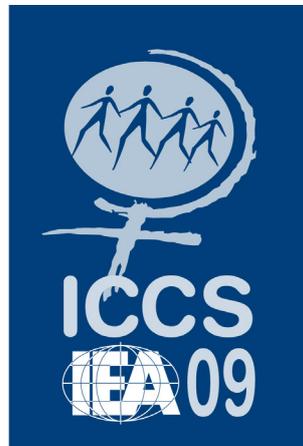


Results of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)

Perspectives on Ireland from Two of IEA's International Reports on ICCS



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Information on ICCS Reporting

The international report (see www.iea.nl) :

- A short *First Findings Report* (published in June 2010)
- An extended international report on ICCS (published in November 2010 and summarised in this document)
- A detailed report on students' knowledge of and attitudes towards Europe (published in November 2010 and summarised in Sections 9 to 11 of this document)
- Reports on regional instruments administered in Latin America and Asia i (2011)
- The *ICCS Encyclopaedia* which describes civic and citizenship education in all participating countries (2011)
- The *ICCS Technical Report* and micro-level database (2011).

National reporting includes

- Summaries from an Irish perspective of the first findings, extended and European Module international reports, (available for download from www.erc.ie)

A full-length national report to be published in February 2011.

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RESULTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIC AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION STUDY (ICCS)

1. Overview of this Report

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study is a project of the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) (www.iea.nl).

This summary is based on IEA's reports on ICCS¹. It:

- lists participating countries
- describes the design and structure of the study
- establishes a context for ICCS
- discusses the instruments used in the study
- describes the content of the ICCS test of civic knowledge
- describes aspects of the civic knowledge of 14-year-olds in Ireland compared with students in other participating countries
- considers key characteristics associated with performance on the test of civic knowledge
- describes students' beliefs and attitudes relating to various aspects of civic and citizenship
- describes students' knowledge about, and attitudes towards, Europe and the EU
- provides some information on the teaching and learning contexts of the study.

2. Participating Countries

Thirty-eight countries/systems (henceforth 'countries', listed in Table 1) participated in ICCS.

Table 1: Countries participating in ICCS

#Austria	Greece	*Netherlands
#Belgium (Flemish region)	Guatemala	#New Zealand
Bulgaria	*, #Hong Kong (SAR)	Norway
Chile	Indonesia	Paraguay
Chinese Taipei	Ireland	Poland
Colombia	Italy	Russian Federation
Cyprus	Korea (Republic of)	Slovak Republic
Czech Republic	Latvia	Slovenia
#Denmark	Liechtenstein	Spain
Dominican Republic	Lithuania	Sweden
#England	#Luxembourg	#Switzerland
Estonia	Malta	Thailand
Finland	Mexico	

*Country did not meet the international student sampling standards.

#Country did not meet the international teacher sampling standards.

¹ Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Kerr, D., & Losito, B. (2010). *ICCS 2009 International Report: Civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement among lower secondary school students in thirty-eight countries*. Amsterdam: IEA and Kerr, D., Sturman, L., Schulz, W., Burge, B. (2010): *ICCS 2009 European Report: Civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement among lower secondary students in 24 European countries*. Amsterdam: IEA.

Southern Hemisphere countries conducted the survey in autumn 2008 and Northern Hemisphere countries did so in the spring of 2009.

3. Design and Structure of ICCS

To ensure the quality and comparability of the ICCS results across countries, all participating countries (including Ireland) implemented a field trial in a small sample of schools in spring of 2008. Results were used to refine procedures and select test items and questionnaire content for the main study.

Also, countries had to meet sampling and participation rate standards. As can be seen from Table 1 (previous page), two countries (Hong Kong and the Netherlands) did not meet these standards for the student sample, and eight countries (Austria, Belgium (Fl.), Denmark, England, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Switzerland) did not meet them for the teacher sample. For this reason, results for students are reported on the basis of 36 countries, and those for teachers on the basis of 30 countries.

The structure of the ICCS assessment is shown below and on the following page. For each survey instrument (shown in bold), a brief summary of the content covered is listed. The content of these instruments was guided by the ICCS assessment framework, available for download at iccs.acer.edu.au.

Student Instruments
<p>Assessment of civic knowledge (<i>45 minutes</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four content areas: civic society and systems; civic principles; civic participation; and civic identities. • Two processes: knowing; and reasoning and analysing.
<p>Student questionnaire (<i>40 minutes</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics (e.g. gender, family structure, migrant status) • Home background (e.g. parental education, books in the home) • Parental interest in social and political issues • Views on participation in class • Participation in civic and citizenship education (CCE) related activities inside and outside of school time • Interest in politics • Views on gender, ethnic, and immigrant rights • Voting intent and intent to join a political party • Trust in civic institutions
<p>European Regional Module (<i>25 minutes</i>) –24 participating countries including Ireland</p> <p><u>Part 1:</u> knowledge about the EU</p> <p><u>Part 2:</u> attitudes towards Europe and the EU, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense European identity • Attitudes towards the euro • Attitudes towards learning European languages • Beliefs about EU governance and enlargement of the EU

Teacher questionnaire
<p><i>30 minutes (second year teachers of all subjects)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demographics (e.g. gender, age, years' teaching experience) ● Qualifications and experience ● School and class climate ● Views on the content of the civic and citizenship education (CCE) curriculum <p><i>Optional teacher questionnaire section – 10 minutes (CCE teachers only)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confidence in teaching CCE-related topics ● CCE activities in and outside of class time ● Perceived improvements needed to the teaching and learning of CCE
School questionnaire
<p><i>30 minutes (principals of participating schools)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management, resources and demographics ● Characteristics of and resources in the local community ● Teaching and learning of CCE
National context questionnaire
<p><i>(Completed by the Department of Education and Skills)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure of education system ● Civic and citizenship education in the curriculum ● Recent developments in civic and citizenship education

4. Context for ICCS in Ireland

In March 2007, the *Taskforce on Active Citizenship* gave national prominence to civic and citizenship issues in Ireland. One recommendation of their report was that Ireland participate in ICCS. Ireland is one among 18 of the participating countries that offers all students the opportunity to learn about civic and citizenship issues as a compulsory subject at lower secondary education. In Ireland, the subject is called CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education). There is a strong emphasis in the CSPE syllabus on active participation. The CSPE syllabus covers four major content areas (the individual and citizenship, the community, the State – Ireland, and Ireland and the world) with seven concepts cross-cutting these content areas (democracy, rights and responsibilities, human dignity, interdependence, development, law, and stewardship).

However, CSPE is only timetabled for one class period a week and is the only Junior Certificate subject assessed with a common-level paper (40% of marks) and an action research project (60% of marks). Other subjects, such as history, home economics, religious education (RE) and social, personal and health education (SPHE) cover content relevant to the ICCS assessment. Students might learn about ICCS concepts outside of school (e.g. by watching the news or in discussion with parents). Also, students in Ireland participated in ICCS in the spring of second year and would not have covered all of the CSPE curriculum.

In the broader context of CCE, other issues are noteworthy, for example:

- the current review of the junior cycle by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
- opportunities for civic- and citizenship-relevant experiences in Transition Year including specific programmes such as Young Social Innovators (YSI)
- the current development of a new senior cycle subject, politics and society, by the NCCA
- patterns of social and political change that are occurring in Ireland and internationally, such as the increase in migration, the development of democracy, the increase in NGOs, globalisation, and security threats.

5. Content of the ICCS Test of Civic Knowledge

Students were allocated 45 minutes to complete the test of civic knowledge. The majority of questions were multiple choice. The ICCS test distinguished between four content areas (civic society and systems; civic principles; civic participation; and civic identities), and two processes (knowing; and reasoning/analysing).

Three examples of questions from the test are described in this section in order to illustrate the types of tasks that students were asked to do.

Example 1 aims to assess understanding of civic society and systems and the process of reasoning/analysing. It asks about regulation of the media by the government. On average both in Ireland and internationally, 41% of students answered the question correctly (option d); option b was an attractive distractor, picked by more than 35% of students nationally and internationally.

ICCS Test (Example 1)		
In many countries, media such as newspapers, radio stations and television stations are privately owned by media companies. In some countries, there are laws which limit the number of media companies that any one person or business group can own.		
<i>IRL</i> %	<i>INT</i> %	Why do countries have these laws?
16	11	a) To increase the profits of media companies
37	39	b) To enable the government to control information presented by the media
6	9	c) To make sure there are enough journalists to report about the government
41	41	d) To make it likely that a range of views is presented by the media

Correct answer is shown in bold.

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 3.7.

Example 2 (next page) aims to assess knowledge about civic principles and the process of reasoning/analysing. The question requires a written response, in which students are asked to provide two different ways in which public debate can benefit society.

ICCS Test (Example 2)			
Public debate is when people openly exchange their opinions. Public debate happens in letters to newspapers, TV shows, radio talkback, Internet forums and public meetings. Public debate can be about local, state, national or international issues.			
Score	IRL %	INT %	How can public debate benefit society? Give two different ways. (Examples of responses in Ireland)
0	33	40	<i>There is too much graffiti around the place so we need to stop it!</i>
1	39	40	<i>It can help people see that there are always two sides to a story/argument</i>
2	28	20	a) <i>They might want to inform people about problems which can be looked into.</i> b) <i>It can make other people see different views which others have</i>

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 3.2.

Students can achieve a score of 0, 1 or 2 points depending on the quality of their answers. To get full points, a student needs to give reasons that cover two of the five categories given below.

1. provides better knowledge or understanding of the substance of an issue or situation
2. provides solutions to problems *or* a forum from which solutions can come
3. potentially increases social harmony, acceptance of difference, or reduction of frustration
4. increases people's confidence or motivation to participate in their society
5. represents/enacts the principle of freedom of expression for people.

A score of 1 up to a maximum score of 2 for each reason that covers one category only, and 0 points is given for responses that do not cover any of the five categories.

Looking at sample responses to Example 2 (above), the first response is not directly relevant to the question, so 0 points are awarded (33% in Ireland). In the second example, the student's reason covers only one of the five specified categories, so 1 point is given. The third response is an example of a full-score (2-point) response since two different reasons are given. Irish students did better on this item in international comparison, with 28% obtaining a score of 2 compared to 20% internationally.

Example 3 (next page) concerns the content area of civic participation and again covers the process of reasoning/analysing. It is on the topic of the boycotting of products due to exploitation of cheap labour. This was a relatively easy item, with 85% of students in Ireland responding correctly to it. Again, the Irish percent correct is higher than the international one (73%).

ICCS Test (Example 3)		
Marek buys new school shoes. Marek then learns that his new shoes were made by a company that employs young children to make the shoes in a factory and pays them very little money for their work. Marek says he will not wear his new shoes again.		
<i>IRL</i> %	<i>INT</i> %	Why would Marek refuse to wear his new shoes?
3	8	a) He thinks that shoes made by children will not last very long.
85	73	b) He does not want to show support for the company that made them.
3	9	c) He does not want to support the children that made them.
8	11	d) He is angry that he paid more for the shoes than they are actually worth.

Correct answer is shown in bold.

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 3.3.

6. Student Achievement on the ICCS Test of Civic Knowledge

Students' responses to individual questions were combined to give an overall civic knowledge score. The achievement scale has an international mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. This implies that about two-thirds of students on average across ICCS countries have a score between 400 and 600. Table 2 (next page) shows, for all countries:

- average performance (column 2)
- standard errors of country estimates (SE)² (column 3)
- an indication as to whether the country average is significantly above or below the international average (column 4)
- gender differences in average achievement (column 5)
- grade level (column 6), and
- average age of participating students (column 7).

The average age of participants is 14.4 years and the mean age of Irish students (14.3) is close to the international average. Average age across countries ranges from 13.7 to 15.0 years. In the majority of countries (34), students were sampled from grade 8 (second year in Ireland). Variations in average age and grade level are indicative of variations in policies on school starting age and grade retention and so should be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

The highest-performing countries are Finland, Denmark, Korea and Chinese Taipei. These four countries have an average score that is well ahead of the other countries. Ireland scores a substantial 34 points or one-third of a standard deviation above the international average, with a rank of seventh out of 36 countries with acceptable student samples. Ireland has a similar average performance to Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. Lower scores are associated with emerging economies (e.g. the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Paraguay).

² The standard error is a measure of uncertainty surrounding the mean score which is due to the fact that a sample of second year students participated, rather than the entire population of second years.

Table 2: Mean ICCS score, gender differences, grade level, and mean age, all countries

Country/System	Mean ICCS Score	SE	International Comparison	Female Advantage	Grade Level	Mean Age
Finland	576	(2.4)	▲	28	8	14.7
Denmark	576	(3.6)	▲	8	8	14.9
Korea, Republic of	565	(1.9)	▲	22	8	14.7
Chinese Taipei	559	(2.4)	▲	26	8	14.2
Sweden	537	(3.1)	▲	21	8	14.8
Poland	536	(4.7)	▲	33	8	14.9
Ireland	534	(4.6)	▲	22	8	14.3
Switzerland	531	(3.8)	▲	7	8	14.7
Liechtenstein	531	(3.3)	▲	12	8	14.8
Italy	531	(3.3)	▲	18	8	13.8
Slovak Republic	529	(4.5)	▲	18	8	14.4
Estonia	525	(4.5)	▲	33	8	15.0
England	519	(4.4)	▲	20	9	14.0
New Zealand	517	(5.0)	▲	31	9	14.0
Slovenia	516	(2.7)	▲	30	8	13.7
Norway	515	(3.4)	▲	24	8	13.7
Belgium (Flemish)	514	(4.7)	▲	6	8	13.9
Czech Republic	510	(2.4)	▲	18	8	14.4
Russian Federation	506	(3.8)		21	8	14.7
Lithuania	505	(2.8)		35	8	14.7
Spain	505	(4.1)		19	8	14.1
Austria	503	(4.0)		16	8	14.4
Malta	490	(4.5)	▼	34	9	13.9
Chile	483	(3.5)	▼	14	8	14.2
Latvia	482	(4.0)	▼	30	8	14.8
Greece	476	(4.4)	▼	32	8	13.7
Luxembourg	473	(2.2)	▼	10	8	14.6
Bulgaria	466	(5.0)	▼	26	8	14.7
Colombia	462	(2.9)	▼	3	8	14.4
Cyprus	453	(2.4)	▼	40	8	13.9
Mexico	452	(2.8)	▼	24	8	14.1
Thailand	452	(3.7)	▼	48	8	14.4
Guatemala	435	(3.8)	▼	2	8	15.5
Indonesia	433	(3.4)	▼	19	8	14.3
Paraguay	424	(3.4)	▼	29	9	14.9
Dominican Republic	380	(2.4)	▼	26	8	14.8
<i>Countries not meeting sampling requirements</i>						
Hong Kong (SAR)	554	(5.7)	-	21	8	14.3
Netherlands	494	(7.6)	-	7	8	14.3
International Average	500	-	-	22	-	14.4

▲/▼ Significantly above/below international average; significant gender differences in **bold**.

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Tables 3.10, 3.11 and 3.13.

The gender difference in civic knowledge in Ireland is 22 points in favour of girls, which is the same as the international average. Gender differences are statistically significant in all but five countries, ranging from 2 to 48 points. These differences may be partly due to differences in reading literacy favouring girls. It can also be seen from Table 2 that the size of the gender difference is not related to overall average achievement.

Results were also reported in terms of international benchmarks or proficiency levels, ranging from Level 1 (concrete understanding of basic principles) to Level 3 (advanced levels of civic knowledge and reasoning). Table 3 shows brief statements of the kinds of knowledge and skills that students are likely to be able to demonstrate at each proficiency level of the ICCS test.

Table 3: Brief description of proficiency levels

Proficiency Level	Brief description: Students at this level are likely to...
Level 3 (> 563 points)	Make connections between processes of social/political organisation and influence; generate accurate hypotheses about benefits, motivations and likely outcomes of policies and actions; integrate, justify and evaluate positions, policies or laws based on their underlying principles; demonstrate familiarity with economic forces and the strategic nature of active participation
Level 2 (479-563 points)	Demonstrate familiarity with representative democracy; recognise ways that institutions and laws protect and promote principles and values; understand the potential of voting within a representative democracy; generalise principles and values from specific policies and laws; generalise the role of the individual citizen to broader civic activities
Level 1 (395-479 points)	Demonstrate familiarity with equality, social cohesion and freedom as principles of democracy and are able to relate these principles to everyday examples; demonstrate understanding of concepts relating to the individual as an active citizen; recognise the necessity for individuals to obey the law; relate individual courses of action to likely outcomes; relate personal characteristics to an individual's ability to affect change
Below Level 1 (<395 points)	Knowledge and skills of students at this level are not assessed by ICCS

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 3.1.

The levels represent an increasing hierarchy of knowledge and reasoning about civic issues, ranging from Level 1 (where students can demonstrate a concrete understanding of basic civic principles), to Level 3 (where they can demonstrate a more interconnected and abstract understanding of civic principles and processes). Students scoring below Level 1 have a level of knowledge and skill that is below the easiest questions on the test so their proficiencies cannot be described by ICCS.

Table 4 shows, for Ireland and nine comparison countries³, the percentages of students scoring at each proficiency level as described in Table 3. In Ireland, 10% of students scored below Level 1, 20% at Level 1, 29% at Level 2, and 41% at Level 3. The percentage of students scoring at Level 3 compares favourably with the international average of 28% and is about the same as the average for Ireland and the nine comparison countries (40%), but is well behind Finland (58%) and Denmark (56%). Ten percent of students in Ireland scored below the lowest proficiency level ('below Level 1') compared to the ten-country average of 8%, and just 2% and 4% in Finland and Denmark, respectively. These students have a level of knowledge and skills below that measured by the ICCS test.

Table 4: Percentages of students at each proficiency level on the ICCS test – Ireland and nine comparison countries, the 10-country average, and the international average

Country/System	Below			
	Level 1 (<395)	Level 1 (395-479)	Level 2 (479-563)	Level 3 (>563)
Finland	2.1	10.2	30.0	57.7
Denmark	3.7	12.7	27.5	56.1
Sweden	7.8	20.5	31.7	40.1
Poland	8.6	19.4	30.9	41.0
Ireland	9.9	19.9	29.1	41.1
Switzerland	5.6	20.5	37.3	36.6
England	12.7	22.2	30.8	34.3
New Zealand	14.4	22.0	28.1	35.4
Slovenia	8.6	25.0	36.3	30.0
Belgium (Flemish)	8.4	23.8	38.8	29.1
10-country average	8.2	19.6	32.1	40.1
International average	15.7	26.0	30.5	27.8

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 3.12.

Countries are ordered by overall average achievement.

The ICCS civic knowledge results also indicate that in Ireland, variation in achievement between students (as indicated by the standard deviation, 101.2 in the case of Ireland) is fourth highest amongst 36 countries for which results can be compared. This means that there is a higher than average disparity between the achievements of low- and high-scoring students in Ireland.

Between-school differences in achievement in Ireland are also higher than on average internationally. That is, 35% of achievement differences are between schools in Ireland, compared with 28% on average internationally. Just 10 countries have a higher between-school variance than in Ireland. This finding should be interpreted with respect to the fact that students were sampled on the basis of their base class,

³ These countries were selected for a variety of reasons – for example high average performance (Finland, Denmark, Sweden), similar performance compared with Ireland (Poland, Sweden, Switzerland), similar cultural and linguistic characteristics (England, New Zealand), similar population sizes (New Zealand, Slovenia, Belgium-Flemish), and/or recent educational reform (Poland).

and between-school variance in achievement is likely to be higher in countries that practice streaming.

7. Characteristics Associated with Civic Knowledge

The ICCS report (Schulz et al., 2010) highlights a number of background characteristics that are associated with student achievement on the civic knowledge test, initially examining these one at a time, then simultaneously using regression analyses. The results of the regression analyses are the focus of this section since examining the relationships between variables one at a time can mask the fact that some of the background characteristics are related to one another.

In a set of multilevel regression analyses, both student and school background characteristics were examined simultaneously. These comprised, at the student level:

- Gender
- Language spoken
- Parental occupation (socioeconomic status)
- Parental interest in political and social issues
- Discussion with parents about political and social issues
- Use of media information on political and social issues
- Expected years of further education
- Perceptions of openness in classroom discussions
- School-related voting activities.

At the school level, these were:

- School average socioeconomic status
- School location (population density)
- Index of social tension in the local community.

In Ireland, this model explained 21% of the variation in civic knowledge within schools and 63% between schools, which is similar to the ICCS averages (21% and 63%, respectively).

Some key findings of the analyses when we compare Ireland's results with the ICCS averages are that:

- Student gender is not significant in the model for Ireland (just 4 points in favour of girls), yet it is significant on average across ICCS countries (with a 13-point advantage for girls). This means that other characteristics in the model account for the 'unadjusted' gender difference in Ireland
- Speaking a language other than English/Irish at home is associated with a larger achievement disadvantage in Ireland (-36 points) than on average internationally (-22 points)
- Discussion with parents about political and social issues has a comparatively strong association with civic knowledge in Ireland (+13 points) compared to the international average (+6 points)
- Stronger effects in Ireland are associated with student and school socioeconomic status (+16 and +25 score points with a one standard deviation

increase, respectively) relative to the corresponding international averages (+11 and +16 points, respectively)

- Significant effects that are similar to the international averages are associated with expected years of further education (+10 points per additional year in the case of Ireland), perceptions of openness in classroom discussions (+12 points with a one standard deviation increase) and school-related voting activities (+12 points with a one standard deviation increase)
- In addition to gender, the model for Ireland indicates that parental interest in political and social issues, use of media information on social and political issues, school location, and index of social tension in the local community are not statistically significant in the presence of the other characteristics.

8. Students' Beliefs and Attitudes

The student questionnaire used in the ICCS study yielded information on a wide range of students' beliefs and attitudes. Some, but not all of the results in Schulz et al. (2010) are discussed in this section to give a general flavour of the results. Readers are referred to Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Schulz et al. (2010) for more detailed discussions of the full range of students' beliefs and attitudes gathered in ICCS.

Similar to students in other countries, students in Ireland reported high levels of [support for democratic values](#). For example, 82% of students in Ireland indicated agreement with the statement that 'People should be free to criticise the government publicly' and 94% agreed that 'People should be allowed to protest if they feel a law is unfair'. Corresponding international averages were 78% and 92%, respectively.

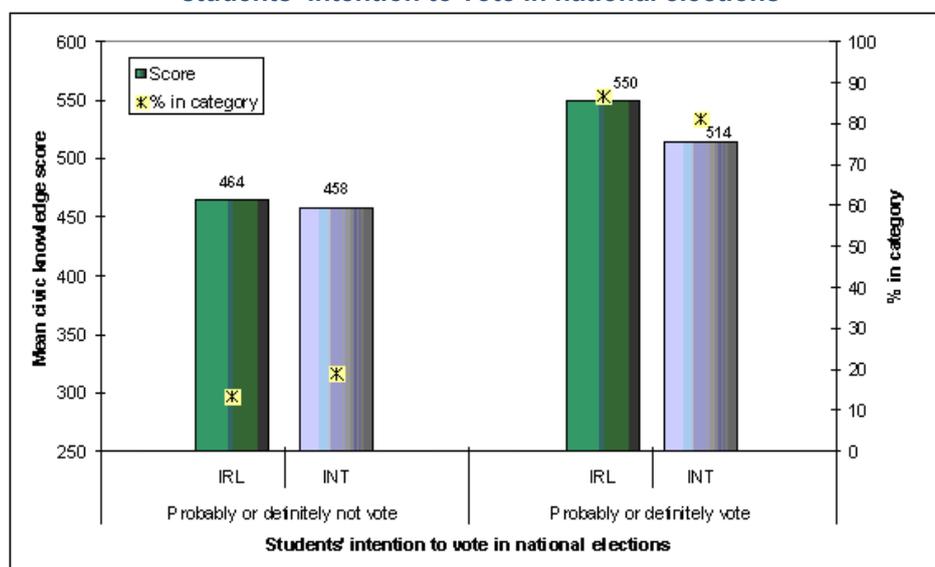
Students were asked a series of questions on their [interest in political and social issues](#) (e.g., 'How interested are you in ...politics in your country?' ...'politics in other countries?'). Responses were combined to form a scale with an international mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. The Irish average is the same as the international average (50), and the gender difference in Ireland is marginal (about one scale point or one-tenth of a standard deviation in favour of girls).

Students were asked about the [number of civic-related activities they participated in outside school](#) in the past school year (e.g., in activities arranged by a voluntary groups to help the community, or a human rights organisation). Across various activities, average rates of participation in Ireland were just marginally below the international although there were some variations. For example participation in voluntary groups was comparatively high in Ireland, while participation in human rights organisations was comparatively low.

In Ireland, 44% of students expressed a [preference for a particular political party](#), compared with 48% internationally. However, a higher percentage of students in Ireland (87%) reported an [intention to vote](#) in future national elections than internationally (81%). In Ireland, the score-point difference on the civic knowledge test between students intending and not intending to vote (85 points) was higher than the international average (56), indicating that intention to vote is associated with

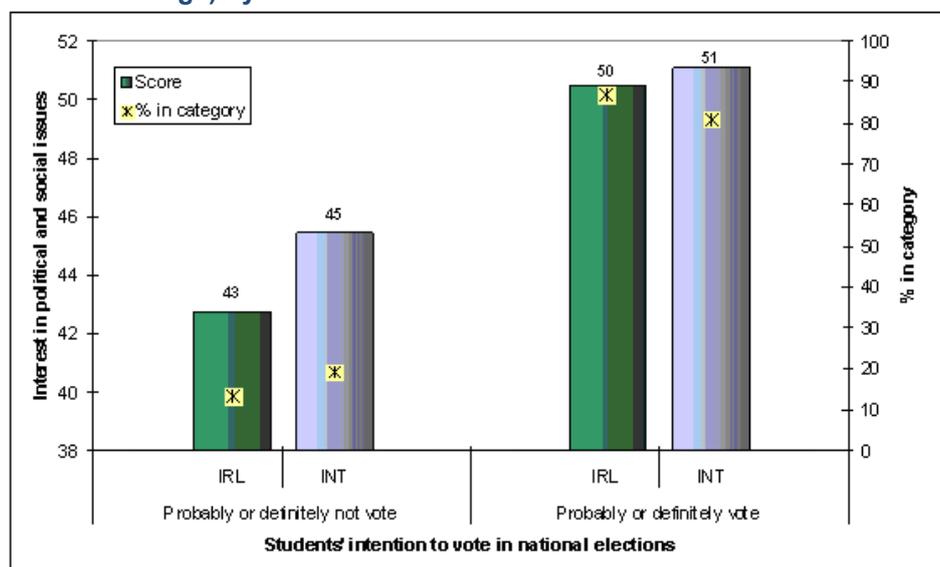
higher levels of civic knowledge (Figure 1a). Similarly, there was an 8-point difference on the interest in political and social issues scale in favour of students intending to vote compared to an international average difference of 6 points (Figure 1b).

Figure 1a: Mean civic knowledge scores (Ireland and international average) by students' intention to vote in national elections



Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 5.14.

Figure 1b: Students' interest in political and social issues (Ireland and international average) by students' intention to vote in national elections



Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 5.14.

Students were asked about the extent to which they [trust civic institutions and people in general](#). The percentages of students in Ireland indicating 'complete' or 'quite a lot of' trust in the national government is lower (52%) than the international average (62%). Similarly, lower levels of trust in the media are evident in Ireland (48%) when compared with the international average (61%). In Ireland, students' levels of trust in political parties (40%) and in schools (75%) are similar to the

corresponding international averages (41% and 75%, respectively), while trust in people in general in Ireland (64%) is a little higher than the international average (58%).

Students were also asked a series of questions about their [attitudes towards gender rights](#) (e.g., level of agreement with questions such as ‘Women should stay out of politics’, ‘Men and women should get equal pay when they are doing the same jobs’). These questions were used to construct an index with an international mean of 50 and standard deviation of 10. In Ireland, students scored significantly above the international mean (by 4 points or two-fifths of a standard deviation), indicating relatively more positive attitudes towards gender equality. However, as in all countries, girls in Ireland had a significantly higher score (59) than boys (50), though the mean score of boys in Ireland is 3 points higher than the corresponding international average of 47 points.

Since the IEA’s Six Subject Study was conducted in 1971⁴, there has been some [shift in Irish students’ attitudes to gender rights](#). For example, in 1971, 22% of students strongly agreed or agreed that ‘Women should stay out of politics’ compared to 7% in 2009. Also, while 62% of students in Ireland in 1971 agreed or strongly agreed that ‘Men and women should have the same rights in every way’, 96% did so in 2009.

When asked about [attitudes towards equal rights for ethnic groups and for immigrants](#), students in Ireland expressed relatively more favourable attitudes towards ethnic groups than towards immigrants, though the difference on these two scales (with a mean of 50 and standard deviation of 10) was only 1 point. Ireland’s mean score on the former scale was significantly higher than the ICCS average, and did not differ to the ICCS average on the latter scale. As examples of questions that students responded to that formed these two scales, 94% of students in Ireland agreed that ‘All ethnic groups should have an equal chance to get a good education in Ireland’ (compared with 93% internationally) and 74% of students in Ireland agreed that ‘Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue speaking their own language’ (compared with 76% internationally). On both scales, girls in Ireland had scores that exceeded those of boys by over one-quarter of a standard deviation.

9. Overview of the European Regional Module

Ireland and 23 other ICCS countries participated in a regional booklet called the European Module (Table 5). Norway and Russia did not participate, while Switzerland and Liechtenstein, which are not in the EU, did. Of the 23 participating countries with valid data⁵, 21 are EU member states and the euro currency is used in 12.

⁴ Torney, J.V., Oppenheim, A.N., & Farnen, R.F. (1976). *Civic education in ten countries: An empirical study*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell; New York: Wiley.

Litton, F., (1977). *Aspects of civic education in Ireland: National Report on the IEA Cross National Survey of Civic Education*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

⁵ Response rates in the Netherlands were too low to allow valid comparisons.

Table 5: Countries that participated in the European Regional Module with year of joining EU and Eurozone, where applicable

Country	Year of joining EU	Year of joining Eurozone	Country	Year of joining EU	Year of joining Eurozone
Austria	1995	1999	Liechtenstein	–	–
Belgium (Flemish)	Founding ¹	1999	Lithuania	2004	–
Bulgaria	2007	–	Luxembourg	Founding ¹	1999
Cyprus	2004	2008	Latvia	2004	–
Czech Republic	2004	–	Malta	2004	2008
Denmark	1973	–	Netherlands ²	Founding ¹	1999
England	1973	–	Poland	2004	–
Estonia	2004	– ³	Slovak Rep.	2004	2009
Finland	1995	1999	Slovenia	2004	2007
Greece	1981	2001	Spain	1986	1999
Ireland	1973	1999	Sweden	1995	–
Italy	Founding ¹	1999	Switzerland	–	–

¹The Schumann declaration was signed by six countries (Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) in 1951 agreeing to common management of coal and steel. In 1957, co-operation was expanded to other economic sectors and the European Economic Community was created through the Treaty of Rome.

²Although students in the Netherlands participated in the European regional module, response rates were too low to allow accurate comparisons to be made.

³Estonia will join the euro zone on January 1st, 2011.

10. Students' Knowledge about the EU

The first part of the European Module Booklet examined students' knowledge of the EU. It consisted of 20 questions, all multiple choice. It was not possible to produce an overall scale score (as was the case in the test of civic knowledge discussed in Section 6), so results were reported as percentages correct on individual items. Note that students in Ireland do not normally cover Europe and the EU in their CSPE class until third year (and were in second year at the time of the study).

Regarding [knowledge of the EU and its institutions](#), there was a high degree of familiarity with basic facts. As examples, almost all students in Ireland (99%) knew that Ireland is a member of the European Union and most (87%) could identify the flag of the EU. The corresponding European averages were also high, at 97% and 93% respectively.

There were lower levels of familiarity with [procedural aspects of the EU](#). For example, 56% of students in Ireland knew the number of EU member states (57% internationally) and 49% knew who votes to elect Members of the European Parliament (35% internationally).

Only a minority of students in Ireland could identify a requirement for a country to be allowed to join the EU (33%) or indicate what determines the amount that a

member country contributes to the EU (32%). These percentages were lower than the corresponding European averages (41% and 44%, respectively).

Knowledge of [EU laws and policies](#) was varied. For example, while most students in Ireland (91%) knew that the EU aims to promote peace, prosperity and freedom within its borders, only one-fifth knew that all citizens of the EU can study in any EU country without needing a permit.

Three of four questions on [the euro](#) were answered correctly by at least two-thirds of students in Ireland and on average across Europe (the euro is the official currency in all countries in Europe (true/false); banknotes have the same design in every country that uses the euro (true/false); identify an advantage for having the euro (four response options)). The fourth question, asking students whether or not the euro is the official currency of all EU countries (true/false), was answered correctly by only half of students in Ireland and on average across Europe.

Students also [rated their knowledge about the EU](#). Students in Ireland rated their knowledge significantly lower than on average across Europe. Boys in Ireland rated themselves as having higher levels of knowledge than girls, and interestingly, newcomer students who spoke another language at home rated their knowledge significantly higher than English/Irish speakers.

Readers are referred to Kerr et al. (2010) for detailed country-by-country and item-by-item analyses of the questions on the EU test.

11. Students' Attitudes Towards Europe and the EU

The second part of the European Regional Module Booklet consisted of a questionnaire that examined students' attitudes on a range of European-related issues. Some of the highlights of the results are discussed in this section. Readers are referred to Kerr et al. (2010) for more detail.

Students' were asked questions about their [sense of European identity](#). For example, most students in Ireland (90%) and on average across Europe (91%) agreed that they saw themselves as European. Students in Ireland had an average score on the resulting scale that did not differ to the European average, although boys in Ireland had a significantly higher score than girls, and Irish-born students had a higher score than newcomer students who speak English or Irish. This latter finding may be because some newcomer students who speak the language of the test may come from outside Europe (e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA).

The questionnaire asked about [attitudes to foreign language learning](#) but did not distinguish English from other languages. Students in Ireland had a score on this scale that was two-fifths of a standard deviation below the European average. Students were also asked whether they could [communicate in/understand languages spoken in other European countries](#). In Ireland 23% of students indicated that they could not, compared with just 12% across Europe. Relatively low rates of

self-reported foreign language competency were also found in Bulgaria (21%), England (27%), and Spain (21%).

A large majority of students in Ireland and on average across European countries agreed or strongly agreed that 'European countries should try and have a common set of policies regarding the environment' (Ireland 88%, European average 87%) and that 'it would be good if European countries had more similar rules and laws' (Ireland 73%, European average 76%). The scale formed on the basis of these and similar items – [attitudes towards common policies in Europe](#) – indicated that Irish students have a mean score that is close to the European average (though marginally below it).

Similarly, high percentages of students in Ireland and on average in European countries agreed or strongly agreed with the statements regarding attitudes towards the [common European currency](#). In Ireland, 81% of students agreed or strongly agreed that 'if all European countries had the same currency, they would be stronger economically'. The corresponding European average was 75%. A greater percentage of students in Ireland (79%) than on average across Europe (65%) was in favour of all countries in Europe joining the euro. Students in Ireland had a score on the resulting scale that was about a quarter of a standard deviation above the European average, indicating relatively favourable attitudes towards a [common European currency](#). Similarly, the mean of students in Ireland on a scale measuring the extent to which students favoured [further expansion of the EU](#) was significantly above the European average. In contrast, students in Ireland had a mean score on a scale measuring agreement with [European unification](#) (by indicating agreement with statements such as 'The European Parliament should one day replace the parliaments of all European countries') that was a quarter of a standard deviation below the European average.

Two final scales are considered in this section. These are [attitudes towards freedom of migration in Europe](#), and (conversely) [attitudes towards restricting migration within Europe](#). As an example of an item contributing to the first scale, students were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement 'Allowing citizens from other European countries to work here is good for the economy of Ireland [i.e. the country of the test]'. Agreement in Ireland was lower than internationally at 58% and 70%, respectively. The second scale comprised agree-disagree statements such as 'Allowing citizens of other European countries to come and work here leads to more unemployment for citizens of Ireland'. In Ireland, 75% of students agreed with this statement, compared with just 65% on average across Europe. Therefore, the Irish mean score on the freedom of migration scale was close to a quarter of a standard deviation below the European average, while the Irish mean score on the restriction of migration was one-sixth above the European average. In both cases these were statistically significant.

12. ICCS Results in the Context of Schools, Teaching and Learning

This section considers the views of teachers, principals and students on issues relevant to the teaching and learning contexts for CCE. Initially, teachers' views on the key aims of CCE and their levels of confidence with teaching CCE topics are discussed. Then, we move on to discussing a number of outcomes relevant to participation in school and community-based activities. The section concludes by

considering some more general features of schools. In all cases, the focus is on Ireland with reference to international patterns in the results. Readers are again referred to Schulz et al. (2010) for a more detailed analysis of these and other related themes.

When asked what they thought were the three most important aims of CCE, teachers in Ireland selected ‘promoting knowledge of social, political and civic institutions’, ‘promoting critical and independent thinking’, ‘promoting knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities’, and ‘promoting participation in the local community’. Irish teachers are unusual by international comparison as they attributed a higher level of importance to the first two of these four aspects (Table 6) In contrast, teachers in Ireland placed a comparatively low emphasis on ‘developing skills and competencies in conflict resolution’ and ‘promoting capacity to defend one’s own point of view’.

Table 6: Percentages of teachers endorsing 10 areas of CCE education (top three ratings), Ireland and international averages (teachers of all subject areas)*

Area	Percent endorsing (Ireland)	Percent endorsing (International)
Promoting knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities	56	60
Promoting critical and independent thinking	49	52
Promoting knowledge of social, political and civic institutions	42	33
Promoting participation in the local community	40	16
Promoting care and respect for the environment	39	41
Developing skills and competencies in conflict resolution	22	41
Promoting participation in school life	19	19
Promoting capacity to defend one’s own point of view	13	20
Promoting strategies against racism/xenophobia	12	10
Preparing students for future political participation	7	7

*Only the top three areas rated by each teacher were included in this analysis.

Source: Schulz et al., 2010, Table 6.16.

CSPE teachers in Ireland rated their [confidence with teaching various CCE topics](#) as quite high – the scale average for Ireland was one-third of a standard deviation above the international one. On all 14 topics underlying this scale, in excess of 80% of teachers in Ireland indicated that they were ‘confident’ or ‘very confident’ in teaching them (e.g. human rights, voting and elections, rights and responsibilities, the environment), with the lowest levels of confidence in Ireland associated with the topic of legal institutions and courts (with 68% reporting that they were ‘confident’ or ‘very confident’).

Teachers were asked about the rates and types of [participation by their second years in various community activities](#). In Ireland, perceived rates of participation were lower than internationally, in general. For example, 29% of teachers indicated that their students had participated in activities related to the local environment, compared with 49% internationally; and 41% in cultural activities, compared with 68% internationally. In fact, 24% of teachers in Ireland reported that their students

had not taken part in any of eight activities listed compared with just 10% on average internationally.

The mean score on a teacher scale relating to [student participation in class activities](#) was also below the international average, by about one-quarter of a standard deviation, and the mean score on a scale measuring principals' reports on [parental participation in school](#) was also significantly below the international average, by about one-sixth of a standard deviation.

Students were asked about their [perceptions of student influences on decision-making processes at school](#). For example they were asked to indicate the extent to which students' views were taken into account when decisions are made about school rules (34% in Ireland indicated 'to a moderate' or 'to a large' extent compared with 51% on average internationally) or the way classes are taught (29% in Ireland compared with 55% internationally). The average score on the resulting influence scale for Ireland (44) was two-fifths of a standard deviation below the international average of 50. Consistent with this, a similar teacher scale measuring their perceptions of student influence on decision-making processes at school was three-fifths of a standard deviation below the international average.

Findings in the previous three paragraphs contrast with the relatively high level of emphasis accorded to participation in Table 6 (above).

Students' views on the extent to which there was [openness in classroom discussion](#) were examined using agree/disagree statements such as 'Teachers present several sides of the issues when explaining them in class' and 'Students express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students'. These were again summarised on a scale with an international mean of 50 and standard deviation of 10. Irish students' scores were a little higher (by 2 points) compared to the international average. However, although in most countries, girls reported a more open climate, the difference was 5 points in Ireland compared to 2 points internationally.

A number of more generic questions were also included in the teacher and school questionnaires. For example, teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which their students... 'Respect their classmates even if they are different'. In Ireland, 89% of teachers indicated that all or nearly all students did this compared with 87% on average internationally. Items such as these formed a [classroom climate](#) scale, and the Irish average was one-sixth higher than the international one. Consistent with this, responses of school principals indicate significantly higher perceptions of both [student and teacher sense of belonging at school](#). However, in contrast to these generally positive results, responses of teachers in Ireland on items that comprised a scale measuring [social problems at school](#) (e.g. issues such as truancy, racism and bullying) yielded a mean score that was half a standard deviation above the international average, which indicates more extensive perceived social problems in Ireland.

13. Concluding Remarks

This summary document aimed to provide a concise overview from an Irish perspective of the content of the ICCS international report (Schulz et al., 2010) and the European report (Kerr et al., 2010). Both of these international reports include final chapters that draw some broad international conclusions and implications that may be of interest to some readers. This summary document has tended, rather, to focus on the results in the Irish context rather than seeking out international patterns in the results.

The full national report for Ireland will be published in [March 2011](#). It is intended that the national report will complement both international reporting and this national summary of international findings by:

- Providing thorough and in-depth analyses of civic knowledge and other key outcomes using both nationally-relevant characteristics that were not available for international analysis, as well as internationally-derived ones.
- Comparing outcomes in both knowledge and attitudes by nationally policy-relevant sub-groups of the population.
- Providing a more in-depth consideration of CCE in the Irish context, for example through an analysis of the content of the CSPE examinations vis á vis the ICCS civic knowledge test.
- Reporting on the results of several national questions (unique to Ireland) that were asked of CSPE teachers.
- Considering the findings in the broader national context of CCE in Ireland.
- Providing a detailed set of national conclusions, implications and suggestions for further research.

14. More Information

Websites for accessing reports etc.

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