

Education programme for schools 2019-2020 – Evaluation report

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1. The education programme for schools 2019/20 – Main figures

The following table is reporting the planned and the actual number of schools, number of classes, and number of students, disaggregated by age groups, that were involved in the programme¹. The differences between the planned and the actual values depend on the cancellation of some sessions due to the health emergency situation that led to the interruption of the in-presence activities.

	Total		Upper secondary school		Lower secondary school		Primary schools	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual

¹ Data are approximate due to some minor errors in data recording and/or missing data. The estimate is based on a precautionary approach and data could be slightly higher.

N. of schools	24	21	19	18	3	2	2	1
N. of classes	58	45	46	41	10	3	2	1
N. of students	1,141	867	852	769	235	73	54	25

This evaluation report is based on the results of the survey involving only the students and the teachers of the upper secondary schools. Due to the interruption of the in-presence activities, neither the lower secondary school nor the primary school students and/or teachers filled in the questionnaire.

2. Evaluation methodology and tools

The evaluation is based on an online survey using two different questionnaires, one for the students of any age and any type of secondary school², and one for the teachers. The participation to the survey was voluntary and the participants were invited to fill in the questionnaire within two weeks after the end of the activities. Questionnaires are anonymous and it is impossible for the evaluator to identify any specific person. The name of the school is not reported.

The following table is reporting the number of respondents by school type and their percentage on the corresponding group of participants to the education programme activities³.

	Total	Upper secondary – <i>Liceo</i>	Upper secondary – <i>Tecnico</i>	Upper secondary – <i>Professionale</i>
N. of teachers	22	9	8	5
N. of students	123	76	31	16

The restricted number of questionnaires and the methodology used to create the sample (voluntary self-selection) do not allow to carry out any rigorous analysis of dependence between variables, any statistically founded analysis of causal relation among phenomena, nor any inference on the whole group of participants. Still, the number of respondents is sufficient to make a univariate analysis of main variables, to look for and discuss correlations between variables, and to provide possible interpretations and explanatory hypothesis. Finally, it is sufficient to have a clear picture of the effects of the activities in terms of respondents' satisfaction about the activities, and in terms of effects on knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

The analysis of the quantitative results is integrated with qualitative information, focused especially on open questions concerning the respondents' perceptions. Finally, the respondents had the opportunity to include free comments on the activities in which they participated and to provide suggestions for future activities. The latter have been analysed by categorising the answers and reporting those that were deemed the most relevant.

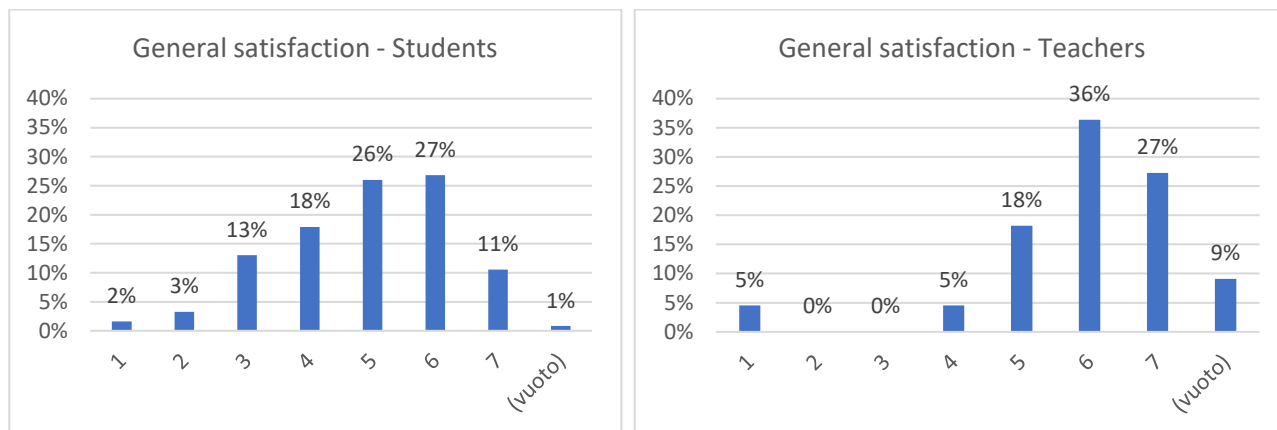
3. Findings

² Due to the suspension of the in-presence activities, only upper secondary school students participated to the survey. A different questionnaire was planned for the primary school students, but the survey was not carried out and no result is available.

³ The percentage is approximate (the symbol “~” meaning “around”) due to the fact that the exact number of participants to the programme activities is not available, especially for teachers.

3.1. Participants' satisfaction

Both students and teachers were requested to report on general satisfaction with the activities on a scale from 1 (not satisfied at all) to 7 (very satisfied). The main results are showed in the following two graphs and in the table.



	Students	Teachers
% of respondents satisfied (5+)	63%	82%
Average evaluation	4.88	5.75
Stand. Deviation	1.39	1.37

On average, teachers are significantly more satisfied than students. The evaluation given by the teachers is also far more concentrated on some few (high) values, compared to the widely spread evaluations given by the students. Students were also more reluctant than teachers in choosing the maximum evaluation ("7"). A relevant percentage of students answered "4": some of them, probably, did not understand that 4 is the "central" value, therefore they provided a neutral evaluation whereas they probably wished to provide a – slightly – positive one.⁴

Data are in line, even though lower on average, with those of the school year 2018/2019⁵. Considering the whole analysis of the complete questionnaire results, we can anticipate that the main general reason for the difference between the students' and the teachers' satisfaction seems to be the perception of low engagement by some students in some activities, especially discussions, probably due to an insufficient amount of time available to carry out all the planned activities. This situation was most likely perceived as a problem, more by students than by teachers.

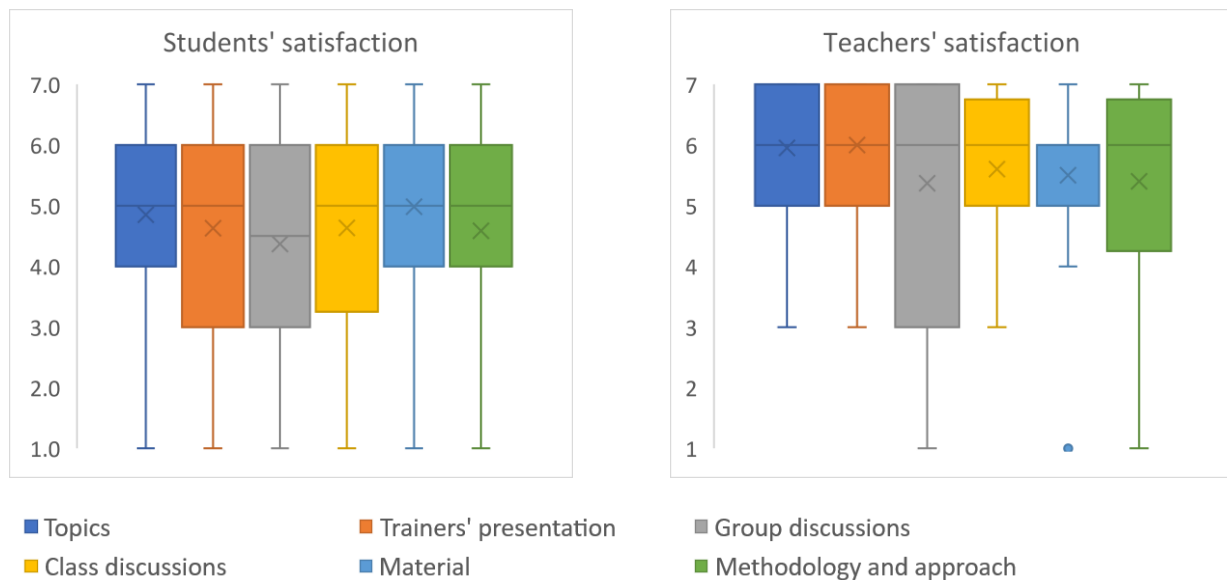
We can more specifically analyse which components received a lower/higher/more diversified evaluation in terms of satisfaction for the survey participants, thanks to the following two graphs⁶:

⁴ See the Recommendations section for further analysis and discussion on this issue.

⁵ Ref. "Evaluation report - Education program for schools 2018-2019" (Jenni S.), available here <https://www.eui.eu/Documents/Research/HistoricalArchivesofEU/Education/2019-2020/Evaluation-HAEU-education-201819-en.pdf>

⁶ They are so-called box-whiskers plots. The horizontal line in the box indicates the median value (half of all respondents chose a value higher than the median value, and the other half a lower one); the border

Students' and teachers' satisfaction – different components

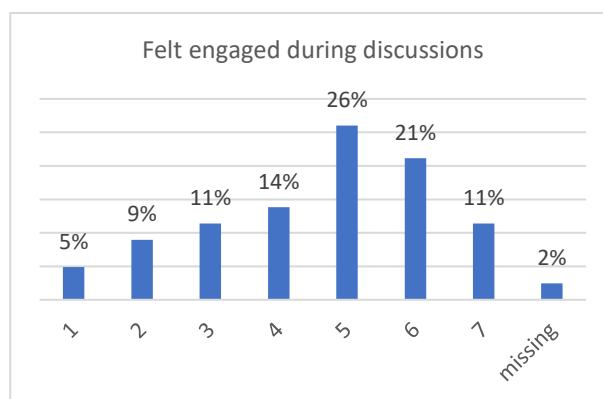
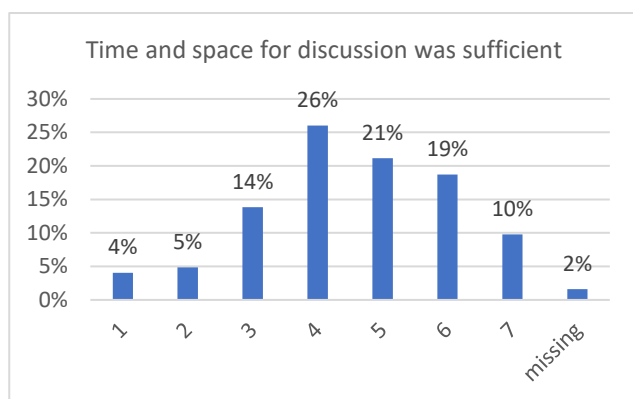


Students

The most satisfactory components for students were the **activities topics**, the **material**, and **teaching methodology and approach**: around three quarters of the respondents gave to these components an evaluation equal or higher than 4. Topics and material show an average evaluation near to 5 (almost equal to the median), while the average evaluation for the teaching methodology and approach is significantly lower. This means that the evaluation of the teaching methodology was much more polarised: as anticipated, the low level of satisfaction of the most unsatisfied students is linked to their evaluation of the teaching methodology.

The least satisfactory component was **group discussions**, that is the only component having the median equal to 4 and not to 5, and showing the lowest average value, equal to 4.37 (still in the upper part of the evaluation range). Class discussions is also showing similarly low but slightly better evaluation values. Fortunately, the questionnaire was including two specific questions concerning the discussions that allow us to perform a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the reasons behind the low level of satisfaction about this component. The two following graphs are showing the answers distribution for the two questions.

of the box indicate the first and fourth quartile, i.e. the box represents the distribution of the “central” group of respondents; the vertical lines indicate the distribution of the responses; the “x” indicates the average value for each specific question.



In the following table we simply sum-up the answers in three groups to facilitate their analysis.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Time and space for discussion was sufficient	50%	26%	23%
Engaged during the discussions	59%	14%	25%

Only half of the students thought that time and space for discussion was sufficient and an higher percentage of respondents gave a positive evaluation in terms of engagement; the negative evaluation is almost the same for the two questions; finally, the neutral answers to the first question were almost double to those of the second question. This means first that the low amount of time and space was a more relevant cause of dissatisfaction than the engagement level; secondly, the higher polarization in the engagement evaluation tells us that when time and space dedicated to discussion were sufficient, the students felt involved and engaged and their satisfaction is higher.

Finally, we checked if the level of satisfaction with the engagement during discussion was correlated to any variable / characteristic of the sample. We can conclude that:

- We could not check the correlation with gender because the variable was not included in the questionnaire. It would be interesting to check it in the future because rooted gender discriminations may affect the level of satisfaction with participatory activities. We should check whether our activities are gender sensitive/transformative.
- There is not any relevant correlation with the age of the students.
- Last but not least, there is a strong correlation with the type of school: students of *Istituto Tecnico* are the most unsatisfied in terms of engagement in the discussions: 42% of them evaluated 3 or less, double of the students of *Liceo* (21%) and more than triple of the students of *Istituto Professionale* (13%). Considering the relatively low number of cases involved in the survey, it is difficult to evaluate the significance of these data, because they could be easily affected by a low activity performance in just one class (and we cannot check it with the available data).

Teachers

The number of respondents is too low to evaluate if and which variable influenced the satisfaction with the activities, neither in general nor for specific components. In any case, we could exclude some explanations concerning possible causes of dissatisfaction.

First, we can say that the participation at the initial meeting does not affect the general satisfaction. The average value is equal to 6 for the respondents who did not participate in the meeting, and equal to 5.6 for those who participated; but the latter group includes the only teacher who was completely dissatisfied (whose evaluation is equal to 1), and if we exclude this outlier value, the average rises up exactly to 6 for that group too.

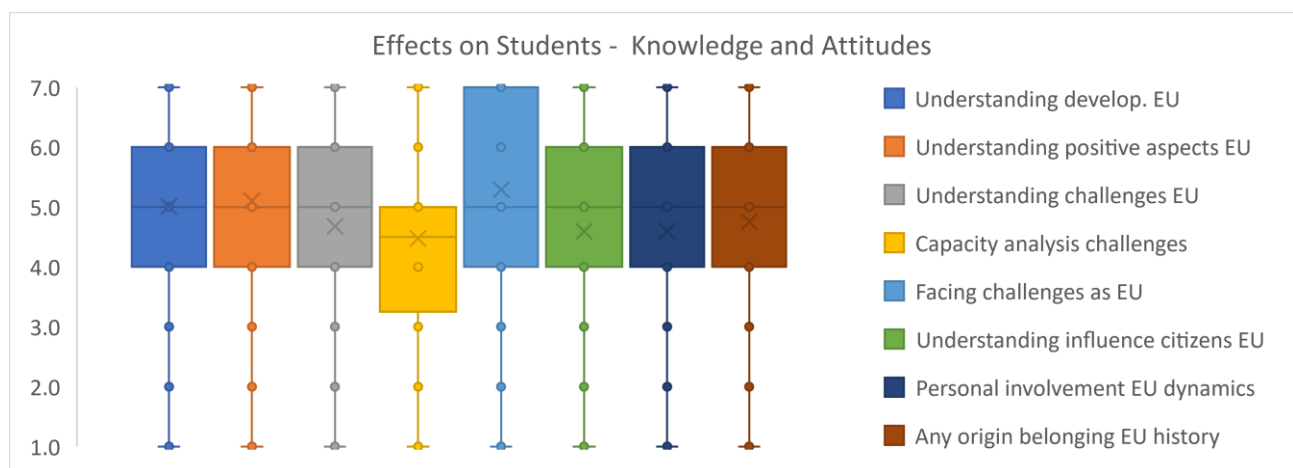
Secondly, the satisfaction seems to be not affected by the channel used to communicate with the teacher. Two channels have been used with more than half of the teachers (55%), especially e-mail plus phone (41%); only one channel was used with the remaining 45% of teachers. This was mainly due to teachers' preferences and had no relevant consequences in terms of satisfaction.

Finally, we can compare the general satisfaction with the answers to other two questions: 1. «In my usual teaching I give space to the EU»; 2. «EU was part of the class teaching programme for this year». Without reporting detailed data (their statistical significance is not demonstrable), we can say that there is a direct relation between the general satisfaction and the average value for the first question, meaning that whoever usually gives space to EU was more satisfied. Conversely, there is an inverse relation between the satisfaction and the average value for the second question, meaning that if the EU was planned in the teaching programme, teachers are less satisfied. A possible explanation for this is that teachers had expectations about the activities that did not perfectly match with the education programme proposal. It seems that their expectation is that of delegating the teaching about the EU to the HAEU education programme, even though this is not the primary and/or the only objective of this programme, and this should be better clarified in the future.

«I think the whole project was good. Maybe it would be better to give more space to the introductory lesson because my students need more knowledge about the European Union» (*Mi è sembrato buono tutto il progetto. Forse dedicherei più tempo alla lezione introduttiva in classe, visto che la mia classe aveva bisogno di più conoscenza dell'Unione Europea*).

3.2. Effects on students

The effects on students can be analysed by starting with the effects on knowledge about and attitudes towards the EU. It is important to stress the fact that the evaluation of the effects is not based on an objective methodology such a pre/post-test but on self-evaluation. The following box-plot graph is reporting main resuming results.



We can read the data following the order of the variables in the graph. The self-evaluation concerning the understanding of the EU development and of its positive aspects is showing good aggregated and average results; the median is equal to 5 and the average is slightly higher for both the variables. The understanding of the challenges the EU is facing shows a similar distribution but a significantly lower average; this datum can be read together with the following one: the activities did not help much the students in increasing their capacity of analysis of those challenges. At the same time, the positive attitude towards the EU as the appropriate institution (rather than national states) to face common challenges is showing very high values,

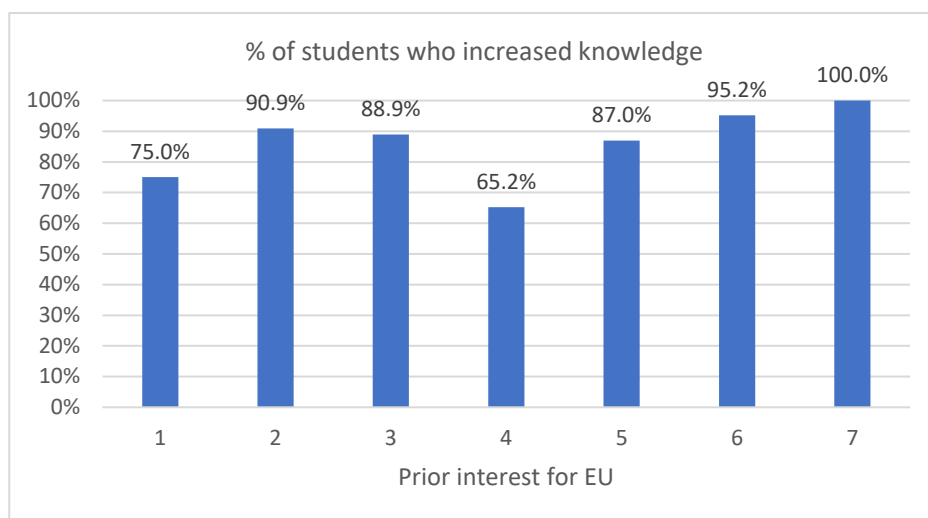
higher than all the other variables. And did the activities help the students in understanding the role of EU citizens? The global results are still good, and the median is still equal to 5, but the average value is significantly lower than 5; the perception of personal involvement in the EU dynamics is unsurprisingly showing a very similar distribution. Finally, the last question was focused on the perception of “openness” of the EU citizens’ identity («In my opinion the personal stories of people having any geographical origin are part of the history of the EU»): the answers distribution is similar to other questions.

The average values for the answers on knowledge and attitudes were compared with the prior interest for the EU, aggregated in three groups (low, medium and high prior interest).

	Average values				Diff. High-Low
	All the students	Low Interest (1-3)	Medium interest (4)	High interest (5-7)	
Prior Interest for EU	4.57	2.42	4.00	5.92	3.50
Understanding develop. EU	5.01	4.48	4.76	5.44	0.95
Understanding positive aspects EU	5.10	4.27	5.00	5.65	1.37
Understanding challenges EU	4.68	4.16	4.67	5.00	0.84
Capacity analysis challenges	4.47	3.79	3.95	5.05	1.26
Facing challenges as EU	5.29	4.27	5.14	5.92	1.65
Understanding influence citizens EU	4.59	3.91	4.33	5.06	1.16
Personal involvement EU dynamics	4.60	3.73	4.29	5.19	1.47
Any origin belonging EU history	4.75	3.79	5.25	5.15	1.36

As it was partially predictable, the effects on knowledge and attitudes are more positive for those students who already had a prior interest for the EU considering all the variables. The effect is stronger for variables whose values are coloured in red (we selected the three variables with a higher difference between the low and the high interest groups’ averages). We could briefly interpret the data as follows: the lower effects on positive perception of the EU and on the sense of belonging to the EU for those students with a low prior interest is probably due to the fact that the duration of the activities is quite short.

The following graph is finally reporting the percentage of people who answered “yes” to the general question «My knowledge about the EU has increased» compared to their prior interest for the EU. Curiously, the lower value corresponds to those who had a neutral position about their prior interest. Other values are in line with the expectations and it is worth noting that the percentage of “yes” is high at any level of prior interest.

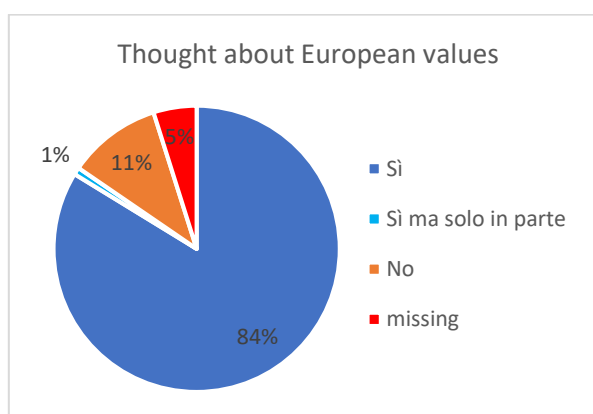
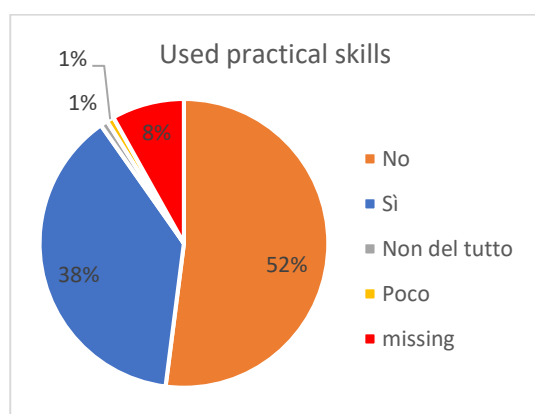


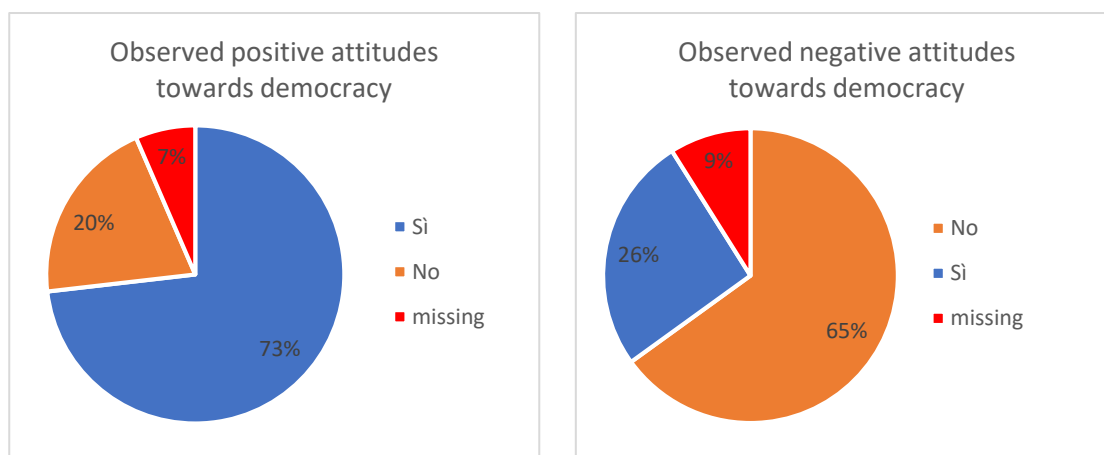
Students had the opportunity also to report some example concerning their increase of knowledge: only 32 of them took this opportunity and most of their answers were focused on knowledge of the EU institutions and their functioning (11), on the history of the EU (10), or both (4).

«I have assimilated better the knowledge about the bonds among different entities involved in the European Union administration» (*Ho meglio assorbito le conoscenze riguardanti i legami dei vari organi che compongono l'amministrazione dell'unione europea*)

«We have learnt about the several steps that led to the constitution of the European Union and its institutions» (*Abbiamo scoperto le varie tappe grazie alle quali si sono potute formare l'Unione Europea e le varie istituzioni che la costituiscono*)

Only 7 students reported other topics, especially EU Treaties; only one made an explicit reference to the freedom of movement for the EU citizens, and another one to the opportunities provided by the EU to its citizens.





Very few students (4) reported examples of practical skills they applied during the activities, and the answers are really concise and not relevant. The reported examples regarding the attitudes towards democracy are not relevant: the questions were probably not clear for the respondents, because the few answers (5) are completely off-target.

The answers concerning their reflection on the EU values are still few (17) but relevant: most of the answers were focused on the “citizen’s rights” (12) but only 3 of them made an explicit reference to the freedom of movement; few answers were focused on their sense of belonging to the EU (3); the remaining 2 gave very general answers.

«I have especially reflected upon the importance of moving easily and on its consequences» (*Ho riflettuto specialmente sull'importanza di potersi spostare con facilità e su ciò che questo comporta*)

«We understood the various reasons why we could be defined “European Union citizens”» (*Abbiamo compreso i vari motivi per cui possiamo essere definiti "cittadini dell'Unione Europea"*)

Finally, the students were asked to report the two most interesting elements of the activities and to provide any suggestions for future activities. The majority of the students (59%) answered the first question, less than half of them answered the second one (42%).

Most interesting elements – Main dimensions

<i>Dimension</i>	<i># of answers</i>	<i>% of answers</i>
Methodology and material	41	56%
Content of the activities	13	18%
Visit to Archives and Villa	10	14%
Trainers' approach	4	5%
Impact on my knowledge	2	3%
Nothing	3	4%
Total	73	100%

According to the students, the most interesting elements concerning the activities’ methodology and material have been the following: the visit to the archives, the meeting with the former MEPs, the class and

group discussions, and the final activity about planning a permanence abroad. Some relevant answers are the following:⁷

«The class discussion because it gave me the opportunity of taking into consideration other points of view» (*Il dibattito collettivo perché mi ha dato la possibilità di vedere altri punti di vista*).

«In site visiting the Archives and understanding how the archiving process functions. And also the self-positioning activity in relation to the EU» (*Visitare direttamente l'archivio e capire come funziona il processo di archiviazione. E anche le attività di porsi lontani o vicino rispetto all'UE*).

«The discussion with the former MEP and the visit to the Archives – The opportunity of coming directly into contact with the EU history and with a [former] MEP» (*Discussione con l'onorevole Michela Giuffrida - Visita degli archivi - La possibilità di entrare a contatto diretto con la storia dell'Unione europea e con membri del parlamento*).

Focusing especially on the material that was used in the activities, the projection of the video produced by Istituto Luce was really liked (mentioned 12 times). It is worth noting that a restricted but significant number of students mentioned also the direct access to and use of the historical sources.

«In my opinion, watching of the video about the European Union has been interesting because it is an historical document and it is not otherwise accessible, and also the activity about the EU entities has been interesting because we worked in small groups and then we put together the information concerning the functioning of the different entities » (*Secondo me la visione del video sull'Unione Europea è stato interessante perché fa parte di un reperto storico e non è possibile vederlo da altre parti, e anche il lavoro sugli organi dell'Unione Europea è stato interessante perché abbiamo lavorato in gruppi e poi abbiamo messo insieme le varie funzioni degli organi*).

Reading and analysing the historical sources has been interesting, we do not undertake this kind of activity at school, but learning how to extract the relevant information and how to judge what we read is fundamental» (*È stato interessante leggere le fonti e analizzarle, ormai a scuola questo tipo di attività non viene più svolto, ma è fondamentale imparare a estrapolare le informazioni fondamentali e giudicare ciò che leggiamo*).

A relevant number of students found especially interesting the content of the activities, in particular they were happy to understand better the EU institutions and their functioning, but also the EU citizens' rights:

«Learning the rights of the European citizens and finding out what are the roles of the different EU Institutions» (*Imparare a conoscere i vari diritti dei cittadini europei e anche scoprire quali ruoli hanno le varie istituzioni dell'Unione Europea*).

Few students (10) mentioned only the visit to the Archives and/or to Villa Salviati: almost all of their answers were very brief and it is difficult to evaluate their relevance. We could interpret them as “no other element was interesting”, but the average value of the “general satisfaction” for the involved respondents is not lower than the whole sample's average (it is actually slightly higher).

Suggestions for the future – main dimensions

<i>Dimension</i>	<i># of answers</i>	<i>% of answers</i>
Methodology and material	23	44%
Content	8	15%
Organization	6	12%
Trainers' approach	3	6%

⁷ All the answers are included in the Excel database attached at the end of the document.

Other	2	4%
Everything	1	2%
Nothing	9	17%
Total	52	100%

Suggestions for improvement are very contradictory, especially those concerning the methodology and the material, which are focused on group and class discussions. A slightly majority asked for an increase in participatory methods (using also simulations and debates among students), but still many of them asked for their reduction and for an increase in time dedicated to the presentations and classic lectures. Suggestions concerning the organization of the activities are more consistent, and most of them stressed the importance of having more time to carry out the activities.

«Increasing the activity duration in order to implement more practical activities and to involve even more the students» (*Aumentare il tempo a disposizione così da fare più attività pratiche e che coinvolgono di più i ragazzi*).

«During the lessons I suggest to avoid starting from students' existing knowledge; explaining directly the institutions and the EU development steps would be better» (*Durante le lezioni in classe sarebbe meglio evitare di partire da ciò che conoscono i ragazzi ma sarebbe meglio spiegare direttamente ciò che fanno le istituzioni o i vari passaggi della nascita dell'UE*).

«I think that the small group activity was the less productive one» (*Il lavoro in piccoli gruppi mi è sembrata la cosa un po' meno produttiva*).

«[I suggest] to do more activities in small groups because in my experience they are very useful for learning» (*Fare più attività in gruppetti poiché per quanto riguarda la mia esperienza sono molto utili nell'apprendimento*).

«Introducing debates would be interesting, in order to help students in formulating thoughts and speeches» (*Sarebbe interessante introdurre dibattiti per aiutare gli studenti a formulare discorsi e pensieri*).

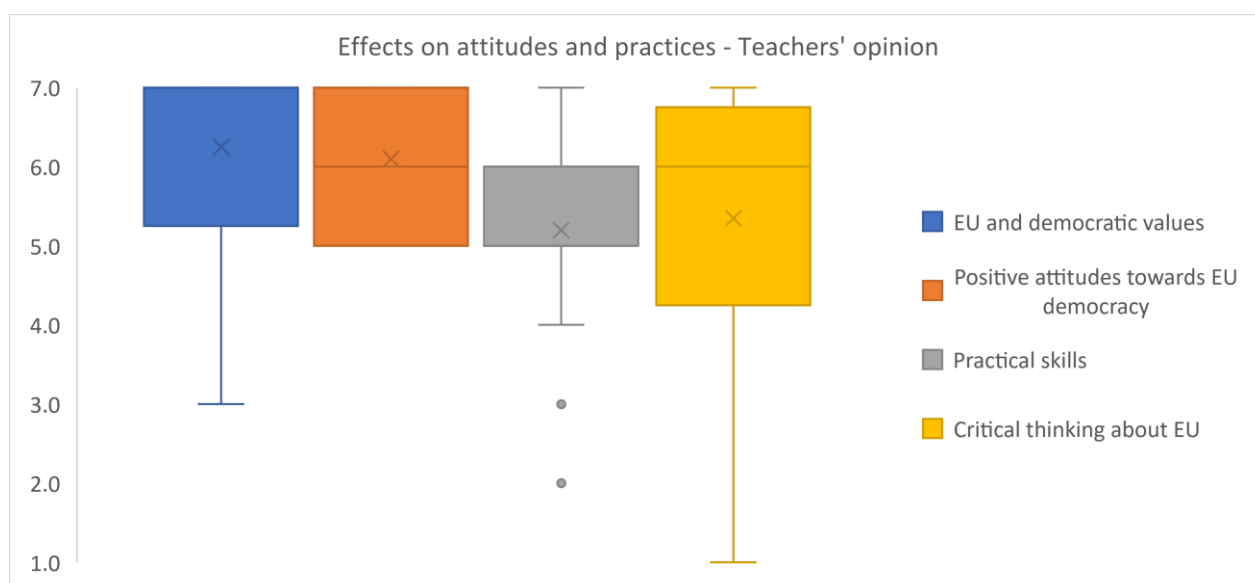
Students suggested also some further topics to improve the activities content; most of them are focused on current events and challenges.

«Having more time available, I would have analysed in depth the current challenges EU is facing» (*Ci fosse stato più tempo avrei approfondito di più le sfide di oggi giorno che l'Europa affronta*).

«Explaining in which sectors the EU is committed, in terms of funding and helping the member states » (*Far capire in quali settori l'Unione Europea si impegna a dare dei finanziamenti e ad aiutare gli stati membri*).

3.3. Effects on teachers

The following graph reports the teachers' opinion about di effects on students in terms of promotion of values and positive attitudes, practical skills and critical thinking. A question about knowledge was not included in the questionnaire.



According to the teachers, the best results concern the transmission of European and democratic values, and the promotion of positive attitudes towards the EU. The distribution of the answers is concentrated in the higher part of the graph and the average evaluation is higher than 6.

The evaluation is significantly lower for the promotion of practical skills and critical thinking. In particular, the last question is showing a wide answers distribution; reading also the open comments, it emerges that teachers thought that the time for single activities and for the whole programme was probably not sufficient to promote the use and increase of this kind of skills. Moreover, the teachers' opinions about the effectiveness of the activities approach in promoting critical thinking are different one from the other.

[Reporting an example of activity promoting positive attitudes] «The activity about the European Institutions, stressing the issue of the proportional representation by country» (*Attività sulle istituzioni europee, con l'accento posto sulla loro rappresentatività dei singoli paesi*).

«Two lessons are not sufficient. It is difficult to instil the concept of “active citizenship” to youths» (*Non sono sufficienti due incontri. Il concetto di cittadinanza attiva è il più difficile da trasmettere a dei ragazzi*).

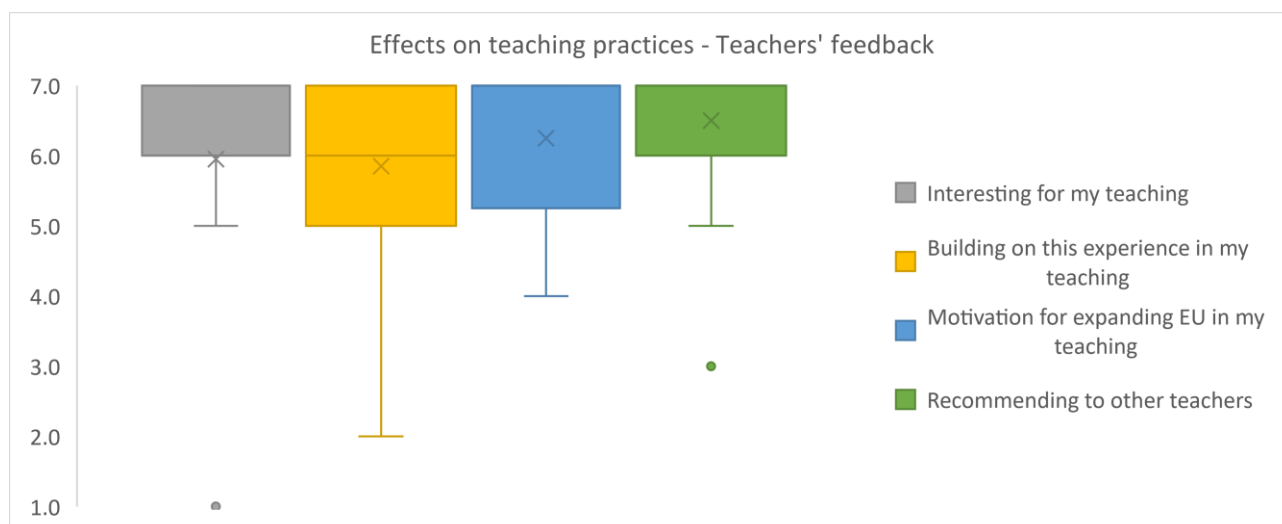
«The trainers did not sufficiently promote critical thinking about the evolution of the EU» (*Le formatrici non hanno trasmesso ai miei allievi una sufficiente riflessione critica sull'evoluzione dell'UE*).

«The activities have promoted a positive attitude towards the EU, but they have also stimulated the students in pointing out their criticism, and that is necessary to develop doubts and questions» (*Il lavoro svolto ha proposto argomenti di adesione ma ha sollecitato la critica, che poi serve a porsi delle domande*).

Only one teacher deemed the activities completely useless both in terms of content and in terms of methodology.

«I had to address all the topics again and explain them properly to the 5th grade students» (*Sono stata costretta in quinta a riprendere in mano tutti gli argomenti e spiegarli a modo*).

Another set of questions was focused on the effects on teachers' teaching practices.



Evaluations were very good; in particular, the activities and their topics were deemed interesting for the respondents' teaching work, even though a few teachers expressed some criticism about the methodology. It is worth noting that the question "would you recommend the participation at the programme to other teachers?" obtained the higher evaluation, with an average value of 6.5.

The main positive elements pointed out by the teachers concern the importance of the topics that were explained, the used material, and the opportunity to visit the Archives.

«The presentations with the use of authentic historical sources have been really effective, the group activities facilitated the students' active participation» (*Le presentazioni supportate da materiali autentici sono state molto efficaci, le attività a gruppi proposte hanno permesso di partecipare attivamente*).

«The explanation of the EU development historical framework and of the evolution of rights and opportunities for the new European citizens has been effective» (*È stato importante offrire un quadro storico della Comunità Europea e l'evoluzione dei diritti e delle possibilità per i nuovi cittadini europei*).

«The opportunity of in-site visiting the Archives made the activity more "tangible"» (*La possibilità di visitare direttamente gli archivi ha reso più "concreta" l'attività*).

Suggestions for the future were very diversified and the final results are slightly contradictory: some teachers would prefer an even more active and participatory approach; some others would prefer to give more space to "classic" lectures in order to provide a more complete explanation of the EU institutions.

«[it would be better to] make the students even more active in the material production/integration» (*Renderli ancora più attivi nella produzione/completamento dei materiali*).

«[Give more space to] How the EU does deal with some issues that are everyday relevant for the students: e.g. agriculture and food sector, mobile networks, training/education and job opportunities, etc.» (*Come l'Ue si occupa di questioni che sono vicine, nel quotidiano, agli studenti: per esempio, il settore agro-alimentare, la telefonia, le opportunità di lavoro e formazione...*).

«Explaining more easily the EU Institutions, explaining better the prerequisites to enter the EU (e.g. for example respecting right), explaining very briefly the history of the preceding economic organizations, maybe presenting a brief review of the pro-European movement, from Mazzini to Spinelli» (*Spiegare in modo più semplice gli organi dell'UE, spiegare meglio ciò che è prerequisito per entrare nella UE (es rispetto dei diritti), spiegare assai brevemente la storie delle organizzazioni economiche precedenti, magari fare una breve rassegna del pensiero europeista, da Mazzini a Spinelli*).

Finally, reading the feedback for the trainers, we can notice that generally speaking the teachers appreciated the trainers' enthusiasm; but some of them also thought that the trainers should improve their teaching approach and the relation with the students.

«I really appreciated their professionalism and enthusiasm» (*Ho apprezzato molto la professionalità e l'entusiasmo*).

«Some activities were too simple compared to my students' level and I think more demanding activities could be proposed» (*Rispetto al livello dei miei studenti ho trovato alcune attività molto semplici e penso che si possa pensare anche a qualcosa di più impegnativo*).

«When the students try answering your questions, trainers should demonstrate approval and respect for their efforts, even if the answer is not correct; they should avoid making the students feeling incompetent» (*Quando i ragazzi provano a rispondere alle vostre domande (anche se la risposta non è corretta) mostrare comunque un segno di approvazione ed evitare di far sentire che le loro conoscenze non sono adeguate, apprezzare lo sforzo*).

Conclusions

Considering the average values, the evaluation of the Education Programme can be considered positive both in general and in relation to almost all the components. The data analysis showed some open issues, weaknesses, and elements that can be improved: some of them are quite clear, some other less due to the contradictory comments given by the participants (both the students and the teachers), especially concerning some methodological choices. One of the main solutions could be an effort to increase the participatory involvement of the teachers in planning and adapting the activities, as far as possible, to their students' needs. At the same time, the programme should also make an effort in increasing further the clarity of the education proposal in order to avoid any misunderstanding and unfounded expectations by the teachers and by the students.