**Citizenship teachers - different types, different needs**

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*Abstract*

*This paper outlines the diverse nature of citizenship education provision in England and raises some of the problems this creates in relation to the initial and continued professional development of pre-service and in-service teachers, a situation exacerbated by the reduction in state authorised citizenship teacher education programmes. It goes on to identify some of the variety of citizenship teacher academic backgrounds and some of the challenges which arise for both specialist and non-specialist citizenship teachers in addressing divergent, complex – and sometimes invisible – modes of subject provision. It is argued that differences in school provision, teacher background and attitude(s) to the subject require sensitivity in the construction and delivery of programmes intended to enhance teacher confidence and competence in citizenship education. A typology of the ‘8 Cs’ of citizenship teachers is identified – Co-existence Colonisation Commitment Compliance Conflict Convenience Conversion Cynicism – and discussed, outlining the range of needs and attitudes among specialist and non-specialist teachers of citizenship education, and some recommendations are offered regarding how these can be approached.*

Keywords: Different needs Non/specialists Professional development Teacher typology

*Introduction*

This paper outlines the diverse nature of citizenship education provision in England and addresses some of the problems this raises for pre-service and in-service teacher development, a situation shown to be exacerbated by the reduction in state authorised citizenship teacher education programmes. It goes on to identify some of the variety of citizenship teachers’ academic backgrounds and some of the challenges which arise for both specialist and non-specialist citizenship teachers in addressing divergent, complex – and sometimes invisible – modes of subject provision. It then identifies an eight-element typology of citizenship teachers and addresses the varied and very distinct professional needs which such teachers face, and recommends different approaches for different needs.

*Background*

A number of reports in England (Ofsted 2006, 2010, Ajegbo et al 2007, Kerr et al 2007, Keating et al 2010) have identified qualitative and quantitative differences in the effectiveness of the teaching of Citizenship Education by those who have qualified as specialists compared to teaching by those whose professional backgrounds are in other subjects. Ofsted, the schools inspectorate for England, recommended that the Department for Children, Families and Schools (since supplanted by the Department for Education) and the Teacher Development Agency should ‘maintain the numbers of trainee places for initial teacher education and the level of provision for continuing professional development in citizenship’ and ‘promote the take-up of courses for continuing professional development in this area’ (Ofsted 2010, p7). It further stated that schools should ‘develop the quality of citizenship teaching by taking advantage of existing expertise in the school, capitalising on training opportunities and recruiting specialist teachers when the opportunity arises’ (Ofsted 2010, p8).

The Department for Education has ended the undersubscribed part-time professional development course which gave non-specialists thirty-eight hours of support, spread across several months, in order to develop the insights and skills which pre-service specialists take a year of full-time study and practise to address. That programme was a response to a perceived need for more specialist teachers of citizenship but did not recognise the significant differences between those who choose to follow a particular path and those who are required or compelled to do so. With the demise of that programme, professional development programmes will be limited to those offered by a variety of institutions and organisations, many of which are likely to similarly fail to recognise and respond to such variance. Furthermore, it has cut the number of places on pre-service programmes for Citizenship teachers by 30% which has led to the closure of some courses and a serious threat to the viability of others when there are still not enough qualified specialists to ensure that every secondary school in England has at least one such teacher.

Teachers do not comprise a homogenous group of same thinking, like minded and similarly experienced individuals. The designation ‘teachers’ represents a diverse group for which ‘community’ implies greater uniformity than is appropriate. To generalise about citizenship teachers, while possibly a syntactical convenience, is to allow an inaccuracy which can lead to errors of analysis and interpretation of data and, subsequently, to errors of understanding, judgement and policy. It also leads to training, development and support which does not meet the needs of the intended targets nor of the children in their care. It is important that we not only understand the diverse nature of citizenship teaching and provision in order to agree on what we are talking about, it would also be helpful – when discussing how the subject is taught and by whom – to know who we are talking about.

There is an extensive body of evidence (Cleaver et al 2003, Leighton 2004a, Ofsted 2006, 2010, Ajegbo et al 2007, Kerr at al 2007, Keating 2010) that, unlike any other secondary school subject, there is not a large number of specialist trained professionals in place to interpret and deliver England’s National Curriculum for Citizenship (QCA 2007). Indeed, the NfER longitudinal study into the teaching of citizenship in England found that “four years on from the introduction of statutory citizenship over half of teachers teaching citizenship have still not received any citizenship-related training.” (Kerr et al 2007, p vi)

There are, at most, 2500 current teachers with a citizenship Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). To this number we can add those teachers who have been trained through work-based routes such as Teach First and the Graduate Training Programme, as well as those who have completed the Certificate in the Teaching of Citizenship. There are also some Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) in Citizenship from a variety of subject backgrounds. We can subtract from this total those who have left the teaching profession or who are not teaching citizenship and, bearing in mind that some schools have more than one specialist, conclude that approximately half of England’s secondary schools do not have any subject specialists teaching Citizenship.

It has been shown previously (Cleaver et al 2003, Leighton 2004a, 2012a, 2012b, Clemitshaw and Calvert 2006, Ofsted 2006, 2010, Faulks 2006) that schools approach the delivery of citizenship in a number of disparate ways, the varying degrees of effectiveness of which are not here under consideration – although it should be noted that Ofsted (2006) estimated that 25% of the Citizenship lessons seen in its 2005/06 inspections were inadequate and, by 2010, this was 11% (Ofsted 2010, p4). Some schools integrate citizenship within the teaching of other subjects; often within one or more of the humanities, with RE featuring prominently in such provision, but also through English or across the whole curriculum. While the cross-curricular approach is required by the National Curriculum as complementary to single-subject delivery, there are schools where it is seen as an alternative. It is conflated with Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) in over two thirds of the schools in the NfER study (Kerr et al 2007, Keating 2010); sometimes it subsumed into an existing programme, while in other cases a hybrid such as Personal and Citizenship Education (PACE) has emerged. There are many – a growing number – where Citizenship Education exists as a separate timetabled subject, others where it is presented through a series of collapsed time-table days or events, and some where there is no formal recognition or provision.

In those schools where there is distinct timetable provision of the subject, delivery is neither uniform nor consistent (Leighton 2004a). There are schools, or teachers within schools, who follow the schemes of work and lesson plans available on-line from the Department for Education – some following these to the letter and others using them to guide rather than dictate lessons. There are schools, or teachers within schools, who recognise the spirit of the National Curriculum for Citizenship and who have developed and present their own interpretation of it – and others who have developed and present their own version without necessarily paying close, or even scant, attention to that spirit.

The delivery of Citizenship Education in schools in England can therefore be at best described as “erratic”. This is not due to a lack of information about the subject, given the plethora of sites, texts, documents, articles, handbooks, and involved NGOs which proliferate, although the inconsistencies between these might be a contributory factor. At least as important as those possible inconsistencies is the demonstrable disparity of types of teacher of citizenship.

Most secondary school teachers in England have a degree in their subject as well as a post-graduate qualification in that subject. However, according to Ofsted, ‘[m]ost teachers of citizenship are “non-specialists”; many work far from their normal comfort zone both in subject knowledge and teaching approaches, especially with regard to controversial and topical issues’ (Ofsted 2006, p1). Four years on, the inspectorate again raised concerns about the subject being ‘taught by large teams, including form tutors, who lacked the knowledge, skills and understanding to teach it effectively.’ (Ofsted 2010, p20)

An earlier study (Leighton 2004b) identified one institution’s training cohort of 23 PGCE(s) Citizenship students as including graduates in nine subjects, none of which was Citizenship, who had worked with 27 school based mentors who had been trained to teach nine subjects – only in one case was that subject Citizenship. In the academic year 2006/07, that institution recruited 38 PGCE students to work with 29 school-based mentors, eight of whom were trained citizenship teachers and with a further eleven subject specialists in their schools. This might be taken to imply that 50% of these trainees would have first teaching placement contact with a practicing subject specialist but, due to the unequal distribution of such specialists, only 30% had such contact. While a significant improvement on the findings of the earlier study, this clearly indicates that there is an expertise deficit in the training of Citizenship teachers in schools.

That research, based on interviews with pre-service teachers of citizenship and their subject mentors, initially led to the conclusion that there were six distinct “types” of teacher of citizenship. Further interviews, with a greater number of trainee and practising teachers and with the greater depth of analysis which arises from Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), have revealed two more categories.

While the classifications outlined and discussed below are significant, they cannot be assumed to represent an exhaustive list; the point to be emphasised is that the typical citizenship teacher, like the typical “anyone”, does not exist. The diversity of type of citizenship teacher should therefore be reflected in sampling and analysis when researching citizenship education in order to ensure that generalisations about the nature of the experience of teaching or being taught citizenship in England – if they must be made – are secure, valid and reliable. Similarly, and crucially, awareness of that diversity must also inform any in-service or professional development provision if it is to meet the needs of teachers and of pupils.

*Typology – the 8 Cs*

1. Commitment: For most citizenship specialist student teachers, the decision to teach citizenship has been a conscious career choice based on their understanding of and commitment to the underlying principles of citizenship as identified, for example, in the Crick Report (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998), and to the content of the Citizenship National Curriculum. Citizenship-qualified teachers who were acting as mentors had very similar reasons for teaching the subject to those offered by specialist student teachers; unsurprisingly, as they were recently qualified and had made the same conscious choices. In both groups, academic backgrounds represent a wide range of subjects and most had demonstrated their own commitment to active citizenship in working for NGOs, voluntary activities with faith groups or support networks both prior to and subsequent to qualification. There is a strong identification with a sense of mission, a desire to ‘make a difference’.

2. Conversion: There are experienced teachers who feel that the separate and explicit teaching of Citizenship is crucial to the benefit of young people and the welfare of society; for some such teachers this is to the extent that they are more interested in how to teach Citizenship and thereby enable their pupils to develop related skills than in developing the subjects in which they originally qualified to teach. There are others who feel that they do not have the necessary skills and depth of knowledge to develop the subject and actively seek recruitment of teachers who have an appropriate background. Many of the teachers who choose to enrol on the Certificate of the Teaching of Citizenship were converts, but not all.

3. Convenience: Amongst those who have trained or who are on pre-service programmes for specialist teachers of citizenship there are those who see these as a route into teaching their degree subjects. With few initial teacher education courses in the social sciences, some graduates in related subjects appear to consider their chances of successful recruitment and subsequent employment to be greater on Citizenship training courses. In January 2011, the Graduate Teacher Training Registry website identified three courses for intended teachers of Economics; four Social Science training courses, including one with an option in sociology or psychology and one with a Citizenship option; and lists no courses for the specific training of teachers of Law, Politics, Psychology, or Sociology – all subjects which featured significantly in this sample. In comparison, there are fifteen institutions of higher education offering Citizenship places, giving a significantly greater likelihood of finding a training place and a greater likelihood of Key Stage 3 (11-14) teaching experience, carrying with it a perceived improvement in employment prospects.

4. Co-existence: A number of teachers qualified in other subjects believe that there is a need for citizenship teaching. Not at the expense of their main subject but possibly complementary to their schools’ Personal Social and Health Education programmes, as well as preparing young people for life after school in ways which other subjects were not equipped to address. They have tended to share what this author has described elsewhere (Leighton 2004a) as a ‘Not before time’ perspective. These teachers, and student teachers in other subjects, are keen to deliver discrete lessons in Citizenship and to ensure the explicit inclusion and identification of the Citizenship curriculum in their own subject specialist teaching.

5. Colonisation: There are teachers who regard Citizenship as a way of ensuring the continuance of their own subject which they perceive as otherwise under threat. Amongst teachers in this category there is a belief that they can deliver ‘their version’ of citizenship, apparently in line with Crick’s (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998) notion that what pupils experience in citizenship should be tailored to the requirements of their school and the local community – ‘[i]f taught well and tailored to local needs, [citizenship] skills and values will enhance democratic life for us all, both rights and responsibilities, beginning in school and radiating out.’ (QCA, 2001, p 3) This carries with it the assumption that such requirements are identifiable and identified; such identification appears to be confined to the perceptions of those charged with delivering the subject and, in the case of ‘colonising’ teachers, this is heavily influenced by their desire to protect and develop their own, often PSHE-related, areas of responsibility. Programmes of study which emphasise personal relationships, sex education, first aid and road safety, laudable as they may or may not be, do not reflect the National Curriculum for Citizenship (QCA 2007).

6. Compliance: There would appear to be teachers of Citizenship who find themselves in that position due to a lack of an adequate number of classes timetabled in their ‘own’ subject, and where Citizenship is therefore seen by both the teacher and the school as a timetable filler; there is also some indication that pupils taught in this context share this perception of the subject.

It is common to find an air of resignation amongst such teachers. Frequently younger and less experience teachers, their approach tends to be that the subject is there and they do not want to upset anyone who might be called upon to write a reference, so they might as well do what they can. That they were compliant rather than dedicated does not necessarily result in poorer teaching but in greater anxiety. Some of the more senior teachers who do not want to teach the subject were in a position to ensure they were not called upon to do so, while others seem to have been timetabled to teach Citizenship but find that such lessons often coincide with ‘unavoidable’ meetings and leave the lesson to be taught by a free and compliant or coerced more junior colleague.

7. Conflict: Direct opposition to the provision of Citizenship education was identified less often and was less vehement than had been expected at the outset of this research. This might be a reflection of an overestimation or initial oversensitivity on the part of the researcher, or of respondents’ awareness of the researcher’s commitment to citizenship education. None the less, it is clear that some teachers are actively opposed to the teaching of citizenship – whether by themselves or by anyone else. In some cases this opposition in based upon dissatisfaction with the programme which such teachers are expected to deliver and which does not closely match the National Curriculum guidelines; for these teachers the opposition is not necessarily to Citizenship Education per se but to a perceived inadequacy or inappropriateness of their school’s provision. For others it is derived from an insecurity with subject knowledge and subject skills; again this might not be opposition to the subject itself, but a response to the professional dissonance created by the professional and pupil expectation that teachers are in command of what they are doing coming into conflict with a very different reality. While citizenship tends not to be a didactically delivered subject as, at its best, it encourages active participation and the airing and sharing of views, it might be that didactic teaching and acquiescent pupils are some teachers’ preferred experience. There are also those teachers who are aware of National Curriculum requirements for citizenship but do not think that these have a place in school.

As well as three variants of the ‘conflict’ teacher, there are variations in the response to this conflict. Many of them are as anxious as their compliant colleagues, with their anxieties centred upon spending time away from what they believed the should be doing – usually preparing or delivering ‘their’ subject – or that colleagues or line managers will perceive them as poor teachers because they do not perform as well outside their specialism as they do within it.

There are also some conflict teachers who openly express their rejection of the subject and who do not adhere to school or national guidelines and who belittle the subject to pupils. In the most extreme case in the conduct of this research, one such teacher adopted strategies which included being disruptive when observing the lessons of student teachers of citizenship, making disparaging comments about their competence and the relevance of the subject to their university tutor, and removing resources prepared by and relied upon by trainees. He continues, however, to be perceived as a very good teacher of his specialist subject – albeit now in another school, where he has no involvement in the support and development of student teachers of citizenship.

8. Cynicism:

One specialist teacher of citizenship was aware that there were signs of her “becoming cynical about whether we can make any difference to anyone”. In her own school, she could identify more teachers who could be placed in typology categories 3 – 7 than who might be in 1 or 2. Many of her colleagues openly described the subject as a time-table filler for themselves and for the pupils. While she believed that her head-teacher was aware of and committed to the principles underpinning the National Curriculum for Citizenship, the lack of provision equivalent to that enjoyed by other subjects – time-table time, homework, examination entry, space and time for co-ordinated extra-curricular citizenship activities, pupil engagement and encouragement – meant that, in her view, there was little which citizenship could tangibly achieve.

Originally committed, some specialist teachers of citizenship are finding it difficult to maintain this commitment in the face of what they perceive as intransigence or unequal treatment. Time tables where Citizenship is a ‘floating subject’ (e.g. Monday period 1 one week, period 2 the next, period 3 the next) are cited as disabling, as have ignoring or openly denigrating pupils’ examination successes in Citizenship, and, in a school which streams by perceptions of ability based on SAT scores, providing citizenship for lower streams while the more able learn a second language.

While it has so far been possible to identify eight types of citizenship teacher, it has not been possible to organise them by any social categories other than the descriptors given and it should not be imputed that there are only these eight types. It may well prove to be the case that there are other further attitudinal categories or sub-categories of citizenship teachers – for example those with preferences for community involvement over curriculum knowledge, or vice versa, or those who would emphasise a communitarian approach over a commitment to self-improvement. In a more general context not considered here but worth further investigation, See (2004) identifies that family background and perceptions of teaching are key determinants of an individual’s attitudes to teaching, and that those who are committed to teaching are likely to be motivated by associated perceived intrinsic rewards.

There is no indication in this research that age, length of service, gender, ethnicity, subject specialism, occupational background, seniority or any combination of these determines into which ‘type’ a teacher could be placed. This is in part a research artefact – the methodology is interpretative, the sample was not intended to be representative of any of those social categories, and data which might inform such interpretations were not gathered in a systematic way – but it is also an important point in itself.

*Discussion*

Gillborn (2006) cites numerous studies which indicate that ‘many White teachers hold systematically lower expectations of Black and other minority ethnic students’ (p 89) and demonstrates the growing gap in inequality of attainment between ethnic groups as part of his substantial body of evidence of institutionalised racism in the UK. While not blaming citizenship education for a racist society, Gillborn places it in the – for him – counter-productive context of multiculturalism rather than a more radical anti-racist agenda. He describes it as ‘a *placebo*: a fake treatment, meant to placate concern, but making no actual attempt to address the central problem’ (p 97) going on to caution that, while ‘Citizenship education has the potential to open up new and controversial areas of debate and, within a critical whole-school approach, can advance anti-racist developments’ (pp 98/9) it is unlikely to do so.

If Gillborn is correct – and the strength of his arguments and the wealth of data he presents from his own work and the research of many others presents a very powerful case – the ethnicity of teachers of citizenship, and the commitment of all teachers to the potential for social change which citizenship education can foster, might be a key factor which influences the attitudes they display and therefore their classification within the typology.

While this author’s perspective on such potential for social change is discussed elsewhere (Leighton 2006, 2012b), the ethnic distribution of pre-service citizenship teaching students may be informative. The institution whose citizenship PGCE students formed the sample for this study consistently achieves Black and other Minority Ethnic Group recruitment just below 20% on its secondary post-graduate initial teacher education programmes, and the PGCE Citizenship course has recruited at over 30% since its inception. The national representation of black and other minority ethnic group members of the teaching profession in England is 10% (WLE, 2010) although that varies considerably by national region.

These past course members have taken either a committed or convenience approach to their development as teachers of citizenship, and some might have become cynical. As a cohort they cross the age, ethnic, academic background, physical disability and social class diversity of teachers in general, without necessarily coinciding with the mean/norm of any of these divisions either within Initial Teacher Education or within the wider teaching workforce. This highlights the difficulty in predicating typology classification according to social or biological categories.

Kerr at al (2007) clearly indicate that discrete provision of citizenship on a school timetable does not in itself guarantee adequate provision, appropriate learning or subject development. Rather, their findings lead them to conclude that any model of delivery of citizenship is most “likely to be effective if citizenship: is taught by small, dedicated teams; has strong and clear leadership and direction; is well supported through up-to-date, accessible lesson plans and resources” (Kerr et al 2007; p vii), a perception previously identified by Breslin (2005) and subsequently confirmed by Ofsted (2010). Such dedication, clarity of thought and direction, and currency of lessons and resources are much more likely to come from individuals – or teams which include individuals – who have a commitment to the provision, development and delivery of the subject.

When supporting teachers of citizenship education – whether curriculum design, lesson planning and delivery, attitudes to and conduct of assessment, classroom activities and outcomes – an understanding of the role of the teacher, and how an individual teacher performs that role, is vital. The execution of that role is likely to be determined by the attitude(s) to citizenship education held by that teacher, so that understanding the teacher’s place within this typology might clarify our understanding of the range of needs such teachers might have. When talking about such about citizenship teachers, about their training and development needs and how such needs can be best met, it might ensure some understanding of their diversity.

*Conclusions*

It is clear that there are both qualitative and quantitative differences in the provision and effectiveness of the teaching of Citizenship Education in England, with most teachers of citizenship not being specialists and working outside their comfort zones in regard to both subject knowledge and teaching strategies. While there is an identified need to continue to develop pre- and in-service programmes for teachers of Citizenship Education, there is no indication that this need will be reflected in government policy; if schools are to develop and exploit expertise and promote take-up of CPD courses, those courses will have to meet a wide range of diverse and sometimes conflicting needs. A range of attitudes towards and expertise in citizenship education has been identified amongst those who currently teach the subject. Just as these differences exist, so do their learning, development and training needs.

Those teachers who are committed to the teaching of Citizenship Education will have a variety of subject perceptions and subject-related strengths which can be shared and developed. Such sharing and development must take into account the nature of subject provision in their schools as the needs and opportunities prevalent in an environment where the subject is taught discretely by a team of experts will be very different to those where there is one committed teacher and an array of cynics and compliant colleagues.

Converts to Citizenship Education are likely to have a particular need for greater subject and resource awareness, ensuring that evangelism does not obscure the opportunities and range of activities which citizenship education presents. Those who followed pre-service Citizenship Education programmes as a matter of convenience might find they are none the less still required to teach it. Their needs might overlap with those of their committed colleagues in that their subject knowledge could be further strengthened, as well as there being a need to ensure that they do not become colonials, compliant, conflicted or cynical.

There were few teachers of Citizenship Education who displayed an attitude of co-existence. As the current national curriculum requires that all subjects explicitly identify their relationship with all other subjects, these teachers may well be in a position to lead their less enthusiastic colleagues in understanding how such links can be effectively made and sustained.

The colonising teachers and schools need first and foremost to be made aware of the content, opportunities and requirements of the National Curriculum for Citizenship. This has to be done in such a way as to avoid compliance, conflict or cynicism. There are likely to be gaps in subject knowledge and teaching and assessment strategies which are much more fundamental and deep-rooted than those of the types discussed so far, so that developing confidence as well as understanding is paramount.

By no means unique to citizenship education, the needs of the compliant teacher are considerable. They have effectively subjected to bullying and need to understand how this can be challenged professionally and securely. Pragmatically, they also need to understand the nature and demands of teaching citizenship education, to have their confidence and expertise developed, to have a sense of their own value. Although on the surface very different, they have much in common with those in conflict with or cynical about citizenship education.

Nobody should have to teach a subject with which they find themselves in conflict; it does them no good and it does their pupils great harm. If both conflicted and compliant – willing to teach citizenship education but not seeing the point of it – they need subject and teaching skills as well as an understanding of how their preferred subject relates to citizenship education. Both they and the converts might benefit from collaboration and shared time. If they have lost their passion for teaching, it is incumbent upon their school – and their own sense of worth – that steps are taken to rekindle that passion. Putting them out to pasture in a subject possibly perceived to be of little value is a betrayal of them and of their pupils.

There can be some value to staffroom cynics, if only to alert other teachers to the dangers which lie in wait, but to be cynical about the subject one teaches is no good for the teacher or the pupils. School ethos matters in the teaching of citizenship education, not only to encourage pupils to understand and apply the principles of good citizenship, but to reinforce for all members of the school community that who they are and what they do is valued. Perhaps the most supportive and enhancing in-service support for cynical teachers would not be for their participation but for their senior colleagues’.

All the above types of citizenship teachers, indeed all teachers, need the opportunity to network. They also need their senior colleagues – perhaps where the depths of conflict and cynicism are at their most profound – to develop understanding of the subject. To counter the negativity of some senior and head teachers, there should perhaps be a ninth category – Citizenship Champions. There are many classroom-based teachers of citizenship who could lead and support citizenship education CPD, and who do, but are concerned not to raise participants’ hopes too high in the light of senior teacher lip-service. However, there are also many head teachers and other senior staff with a commitment to and passion for citizenship education who could demonstrate to their colleagues how to harness the potential of the subject for the good of their schools.

There can be no doubt that citizenship education is most effective when it is taught by dedicated teams of committed professionals who enjoy clear leadership and direction to provide engaging, up-to-date, and accessible activities. This has to be the common objective, but it is folly to assume that everyone should tread the same path to arrive at that destination: diversity is not a term exclusively applicable to pupils.

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