

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies

Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts

Conference Paper

Contribution to Workshop 5, Session 1: Intercultural Citizenship Education – New Perspectives for Learning at Schools

**„How should the curriculum change to reflect migration in society?“
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Lisbon, Portugal, April, 26-28, 2007

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Citizenship has been part of the statutory National Curriculum in England since 2002.

There is currently a debate in England about the extent to which education (and citizenship education in particular) equips pupils for life in an increasingly diverse society. The current National Curriculum for citizenship includes teaching about Britain's diversity and its origins, but Ofsted's evidence is that this is not well done in many schools. In 2006, the government set up a review led by Sir Keith Ajegbo on 'Diversity and Citizenship'. This review reported earlier in 2007. It found some good practice in teaching about diversity, but also a lack of experience amongst some teachers in teaching about diversity and continuing negative attitudes on the part of some pupils.

The recommendations of the report have implications for government departments, schools and teacher training organisations. At the heart of the recommendations is the need for schools to promote community cohesion. There are specific recommendations for school leaders, curriculum developers, teacher trainers and local networks.

With regard to the content of citizenship courses, the Ajegbo report recommends a strengthening of the citizenship curriculum to include a 'strand' called 'Identity and Diversity: Living in the UK'. This will include 'critical thinking about ethnicity, religion and race', and the use of contemporary history to illuminate these issues. Areas to be included in this study include the UK as a 'multinational state', immigration, the Commonwealth and the legacy of Empire, the EU, and the extension of the franchise.

In conclusion, the report recommends a whole-school focus on identities, diversity and citizenship with time dedicated to answer the question 'Who Do We Think We Are?'

This significant report comes at a time when the QCA is consulting on revisions to the National Curriculum citizenship, including a new element, 'Identities and Diversity, living together in the UK'. There is also a broader debate, promoted by government ministers and others, about what we mean by 'Britishness'. So what practical steps should be taken to promote the issues raised in the report, including the understanding of a migration society? This workshop presentation will set the context for the current debate in England and will look at possible next steps.