

# Teaching European Values at Moudros Junior High School "Argyrios Moschidis": Pedagogical Practice, Extroversion and Cooperation

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## ► ABSTRACT

Education in European values plays a crucial role in shaping active, responsible, and democratically minded citizens who can participate meaningfully in con-temporary societies. In this context, Moudros Junior High School "Argyrios Moschidis" serves as a model institution, integrating European and global citizenship education into its curriculum and school culture. As a recognized eTwinning School and a member of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), the school consistently implements a wide range of initiatives designed to foster students' awareness of fundamental rights, democratic principles, cultural diversity, and social responsibility. Through an outward-looking educational strategy, the school promotes dynamic interactions with both local and international communities. Students are encouraged to participate in collaborative projects with peers from other countries, engage in cultural exchange programs, and develop critical thinking and intercultural competencies through experiential learning activities. At the same time, the integration of digital tools and online collaboration platforms enhances students' digital literacy, preparing them for active participation in a globalized, technology-driven world. This article presents and analyzes the educational approach of Moudros Junior High School, highlighting how European values education is interwoven with digital competencies and active citizenship. It discusses the school's practices, the pedagogical methodologies adopted, and the impact of these initiatives on students' personal and social development. The case study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on education for democratic citizenship and to offer practical insights for educators and policymakers interested in cultivating European and global identity within the school environment.

**Key-words:** European Values, Citizenship Education, eTwinning, UNESCO ASPnet, Extroverted School, Active Citizenship, Digital Literacy, Educational Innovation.

## ► INTRODUCTION

The European Union is founded upon a set of shared values that form the core of European identity and social cohesion. Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights, including the

rights of minorities—are explicitly enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. These principles are not merely institutional or legal constructs; they are essential for peaceful coexistence, social solidarity, and active participation in democratic life.

Education plays a pivotal role in nurturing and transmitting these values to younger generations. In today's educational landscape, it is no longer sufficient to focus solely on knowledge acquisition. Schools are called to cultivate skills, attitudes, and behaviors that empower students to become active, responsible, and critically thinking citizens, capable of engaging constructively with the complexities of a globalized world. Citizenship education and human rights education are thus fundamental components of a con-temporary pedagogical approach.

Moudros Junior High School "Argyrios Moschidis," located on the island of Lemnos in Greece, represents a notable example of a school that incorporates European and global values into its daily educational practice. As a certified eTwinning School and a member of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), the school has developed an outward-looking educational strategy that blends local cultural heritage education with the promotion of European and global citizenship. Through participation in international collaborative projects, cultural and artistic initiatives, experiential learning activities, and the use of innovative pedagogical methods, the school creates a learning environment in which students are encouraged to think critically, collaborate with others, and take responsible action both locally and globally.

This paper presents and analyzes the educational model of Moudros Junior High School, focusing on how European values education is seamlessly integrated with the development of digital literacy and the fostering of active citizenship. The aim is to highlight a good practice example that can inspire educators and policymakers at both national and European levels.

## ► MATERIALS AND METHODS

Moudros Junior High School participates in European and international networks, engaging in various educational actions:

- eTwinning Projects.
- Collaborative online projects with European partner schools focusing on human rights, diversity, cultural heritage, and sustainability (<https://www.etwinning.net>).
- Erasmus+ Mobilities.
- Exchange programs and training fostering intercultural awareness and European identity (<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu>).
- UNESCO ASPnet Initiatives.
- Activities promoting peace, non-violence, human rights, and global citizenship (<https://aspnet.unesco.org>).
- Community Outreach and Volunteering.
- Collaborations with local institutions for environmental actions, cultural events, and social solidarity programs.

Moudros Junior High School has developed a dynamic and multifaceted educational framework that promotes European values through a variety of actions and initiatives. By combining local cultural education with European and global citizenship

projects, the school ensures that students not only understand their cultural roots but also cultivate a sense of belonging to a broader European and international community.

A key component of this strategy is active participation in eTwinning projects (photo 1), which offer students the opportunity to collaborate with peers from other European countries through online platforms. These projects foster intercultural dialogue, the development of digital literacy, and teamwork skills. For example, the school has implemented projects focused on democracy in everyday life, sustainability and climate action, and cultural diversity, enabling students to discuss issues of common concern with students from other European schools. Through these collaborations, students explore topics such as the European Green Deal, digital citizenship, and the role of young people in democratic societies.



*Photo 1. Actions=implementation of the eTwinning project*

As a UNESCO Associated School (ASPnet), Moudros Junior High School also participates in initiatives related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Students engage in projects that raise awareness of global challenges such as poverty, in-equality, and environmental degradation. Activities include organizing thematic days on human rights and cultural diversity, developing school-wide recycling campaigns, and participating in simulation exercises of democratic processes, such as mock elections or youth parliaments. These initiatives aim to connect theoretical knowledge with real-life action, encouraging students to take an active role in their communities (Photo 2).



*Photo 2. Introduction-The significance of Geoparks-UNESCO ASPnet in collaboration with the Museum of Natural history at Lesvos*

The school also integrates experiential learning approaches, such as visits to local cultural sites, partnerships with local authorities and NGOs, and participation in community service projects. For instance, students have collaborated with local museums and cultural associations to document the intangible cultural heritage of Lemnos, linking local identity with European narratives about diversity and cultural preservation.

In addition, Moudros Junior High School emphasizes the development of digital citizenship as part of its educational model. Using collaborative digital platforms, students learn about cybersecurity, responsible online behavior, media literacy, and the ethical use of technology. These skills are crucial for empowering young people to participate responsibly in the digital public sphere, aligning with the European Union's objectives for digital competence and inclusion (Eurydice Network-photo 3).



*Photo 3. Participation in the online students' debate: We explore-We learn-We discuss within the Eurydice Network*

Overall, the school's actions form an integrated educational approach that combines value-based learning, international collaboration, and active citizenship education. By doing so, Moudros Junior High School provides its students with the tools and experiences necessary to become informed, empathetic, and engaged in European citizens.

## ► RESULTS

The implementation of this comprehensive educational model at Moudros Junior High School has led to a series of significant outcomes, both at the individual and the collective level. The school's initiatives have contributed to the development of students' cognitive, social, and emotional skills, while simultaneously fostering a school culture that prioritizes democratic participation, respect for diversity, and digital responsibility.

### **Enhanced Intercultural Competence and European Identity**

Through participation in eTwinning projects and cross-cultural collaborations, students have expanded their understanding of European cultures, traditions, and social realities. They have developed greater empathy towards people from different backgrounds and have gained practical experience in intercultural communication.

Students report feeling more connected to the concept of European citizenship, perceiving themselves not only as members of their local community but also as part of a broader European family. This shift in identity is crucial for cultivating openness, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity.

### **Development of Democratic and Social Skills**

Active involvement in initiatives such as school-based simulations of democratic processes (e.g., mock elections, student councils, debates) has significantly improved students' democratic engagement and understanding of civic responsibilities. Students have learned how to express their opinions constructively, listen to others, participate in decision-making processes, and collaborate effectively in group settings. These activities have contributed to the creation of an inclusive school environment where students feel that their voice matters.

### **Strengthening of Digital Literacy and Responsible Online Behavior**

The integration of digital tools in the educational process has led to the systematic enhancement of students' digital skills. Students have learned how to safely navigate digital environments, assess the credibility of online information, and collaborate in virtual teams. Through their participation in online collaborative projects, they have become more aware of the ethical dimensions of technology use, such as data privacy, respectful online communication, and combating online misinformation. This aligns with the European Union's Digital Education Action Plan, which highlights the importance of digital competence for active citizenship.

### **Increased Environmental and Social Awareness**

By participating in projects linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, students have developed a heightened sense of environmental and social responsibility. School-wide initiatives such as recycling programs, energy-saving campaigns, and awareness events on social justice issues have empowered students to take concrete actions for the benefit of their community. These activities have reinforced the idea that small local actions contribute to larger global changes.

### **Positive Impact on the School Community and Local Society**

The school's extroverted approach has also strengthened ties with the local community of Lemnos. Collaborations with local cultural organizations, museums, and NGOs have created a bridge between the school and the broader social context. Parents and local stakeholders report increased engagement in school activities, contributing to a culture of shared responsibility and social cohesion.

### **Personal Growth and Emotional Development**

Beyond knowledge and skills, students have demonstrated growth in areas such as self-confidence, empathy, and resilience. Working in diverse teams and taking part

in real-world projects have helped students overcome stereotypes, develop emotional intelligence, and build a mindset of active participation rather than passive observation.

## ► DISCUSSION

Embedding European values in school life requires active methodologies, extroversion, and digital innovation. Moudros Junior High School's model demonstrates how peripheral schools can become hubs of global education, by aligning curriculum activities with real-life community involvement and European citizenship education.

## ► CONCLUSIONS

The case of Moudros Junior High School demonstrates that the promotion of European values, when combined with innovative pedagogical methods and international collaborations, can lead to substantial educational and social benefits. The school's systematic engagement in projects related to democracy, human rights, cultural heritage, and environmental sustainability has created a learning environment that transcends the traditional classroom model.

One of the key conclusions is that value-based education must be experiential and participatory to be truly effective. Students learn democratic principles not only by studying them theoretically but by practicing them in real-life contexts—through teamwork, discussions, decision-making, and community involvement. This process nurtures critical thinking, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility, equipping students to become active citizens in both local and global communities.

Another important outcome is the integration of digital literacy as a fundamental component of modern citizenship. In the digital era, students must be prepared not only to use technology but to use it ethically and responsibly. By participating in eTwinning projects and other online collaborations, students at Moudros Junior High School have developed essential skills for navigating the digital public sphere—skills that are directly linked to democratic participation, media literacy, and combating misinformation.

Furthermore, the school's efforts illustrate that local cultural heritage can serve as a powerful gateway to global awareness. By connecting the history, traditions, and cultural identity of Lemnos with broader European and global narratives, students can see the relevance of their local context within the larger framework of shared human values. This approach helps bridge the gap between the local and the global, fostering a balanced and inclusive sense of identity.

The collaboration between the school, local community stakeholders, and international partners has also shown that education is most impactful when it is community-centered and globally connected. The school does not function in isolation but acts as an active hub that connects students, parents, educators, and local institutions in a common educational vision.

In conclusion, Moudros Junior High School presents a model of good practice for schools aiming to foster active, democratic, and responsible European citizenship. Its educational strategy, which combines European value education with digital literacy, intercultural dialogue, and environmental awareness, can serve as an example for other schools in Greece and across Europe. Moving forward, the challenge is to

maintain and expand such initiatives, ensuring that more students—regardless of geographic or socio-economic background—could participate in transformative learning experiences that prepare them for the demands and responsibilities of 21st-century citizenship.

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