FROM PASSIVE CONTENT TO ACTIVE PARTICIPATION: STRUCTURAL APPROACHES TO CIVIC EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Viktoriia Kryshmarel[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9822-8331
[1]Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
Corresponding author: krishmarel@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-609-9-40
Keywords: civic education; textbook architecture; socially oriented learning; civic agency; Ukraine's educational recovery.

In the context of Ukraine's ongoing wartime challenges and the strategic imperatives of post-war recovery, education is increasingly positioned as a key instrument for strengthening democratic participation, civic resilience, and social cohesion. Civic education, in particular, is expected to move beyond the transmission of factual knowledge toward fostering students' capacity for critical reflection, responsible decision-making, and meaningful participation in community life. However, a persistent gap remains between these policy-level aspirations and everyday classroom practices. This paper examines how the design of textbooks as instructional tools can contribute to bridging this gap by embedding socially oriented learning into the structure of formal schooling.

The analysis focuses on the structural and pedagogical features of the Grade 9 "Civic Education" textbook authored by Olena Pometun, Olha Dudar, Viktoriia Kryshmarel, and Tetiana Remekh. Developed within the framework of Ukraine's competence-based reform and aligned with the State Standard of Basic Secondary Education, the textbook is grounded in a clearly articulated architectonics that organises the learning process as a sequence of interconnected stages. Its internal logic functions as a pedagogical script that guides classroom interaction and helps prevent passive, transmission-based instruction, repositioning both students and teachers as active participants in meaning-making processes.

This architectonics is operationalised through four interrelated stages. The first stage, Activation, connects students' prior knowledge, personal experiences, and emotional responses with

Co-funded by the European Union

civic concepts, thereby establishing relevance and engagement from the outset. The second stage, Guided Inquiry, provides structured opportunities for analytical work with texts, including the development of critical media literacy and the capacity to interrogate ideological narratives–competencies that are particularly significant in the context of information warfare and contested historical memory. The third stage, Collaborative Engagement, introduces task formats based on simulations of civic processes, such as deliberative practices, local governance scenarios, and school self-governance models. For instance, by engaging in "unskippable" group projects or role-playing community council sessions, students practice dialogue, negotiation, and collective decision-making. These tasks position students as active agents rather than passive recipients of knowledge. The final stage, Reflective Synthesis, supports both individual and collective reflection, enabling students to evaluate their learning trajectories and to relate them to broader questions of civic responsibility and democratic participation.

Such a structural approach is consistent with established frameworks of service-learning and experiential civic education, which emphasise the integration of knowledge, skills, and values through active engagement with socially relevant problems (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Eyler & Giles, 1999). The textbook by Pometun, Dudar, Kryshmarel, and Remekh is intentionally designed to simulate real-life civic contexts within a safe learning environment, thereby creating a preparatory space for the development of civic agency. As highlighted in recent research on model curricula, the coherence and internal logic of instructional materials play a crucial role in sustaining competence-oriented learning, particularly in conditions of rapid social transformation (Kryshmarel, 2024).

In the Ukrainian context, this approach acquires particular significance. The development of civic competence requires a transition from episodic, project-based activities to a systematic integration of activity-based and value-oriented practices within everyday teaching (Pometun & Remekh, 2018). Textbook design, in this sense, becomes a key mechanism for ensuring the scalability and sustainability of socially oriented learning across diverse educational settings, including those affected by displacement, instability, and resource constraints. It ensures that the textbook is not merely a "reading book" but a functional classroom tool.

The paper argues that embedding collaborative, inquiry-based, and socially relevant tasks into the core structure of textbooks contributes to the institutionalisation of participatory competencies at the systemic level. While the effectiveness of such an approach remains dependent on teacher facilitation and broader pedagogical conditions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020), rethinking textbook architectonics represents a strategically important step toward aligning classroom practices with the broader goals of Ukraine's educational recovery. By shaping not only what students learn but how they engage with knowledge and with one another, textbooks can support the development of a generation capable of contributing to democratic reconstruction and long-term societal resilience.

References:

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1995). A service-learning curriculum for faculty. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 2*(1), 112–122.

Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2020). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science, 24*(2), 97–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791

Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* Jossey-Bass.

Kryshmarel, V. Yu. (2024). Model curricula "Civic Education. Grade 8": main focuses and structural features. In *Annotated results of the research work of the Institute of Pedagogy for 2024* (pp. 165–166). Institute of Pedagogy of the NAES of Ukraine; Pedahohichna Dumka.

Pometun, O., & Remekh, T. (2018). Hromadianska osvita v Ukraini: stan i perspektyvy rozvytku [Civic education in Ukraine: Current state and development prospects]. *Ukrainskyi pedahohichnyi zhurnal [Ukrainian Educational Journal]*, *1*, 5–16.

Co-funded by the European Union