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Introduction

This chapter compares the English tradition of active citizenship education (embodied in the national curriculum for Citizenship) with the US tradition of service-learning. Following some initial observations about the different traditions in the two countries the chapter focuses on three significant issues which are common to both traditions: (a) the type of experience which educators should facilitate; (b) the relationship between that experience and citizenship education; and (c) the pedagogy of experiential learning. The concluding section makes some suggestions as to why, given there are such significant shared educational and political concerns, the English educational community have not connected more positively with the longer established tradition of service-learning.

I. Service-Learning

For teachers in the UK service-learning is a largely unknown tradition and there is certainly no established and recognized parallel tradition in Britain. For those helping to establish and shape citizenship education in England from 2002 onwards, the active dimension was therefore relatively new. In retrospect it is possible to identify a strong shared aspiration with the broader service-learning community of practitioners, especially in relation to the kind of definition offered by Wilczenski and Coomey who describe it as "an experiential approach to education that involves students in meaningful, real-world activities that can advance social, emotional, career, and academic curricula goals while benefitting communities" (2007, p. viii). One can recognize the importance of Dewey's ideal of experiential learning (Dewey,

1997/1938) and in practice one can also recognize the on-going diversity within service-learning where some projects focus more on the service, others are driven more by a learning focus, and others try to balance the two. Typically a service-learning project includes a connection between the academic curriculum and an experience that meets real community needs to some context, as we have tried to achieve in England as well. Annette (2008) has argued that the early focus on community-based internships, which were popular in the USA in the 1960s, have largely given way to a model which seeks to link the service element more explicitly to citizenship learning. The nature of this link remains controversial and it is not always clear what form of citizenship education is being pursued through such programs (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

In addition to the contribution to citizenship education, advocates also champion the contribution of service-learning projects to developing social capital (Howard, 2006), improving attitudes towards 'others' (Morgan & Streb, 2001), enabling students to feel more of a connection to local communities (Ransom, 2009) and developing moral reasoning (Koliba, 2000). They can also be used to structure community based research projects as opportunities for students to learn and apply their learning (Paul, 2009). When working well these projects are reciprocal, in that they promote student learning and further the aims of the partner organization (Jacoby & Brown, 2009) and so they also hold out the possibility of making a direct contribution to wider social aims. However, as Jones and her colleagues' discussion of student resistance to 'service' unwittingly demonstrates, there are on-going problems with the relationship between the two elements of service and learning (Jones, Gilbride-Brown, & Gasiorski, 2005). Although the main focus of their article is the analysis of forms of resistance displayed by student participants, it also becomes clear in the course of their discussion that the service being discussed relates to a volunteer program in a food preparation center. The nature of the experience is not fully described in their account and

only emerges through extracts of student testimony, and from this it is clear that some of the resisters described essentially menial tasks – unpacking stock and organizing foodstuff on shelves. Whilst it is unlikely that these tasks form the basis of their entire service-learning program it does seem significant that these are the tasks that some of these resisters complain about. One might question the nature of the experience in this case, and ask whether this kind of experience is likely to lead to the wider benefits listed above? This illustrates a continuing tendency for some projects to focus on the act of service rather than the nature of service and its relationship to learning for citizenship – a debate which has also emerged in relation to the more recent introduction of citizenship education in England.

II. Education for Active Citizenship

There are some advocates for service-learning in England (see for example www.csv.org.uk; Annette, 2008, Potter, 2002) but it is far from establishing itself as a common term in educational discourse. Instead, the features of service-learning are dispersed through a more holistic model of citizenship education, one of the elements of which is active citizenship. Although Citizenship was not introduced into the national curriculum until 2002, the active dimension has come to be seen as one of its defining features. The programs of study, which defined the subject for 11-16 year olds were very clear in establishing the scope of this new curriculum entitlement. The initial curriculum included the following requirement:

Developing skills of participation and responsible action

Pupils should be taught to:

- (a) use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own ;
- (b) negotiate, decide and take part responsibly in both school and community-based activities;

(c) reflect on the process of participating.

(QCA, 2000)

And in the subsequent revised curriculum in 2008 this became:

Taking informed and responsible action

Pupils should be able to:

(a) explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes;

(b) work individually and with others to negotiate, plan and take action on citizenship issues to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, using time and resources appropriately;

(c) analyze the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future;

(d) reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt, what went well, the difficulties encountered and what they would do differently.

(QCA, 2007)

In the same way that service-learning includes a wide range of experiences, active citizenship has been interpreted to include many different types of activities. Some school based activities are extra-curricular, for example school councils and projects designed to share responsibility for inclusion between children and staff. Some projects are more focused on campaigning as a form of active citizenship, for example in school campaigns might tackle bullying, whilst other campaigns might reach out into the community and include lobbying politicians and other agencies. The British Library's education project Campaign Make an Impact (www.bl.uk/campaign) provides a pedagogic framework for such activities and case studies of previous projects include the voting age, local transport, litter and knife crime.

Other forms of active citizenship can be initiated at local government level, with consultations and opportunities for involvement being led by local authority staff working in community groups (for example Islington's project www.participationworks.org.uk). Active citizenship therefore not only engages young people with almost any topic, but can also take place in a range of contexts: it may be limited to the classroom or school, it may reach out from the school into the community, or it may start in the community and connect back to the curriculum.

After eight years of Citizenship in the national curriculum, young people's positive intentions to participate continued to be generally correlated with high levels of civic knowledge and parental interest in social and political issues (Nelson et al., 2010, p. 96). Where citizenship education has been introduced consistently and with specialist teachers, there is a measurable change in young people's attitudes and actions. Significantly, within this generally positive picture the data from longitudinal research (for example Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010) indicates that activities such as voting and volunteering are supported much more highly than more 'activist' forms of citizenship such as joining a political party, campaigning, and attending meetings, which reflects the patterns of active citizenship in the general population. This reflects a tendency for young people to hold a more holistic definition of citizenship than merely political participation (Nelson et al., 2010: 50-2). In turn this suggests that notions of the 'good citizen' still hold out over the 'active citizen', which in turn reflects Crick's discussion of the prevalent tendency to favor a de-politicized account of the 'good citizen' (Crick, 2000: 2). This reflects the debate in the USA as characterized by Westheimer and Kahne, and indicates a preference for the 'personally responsible citizen' over the 'participatory' and 'justice oriented citizens' (2004: 266).

III. Service-learning and Education for Active Citizenship Compared

The comparison of active citizenship education and service-learning raises several issues which link to foundational questions about the nature, scope and purpose of citizenship education. Whilst one always needs to consider the overarching model of citizenship adopted in any specific curriculum or project, here I focus on three additional issues which emerge as particularly significant:

- (a) the nature of the experience that contributes to political learning,
- (b) the relationship between developing political literacy and social capital through such experiences, and
- (c) the processes through which experience is transformed into learning.

(a) The nature of the experience that contributes to political learning

Around the time of the introduction of Citizenship into the national curriculum in England, the Department for Education and Skills funded a project called Active Citizenship in Schools (ACiS). The project emphasized the continuum of active citizenship across four dimensions:

- From adult led, young person-centered to young person-led activity.
- From school based activity to activity in the wider community.
- From individual to group activity.
- From helping others to taking issue based action (Stenton, 2004).

This is helpful in thinking about forms of active citizenship and forms of service. Whilst it is easy to think about the maximal forms of public engagement which form archetypal acts of citizenship, it is equally important to remember that small can be beautiful.

This key message emerged in an initial teacher education course, where student teachers were encouraged to reflect on their experience facilitating active citizenship in schools. One student teacher argued:

“Smaller events such as individual tutor groups organizing fund-raising activities where they design and plan the activities themselves with teachers acting as guides are often more valuable than whole school organized events which have little student participation in the planning stages” (Jerome, 2006: 319).

Another student wrote:

“Providing meaningful active citizenship experiences for all pupils is not about turning each pupil into highly motivated politically galvanized individuals, rather it is about providing the framework and activities for pupils to experience community action in a meaningful way, which they may otherwise never experience” (ibid).

These sentiments reflect to some extent the viewpoint of Jensen and Schnack who emphasize the educational value of such activities over and above the concrete project outcomes:

“It is not and cannot be the task of the school to solve the political problems of society. Its task is not to improve the world with the help of the pupils’ activities... These (activities) must be assessed on the basis of... educational criteria. The crucial factor must be what the pupils learn from participating in such actions” (Jensen & Schnack, 1994: 14).

Whilst such learning can include the hard-edged political literacy required for effective citizenship learning, it is also important to remember that the learning can be emotional and highly personal. If such experiences are to really engage with young people’s personal

development and growth, then these student teachers' reflections indicate that small scale projects will have a valuable role.

(b) The relationship between developing political literacy and social capital through such experiences

Annette (2008) has argued that the relationship between active citizenship and social capital has emerged as a key problem in the debate about citizenship education, especially given the prominence of both concepts for the Labour government that introduced citizenship education in England. Crick addressed these issues to some extent in 'A Note on What Is and What Is Not Active Citizenship' (Crick, 2002). In one example of how the call to promote action can be misunderstood, he described a school which claimed to be doing an active citizenship project by enabling a group of pupils to plan a party for old people in a residential home near to the school. The young people negotiated with the staff, bought provisions and organized entertainment. On the face of it this seems to demonstrate participation, but this is not, according to Crick, what active citizenship is about. In considering what could have transformed the project into active citizenship he suggests:

- A prior investigation into the complex policy area of health care, and provision for the elderly.
- An investigation into why some of the residents were being cared for in a state funded institution, and whether the level of funding was adequate.
- Representations to the relevant public authorities.

It is relevant, given the significance of this fictional case study in Crick's clarification, to reflect on exactly what distinctions are being made here and what assumptions about Citizenship underlie his discussion.

On the one hand there is some similarity here with the definitions of service-learning quoted at the beginning of this chapter, which called for real-life problems and critical thinking. In essence, what is needed is some knowledge base, in order that the situation is understood. Indeed it is the notion of young people being ‘informed’ which marks Hart’s distinction between genuine participation and non-participation, which is deemed to consist of tokenism, decoration or manipulation (Hart, 1992). However, one might also want to encourage young people to participate in the project outlined above because:

- they will get to know groups within the community;
- they will build relationships with people from another generation;
- they may feel the satisfaction of a job well done and enjoy helping out;
- it may also serve to boost their sense of self-esteem and their appreciation of others.

Through these additional outcomes the project may build bridging social capital and therefore it may play a part in the school’s overall vision for developing citizens, regardless of the extent to which political literacy (civic knowledge) has been addressed.

Kisby (2012) has attempted to analyze citizenship education in England primarily as an attempt to recreate or strengthen social capital. And, even Crick acknowledged the value of everyday associations in his major work, *In Defense of Politics*, where he argued that politics is an essential element of what it is to be human:

“The more one is involved in relationships with others, the more conflicts of interest, or of character and circumstance will arise. These conflicts, when personal, create the activity we call ‘ethics’... and such conflicts, when public, create political activity...” (Crick, 1982).

From this perspective such ‘public interactions’ could be seen as the bedrock of political education, and there is no obvious reason why the joint effort required to negotiate and

organize the party for elderly people discussed above would not fulfill these criteria. If we expand our notion of relevant experiences to recognize that democracy is lived in the acts of coming together to discuss, resolve and take action we derive a significantly different agenda for school based citizenship education. This agenda is actually closer to Dewey's understanding of the purposes of education and the link to experiential learning, as he put it:

“Is it not the reason for our preference [for democracy] that we believe that mutual consultation and convictions reached through persuasion, make possible a better quality of experience than can otherwise be provided on any wide scale?... Personally I do not see how we can justify our preference for democracy and humanity on any other ground” (Dewey, 1997/1938: 34-5).

This strengthens the argument that the foundations of education for democracy might best be established by focusing on the experience of getting along together and engaging in meaningful deliberation (thus building social capital) rather than by a premature induction into public policy debates.

There is then, a tension between the definition of politics, which focuses on the process of working with others to achieve ends within the public sphere (the example above of students organizing a party and negotiating with others to achieve their goals seems to fit this definition) and an expectation that such activities, to count as Citizenship, must at least touch on relevant questions of policy or governance (which is implied by the additional questions with which Crick wants the students to engage). This is a tension that also seems to underpin much of the discussion about service-learning as a pedagogic approach.

(c) The processes through which experience is transformed into learning

If we are concerned that young people learn from their experiences, the role of reflection, and therefore of facilitation is important in the process. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) provide one example of how to achieve this through three distinct stages. First, students must return to the experience in their mind and recall what happened. Second, they have to deal with their emotional response, and recognize feelings that may obstruct clear thinking. Third, they should attempt to re-evaluate the experience by exploring their feelings, identifying key learning outcomes and testing their conclusions for consistency. Building on such approaches, several individuals and educational organizations produced guidance for Citizenship teachers in England highlighting the usefulness of tools such as Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Potter, 2002).

In a similar vein, service-learning assessment should balance both the knowledge and the skills acquired and there are several layers of outcomes that could be assessed.

- From a general knowledge perspective, students may learn about specific public issues they are working on.
- From a political literacy perspective, they may learn about civic participation and the range of actions available to citizens.
- From an interpersonal perspective, they may learn about strategies for working with others.
- From an intrapersonal perspective they may also learn something about themselves, their own motivations and interests (Jerome, 2008).

In England in 2012 approximately 75,000 students (only about 10% of those eligible) took an end of school examination in Citizenship, part of which included a written report of their active citizenship experience. The examiner's report indicated that most of these young people were indeed able to use the opportunity to reflect meaningfully on their experience

and what they have learned in relation to these various levels of knowledge and skills (AQA, 2012).

In relation to this aspect of experiential learning Dewey provides an important warning, which is relevant to Citizenship teachers and those who facilitate service-learning alike:

“The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (Dewey, 1997/1938: 25).

The implication of Dewey’s insight is that whilst negative experiences can be educational if handled well, any experience has the potential not just to fail as a learning experience but to have a destructive effect on future learning. In relation to citizenship education this points to the fact that young people, indeed all citizens, stand to learn a lot through reflecting on their experience of researching, planning and participating in a political process, regardless of whether the end goal is achieved. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible that young people may participate in an experience which actually deters them from future participation, even if they achieve the project goal, for example through feeling belittled, marginalized, insulted, or simply ignored.

This insight into how experience relates to education provides a profound challenge for teacher education. It implies that teachers who are inadequately prepared to facilitate experiential learning as part of the active dimension to citizenship education or service-learning could have harmful effects on the development of active citizens. At best, the learning may be minimized if teachers are not able to guide learners effectively through

reflection and evaluation. At worst, teachers who fail to support young people through the process, and therefore fail to help them identify the value of their experiences, may lead them down a cul-de-sac of disillusionment and apathy.

IV. What's the Problem with Service-learning in the English Context?

The above discussion illustrates that there are some common issues at the heart of England's tradition of active citizenship education and the more established tradition of service-learning. However it is notable that there has been little explicit connection made between these traditions in the citizenship education community in England. Although some organizations in the UK have 'borrowed' from service-learning models established in the US, it would be wrong to suggest that the English have simply adopted the best principles of service-learning and employed them under a different name. The absence of a shared language appears to deter practitioners from recognizing they are engaged in broadly similar endeavors. Below I suggest three possible reasons for this lack of connection.

First, there may be issues related to language over substance. In the first place the term service is not well understood in England, even UK academics do not understand the term and struggle to translate it into an equivalent English phrase (Macfarlane, 2005). One suspects it has connotations of an imbalanced relationship and has echoes of the phrase 'being in service' (being employed as a servant), and 'national service' (conscription).

Second, there is also a deeper difference between the English and American contexts relating to expectations about the role of the welfare state and therefore of the individual's responsibilities for themselves, their own families and others in the community. The concept of service fulfills a specific role in the USA where, for example, philanthropic giving is seen as a more public act than would be generally accepted in the UK (Wright, 2002).

Third, one might broadly perceive a trajectory within service-learning from a service orientation towards one in which the citizenship learning becomes a priority. In England on the other hand, active citizenship has from the outset clearly been set within the context of citizenship education, and within that political literacy has been a key dimension. Whilst the current definitions of both traditions may be relatively close, the fact that the American tradition has evolved from the very kinds of activities English educationalists were being warned away from (volunteering, giving and helping), may also contribute to the skepticism.

In reality this perceived difference may actually just mask another similarity in practice. It is possible that many service-learning practitioners are actually still rather more focused on the service element (where service is defined as a form of charity or even more simplistically as ‘doing good for disadvantaged people’) than they are on the rigorous identification and assessment of learning. And, despite the best efforts of Crick to warn them away from this approach, the examiner’s reports for Citizenship continue to demonstrate that many teachers in England have taken up relatively easy opportunities for their students to volunteer or raise money for charity (OCR, 2012). It seems the model of the good citizen still exists in tension with the active citizen, at least in some projects regardless of whether we call them active citizenship or service-learning.

Biography

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Lee Jerome completed his PhD at the Institute of Education, University of London where he researched the development of citizenship education policy in secondary schools in England.

He published 'England's Citizenship Experiment: State, School and Student Perspectives' in 2012 and also edits 'Teaching Citizenship' the journal of the Association for Citizenship Teaching in the UK. He has taught in secondary schools in London and on teacher education courses in several universities. He currently works in the School of Education in Queen's University Belfast, where he is a member of the Centre for Children's Rights and contributes to the MSc in Children's Rights.

Further Reading

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