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**National Identity, Citizenship and Cosmopolitanism:
Unpacking the Terms in British Schooling**

A Work-in-Progress

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ABSTRACT

Issues of citizenship and national identity are present in all societies. But in some societies, even those that have regarded themselves as well established and secure, profound and urgent questions are now being asked in response to both internal and external factors. It is possible to explore one specific example as an illustration and vehicle for this discussion. In multi-ethnic Britain, citizenship and national identity have become important issues. Things once taken for granted have become a matter of public concern and debate. Specifically, ‘What is Britishness?’ is a question that has concerned government departments and agencies, educationalists - and the current British Prime Minister for some time.

Contemporary trends, including post-war immigration, have challenged the automatic transmission of a hegemonic national identity that can be insensitive, unaware and excluding. In response to the breakdown of the old certainties, the British Government have introduced a mandatory addition to the National Curriculum (2000) for schools in the form of citizenship education. This is to promote shared values and behaviour; social cohesion; respect of diversity and difference; and democratic and community involvement.

Within this intellectual position, questions now have to be asked not only about the *nature* of the national identity but its *purpose* in the twenty-first century. With this question, there is a shift from the tight focus of ideas around national or local context to an accompanying idea, namely, global thinking, which is essentially an awareness of globalisation. The idea that all of humanity belongs to a single – and some would say, moral - community is increasingly influential.

This general and abstract discussion has relevance for the role and work of teachers, especially for those where citizenship education and global thinking are declared governmental policy. So, all teachers, certainly British ones, whether involved in teaching citizenship or not, must consider the evolving national identity in the context of globalisation and their concomitant values about diversity and cosmopolitanism that they embody as being part of their professional identity.

Keywords: National identity, citizenship, cosmopolitan, impact on classroom practice

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Introduction

Fifteen years or so ago, a popular sticker on the bumpers of American cars advised 'Think globally. Act locally'. The slogan had identified two contexts – albeit one duality - in which some of us increasingly perceive reality: one that requires a wide, global perspective and the other that needs appropriate action in the immediate circumstances in which we live. Such a duality is reflected in our role as inhabitants of an increasingly smaller, inter-linked world and in our own national citizenship and identity. However, neither part is straightforward and requires discussion.

Issues of citizenship and national identity are present in all societies. But in some societies, even those that have regarded themselves as well established and secure, profound and urgent questions are now being asked in response to both internal and external factors. The reader can reflect on his or her own situation and national context - and find a variety of certainties and questions...What is it to be Indian, Korean, French, Ghanaian, American or Bolivian? Enter here whatever is applicable...

This article will explore one specific example as an illustration and vehicle for this discussion. In multi-ethnic Britain, citizenship and national identity have become important issues. Things once taken for granted have become a matter of public concern and debate. Specifically, 'What is Britishness?' is a question that has concerned government departments and agencies, educationalists - and the current British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, for some time. A leading right-wing political magazine (and so not always his immediate supporter) has recently described his concern in these terms:

The PM's interest in Britishness is a honourable pursuit, at a time when the nature of allegiance, citizenship and shared national culture is being questioned as never before (The Spectator, 2007).

Contrasts can be made by considering the situation elsewhere. For Indians, for example, an immediate reaction could be to turn to the Indian constitution as a starting place. However, the difficulties in this area for the British are not easily solved, as they have no written constitution. Additionally, contemporary trends, including post-war immigration, have challenged the automatic transmission of a hegemonic national identity that can be insensitive, unaware and excluding. In response to the breakdown of the old certainties, the British Government have introduced a mandatory addition to the National Curriculum (2000) for schools in the form of citizenship education. This is to promote:

- shared values and behaviour;
- social cohesion;
- respect of diversity and difference;
- democratic and community involvement.

It can be expected that citizenship education is a subject area that to be taught effectively needs profound professional knowledge and high quality skills built on a considered theorised position. It is, after all, an area that could be unquestioningly rooted in patriotism, nationalism or sense of the nation-state. Within this intellectual position, questions now have to be asked not only about the *nature* of the national identity but its *purpose* in the twenty-first century. Does strong national identity help or a hinder the development of a cohesive, diverse and equal society and a sense of

global thinking in today's mobile and fluid world? With this question, there is a shift from the tight focus of ideas around national or local context to an accompanying idea, namely, global thinking, which is essentially an awareness of globalisation. The idea that all of humanity belongs to a single – and some would say, moral - community is increasingly influential. More specifically, as global travel increases, a cultural cosmopolitanism (Urry, 2000) is developing among certain groups, at least, that pertains to wide international experience. Essentially, it means having a taste for – and awareness and knowledge of - other cultures beside one's own.

This is seemingly a very general and abstract discussion. But it has relevance for the role and work of teachers, whatever their national setting, especially for those where citizenship education and global thinking are declared governmental policy. (From September 2008, global thinking is to permeate the teaching of the revised secondary school curriculum in English schools). So, all teachers, certainly British ones, whether involved in teaching citizenship or not, must consider the evolving national identity in the context of globalisation and their concomitant values about diversity and cosmopolitanism that they embody as being part of their professional identity. In this way, we arrive at the term 'glocal', where for example, companies, who are these young people's future employers, have become both 'intensely local and intensely global' (Swyngedow, 1997).

However, first, there is a need to explore the national identity from which such cosmopolitanism may or may not be developed and for the values within national and world identities to be examined and their relationship determined. This will be done through three approaches – populist, theoretical and educational.

A populist approach to the issue of identity

For some populist commentators and others within British society being British goes beyond mere legalities to something that is intuitive and instinctive. Being *really* British means *just knowing* how to behave and to behave in the best way possible. (Others, of course, may have different opinions about British behaviour). However, the presence of this approach makes firm statements in terms that allow no contradiction or doubt about a fixed and unambiguous British identity. The theoretical and educational implications of such a stance can be seen to be the unquestioning transmission of a perspective that could be insensitive, unaware and excluding.

Others might see citizens as having experienced many influences in their lives – through home and, importantly for this paper, through schooling. (The latter in the British context stipulates a minimum of eleven years, being both compulsory – and free - within the state sector). The intellectual and educational implications of such a stance offers some room for action beyond presumably irretrievable exclusion: negative influences can be replaced with positive ones, some of which can be experienced in the common environment of the school and university. But there is no suggestion here that this is and will be easy. (Lord Parekh has warned that 'it is not the role of education to inculcate these values in the abstract', DfES, 2007: 93). Difficulties can be encountered immediately.

A theoretical approach to the issue of identity

The populist, instinctive view is noteworthy because of its *certainty* about the national identity called Britishness. This is a perspective that does seem to be, at best,

anachronism in a contemporary British society that in many other ways has no longer has such supposed consistency of view and expectation. There are many analyses that can be used as the United Kingdom:

- is post-colonial;
- is post-industrial;
- is perhaps post-Christian (though recent immigration may be changing this trend);
- has a constitutional and social fragmentation that some would call 'post-modern';
- is 'post-traditional' (Giddens, 1996);
- with a Scottish Nationalist First Minister now in charge in the Scottish Parliament, may even be on the brink of becoming a federal state or even breaking up.

Whatever the description chosen, values, behaviour and identity are now not unproblematic (Foster and Kelly, 1990). Minorities, indigenous and others, once ignored or dismissed, are playing an increasing part in the mainstream of society. The arrival and success of recent immigrants, in particular, Indian communities, is celebrated by the British government and held up as a model for others. With this presence of many identities and cultures, identity *per se* can be seen more as a matter of choice and self-design rather than something permanent and unquestionable that is acquired at birth. These changes make it necessary to recognise that some form of theoretical position is being taken, whether consciously or not. The implications of questioning the taken-for-granted and subsequently taking a theorised position could be: that such a process is necessary for the development of intellectual rigour and clarity for oneself, and if shared, for others.

An educational approach to the issue of identity

So, it is clear that many factors, including those with a deeply serious political hinterland such as international terrorism and the global migration of peoples, have brought about wide-ranging discussions in many western countries about the nature of identity and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. As illustrated above, these discussions are going on not only at a populist and theoretical levels but also in governmental policy terms that impact directly on educational practice in schools. Here, attention has focused on, in particular, citizenship educational initiatives in schools (Derricott, 1998).

On the surface, it could appear that British governmental policy on citizenship education is simply extending the existing and accepted curriculum of affective education. However, when this recent and compulsory addition to the National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA, 2000; DfES, 2007) is examined more closely, it can be seen to comprise discrete elements such as the acquiring of political knowledge and skills through student involvement in community action projects. As set out in the influential Crick Report (1998) and with reference to British government policy, as noted earlier, it is possible to see that underpinning this curriculum is the desire for a sharing of some basic values and desirable social behaviour to bring about some form of social cohesion. These are to be encapsulated in a common identity that will support both particular communities and society as a whole. The educational implications of this are clear: it is the role of teachers to implement this policy. As

noted earlier, for this, they will need specific professional knowledge and high quality skills built on a considered theoretical position.

Questions about national identity

From this short discussion, it is possible to generate a sample of linked questions about national identity (from Johnson and Holness, 2001):

In populist terms:

- Is there any need to ask what is Britishness?
- are you 'really' British?
- why shouldn't people conform to one model of social identity?

These questions are essentially rhetorical. They are asked to confirm a position and not to question it.

In theoretical terms:

- does Britishness conform to solely one model of national identity?
- can or should one model of national identity take precedence over others?
- given the presence of many cultures within British and English society, what status should be given to languages other than English?

These questions go beyond conventional wisdom, the 'taken-for-granted', to seek objective knowledge and the clarification of complex issues.

In educational terms:

- how is government policy and other external influences affecting the conceptualisation of national identity to be transmitted in schools?
- how is citizenship and global thinking to be taught in schools?
- which teaching and learning strategies are or may be effective?

These questions are a theoretical and practical expression of issues arising from the implementation of governmental policy in schools.

Thus, whatever approach is taken, as noted earlier, it is clear that teachers in schools involved in the increasingly broad nature of citizenship initiatives do not have a task with 'taken-for-granted', unquestioned – and unquestionable - perspectives and assumptions (Greenaway, 1998). Their pupils and students, and their parents, will embody different approaches to national identity and represent many cultures. These perspectives lead to a fuller discussion of the wider and deeper issues that surround the concept of citizenship education about which citizenship teachers will clearly need knowledge, awareness of their own theoretical position and of their own role as intellectuals in a professional knowledge community. These issues fall into four broad areas:

- the complexity of societal culture;
- the uncertainty of national identity;
- the nature of legal identity ;
- the nature of global thinking and cosmopolitanism

Issue (1): the complexity of culture

Culture is itself a marker of identity (Grant, 1997) and it is a complex term that is used at societal, organisational and individual levels. Hofstede (2001), for one, has

produced a typology of societal cultural characteristics. However, few, if any, societal cultures are homogenous (Dimmock and Walker, 1999) and terms that once had meaning and relevance can be outpaced by events and trends. For example, recent Scottish and Welsh devolution and the expansion of the European Union (EU) have made the term 'British' – and 'English' - increasingly problematic. Bottery (2003) has written of the need to deconstruct citizenship in the face of the increasing pressure being placed on the concept of the nation-state. (As will be seen later, such a deconstruction has relevance in the discussion of 'cosmopolitanism').

At the level of organisations, culture has also been much examined (for example, Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1992). Within any school and linked community many sub-cultures will co-exist. These will possess certain values that may or may not be congruent with the mainstream culture, that in Apple's terms (1996), holds hegemonic sway within the school or community or society as a whole. The personal values of individuals are significant and these may be expressed overtly in political, social or religious allegiances or more subtly, as Goffman (1969) would have it, in the 'ordinariness' of everyday behaviour and interaction. All these (individual and collective) cultures will interact in ways that are both predictable and unpredictable. This variety of cultures, sub-cultures and micro-cultures within a school could be congruent or so with different subject areas and knowledge.

Issue (2): the uncertainty of identity

As has been noted earlier, identity is not a social fact to be picked up and examined: for it is a concept that '... is ... not an essentialist, but a strategic and positional one' (Hall, 2000: 17). He goes on to say that identity 'does *not* signal that stable core of self ... the bit which remains always-ready 'the same', identical to itself across time'. In the same vein, Ricoeur (1992) proposes a narrative identity that we construct for ourselves from various events and episodes in our lives through a dialogue with different situations. Bauman (2003) talks of 'liquid modern' times that have produced people 'with none of the fixed or durable bonds that would allow the effort of self-definition...to come to rest'.

On a more specific level about educational policies, Todd, over sixteen years ago (1991: 39), noted that these '... have altered following changes in the composition of British society'. But in these alterations and they have been numerous in the passing years, there have been many approaches, which have drawn 'upon different or slightly different perspectives and perceptions of socio-educational reality and objectives' (Mullard, 1984: 7).

Issue (3): the nature of legal identity

It was seen earlier that the populist view asserted that citizenship and its underpinning national identity is something more instinctive than the mere legal holding of a passport. But even legal identity is far from straight forward. Still influential, Marshall (1950) has stated that British citizenship has three parts:

- the civil element (including the rights of the person);
- the political element (including the right to participate in the political process);
- and the social element (including the right to be regard as a full human being living in society).

Of course, even when Marshall was writing the situation was less simple than it may have appeared – and this complexity has increased in the intervening fifty seven years. For example, as mentioned earlier, the United Kingdom does not have a written constitution; so much constitutional law is based on the interpretation of conventions. However, there is more than one legal system in the United Kingdom and though the European Communities Act (1972) established the supremacy of European law, some citizens may not recognise or even be aware of such a legal reality. Despite the United Kingdom being a signatory to the UDHR and the European Convention of Human Rights, many British passport holders do not have the right to automatically enter the United Kingdom to live and work there. Additionally, as has been seen with the recent mass movement from Eastern Europe to the United Kingdom, European citizens, workers from EU countries can move to and work in other EU states, but having no political rights, cannot vote.

So, terms have to be used carefully in situations where nationality and citizenship are not synonymous. Thus, a teacher can have students in his or her classroom that have every right to be in the United Kingdom but whose parents do not have the right to vote. In such instances, the teacher is faced with finding strategies that will enable the citizenship curriculum to be taught meaningfully and inclusively to support, in Marshall's terms, the social right for all to be regarded as full human beings and so worthy of respect.

Issue (4): global thinking and cosmopolitanism

Global thinking is concerned with an awareness of globalisation with its impact on national economies. Cosmopolitanism goes beyond this widening out of thinking to encompass all three of the above issues: the complexity of societal culture; the uncertainty of national identity; and the nature of legal identity. But it places them in a wider, 'unbordered', transnational context. Current discussion about cosmopolitanism can be seen a consequence of today's reality, *how we live now*.

People are no longer static – and some of us, at least, experience intensive mobility, domestically and internationally. This will, of course, vary; for example, most of us in Britain no longer live at the place where we were born and live on an average eighty miles away from our parents. International travel is the norm for most, certainly in terms of summer vacations, which can include visits to civilisation centres (Urry, 2000). In so doing, as places and cultures are consumed, a connoisseurship is developed. This has produced openness to other peoples and cultures. It has resulted in social networks of widely scattered but linked individuals who interact through face-to-face contact and through computer technology.

In this discussion of *how things are* can be added polemics about *how things should be*. In her important essay on patriotism and cosmopolitanism, Martha Nussbaum (1994) has recalled and advocated an ancient position. She notes when Diogenes Laertius was asked where he came from, he said: 'I am a citizen of the world'. In this cosmopolitanism is clearly more than internationalism, and nationalism is relativised. Its importance is, therefore, reduced.

According to Skrbis et al (2004: 115), the debate about the limits of patriotism that followed the publication of Nussbaum's essay (encapsulated in Nussbaum and Cohen, 1996) 'reinvigorated the concept (of cosmopolitanism)'. It can be seen, they said, as

‘a tool for radical social imagination and radical projections of cosmopolitan democracy (Archibugi and Held, 1995) and cosmopolitan citizenship (Hutchings and Dannreuther, 1999)’.

Other commentators take what can be seen as an expansive view of cosmopolitanism. Resonating with Giddens’ views about post-traditional societies, Beck, in his cosmopolitan manifesto (1998) sees the end of confident boundaries between the global and the local, and a blurring between traditional and de-traditionalised societies (2002). Again – at least, for some – perpetual international travel, as noted earlier, has produced international lives and unfixed and multiple identities. This, Said (1979: 18-19) has led to, in extreme cases, to a form of emotional homelessness. As a subjective outlook, it has also produced cosmopolitan perspective – expressed as a broad and openness mindedness to cultural difference (Urry, 2000). Kanter is more direct and specific about those she sees as ‘living the good life’. She focuses on the global business class – those never found in ‘cattle class’ on the long-haul jets.

If this is its inherent promise’, albeit some mixed, what are its ‘limitations and contradictions’? After all, Skrbis et al (2004: 115) remind us that (cosmopolitanism) can be accused of being a ‘catch-all phrase that renders its meaning irrelevant’. In addition to the accusations of meaninglessness, others would criticise its western-centric view of the world (Calhoun, 2002: 90). Others would point out its colonial undertones (van der Veer, 2002: 166); though there is research on non-Western cosmopolitanisms (e.g. Werber, 1999; Zubaida, 2002). In reply to this, Skrbis et al (2004: 124), themselves, make the pertinent point that the origin of the idea is immaterial. For them, ‘what matters most in this context is not whether cosmopolitanism is a Western invention but, rather, whether it can serve as a shared universal value, applicable across different cultural contexts’.

As has been seen, much emphasis has been placed on international travel and mobility – much of it couched in Kanter’s terms of a global elite or focused on the social networks of the highly educated - as the impetus of this renewed interest in cosmopolitanism. But there are other movements of people who are not allowed to enter the VIP lounge at the airport (Calhoun, 2002). We live in an era of unparalleled movements of people: those who are asylum seekers, economic migrants and those who are seeking freedom and a better life.

There are also those who do not travel and live lives of little or no mobility, be it geographical, economic, cultural and social (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002). Stationary in their locale, what is their access to the global? They may ‘have cosmopolitan mobility through satellite television...mobility of ideas, objects and images’ (Skrbis et al 2004: 121). Such a cosmopolitanism offers a certain window on the world. But perhaps it does not offer the genuineness of real experience – Urry’s (2000) ‘encountering the other’- upon which an authentic and meaningful cultural connoisseurship can be based. More realistically, cosmopolitanism can be seen in a more tempered and likely form, namely as a perspective ‘used by ordinary people to bridge boundaries with people who are different from them’ (Lamont and Askartova, 2002: 1).

Tentative conclusions about cosmopolitanism

Where does such a discussion take us? Universal approaches to world citizenship and cosmopolitanism have their dangers as much as nationalistic approaches to national citizenship and identity. For commentators such as Hirst and Held (2002), the local (be it a town, city or region rather than a nation-state) and the global underpin each other and, as stated at the beginning, are a duality in which ‘transnational citizens’ live. The world cities (in British terms, London, who its former mayor, Ken Livingstone, has described as a ‘city-state’), which are increasingly becoming detached and unrepresentative of their host country, are a phenomenon of our times.

On the other hand, a more balanced view (some would say more conservative one) is that the state cannot be done away with and this should not be attempted. In essence, we all start from somewhere and decide for ourselves what we take with us or leave behind in our journey to a wider perspective and knowledge of others. Nussbaum’s desire (1994) for new citizens of the world overlooks structural and everyday realities. Skrbis et al (2004: 116 quoting Boli and Thomas, 1999) make the point that:

We prefer to speak about cosmopolitanism as a progressive humanistic ideal which continues to be embedded in the structural conditions of modernity. We make a case for a more rigorous conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism that recognizes the validity of two enduring characteristics of the modern era: the nation-state and citizenship.

So the complexities of the local in terms of national citizenship and identity are conjoined with the complications of the global as expressed in world citizenship and cosmopolitanism. How do teachers cope with all of this in the classroom? In what frame of mind do teachers arrive in that classroom? By what means have they themselves developed, in Urry’s terms (2000), a ‘broad and openness mindness about cultural difference?’

The realities of encountering others

Before answers to these questions can be attempted, another set of questions has to be worked through. Or, if it is accepted that such a cosmopolitan mindset is desirable, what can actually happen when we ‘encounter the other’ (Urry, 2000). How difficult or easy is it to be cosmopolitan and to ‘build bridges’? There are a number of responses:

- 1) *by declaration*: as was seen earlier, Martha Nussbaum models one approach in her declaration that she is a citizen of the world. In this she echoes Diogenes and perhaps also Terrence, inasmuch, that nothing human is alien to her. Such a declaration is bold, brave – and unilateral. But what of the reactions to such a declaration? Martha Nussbaum has been described recently (Greenawatt, 2008) rather flatly as ‘a philosopher and a public intellectual’. She is, of course, a truly celebrated, internationally renowned academic. Such a declaration is likely to be accepted by a variety of audiences in its own terms. But what of such declarations coming from those not so distinguished – so that the declarations seem not so much grand as grandiose? What are the chances of their acceptance (and real, deep understanding of what she/he is meeting perhaps for the first time?
- 2) *using ‘big’ theory*: a theoretical basis for the analysis of cross-cultural issues can be sought. In an ever-expanding literature about cross-cultural issues, Hofstede’s (2001) work, mentioned earlier, on national cultures is an obvious

start. His dimensions of cultural difference, revolving around power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, can perhaps assist. They offer some explanation of a wide, general context.

- 3) *subjective reflexivity*: but this understanding of an ‘aggregated’ context can be strangely unhelpful when the individual seeks to understand their own experience and feelings. In the move from ‘big’ theory to the subjective reflexivity of personal reflection, the epistemological (and ontological) issues are the perennial ones between positivism and interpretivism, quantitative and qualitative methods; and objectivity and subjectivity. In specific instances of encountering the other – perhaps with the experience of culture shock -such subjectivity can uncover more meaningfully an individual’s, in Schein’s terms, assumptions and values about their own cultures –and those of others.

The effectiveness of these three approaches to cross-cultural understanding can be tested out in real situations where cultures and individuals interact. Differences (and commonalties) – can be discovered, perhaps resolved and celebrated. (However, of course, there may be issues that cannot be easily resolved or smoothed over. Gender issues revolving around the status and the role of women in society is an obvious example). However, personal criteria can be blended with the more ‘objective’ criteria in particular work and/or educational situations as working in cross-cultural teams and building the necessary trust and cosmopolitan space (Adler, 2007; Hofstede, 2004; Lewis, 2005; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997; 2004).

Some preliminary conclusions about cosmopolitanism criteria

Responding to another societal culture is no easy matter. It is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid generalisations which may be unhelpful and downright misleading. However, the subjective response (modified by some ‘hard facts’) is perhaps the only meaningful one as it allows an examination of the intermingling of local and cosmopolitan identities and experiences.

However, cosmopolitanism, unless it is simply to be a reflection of the ‘globalised’, insulated and protected culture of the long-haul business class, the air-conditioned hotel (probably belonging to an international chain), taxi or chauffeured limo and conference hall, is clearly complicated and emotionally-demanding hard work that demands systematic analysis. Anything else will be sloppy and meaningless – and potentially very dangerous if brought into the classroom to influence others. The difficulties and clashes cannot be resolved and so they cannot be ignored.

The issues in teaching citizenship and promoting global thinking

Over seven years ago, a small study (Johnson and Holness, 2001) found that a small group of British student teachers accepted in an unquestioning way the introduction of citizenship education into the National Curriculum. As might be expected, they are much concerned the pragmatic and operational practicalities of citizenship education. Its approaches and purpose ‘are so because the government said so’. For many of the student teachers, government policy and compulsion were rarely seen as a political issue. It seemed then that there was little awareness of the position, identified earlier by Mullard (1984), in which unchallenged perceptions of social reality co-exist with changes in governmental policy about the importance of the role of citizenship education. Clearly questions do need to be asked about teaching of citizenship (and

global thinking and, in its more sophisticated form, cosmopolitanism). Some suggested ones are:

Questions about teaching citizenship

From this short discussion, it is possible to generate a sample of linked questions about citizenship and cosmopolitanism:

Professional knowledge and intellectual awareness

- What should teachers know?
- Should teachers explore their own life histories to locate their own national identity and global perspective?
- Is there a need to go beyond the statutory orders?

Connected issues about values and professional knowledge

- What are the broader considerations of moral values, discipline, and community?
- Should teachers relate the issue of citizenship and global thinking to broader political ideologies?
- Should they offer their pupils/students a variety of perspectives on the nature of the state, especially in a time when the state is perceived to be in a period of flux (for example, as mentioned earlier, the impact of Scottish devolution, the directives of the European Union and the consequences of globalisation)?
- Should they offer their pupils a variety of perspectives on, for example, the current nature of British society and its many cultures and multi-ethnic nature; its social class structure as experienced by their own pupils; ethnic and national identities; differing lifestyles, changes in morality, the impact of globalisation and cosmopolitanism?

Anxieties about teaching controversial subjects

- How do or should teachers deal with difficult situations that might arise from political discussions?
- How do or should teachers be aware of and sensitive to the links between home and school, and the impact such a curriculum may have on the need for greater liaison and alliance?

These questions are a theoretical and practical expression of issues arising from the implementation of governmental policy in schools.

As noted earlier, the student teachers had identified their practical concerns but significantly had not focused on the more theoretical and problematical issues within national identity (and the concomitant issue of shared values). Does this reflect how citizenship had been presented and discussed by their teacher educators? It would appear that controversial areas had been ‘skated over’ in their professional training, perhaps to avoid controversy. This inference is supported by the Curriculum Review (DfES, 2007: 67):

Research shows that there is insufficient effective training for teachers to feel confident with issues of identity, 'race' and religion...in initial teacher training...

While good practice can be found, the Review makes the direct link between teacher educators and what goes on in classrooms by saying:

On quality of training, Davies and Crozier found 'an inconsistency across initial teaching training providers in both the amount and the nature of the input pupils received about diversity, that many providers do not regard diversity issues, and more specifically 'race', as sufficiently important, and that underlying this is the profound lack of confidence and understanding of some providers in addressing such issues' (DfES, 2007: 68).

So how do schools of education in British universities and the teacher educators working within them avoid 'a simplistic approach' that, according to the Curriculum Review, is perhaps consistent with supplying initial teacher training that fulfils Qualified Teacher Status standards set by government? (The Review goes on to suggest they are not sufficiently high in this area).

For both teacher educators and student teachers, clearly there is a need to enhance teacher confidence in teaching controversial subjects. Additionally, the increasing inclusion of Master (postgraduate) level credits within initial teacher training programmes offers the opportunity for the theorising of subject areas (as, for example, in citizenship education's four issues that were outlined above). However, before or alongside such strategies, there could be advantages in teacher educators exploring how they have constructed their own national identity (and that of others).

Conclusions

The British government has introduced citizenship education into its schools as a means of promoting shared values, some form of common identity, political literacy and involvement in the community and society as a whole. This paper started with the premise that unexamined and 'un-theorised' approaches to citizenship and citizenship education were likely to be unhelpful. They could be particularly divisive in a society such as the United Kingdom that while increasingly multi-cultural is still in many ways unaccustomed to considering and questioning such issues in a manner that moves beyond the populist opinions of 'pub talk'.

The task of delivering the governmentally determined citizenship curriculum falls to:

- teachers already in school who are likely to be experienced in teaching affective education in some form;
- to a few newly qualified teachers who have specialised in citizenship education;
- and to newly qualified teachers whose specialism is in another area but will taking on teaching responsibilities in citizenship.

(Significantly. The new DFID initiatives on global thinking stipulate, as with some citizenship approaches, that global thinking should permeate the whole curriculum – and so these issues, if they ever were, are no longer for citizenship teachers alone).

It could be expected that student teachers would be mostly concerned with operational – or, at a simple level, educational - issues evolving around timetables and the

implementation of a curriculum prescribed by government. It can be inferred that student teachers see the task of teaching citizenship education as something they 'have to' implement, over which they have little or no professional control.

However, if teachers only have a superficial grasp of the subject area itself akin to what Prosser and Trigwell (1999) would call surface learning, this can only 'sell the subject short'.

Such unwillingness to recognise, 'unpack' and be informed on an intellectual level about the deeper, underpinning issues could be considered as political ignorance, disinterest and disengagement. Beyond being able to 'sense trouble' on an intuitive level, the pedagogical consequences are straightforward: if teachers do not recognise the problematic, theoretical issues in this area, how will they be able to design and use inclusive teaching and learning strategies - and develop a real and mature understanding in their pupils?

The role of initial teacher educators, as implied by the Standards of the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (DfEE, 1998; DfES 2007), is to use a competency-based model in their work with student teachers (and this is the model used in respect of citizenship education). Within this model, there is no compulsion that the curriculum and processes should be critiqued. The approach adopted by the initial teacher educator is a matter mostly determined by his or her own subject area (which may or may not give experience in dealing with controversial issues) and an individual professional and ideological position. Clearly, there is a need for teacher educators in the university to critique the curriculum and to encourage his or her student teachers to do the same.

Additionally, there is also a need for teacher educators to fully understand the social, political, personal and perhaps emotional origin of attitudes. In this way, teacher educators will be encouraging 'a deep approach' (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999) for themselves - and for their student teachers. That in turn is likely to be relayed on to their own pupils in the school classroom when they have taken up this demanding task. For this 'chain' of awareness to develop, there is a need for support and opportunities for experience and development. To this end, the professional networks of students, teachers and teacher educators must increasingly take on a global aspect through contacts and exchanges and the development of intellectual sites such as shared university programmes and academic journals. (For example, student teachers at Kingston University have the opportunity to visit schools in Uganda and India). In this way, aware citizenship awareness in its broadest forms leads to a fuller understanding and appreciation of what can be learnt from contacts with others who are different from us, be it that we meet them locally or in the wide world beyond our initial socialisation.

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