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Learning to Teach–Learning to Value?

An Example of Citizenship Education in Initial Teacher Training

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An Example of Citizenship Education in Initial Teacher Training

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Abstract

This article describes and reflects on the annual 'Values Week' which is held in the Department of Primary Education at the Nottingham Trent University and which constitutes an example of an 'events and activities' approach to the development of citizenship. The value of this approach and its relationship with other forms of provision is discussed and the approach is set within the context of citizenship education in the UK. Issues relating to the impact of the week on student learning are also addressed.

Keywords: Citizenship, Values Education, Initial Teacher Training

Introduction

This paper is a reflective discussion of an emerging example of practice using an 'events and activities' approach to the development of citizenship within an ITT course. Evidence of data from early evaluations of the approach is detailed in a previous article by the authors. However, this example of practice is very much a 'work in progress'. The discussion explores how the relationship between reflective practice in curriculum development is being used to create a rich resource of more structured research opportunities that will form the basis for future work in this area.

Citizenship within the Context of UK Primary Education

Within the UK context, it is only relatively recently that citizenship education has appeared as a discrete subject or focus within the curriculum of primary and secondary schools. Prior to the Education Reform Act 1988, schools had a high degree of autonomy over teaching style and content and citizenship issues were addressed in a variety of ways and to differing degrees in different schools. In many secondary schools it was approached through subjects such as history, civics and politics and in primary schools, through the 'whole child' approach to personal and social education. Throughout the 1970's much work was done on antiracist and multicultural education, as the increasingly pluralistic nature of British society demanded that educational practice reflected and prepared children for their role in a more diverse society. In 1988 the introduction of a national curriculum which incorporated a traditional subject based structure throughout both primary and secondary phases of education, led to a decline in cross curricular and affective approaches. Early criticism of the lack of integrated and cross curricular opportunities

presented by this national framework, led to the publication of non statutory guidance documents on a range of cross curricular themes, one of which was education for citizenship (NCC1990). However, the overwhelming demands of the statutory requirements meant that few schools developed citizenship policies and these were not the focus for school inspections.

In 1997, the Government White Paper on Education, *Excellence in Schools*, advocated the intention to 'strengthen education for citizenship and teaching of democracy in schools' and an advisory group chaired by Bernard Crick was set up 'to report on and make appropriate recommendations for the teaching of citizenship and democracy in schools'. (QCA1998) The preface to this report advises that 'citizenship and the teaching of democracy..... is so important both for schools and the life of the nation that there must be a statutory requirement on schools to ensure that it is part of the entitlement of all pupils'.

In 2000, a revision of the national curriculum (DfEE1999) made teaching citizenship a compulsory subject in secondary schools and provided guidance for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship in primary schools. Two broad aims were set out for the school curriculum:

- to provide opportunities for all children to learn and achieve; and
- to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life

The preface to the guidance document for primary education states that these interdependent aims for the school curriculum cannot be fully achieved without the provision of PSHE and citizenship. (QCA2000)

Another factor affecting citizenship education in schools has been the speed with which globalisation has



developed and the impact this is having on the very concept of what it means to be a citizen in a world in which our local actions have global impacts. We are now as intimately connected to distant places through global networks of information and communication as we are to our immediate neighbours. We are no longer tied to place in the traditional sense and many analysts have seen globalisation herald the decline and end of the nation state (Baumann 1998; Beck 2000). This has huge implications for the very concept of citizenship and the model of citizenship on which much of the curriculum in England is founded, is in many ways already outdated. It remains tied to the notion of the local and national ideal of the 'good citizen' operating within the boundaries of the homogenous and clearly defined nation state and globalisation has made clear the limitations of this concept of citizenship. The development of global communications, mobility and environmental concerns, as well as the increasingly pluralistic nature of the society in which we live, demands a much broader and more universally humanistic approach to education for citizenship.

The concept of global citizenship has been taken up and developed by Non Governmental Organisations such as Oxfam (1998) and the need for a more global dimension to the primary curriculum has recently been recognised and promoted by government guidance documentation.(DFID et al 2000) This approach to citizenship builds on the ideas and values incorporated in educational fields such development education and international/global education and is underpinned by a coherent set of organising conceptual categories:

- Social justice
- Diversity
- Globalisation and interdependence
- Sustainable development
- Conflict resolution
- Human rights

Citizenship is by its very nature a contested and changing concept – definitions will be influenced by the values of individuals, communities and cultures and will necessarily be tied to the political and economic realities of the changing world in which we live. Discussion of the nature of citizenship and what it means to be a citizen in a society in which many people will have identities and allegiances to cultures and communities beyond the boundaries of the nation state, have to be key processes in citizenship education and need to be pivotal to the process of teacher education.

Government requirements for the training of teachers and the professional standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (TTA 2002) demand that trainees need to be familiar with the national framework for PSHE and Citizenship and states that it is 'important for trainee teachers to understand that the national curriculum has been designed to do more than set out a particular body of knowledge to be delivered to pupils

and includes preparing pupils for life outside school'. The vagueness of this requirement does little to give status to this aspect of the primary curriculum and although many aspects of citizenship may be developed through specific subject teaching, there is little here to ensure that trainees go beyond this to consider citizenship in terms of their own personal and professional development, and begin to understand how this can be developed in the context of the school community.

Bringing together trainees' own personal citizenship education with their developing professional needs is a continuing concern for many ITT providers and finding the most effective ways of incorporating citizenship into courses is an on-going issue. That citizenship needs to be approached through a variety of forms of provision is as true for ITT courses as it is for schools. The forms identified by QCA (2000) -

- discrete curriculum time
- teaching through and in other curriculum areas
- activities and school events -

provide a useful framework in planning a citizenship curriculum for primary student teachers. A combination of these types of approach offers the greatest potential for students to come to an understanding of the nature of citizenship, its place within the school curriculum and appropriate pedagogical strategies. At the Nottingham Trent University a particular focus has been placed on the development of an 'activities and events' approach which, whilst having value in its own right, has also influenced and developed the other approaches used in the Department of Primary Education – teaching in discrete curriculum time and through and in other areas.

The Genesis of Values Week

Values Week arose from student concerns about a perceived lack of focus on the affective and attitudinal development of student learning. In the year 2000, a group of predominantly, though not exclusively, black students approached the course leader with concerns about the attitudes of some of their fellow students and felt that the course should be addressing issues of equal opportunities, cultural diversity and anti racism in a much more explicit way. At the time the requirements for initial teacher training (Circular 4/98 DfEE) were focusing attention on subject knowledge, the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, the core subjects and ICT. The students felt this focus was too subject knowledge based such that insufficient curriculum time was being dedicated to the exploration of values and attitudes.

In addition, the focus on citizenship in the early 1990s, promoting cross curricular elements in response to non statutory curriculum guidance, had also dissipated. There was a growing awareness that these important

areas of learning and teaching were not being made explicit within the course

In response to these concerns, a working party of students and tutors was set up and the result was the introduction of an annual Values Week providing a context for tutors, students and support staff to share in learning experiences related to the development of the values dimension, thereby giving students an opportunity to stand back from an increasingly subject-based and over-loaded curriculum to reflect on some of the wider issues in education.

The Aims of Values Week

Established by the original working party, the aims were devised in terms of providing opportunities to:

- explore our own values, attitudes and beliefs;
- raise our awareness of how these influence us in learning and teaching situations;
- increase our knowledge and confidence in addressing issues related to values and attitudes;
- experience and reflect on examples of practice;
- influence the development of the values dimension on the course and across the whole curriculum;
- equip both tutors and students with experiences which will inform their teaching and learning throughout the year;
- learn about the values and experiences of people in other cultures;
- consider the value systems and perspectives of others.

It was perceived initially that the implementation of Values Week would act as a spur to promote thinking and learning in citizenship and values education and gradually, as a range of other approaches were developed, many of the experiences would be embedded and assimilated within the regular curriculum. At first we were uncomfortable about allocating a brief and discrete period of time to citizenship and values, fearing that it implied these aspects of teaching and learning did not already take place and did not underpin our whole curriculum. This was far from true as many aspects of citizenship were being addressed within curriculum areas, such as global citizenship in geography, sustainability in design and technology and PSHE in education studies. Although citizenship was perhaps most explicitly addressed within the humanities modules, it was an implicit part of much of the teaching students received on the course.

In practice, the role of Values Week has made these aspects more identifiable to students, enabling an enrichment and extension of students' experiences which contextualises their learning in real life contexts and offers more informal interactions between students and tutors.

The original group of students suggested the term Values Week rather than 'Citizenship Week' as they clearly identified their main concern, where they wanted to see change and development, related to values issues. As Claire (2001) states 'Values education' is the generic term for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, development education, religious education, multicultural and anti racist education, and above all Human Rights education which underpins concepts of a good citizen and a just society' (p 105). Students believed the term 'values' encompassed their aspirations for the week and felt they understood this as a broad and sufficiently all embracing concept. The term 'citizenship', was not such a user friendly concept for them, despite it inhabiting common territory with values education.

Under the control of a core of self selected students and tutors working with the support of and in response to the feedback from the whole community, the week naturally has a flexible and changing agenda. This is very much in line with the view of citizenship education described by Cunningham (2000) 'The school's own vision of itself is the essential foundation of any work in citizenship and participation' (p134) This is also true for ITT institutions and the element of student participation and control means that we cannot, and would not want to, set up Values Week solely in order to meet curriculum objectives in citizenship. The values-focused approach through this particular event, has a contribution to make to the overall development of students' understanding of citizenship and the focus is on *how* we are learning in this week as well as *what* we learn.

As a model for how particular aspects of citizenship education can be addressed on ITT courses with competing demands on curriculum time, the Values Week experience has much to offer. The value of using an 'events and activities' approach alongside other approaches can enrich students' experience and understanding not only in relation to particular areas of learning but also in them being able to engage with the content in a particular way. The areas of knowledge and understanding addressed through Values Week include

- Religious Education
- political literacy
- citizenship
- inclusion
- equal opportunities
- sustainability and environmental education
- cultural diversity
- literature and the arts

Students can reflect on their own values, beliefs and responses through the experiences on offer, and begin to make sense of how these impact on their personal and professional lives. During the week, in order to

facilitate this internal and external reflection, there are opportunities for :

- tutors and students to learn together within lectures and workshops;
- students and tutors to benefit from the experience of experts from outside agencies;
- attendance at a national key note lecture which gives status and a wider picture;
- student involvement in the organisation and in contributing workshops;
- learning in a context completely free from assessment;
- students to reflect on the experience with their professional tutor;
- students from different year groups working together;
- involvement of community and religious groups;
- involvement of partnership schools.

The Structure and Content of the Programme

The regular timetable for the BA ITT programme is suspended for one week with three days allocated to the provision of a series of sessions that relate specifically to the values dimension and the remaining two days used by students as study days or to undertake additional optional visits.

From its onset, the content and pattern of the week has been organised by the working group of students and tutors with one student and one tutor acting as joint co-ordinators. At the start of the year, students confirm their interest in being involved in the planning by attending an open meeting. At that meeting suggestions for new sessions and new directions are requested as well as roles assigned. Each year the nature of the roles alter slightly to reflect different students' experiences and skills. The co-ordinators work on devising the programme, contacting providers and organising resources, whilst students, in sub groups with a member of staff, take responsibility for organising the 'meeting and greeting' team, the publicity and the fundraising. Regular meetings ensure the planning is developing on schedule and any problems are addressed as they arise. During Values Week itself, the working group operates as a team to ensure the smooth running of all the activities and the organisation.

The sessions take a variety of forms: seminars, workshops, visits to significant sites and a keynote lecture. They vary in length from one hour to a half or whole day (2 or 4 hours) and are led by a range of individuals. These 'providers' come either from outside agencies, are nationally known speakers, or are staff tutors or students from within the Department. Each year the content of sessions and the providers alters, with some remaining constant and others changing, ensuring opportunities for students to access

popular sessions as well as experience new issues with new speakers.

Whilst the choice of sessions depends in part on the availability and financial cost of providers to attend during the specified week, responding to previous years' student evaluations as well as local and national issues of the moment is of greater significance in determining the programme content. Over the years, some issues have developed to such an extent, as in the case of a school linking project with Goa, that they are now embedded as an essential part of the humanities element within the main ITT programme.

Student attendance at sessions is down to personal choice, although there is a minimum requirement in terms of the number of sessions. There are compulsory sessions for particular year groups, as well as the expectation that everyone will attend the keynote lecture. Fine tuning the programme to make sure there is sufficient choice and opportunities for all students to attend the minimum number of sessions is problematic, especially as some sessions are particularly popular whilst others sometimes fail to recruit. Interestingly, this popularity does appear to alter from year to year, perhaps reflecting the needs of a particular combination of year groups but there is as yet no clear pattern for these differing responses.

Values Week is one of very few occasions when students are provided with the opportunity to communicate with students in other year groups and forge new connections which aids the promotion of a stronger programme identity. This opportunity takes the form of a time slot during the week, allocated to a professional tutor meeting which allows all students, in cross-year groups, to meet with their professional tutor and discuss their experiences of Values Week directly, at the same time completing their evaluations. This interaction is reflected in their professional development portfolios, as it forms part of a series of on-going discussions held during the year. As the week becomes more established, it is also becoming a shared reference point across the course, as all staff and students can refer to the experiences gained throughout the event and use them as teaching and learning examples.

This shared reference point is also reinforced with the inclusion of a keynote lecture fronted by a nationally known speaker or group. It enables students and tutors to feel they belong to a larger debate and places the whole of Values Week within a wider context. The contributions made by David Hicks on futures education, by Michael Rosen on creativity, and by the Roundabout Theatre Company on the experiences of an Iranian child in Britain have made it possible to address issues of the moment that are engaging a wider audience and thereby broaden the students' educational perspective.

The Types of Activities

The range of different types of activities offered during Values Week allows for all the areas of knowledge and understanding within citizenship education to be addressed in some way. We are aware that most activities may fit into more than one area of knowledge and understanding and that this is not the only form of categorisation possible, but that it serves to demonstrate the spread and flexibility of the programme offered.

In terms of Religious Education, the focus for sessions is on heightening the awareness of students and tutors to the practices and beliefs of specific religions and at how this understanding can be explored further in schools with children. In addition there are sessions on specific festivals such as Kwanzaa, and opportunities to visit places of worship, such as the Hindu Temple or Beth Shalom, the Holocaust Centre in north Nottinghamshire.

For political literacy, the central idea has been to examine how society functions generally and promote more of a global perspective. Sessions with a historical focus such as ‘Upstairs, Downstairs’ have been used to examine how the values and organisation of society have changed through time. Sessions on how to develop ‘Democratic Classrooms’ have enabled students to examine their own practice and sessions such as ‘Values in Literature’ have examined ways of addressing issues such as war and displacement, divorce, death or sexuality, by using children’s literature appropriate to their age and maturity. There are also opportunities for visits, for example, to the National Centre for Citizenship at the Galleries of Justice, enabling students to be involved in role play relating to issues of fairness and social justice.

The role of the citizen and citizenship is covered by sessions relating to personal, social and health education and community involvement. With sessions such as ‘DARE’ (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) or ‘ChildLine’, the practical action of the charity is explained within the context of why it needs to exist at all and how the work relates specifically to schools is examined alongside how the responsibilities we have as teachers integrate with that work. This focus on our social and moral responsibilities is also demonstrated during the week by students actively taking part in a fund-raising activity. In the last three years funds have been raised for various children’s charities both locally and globally through making and flying kites (for educating the children of Afghanistan) making and buying food from around the world (for the local children’s hospice) and making tutors and students take part in fun activities based on a TV programme (for a chronic and terminally ill children’s charity providing last wishes for children). Further understanding of community involvement is demonstrated using the relationships between the Department and members of local communities and teachers from partnership

schools, to model a way of creating these relationships for when students become teachers in schools.

The areas of inclusion and equal opportunities clearly overlap and sessions often follow the pattern of examining the practical action taken to address issues within society at large and then highlighting what this means in terms of the implications for schools and teachers. The focus is wide and includes sessions relating to special educational needs as in the case of ‘Adapted PE’ where students work with children from PMD special schools in PE and games activities that have been adapted to take account of their needs, or ‘Makaton’ which provides students with training in the signing system used in special schools. Other sessions look at the work done by providers such as the Nottingham Travellers’ Team who work with ‘Gypsies & Travellers’ in the local area or the local education authority’s work ‘Supporting Refugee and Asylum Seeker Children’.

Issues relating to sustainability and environmental education like intermediate technology or recycling have been examined through sessions such as ‘Education for Sustainability’ and the ‘Sabre-Toothed Curriculum’ as well as visits to an environmental education site based near Sherwood Forest. For cultural diversity, as well as literature and the arts, great use has been made of local musicians and storytellers to provide sessions reflecting specific cultural aspects such as ‘African drumming’, workshops on festivals such as Kwanzaa, and literary aspects with the use of children’s literature in ‘Values in Literature’. In some sessions culture and literature form a powerful combination as in ‘The Spirit of the Storyteller’ where the personal experience of the provider, in this case a tutor, featured heavily. The provider’s father was the ‘Keeper of Stories of the Maroon People in Britain’. He had passed on to his son all his stories and woodcarvings from Jamaica, with the express purpose that the stories should continue to be told and his carvings shown.

All these concepts allow local, national and global perspectives to be addressed whilst still starting from the values system of the individual. It enables all students and tutors to reflect on and address their own values within this larger perspective whilst also allowing them to develop skills, knowledge and understanding to support their practice.

Issues Relating to Students’ Learning Experiences Arising from Values Week

To examine the effect of Values Week on students’ learning, each year a formal opportunity is offered where students are asked to complete an evaluation sheet during their meeting with professional tutors. Session providers are asked to give their thoughts on ways to improve the event from their perspective. Informal and anecdotal comments are also fed back throughout the year as students make reference to

experiences initiated during Values Week that are being built on in other areas of the ITT programme. This in turn impacts on the course itself, though in a less structured way than the collected evaluations.

One issue that has arisen is the need to prepare students beforehand in developing their understanding of citizenship and the values dimension by giving specific input on the purposes of Values Week and what they might hope to achieve from attending sessions. This preparation varies according to year group, with first year students having a longer, more detailed presentation and third year students reminded to add to their range of previous experiences.

Another issue relates to how and why students take up the sessions on offer. Values Week has no specified learning outcomes or performance expectations laid down as it is a non-assessed part of the course. This non-threatening environment allows students to explore their own values systems and reflect upon their assumptions without feeling pressured. For most of them it is a positive experience. Initially they appear to be attracted to sessions that reflect their own interests or have direct practical applications to their school-based training and there has been some concern that students tend to reject workshops which have a more explicit political or formal citizenship agenda. They are anxious about signing up for workshops which are labelled 'Anti - racist Education' or 'Global Citizenship' or 'Education for Sustainability', resulting in the cancellation of some activities for lack of student interest. Sessions which relate to the PSHE aspects of citizenship appear more popular possibly because students feel their own values are less likely to be challenged in these sessions. However as their awareness increases, students become more confident and ready to build on their experiences and attend more challenging sessions. This growing willingness to take part with an open mind, have their assumptions challenged and build on their prior knowledge to heighten their awareness of issues is evident in their evaluations. Individual students are at different points in this process and Values Week alone cannot fulfil everyone's needs in the three to four years of the course. The issue for us as organisers is the tension between developing the programme of sessions to meet student needs, and fulfilling the potential of the week to address some of the more challenging issues in citizenship education.

In addressing these challenging issues, the great value of this 'events and activities' approach to citizenship education within ITT, is its discrete and dynamic nature. Values Week as a discrete event is a very powerful visible expression for raising awareness, as everyone who enters the Faculty of Education building is faced with the posters, the sessions, the people or the activities and the heightened buzz of the place. In terms of its dynamic nature it can be tuned and tweaked to focus and address particular areas in response to the current

needs and concerns of students, children, education and society. It has a built-in flexibility which is harder to emulate when citizenship education is embedded within an ITT programme.

In this case, the issue is that using this type of approach appears to be in conflict with the argument for moving towards citizenship education becoming embedded *within* the programme and permeating every curriculum and discipline area. We fully support this argument as preferable to citizenship education being seen as a separate, add-on part of the course which is always under threat of being 'cut' because of financial or timetable restraints and it was always our intention to embed Values Week more deeply within the main body of the ITT programme. Although this has begun, progress is slow and we acknowledge the difficulty of introducing citizenship education across *all* the subjects at a similar level. We firmly believe citizenship education should not be an optional extra but needs to become an integral part of the thinking for the teaching and learning of our students and fellow tutors. Our attempts to address this issue mean we argue, not for an 'events and activities' approach at the expense of an 'embedded' approach, but rather we advocate the use of both approaches, together with others, to more powerfully address both the initial heightening of awareness and challenging of assumptions, as well as the measured, sustained development of skills, knowledge and understanding required in the creation of a reflective teacher-citizen.

Conclusion

In evaluating the overall effectiveness of the week as a contribution to citizenship education, there are both benefits and concerns. It is clear that students and contributors perceive that it is worthwhile and that they get something of value out of the experience. It also has the capacity to affect students' thinking throughout the course of study. Its annual occurrence enables a cumulative effect to set in and students return to the event each year with a growing understanding of the issues it addresses and with a widening capacity to make the links between theory and practice. The opportunities within the week for students to make links with other people who are concerned in the education and welfare of children in a variety of contexts beyond the school, also seems to be of particular value. Teachers and schools lie at the heart of their communities and they need to be able to reach out and make links with other agencies and groups. Providing our students with insight into the quality and significance of the work done by other people in the real world beyond the school gates seems to be of tremendous importance.

Concerns about the week relate mostly to the practical and organisational aspects of the experience. To set up and organise the week on an annual basis takes

considerable work and contributes to the course costs. This has to be continually justified and is therefore always under threat – this in itself means that more work and time have to be spent in ensuring the experience does contribute in a way which will justify its continuation. The Values Week experience has heightened awareness of the significance and place of values education and the role of citizenship in the initial training of teachers but a continuing concern is that we still need to work harder at making explicit and evident

the links between the week's experiences and the citizenship element in the main course. Our intention is to continue to evaluate and develop this example of practice and work towards the creation of theoretical frameworks that in turn will enable us to find ways to further develop students' awareness of how the week contributes to and strengthens their own personal and professional development as the educators of future generations of global citizens.

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Acknowledgment

For further information about citizenship education within initial teacher training in the UK context see the following website <http://www.ittcitized.info/>

This is a project of the Teacher Training Agency designed to act as a new resource for teacher educators in citizenship education. For further information about 'Values Week' see a previous article by the authors highlighting some of the data from the early stages of the project at http://www.ittcitized.info/Commarticles/Karen_Chantry_Wood.doc

About the Authors

Dr. Karen Chantrey Wood has taught on early years courses in further and higher education institutions and currently runs a Foundation Degree for teaching assistants. She also teaches education studies and humanities on a variety of Primary Education courses. Her research interests include citizenship; creativity, learning environments and organisation; small group work; speaking & listening; teacher–pupil interactions and the use of narrative.

Anna Disney is curriculum leader for humanities within the Department and has a commitment to approaching the teaching of history and geography in a way which contributes explicitly to the development of global education and citizenship. She is currently researching the experience of school linking as an aspect of global education. Her research interests have also included action research into the links between educational and historical methodology.