

Responding to nationalism and supra-nationalism: curriculum policy and practice in European states

Dr Avril Keating

National Foundation for Educational Research, UK
a.keating@nfer.ac.uk



Education and Nationalism

Interwoven projects

Curricula and textbooks = telling the story of the nation and its imagined community

Civic education focused on national history, institutions, heroes and myths

Europe's central position is a *geographical fact*. German, English and American geographers and economists have proved this... The European phenomenon is illustrated in world history by some unique facts of which Denis de Rougemont quote three:

1. Europe discovered the whole of the earth and nobody ever came and discovered Europe.
2. Europe has held sway on all continents in turn and has never yet been ruled by any foreign power.
3. Europe has produced a civilisation which is imitated by the rest of the world, but the converse has never occurred

(CoE CDCC, 1966: 30-1).

Post-nationalism?

European and global integration = the end of the nation-state and nationalism?

Move towards a post-national citizenship and education

Creating active citizens of the world - multiple identities and 'universal' human rights.

Citizenship education in + about Europe

Over 50 years of policy for teaching about Europe

But curricula decided at national/ local level

⇒ How do member states teach about Europe?

7 country comparison of curricula and textbooks:

Ireland, England, Spain, Germany, Slovakia, Estonia, Cyprus

Common themes in national curricula

Citizenship = multi-level

All have a 'European dimension' to CE

European dimension = multi-faceted

But European citizenship = passive and 'thin'?

Exclusionary – overtly or implicitly

The nation at the centre

CE still nation-centric

Education for Europe reflects + reinforces national goals

No consensus on what European citizenship means
No roots to European citizenship
No challenge to nationalism?

Curriculum in Context – the England case

Statutory CE introduced in England in 2002

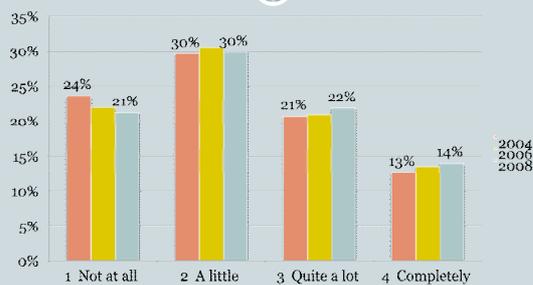
Little impact on levels of knowledge, trust, attachment among pupils

- only 25% of students trust the EU a lot/completely (15% not at all)

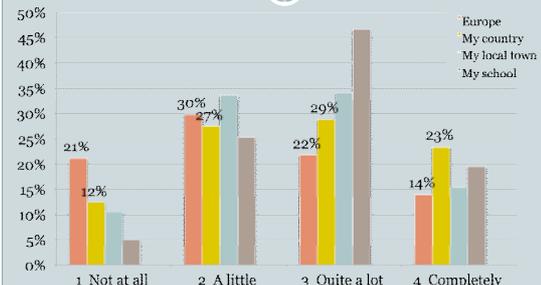
Only 1/3 of students aware of learning about Europe

Teachers lack confidence in teaching this subject

Attachment to Europe



In comparison to other attachments



Reform of Politics, Policy + Practice

Textbooks and official curricula not a panacea

European institutions to be more democratic and open

Not a 'national' problem

Need to address how citizenship and CE are understood and practiced (at all levels)