

Citizenship Education through University Classrooms

Fostering Values and National Belonging in Qatar

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As Qatar builds towards a cohesive, innovative, and sustainable society, the Qatar National Vision 2030 places human and social development at the core of this transformation. Universities carry the responsibility of imparting knowledge while shaping citizens capable of contributing to national progress, even as they engage with global challenges. As the national university, Qatar University bears a significant responsibility to prepare students to become responsible, reflective, and value-driven members of society. In this context, citizenship education should not be confined to textbooks or classroom instruction alone; it must be experienced, practiced, and connected to real-world issues.



This report outlines a current project in the course “EDUC200: Education and Social Problems,” which is a general education course redesigned to enhance values, identity, and citizenship by using experiential and community-based practices. The course integrates active learning methods, open engagement platforms, and reflective online practices designed to foster accountable participation, strengthen national identity, and enhance ethical awareness among undergraduate students. Although the study is still in progress, its design already offers valuable insights into how higher education can contribute to the objectives of Qatar’s research and development strategy. The course design is based on the modern theories of learning and identity. The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky emphasizes the fact that knowledge and values are developed in the process of interaction, dialogue, and mutual activity. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that the transmission of values and civic dispositions is not a mechanical process, but rather one that is co-constructed through meaningful participation. This approach is further guided by the principles of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), which encourages the systematic investigation of teaching practices, the collection of evidence on their effectiveness, and the dissemination of findings to broader academic and professional communities.

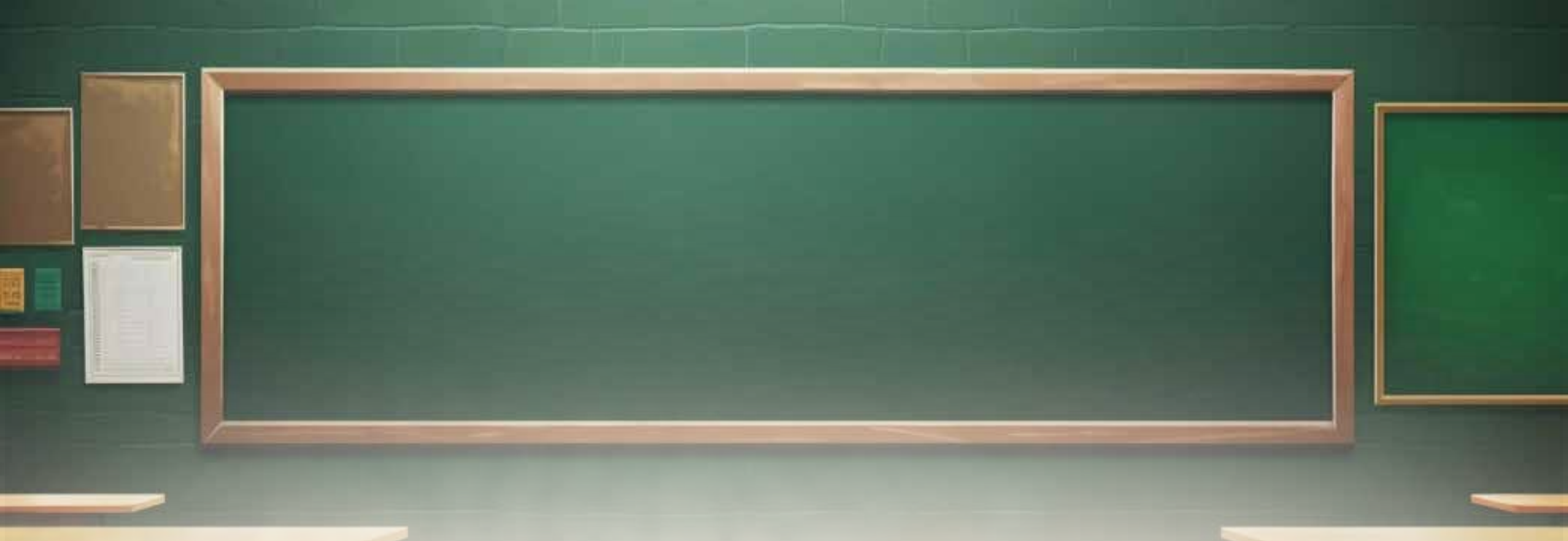


Simultaneously, the focus on the 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, and reflection, will ensure that the course is oriented towards the transformations in the sphere of higher education worldwide and will equip students to cope with the challenges of the fast-changing world.

The EDUC200 weekly model is a blend of theoretical lectures, guided discussions, and practical tasks. The topics are sequenced progressively, moving from the personal to the societal. The course begins with an exploration of youth and education, addressing themes such as identity, mental health, and the role of technology in young people’s lives. Students then shift to discussions on family and schooling, where they examine communication gaps between home and school and their implications for student learning. In the following weeks, the focus expands to values within the context of globalization, including the influence of social media, consumer culture, cultural diversity, and artificial intelligence on identity and behaviour. The final segment of the course engages students in connecting citizenship and nation-building to the four pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030—human, social, economic, and environmental development. To ensure academic rigor, students employ the Claim–Evidence–Reasoning (CER) framework, which requires them to substantiate their arguments with evidence rather than personal opinion. Interactive tools such as live polls and digital sticky notes support sustained engagement, even in large classrooms, while case studies and role-play exercises encourage students to approach issues from multiple perspectives.

Two major assignments are designed to translate theory into practice. The first is the Group Community Project and Exhibition, in which student groups identify a locally relevant social issue, investigate its underlying causes, and propose an original solution. Their work is then presented in a digital format—such as a video, podcast, awareness campaign, or web-based product—and culminates in a public showcase held at the College





of Education. This transforms the classroom into a civic arena, where students engage with peers, faculty, and visitors in a dialogue around real social concerns. The second assignment is the Individual Reflective Blog, where each student selects a personal habit with wider social implications, such as digital balance, reading, or environmental practices, and documents their efforts to improve it throughout the semester. Weekly reflections help students connect personal growth with broader social challenges, fostering deeper self-awareness, ethical online behaviour, and the application of values in everyday life.

This course design will contribute directly to the development of the Society Pillar of the research strategy of Qatar University and will correspond to the National Development Strategy (2030). At the family and social level, the course addresses the importance of effective communication between schools and parents, as well as the role of youth well-being in educational success. In terms of identity and citizenship, it explores the formation of values in an increasingly globalised and digitalised world, with particular emphasis on responsible engagement with artificial intelligence. At the digital transformation level, the course equips students with the skills and ethical awareness needed to participate responsibly in online communities. The economic and environmental pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 are embedded throughout the design, fostering entrepreneurial thinking through creative, innovative student projects and encouraging environmental responsibility by addressing sustainability, waste management, and

similar contemporary challenges.

The course is intentionally designed with ethical safeguards to promote responsible practice. Students are required to disclose the use of artificial intelligence tools transparently, reinforcing the link between digital ethics and digital citizenship. Privacy is protected by prohibiting the sharing of peer images without consent, and the use of respectful and dignified language is expected both in class and in online interactions. These measures are not merely protective, but developmental—helping cultivate behaviours that are essential for a knowledge-based society undergoing rapid technological transformation and evolving forms of citizenship.

Citizenship education in university settings cannot be reduced to abstract instruction on rights and duties alone. What ultimately shapes real communities are lived values, a nurtured sense of identity, and the ability to generate and communicate solutions to social challenges. EDUC200: Education and Social Problems offers a practical blueprint for how Qatar University can translate its mission into meaningful teaching through active learning, community engagement, and reflective digital practice. The course contributes to cultivating a generation of learners and civic actors capable of balancing tradition with modernity, national identity with global citizenship, and ethical responsibility with technological innovation. In doing so, it stands as a potential model for how higher education can support Qatar's aspiration to build a harmonious, equitable, and sustainable society.