



Article

School Inquiry in Secondary Education: The Experience of the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress in Seville

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Abstract: In secondary education, the focus of history teaching must be on the development of global citizenship. The present research was a study contextualized in the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress in Seville (Spain). A documentary analysis with a descriptive and interpretive design was made of 63 projects of inquiry that pupils carried out. The main objectives were to assess the incidence of the proposal in terms of participation, and to determine whether the pupils' projects followed a logic of inquiry about socially relevant problems which favors the construction of global citizenship. The results point to a low incidence of schools participating in this initiative. The projects of inquiry analyzed present, for the most part, themes related to the historical and social heritage of the locality. The proposals are approached as problems of a specific discipline and are worked on through a method based on a pseudoscientific research process. The findings indicate the need to continue implementing initiatives based on school inquiry that allow the teaching of history to be articulated around relevant social problems, with the objective being to develop citizenship skills.

Keywords: history education; social studies; school research; relevant social problems; global citizenship



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1. Introduction

1.1. The Teaching of History for the Construction of Global Citizenship

Educating for global citizenship (DiCicco 2016; Engel et al. 2016) implies that the education system is aware of the need to promote not only conceptual elements but also affective and value-based elements, since the starting premise is that a citizen must feel themselves as such if our intention is for them to reach their full development as a social being. This is supported by European organizations and reports, such as Agenda 2030 (Unesco 2017) and the Faro Convention (Council of Europe 2005). It is not enough to know its benefits at a theoretical level. Instead, it is necessary to generate processes that allow pupils to develop values and skills that commit them to a real participation (García 2019). Therefore, the task of schools is to educate children and adolescents in the exercise of their rights and duties, in the principles of liberty and respect, and in the promotion of democracy as a mechanism for their political and social development (Apple 2018). In this way, the creation of more democratic societies and people should be mediated both by the democratization of educational systems and schools (Aguirre and Schugurensky 2017) and by its inclusion in the curricula. When one analyzes the study plans for the subject of history in secondary education¹ in Spain, and in Andalusia in particular, one can see the link between the teaching of this subject and the development of citizenship. The teaching of history, together with other disciplines in the area of social sciences such as geography, as part of preparation for citizenship is not only essential to knowing about the past but also to “glimpse some of the problems of the future” (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 297). The teaching of both history and geography allows young people to understand “social events, processes, and phenomena in the context in which they occur, to analyse the processes that gave rise to historical changes, and to continue acquiring the skills needed to understand

the reality of the world in which they live, past and present collective experiences, [and] their orientation in the future" (*Real Decreto 1105/2014*, p. 297). Having a historical perspective allows pupils to know what their reality is and gives them the capacity to analyze and explain the problems of the society of which they are part (*Sobejano and Bravo 2010*). The Curricular Order of Andalusia (*Orden de 14 de julio de 2016*) notes that the study of this core subject favors "the analysis and implementation of the precise strategies to exercise a responsible, participatory citizenship, [that is] aware of its identity, rights, and obligations, in a plural and globalized environment" (p. 156).

This relevance given to the citizenship dimension in the social sciences curriculum is, in turn, supported by education research. Numerous studies have shown that history is a basic vehicle through which to transport our societies' values and changes, relating its educational function, purposes, and propositions to the civics training of young people (*Navarro-Medina and de-Alba-Fernández 2011, 2014, 2019*). This allows working with the young on their future as citizens, going beyond the mere reproduction of outstanding events and figures from the past, and generating in the pupils a historical and transformative awareness (*Pagès 2019*). For *Santisteban (2010)*, it fulfils a still greater function—the teaching of history encourages the formation of historical thought, it being necessary to provide pupils "with a series of instruments of analysis, understanding or interpretation" (p. 35) that can lead them to construct their own representation of the past, away from manipulations or biased narratives. A link is established between historical awareness and civic awareness, beginning with the premise that history is fundamental for a democratic education and the construction of identity (*Santisteban and Anguera 2014*). However, achieving these links entails a certain way of teaching and learning history. Following this line, there have been several authors (*Evans and Saxe 1996; Legardez and Simonneaux 2011; Santisteban 2017*) who note the necessity to work on history from socially relevant problems that are present in our own and in our pupils' everyday lives, and that are of concern to us, in order to analyze their evolution and construct their future projection. Together with this, the teaching of history from a perspective of working on the basis of current problems will allow us, at the same time, to develop the consciousness of historical time (past–present–future) and historical awareness, completing the usefulness of teaching this subject for the development of education for global citizenship.

1.2. School Inquiry Processes as a Strategy for the Construction of Global Citizenship among Pupils

To fulfil the objectives of the teaching of history as an educator for citizenship, it is necessary to generate processes in class that encourage pupils to analyze and understand the relevant social problems that occur around them. In this sense, there is an important current in the areas of social sciences (*Paraskeva 2003*) which connects this way of working with an entire pedagogical tradition (Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Freinet, among others) that puts the focus on the pupils' active role in their learning. Working on socially relevant problems in class involves adopting an inquiry-based method. The fundamental difference between this and other active methods is that while the latter are only concerned with the learning of skills and procedures—and with replicating in class the researcher's work—the former deals with the contents of the disciplines (not just conceptual but also procedural, and of attitudes and values), starting from the pupils' everyday conceptions of a series of problems with which to organize the content to be taught and learnt (*García and García 1989*).

Therefore, including inquiry in the classroom means going beyond the use of specific strategies. Rather, it is a matter of understanding the teaching and learning process in an overall way, characterized, among other issues, by a constructivist vision of learning, recognizing the pupils' ideas as a source from which to build knowledge and which is in permanent progression, and by the necessary interaction between the school and the social worlds (*García and García 1989*).

Thus, in order to start a process of inquiry in the classroom, the first thing that should be considered is a school-appropriate problem. In this regard, and in relation to social sciences, *Washburne (1967)* stated that current problems should be the basis on which to

settle the selection of what will be studied, and that the process should be designed to give a response and conclusion to the said problems. For [Santisteban \(2017, p. 92\)](#), “the teaching of history and of the social sciences must begin from relevant social problems that concern us, analysing their historical evolution until a projection towards the future has been constructed”, because this will enable us to work in class on historical time (past–present–future) and historical awareness, reflecting the usefulness of the teaching of history in education for global citizenship. Various research findings support this claim. The work of [Salinas and Oller \(2017\)](#) reveals how learners are in agreement with treating controversial issues in class, claiming that this allows them to become informed, take a position, and concern themselves about issues that affect their contexts, as well as giving them the possibility to acquire a greater sensitivity about what is happening around them locally, regionally, and globally. For [Muñoz and Pagès \(2012\)](#), the study of past–present relationships, and therefore the fostering of historical and civic awareness, must be carried out on the basis of issues concerned with wars, political questions, economic crises, and people’s rights. In this line, [Rapoport \(2013\)](#) analyzed the work that teachers conduct to educate about citizenship through the teaching of social sciences. His results show that the participants do not use a specific method to teach themes related to global citizenship. Nonetheless, two strategies are present in the themes which promote global citizenship education: the comparative approach, and teaching controversial themes. Here, it is necessary to make a terminological comment. The present study agrees with [Legardez \(2017\)](#) that, for a social problem to be teachable in school, it must present three elements: be current, be relevant to the scientific discipline, and be meaningful in the school context. [García et al. \(2017\)](#), who agree with this, add that it should be significant for both pupils and society. Therefore, those proposals which present the content as a problem corresponding to the curriculum or solely a discipline-specific one, without taking into account the rest of its outstanding elements, cannot be considered relevant social problems.

Together with putting forward socially relevant problems, the second of the steps within the school inquiry process must be to take note of the pupils’ conceptions about the phenomenon. To construct new knowledge, it is necessary to know what the pupils’ current everyday knowledge is in their understanding and explanation of the world ([García and García 1989](#)). Along these lines, [Davis et al. \(2001\)](#) noted that to develop historical empathy and understand historical processes, it is necessary to take into account what pupils know, understand, and identify with. [Llorente and Etxeberria \(2019\)](#) pointed out that to achieve this, it is necessary to link together three processes: the complex historical contextualization of the event; managing to look at the event from a certain historical perspective; and an affective connection that can be achieved through the pupils’ connecting their own experiences with those being studied.

Once the problem to be worked on has been defined and the pupils’ ideas taken into account, there begins the phase of the school inquiry process. This will provide a great diversity of information or content for the pupils’ initial ideas regarding the problem to be restructured and made more complex. Here, the various referents for accessing knowledge (the pupils’ ideas, the sociocultural reality in which they find themselves, the teacher as a source for providing information, textbooks, documents, materials, etc.) come into play. The essence of this phase is the planning of a considerable number of activities of contrasting. These activities are understood to be experiences for the pupils to construct knowledge based on confronting their own ideas with information obtained through the different activities proposed. In the case of history, this phase of working with new information allows global citizenship competencies to develop since it favors the “implementation of learning experiences that promote critical thinking and an open and deep discussion about controversial issues” ([Aguilar-Forero et al. 2019, p. 107](#)). These activities of contrast can be of various kinds. For [Hess \(2009\)](#), controversy, debate, and discussion are the most powerful strategies with which to generate an education for an aware citizenship. The research study of [Fuentes-Moreno et al. \(2020\)](#) corroborates these ideas. Based on the design and implementation of five didactic units with the common denominator of

working on social problems for the development of civic competence, those authors used teaching methods based on a challenge or question, analysis of sources, and applying the hypothetical-deductive method. Their results show that the pupils participating in the study developed active citizenship attitudes and skills. In this line, [Santisteban and Anguera \(2014\)](#) argue that it is necessary to propose activities that allow pupils to develop four competencies of historical thinking from the citizenship perspective: “(a) those related to historical imagination (empathy, contextualization and moral judgement); (b) narrative as an essential form of historical discourse, which can evolve as a causal or intentional historical explanation; (c) the interpretation of primary and secondary historical sources, and the solution of historical questions-problems; (d) historical-temporal awareness, as an understanding of the changes and continuities in History” (p. 251).

The last phase of a school inquiry process is drawing conclusions. This last step allows the pupils to make explicit the results of the learning process, and of the restructuring of their initial ideas in relation to the problem posed, and it represents a natural culmination of the school inquiry. Here, together in common with their peers, they present the results of their work. Giving them the possibility of putting their learning into practice allows them, on the one hand, to fix the content they have learnt, and, on the other, to gain confidence in their own abilities ([García and García 1989](#)). Interesting in this sense is the work of [Morgade \(2017\)](#) in which she studied her pupils’ change in conceptions through the elaboration of a didactic proposal that worked on a socially relevant problem (in this case, the Spanish Civil War and historical memory in Pontevedra). This shows that this type of classroom experience allows pupils to develop competencies linked not only to the knowledge of historical events but also, above all, to the ability to analyze, interpret, and assess current events in the light of the past, to project a future, and to construct a participatory citizenship that is critical of the world in which they live. A diagram of these school inquiry phases is presented in Figure 1.

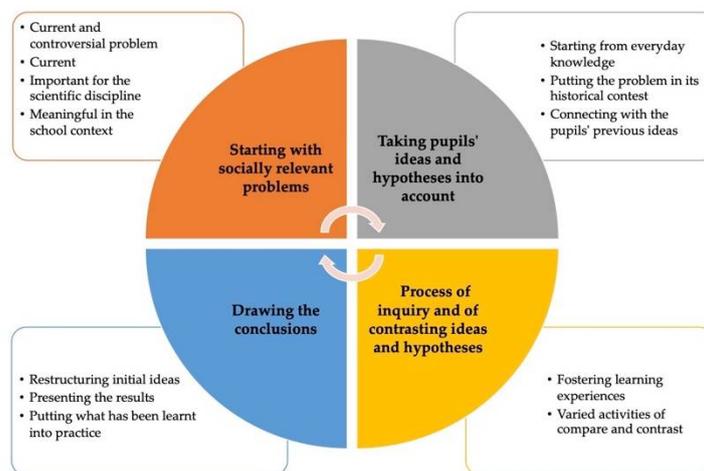


Figure 1. Phases and characteristics of the process of school inquiry.

Nonetheless, this process of school inquiry often faces obstacles to its development. Two of these, noted by [García Gómez \(2011\)](#), are the instability of teaching, which leads to the teacher having little knowledge about the reality of the school and the pupils, and a lack of commitment to the school’s work. Furthermore, this uncertainty in which they move means that the effort the teachers have to make to change their teaching methods will not be seen as receiving sufficient compensation, thus perpetuating a transmissive type of teaching model. The use of textbooks, which is even sometimes imposed in secondary school departments, may appear to be the only resource that provides security and reduces the workload. This use of textbooks encourages the survival of a traditional system that is deeply rooted in both the teachers (with their reproduction of models that they lived with in their own education) and the pupils (clinging to the passive role that, for centuries, has

been imposed on them in all the stages of the education system). Class routines prevail that are marked by the explanation of the theme and completing and correcting homework (García Pastor and Gómez 2008), where the activities designed respond to a predetermined scheme, and neither question the pupils' ideas nor link to complex cognitive processes. In addition, individual learning is encouraged, translated into the organization of the classroom space (individual seating) and the type of tasks requested (generally to be solved alone, without small or large group work). Last but not least, working from a school inquiry model is associated with the negative connotation that the contents are not worked on, clearly reflecting the obsession with needing to teach the entire syllabus (García and García 1989; García Gómez 2011).

These obstacles to school inquiry are accompanied by others specific to implementing citizenship education through the teaching of history. Tutiaux-Guillon (2003) pointed out that the problem is that teaching practices do not favor the development of pupils' democratic attitudes. Boadu (2020) showed that the practices in the classroom of the 24 history teachers he studied reveal minimal attention to the problematization of historical knowledge, since most of the participants teach history as great narratives. This leads to some of the conclusions of Lucas and Delgado-Algarra (2018), who state that promoting civic attitudes among pupils is directly linked to the teacher's clear commitment towards social problems. It also highlights the idea of Delgado-Algarra and Estepa-Giménez (2017) that history teachers still have "a traditional conception of teaching with limited participatory nuances" (p. 273).

1.3. *The Fiesta de la Historia and the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress*

The Fiesta de la Historia in Seville began in 2015 as an extrapolation of the "Festa Internazionale della Storia" that is held in Bologna (Italy) (Borghi 2012). Conceived of as an activity for the dissemination of history and heritage, it is a week in which historical science is promoted in schools and among citizens through exhibitions, guided visits, and various activities. The ultimate objective is to value the culture and history of the location as common heritage from a common perspective of the development of citizenship.

In this framework, in 2016, an activity denominated "Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress" was created. It was conceived of as an essential element for the construction of global citizenship in secondary schools through the dynamization of the teaching of history and social sciences in which it is the pupils themselves who, based on their research-type inquiry, give value to the history that surrounds and shapes us as citizens. The intention is for the Congress to function as a facilitator of innovation and change in the teaching of social sciences, advancing from methods based on the almost exclusive use of textbooks and memorization towards inquiry-based methods. For the schools, this event acts as a place to show, after several months of classroom work, the result of an inquiry-based way of teaching social sciences. Ultimately, its purpose is to improve both pupils' ability to analyze the reality which surrounds them and their active and civic participation in the affairs of their environment.

The call for projects is published at the beginning of the school year, in September. It is targeted at lower and upper secondary education pupils of the entire province of Sevilla (Spain), although schools in other neighboring provinces also respond to the call. The organizing committee puts out some methodological guidelines to take into account in carrying out the projects. These are as follows: the development of work in small groups that is cooperative in nature; that the pupils carry out the inquiry autonomously (with monitoring and advice from their teaching staff); and consultation of different types of sources—oral testimony, active searches on the Internet, work in libraries and other sources of documentary heritage, visits to places of interest, etc. During the course, the pupils develop projects of inquiry that are preferably related to aspects or problems which allow what is investigated to have an impact on citizens, with especial attention paid to civic participation. Some of the suggested themes are: diverse aspects of local history; the life of historical figures; the life of our ancestors; the historical, cultural, natural, and scientific

heritage of the locality or environment; the genesis of the city or town in which one lives; life in the neighborhood; the struggle to improve the well-being of citizens; milestones in contributions to the improvement of society (the printing press, theatres, the creation of the first schools or hospitals, the sewage system, trades and their places, traditions, etc.); the knowledge of other cultures whether or not related to one's own, looking for possible relationships; flamenco; and other issues related to the development of citizenship from history.

The event takes place during the month of March and is held at the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Sevilla. In it, the pupils must present the reports that gather the results of their research processes through oral communication, expository panels, or presentations through slides and/or a video with a duration of between seven and ten minutes.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Research Objectives and Questions

The two main objectives of the present study were:

To evaluate the incidence in terms of participation in the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress in the province of Sevilla from 2016 to 2019;

To determine whether the projects developed follow a logic of inquiry into socially relevant problems which favors the construction of global citizenship.

To meet these objectives, the following research questions were set:

Q1.1. What volume of participation over four years does an event focused on pupil inquiry have?

Q2.1. What themes were addressed in the experiences?

Q2.2. Are the themes presented as socially relevant problems or differently?

Q2.3. What characteristics does the method followed in the classroom have?

Q2.4. What is the relationship between the theme and the way it is presented?

Q2.5. What is the relationship between the way the theme is presented and the method followed in the classroom?

2.2. Research Design, Sample, and Techniques of Data Analysis

The research carried out was qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive (Creswell 2014). To achieve Objective 1, a longitudinal study from 2016 to 2019 was proposed in order to determine the volume of both state and private secondary school participation in the Youth Congress, mostly from the province of Sevilla, with a minor participation from other provinces of Andalusia such as Huelva, Cádiz, Córdoba, and Almería (linked to Q1.1). Sampling was intentional, with all centers participating from the beginning of the event (Creswell 2014).

To achieve Objective 2, a documentary study was carried out based on the data provided by the participating schools, and 63 reports presented by the participating pupil groups were analyzed. Each report consists of the following elements: 1. title of the project; 2. problem or topic investigated; 3. brief summary; 4. description of the research process followed in the classroom; 5. results and conclusions obtained from the research; 6. dissemination of the entire process at the event.

With the qualitative analysis, information was extracted from the dataset, without establishing previous categories or patterns, by following the guidelines of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 2002). In the first phase consisting of open coding, the categories directly linked to the research problems were identified. Three families of codes emerged from this analysis: themes used in the experiences, the way the themes are presented, and a hypothesis of progression of the method followed in the classroom (linked to Q2.1, Q2.2, and Q2.3, respectively). In the second phase consisting of axial coding, the three families of codes were categorized according to their relationships with each other. To this end, the Justifies function of Atlas.ti was applied to the citations of the categories identified, which made it possible to create co-occurrence tables (Friesse 2012). These tables

facilitate the analysis of the relationships between the categories in terms of the frequencies of simultaneous appearance in the same citation (linked to Q2.4 and Q2.5). In the final phase consisting of selective coding, a network of categories and codes was created that captures the most relevant results of the study. The qualitative results of the three phases were also subjected to frequency analyses in order to obtain a quantitative overview of the study. The software used for the analyses was Atlas.ti v.8.4.4.

3. Results

In response to the question relating to the volume of participation in the event (Q1.1), the analysis clearly showed the sparse incidence that the call for participation in the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress had on the target schools. As can be seen in Table 1, in the four years analyzed, the representativeness of the schools (both state and private) in Sevilla province barely exceeded 5%, which denotes that this type of initiative had little impact on the daily life of the secondary school classrooms. Likewise, the presence of other provinces was just anecdotal. Nevertheless, the growth in participation over the years studied does stand out. In the first edition, only six schools participated, while this doubled in the second, to stabilize afterwards.

Table 1. School participation by year ¹.

Participating Schools	I Edition 2016	II Edition 2017	III Edition 2018	IV Edition 2019
Province of Sevilla	6 (3.3%)	7 (3.8%)	10 (5.5%)	9 (5%)
Other Andalusian provinces		3 Córdoba 1 Huelva 1 Cádiz	2 Cádiz 1 Almería	2 Cádiz 1 Almería 1 Córdoba
Totals	6	12	13	13

¹ The percentage representation of schools is relative to the total of public and private schools in the province of Sevilla ($n = 181$). Data retrieved from the website of Ministry of Education and Sports of the Junta (Regional Government) de Andalusia on 15 April 2020: <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion/vscripts/centros/Escolarizacion2019/index.asp>.

Similarly, with regard to the number of reports presented, the data reflect an increase as the editions progressed (Table 2). Thus, in the first edition, only 10 inquiries were presented, while in the second, this number had almost doubled (to 19). In the third and fourth editions, there were fewer, with 16 and 18, respectively.

Table 2. Participation of the different years of secondary education (courses) in the four editions.

Course	I Edition 2016	II Edition 2017	III Edition 2018	IV Edition 2019	Totals by Course
1st ESO	0	0	2	1	3
2nd ESO	4	2	2	1	9
3rd ESO	2	4	3	1	10
4th ESO	0	5	7	6	18
1st Bach	2	4	0	4	10
2nd Bach	2	4	2	5	13
Totals	10	19	16	18	63

ESO = lower secondary education. Bach (baccalaureate) = upper secondary education.

If one looks at the experiences presented by the different years (courses) of secondary schooling, most were carried out in the last year of compulsory lower secondary education (ESO, with 18 inquiries), also notable being the numbers presented for the two years of upper secondary (Bach). These data confirm teachers' resistance to proposing inquiry processes in the first years of secondary education (García Gómez 2011). Nonetheless, the results of a study by Santisteban (2019) indicate that pupils are well able to analyze and interpret sources in these

first lower secondary education years, and that the fundamental problem lies in the lack of custom and in the traditionalism that prevails in teaching (Sáiz Serrano 2013).

With respect to the themes (Q2.1), there were eight different ones used (see Figure 2). Of these, just two represent 69.5% of the inquiries. They are linked to the locality's social, cultural, and historical heritage (38.5%) and to major historical moments (31%). These data confirm the results of Massip et al. (2020) for whom the fact that such themes as heritage or outstanding historical moments are still predominant is linked to the stagnation of school history as a discipline. This is also supported by the curriculum itself: "the History that is presented is that of the great facts and events, and it is almost totally Eurocentric" (p. 184).

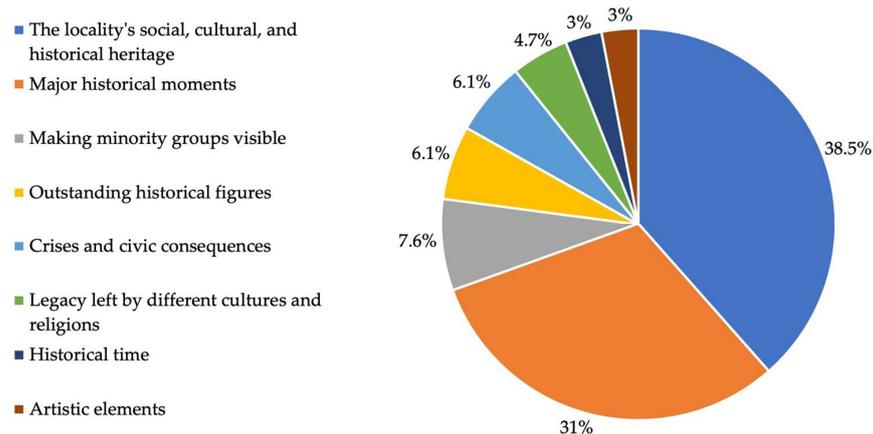


Figure 2. Inquiry themes. Note: two of the cases worked on two themes simultaneously.

The rest of the themes have a notably lesser presence (below 10%). They go from the visibility of minority groups to the study of artistic elements, passing through outstanding historical figures or the legacy of cultures, among others, as can be seen in the examples listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of allusions to the inquiry themes.

Inquiry Themes	Examples of Allusion
The locality's social, cultural, and historical heritage	The "Expo of '92": return to the age of discoveries (2018_IIICJFH_1_ESO_SMS_1)
Major historical moments	The twilight of the Republic: Seville 1936 (2016_ICJFH_4_ESO_IES_SE_1)
Making minority groups visible	The Seville of Women (2019_IVCJFH_4_ESO_CBP_1)
Outstanding historical figures	Murillo and his time (2017_IICJFH_1_BACH_IES_M_1)
Crises and civic consequences	Economic crises in the contemporary world and their impact on citizens' lives (2019_IVCJFH_1_BACH_IES_FM_2)
Legacy left by different cultures and religions	Historical roots of gastronomy in the province of Cádiz (2019_IVCJFH_4_ESO_IES_CC_1)
Historical time	The chronology of the history of humanity and of our locality (2018_IIICJFH_1_ESO_IES_P_1)
Artistic elements	Historical facts through art (2017_IICJFH_1_BACH_CBP_1)

Considering the way the theme is presented (Q2.2), one can distinguish three categories of inquiry for analysis (Table 4): curriculum topics, generally belonging to the content prescribed by the curriculum; topics related to problems typical of the discipline, more appropriate for scientific research in history, geography, anthropology, etc.; and topics that address socially relevant problems, as defined above, linked, in particular, to the school's local context.

Table 4. Examples of allusion to the way in which the themes are presented.

Form of Presentation	Examples of Allusion
Curriculum topic	The War of Independence (1808–1814): military, social, political, and religious aspects. (2017_IICJFH_4_ESO_IES_MS_4)
Discipline-specific problem	Evolution of the different atomic models, the study of the atom, the history of how and why the bomb was created (different projects), consequences deriving from the bomb, the incident in Palomares (Almería) linked to the environment in which we live, historical framework (Cold War) and consequences of the use of the first atomic bombs (Hiroshima and Nagasaki), nuclear fusion and fission. (2018_IICJFH_4_ESO_IES_FMA_1)
Socially relevant problem	Forgotten, hidden from view, and abused: women without history, history without women. (2018_IICJFH_4_ESO_IES_M_1)

The data show (Figure 3) that 50% of the themes were approached as problems of the discipline. This entails overcoming working around a theme that is determined by the curriculum or the reference didactic material (generally textbooks), turning it, instead, into a question approached from a perspective more typical of historical research fields than of classroom inquiry. Nevertheless, this type of classroom work dynamics involves a didactic transposition of just a part of the knowledge that is produced in the historical inquiry (Pagès 2018; Sáiz Serrano and Fuster 2014). Presenting problems from this perspective, even if sources typical of social disciplines are used, does not mean that the pupils are going to develop historical thinking (Sáiz Serrano 2013).

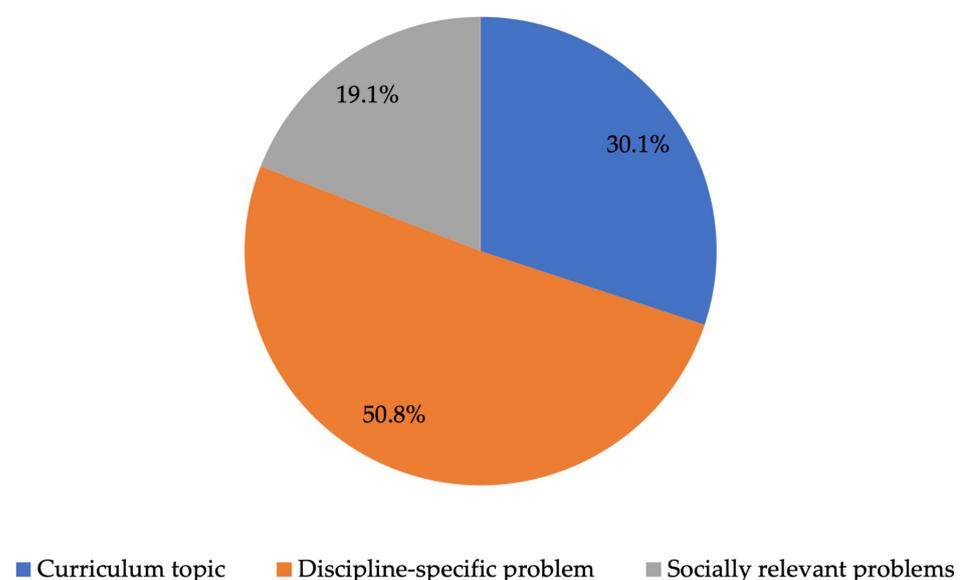


Figure 3. Ways in which the themes are presented.

Together with this, it stands out in the results that few of the projects (19.1%) were approached from a perspective of socially relevant problems. This highlights the difficulties secondary education teachers encounter in approaching the curriculum through problems that organize and structure the content (Pineda and García 2011).

Considering the temporal evolution of how the themes are presented (Figure 4), one finds two issues that stand out. The first is that in 2016, none of the 10 inquiries presented were about a socially relevant problem. It is clear, therefore, that the objective set with the event of introducing invigorating and innovative elements into the classrooms did not have the expected reception. This fact was repeated in 2017, when most of the projects presented concerned curriculum themes. The second is that, after these first two years, the working strategy that the event's organization wished to disseminate began to become consolidated, with the inquiry themes corresponding to discipline-specific and even socially relevant problems taking over at the cost of curriculum themes.

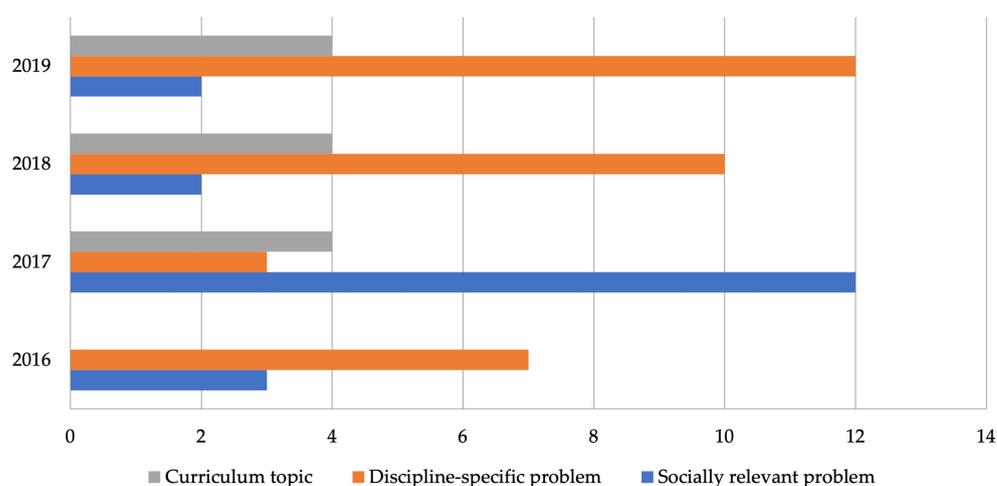


Figure 4. Evolution of the way of presenting content by year of the call.

The characteristics of the methods used emerged from the analysis of the documents (Q2.3). This categorization of the inquiries research allowed us to define the levels of progression that are presented in Table 5. The first two levels refer to a conception of the classroom method as a directed (Level 1) or autonomous (Level 2) search for information. The higher levels refer to a pseudoscientific inquiry process (Level 3) more typical of discipline-specific research in the historical field, and, finally, a level we consider to be desirable (Level 4), which contains all the phases of a process of school inquiry.

The results (see Figure 5) indicate that 38% of the cases worked using a pseudoscientific inquiry process. This was followed by autonomous search with 37%. Only 7% of the cases followed a guided search method. Although it is true that analyzing and obtaining evidence from historical sources and evidence is a basic skill to be able to develop historical and civic thinking, this must “go beyond the simple decoding of textual and iconic information [. . .] mobilizing capacities that transfer the mere literal understanding” (Sáiz Serrano 2013, p. 45).

Table 5. Levels of progression of the methods used in the classroom.

Levels of Methodological Progression	Characteristics or Description of the Process
Directed search	No actual inquiry is carried out, since only one of the phases of the process is present—the search for information. Additionally, the source is set beforehand.
Autonomous search	No actual inquiry is carried out, since only one of the phases of the process is implemented—the search for information. Nonetheless, the sources are free. Sometimes, the inquiry process is confused with carrying out activities of content verification (murals, exhibitions, theatres, etc.).
Pseudoscientific inquiry	A pseudoscientific inquiry is carried out in which the process starts from a certain scientific problem and the pupils perform tasks typical of research in the fields of history, anthropology, geography, etc. (search for information in archives, cataloguing pieces, transcription of manuscripts, etc.). Various activities are carried out as if the pupils were “little historians”.
School inquiry	A process of school inquiry is carried out which includes all of its phases: a school-level problem is posed (one that is close to the pupils, important to society, and relevant from a scientific point of view); the pupils posit their hypotheses and carry out activities of contrast to confirm or refute those hypotheses; and, finally, conclusions are drawn concerning the problem that was posed. Sometimes, the result goes beyond the classroom work itself, and direct transformational interventions are proposed.

Table 6 gives some examples that allude to each of these four levels.

Table 6. Examples of allusions to the different levels of methodological progression.

Levels of Methodological Progression	Examples of Allusions to Each Method
Directed search	<p>“The cholera epidemic of 1834 in Lebrija”</p> <p>Problem or theme investigated: The cholera epidemic of 1834.</p> <p>Description of the process followed in the inquiry: 1. Select the information from an article on the subject; 2. Prepare a collaborative base document; 3. Prepare a collaborative presentation; 4. Prepare the final product (infographic). In this work, we study the influence in Lebrija of the first cholera epidemic that appeared in Spain in 1834, and its effects and consequences in a rural Sevillian town. The study is based on an article by our teacher which studied the influence of this epidemic in three Sevillian towns, including Lebrija, for a conference about death and illness in the 19th century and based on the Chapter Acts and Parish Books of those three towns.</p> <p>(2019_IVCJFH_2_BACH_IES VC_1)</p>
Autonomous search	<p>“Los Caños de Carmona, Seville’s Aqueduct”</p> <p>Problem or theme investigated: History and layout of the Aqueduct of Seville.</p> <p>Description of the process followed in the inquiry: Reading of documents and analysis of plans, tables, engravings, and old texts.</p> <p>(2018_IICJFH_2_ESO_CBP_3)</p>
Pseudoscientific inquiry	<p>“A Cádiz town in the Age of Enlightenment: Chiclana de la Frontera in the mid-18th century”</p> <p>Problem or theme investigated: The historical past of the locality through the general responses to the Marqués de la Ensenada’s Cadastre.</p> <p>Description of the process followed in the inquiry: After choosing the object of study, a visit was organized to the town’s Municipal Archive. Subsequently, the pupils accessed the digitized documentation in PARES, which they transcribed and analyzed as a group. This was completed with the reading of other secondary (bibliographic) sources, which helped to shape the data extracted from the primary documentary sources. The pertinent conclusions were drawn in thematic groups, and will be synthesized in digital format in the coming weeks.</p> <p>(2017_IICJFH_4_ESO_IES PRPC_1)</p>

Table 6. Cont.

Levels of Methodological Progression	Examples of Allusions to Each Method
School inquiry	<p>“Human rights, memory and civic construction of peace from the Memorial in honour of the Republican Cordobans murdered in the Nazi extermination camps which is located in the Glorieta de Nuremberg in the Valdeolleros quarter [in Cordoba city].”</p> <p>Problem or theme investigated: Life in this neighbourhood, and the struggle to improve the well-being of its citizens.</p> <p>Description of the process followed in the inquiry: 0. Linked with the work being carried out in the school within the project “Valdeolleros, our neighbourhood”; 1. Presentation by the teacher of the possibility to research into this theme within the project “Valdeolleros, our neighbourhood” around a memorial in honour of the Republican Cordoba people murdered in the Nazi concentration and extermination camps; 2. Configuration of a work group made up of four pupils from 4th ESO; 3. Generation of a working outline or script based on the initial hypotheses and a work schedule over time; 4. Determination of the documentary sources to be used: written documentation, oral sources, audiovisual sources, photographs, historical heritage (sculptures and public memorials); 5. Development of the inquiry project: several visits to the Memorial de la Glorieta de Nuremberg; consultation of historical documentation about Nazism, World War II, the History of Spain in the twentieth century, specifically, in textbooks in the school; conducting a historical workshop on “Cordobans in the Nazi concentration camps”, with the presence of the University of Sevilla professor, Don Ángel del Río; carrying out a survey to interview people of the neighbourhood and various other persons who could provide us with information about the said memorial (university professors, schoolteachers, the former Director General of the Democratic Memory of the Junta de Andalucía, people from the neighbourhood, and victims of Francoism or relatives of victims of the Nazi camps); recording, analysis, and study of the interviews carried out; a round-table of all the members of the school’s History Department to debate with the class about the historical period being dealt with; documentation of the contacts and projects between Nuremberg and Cordoba through an interview with Don Juan Gregorio Ramírez, president of the North District Council of Cordoba and a key figure in the relations of the Valdeolleros neighbourhood with the association Conoris de Nuremberg; 6. Establishment of a proposal to enhance the value of the Memorial for the citizens of Cordoba in the Barrio de Valdeolleros, inserted to be part of the project “Valdeolleros, our neighbourhood”; connection and collaboration with the neighbourhood’s collectives; 7. Drafting a collaboration project of the IES [secondary school] “Grupo Cántico” with the city of Nuremberg to develop activities to construct citizenship, projects in defence of freedom, and human rights through the collaboration of Don Juan Gregorio Ramírez; 8. Explanation of the project to our peers, teachers, and neighbours in various events over the next two terms; 9. Recording of a video documentary that will reflect all the aspects worked on in the inquiry; 10. Its dissemination on social networks.</p> <p>(2019_IVCJFH_4_ESO_IES GCC_1)</p>

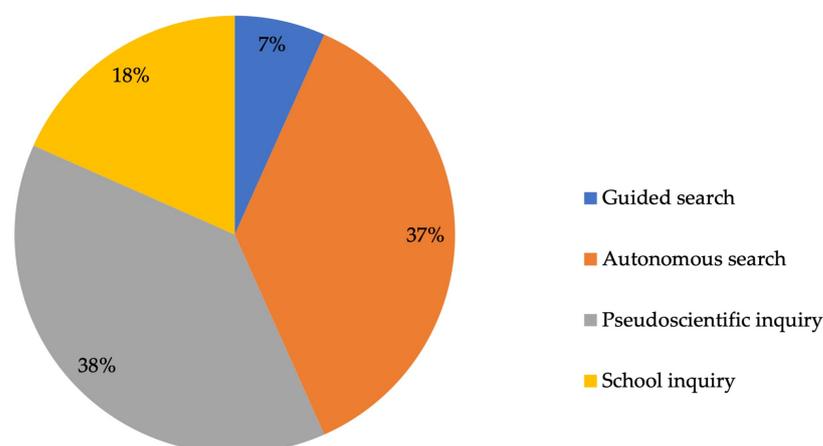


Figure 5. Classification of the methods used in the classroom. Note: In three of the cases, it was impossible to establish the level of inquiry carried out since it was not made explicit.

However, only 18.3% of the cases analyzed followed a school inquiry method as described above. This is a reflection of the difficulties and obstacles confronting the implementation of innovative processes in secondary education classrooms (García Gómez 2011).

From a chronological perspective, it is noteworthy that, in the first edition of the Congress, inquiry that followed an autonomous search method prevailed. In the second and third editions, there was a considerable increase in the number of experiences based on a pseudoscientific inquiry method. In the last edition analyzed, however, the data reflect a regression towards the use of methods that are further away from the school inquiry proposals (see Figure 6).

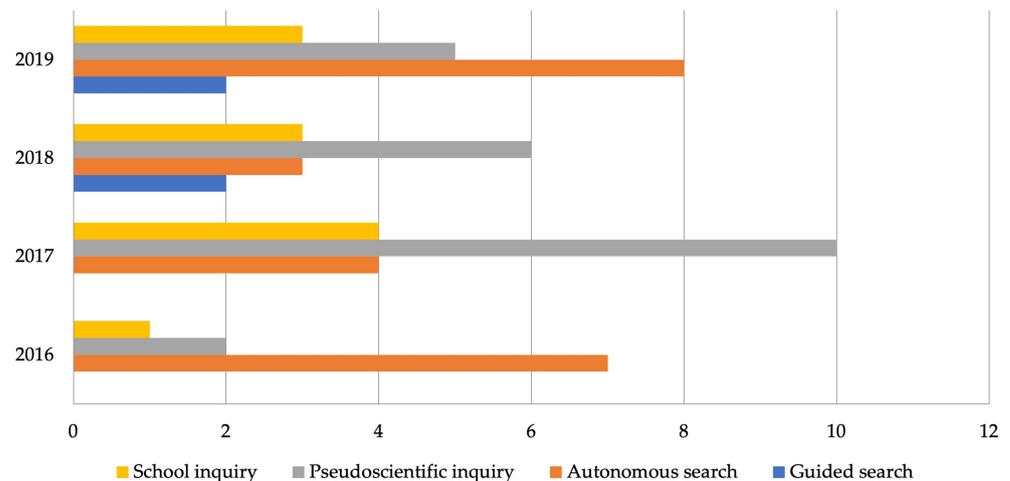


Figure 6. Annual evolution of the classification of the methods used in the classrooms.

With respect to Q2.4, according to the data, there is a positive relationship between the inquiry theme and the way in which it is presented (Table 7). Thus, for those questions that relate to knowing about the locality's social, cultural, and historical heritage, there is a focus on inquiry into a discipline-specific problem as well as, on a considerable number of occasions, on inquiry into a socially relevant problem. On the contrary, the projects that address outstanding historical moments are presented as curriculum themes, generally because these are established and presented in textbooks, and the method proposed only provides an intention to look into them in greater depth.

Table 7. Co-occurrences between inquiry themes and the way the content is presented.

Themes		Curriculum Topic	Discipline-Specific Problem	Socially Relevant Problem
		<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 32	<i>n</i> = 12
The locality's social, cultural, and historical heritage	<i>n</i> = 25	3	14	7
Major historical moments	<i>n</i> = 20	10	9	1
Making minority groups visible	<i>n</i> = 5	1	1	2
Outstanding figures	<i>n</i> = 4	2	1	1
Crises and civic consequences	<i>n</i> = 4	0	3	1
Legacy left by different cultures and religions	<i>n</i> = 3	1	2	0
Historical time	<i>n</i> = 2	1	1	0
Artistic elements	<i>n</i> = 2	1	1	0

Finally, the relationship established between the way of presenting the theme and the levels of progression of the method used in the classroom (Q2.5), as presented in Table 8, indicates that, as the themes get closer to inquiry into socially relevant problems, the method used becomes more complex and typical of school inquiry. Thus, for inquiries into issues corresponding to the curriculum, a method based on the autonomous search for information predominates (9 experiences); the works presented as problems of the discipline (15 experiences) follow a pseudoscientific inquiry process, with tasks typical of historical research; and, finally, the works addressing socially relevant problems (9 experiences) are developed through a school inquiry process.

Table 8. Co-occurrences between the method used in the classroom and the way the content is presented ¹.

Form of Presentation	Method Used in the Classroom			
	Directed Search	Autonomous Search	Pseudoscientific Inquiry	School Inquiry
Curriculum topic	1	9	8	0
Discipline-specific problem	2	11	15	2
Socially relevant problem	1	2	0	9

¹ 1 lost in 2017; 2 lost in 2018.

4. Conclusions

The present research has allowed us to determine and analyze the repercussion of the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress in Sevilla province and of the projects that were presented throughout four editions of it. The results have highlighted the need to continue delving into activities of this type and their dynamics. One of the first results is linked to the low impact of this type of initiative, at least in the schools of Sevilla province. The most plausible explanation for this fact may be the resistance inherent in the culture of schools and teachers to accept external proposals or initiatives (Bolívar 2007; Fullan 2007). Although there are a group of teachers who are interested in proposing other classroom dynamics, their participation is just anecdotal. In addition, the processes of educational change and innovation depend on multiple factors that condition and hinder them (Murillo and Krichesky 2012). Additionally, noteworthy is the fact that, in the course of the four years of the Congress, the presence of the schools barely varied. We therefore understand that there is a need to make initiatives of this type visible in other ways so that they truly reach the schools and classrooms, and to find an active involvement that allows these events to stop being seen as something just testimonial.

Other results are in line with some of those reported by Pagès (2018), and which are directly linked to the socio-genesis of history (Cuesta 1998) as a school subject. Thus, the history that is being taught is a chronological history presented in a linear way. This is demonstrated in our case in the two predominant themes: the locality's social, cultural, and historical heritage (as a legacy in the evolutionary-historical narrative of other past cultures and civilizations), and the major historical moments (most often, those of national, political, and factual history). Together with this, the way in which the themes were presented is especially significant since 50% of them were approached in the form of normal problems of the discipline which are related more to scientific research issues than to school inquiry. Additionally, in the methods used in the classroom, inquiries that start from a scientific problem predominate in which the pupils carry out tasks typical of historical, anthropological, or geographical research. The interpretation of sources stands out in the principal tasks carried out by the pupils in this type of method, which can be a good starting point for broader and more complete school inquiry methods.

We would highlight, in this sense, the basic operations involved in interpreting sources as ways of thinking about history, which [González-Monfort et al. \(2011\)](#) summarized into three classes: (i) the reading and treatment of documents or historical evidence; (ii) confronting historical texts with different or opposing interpretations; and (iii) the process of constructing history. [Santisteban \(2010, p. 49\)](#) also pointed out that inquiry using sources “favours the development of the competency of historical interpretation but also the incorporation of historical experience” in the sense of including personal, cultural, and historical elements of the pupils when they are interpreting and understanding sources. Nonetheless, working with sources cannot be carried out in a de-contextualized way about any discipline-specific problem whatsoever but must be put into play “based on historical problems from which the pupils put their historical experience into play, for the development of historical competency” ([Santisteban et al. 2010, p. 120](#)). In this way, the contextualization of the historical phenomenon and the pupils’ capacity to analyze and reason give meaning to the actions of past history and predispose the pupils to developing historical empathy, to understanding other visions of the event, and to put themselves in the place of others ([Meneses et al. 2019](#)). Therefore, the main results of the present study, in which inquiry into problems typical of a discipline approached with a pseudoscientific method predominates, confirm the beginning of a process of teaching history in secondary school classrooms favoring the richness of experiences, and allowing the pupils to acquire historical knowledge progressively ([Santisteban et al. 2010](#)). It still does not, however, meet the ultimate goal of developing global citizenship because it does not work on relevant social problems ([Santisteban 2019](#)).

Our data have brought to light some challenges that need to be faced in order to ensure that the themes of inquiry in the classroom are presented as real relevant social problems to be resolved by means of a school inquiry method. The results indicate that, of the 63 inquiries in the four years analyzed, only 9 (14.3%) were approached in the way actually indicated in the calls for the Congress. In this sense, it seems evident that there is a need to clearly define the learning objectives of a Congress proposal like the one presented here, and especially to encourage the participating teachers to design and carry out learning experiences with their pupils that will allow them to think about and discuss controversial problems and challenges ([Aguilar-Forero et al. 2019](#)). Different studies ([Llorente and Etxeberria 2019](#); [Morgade 2017](#); [Salinas and Oller 2017](#)) corroborate the positivity of pupils’ responses to this type of proposal. Indeed, the results of [Llorente and Etxeberria \(2019\)](#) showed that pupils are highly motivated when the learning of historical content is linked to current and complex situations which allow them to assimilate the interrelated and multi-causal nature of the processes, since, methodologically, the approaches are active, mainly based on the historical method. In other contexts, this type of initiative has also had a great impact. [Meerah and Arsad \(2010\)](#) reported that in Malaysia, it has been shown that including inquiry projects in social sciences subjects (geography, history, and social skills) is vital to enable the formation of informed, competent citizens with high moral standards.

Finally, we think that the decisive element to understanding the data that have been described and analyzed is the part that the teachers play. Although our research has not delved into this aspect, it is undeniable that part of the results obtained are explained by this variable. There is no room for doubt that the teacher is vital to generating rich and meaningful historical experiences for their pupils by making them aware of the sources and of the diversity of historical perspectives ([Meneses et al. 2019](#)). Similarly, for teachers to be able to put into practice those historical experiences which foster citizenship among their pupils, it is vital that they develop these competencies in themselves ([Tichnor-Wagner et al. 2016](#)). [Fuentes-Moreno et al. \(2020\)](#) concluded that teachers fulfil a fundamental role in the promotion of citizenship education in their classes through the teaching of social sciences, since their role is fundamental in the choice of both content and work methods, as well as in generating learning environments that favor participatory processes. For the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress to meet its objectives, it is necessary for teachers to change their model and, above all, for them to have received preparation both in the

development of historical and civic awareness from a content point of view, and in the teaching strategies and methods that they will promote. The study by [Delgado-Algarra and Estepa-Giménez \(2017\)](#) points to a minority teacher model that is characterized by its fostering pupil engagement, understanding history classes to be a fundamental space for citizenship education, and that does so by tackling conflictive issues through debate as a form of the construction of thinking. Nevertheless, most of the results of that study reflect a teacher who is sensitive to criticism but without transferring this into the classroom context, and that there are major divergences between thinking and practice which, according to those authors, can influence the construction of a democratic and civic attitude in the pupils.

In summary, events with characteristics similar to those of the Fiesta de la Historia Youth Congress represent an improvement for the construction of global citizenship through history in comparison with the usual classroom practices. Nonetheless, in order for it to reach the maximum levels of development that would be desirable, based on investigation into socially relevant problems through a school inquiry method, it is necessary to provide teachers with training. This is a line that we propose to explore in future work.

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Notes

- ¹ Secondary education in Spain lasts six years, distributed as follows: the first four years correspond to compulsory (i.e., lower) secondary education (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th of ESO), and the last two years to the baccalaureate (i.e., upper secondary education—1st and 2nd of BACC).

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