



# Reflections on the ICCS European Regional Module

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# Overview



1. ICCS in Ireland
2. CCE in Ireland
3. Reflections on the results of the European Regional Module

# ICCS in Ireland (1)

- ▶ First international survey of CCE in Ireland since 1971 (not in CIVED)
- ▶ Initially some difficulties with the target grade (why not Grade 9?)
- ▶ Report of the National Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) recommended Ireland's participation in ICCS
- ▶ National implementation of ICCS included some add-ons, e.g.
  - National additions to the background questionnaires
  - A comparison of the ICCS assessment and national curriculum for CCE
  - No specific additions were made to the European Module

# ICCS in Ireland (2)



- ▶ International reports were complemented by
  - Detailed national report and summary ([www.erc.ie](http://www.erc.ie))
  - Some secondary reporting of results
    - ESAI (theme on partnership), April, 2011
    - ECER (student participation in school), September, 2011
- ▶ Presentation and discussion of results to interested groups
  - e.g., Citizenship Education Network, September, 2011
- ▶ Some evidence that ICCS is influencing other, related research
  - e.g. upcoming evaluation of Young Social Innovators
- ▶ A key finding of interest was the relatively low rates of active participation of students and parents in our education system
  - High in knowledge, low in engagement and participation?
- ▶ Results have tended to be interpreted in a broad context, e.g. with respect to proposed reforms to the Junior Cycle (lower secondary)
  - Implications for CCE with respect to more flexible assessment; options for locally-developed courses/modules
  - Perceived lack of balance in CCE-related activities across junior and senior cycles

# CCE in Ireland (1)

- ▶ At lower secondary, CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) is a compulsory CCE subject (one of 18 ICCS countries with a compulsory CCE subject)
  - Something of an anomaly
  - One class period per week
  - 60% of marks to an Action Project, mainly carried out in a whole class setting
  - Issues: low status, teacher specialisation and turnover, instruction time, safe and minimal rather than creative and developmental approaches, very high pass rate, (currently) lack of follow-through to upper secondary
  - Wider context of the overarching structure of a centralised exam-driven system

# CCE in Ireland (2)

- ▶ Evidence over the past 15 years of an increased focus on ‘education for citizenship’:
  - Proposals for Politics and Society – a new subject at upper secondary (2010; [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie))
  - Young Social Innovators – an initiative for Grade 10 students (2001; [www.youngsocialinnovators.ie](http://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie))
  - Civic, Social and Political Education – as a compulsory subject, examined subject at lower secondary (1999)
  - Social, Personal and Health Education at primary level (1999)

# CCE in Ireland (3)

- ▶ The CSPE syllabus
- ▶ Organised along content units
  - Concepts, values and attitudes are desired outcomes (i.e. not solely knowledge-driven)
- ▶ Concepts
  - Democracy
  - Rights and responsibilities
  - Human dignity
  - Interdependence
  - Development
  - Law
  - Stewardship

# CCE in Ireland (4)

## ▶ Content units

- Individual and citizenship
- Community
- The State – Ireland
- Ireland and the world
  - Europe and the EU are typically studied in the last unit, normally in Third Year (Grade 9)
  - No separate, focused module on Europe and the EU
  - <http://cspe.slss.ie/>



# The European Regional Module (1)

- ▶ A more muted reaction to the results of the European Regional Module than the ICCS 'core' results
  - Some disappointment that the European test did not form a knowledge scale
  - But this also generated discussion such as...
    - why knowledge varies
    - what values underpin the European module test
    - what students should ideally be learning about Europe and the EU...

# The European Regional Module (2)

- ▶ In general, it's perhaps not surprising that most young people in Ireland know basic facts about the EU:
  - e.g. country membership, flag, its function as a partnership between countries
- ▶ Of potential concern that less and more varied knowledge was demonstrated about structures and processes of the EU, and individual and country rights and responsibilities:
  - Low awareness of, e.g. country requirement for joining the EU; amount that a country contributes to the EU
  - Low awareness that individuals have a right to study in any EU country

# The European Regional Module (3)

- ▶ The questionnaire part of the European Regional Module produced results that were broadly regarded as interesting and worthwhile
  - For example, attitudes to European language learning and knowledge of European languages was a finding of interest
  - But – the conceptualisation of language learning was viewed as problematic – English versus other languages
- ▶ Some have questioned the added value of this part of the ICCS study, given the availability and timeliness of Eurobarometer indices
  - However, Eurobarometer data are gathered from adults and lack contextual information such as that gathered in ICCS
  - [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

# The European Regional Module (4)

- ▶ Some of the information gathered was questioned in terms of its relevance to Grade 8 (14-year-old) students
  - For example, the right to study abroad
  - Is it the case that young people will obtain this type of information on a needs basis, or should all young people be made aware?
- ▶ The potential instability of some indicators was also noted, given the worsening of the economic situation since ICCS
  - e.g., attitudes towards: common European policies, common European currency, European unification, and EU expansion

# In Conclusion...

- ▶ ICCS in general, and the European Regional Module in particular, are examples of the challenges faced in developing and administering an international study across diverse social, political and historical contexts
- ▶ Perhaps future assessments of knowledge of and attitudes towards Europe and the EU might have at their starting point the assumption of variation rather than of uniformity and comparability
- ▶ Ireland looks forward to following developments in this respect with proposals for ICCS 2016...

# In Conclusion...

- ▶ Thank you
  
- ▶ ICCS national contact and website
  - [iccs@erc.ie](mailto:iccs@erc.ie)
  - [www.erc.ie/iccs](http://www.erc.ie/iccs)
  
- ▶ We hope that you are enjoying the IEA General Assembly and your stay in Ireland!