

**Executive Summary**  
**Education for Citizenship in England Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales 2001**  
**September 27-29 2001, Glynhill Hotel Glasgow**

**Three key themes from the conference**

**1. Role of Students**

A fundamental issue, in relation to student participation, is that of motivation. We need to look carefully at what motivates students, is it an enhanced social life, improved CV, family issues, the desire to make a positive change?

Level of Involvement:

- What understanding do students have conceptually and how do they perceive citizenship education?
- What are students entitled to, and how much can they contribute to the strategic development of citizenship education?
- How much room is there for ideas to grow organically from students?
- Students are key stakeholders, but are they being consulted and addressed?
- Importance of power relationships – e.g. adult/youth. How do students perceive adult roles? Are adults supportive, patronising, opposing? Can young people make any real decisions?

Knowledge/skills/understanding gained:

- Students have the opportunity to learn about rights and responsibilities and how they are reciprocal
- Students will be learning how to influence people, and how they can change the predominate values in society.
- They will have the opportunity to become critically reflecting individuals, who respect themselves and others.
- They will have the opportunity to consider deeper questions in life, and look at meaning and purpose.

**2. Schools and the education system**

Potential problems/issues arising from implementation:

- How do we have meaningful participation within the confines of the current institutionalised educational system?

Schools are not used to, and not willing to, take the risks involved.

- Implementation will be a logistical nightmare – and another administrative burden for school management; and schools will also need resource support.
- Schools will have to instigate and nurture community partnerships that work for them.
- Is there a tension between the classroom climate and the citizenship agenda?
- Citizenship education needs to be given status within school life.
- Schools should get the governors and parents involved.

Who else is responsible?

- It must be remembered that young people spend more time out of school than in school – there is a parental responsibility – this isn't just a school based agenda.
- LEAs must be aware of their responsibilities, as they can play a key role in supporting schools.

Why is it so important?

- Citizenship education is fundamental to the work of schools, and could make positive changes to the nature of schools and institutions, though any change will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.
- We have to be realistic about what schools are already trying to balance; and we must recognise the good practice which already exists.
- How do we encourage teachers to look at opportunities positively, and see their potential value?

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**3. The related value of citizenship education**

Ongoing research and evaluation needs to be carried out to assess the effects of citizenship education, i.e. is it achieving what we hope it will achieve? How does it link to achievement, motivation and participation?

Some of the expected benefits of citizenship education are listed below:-

- Helping to develop the individual in society, and enhance the young people's contribution.
- Promoting excellence in schools.
- Forming confident and fully rounded citizens who participate in society.
- Building on the diversity that exists in society, and see it as a strength.
- Contributing to the standards agenda.
- Improve self-esteem.
- Raising questions about the power and passion of language.
- Improving exam performance, lesson attendance, and attainment.
- Impacting upon school ethos, participation, behaviour, and quality of work.
- Preparing students for the opportunities and responsibilities of life.

**Key issues raised going forward from each of the four home nations**

**England**

- Active learning and participation provide the key – effective citizenship education combines experiential learning and knowledge. The culture of inter-active learning needs to be disseminated across the whole school. Therefore training is needed in the *process* and *basic content* of citizenship education.
- Adequate funding is needed for professional development over an extended period of time. There is a danger that start-up funding will not be adequate to maintain the strength of the initiative.

- Will citizenship be delivered by specialists or whole-school models of working?
- Teachers should get financial recognition for extra responsibilities - the £1300 from the Standards Fund is helpful but not sufficient to make strategic impact on citizenship education in schools.
- Year Heads can be the link between PSHE, citizenship and academic subjects.
- There is still concern about assessment.

**Northern Ireland**

- The pilot project on citizenship is now in its third year and another 71 schools will be trained in April-June 2002.
- Education and Library Boards need to establish a common approach (and job descriptions) across the Province.
- Preparation, progression and coherence remain critical issues.

**Scotland**

- The need for an *audit tool* was identified, to be used by LEA's working in partnership with schools particularly as citizenship won't be a formal subject,
- Concern about reduced funding for schools (e.g. when the community schools programme comes to an end.)
- How to involve young people on the margins of school and society.
- How do we teach about the disappointments of democracy?

**Wales**

- A number of teachers want a statutory framework within which to establish their initiatives on citizenship and community action.
- It is important to establish clear and strong mission statements.
- Important to tie in those youngsters who are outside the formal education system.
- Need more materials and support for the Welsh language.