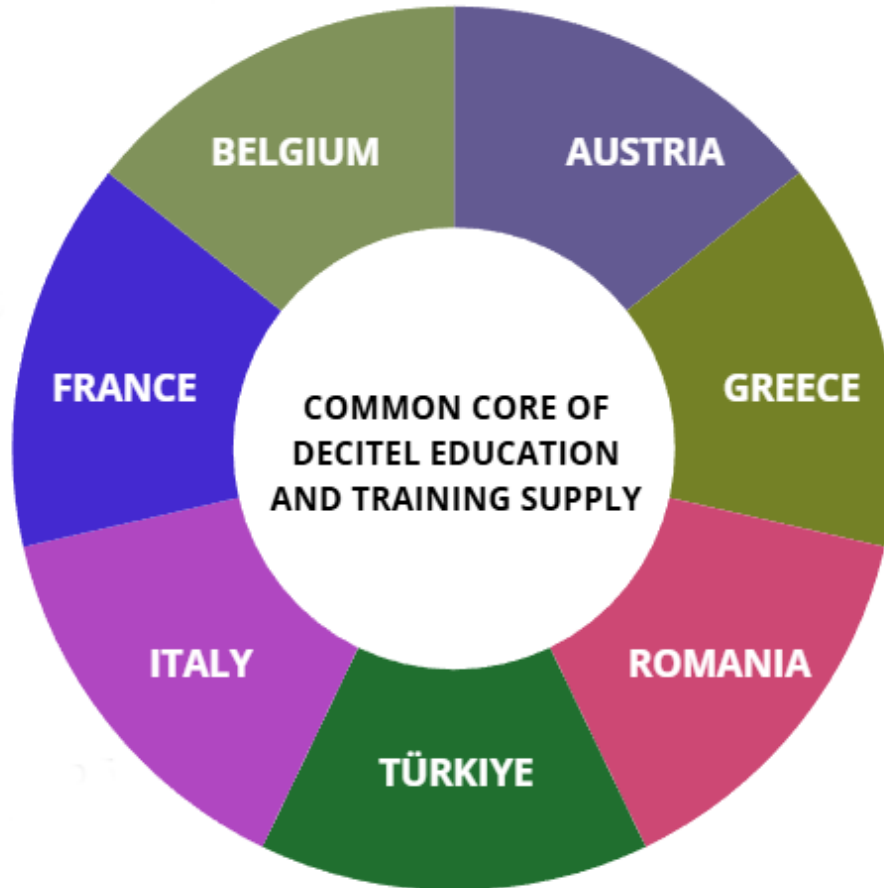
1. DCE Redef. CORE CITIZENSHIP PROCESSES

2. STIMULATE DEMAND AND DESIGN SUPPLY ACCORDING TO NEEDS
3. CORE + NAT CONTEXTS 
4. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH
5. OPEN AND INCLUDING NFE / LOCAL CONTEXTS
6. MULTI-SPACES FOR DCE
7. PARTICIPATORY LEARNING +
8. INNOVATE LEARNING ASSESSMENT (L. + PEERS)
9. JOINT DEV + RECOGN, JOINT DEL. + VE
10. PEER LEARNING
11. DCE AS A WAY TO EXPRESS AND CREATE
12. OPEN TO RES - COMMITTED TO POLICY IMPACT

1. Redefining Democratic Citizenship Education. DCE requires attention to what happens in the world, and DECITEL has the ambition not only to contribute to redefine the concept (keeping in mind what has recently been studied and written in terms of global sustainability, intercultural communication, digital citizenship, peace and conflict transformation, human rights, etc), but also to DECITEL is an Erasmus + Teacher Academy project (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PEX-TEACH-ACA Project ID 101196495) and co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

design, document and consolidate a process to continue to do so and make DCE a dynamic concept, open to international debate engaging a plurality of stakeholders. It also includes making explicit which approaches are considered effective for which kind of expected learning outcomes

2. **Modularity and attention to national contexts.** The TA will work to develop an international framework to renew Initial teacher education curricula by introducing common elements of DCE, and on a common core of training modules for teachers continuing professional development, but will consider national needs and regulation as relevant, so to make the resulting training supply a combination of core and country-specific elements. DECITEL should support the adaptation of Teacher Academy activities to different national and cultural contexts, taking into account structural and institutional challenges that may affect implementation The following graph, with the two concentric circles, may give a rough idea of this principle



3. **Stimulate demand and design according to needs.** The DECITEL partners will not only try to give an answer to explicit needs expressed by teachers and future teachers, but will also try to reach out to teachers who do not see the need to get prepared/updated to new contents and methods for DCE. Traditionally Citizenship Education has been strongly defined, in many countries, as a dominantly national and legislation-based subject, so many teachers tend to avoid responsibility in this field and do not express an interest or a need; nevertheless, a Whole School Approach, as defined later, requires that a majority, if not the totality of teachers are engaged in an effective strategy of DCE
4. **Advocate and implement the value of DCE as a field of creativity and expression.** If we support a substantial shift from knowledge-based education to interaction processes, DCE becomes a field for creativity and expression, much more attractive for teachers and learners
5. **.Whole School Approach:.** DCE should be conceived as a commitment of the whole school and its stakeholders, not as a task of one or few teachers: a systemic approach is adopted to make sustainable progress and create a supporting organisational climate for finding new opportunities and methods to develop citizenship competences across the curriculum
6. **Open to non formal education and new safe places for DCE.** DCE is not the exclusive task of school: the local community, from parents to the local administration and cultural institutions, should be integrated in the proposals that DECITEL will develop, and civil society organisations may play an important complementary role through non-formal education to be proposed in collaboration with school or in the extra-school activities. In this context, the experimentation of unusual places for CDE may also represent a new and motivating element for teachers and learners;
7. **Value-driven education;** the DECITEL education and training supply will adopt a common frame of democratic and humanistic values, with specific reference to EU policy documents on democracy and COE framework of competences for democratic culture.

8. Participatory learning processes at the centre. DCE should include a massive amount of participatory processes: discussions, conflict transformation, mediation, project work, virtual exchange among teachers from different countries, role games are examples of how teachers should be involved in the learning experiences that the TA will propose. Some new contents of DCE are very important, but if teachers need to help learners to develop DCE competences they have to practice these competences themselves in their training programmes.

9. Peer learning as a key approach for DCE. The existing experience of teachers should be used to develop interactions and to create new approaches to DCE, a huge reservoir of instruments, lessons schemes and other activities can be activated while proposing new learning programmes, and collaboration will enhance teachers' motivation to learn. The role of digital technology to support the international community of DECITEL teachers and learners should be explored and exploited while keeping the human interaction element at the centre of the project philosophy.

10. Innovative approaches to the assessment of DCE learning outcomes. DECITEL will experiment innovative approaches to learning assessment, whenever possible involving learners and peers in the provision of evidence of the achievements of groups and individuals during project work and other participatory methods;

11. Joint design, joint development, Virtual Exchange, joint recognition; most of the new training supply for teachers and future teachers will be co-designed by more than one partner and, whenever possible, also the delivery of the study programmes and training modules will be implemented through the collaboration of more institutions, thus allowing the possibility of Virtual Exchange (collaborative learning and joint tasks and discussions among teachers from different countries) during international project work. The Academy will progressively develop and deliver an own certification system, initially based on e-badges; through a step-by-step approach, the Academy will seek full recognition by the national teachers training systems, while maintaining the aim of making DCE a more international subject.

12. Keep the project open to research developments and aware of/relevant to policy developments. Although the “main job” of DECITEL is the provision of innovative education and training for teachers, the project will keep a careful eye on research developments, trying to inform its current activities with the most recent and relevant results; at the same time, DECITEL will try to quickly disseminate its results and draw lessons that may inspire future teachers policies at national, EU and international level by connecting with the relevant policy makers and international

DECITEL is an Erasmus + Teacher Academy project (ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PEX-TEACH-ACA Project ID 101196495) and co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

organisations.

4. The “citizenship processes” at the centre of the Teachers Academy design

According to the discussion held in the workshop and to design principles of the previous section, **many citizenship competences are better developed by practicing “citizenship processes” than by listening or reading.** Which processes can be considered “citizenship processes”?

This question cannot be answered in a simple and unilateral way. What follows is a first attempt to propose some examples searching comments, reformulations and suggestions of other processes that may contribute to the development of democratic citizenship competences:

- Debating different positions on a specific or general issue
- Transforming conflicts in a positive direction, without the pretension to “solve” all of them
- Negotiating among different interests by using democratic principles
- Inter-cultural communication, appreciation and collaboration
- Teamwork for common/public interest
- Expressing own views and receiving feedback
- Mediation between two parties
- Multi-stakeholder problem analysis and solutions search
- Democratic consensus building and decision making
- Trust building and respect of rules in games and sports
- Representation of group’s interest
- Advocacy and organisation of interest groups

In practical terms, what is suggested is not only that teachers should “organise/use” these processes at school and in the surrounding community to be more effective as DCE educators, but also that **the Teacher Academy itself should incorporate these processes in the training supply that it is going to develop for its two main target groups: future teachers and in-service teachers.**

This has obvious implications for the design of the curricula and the short modules, and represents a significant challenge in terms of course implementation, online and face-to-face. The basic knowledge about these processes can certainly be provided by online modules, but the competence to activate and moderate the processes require quality human interaction or, hypothetically, sophisticated digital systems to simulate the processes.

5. Organisation and collaboration principles

According to the design principles, every new study programme, for initial teachers education or continuing professional development, should be based on the collaboration of at least two project partners; to this purpose thematic working groups will be formed by September 2025 to focus on specific groups of competences/learning outcomes on which new study programmes or modules will be developed and, possibly, jointly delivered and assessed.

However, some minor or major changes may be implemented on **existing curricula and short courses to introduce some new contents or some new methods suggested by the project.** In principle this is every partner's responsibility, but it is recommended to keep track of all improvements produced by the project in the partner institutions and all learners affected by the changes implemented.

All partners will contribute to the choice and to the development of new study programmes and short modules, and will then have privileged access to the new supply, thus contributing to its validation before the courses are made available to other institutions.

A governance structure to make decisions on the new training supply and the sustainability perspectives of the DECITEL TA will be set up within Year 1.

6. The road to the second workshop

A second workshop will be planned to consolidate the organisational principles and structure of the teachers academy. The second workshop and the second deliverable of WP2 are due by the end of Month 12 (March 2026); by that time the project will have:

- Developed a long-term roadmap outlining the strategic direction and the milestones for the development of the DECITEL Teacher Academy Alliance
- Further developed its dissemination strategy and its plan for sharing best practices, materials and resources developed by the project
- Finalised the definition of design principles and DCE processes to be included in one or more programmes of the new education and training provision
- Organised and activated the thematic working groups which will work on the reference learning paths in WP3
- Defined an evaluation strategy for ITE and CPD
- Identified and involved the necessary partners in the relevant regions and, indicatively, identified potential partners in other EU and ERASMUS partner countries, with whom to develop the long-term sustainability strategy; to this purpose, every partner should indicate one or more persons to form part of a Strategic Development Working Group.