

# **Interpersonal Citizenship Skills of Primary School Students: The Role of Class Composition**

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## **Keywords**

*interpersonal citizenship skills; class composition; primary education; multilevel; educational effectiveness*

## **Abstract**

This study aims to identify how class composition characteristics are related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students by considering some important student characteristics. To gather information about the student and class characteristics, questionnaires were administered to 1,013 sixth grade primary school students in 55 classes in Flanders, Belgium. The results of the two-level regression analysis indicate that students' interpersonal citizenship skills are mainly explained by characteristics at the student level (gender, home language, and parents' country of birth). At the class level, only ethnic diversity is related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students, favouring more ethnic diversity in the class.

## **German Synopsis**

Ziel dieses Beitrages ist es, durch eine Betrachtung wichtiger Schülermerkmale herauszufinden, wie Eigenschaften der Klassenzusammensetzung mit den zwischenmenschlichen bürgerschaftlichen Kompetenzen der Schüler zusammenhängen. Eine Umfrage wurde mit 1 013 Grundschüler in 55 sechsten Klassen in Flandern in Belgien durchgeführt, um Informationen auf Schüler- und Klassenebenen zusammenzustellen. Die Ergebnisse einer zweistufigen Regressionsanalyse deuten darauf hin, dass sich die zwischenmenschlichen bürgerschaftlichen Kompetenzen der Schüler hauptsächlich durch Eigenschaften auf Schülerebene (Geschlecht, Muttersprache, und Geburtsland der Eltern) erklären lassen können. Auf Klassenebene beeinflusst lediglich die ethnische Vielfalt die bürgerschaftlichen Kompetenzen der Schüler, wobei höhere ethnische Vielfalt von Vorteil ist.

## 1. Introduction

During the past few decades, society has been challenged by sociopolitical and cultural changes, such as globalisation, neoliberalism, increasing diversity and growing multiculturalism (Dusi, Steinbach, & Messetti, 2012; Torney-Purta, 2002). These changes are associated with a gradual decrease of shared values and a strong individualisation. In the current fragmented society, many subcultures with different norms and values coexist (Geijsel, Ledoux, Reumerman, & ten Dam, 2012), which causes concerns about divisions among citizens and a reduced social cohesion (Jansen, Chioncel, & Dekkers, 2006).

In order to cope with these changes, people need a wide range of citizenship competences. This brings a renewed interest in citizenship, and particularly in the citizenship competences of young people (Lawy & Biesta, 2006). However, changes in society challenge the traditional concepts of citizenship. Traditionally, citizenship has been mainly considered from a political perspective. In this perspective, knowledge about voting, political participation, and democratic attitudes are the competences to be pursued (Campbell, 2007; Kioussis & McDevitt, 2008). However, the current diverse, individualised society requires a more social concept of citizenship to foster social cohesion (Geijsel et al., 2012). From this social perspective, citizenship is defined from the context of the civil society which emphasises relationships between citizens, the coexistence of different individuals, and the exchange of values and cultural meanings (Oser & Veugelers, 2008).

In accordance with this shift from political to social citizenship and the fact that the social domain is underexposed in empirical research (Geijsel et al., 2012), this study explores the social perspective to define citizenship competences. More specifically, citizenship competences are defined as the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and reflection needed by young people in a democratic and multicultural society to adequately fulfil social tasks that are part of their daily lives (ten Dam & Volman, 2007). In this study, the focus is in particular on the citizenship skills that are important to communicate with others, to embrace diversity, and to handle conflicts, because of their importance in fostering social cohesion.

Schools play a key role in the development of the citizenship skills of students (Dusi et al., 2012; Hoskins, Janmaat, & Villalbla, 2012; Leenders, Veugelers, & De Kat, 2008). Although research indicates that the citizenship skills of students are partially explained by characteristics at the class and school level (Isac, Maslowski, & van der Werf, 2011), most studies so far have mainly focused on students' background characteristics such as gender,

ethnic background, age... (e.g. Cleaver, Ireland, Kerr, & Lopes, 2005; Torney-Purta, 2002). Consequently, it is still unclear which specific school and class characteristics are related to differences in students' citizenship skills (Hoskins et al., 2012; ten Dam, Dijkstra, Geijsel, Ledoux, & van der Veen, 2010).

In educational effectiveness research, composition characteristics are treated as important variables for explaining the differences in both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of students (Denessen, Driessen, & Bakker, 2010; Driessen, 2007). With regard to the development of citizenship skills, school and class composition are also expected to have an influence. After all, citizenship skills are learned through social practices, collaboration, and exchange of experiences; and these experiences differ for groups with different background characteristics (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, Jorgensen, & ten Dam, 2015; ten Dam et al., 2010). However, the few studies that have already taken school and class composition characteristics into account when explaining differences in citizenship skills have produced inconclusive results (Dijkstra, Geijsel, Ledoux, van der Veen, & ten Dam, 2015; ten Dam et al., 2010).

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between composition characteristics and the interpersonal citizenship skills of students.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Interpersonal citizenship skills**

Increased levels of diversity in society reinforce the formation of more and more subcultures which live separately in the society. This new pluriform context fosters individualisation and affects the social cohesion of society (Geijsel et al., 2012). However, the impact of globalisation, individualisation, and diversity causes a shift in the interpretation of social cohesion. In the current society, social cohesion can no longer be interpreted as trying to achieve a consensus on fundamental values and norms to reproduce the social order, but has to be seen as coping with diversity and widespread dissent. Social cohesion then depends on the social interactions of people, the communication about different meanings and opinions (Jansen et al., 2006), and the ability of citizens to function in diverse contexts (ten Dam & Volman, 2007).

In this context, the social perspective of citizenship is of increasing importance, because this perspective provides the opportunity to focus on the coexistence of citizens and the interactions between citizens (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, & ten Dam, 2013). Various authors stress the importance of citizenship skills, such as helping each other, dealing properly with

others, and handling conflicts and differences (ten Dam, Dijkstra, & Janmaat, 2016), because citizens need to be able to communicate with diverse social groups with different values and opinions (Schuitema, ten Dam, & Veugelers, 2007).

This study focuses in particular on the kind of skills relating to interaction and communication between individuals and different groups because these are of greater importance in the current fragmented society (Jansen et al., 2006; ten Dam et al., 2016). In this study, these skills are summarised as interpersonal citizenship skills.

## **2.2 Class composition**

In line with the increasing societal diversity, schools are also becoming increasingly diverse (Dusi et al., 2012). Students from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds are not equally distributed across schools (Dewulf, van Braak, & Van Houtte, 2017). This causes the existence of big social-ethnic differences in school populations, which can influence students' learning outcomes (De Fraine, 2004). Effectiveness studies confirm the role of compositional effects on the cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of students (Denessen et al., 2010; Driessen, 2007). Compositional effects can be defined as the impact that being part of a specific group with certain background characteristics has on specified outcomes (van Ewijk & Slegers, 2010). Compositional characteristics that are often investigated are gender composition, average socioeconomic status (SES), ethnic share, and ethnic diversity. Although the relationship between these composition characteristics and the citizenship skills of students has so far been studied by some authors, results are inconclusive (Dijkstra et al., 2015; Geijssels et al., 2012; ten Dam et al., 2010).

The studies that took *gender composition* into account show a positive relationship between gender composition and citizenship knowledge and the interethnic tolerance of students, favouring students in classrooms with more female students (Isac et al., 2011; Kokkonen, Esaiasson, & Gilljam, 2010). They indicate that further research is needed to investigate the relationship with other citizenship outcomes (Isac et al., 2011), such as citizenship skills.

The mean SES of students in a classroom is often used as a proxy for the *social composition* of the class. Ten Dam et al. (2010) and Dijkstra et al. (2015) measured the mean SES of students by means of the percentage of students of parents with low education and find no relationship with students' citizenship skills. Isac, Maslowski, Creemers and van der Werf (2014) found a positive relationship with citizenship knowledge and the intended participation

in political and social activities. More specifically, students from schools with a higher mean SES tend more to participate in social and political activities.

*Ethnic share* refers to the proportion of migrant students in the class (Veerman, van de Werfhorst, & Dronkers, 2013). Ten Dam et al. (2010) use the country of birth of the mother to measure the ethnic share of the class. Their results indicate that the proportion of immigrant students in the class has no impact on students' citizenship skills.

*Ethnic diversity* refers to the variety of ethnic groups in the class (Dronkers & Vandavelde, 2010). Authors who already investigated the relationship between ethnic diversity and citizenship skills have generated contrasting results. On the one hand, some argue that ethnic diversity fosters conflicts in the classroom and avoidance behaviour (Lindo, 2008; Lindo & Pratsinakis, 2007). On the other hand, some authors stress that ethnic diversity is associated with less prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), or they find no relationship between ethnic diversity and citizenship skills (Dijkstra et al., 2015; ten Dam et al., 2010).

Although these studies provide some important insights into the relationship between school and class composition characteristics and citizenship competences, results are still inconclusive (Dijkstra et al., 2015). Furthermore, none of the studies concentrate on interpersonal citizenship skills in particular. Consequently, this research examines the relationship between composition characteristics and interpersonal citizenship skills. To investigate this relationship, the focus is at the class level because effectiveness research emphasises the dominance of class level effects above effects at school level (Kyriakides, Campbell, & Gagatsis, 2000).

### **3. Research aim**

This study aims to identify which class composition characteristics are related to differences in the interpersonal citizenship skills of primary school students, with a particular focus on gender class composition, social class composition, ethnic share, and ethnic diversity. In so doing, some important student background characteristics, such as gender, SES, home language, and parents' country of birth, are taken into account.

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Sample

In order to measure the interpersonal citizenship skills of primary school students, 1,013 sixth-grade students in 55 classes at 54 primary schools in Flanders (the northern part of Belgium) took part in the study. Data was gathered by student researchers between October and December 2017. A convenience sampling method was used, which implies that researchers were free to choose schools without any specified criteria. 49.6% of the surveyed students were male and 50.4% were female. Their ages ranged from ten to thirteen years old ( $M=11.04$ ,  $SD=0.49$ ).

### 4.2 Measures

#### 4.2.1 *Dependent variable*

The dependent variable ‘interpersonal citizenship skills’ was measured by means of the Citizenship Competences Questionnaire (CCQ) of ten Dam, Geijsel, Reumerman and Ledoux (2010). The questionnaire included 94 items measuring four components of citizenship competences, which are: knowledge, skills, attitudes and reflection. In this study, only citizenship skills are taken into account. The 15 citizenship skills items measure the degree to which students perceive themselves to have the skills to act democratically, to act in a socially responsible manner, to deal with conflicts, and to deal with differences. Students were asked to provide their answers via ratings on 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘not good at all’ to ‘very good’. The basic form of the questions was ‘how good are you at...’, followed by, for instance: ‘finding a solution that everyone is satisfied with for a conflict?’

Ten Dam et al. (2010) distinguish four scales for measuring citizenship skills; however, these scales are measured by only 3 to 5 items, which is too limited for a reliable scale. Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis was used to explore the structure of the data. This analysis revealed two dimensions for measuring citizenship skills. The first dimension consists of 3 items with a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .67$  and can be summarised as intrapersonal citizenship skills. The second dimension contains 12 items and has a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .84$ . The items of this dimension can be summarised as interpersonal citizenship skills and are the focus of this study. Appendix A gives an overview of the items used to measure interpersonal citizenship skills.

#### 4.2.2 Independent variables

**Student level.** Data about the students was gathered by means of a student background questionnaire, taking into account the following characteristics:

gender (boy = 0; girl = 1);

home language (Dutch = 1; French = 2; Turkish = 3; English = 4; Moroccans/Berbers = 5; other language = 6);

country of birth of the parents (mother and father born in Belgium = 0; at least one parent born in a country other than Belgium = 1);

highest educational level of the mother (no education = 1; primary education = 2; secondary education = 3; higher education = 4).

The highest educational level of the mother was used as a proxy indicator of SES. At student level, the home language was recorded as a binary variable (Dutch = 0, other language = 1).

**Class level.** Class composition variables were calculated based on data retrieved from the student background questionnaires. Gender class composition was measured by the percentage of girls in the class. Social class composition was based on the classroom average of the highest educational level of the students' mother. When measuring the ethnic composition of a class, a distinction can be made between 'ethnic share' and 'ethnic diversity' (Dronkers & Van der Velden, 2010). Ethnic share refers to the proportion of migrant children in the class and, in this study, was measured by means of the proportion of non-native speakers. Students were categorised as non-native speakers when they spoke at least one language other than Dutch at home. Ethnic diversity was based on the amount of different ethnic groups in the class. This was measured by means of the Herfindahl index, which is calculated based on the variety of spoken home languages in the class. The formula to calculate the index was:  $1 - [(\text{proportion Dutch})^2 + (\text{proportion French})^2 + (\text{proportion English})^2 + (\text{proportion Turkish})^2 + (\text{proportion Moroccans/Berbers})^2 + (\text{proportion other language})^2]$ . This yielded a value between 0 and 1, with a higher value representing more diversity in spoken home languages in the class.

The descriptive results and correlations for all the variables are presented in Table 1 (student level) and Table 2 (class level). The results show that primary school students perceive themselves as having pretty good to very good interpersonal citizenship skills ( $M = 3.109$ ,  $SD = 0.454$ ). Table 1 shows that the average highest educational level of students' mothers is secondary education ( $M = 3.581$ ,  $SD = 0.583$ ); that 28.3% ( $SD = 0.451$ ) of the students speak

another language than Dutch at home; and that 24.9% (SD = 0.433) of the students' parents were born in a country other than Belgium.

Table 1: means, standard deviations and correlates at student level (n = 1013)

	M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender	0.504(0.500)	1				
2. Highest education of mother	3.581(0.583)	.046	1			
3. Home language	0.283(0.451)	-.020	-.218**	1		
4. Parents' country of birth	0.249(0.433)	.003	-.194**	.614**	1	
5. Interpersonal citizenship skills	3.109(0.454)	.103**	.039	.103**	.117**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2: means, minimum and maximum scores, standard deviations and correlates at class level (n = 55)

	M(SD)	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender class composition	0.504(0.117)	0.24	0.83	1				
2. Average highest educational level of mother	3.568(0.257)	2.83	4.00	-.199**	1			
3. Proportion of non-native speakers	0.287(0.204)	0.00	0.94	.043	-.464**	1		
4. Ethnic diversity	0.395(0.198)	0.00	0.80	-.043	-.397**	.893**	1	
5. Interpersonal citizenship skills	3.109(0.454)	1.25	4.00	-.033	.048	.083**	.097**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The minima and maxima in Table 2 indicate that there is only limited variance between classes in the average highest educational level of the mother (2.83 – 4.00). The proportion of non-native speakers (0.00 – 0.94) and the ethnic diversity (0.00 – 0.80), by contrast, vary more between classes.

### 4.3 Analysis

The data of the sample has a hierarchical structure, which means that the students are nested in classes and the classes are nested in schools (Snijders & Bosker, 2012). In this study, the difference between the class level (55 classes) and the school level (54 schools) is very small. This could lead to confounding of class and school level and could cause standard errors and inaccurate measures (Hox, 2002). Therefore, the school level has not been taken into account, and a regression analysis with a two-level design (MLwiN 2.29) at student and class level was conducted to identify which class composition characteristics are related to students' interpersonal citizenship skills.

Three models were tested. First, a null model without independent variables was tested to investigate whether a multilevel approach was more desirable than a single-level, linear regression analysis. In the second model, student background characteristics were added to the fixed part of the model. The third model also contains the variables at class level. Using this stepwise approach provided the opportunity of testing the additional value of each subset of variables to the model. Difference in deviance between two models was used to control for model improvement (Snijders & Bosker, 2012). More specifically, a significant decrease of the deviance between two consecutive models signifies model improvement.

## 5. Results

The first step of the analysis was used to verify whether a multilevel analysis or a single-level analysis was most appropriate for explaining differences in students' interpersonal citizenship skills. Therefore, a null model was created which contained no independent student or class level variables. The intercept of 3.114 on 4 represents the mean score on interpersonal citizenship skills of all students in all of the classes. This means that students perceive themselves as having pretty good to very good interpersonal citizenship skills.

The results of the null model indicate that 93.24% of the variance is located at student level, whereas only 6.76% of the variance is due to differences at class level. The difference in deviance between the single-level model and the two-level null model shows that the null model

fits the data better ( $\chi^2 = 8.594$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .005$ ). This justifies the use of multilevel analysis to model the data adequately.

In the next step of model specification (Model 1), the student characteristics – gender, highest educational level of the mother, home language, country of birth of the parents – were added as explanatory variables to the fixed part of the model. This model fitted the data significantly better than the null model ( $\chi^2 = 492.585$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results of Model 1 indicate that gender ( $\chi^2 = 11.154$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), home language ( $\chi^2 = 4.565$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and parents' country of birth ( $\chi^2 = 4.092$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ) are related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students. More specifically, girls who speak another language at home and have a parent born in a country other than Belgium have better interpersonal citizenship skills. The SES (no education:  $\chi^2 = 0.788$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; primary education:  $\chi^2 = 0.651$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ; higher education:  $\chi^2 = 0.422$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) is not significantly related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students.

In the last model (Model 2), class composition characteristics – gender class composition, social class composition, ethnic share and ethnic diversity – were entered in the model. This model is no significant improvement of Model 1 ( $\chi^2 = 8.154$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p > .05$ ). At student level, gender ( $\chi^2 = 12.262$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), home language ( $\chi^2 = 4.106$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and parents' country of birth ( $\chi^2 = 4.421$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ) are still significant. With regard to class composition variables, ethnic diversity ( $\chi^2 = 4.596$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) is positively related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students. This implies that students in more ethnically diverse classrooms have better interpersonal citizenship skills. Gender class composition ( $\chi^2 = 0.059$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), social class composition ( $\chi^2 = 3.437$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and ethnic share ( $\chi^2 = 2.335$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) are not significantly related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students. Table 3 provides an overview of the model estimates.

Table 3: Multilevel parameter estimates for the two-level analyses

	<b>Model 0: null model</b>		<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
<b>Fixed</b>						
Intercept	3.114	0.021	3.012	0.039	3.016	0.039
<b>Student background</b>						
Gender ( <i>ref: boy</i> )			0.111***	0.033	0.118***	0.034
Educational level of the mother ( <i>ref: secondary education</i> )						
No education			-0.194	0.219	-0.138	0.219
Primary education			-0.082	0.102	-0.071	0.103
Higher education			0.024	0.036	0.008	0.038
Home language ( <i>ref: Dutch</i> )			0.101*	0.047	0.097*	0.048
Parents' country of birth ( <i>ref: Belgium</i> )			0.104*	0.051	0.110*	0.052
<b>Class composition</b>						
Proportion girls					-0.047	0.195
Average highest educational level of mother					0.180	0.097
Proportion non-native speakers					-0.372	0.244
Ethnic diversity					0.515*	0.240
<b>Random</b>						
Level 2: class	0.014	0.005	0.014	0.006	0.010	0.005
Level 1: student	0.193	0.009	0.175	0.010	0.175	0.010
<b>Model fit</b>						
Deviance (-2log)	1249.204		756.619		748.465	
$\chi^2$	8.594		492.585		8.154	
Df	1		6		4	
P	0.0034		0.0000		0.0861	
N	1011		659		659	

\* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

Research into the role of compositional characteristics in explaining differences in citizenship skills is scarce (Dijkstra et al., 2015). The research presented here begins to close this gap in literature by focusing on the relationship between class composition and interpersonal citizenship skills of students.

The variance in the interpersonal citizenship skills of students is mainly explained by characteristics at student level, while only a limited part of the variance can be explained by class composition characteristics. These findings are consistent with previous studies that investigated the relationship between composition characteristics and students' citizenship skills, and they confirm the limited variance explained by composition characteristics (Dijkstra et al., 2015; ten Dam et al., 2010).

With the exception of SES, all included variables at student level are significantly related to students' interpersonal citizenship skills. The results at student level indicate that being a girl, speaking another language than Dutch at home, and having a parent born in a country other than Belgium are positively related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students. These findings are in line with previous studies which focused on citizenship skills in general (Dijkstra et al., 2015; Geboers et al., 2015; Geijsel et al., 2012; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). The non-significant relation between interpersonal citizenship skills and SES is also consistent with the results of previous studies (Dijkstra et al., 2015; Geboers et al., 2015; Geijsel et al., 2012; Ledoux, Geijsel, Reumerman, & ten Dam, 2011).

With regard to class level, the results indicate that only ethnic diversity in the classroom is positively related to the interpersonal citizenship skills of students. This result is in line with the idea that ethnic diversity in the classroom gives a more natural environment for students to constantly practice living with diversity (Radstake & Leeman, 2010; ten Dam & Volman, 2007) than schools with no ethnic diversity can provide (ten Dam, Volman, van der Veen, & Zwaans, 2005). In a diverse classroom, students have more opportunities to learn how to deal with diversity, conflicts, and social tensions (Green & Wong, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) which reduces prejudice and promotes better inter-ethnic relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These findings are based on Allport's contact theory (1954), which states that if people have the opportunity to communicate with others, they will appreciate different ways of life and have better interactions. However, some authors found the opposite to be true and argue that ethnic diversity leads to more conflicts in the classroom and fosters avoidance behaviour and negative

perceptions (Lindo, 2008; Lindo & Pratsinakis, 2007). Radstake and Leeman (2010) also assert that ethnically diverse classrooms do not necessarily lead to better relations between students.

Teachers possibly play an important role in determining whether an ethnically diverse classroom has a positive or negative impact. Teachers are after all important actors in the classroom who can influence the relationship between composition characteristics and the outcomes for students (Bellens & De Fraine, 2012). Furthermore, by fostering citizenship competences, teachers are thought to be the most accountable actors (Isac et al., 2011) who influence the value development of students consciously as well as subconsciously (Leenders et al., 2008). The way in which teachers implement citizenship in the classroom largely depends on the beliefs teachers themselves hold about citizenship education and society in general (Pulinx, 2017). These beliefs are generated by teachers' personal experiences and characteristics of the environment, which means that the educational context can influence the teachers' beliefs (Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth, 2014). Other authors also confirm that teachers' beliefs (Pulinx, 2017) and instruction (Opdenakker, Van Damme, & Minnaert, 2002) are influenced by composition characteristics.

However, this study does not investigate the role of the teacher in the relationship between class composition and students' interpersonal citizenship, which is a first limitation. Further research needs to reveal what role teachers play in the relationship between compositional characteristics and the interpersonal citizenship skills of students.

A second limitation of the study is that only students completed the background questionnaires. It is possible that the information about the background of students contains errors because not all students may have known the answers for all questions. Research with additional background questionnaires completed by parents can give more accurate background information.

A final limitation is the fact that interpersonal citizenship skills are measured by means of students' self-perception. Answers in self-perceived questionnaires are sensitive for social desirability (Ledoux, Meijer, van der Veen, Breetvelt, ten Dam, & Volman, 2013; ten Dam & Volman, 2007) and overestimation by students (Ledoux et al., 2013). Measuring the interpersonal citizenship skills of students through a test would give a more accurate view of their actual skills. In future research, it would therefore be an added value to measure the interpersonal citizenship skills of students also by means of a test.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the knowledge about the role of class composition in explaining differences in the interpersonal citizenship skills of students, which are essential in the current individualised society.

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## Appendix A

### Interpersonal citizenship skills

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Item 1	How good are you at letting others finish their speech?
Item 2	How good are you at listening to the reasons why others choose something else?
Item 3	How good are you at understanding how others think?
Item 4	How good are you at imagining how someone else feels and taking that into account?
Item 5	How good are you at imagining how someone else feels when you give your opinion about him or her?
Item 6	How good are you at making friends again in a conflict?
Item 7	How good are you at understanding what someone else feels in a conflict?
Item 8	How good are you at coming up with a solution that satisfies everyone in a conflict?
Item 9	How good are you at adjusting at the rules and habits of someone else?
Item 10	How good are you at acting normal in an unfamiliar environment?
Item 11	How good are you at adapting your language to the person you are talking to?
Item 12	How good are you at taking into account the wishes of others when making a decision together?

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