

Network 34: Research on Citizenship Education

Minutes of the Network Meeting on 20 August 2026

Room E301, University of Tampere

Chaired by Ralph Carstens (Co-Link Convenor) and Jetske Strijbos (Co-Convenor)

Agenda

- Welcome and network presentation: aims, convenors, activities
- Season School 2026
- Submission and session overview for ECER 2026
- Planned and possible activities
- Mailing list
- Outlook on ECER 2027 in Debrecen
- Any other business

1. Welcome and network presentation

The meeting started with introductions of the convenors and attendees with approximately 25 colleagues in total. No name list was prepared. The chairs briefly introduced Network 34, its aims, liaisons, current convenors, and research focus.

Network 34 was envisaged as a platform within EERA for comparative exchange and debate in the field of research on citizenship education. The network is interconnected to a number of of the existing EERA networks, in particular Network 6 (Open Learning: Media, Environments and Cultures, in relation to citizenship experiences and practices in digital spaces), Network 9 (Assessment, Evaluation, Testing and Measurement, in relation to secondary analysis of large-scale assessment studies results, especially IEA ICCS), Network 30 (Environmental and Sustainability Education Research, on research education for sustainable development and global citizenship education). External liaison now included the Council of Europe's "European Space for Citizenship Education" initiative via some convenors (Valeria Damiani and Catalina Ulrich Hygum) and network members (Edda Sant).

Network 34's research focus is related to various subfields that include, but are not limited to educational policies and curriculum; professional development for teachers and school principals; formal, non-formal and informal learning environments and opportunities; and teaching, learning and assessment. Colleagues were invited to reflect on the aims and whether additional sub-themes would be beneficial with a view to build a more comprehensive and clearer taxonomy of themes and topics going forward. Attendees felt that the existing descriptions and categories are sufficient to cover the breadth and depth of qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Changes remain possible in the future.

The chairs then presented the network organization and its current set of convenors, noting that the initial term for two Co-Link Convenors (Valeria and Ralph) will run out after four years, i.e. ECER 2027 in Debrecen, and an election would take place at next year's network meeting. Colleagues interested in being more engaged in the network and organizing the program were invited to nominate themselves. Update: Following the conference, two colleagues registered an interest to join as co-convenors, who may be co-opted during the next online meeting of convenors in late September/early October in a shadow role, then formally confirmed at the next network meeting.

2. Season school report

In June 2026, EERA Network 34 organised the three-day Season School 2026: On Field Research in Citizenship Education, hosted by CIIE-FPCEUP (Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativas da Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto) at the University of Porto (Portugal). The programme brought together 17 doctoral researchers from 10 countries (Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Chile, Romania, Georgia, the United Kingdom, Croatia, and Poland), creating a vibrant international learning community focused on citizenship education research.

Designed for PhD candidates working in the field of citizenship education, the programme addressed methodological challenges and opportunities in conducting field research. It combined keynotes, workshops, group work, and participant presentations, enabling attendees to engage deeply with methodological questions, exchange experiences, and receive feedback on their ongoing studies.

The Season School began with a preparatory webinar on 5 May 2026, featuring a keynote by Edda Sant (University of Manchester, UK), who introduced participants to key theoretical foundations and perspectives in democratic and citizenship education. The on-site programme included four keynotes: Valeria Damiani (Lumsa University, Italy) discussed the assessment of civic and citizenship education across countries through the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS); Carla Malafaia (CIIE-FPCEUP, Portugal) explained her research on youth visual practices of citizenship; Jetske Strijbos (UHasselt, Belgium) presented participatory visual research methods in citizenship education research; and Pedro D. Ferreira (CIIE-FPCEUP, Portugal) examined the possibilities of researching citizenship education through engagement with video games. The keynote sessions alternated with interactive workshops and group work. This combination of expert input, collaborative activities, and peer discussions created ample opportunities for participants to engage in in-depth reflection, critically process new ideas, and explore how methodological and theoretical insights could inform their own doctoral research projects. On the final day, participants presented posters of their research projects.

The Season School concluded with “The Worst Tour” in Porto, a guided urban walk that deliberately departs from conventional tourist routes. Rather than focusing on the city's iconic landmarks, participants explored lesser-known neighbourhoods and engaged in critical conversations about urban development, social inequalities, local histories, and the politics of the city. The tour provided an inspiring and memorable conclusion to the programme, illustrating how local contexts and everyday spaces can serve as valuable sites for observation, interpretation, and reflection in citizenship education research.

Special thanks are due to Professor Isabel Menezes and Filipa César, whose thoughtful hosting, excellent organisation, and warm hospitality made the Season School a highly enriching and memorable experience for all involved.

3. ECER 2026 - Submissions, reviews and observations

First of all, the chairs thanked all reviewers who helped in reading the growing number of submissions for ECER 2026. We had a steady but not too steep increase in the number of submissions, certainly not as strong an increase as the overall conference. asked the members whether someone was interested in joining the group of reviewers and gratefully collected some availability for a total of five additional reviewers for 2027.

The chairs provided an overview of the submissions to Nw 34 for ECER 2026. The network received 65 entries in total for review (papers, poster, symposia, ignite talks). After moving to or receiving from alternative networks (a handful each), 4 submissions were rejected (including the only “ignite talk”), 5 withdrawn after review, 6 withdrawn or removed after the registration deadline. 3 additional papers were withdrawn last minute (flagged as ***WITHDRAWN*** in the program for transparency), increasing the office’s and convenors’ workload.

Consequently, we had 50 entries in the program. Of these, 39 were papers that the convenors clustered thematically clustered into sessions. Network members commented that this worked very well. There were 4 symposia with 14 individual contributions, 3 posters (yet not all authors presented during the scheduled session), 1 keynote (Josefina Sipinen, University Tampere), the network meeting itself.

In total, network 34 hosted 57 individual contributions with a rich set of perspectives from quantitative and qualitative as well as conceptual and evidence-based approaches. In terms of joint sessions, 2 symposia were jointly organized with Nw 30 on teaching about controversy (with 6 individual contributions), and well received. Parallel sessions were organized for sessions SES 03, 07, and 13, and indicator of the growing number of contributions year on year. The EERA office asked all networks to schedule 4 papers in each session to accommodate the increased number of contributions and avoid the need for an even larger number of excess rooms. Network 34 would strongly prefer to return to a three paper per session ration for 2027.

The inclusion of a keynote in the Network conference program for 2026 was highlighted given its political science perspective. There was general agreement that a keynote should be envisaged for the 2027 conference and the chairs asked for possible nominations.

Network members commented that the room assigned by the office (i.e. room E301) was not large enough to accommodate attendees and also among the less attractive. The chairs commented that this can be a bit of a lottery, under the general control of the local organizing committee. In Belgrade, we had a much better room than many other networks. The convenors will make that point nonetheless.

4. Planned and future activities

Several activities, in which network members could be engaged in, were presented and discussed during the meeting. First, one of the existing convenors could act as a link with the Emerging Researchers' Group (ERG), which represents emerging researchers' interests and now received their own diamond access journal. Although the ERG does not work with formal link persons for networks, other networks had some good experiences with having a clear link with the ERG. Thankfully, Jetske Strijbos offered to act in this capacity.

The season school that was successfully held in Porto in June 2026 for 17 PhD students, addressing quantitative and qualitative research methods for citizenship education research, could potentially be repeated in 2027 or the year after.

More generally, network members are free to suggest or coordinate collaboration for posts for the EERA blog, EERA European Educational Research Journal (EERJ), and use the mailing list for sharing calls for proposals (e.g. books or special issues) or for collaborating on project proposals and events.

5. Network mailing list

Ralph introduced the moderated mailing list that is run via the EERA office (currently 150 colleagues are registered). To join, simply send a blank message to nw34-subscribe@lists.eera-ecer.de. The mailing list will be used to distribute network updates, special calls, season school information, sibling works, conference information etc and will serve as the network's member list.

Admittedly, we are not yet using the list and its full potential. This is a balancing act of sending too many messages (and causing nuisance) and too few (the impression of an inactive network).

6. Outlook on ECER 2027 in Debrecen, Hungary

The convenors relayed information from the office on the next ECER 2027 at the University of Debrecen in Hungary. The relevant dates are: 30-31 August 2027 - Emerging Researchers' Conference; 31 August to 3 September 2027 - Main conference. The timeframe for submission (start/end) is equivalent to prior years, i.e. from 1 December 2026 to 31 January 2027. Other key dates are already posted on the EERA page.

For next year, members suggested organizing a network dinner on Thursday, or any other day that does not offer a central event in the evening. They also showed interest in informally meeting for an “early arrival” social event, i.e. drinks or dinner for members arriving early on Monday, 30 August. As noted above, they wished for a better room next year.

Logistically, the university in Debrecen said it can host events of up to 3,000 people. Nonetheless, the clear recommendation was to book accommodation as early as possible given that the number of larger hotels and international brands is limited.

Network members and, independently, other link convenors commented that Hungary is not considered an open and fully safe space for minorities, e.g. queer community, people of color. Researchers generally interested in ECER/EERA voiced strong anxiety, questioned the choice of venue and are considering whether to attend or skip the 2027 event.

As said earlier, a network keynote would be a welcome addition to the 2027 program, especially given the recent illiberal regime that conditioned general societal development and in particular educational policy. Potentially, a special thematic call for 2027 will be issued in this regard.

All attendees were encouraged to submit for Debrecen and to spread the word about our network. Further information on the 2027 event will be communicated via the network’s mailing list.

7. Any other business and closure

No additional points were discussed and the meeting ended by thanking everybody for contributing to the conference and network meeting. The convenors of Nw 34 plan to meet in late September and are looking forward to seeing everyone again next year.