

Editorial Introduction

This is the seventh annual edition of CERJ—this year compiled of papers written by both Canadian and international educators and researchers in the field of citizenship education. The field of citizenship education is broad, and can be explored from a wide range of perspectives. Currently, with the large-scale movement of both people and ideas around the globe beginning to impact the way in which both teachers and learners approach education in the 21st century, citizenship education deserves closer examination. Ideas of equality and equity are receiving increased focus. Education systems around the world are beginning to prioritize teaching and learning that support critical thinking and collaborative approaches in part to encourage a greater sense of global citizenship through education. The collection of papers in this issue primarily examine the engagement of learners in areas of citizenship education. Engaging young people with issues related to citizenship may affect how they engage (or fail to engage) with political and social issues into adulthood. Early engagement is key. Another factor affecting learner engagement is how educators themselves understand citizenship, and ways that they might approach citizenship education with the learners in their classrooms. Many of the contributors to this issue have considered the role that multiculturalism and diversity play in the personal experience of the classroom educator and how that experience may influence citizenship education in their classrooms.

In this issue's first paper, researchers Paul R. Carr, Gary Pluim, and Gina Thésée take a close examination of citizenship education from the perspective of multicultural-social justice education and education for democracy. In Canada, policies of multiculturalism combined with a long history of immigration have created a demand for education to address citizenship in a way that meets the needs of a diverse population of learners. The study conducted by Carr et al. is a thorough examination of how future educators might address that diversity in their classrooms. They have considered ways that future educators might be affected by their own experiences and personal understandings of multicultural social justice education and education for democracy. Their research explores not only how education around democracy, multiculturalism and citizenship occur in the classroom, but also how individual experiences may impact an educators' classroom instruction.

Researchers Ruth G. Kane, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Linda Radford, and Jesse K. Butler address similar issues in the second paper in this collection. The article provides an introduction to a multi-year study currently being conducted in urban schools. This study examines the need to support future teachers in teacher education programs as they map out ways to address citizenship education with a diverse population of learners. One possibility that Kane et al. have explored is through the use of digital technologies in school. This study has examined the role of digital citizenship as a part of citizenship education and ways that this approach might assist learners from diverse backgrounds to find their voice. Issues that have arisen from their study concern a limited understanding of digital citizenship and the need for future teachers to develop a clear understanding of how the “placelessness” of digital technology can provide opportunities for diverse learners.

The third paper in this issue focuses more closely on the learner and how educators might better engage them in civic education so as to inspire future civic action. Researchers Jonathan Lee and Catherine Broom affirm the familiar rationale that education is one of the most effective means through which to prepare students to participate in a democracy, therefore educators must work towards more effective methods of instruction for civic education. Lee and Broom combine key

theories in motivation with the data collected through a number of student interviews in order to determine what role motivation might play in engaging young people in civic action. The study concludes with recommendations which may help both current and future educators.

Canada is not the only country in the world with a diverse population, and Canadian students are not the only ones who have expressed limited engagement in civic education. The fourth paper in this issue describes the results of an Australian study conducted by researchers Frank Reichert and Murray Print. Their research examined the results of two decades of various curricular initiatives aimed at improving future civic action by young people – in particular the *Discover Democracy* program (1997-2004). The research conducted by Reichert and Print surveyed the effect of government initiatives aimed at increasing future civic involvement. The results of their research contain some valuable insights for Canadian educators.

In the perspective paper at the end of this issue, author Dana Dabbous calls attention to the global increase of non-citizens and the essential role that education plays in their lives. Dabbous calls for the need for an alternative form of citizenship education that will provide the rights of citizenship to non-citizens, pointing particularly the right to primary education. Her work reviews historical understandings of citizenship and brings them together with more contemporary ideas of global citizenship in order to encourage support for the educating of non-citizens around the globe.

All papers in this issue focus on school as a place to develop engaged citizens of democracy and on the significant role that teachers can play in engaging learners in citizenship education. Young people have long been known to be minimally engaged in democracy and the democratic process, and their participation in the electoral process is typically much lower than that of older demographics. Patterns of (dis)engagement are also seen to persist as each generation progresses, thus creating a pattern of decreasing participation across an entire population. This is no small concern. The researchers in this issue of CERJ have examined ways to not only engage young learners in areas of citizenship, they have also considered the significant role of future educators in this process. They have recognised the importance not only of engaging students, but also the importance of supporting their teachers in leading effective and engaging pedagogy for citizenship education.

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