

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TEACHING METHOD, RECEPTIVENESS AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCES: CONDITIONS FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Camille Amilhat

INTRODUCTION:

According to the last IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, the most interactive and innovative activities such as project work and role plays are the less used teaching methods during civic education courses (Schulz et al. 2017 : 172). Research related to innovative pedagogy in civic education is even scarcer than lessons because “studies that explore citizenship education pedagogy are rare” (Evans 2016 : 525). Indeed, there is an evident lack of bridges between political science and educational sciences in Anglo-Saxon research (Bursens and Usherwood 2018) and in French one (Barrault-Stella and Goastellec 2015). The ideal of teaching political neutrality notably complicates the admission of researchers in schools and has led to a predominance of the study of family effects on children politicization (Maurer 2000; Tournier 2010).

More broadly, general theories on pedagogical practices are lacking in Anglo-Saxon countries (Evans 2016 : 519) and in France (Duru-Bellat and van Zanten 2012 : 146). Sociology of transmission is not a developed research field (Bonnéry 2016). Yet, “what teachers know and do is one of the most important influences on what students learn” (Darling-Hammond 1998 : 6). The few existing Anglo-Saxon studies related to innovative pedagogies effects, have only considered effects on academic performance, learning process, development of affective and cognitive capacities and interests in motivation; in word on learning outcomes. Involvement in class and student participation have not been especially studied.

Linking educational sciences and political science, our study illuminates conditions for student participation during public institutions¹ teaching which uses innovative pedagogy. This teaching took place during civic education lessons in a French high school. Participation is one of the major indicators of student involvement, motivation and interest for public institutions learning. Motivation in class is a learning condition because “there is no possible learning without a mobilization, an implication, a more or less important commitment of the subject in this work, on cognitive, psychological and behavioural plans at the same time.” (Bourgeois 2011 : 236). Participating is a contextualized process like learning: for the participant, it depends on cognitive, social and affective conditions (Chapelle and Bourgeois 2011). Thus, how can a teacher capture students’ attention and trigger their participation on topics related to public institutions? Which features of an innovative pedagogy concretely stimulate participation? What are the positive effects of such practices on student

¹ Among civic education research, public institutions are less studied than other themes like rights and duties, political participation or current affairs (Evans 2006 : 421).

receptiveness²? Could these effects be strengthened or weakened because of individual characteristics and peer group effects?

The direct observation of a “justice project”³ in two civic education classes of a French high school has enabled the building of hypothesis to answer these questions. We combined qualitative and quantitative analysis of participations in class⁴ along with several interviews⁵ with the history teacher⁶ and the study of sociological and academic profiles of students (thanks to their examination results and grading, personal file written by students to the history teacher at the beginning of the year, and students’ year-end assessment of history lessons). Most of the time teaching practices are studied through teacher declaration or simulations (Talbot 2012 : 137); with direct observation we wanted to observe what is actually taught in class.

All observations were achieved from February to May 2016 in a high school located in a rural zone near Paris. Counting 1500 students, this public high school is neither excellent nor bad⁷. It offers general subjects, one technical department and two vocational subjects. Student sociological profiles are various but condensed: there is a mix of students from wealthy families – but not from very wealthy ones⁸ – and from modest and rural families – but none from difficult suburbs. Students of foreign origin are not many. There are twelve 15-year-old classes⁹ – called 2nd classes – composed of 35-40 students. We led our analysis in two of them (2nd4 and 2nd5), which had the same history teacher. Both were “bad” classes according to their teachers: a lot of truancy, many dropouts and a lack of respect for teachers. We particularly followed the 2nd4 while the 2nd5 was used as a sort of test class. Both classes were taught about judicial institutions by their history teacher, Veronica, through innovative student-activating learning (interactive lessons with debates, problem-based learning and media-based activities, and a court visit). However with the 2nd4, Veronica organized a specific justice project in tandem with Melanie, the 2nd4’s French teacher¹⁰. Besides judicial institutions lessons and the field trip, 2nd4 students met a lawyer, worked on the importance of speech serving justice and of reasoning in French lessons, and took part in a speech contest brought into play for them by both teachers. The speech contest was designed on the model of an existing lawyer contest: a real subject drawn lots¹¹ and given to each student a few weeks before their speech, and three rounds¹².

The weakness of the observed sample has enabled us to establish likely assumptions more than strengthened explanations. The purpose of this paper is to open lines of research on innovative pedagogy effects, particularly speech contest ones¹³.

² Pedagogy effect is a major component of teacher effect which is a major component of class effect (Bressoux 2016).

³ In French, the project was called “projet justice” by the teachers. A project which involved the teaching of the French judicial institutions.

⁴ We noticed each kind of participation (questions, answers, remarks, smiles, laughs, raised hands...) or indifference expression (limps, yawning, insolent remarks...) on a seating plan and recorded all lessons in order to precise observation notes.

⁵ Questions were open-ended but prepared, and interviews were recorded and transcribed.

⁶ In France, history teachers are often in charge of civic education.

⁷ Its national ranking: 1000th on 2300 national high schools.

⁸ The wealthiest families register their children in the best private schools of the department.

⁹ In France, the class level in high school with the most developed civic education curriculum.

¹⁰ Thirty-year-old teachers, Veronica and Melanie have taught in this high school for several years. They are known for their great skills in their field and for being respected by their students.

¹¹ For each subject, one student had to answer in the affirmative, another one in the negative.

¹² Eight students were selected by students’ votes for the first round and four for the second one. The two first rounds took place in half-group and the final one in entire class.

¹³ Indeed, there is practically no research on student effects of speech contests.

Table 1: Observations index

Date	Length (hours)	Class	Teacher(s)	Half-group (HG) / entire class (EC)	Used pedagogy
16/02/2016	2 hours	2 nd 4	Veronica	EC	Participatory lesson
8/03/2016	1	2 nd 5	Veronica	EC	Participatory lesson
8/03/2016	2	2 nd 4	Veronica	EC	Participatory lesson
8/03/2016	Afternoon	2 nd 5	Veronica, Melanie & others	EC	Court visit
12/05/2016	2	2 nd 4	Veronica & Melanie	HG	Speech contest (1 st round)
19/05/2016	2	2 nd 4	Veronica & Melanie	HG	Speech contest (2 nd round)
26/05/2016	1	2 nd 4	Veronica, Melanie & the jury of the contest	EC	Speech contest (final round)

UNUSUAL, PARTICIPATORY, ADAPTIVE AND EXPLICIT: DESCRIBING THE USED INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

Before the analyse of the effects of the used innovative pedagogy, it seems interesting to precisely study its features. The used pedagogy was innovative because it was rare, interactive and adaptive. Even so, the pedagogy remained an explicit one.

An unusual practice

Project and performance-based instructional practice during civic education is really rare in the world (Schulz et al. 2017) and particularly in France. For civic education, French history teachers are notably short of such national resources on public websites, like *Eduscol* (the Ministry of National Education's website)¹⁴, and in books. Veronica specified me she had no material to prepare lessons but a 13-year-old student book, and the used pedagogy was unique for her. Therefore, these particular project and unusual pedagogy implied a totally different teaching organization in comparison with usual lectures. Veronica and Melanie, the two teachers, invested a lot of time and energy in the project preparation. They gathered extremely diversified materials like videos (extracts from documentaries and Ministry of Justice movies), case studies, PowerPoint slides, diagram illustrations, concrete material for the contest (e.g. contest subjects in a box, appreciation table for each student, ballot papers for each round). They organized the court visit and the sequence of the contest; both have been

¹⁴ Regarding the "People and the Rule of Law" program theme which includes the functioning of the justice system, four projects are suggested on Eduscol, including one to be developed over several lessons. But none is linked to public institutions or judicial institutions. Only two themes are dealt with: the citizen connection with rules and law, and peer mediation. In a 15-July 2016 interview, Veronica regretted the National Education had not offered more projects, all the more so as she felt lacking "creative ideas" although enthusiastic to achieve them and she would never have got this idea without Melanie.

stressful for them. The objective of this big investment was to pull students out of school structures in order for them to live real justice and eloquence experiences¹⁵. Consequently, school requirements for students were specific. They didn't have to take many notes¹⁶ unlike classic history and geography lessons¹⁷. Only one grade assessed their knowledge of judicial system¹⁸; there was no grade for the speech contest or for the observation of the court hearings. But their involvement in the project had to be even stronger than in a traditional lesson or for simple applied exercises¹⁹.

This collective project was also exceptional because the participating students were singled out from other classes and it had increased their standing in the eyes of the whole high school. Indeed, the official and formal contest final round brought to light their project participation and their remarkable work. The final round took place in the most significant room of the school: the class council room. The jury was composed of their teachers, the lawyer they met, the person in charge of the school library, the deputy head and above all, the headmistress. Prizes were given to the finalists: an official diploma signed by the head and the lawyer, and a gift token for cultural commodities (which is extremely rare in French schools). At the end of the contest, a buffet snack was set. Melanie had announced students that it would be a "fame and great moment"²⁰, a crowning achievement of their justice project. All students had to smarten themselves up²¹ and everybody respected these unusual instructions: all boys wore a shirt and most of the girls wore a skirt. Besides arousing enthusiasm from participating students and making other classes curious, this specific staging led to direct highlighting of their involvement with a congratulation speech of the head²² and an article published on the school website by the librarian.

A participatory and interactive teaching

Going out the general lecturing shape. The history teacher stirred permanent interaction with a permanent eye contact (she never looked at her notes), her own physical and oral involvement (she never sat down and she used changing voice tones) and numerous prepared oral activities²³ and videos (11 extracts of hearings and trials).

¹⁵ On 16 February 2016, Veronica said they wanted to "make them do something that happens in real life". We also observed it was not natural for teachers not to speak in school terms. For example, Melanie said : "Take the time to comment on the **work**, well on the **speech** [of your classmate]".

¹⁶ Time for note-taking was very short between the time of videos, the interactive discussions and debates, and the time of exemplification and of the project explanation.

¹⁷ Students noticed a too-fast note-taking during history and geography lessons on their year-end assessment.

¹⁸ Veronica gave a picture of the test to students: a list of trials for which students had to find the right judging court for each one, an unusual case test.

¹⁹ On 12 May 2016, during the discussion with Valère who had not prepared his speech for the contest, Melanie: "You can't run and have the right to vote, without taking part, without having exposed yourself to thinking. [...] for me, you see, it's not an exercise in French lesson that we didn't do at home and it doesn't disturb the class. "

²⁰ On 19 May 2016, at the end of the lesson.

²¹ Veronica emphasized this point on 19 May 2016: "It seems so important to me that everybody plays the game. [...] All the boys who can: suit or shirt; girls in dress, well-dressed, nice-looking hair. [...] Elegance from every point of view, show the best of what you can give."

²² The headmistress at the end of the speech contest: "You worked [on the project] the whole year and it's so remarkable. I can't imagine how much you are prepared for the future oral exams, whether it's for the GISs, all the baccalauréat tests and then for your future life. It's such an interesting experience. I feel that you have learned a lot. I saw it in the four speeches I heard. I observed a lot of things: reflection, fluency [...], humour. There were a lot of happened things, and that's great. "

²³ For instance: "To connect the appropriate court with each dispute " or "to discover justice symbols".

Picture 1: Extract from Veronica's judicial lesson

Activité orale : les mesures éducatives

Etude de cas sur le racket : Kevin, 17 ans, a volé un scooter dans le parking du centre commercial. Il a agi seul et sans agresser le propriétaire.

1^{re} étape arrestation : vérification des papiers, constat du vol, poste de police. Puis il est convoqué devant le juge pour enfants. Le vol est puni de 3 ans de prison et 45000€ d'amende / Kévin risque 1 an ½ de prison +7500€ d'amende car il est mineur. C'est la 1^{re} fois, donc pas de condamnation, mais mesures de réparation. S'il ne recommence pas, condamnation pour vol effacée de son casier judiciaire, s'il recommence, tribunal pour enfants et peine graves

Vidéo : alternatives aux poursuites 2 (mesures de réparation pénale : réflexion sur le trafic de stupéfiants)

After each activity, Veronica systematically asked students their reactions: “What are your views on that side?”. She even suggested them to watch certain videos optionally at home (like “The appeal at crown courts”, a documentary about an attempted murder). With the court visit, she offered out-of-school teaching and learning. As regards the eloquence contest, the French teacher emphasized that “it was an experience living together” (teachers and students). So, before students came, they put tables in a U form for each round in order to “facilitate an awareness of citizenship themes and issues” (Evans 2006 : 420) and participation, and did not give chosen seats. Half-group with less than 20 students for these hours facilitated the U configuration. The teachers sat behind students instead of standing in front of them, and students took the usual place of the teacher one after the other. Finally, the teachers intervened at the minimum during speeches.

Involving each student as a central player of their lessons. The history teacher implemented “talk” lessons during judicial teaching. She wanted an active participation of students and interactions between students and her and among students, not a traditional lecture. In addition to interactive tools, she instituted a total freedom of intervention if students asked to speak and respected the others. She enhanced diversity of opinion²⁴, she used out loud remarks to stimulate discussion and taught students how to listen to each other. Therefore, lessons gave rise to debates (e.g. on death penalty) and many interactions. Before the court observation, Veronica also gave precise orders to avoid passivity and make them aware of their responsibilities: “Pay great attention. You will be spectators, but be almost actors. Look at the roles, look who's who. Listen to the atmosphere. [...] You will be asked a little later to render how you have experienced all this. [...] Take note of the ongoing trials and what is making an impression on you. [...] I will not grade your notes.”. For the eloquence contest, students had a total freedom of position. Melanie told them at the beginning of the first round “You come wherever you want. [...] You can sit down, remain standing, move around. [...] Imagine that you are a lawyer at a rostrum.”. She provided them a power of student-player. The lack of fluency for some of them (e.g. soft voice, hands in the pockets, silences) showed the rarity of the exercise. During the speeches, other students had to be “an active and efficient jury” (Melanie, on 19 May 2016) in order to classify speakers and to vote for the winners.

An adaptive and concrete method

Concrete and billed objectives. Beyond school interactions around the project, the first purpose of the teachers was to offer their students practical knowledge of judicial institutions. At first, Veronica knew some of them (e.g. Loïs or Laura) were being confronted with justice and others could be in the future. She precisely described police custody conditions in the case of drug trafficking, court procedures, juvenile justice, different sorts of courts, and main

²⁴ Following a debate on the first video projected on 16 February 2016, Veronica said: “When you have this kind of opinion discussions, which is interesting, the great conclusion that you're drawing from this: you're understanding the use of the Crown Court jury and why they are 9. Because our opinions, according to what we do ourselves, according to our education, our personality, well...our opinions aren't the same.”.

sentences. Then, the history teacher wanted to teach them the unstudied and large justice careers because they could work in it²⁵. After the project, around ten students would like to work in the judicial world. Preparing well-informed and law-abiding citizens was the second aim. Thanks to the link between civic education and French lessons, the teachers wanted their students to become citizens who know how to speak in public, to argue²⁶, to debate and to develop critical attitudes. In their final round speeches the lawyer and the head stressed the importance of these qualities for their future life too. Moreover, the teachers raised awareness about some offences to encourage them to behave with civility and honesty. Veronica said some students broke rules at school and in their private life (e.g. repeated lies, drug use, immoderate drinking). She made links between school and law infringements²⁷. Offering them a moral framework was crucial. That was why she showed them a trial about unauthorized driving and another one about drug trafficking. Finally, Veronica insisted on the citizen role of jurors and detailed it with a video²⁸.

Features of an adaptive pedagogy. To make students understand justice issues, Veronica permanently referred to their own experience. She thought justice was a theme appreciated by students because “they can project themselves, they can think”²⁹. In addition to appropriate and numerous examples, she questioned them on their own situation. On juvenile justice, she asked:

Veronica: “Be careful: being considered as a child, it’s under the age of ?”

Several students: “16.”

Veronica: “After 16...[...], Adrien is assigned to be a good boy.”

Adrien: “Always.”

Veronica (laughing): “It’s going to be difficult.”

Veronica took care of each student life story and its impact on their receptiveness. Because a student’s father tried to murder her mother, she decided not to show them “a trial in which the accused was a son beaten by his father, and who took a rifle and shot him down”. In order to ease attention and understanding, she got them back into the swing of justice at the beginning of lessons (e.g. on 8 March 2016, after holidays, she took a few minutes to show them a video extract) and explained all unknown words (e.g. “with mercy”). Pedagogy was also adaptive because the teachers always brought out qualities of each student³⁰. They did as much trying as possible to believe in the success abilities of all, thus improving their chances of success (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968). They were really enthusiastic on the expectation of progression and revelation for each of them³¹, believing in “cognitive educability” (Talbot 1997) without doing individualised teaching. Two examples explicitly illustrated this tendency. During the speech contest, every student was asked to write a positive comment for all of their classmates after their speech. At the end of the project, the teachers distributed a summary of all personal positive comments to every student. The second example was the second chance given to first-round eliminated students to present a speech voluntarily at the second round and in the same conditions as winners.

²⁵ Veronica’s interview on 15 July 2016.

²⁶ For instance, “studying argumentative strategies of famous authors in order to pinch them” or “studying fable power: telling a story to communicate their ideas in fact” (Melanie, 12 May 2016).

²⁷ On 8 March 2016 with the 2nd 4: “I would like community service at school, it’s really instructional.”

²⁸ On 8 March 2016.

²⁹ Extract from Veronica’s interview on 15 July 2016.

³⁰ Anyway, with the justice project, they wanted to “find a good activity for the class and for you” (Veronica, 16 February 2016).

³¹ On 16 February 2016, Veronica said “I think we are going to discover hidden skills” with the justice project and “I have confidence in you” for the respect of rules during the court visit. On 12 May 2016, Melanie said “we need to come out growing up” and “it’s one of the most beautiful surprises of this contest” on 26 May 2016.

A nonetheless explicit pedagogy

Giving a large space to civic education content, the used pedagogy formalized knowledge and fulfilled all explicit pedagogy criteria: lecturing presentation of new elements, illustrating exercises to resolve and to correct collectively and individual assessment (e.g. a paper-and-pencil short answer after judicial lessons) (Galand 2009 : 15). The teacher guided students by giving them information on purposes, notions and learning methods (Bressoux 2011). For instance, seven course pages were ready before the beginning of the project with the detail of all videos (watched before by the teacher) and oral activities. Organized upstream, the project presented a great consistency (Talbot 2012): structured taking-notes before activities, planned court visit, prepared contest, announced schedule, and explicit and permanent links between activities and learning (judicial system, eloquence)³². The pedagogy is neither an invisible one (students do not build learning procedures themselves) nor a lecture (transmission is not the only purpose).

When students participated in class discussions, teachers did not look for linguistic activism but for intellectual activation: students had to raise their hand, develop their answers, correct their vocabulary and distinguish experiential knowledge from school knowledge. For instance, during the death penalty debate, Veronica told them:

“So, you know what? I’m dreaming to be in half-group for this theme [...] in order to really make debates. Death penalty officially no longer exists in France since the 1980s. It still exists in many countries. It is the subject of numerous debates. [...] I’m going to think if we will take time to prepare the subject. You have to be a bit informed: you’ve to know in which countries it exists, why this has been abolished in France, what were the charges against death penalty.”

Although the class was not a “good” one in school terms, the teachers succeeded in keeping participants interested and in developing cognitive student resources all along the project, two guarantying conditions of a well-balanced participation and of an efficient talk lesson (Deauvieu 2007 : 104).

In a word, Veronica and Melanie used a teacher-led pedagogy with participatory approaches thanks to a “phronesis” – practical wisdom – that allowed them to raise these different pedagogical approaches for enhancing student participation and learning (Talbot 2012 : 10). What are the precise effects of such an innovative pedagogy?

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY ON GLOBAL STUDENT RECEPTIVENESS AND PARTICIPATION

A class revealed by the justice project

A difficult class which had lost its bearings. The 2nd4 students had learning difficulties. Many were dropouts (e.g. some of them could be involved in drug trafficking) and insolent. Grades were weak and declined continuously during the school year. One third of the students had to go to a vocational class the year after³³. According to Melanie and Veronica, they had never learned to be polite: no landmarks, no awareness of what you can or cannot do because

³² On 16 February 2016 (for the 2nd4) and on 8 March 2016 (for the 2nd5), Veronica concretely described hearings which would allow them to discover “justice in all its phases” (slowness, file problems...) and all the types of affairs they could be attending.

³³ Veronica on 16 February 2016.

of no framework at home. Some of them lived even alone³⁴. The class was really difficult and “turned inside out” all lessons except Melanie’s and Veronica’s ones³⁵. We observed this capability of disturbance (e.g. loud chatter or throwing projectiles) during latency periods of the speech contest.

Table 2: 2nd4 class averages

Class average	Overall average	History average	French average
1 st term	10,9/20	11,1/20	10,6/20
2 nd term	10,7/20	10,3/20	10,3/20
3 rd term	10,3/20	10,9/20	10,9/20

Unexpected class receptiveness. Throughout the justice project, thanks to the specific used pedagogy, students were unusually participant, attentive, dynamic, respectful and kindly. Student participation was unremitting: 111 spoken interventions³⁶ were counted only for the 2-hour lesson on 16 February 2016. Every student prepared their speech for the contest except one³⁷ and most of them respected teachers’ advice. Great silence and absorbed eyes testified to their attention during videos and court hearings. The context of terrorism strengthened their attention and many questions linked to terrorist sanctions and sentences were asked. They were so riveted and participant that they forgot to take notes during lessons. Smiles, laughs, tears in their eyes, enthusiastic reactions³⁸, clothing efforts³⁹ and applause during videos and contest speeches unveiled their spirit. Overall, students were very respectful of their classmates⁴⁰, notably during speech: they did not talk or comment⁴¹ during it, they applauded it and they were very thoughtful and quiet during the vote of each round. Finally, contrary to their behaviour with some teachers, they welcomed the lawyer with a lot of kindness and she noticed this point⁴².

Note: Crossed dynamics of interactive lessons

- During interactive lessons, the most participatory pedagogical tool was video. 53% of spoken interventions took place during the 40% of class time made of video watching and reactions.
- Participatory dynamics involved during interactive time led to constant participation during more formal time (e.g. taking-notes). For instance, on 16 February 2016 during the 10-minute lecture, students participated as much as during the rest of the lesson.
- Some subjects as jurors role or death penalty gave rise to particular numerous reactions (questions, smiles, pouts, comments).

³⁴ A few examples (given by Veronica): Ambroise and Jaffa lived stark alone. Mariama lived in a foster family. Jade’s and Philomène’s mothers had deserted home and their daughter. Julien’s father was alcoholic and Salomé’s one was mad. Nobody drove Thaïs to the doctor when she was sick.

³⁵ Veronica on 16 February 2016.

³⁶ Spoken interventions consisted of questions, answers, (loud or low voice) remarks, smiles, laughs and raised hands.

³⁷ Valère did not prepare it.

³⁸ For instance: Melanie announced “You’re voting [for the contest].”. Immediately, Ambroise answered: “Yeah!”.

³⁹ Were defined as clothing efforts: suit jacket, smart clothes, jewels and lipstick for girls, and shirt for boys. 24% of students did clothing efforts for the first round, 31% for the second one and 100% for the last one.

⁴⁰ Examples of comments on year-end assessment in history: “Pleasant work atmosphere with you.”, “The work atmosphere was very good in every lesson.”, “Nice atmosphere, it made me feel like keeping up.”.

⁴¹ Except Valère who repeated a speech mannerism during Elise’s speech (“all that, all that”).

⁴² The lawyer’s speech on 26 May 2016: “Honestly, I feel a lot of investment from you. You welcomed me with much kindness. You wanted to discover my job. It made me happy because I felt little judgment and I observed you gradually appropriated subjects, you appropriated the [speech] exercise. You broke free of the shackles.”.

Thanks to the justice project, students revealed themselves and their class experienced a great and positive change⁴³ in all subjects. One quarter of students quoted justice project as preferred activity of the class year, on their own on their year-end assessment; an illustration of an unique and appreciable project for students. Veronica was particularly satisfied of this dynamic: it was not usual that students were absorbed in their lessons as much, especially dropouts who played a lead role (by their participation, their liveliness, their class identity)⁴⁴. During the contest final round, she told her students she was proud of them. This innovative project favoured students' progress whatever their academic level. Could civic education be means of getting out of school failure?

A project which resonated with the socialization of some

“Bad” students as best participants. Surprisingly, we observed that the most participant during the justice project were not specifically the top of the class. Quite the reverse, there were more distracted students in the best participants. This phenomenon could be explained by the studied judicial themes: they resonated with the socialization of some. Students with knowledge on institutions – even concrete – thanks to their out-of-school environment could be more receptive to them because “people obtain mostly information in fields in which they have already been informed” (Joignant 1997 : 554). Therefore, paradoxical mechanisms of receptiveness activation are implemented: a student with school or social difficulties, who has an usual profile for attention deactivation, is becoming very active in civic education all of a sudden and for some, dynamic reflects on other subjects⁴⁵. Our hypothesis rest on revealed 2nd4 students by their huge participation in justice lessons (Adrien, Ambroise, Valère, Loïs and Jean), by their selection as finalists for the contest (Louise, Camille, Ava and Elise) and by her conversation with Veronica during break (Laura). Among them, only two (Camille and Ava) were good students.

Table 3: Grading, averages and academic orientation of participating students

	1 st term	2 nd term	3 rd term	Orientation
Adrien	Grading: 21 st /34 students Overall average : 10,5/20 History average: 10,8/20	18 th 10,6 11,5	17 th 10,5 10,5	Technical bac
Ambroise (repeating his year)	8 th 12,2 12	8 th 11,8 13,1	17 th 10,5 11,6	Technical bac
Valère (repeating his year)	30 th 8,8 (work warning) 9,4	33 rd 7,4 6,7	34 th 4,2 7,5	Reorientation
Loïs (repeating his year for a second time)	17 th 11 (work and truancy warning) 11,7	24 th 9,9 (work reprimand) 9,5	23 th 9,8 9,4	Technical bac
Jean	34 th 7,4 (work warning) 6,8	30 th 8 (work warning) 7	33 rd 6,7 7	Vocational bac
Laura	25 th 9,9 10,7	25 th 9,7 9	29 th 8,8 10,7	General bac

⁴³ Discussion between Veronica and Melanie during the break on 19 May 2016. Besides, P. Huguet analysed: “Once familiarized with a certain success [...], the [“bad”] students ask for speaking, especially in public, and it is proper indeed to give it to them on pain of observing their performance deteriorate.” (Huguet 2011 : 180).

⁴⁴ Discussion on 16 February 2016.

⁴⁵ This result questions usual theories which conclude that receptiveness in class is maximized for upper-class students (Gaxie 1978).

Louise	7 th	13 th	9 th	<i>(No information)</i>
	12,3	11,4	11,2	
	12,3	10,3	11,6	
Camille	1 st	1 st	1 st	General bac
	15,2	15,7	14,9	
	15,8	17,6	16,8	
Ava	4 th	3 rd	4 th	General bac
	13,7	14,2	13,4	
	13,9	15	14,3	
Elise	33 rd	32 th	30 th	Technical bac
	7,8 (work warning)	7,5	7,8	
	5,8	6	7	

Out-of-school activities. Hobbies and other out-of-school activities influence attention and participation in civic education class. Three examples illustrate these effects: drug trafficking, the news, and video games and series. Adrien, Loïs and Valère, weak students and big cannabis consumers, showed intensified attention when drug trafficking was talking about. Adrien, sleeping student, smiled when Veronica quoted drug trafficking as possible court hearing and he said “what?!” when he heard “drug use, cannabis” in a court hearing video. Loïs, totally dropout (backwardness, school warnings, truancy), knew guilty pleas appearance, spoke about it and advised lying. Hearing the local and national news also strengthens receptiveness. Because of his current affairs knowledge, Ambroise, student repeating his year, actively contributed to conversation about jail and life sentence⁴⁶. Then, Adrien and Jean, softworking student⁴⁷, played video games all night⁴⁸ and watched series; according to Veronica, it could explain precise knowledge of Adrien on American and French judicial systems and of Jean on weapons⁴⁹. We noticed three of the five more participant students were older than others (Ambroise, Valère and Loïs)⁵⁰: because of their age, they could have more practical and current affairs knowledge than others and so, be more receptive and participant.

Note: Adrien’s atypical portrait

From a very modest background and with school difficulties, Adrien was usually an inactive student: he contented himself with a 10,5 average and often slept in class (tired because he took care of his little sisters instead of his mother, he played video games all night and smoked cannabis). He did not know all his classmates first names and had difficulties to write. And yet, during judicial lessons, Adrien revealed himself. He spoke on all topics: during the first lesson, he totalled more than 30% of class participations and took the first participation number place during the first and the second lessons. His reactions were permanent; he asked lots of questions (always on topic substance)⁵¹. His knowledge was developed: right and rapid answers (Veronica: “Do you know the difference between an assassination and a murder?”, Adrien answered immediately: “Ha, assassination is

⁴⁶ To the Veronica’s question “Why isn’t imprisonment the priority for a first offence?”, Ambroise answered “Because jails are full.”. As for life sentence, Ambroise made a comparison with South America countries where life sentence exist and it said something to him because of a local current affair: “There was a man [in my village] who raped women and burnt them after” (8 March 2016).

⁴⁷ Jean wrote in his year-end assessment: “Tests could be hard or easy, and because I didn’t work a lot, it was often hard.”.

⁴⁸ During a break, Veronica said: “Jean lives night. When he comes back home after school, he takes a big nap. His mother wakes him up at 11 pm and they have dinner. Then, he plays video games, he works and he goes to bed again at 4 am and he wakes up again at 7 am. But he is dead-tired.”

⁴⁹ Jean spoke when Veronica described an attempted murder by gun: “But it wasn’t a big gun if the bullet stopped?”. Veronica answered: “Wow, we have an expert!”. Jean added: “It was probably a little bore, no more than 6 millimetres.”.

⁵⁰ In the 2nd4, there were five students repeating their year in total, of whom these three boys (Ambroise, Valère and Loïs) and two girls.

⁵¹ In his year-end assessment, he wrote what he preferred the most was “the answers to his questions”.

premeditated.”), right comparison between American and French justices on cumulative sentences. He acted a little bit his answers in order to make his classmates laugh. Veronica noticed a durable change of Adrien’s class behavior from the beginning of the justice project: “there was a changeover and he began to involve himself, to be passionate, and he changed in a class pillar, driving force. [...] He didn’t have injected eyes anymore; he didn’t sleep in class anymore⁵². He contributed all the time and took notes. [...] So, his attitude pulled the whole class up.” (15-July 2016 interview).

Their story with justice. Students with good receptiveness are also the ones who are directly confronted with justice. Two students lived this experience. Valère, very difficult student (great truancy, at the bottom of the class, smoking cannabis), was summoned to a Crown Court trial as witness because one of his friends was stabbed. Valère contributed a lot during the justice lessons he attended. He asked for precise questions (e.g. “what is the difference between ‘instance’ and ‘grande instance’?”) and made substance comments (e.g. “Are they going to quote criminal code?”). Laura, quiet and in-difficulty student, did not contribute in class directly but during break with the teacher. She listened carefully to what was said in class and spoke with emotion to the teacher because there was an attempted murder in her family⁵³ and justice lessons generated lots of questions for her.

Dreams for the future. Students dreams for the future lead to a lively participation when the school project echoes with them. Jean’s interest for weapons and connected topics could be explained by his wish to become a soldier like lieutenant colonel paratrooper⁵⁴. In a shorter term, his decision to do a mechanics vocational bac could reinforce his interest for gun precision. As for Louise and Valère, they wanted to become journalists⁵⁵ and maybe also a lawyer for Valère⁵⁶. This vocation could account for their unusual involvement in their homework: preparing a speech for the defence combines writing and thought like a journalist. Although Valère did not prepare his speech for the first round, he worked on two speeches for the second round.

Lecture system reluctance and broadening to another pedagogy. Some students become opened to a school project because it do not remember them their lecture system reluctance anymore. Most of observed students were in this case for the justice project, but it was particularly impressive for Elise who began opening only with the speech contest and gradually. Usually, Elise slumped over the table during all lessons, was very resistant to the school system (overall average under 8 and at the bottom of class grading). Her rare participations often expressed “stupidities” according to Veronica. Whatever the school system was, she wanted to become a tattooist. However, other students noticed her convinced speeches and selected her for the first two rounds. She showed annoyance going to the final round (moaning, insults). She warned Veronica she had prepared nothing a few days before the final round. The D-Day, her speech was ready, her vocabulary changed (so rich), she wore a suit and she declaimed her speech with passion. At the end of the final round, she expressed her joy and was selected as second finalist. Elise progressively opened to the project justice and its instructions.

From social experiences to learning work. That way, students develop their own learning logics of judicial institutions teaching (reception, interpretation, retranslation) (Oeser 2010).

⁵² In his year-end assessment, he thanked Veronica for her “right-speed” lessons: “thanks to you, I succeeded in stopping sleeping during class =D”.

⁵³ Her schizophrenic father tried to kill her mother when Laura was 4. There was a Crown Court trial, her father was in prison during a few years and he committed suicide a few years after. Laura told Veronica she loved her father so much.

⁵⁴ Year personal file written at the beginning of the year.

⁵⁵ Year personal file written at the beginning of the year.

⁵⁶ During a lesson, Valère asked: “When we want to become a lawyer, we gonna choose for which courts?”

Some researchers denounce negative effects of project pedagogy teaching. According to them, this kind of pedagogy, which is based on real-life projects, imparts a great significance to student real-life experiences and focuses on technical mastery of knowledge. Student could be confined in a “student job” logic⁵⁷ to the detriment of “learning work” one⁵⁸; intellectual benefit could be disappointing and the pedagogy could not change student knowledge link (Bautier and Rochex 2017). In the specific case of civic education, the taller pedagogy and lesson contents closeness with student world does not guarantee learning devaluation as soon as student experiences is formed as a thinking object with an explicit lesson (the present case). Quite the opposite, meeting students social experiences thanks to a “citizen job learning logic” could give them the opportunity to do a translation from “student job” logic to “learning work” logic. The translation could be definitive or temporary depending on the context, but it could have spillover effects for other subjects.

PARTICIPATION VARIABILITY DURING THE PROJECT: STRENGTHENING AND WEAKENING OF THE PEDAGOGICAL EFFECTS DEPENDING ON THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Used participatory pedagogy and positioning regarding peer group

Even if pedagogy is unusual and participatory, school environment carries on conditioning student reception via their positioning in the school social space and their particular identity in the peer group. “Concretely: you can’t [...] “be a dunce” or “the best student” without being influenced by the place you defend into the peer configuration and by strategies implemented in order to keep it, question it or transform it.” (Oeser 2010 : 353). Pedagogy effects are so strengthened or weakened. It explains the reception gap between justice lessons and contest: the ones who proved to be very participating during justice lessons, did not prove it for the speech contest, and conversely. All the first ones were boys; all the second ones were girls.

Finding an identity in the class thanks to pedagogy. A pedagogy allows some students to build up an identity in the class when it makes them actors, like the contest, and to be very receptive in return. These students need to be granted a statutory competence, an empowerment from a topmost people, like teachers for the first round, or from their peers, like classmates for the following rounds. Whatever the grading, it is the case for some “reserved” students and particularly girls. Six out of eight half-finalists and all the finalists were girls. And yet, during justice lessons, girls held back in interaction whatever their cultural capital⁵⁹. When they spoke, it was only for asking practical organization questions or for giving sure answers (e.g. an answer explicitly given by a video). When they were not sure of their talk, they spoke in a very low voice or only to the teacher during the break (e.g. Laura and Camille). When Veronica asked them questions in front of the class, their answers were not asserted (e.g. Camille, first in the class grading, on her trafficking drug hearing impression: “neither too severe nor too enough”). Even if there is not yet a political division of labour as described for adults (Gaxie 1978), there probably are a gendered upbringing and

⁵⁷ School exercises are an end in itself without any real cognitive activity, and are used to deal with daily school demands.

⁵⁸ School exercises are the opportunity of a true intellectual work through with student wonders about school activities meaning and can deepen asked task on their own.

⁵⁹ For instance, Camille comes from a social background with economical and cultural capital (engineers). She was an excellent student, first in the class grading, and wanted to go to a scientific general bac in order to become a researcher. She did not speak with loud voice in class for all that.

an imitation effect of mother attitudes, shyer in public area and less interested in citizenship topics. These gendered attitudes are reinforced by teachers expectation “adapted to their adult gendered role – autonomy or assertiveness for boys, altruism or expressiveness for girls” (Duru-Bellat and van Zanten 2012). For instance, during juror lesson, Veronica said: “girls are bound to be influenced by the emotional side, the person’s face; boys are bound to stay on facts”). Besides, the met lawyer referred to this gendered division during her final speech⁶⁰. With the speech contest, girls snatched the given empowerment, confirmed by their personal motivation⁶¹ and by speech subjects on human and social life (not specifically on justice)⁶². So, their contest attitude was the exact opposite in comparison with lessons: speeches were long and committed and they were self-confident (e.g. strong voice).

Note: Louise, the contest winner

From a well-off background, Louise was a “medium” student (overall average: 11-12), “not really serious” according to Veronica (19 May 2016), who wanted to become a journalist or a rider. In class, she preferred enriching her general knowledge instead of doing school exercises⁶³. She never spoke loudly during civic education, but during the speech contest, she showed an excellent reception and retranslation of instructions. She got involved a lot and finished at the first place of the contest. Her speeches were longer and longer, more and more argued. She was more and more at ease. The excellence of her performances was approved by her teachers and by her classmates. She left her competitors far away with a high score for each round (score distance: +41 points, +44 points, +83 points) and received long applause (e.g. during the final round, 20 seconds against 13 and 11 for the others).

Reinforcing an existing strong identity through pedagogy. Some students present a strong identity in class, like “joker”, “dropout”, “insolent” or “sleeper”⁶⁴. Whatever the innovative pedagogy, a constrained – because compulsory – participation reinforces an existing strong identity of a student in difficulty and weakens receptiveness. Adrien, Ambroise et Valère⁶⁵ spoke freely in justice lessons, but none of them was half-finalist because of this phenomenon. Valère had a strong “dropout” identity. Although very participating during justice lessons, as a “dropout”, he did not prepare his first speech, refused to speak in front of the class and was the only student doing loud comments about other speeches. Motivated by his favourite teacher, Veronica⁶⁶, he finally decided to participate with two speeches for the second round, but he stopped in the middle of his second speech and did not succeed to end it. His defeat, visible by everyone and unique in the class, reinforced his feeling of incompetence

⁶⁰ Extract of the lawyer speech on 26 May 2016: “Eloquence world often is men one. Eloquence is said to be charisma, physical condition and so on. Eloquent women are often thought to be a little bit hysterical: if they are eloquent, it means they are overexcited. Have you seen? You have elected girls. Congratulations to all boys who elected girls for the final round. These finalist girls, it’s really a proof of open-mindedness, and I’m very proud.”.

⁶¹ Louise: her wish to become a journalist. Elise: her attraction for an unusual pedagogy. Camille: a way to confirm her first-grading place.

⁶² E.g. “Does madness set free?”, “Should you love her/him to invite her/him?”, “Does joy come after sorrow?”, “Is the end of time imminent?”, “Are we rich of our poverties?”, “Do we still have time?”, “Is progress outdated?”.

⁶³ What she appreciated in Veronica’s lessons and noticed on her year-end assessment.

⁶⁴ Social positioning in 2nd4 class was well-defined as Louise underlined it during her final speech: “Because who will remember it in 150 years? Who will be there to remember Ambroise’s jokes? Who will be there to remember Alexis’ naps and Elise’s coloured hair change? [...] Who will be there to remember Valère’s irrefragable presence?”.

⁶⁵ In this analyse, Loïs is not taken into account because he was absent for all contest rounds.

⁶⁶ In his year-end assessment, he wrote “Written and talked lessons are built, full and clear. [...] Since my first year in high school, she has been one of my best teachers but also one of the most interesting in this subject. Thanks to you for your support and for this year with you.”.

and school system exclusion, so his usual dropout identity. Besides, he was absent for the final round. As for Adrien and Ambroise, humour had to prevail above all, because these two friends got a “joker” identity and were mutually supportive of this play⁶⁷. During justice lessons, they already did some jokes or smiled, but stayed implicated. For the contest, they made their “joker” identity prevailed on their speech quality (thought, substance⁶⁸, speaking time⁶⁹). Although they made all class laugh, they were out of the exercise style and were not selected by their peers.

Explaining the effects of peer group by the student job value and expectancy. Depending on the used pedagogy, student receptiveness varies with gender and social positioning in school area. Comparative function of peer group is crucial. In these peer comparisons, boys prioritized a goal of performance-avoidance during the contest, in other words “avoiding tasks which could threaten them in their self-image and so avoiding ambitious tasks” (Bressoux 2016 : 145), and girls did it during justice lessons. Conversely, girls prioritized the mastery of competence field which opened to them with the contest, and sustained effort during the contest, and boys did it during justice lessons. Actually, all these described variables affect the two main factors of motivation – and therefore, of participation – defined by Etienne Bourgeois in the tradition of Victor Vroom’s theories (Bourgeois 2011): the student feeling value of the task⁷⁰ and their expectancy of its success. For instance, the value of the contest is weaker for boys than for justice lessons. Indeed, extrinsic motivation (prize and recognition, personal future goals) and intrinsic motivation (interest for the subject) already expressed during justice lessons were not sufficient to offset the importance of class identity dynamics and the deterioration of cost-benefit ratio⁷¹. Expectancy of success played in the same way as value: boys feared failure and girls felt empowered. And conversely for justice lessons. Student motivation, so important in learning process, depends on pedagogy and, in its reception, on personal factors.

The influence of group context

A receptiveness context depending on the class. As pointed out by Pascal Huguet, “a class [is] placed into a cultural group of which you have to devote yourself to understand and master influences on student performances and other behaviors” (Huguet 2011 : 183). Judicial institutions teaching receptiveness varies over class context and participatory atmosphere. The 2nd4 class was active; the 2nd5 class was more passive. 2nd4 students were more attentive and responsive during lessons: lots of questions and raised hands for answers, “bouncing” participation, laughing collective reaction. Conversely, the 2nd5 seemed to be sleeping with less interactions and no collective reaction; once, Veronica had even to say “come on, wake

⁶⁷ In their year-end assessment, they wrote respectively “I was too far from Ambroise” and “I was too far from Adrien.” (in their class seating).

⁶⁸ Adrien’s speech extract (subject: “Should we aim for stars?”): “Because, as the French singer Amel Bent said, “Aiming for the moon doesn’t afraid us” [*class laughs*]. [...] The star is also a cartoon character: Patrick, Bob the Sponge’s friend [*class laughs*].”.

Ambroise’s speech extract (subject: “Could we smoke the wooden floor [*same word in French as public prosecutor*]?”): “It simply needs to light it in order to smoke it [*class laughs*]. For that, you need a lighter. Since 32% of people smoke, it isn’t complicated to find a lighter [*class laughs*]. Er...smoking that one is more difficult, but impossible isn’t French. Er...smoking this floor, you first need smoking carpet because there’s no smoke without fire [*class laughs*] and if the wooden floor [*public prosecutor*] fills with smoke, you can also smoke it.”

⁶⁹ Ambroise spoke 50 seconds, Adrien 2 minutes searching for his words.

⁷⁰ The feeling value of the task presents four factors: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, identity dynamics and cost-benefit ratio.

⁷¹ In comparison with a spontaneous participation in class, the contest demanded too much time investment and would imply a renunciation for other activities.

up!”. The early hour of lesson could not explain this passivity because another teacher who taught them on afternoon, informed us of this great passivity. The second hypothesis was the presence of participation leaders in 2nd4 and their absence in 2nd5. Participation leaders are students in school or social difficulty with a strong class identity, who participate a lot and of whom numerous and motivated interventions led to reactions and interventions of other students. Participation leaders contribute to the creation of participation dynamics. For instance, the best participants of 2nd5 participated three times less than 2nd4 ones. Participation dynamics could be reinforced by personal difficulties – financial, social or juridical – of most of 2nd4 students conversely to 2nd5 students⁷² and which went into resonance with justice project.

A receptiveness context depending on events lived in one class. A particular event lived by a class could have an impact on participation. Between the justice lesson in February and the justice lesson in March⁷³, the participatory atmosphere of 2nd4 was strengthened: stronger collective reactions⁷⁴, real debate on death penalty and more attentive girls (less distracted or slumped over the table). A difference of participation leaders number cannot explain it because in March, Valère was absent and contributions of other participation leaders were reduced except Ambroise’s ones.

Table 4: Number of 2nd4 participation leaders’ contributions during judicial lessons

	Adrien	Valère	Ambroise	Jean	Lois	Total
16/02/16	34 contributions	16	13	9	6	78
8/03/16	21 contributions	Absent	21	6	4	52

The class is less full than usual in March because of six absentees. This variation of the number of students could positively influence receptivity. But the most important factor of influence could be their progress in the justice project: they attended court hearings and realized the direct applicability of their learning. An event which could have had a powerful and positive impact on participation. In parallel, for the usual quiet 2nd5, court hearings involved many discussions during the break of the field trip and in the bus.

A receptiveness context depending on the class group⁷⁵. The two half-groups presented a differentiated participation attitude: the first half-group was much more receptive and dynamic – in their speeches and in their collective reactions – than the second one. Their speeches were better according to students’ criteria (good speed of delivery and good size, non-read, thought, humour, exemplification). Most of them expressed happiness and fewer students blew to moan. In the first group, students listened their spoken classmates with more attention (quiet, watching them, taking notes) than in the second one (some did not watch their classmates during their speech). Applause after each speech and drum rolls waiting for results were more vivacious and longer in the first group. Contrary to the first group, students of the second one were more passive when finalists picked their subject and teachers explained the organization of final round. The number of group students could explain participation variations in another way than in whole class. If the group number is too limited (2nd-group case - because of absentees - on 12 May 2016 in comparison with the 1st group), it intimidates and negatively impacts group dynamics. This hypothesis is dismissed by the 19-May round (same group number but unchanged participation variations). The girl proportion of the group could influence participation: a high proportion, especially a majority, could

⁷² In 2nd5, most of students came from a private school and a well-off background while 2nd4 students came from a modest background and some lived alone.

⁷³ Two lessons with the same pedagogy.

⁷⁴ However, the proportion of students participating individually was the same for both lessons (56%).

⁷⁵ Class group is defined as a half-group formed of seventeen students in alphabetical order.

diminish participation (2nd-group case for both rounds). It could explain lower collective reactions but not the lower involvement in speeches of the second group since three girls from each group are half-finalists,

Table 5: Composition of half-groups in 2nd4

	12 May 2016 (1 st round)		19 May 2016 (2 nd round)	
	1 st group	2 nd group	1 st group	2 nd group
Boys	7	3	6	4
Girls	9	10	10	12
Absents	1	4	1 (Adrien)	1 (Loïs)
Total	16	13	16	16

Actually, the most influent factor of individual and collective participations seems to be the concentration of participation leader in a group. The first group counted three out of five participation leaders (Ambroise, Adrien and Jean) – of whom the two most participant –, whereas the second counted two out of five (Valère and Loïs) and both were not involved (absence or explicit attitude).

CONCLUSIONS:

A pedagogy both innovative and explicit, like the justice project, seems to have significant positive effects on collective and individual student participation in civic education. Receptiveness is increased greatly because of an unusual, participatory and concrete teacher-led method.

But “if one is to understand pedagogy in its most comprehensive form, one needs to be mindful of the complex and overlapping factors that appear to relate one’s pedagogy.” (Evans 2006 : 429). Indeed, there are many interactions between factors of learning environment (especially pedagogy) and the learner’s own factors (e.g. background and socialization, positioning regarding peer group, experiences in their school environment). These interactions strengthen or weaken positive effects of interactive pedagogy. Audiences and school context impact the student receptiveness in civic education.

Nevertheless, the teaching of civic education through an innovative project do not seem to be in keeping with general theories on accrued and invariable effects of social and academic positioning in class. According to them, this positioning could create the same advantages and the same handicaps for students each year (Bressoux 2016 : 148). Quite the reverse, we analysed that the teaching of civic education could create new advantages for students with social or academic difficulties and help them to defy their handicaps because their particular positioning reawakens a new interest of learning. Is civic education an exception to the rule?

In future research, interviewing students could enable a better understanding of their ethnic, cultural and social background and of their prior interest and knowledge on public institutions and politics, because all the variables influence student participation in innovative lessons. Broadening comparison with other classes of other high schools could be another way to explore our hypothesis and study school effect, particularly on speech contest.

Further research on innovative pedagogy in civic education could be essential for citizenship learning, for the reversal of some school trajectories and for teachers to closely fit their teaching to their audience and stimulate meaningful participation.

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