

EDUCATION TOWARDS LITERACY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE: BEYOND "BEING ONLINE"

EDUCAÇÃO PARA A LITERACIA E CIDADANIA DIGITAL DE JOVENS: MAIS DO QUE "ESTAR ON-LINE"

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ABSTRACT

The effects of the pandemic crises in education have revealed social inequalities in the youth field but have also provided an opportunity to rethink the demands of education in an increasingly digital world. Framed on youth policies and on the 3 areas of Digital Citizenship defined by the Council of Europe – being online, well-being online and rights online – the present study explores policies and practices in youth digital literacy and citizenship education, with the aim of answering the following questions: What are the strands of digital citizenship education? How do teachers and school leaders perceive practices regarding young people and media and information literacy? What are the main challenges of digitalisation regarding social justice for young people facing vulnerable situations? Data were collected by a questionnaire submitted in 2020 to 120 teachers and school leaders from Portugal, Bulgaria, and Turkey, complemented by documental analysis. The results allow identifying the main strands of digital citizenship in education and the challenges of digital citizenship education. Despite the tendency of policies and European projects towards greater emancipation and empowerment of young people, the teachers and school leaders described practices that have aspects of a more regulatory nature. The conclusions supported the proposal of a model based on a critical approach with the aim of sustaining more inclusive and emancipatory digital practices, which favour greater conditions of social justice.

Keywords: Digital literacy. Digital citizenship. Young people.

RESUMO

Os efeitos da crise pandémica na educação revelaram desigualdades sociais no campo da juventude, mas também proporcionaram uma oportunidade para repensar as exigências da educação em sociedades cada vez mais digitalizadas. Enquadrado nas políticas de juventude e nas 3 áreas de Cidadania Digital definidas pelo Conselho da Europa — estar on-line, bem-estar on-line e direitos on-line — o artigo dá conta de um estudo que teve como objetivo conhecer vertentes da educação para a cidadania digital, como estão a ser trabalhadas com jovens, que desafios enfrentam e como podem contribuir para a emancipação e para a justiça social. Neste sentido, o estudo foi organizado para responder às seguintes perguntas: Quais são as vertentes da educação para a cidadania digital? Quais as percepções de professores e líderes sobre práticas de literacia e de cidadania digital? Quais são os principais desafios da digitalização relativamente à justiça social para os jovens que enfrentam situações mais vulneráveis? Os dados foram recolhidos por um questionário submetido em 2020 a 120 professores e líderes escolares de Portugal, Bulgária e Turquia, complementado por dados de análise documental. Os resultados permitem saber que a educação para a cidadania digital tem seguido uma orientação mais regulatória, apesar das políticas e projetos europeus apontarem no sentido da emancipação dos jovens. Por outro lado, o estudo permitiu conceber um modelo que favoreça práticas digitais inclusivas e emancipatórias, promotoras de justiça social.

Palavras-chave: Literacia digital. Cidadania digital. Jovens.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education for active digital citizenship is at the core of a living global democracy (MITCHELL, 2016; ROSS, 2007, 2012). Being a digital citizen is not only a matter of participating and engaging in the local community where one lives but also a matter of engaging, connecting, and making a meaningful contribution to the global community where we all belong. Active, global, digital citizenship is a complex umbrella that democratic institutions need to tackle and dance with if democracy is to thrive (SOARES; LOPES, 2020).

Even though this networked scenario can favour the emergence of innovative educational practices, according to the Council of Europe (2019a) there is a lack of awareness of teachers regarding digital citizenship and the importance of this domain for the well-being of young people. Based on these assumptions, it was developed a study focusing on practices related to digital citizenship education, youth and media, and digital literacy, framed on youth policies. The research questions were as follows:

- What are the strands of digital citizenship education?
- How do teachers and school leaders perceive practices regarding young people's literacy and digital citizenship?
- What are the main challenges of digital literacy regarding social justice for young people facing vulnerable situations?

Concerning the article's structure, after establishing the background of youth policies, social justice, digital literacy, the concept of active digital citizenship education is presented. The methodology is described and followed by the presentation and discussion of the results, which allowed to conceive a model that favors inclusive and emancipatory practices.

2 ESTABLISHING A BACKGROUND FOCUSING ON YOUTH POLICIES, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Since 2005, with the Youth Pact within the Lisbon Strategy (EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 2000), there have been policies conveying discourses, commitments, and practices targeted at young people. In general, these policies aim to support their integration and enable them to be active and responsible members of society and agents of change.

According to the European Union and Council of Europe (2020), in general, youth policies have a range in approaches from regulation to emancipation, from prevention to intervention, from proactive to reactive, problem-oriented to opportunity focused, from paternalistic to open.

In European policies, a focus that has received increasing attention in recent years is digitalisation, related to the use of digital tools and opportunities, and also to the social phenomenon, paving the way for a new scenario of inequalities, caused by varying access to digital tools and instruments (EUROPEAN UNION; COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2020).

Regarding social inclusion, the political discourses up to 2005 focused mainly on civil society, valuing the conditions for young people entering the labour market, access to sustainable employment, and social protection. Lately, there has been a broader view of social inclusion. This orientation is in line with concepts of social justice that have been accompanying education policy discourses and that in encompassing issues of equity, opportunity, and justice (BALL, 2013), draw attention to the various ways in which oppression can occur and how it can act on people. For example, Dubet (2014) warned that equity, like equality, is a fiction but is necessary because, although it is difficult to fully materialise, it is not possible to educate without believing in it. Other authors (CONNELL, 2012; CRAHAY, 2000; LEITE; SAMPAIO, 2020; PRIESTLEY; BIESTA; ROBINSON, 2015; SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2017) have established relationships between the possibility of school education contributing to the realisation of principles of social justice, considering this necessary to ensure that all students have access to socially valid knowledge – what Young (2008, 2016) calls powerful knowledge – and conditions that favour the development of skills for critical thinking, acting and intervening in the community.

Along the same line of reasoning, the actual European Union Youth Strategy 2019 –2027 (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2018, pp. 4546/2–4546/3) aims to

- Enable young people to be architects of their own lives, support their personal development and growth to autonomy, build their resilience, and equip them with life skills to cope with a changing world;
- Encourage and equip young people with the necessary resources to become active citizens and agents of solidarity and positive change, inspired by EU values and European identity;
- Improve policy decisions concerning their impact on young people across all sectors, notably employment, education, health, and social inclusion of young people.

This strategy represents a cross-sectoral approach that encourages youth agency, as it recognises young people as decision-makers (PANTIĆ, 2015; PRIESTLEY; BIESTA; ROBINON, 2015). It is on this understanding that the European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027 encompasses three core areas: engage, connect, and empower: engage by encouraging inclusive democratic participation of all young people; connect by increasing the opportunities of experience exchanges, cooperation, cultural and civic

action in a European context; and empower by giving young people the necessary resources, tools, and an environment for them to take charge of their own lives.

2.1 DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Citizenship refers to the “set of relationships between rights, duties, participation in the civic community and identity, regarded as a social contract between the individual” (ARENDESE; SMITH, 2018, p. 46). As with any other concept, the historical, social, political, and theoretical context in which the concept is used may cause it to adopt different tones; those from a more regulatory to a more emancipatory view will be further explored. Magalhães and Stoer (2005) distinguished two forms of citizenship based on their regulatory vs emancipatory strand. Attributed citizenship, as a national belonging status, is based on concepts of equality and cultural uniformity and is situated on a regulatory strand. This strand is close to more passive and traditional views of citizenship that focus on the civil, social, political, and economic rights and duties of a “good citizen”.

Considering the three pillars that sustain the concept of citizenship — namely rights, participation, and community (SOARES; LOPES, 2020) — the pillar of rights addresses the more regulatory dimensions of citizenship, ensuring that citizens have the right and means to be part of social, economic, cultural, and political life. However, having the right and resources to participate does not mean active participation per se. Therefore, participation is another pillar of the citizenship concept, addressing questions related to identity and individual engagement in democratic life. This pillar addresses more internal dimensions of citizenship, including knowledge, values, attitudes, and resources, such as awareness, empathy, and compassion. Citizenship is not an individual process but a relational one. Citizenship happens in the relational civic space where differences are met, reflected, and dialogued. Community, the third pillar of the citizenship concept of Soares and Lopes (2020), addresses the relational and transformative role of organised active citizens living and acting in a society characterised by constant and rapid changes.

According to Macedo and Araújo (2014, p. 346), within a “feminist methodological-epistemological tradition” and based on Bernstein’s (1996) concept of democratic rights of inclusion, participation, and enhancement, educational citizenship implies the dimensions of rights and knowledge. The first, educational citizenship of rights, encompasses young people’s right to be heard and recognised, as well as their right to reflection and action in their life contexts. The second, educational citizenship of knowledge, involves not only the right to knowledge but also participation in its construction and definition. Only where young people’s voices are recognised and they can participate in decision-making processes can their rights as citizens be realised. Macedo and Araújo (2014) also highlighted that equality of condition,

i.e. the “equal enabling and empowerment of individuals” (LYNCH; BAKER, 2005, p. 132), is a prerequisite for the accomplishment of young people’s educational citizenship since it entails five key dimensions that interact to facilitate or reduce inequalities: i. the redistribution of resources; ii. cultural respect and recognition; iii. the right to love, care, and solidarity; iv. the reduction of power inequalities; and v. the right to work and learn (LYNCH; BAKER, 2005).

In the 21st century and within the framework of digital transition policies, the concept of citizenship has been complemented by that of digital citizenship. The digital has brought new resources for active citizenship as well as new challenges and reflections, changing citizens’ civic and political practices through online contexts.

The relevant role of active digital citizenship education is a concern for different policymakers at the local and global levels. Different models and frameworks (UNESCO, 2015) and recommendations (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2019a) have been developed to support digital citizenship practice.

The Model for Digital Citizenship (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2019b) provides a framework for active citizenship education, useful for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers to have a clear purpose and integral approach to this issue. It includes 3 conceptual clusters “being online”, “well-being online” and “rights online”, where the 10 digital domains that digital citizenship education should address are located (Chart 1).

Chart 1 - Ten digital citizenship domains

Being Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and Inclusion Learning and Creativity Media and Info Literacy
Well-being Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics and Empathy Health and Well-being E-presence and communication
Rights Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Participation Rights and Responsibilities Privacy and Security Consumer Awareness

Source: Adapted from Digital Citizenship Handbook, Council of Europe (2019b)

Despite the development of valuable policies and frameworks to support the design of citizenship education practices, this is an ongoing and never-ending task, and there is still a lot to be done to promote citizenship. As asserted by Ribeiro *et al.* (2012, p. 45) “although Citizenship Education has become a fashionable educational policy across the EU, it appears that more has to be done, in and out of schools,

to guarantee that it effectively promotes active and critical citizens". Those actions needed are in line with the aforementioned European Youth Strategy

2.2 BEYOND ACCESS: RADICAL DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

The globalised world is more ambitious, impactful, experimental, and changeable. Perhaps for this very reason, it becomes more appealing to younger people, who, in their eagerness to be innovative regarding the possibilities of active citizenship, do not see themselves participating in elections or top-down guidelines for action (RIBEIRO *et al.*, 2012).

The digital world now offers them, on a global scale, alternative, deeper, and more radical forms, of citizenship oriented towards social justice—citizenship that pushes for a critical evaluation of social, political, and economic structures. Emejulu and McGregor (2019) referred to an alternative radical digital citizenship in which critical social relations with technology are made visible and emancipatory technological practices for social justice are developed. This emancipatory character distances itself from an exercise in digital citizenship that is too focused on digital skills, ethical issues, privacy, and security, or the rights and responsibilities inherent in the virtual world, as pointed out in the literature (BAŞARMAK *et al.*, 2019; GAZI, 2016; KIM; CHOI, 2018; PEDERSEN; NØRGAARD; KÖPPE, 2018).

Beyond the instrumental use of or access to digital tools that amplify the same forms of citizenship in line with the mainstream definitions of digital citizenship, it is important to reflect on what they make possible: a vast field of exploration for the full exercise of active citizenship and for understanding the capacity of people (necessarily including the youth) as agents of change (BARROS; MONTEIRO; LEITE, 2022). Through the use of digital technologies and networks, change includes actions that counter the perversions and inequalities of neoliberalism and digital capitalism, promoting movements in tune with social justice and inclusion. In sum, that implies reshaping citizenship and power balance towards social issues.

Emancipated citizen movements work with and through networks to architect and organise counter-power actions. These actions target pro-democracy interests and values, placing on the table issues to think about, to raise awareness about, and to advocate for others (if necessary), whether they be topics focused on social justice and quality education, environmental and planetary sustainability issues, or women's rights. The emancipatory nature of radical digital citizenship is both an individual and a collective process of critical thinking and action towards humanity and, as such, is a process of becoming (BISHOP; BITTNER, 2018; EMEJULU; MCGREGOR, 2019), a process of empowerment, of recognising the voice, and participating critically as a citizen (HEATH, 2018).

Digital activism (political identity and youth activism through digital pathways) can be seen as a meaningful way for young people to express their political identities and impact their world (MITCHELL, 2016). Digital media, the flexibility of thought and action, as well as the characteristics of the phase of psychosocial development that characterizes youth and youth culture provide fertile ground for the development of radical digital citizenship in the context of a systemic change.

3 METHODS

The study has a qualitative and interpretive orientation, also including quantitative data. In this multiparadigmatic and multimethod approach, "no specific method or practice can be privileged over another" (DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2018, p. 46). From our standpoint, which aims for social justice in education, "all research is interpretive" in a sense that it is "guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (p. 56), provided that we are dedicated to research that is "conducted rigorously" and contributes to "robustly useful knowledge" (ATKINSON; DELAMONT, 2006, p. 749).

Data were collected in two different phases: the first phase consisted of empirical data from questionnaires submitted to teachers and school leaders, the second phase addressed a policies and practices analysis (LONG-SUTEHALL; SQUE; ADDINGTON-HALL, 2011; RUGGIANO; PERRY, 2019) on "Active citizenship skills and active digital citizenship skills in a digital age" (SOARES; LOPES, 2020) focusing on the "being online" cluster.

In the first phase, data for the study were collected through two online questionnaires, the first to managers, school principals, and policymakers and the second to teachers, available from May to June 2020.

In the first questionnaire, the following main dimensions were addressed: participation in previous projects involving young people and media and information literacy; recommendations to address digital literacy for young people aged between 12 and 18, European projects/initiatives that address media literacy issues with young people in situations of social vulnerability, national/governmental conditions to promote digital literacy and social media in school that attend to the specificities of students in vulnerable situations, national/governmental conditions to promote media and information literacy in school, national political recommendations/strategies to increase awareness about the risks and opportunities of the internet and social media for young people, and political recommendations/strategies to increase awareness about the risks and opportunities of the internet and social media in young people.

Regarding the second questionnaire, teachers were asked about activities developed with students to promote digital literacy, the latter's receptivity to activities based on digital resources, the existence of a media and information literacy strategy in their school along with its strengths and weaknesses, online risks and opportunities for students. It was also asked about the main challenges that vulnerable young people face on the internet, and the role of media/digital literacy to promote social equity.

The respondents from the first questionnaire (N = 34) were from school leaders Portugal, Bulgaria, Norway, and Turkey, and 61.8% were men. The age group was mainly more than 50 years old (70.6%) and between 41 and 50 years old (8.7%). They had been in their current jobs/positions between 6 to 15 years (47.1%).

The respondents from the second questionnaire (N = 86) were also from Portugal, Bulgaria, Norway, and Turkey, and 66.3% were women. The age group was mainly more than 50 years old (51.2%) and between 41 and 50 years old (32.6%). The predominant teaching subject areas were languages and literature (34.6%) and mathematics and natural sciences (17.3%). Their teaching experience was mainly between 16 and 30 years (58.3%), and between 6 and 15 years (15.5%). Data from the questionnaires' open answers were analysed through content analysis, using NVivo 1.6. software.

Regarding the second phase, focusing on the challenges of the digital age, a desk research was carried out in 2020 within the European Education Policy Network on Teachers and School Leaders (EPPN) to explore the work that has been developed in this field in terms of policies, practices, and research developed from 2000 to 2020, in Europe and around the world. The desk research intended to identify inspirational policy practices that may support teachers and school leaders in the digital age.

The desk research began with a literature review on the topic and with an internal survey sent to members of a professional network (29 partners from 18 countries). The survey asked teachers and school leaders about inspiring practices in policy implementation or policy advice, and relevant EU-funded projects. This survey resulted in 75 submissions from 19 partners, 27 of which referred to the theme of active digital citizenship education.

After removing duplicates, 23 entries related to the topic "Active citizenship skills and active digital citizenship skills in teaching and learning in the digital age" were analysed: 3 policy measures; 5 relevant EU-funded projects; 11 inspiring practices from a practitioner's or parent's perspective; and 4 recent education research projects. All the information in the database, as well as the information available on the respective websites and other relevant documents associated with each entry, were read and analysed regarding the thematic focus (BRAUN; CLARKE, 2006; NOWELL; NORRIS; WHITE; MOULES, 2017) framed by the Model for Digital Citizenship, included in the Digital Citizenship Handbook from the Council of Europe (2019b).

Practices from the three clusters “being online”, “well-being online” and “rights online” were identified and described (SOARES; LOPES, 2020). This process resulted in a description of selected examples in each cluster and the identification of trends in policy practice in each of the clusters. In the present article, and according to the mentioned objective, it was only considered the examples from the “being online” cluster.

4 FINDINGS

The presentation of the findings is structured according to the research questions, involving data from both study phases.

4.1 THE STRANDS OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

To be an active digital citizen, there is the need for resources, knowledge, and skills to access, engage, and exist in online settings. The desk research allowed for identifying some projects that exemplify the being online cluster and domains, as summarised in Chart 2.

Chart 2 – Projects framed on the being online area’s domains

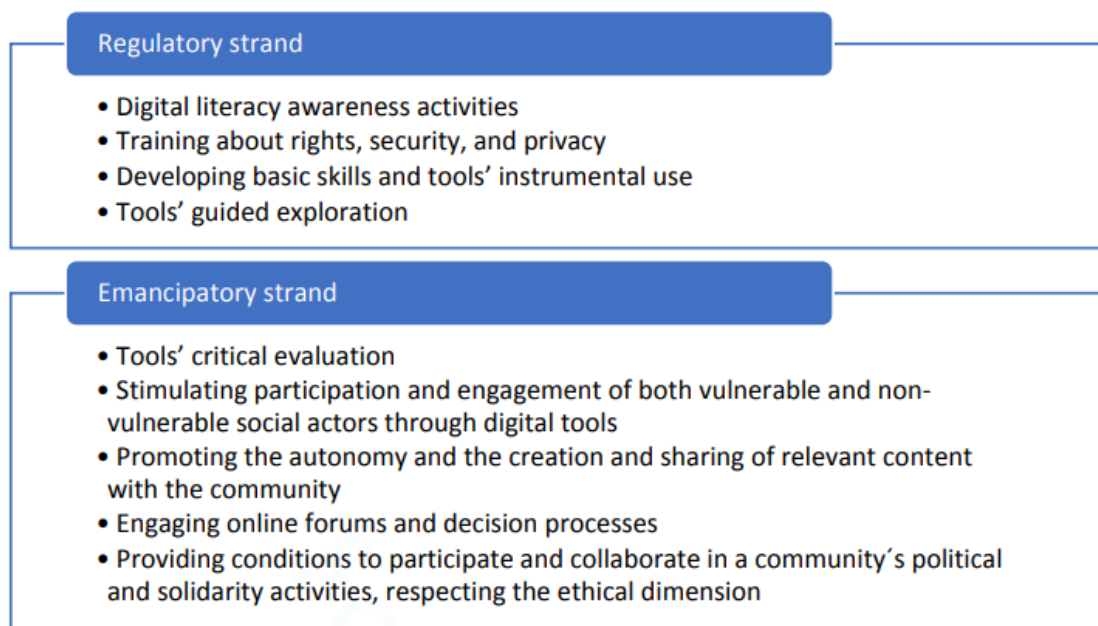
Project	Domains
The Creative Communities for Digital Inclusion (CCDI)	1. Access and Inclusion 2. Learning and Creativity 3. Media and Information Literacy
European Literacy and Citizenship Education	3. Media and Information Literacy
Motivate Youth	1. Access and Inclusion 2. Learning and Creativity
Supertabi	2. Learning and Creativity
User Manual for Digital Literacy (MILD)	1. Access and Inclusion 2. Learning and Creativity 3. Media and Information Literacy
Digital Leaders	3. Media and Information Literacy
Empathy Package	2. Learning and Creativity
UN SGD Action Campaign	2. Learning and Creativity
Active Digital Citizenship in Reception Education	3. Media and information literacy
EU CONVINCENCE	3. Media and information literacy

Source: Authors

It was possible to infer by the analysis of the projects presented in Chart 2 that all of the projects encompass the being online cluster, as they focus mostly on learning and creativity and media and information literacy. Therefore, the selected projects are aligned with recent youth policies, especially with the European Youth Strategy, since the majority “covers the development of personal and professional competencies as citizens prepare for the challenges of technology-rich societies with confidence and in innovative ways” (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2018, p. 13).

Regarding the digital citizenship strands already referred to, the project’s analysis also allowed the identification of activities related to a the regulatory and the emancipatory strand (SANTOS, 2000), as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Classification of project activities with respect to regulatory or emancipatory strand



Source: Authors

Considering that the ERASMUS+ supports priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, the Digital Education Action Plan, and the European Skills Agenda, as well as the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, it is to be expected that the developed activities will fit the most in the emancipatory strand, in line with the activities systematised in Figure 2.

To understand whether digital citizenship education is performed in an emancipatory way, it is necessary to know the practices and perceptions of teachers and school leaders.

4.2 TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON POLICIES AND PRACTICES REGARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AND DIGITAL LITERACY

The data retrieved from the managers, school principals, and policymakers' questionnaires showed that 58.8% were aware of political recommendations/strategies to increase awareness about the risks and opportunities of the internet and social media for young people, and a similar percentage (47.1%) agreed that digital literacy was nationally addressed to young people aged between 12 and 18. Nevertheless, 70.6% agreed that their institution had not participated in previous projects involving young people and digital literacy.

Furthermore, the data showed accentuated inequality when it was linked to European projects and initiatives or national conditions to promote digital literacy in students from vulnerable backgrounds. The majority of the leaders, school principals, and policymakers (79.4%) mentioned that they were not familiar with European projects and initiatives addressing media and information literacy issues with young people in situations of social vulnerability, and 41.2% stated that their country did not have national/governmental conditions to promote digital literacy and social media in schools that attend to specificities of students in vulnerable situations.

Concerning teachers' perspectives on digital citizenship education, data were divided into four major dimensions:

- media and digital literacy in schools;
- ways of improving media and digital literacy in schools;
- teachers' opinions about the role of media and information literacy to promote equity;
- main challenges related to working with young people facing vulnerable situations.

Regarding teachers' perspectives on media and digital literacy in schools, 93% of teachers mentioned developing activities to promote students' digital literacy. However, they mainly mentioned digital resources (with few references to activities and methodologies), the majority of which were digital platforms such as Moodle, Khan Academy, Virtual School, Google Classroom, Edmodo or "Ainda estou a Aprender" (I'm Still Learning). The digital tools used were mainly to support face-to-face or online classroom (Quizzes, Kahoot, or websites/tutorials), videoconferences (Zoom, Skype, Google Meet and so on) and e-mail.

Concerning the ways to improve media and information literacy in schools, 46% of teachers stated that their school did not have a strategy to promote digital literacy among young people. The main weaknesses of the strategy that were mentioned were related to material resources (lack of equipment, outdated computers, lack of internet access both at school and at home), together with human resources issues, namely teachers and parents who lacked digital skills. As one teacher stated:

The school is asked to promote pedagogical differentiation because it is not enough for everyone to go to school; it is necessary to stimulate learning situations, key competencies so that everyone can develop in this learning community that is the school. However, at an organisational level, we are held hostage by classes of 28 students, classes of 50 minutes, some subjects more valued than others...and the degree of family and even economic support sometimes contributes little or nothing to the school's efforts towards equity. (Teacher from Portugal)

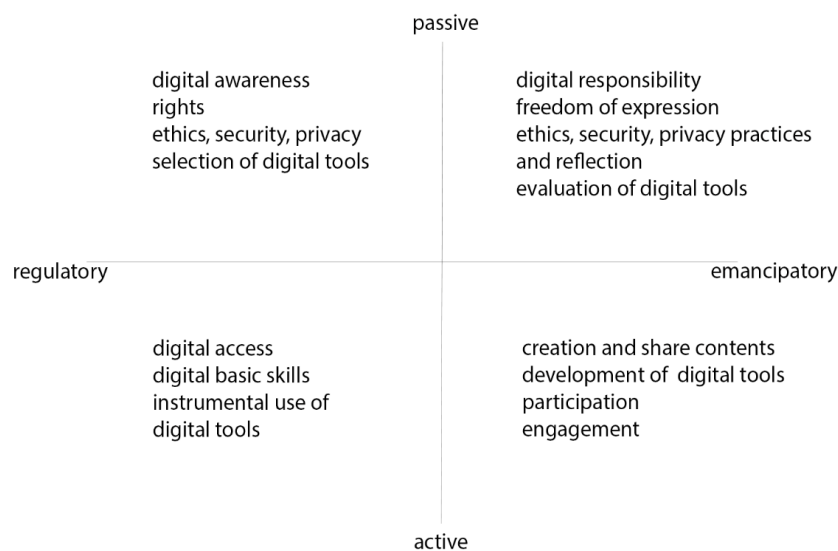
Regarding teachers' opinions about the role of media and information literacy to promote equity, they agreed that media can enable more democratic (widespread and free) access to information and knowledge, given that access to digital resources at school is an asset, by promoting active learning as well as improving opportunities for students who do not have access at home.

In sum, the reported practices and opinions regarding digital literacy were essentially related to how to search online for reliable information or to distinguish reliable sources, as well as discussions to provide information to prevent online risks. Regarding this dimension, teachers' and leaders' main concerns were related to a regulatory strand. (MONTEIRO; MOURAZ; DOTTA, 2020)

4.3 CHALLENGES OF DIGITALISATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FACING SOCIALLY VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

The findings supported the proposal of an interpretative model founded on an intersectional and critical approach aiming to underpin inclusive and emancipatory practices for young people (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Digital citizenship strands



Source: authors

As can be seen in Figure 2, both regulatory and emancipatory strands of digital citizenship have an active and a more passive pole. Performing digital tools is no longer enough for the full exercise of active citizenship (GLEASON; VON GILLERN, 2018). However, little attention has been paid to the confluence between digital technologies, youth political identity, and such relevant and current issues as those that revolve around social justice (MITCHELL, 2016).

The selected projects and the teachers' and school leaders' opinions indicated a diversity of practices and digital tools. Beyond the instrumental use of or access to digital tools that amplify the same forms of citizenship in line with the mainstream definitions, it is important to reflect if they make possible a full exercise of active citizenship and understanding the capacity of people as agents of change (PRIESTLEY; BIESTA; ROBINSON, 2015). According to Ghosn-Chelala (2019, p. 43) "sustainable learning for digital citizenship is learning that lasts in practice, is relevant to place-based settings, is supported by the wider environment and is inclusive in terms of access".

For a more inclusive approach, it could be interesting to work with young people through digital activities framed in the passive and active pole of the regulatory strand and at the same time to engage them in critical social relations with technology and emancipatory technological practices for social justice. Embracing digital resources and environments in a balanced and purposeful way may be a means to engage more vulnerable groups in school learning as well as to enhance pedagogical practices that support "instruction, exploration, and inquiry, increase student participation and widen access" (KELLY, 2020, p. 4).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The appeal to engage, connect, and empower young people in the 21st century requires education/training, equal conditions of access, and critical and creative use of digital technologies for political and economic engagement in society (WRIGHT, 2008). The study presented in this article allowed knowing the strands for digital citizenship education, how digital literacy is being developed, and the challenges faced in the pathway to the emancipation of young people, that enables social justice.

It was also possible to know that there is a contradiction between teachers' practices and the youth policies concerning digital citizenship. Despite the tendency of youth policies and projects towards greater emancipation and empowerment, the study revealed that the regulatory practices are still the more usual at schools. The risk of standing mainly in a regulatory strand is to favour an institutionalised citizenship education based on formal democracy and digital skills, which overemphasises respect for rules, values,

and responsibilities, with a lack of critical questioning and social justice (RIBEIRO *et al.*, 2012). To surf the gap between these regulatory and emancipatory poles is important, in an educational system, where material resources and human encouragement are in place for the development of collaborative school culture and organisation. In this sense, the model presented in Figure 2 can contribute to guiding digital practices where young people assume an active role that promotes emancipation and social justice.

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