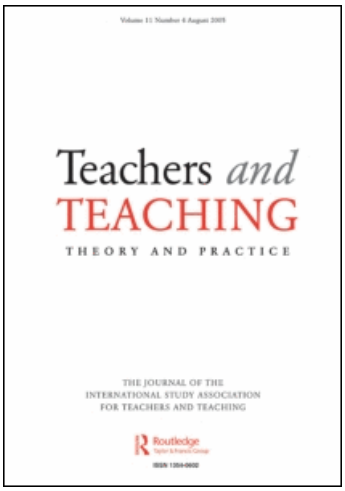

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Citizenship education in England and Wales: theoretical critique and practical considerations

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This paper presents a theoretical critique of citizenship education in England and Wales, as a means of raising pedagogical considerations for teachers, and policy issues for curriculum makers and planners. Drawing on a range of recent empirical studies, we construct an analysis of practice and suggest that differences between dominant models of citizenship in England and Wales owe much to their histories. We suggest that such differences create opportunities for new curriculum-making practices as well as democratic possibilities in the context of citizenship education, at a time when curricula in both England and Wales are under revision. Considering school councils/forums as an exemplar of practice common to both contexts, we question the wisdom of schools employing a narrow conception of active citizenship, via forums, in order to demonstrate they are satisfying the relevant requirements of the *Order for Citizenship* in England, and aspects of the *Personal and Social Education* curriculum in Wales. While the exemplars are both from the UK context the arguments apply beyond these borders and to more general concerns regarding the development of global citizenship.

Keywords: citizenship education; school councils; school forums

Introduction

First, we outline the historical significance of citizenship as a concept, and identify some of the socio-cultural factors that have given rise to debates and contestations, especially those concerned with how citizenship education is both politically constructed and democratically appropriated through contemporary formal curricula. Our key argument is that the present arrangements for citizenship education are more likely to engender outcomes that serve a performative function, rather than provide the means for empowering pupils, especially as currently practised within the English system. This is especially pertinent given the findings of Kerr and Cleaver (2004), who suggest that many schools in England are adopting a narrow perspective on citizenship education and still need to consider the implications of an active dimension. This is compounded by Ofsted's findings that in a quarter of all schools, provision is still inadequate and there is evidence of a 'continuing misunderstanding and dismissal' (2006, p. 11) of citizenship education. We suggest that in contrast with the Welsh context (which appears more open, democratic and rooted in community involvement), mainstream approaches in England which are influenced by Ofsted (2003) practices and which focus narrowly on student entitlement through school councils, are likely to have

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exclusionary consequences for those children and young people citizenship education should endeavour to include.

This theoretical analysis invokes pedagogical concerns through an examination of the English and Welsh perspectives, and identifies two different models operating within the Welsh system. We consider how the development of councils and forums in the two countries has been influenced by different cultural, historical and political factors, and articulate how this different emphasis has led to the construction of different models of citizenship education, with parallel, but contrasting consequences for the development of democracy and critical thinking. Finally, we note that the recent curriculum review in Wales (which differs from the curricula in England), which might well have led towards citizenship education becoming more firmly embedded within formal statutory provision (as in England), has instead been resisted. This, we argue, is due largely to the prevailing influence of different cultures and structures within schools and their communities in Wales.

Historical and theoretical antecedents

The concept of citizenship has a long and chequered history, a central element of western political culture, first emerging from the classical ideas of democracy and participation in the 'polis' of ancient Greece, then later conceived as an entitlement within the autonomous cities of northern Italy (Turner, 1993). In the UK, the concept of democratic citizenship was embraced by nineteenth-century liberalism, before being welcomed in the late twentieth century as a 'set of provisions to counteract the negative consequences of class inequality' (Turner, 1993, p. 176), then further adopted as a means of ensuring the continuity of the nation state (Davies & Issit, 2005). From an early stage, citizenship was conceived as an entitlement to participate in capitalist production *and* as an obligation to perform one's duty in a liberal democracy. This conceptualisation had significant and complex implications, for it involved the challenge of combining a model of economic efficiency with the cultural conditions necessary to sustain this ideology: namely, a form of moral conservatism. On one hand, it provided an essential precondition for the rational development of western capitalism, with a distinct separation of the 'institutional' from the context of the family, located in the private sphere (Poole, 1991). On the other hand, in specifying the relationship between individual and state, it created an oppositional morality between the pursuit of self-interest and responsibility towards public duty. More generally, the public domain was construed as a distinctly masculine space, an artefact of history where men alone were bequeathed the entitlement of practising citizenship through their public role such as through the exchange of property and business (Arnot, 1997). Thus citizenship has been culturally and historically affirmed on liberal democratic principles,[1] circumscribed by public duty, instrumental reason, and the inalienable moral right to free expression in speech, thought and/or conduct (D. Carr, 1993). Intentionally or not, this approach has also given rise to particular gender and class-based inequalities and exclusionary practices (Dillabough & Arnot, 2002; Marks, 2001; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Pateman, 1992).

These developments are highly significant for the construction of models of citizenship education in England and Wales, and their corresponding pedagogies. Although citizenship education has appeared in a variety of forms within secondary education since at least the beginning of the twentieth century (Batho, 1990), early formal citizenship *instruction* was propagated according to a vision in which young people were intended to become 'upright and useful members of the community in which they live, and worthy sons and daughters of the country to which they belonged' (Heater, 1990, p. 85). In this historical moment, the underlying rationale was to create a sense of cohesion (both local and national); to foster

within young people a sense of loyalty and obligation to the nation state; and encourage a sense of pride in the British Empire (Oliver & Heater, 1994). The philosophical basis of this model was less concerned with democratic participation than with the idea of reinforcing public duty and formal responsibility. Later, action to embed particular sets of values within young people, principally conservative notions of deference and 'moral' behaviour, was appropriated as a means of promoting compliance with the 'simple virtues of humility, service, restraint, and respect for personality' (Ministry of Education, 1949, p. 41). Interestingly, while this version of citizenship, as civics education, was implemented for the majority of young people attending state schools in England, those receiving their education outside the state system in the fee-paying sector were afforded the privilege of 'real' democracy through participation in lessons for public leadership (Batho, 1990). Hence, citizenship education has been employed as an instrument of social control in ways that have sometimes made it a repressive rather than progressive social factor (Rees, 1996). Moreover, the Anglocentric perspective upon which contemporary citizenship is sometimes based (Garratt, 2000; Osler & Starkey, 2005) may have the effect of encouraging an 'imperialist' and/or 'sovereign' model, which is often challenging to translate across diverse cultures and communities (Marks, 2001). The inequities inherent in this model are predicated on a discourse with linguistic conventions embedded in ideas of nationalism and the nation state, implying notions of ethnic and cultural homogeneity. However, in a more complex and heterogeneous reality, if inclusive citizenship is to embrace difference and diversity, cultural pluralism, and notions of community (that are at least partly established at a local level) then the enduring model of 'nationhood' (and artificiality of the nation state – Bottery, 2003) is likely to be 'rejected by minorities with their own powerful sense of community' (Heater, 1990, p. 131). Additionally, it may be regarded as an impediment to those wishing to establish a more 'cosmopolitan' perspective (Osler & Starkey, 2005), through which various inequities and a broader conception of active citizenship may be addressed (Gearon, 2003; Kerr & Cleaver, 2004; Potter, 2002).

Citizenship education in England and Wales

The general argument advanced above has considerable weight in relation to the present arrangements for democratic curriculum-making practices in England and Wales. In England, for example, successive governments have promoted guidance for citizenship education (NCC, 1990), and then a programme of (formal) study (DfEE/QCA, 1999), with criteria that 'describe the type and range of performance that the majority of pupils should characteristically demonstrate by the end of each key stage' (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p. 30). In the case of the latter, there are now clear guidelines for the statutory assessment of citizenship education at the end of key stage 3, and a requirement for schools to assess and record ('informally') the progress of pupils studying citizenship education at key stage 4.[2] Criteria taken from the National Curriculum Handbook for Secondary teachers (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p. 458) offer a basis for judging pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 3, when it is expected that most should be able to:

- demonstrate a broad knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study; the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens; the role of the voluntary sector; forms of government; provision of public services; and the criminal and legal systems;
- show understanding of how the public gets information; how opinion is formed and expressed, including through the media; and how and why changes take place in society;

- take part in school and community-based activities, demonstrating personal and group responsibility in their attitudes to themselves and others.

The definition of citizenship education as a formally assessed curriculum subject can be seen as part of a pervasive high-level discourse in which performance, policy delivery and efficiency are prioritised (Power, 1994; Strathern, 2000). However, this approach does little to encourage teachers to think critically or creatively, but rather confines them to exploring the most appropriate and effective ways of delivering education programmes and policies created elsewhere (an issue we return to later). In this respect, teacher professionalism is sometimes appropriated in ways that are reductive (Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark, & Warne, 2002). Additionally, citizenship education may be understood in terms of its historical and cultural antecedents, where arguably (in the English system at least) it is now merely an element in the hegemony of academic subjects in the secondary curriculum, classified and framed through formal prescription and assessment (Bernstein, 1971), and embedded within a system that is hierarchic, authoritarian and essentially undemocratic (Davies, 2001; Kerr & Cleaver, 2004).

In contrast, commentators in Wales have recognised the important dynamics of 'two cultures' bearing upon Welsh curriculum-making practices, especially within the context of community understanding and citizenship education. One is essentially Welsh-speaking and centred mainly in north, mid and west Wales, and the other is predominantly English-speaking, centred in south Wales (Williams, 1985). These traditions differ in context and outcome: in south Wales there were suspicions of the growth of an elitist cultural nationalism, which was reflected in the overwhelming vote against devolution in the referendum of 1979; while Welsh speakers in the rural north and mid Wales felt excluded by a political structure that favoured the more industrial and English-speaking majority in the south (Phillips, Piper, & Garratt, 2003). Emerging from these different traditions came two documents that shape the current form of citizenship education in Wales. The publication of *Developing a Curriculum Cymreig* placed an emphasis upon the need for schools to use opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop distinctively Welsh elements of culture, while acknowledging the need to celebrate diversity (CCW, 1993). The publication of *Community Understanding* created a set of guidelines advocating a clear focus upon a definition of community (CCW, 1991). This is an interesting document because during a prolonged period of conservatism in educational politics in England, it 'offered a complex, multi-faceted definition of the term community' (Phillips & Daugherty, 2001, p. 93), and raised issues relating to 'diversity, inequality and prejudice' (CCW, 1991, p. 6). *Community Understanding* provides an interesting alternative to the Crick Report (QCA, 1998) and the current statutory *Order for Citizenship* (DfEE/QCA, 1999) in England. While the Crick proposals were affirmed rhetorically on the idea of active participation linked with a knowledge of 'civic society' and the need to foster some sort of shared national identity, the CCW recommendations were more deliberately based on the notion of 'community', located in a cultural and disparately local conception of citizenship education.[3] In comparison, the culture of schooling in England can be regarded as largely antithetical to the development of democratic structures, cultural and ethnic diversity, consideration of pupil voice and the active participation of young people in citizenship education (Ajegbo, Kiwan, & Sharma, 2007; Flecknoe, 2002).

As a result of these different cultural and historical antecedents, there is a stronger tendency in Wales for schools to forge more effective partnerships with their local communities (due to historical traditions) and to establish democratic and inclusive practices with greater frequency and purpose (see e.g. Garratt & Shallcross, 2002; CSV, Cymru Wales,

personal correspondence). Thus, active participation has been promoted, aided by deeply embedded relationships and traditions, where many schools across Wales (but particularly in the south) have sought to reflect the diversity of their local communities over some considerable time. By focusing upon some of the ideological, social and economic reasons that prevented effective inclusion and participation (including local, national and international factors contributing to structural inequalities), the CCW recommendations can be regarded as providing a more encompassing, democratic view of citizenship. Indeed, 'community' is currently an important element of PSE in Wales, an integral element of the 'common requirements' of the National Curriculum (ACCAC, 2000/2006), and since September 2003 has become a statutory part of the Welsh curriculum. Further, in a recent review of the Welsh PSE curriculum, there was considerable resistance in moving towards a model that more closely resembles the situation in England through instituting citizenship as a statutory requirement (ACCAC, 2000/2006). Community understanding and citizenship are likely to be retained as an element or theme within Welsh PSE and, while there are plans to introduce a qualification in PSE at Key Stage 4, the ubiquity and primacy of assessment is likely to remain muted in this context.

The pervasive influence of performativity

Citizenship education in England has been influenced by a succession of quite different political, cultural and educational discourses. Alongside some significant and previously noted historical influences, citizenship education has emerged from a discourse that is complicit with the culture of performativity (Lyotard, 1984), driven by particular economic and performance-related priorities. The current emphasis on school improvement and what may be regarded as product-focused outcomes, rather than process-oriented pedagogy (EPPI, 2005), has the effect of compressing the space through which social relations are addressed. Indeed, performativity, alongside a growth in neo-liberalism, has influenced attitudes relating to the purpose, nature and organisation of citizenship education in Britain today (W. Carr, 1991; Quicke, 1991; Wexler, 1990), and particularly in England. The growth of individualism (in contrast with more process-oriented and community-focused approaches to citizenship in Wales) and government-defined performance indicators, league tables and evaluation regimes have had the effect of generating a hard currency of data that is measurable, quantifiable (Broadfoot, 2001; Lyotard, 1984) and indispensable for the commodification of knowledge. At a more structural level, UK education policies as implemented in England have served to strengthen this trend, with schools being encouraged to compete with each other (i.e. both teachers and pupils) via testing and performance indicators (Whitty & Menter, 1989), creating 'an almost pathological belief in the value of assessment' (Broadfoot, 2001, p. 137). Whether the assessment process is directed towards the evaluation of pupils through a centralised examination procedure, or towards institutions through the establishment of standardised performance indicators, this discourse presumes that 'it is possible – and indeed, desirable – to "measure" performance' (Broadfoot, 2001, p. 136–137).

Performativity, at the heart of the assessment culture, is a powerful piece of social technology, informed by particular ideological assumptions which privilege competition over cooperation and outcomes over processes. Rather than being morally neutral, it may actually create an illusion of progress, with some significant implications for the practice of citizenship education (exacerbated by the focus of Ofsted, 2003). Performance indicators generate a context where professionals are required to juggle between 'economies of performance' and 'ecologies of practice' (Stronach et al., 2002) and where:

> 'ideas, structures and actions' appear to the majority of people as 'wholly natural, preordained, and working for their own good … [such that] the dark cruelty and irony of hegemony is that teachers take pride in acting on the very assumptions that work to enslave them … teachers become willing prisoners who lock their own cell doors behind them'. (Brookfield, 1995, p. 15)

The pervasive influence of the assessment regime is consonant with the public face of modernity, where the morality of the (education) market, predicated on a paradigm of rationality, creates the conditions in which pupils, teachers and schools are able (and required) to compete (and sometimes cheat) for social status (Mansell, 2005). The morality that is characteristic of this trend is impersonal and universalistic, and in many ways wholly contrary to effective inclusive education. Moreover, it is an unhelpful model in relation to the development of a more encompassing approach to citizenship education and democracy in schools, where being active means involving 'not only individuals, but also structures, processes and approaches, as well as whole-school and curriculum dimensions … both in and beyond school' (Kerr & Cleaver, 2004, p. 37).

Inclusive citizenship?

In terms of inclusion and exclusion, in England there seems to be a growing emphasis on the promotion of civic awareness and individuals' rights and responsibilities embedded in discourses of citizenship, propagated through Crick (QCA, 1998) and textbooks reviewed elsewhere (Davies & Issit, 2005). These discourses emerge from particular historical and cultural traditions, and reinforce tensions between the rhetoric of participation on the one hand and the discipline of subject-hood on the other. As a result, 'the citizen is free and not free at the same time' (Davies & Issit, 2005, p. 406). In contrast, as a consequence of the origins of *Community Understanding* (CCW, 1991), active citizenship practices have been more common with young people being afforded regular opportunities to engage with broader perceptions of identity: their own and others (see e.g. a recent selection of case studies which emphasise community involvement – DELLS, 2007). However, although it is the claimed intention of both models to promote inclusion, both to some extent are rooted within exclusionary conceptions of community, society and/or nation. While we indicate a relative preference for the 'Welsh model', we draw attention to a general tendency towards a romanticised view of communities. For example, it has been reported that, in South Wales especially, mainstream values and norms supportive of community are often inverted. Bentley, Oakley, Gibson, and Kilgow (1999, p. 8) point out that young people 'do not recognise the conventional definitions of community, seeing it as sentimental and irrelevant … many feel that "Communities" are a source of interference and control'. As in the English model then, there is an inherent danger that attempts towards empowerment can actually be reductive in unacknowledged ways, unless considerable care is applied.

There are obviously problems in attempting to lift aspects of 'good practice' from one social and cultural setting to another. As both Green (1990) and Halpin and Troyna (1995) have argued, the move to import good practice observed elsewhere into the home curriculum is extremely problematic, for exotic curriculum practices will invariably be at odds with the socio-historical traditions and cultural nuances of home-based curricula. With these factors in mind, we accept that some limit to professional aspirations is inevitable and suggest that it is the responsibility of educators to provide opportunities for young people to recognise and understand limitations placed on them. This requires critiquing notions of community in ways that challenge singular and exclusionary definitions of citizenship and identity, *and* curriculum prescriptions. A more critical approach is likely to encourage pupils to develop views of the world that look outwards, not inwards, and success would be

demonstrated when 'citizens' develop an attitude of mind which enables them to celebrate both the familiar and the less familiar, and when pupils are able to recognise and celebrate a multiplicity of potential identities (Piper & Garratt, 2004).

In order to develop this discussion, we focus on the role of school councils in both English and Welsh contexts. We consider the adoption of school councils/forums as a means to satisfy the requirements of the citizenship syllabus, and suggest this adoption can be manipulated in ways that privilege the interests of the performative culture over the genuine inclusion and empowerment of pupils. Somewhat ironically, while school councils have recently been made statutory in Wales – (in both primary and secondary sectors) where citizenship is non-statutory and only an aspect of PSE and not formally assessed, they remain optional in England, where in contrast citizenship education is a statutory requirement of the secondary curriculum. We contend that how councils are defined, understood and ultimately employed within schools will fundamentally affect how participation is engendered. It would therefore be as well for teachers to think carefully about the *nature* and *purpose* of pupil participation before embarking on such activities.

School councils/forums

School councils/forums are one of a number of available strategies for facilitating engagement in personal, social and citizenship education (Kerr & Cleaver, 2004). In the UK, school councils became increasingly evident shortly after youth councils became popular in a variety of local political and community settings. Youth councils were critiqued soon after their implementation by the youth service and other community organisations. A number of advantages and disadvantages were noted (see e.g. Denham & Notley 1982), including the identification of one model (youth service) where the benefits tended to be defined in terms of the personal development of the individual, and another (community) in which members were required first and foremost to regard themselves as part of the community, conceived as a more collective experience. Ideally, councils were intended to be directed by the needs of young people. Similarly, drawing from a study of 50 schools, Taylor and Johnson (2002) have argued that, to be successful, school councils must be located in wider relationships and structures of democracy, which allow for the possibility of collaboration, consultation and change, and in ways that both acknowledge and privilege 'pupil voice' (Kerr & Cleaver, 2004; Ruddock, 2003). They must provide pupils with opportunities to draw on their own experience and capacity so as to change practices of teaching and learning in schools, through more open and transparent processes of participation and communication (Inman & Burke, 2002; Trafford, 2003). Of course, to achieve such ambitious goals is always going to be difficult, as the barriers to intergenerational communication have long been understood:

> Youth is … incorruptible. It hangs together and presents an impenetrable front against the grown ups. It is not sentimental. One may approach it, but one cannot enter into it. Who has once been evicted from that paradise can never get back. There is a law of the years … Educationalists who think they can understand the young are enthusiasts. Youth does not want to be understood. It wants only to be let alone. It preserves itself immune against the insidious bacillus of being understood. The grown-up who would approach it too importunately, is as ridiculous in its eyes as if he had put on children's clothes. We may feel with youth, but youth does not feel with us. That is its salvation. (Remarque, 1929, pp. 146–147)

It is tempting to be cynical about current practice that currently characterises many school councils/forums, especially those that can be regarded as making superficial concessions,

with teachers retaining ultimate control. There is growing evidence to suggest that such cynicism is not without substance (Alexander, 2002; CSV, 2003; Flecknoe, 2002; Ofsted, 2003), since a move towards teaching young people about the structures and processes of democracy without providing genuine consultation and meaningful participation amounts to little more than tokenism. Marks (2001) suggests that citizenship education through participation is inevitably doomed and fundamentally at odds with the school system in England, where schools promote the idea that teachers are always right and that pupils are never quite ready. Ideologically speaking, tokenistic initiatives have strong resonance with Gramsci's (1971) notion of articulation, where subordinate ideologies (in this case pupil voice) are accommodated by the countervailing dominant ideology (teachers and schools), with the latter tactically conceding power in order to preserve its own hegemony. In this case, 'empowerment' is employed as a root metaphor for improved 'choice', 'consultation' and 'autonomy'. Providing pupils with freedom of expression can then be interpreted as little more than an insidious attempt at controlling rather than empowering their experience, producing a chimera of enhanced participation and a spurious sense of autonomy.

In contrast, Bourdieu (1986), among others, has suggested that individuals and groups should adopt a reflexive critique where agents discover the nature of 'symbolic capital' and how much of this they possess, so they can stop cooperating in their own domination *and* the domination of others. This requires recognising things for what they are (i.e. struggles for power) so as to deliberately engage in changing them. Challenge is itself predicated on the theorem of the 'dialectic of control' (Giddens, 1987), which suggests that all power relationships have the ability both to empower and constrain. This means that 'no matter how complete the power of one individual or group might be over others, resources are always available whereby subordinates can reciprocally influence power holders' (Giddens, 1987, p. 62). Foucault (1988) places a similar emphasis on agency through the concept of 'technologies of the self'. In this context, power is conceived less as something that physically determines a person's actions and more a medium that can be readily accessed, with individuals seeking to identify propitious points of resistance. In the absence of such points, there is no possibility of freedom, nor any conceivable prospect of power existing at all (Foucault, 1988). However, in the context of school councils, the extent to which pupils are able to access power in order to become 'masters' rather than 'slaves' in relation to their own practice is a moot point. Ofsted, for example, have argued that 'a good school council represents education for democratic citizenship in action; a school council that is the preserve of an elite group, or the headteacher's poodle, is a weakness rather than a strength' (2006, p. 19). Borrowing from the work of Parker (2002), who argues that schools can never become truly democratic institutions, Kerr and Cleaver warn that 'students [who] are rarely allowed to take part in defining staff policies or appointing new staff in their schools and those who feel marginalized from the ethos of the school are less likely to participate in organisations such as school councils' (McKenzie, 2002, cited in Kerr &Cleaver, 2004, p. 42). Indeed, the current formulation (and adoption) of school councils in the *Order for Citizenship* in England seems light years away from the 'light touch' and flexible approach envisaged by Crick (QCA, 1998), who presumably did not intend such consequences as the restrictive practice outlined below.

While early school councils/forums tended to be pupil-led (meetings would be held whenever pupils could arrange them, and pupils would choose their own representatives to attend meetings with staff members and/or governors), more recent examples (at least in England) have tended to evolve in ways that extend the culture of performativity, with a concomitant focus on adult-led prescription, formalised assessment and top-down imposition. In a recent study carried out in England, for example, Jerome (2006, p. 322) argues

that in some contexts 'the pupils were fixated on the grades, which caused some to boast and others to feel like failures … they need to be taught that everyone can make a contribution to the community'. Elsewhere, Munn (2007, np) has argued that in contrast with practice in Scotland, the English model 'amount[s] to simply getting pupils to participate in the school's pre-existing objectives … schools have to tackle the difficult task of giving pupils alternative, emancipatory goals, and … find new ways of involving pupils in decision-making'. Furthermore, Jerome (2006, p. 316) argues that not all participation is good participation, and if school councils are employed for the 'wrong' reasons (e.g. for auditing purposes), then such cognitive exercises can lead towards mis-educative experiences (Dewey, 1938), with the young left feeling 'belittled, marginalised, insulted or patronised'. Moreover, there is recent evidence that while 'around 94% of heads in England said they had school councils … only half of pupils recalled electing them' (Brettingham, 2007, p. 8). The paternalistic culture that is characteristic of practice in England is at odds with legislation relating to children's rights to appeal, especially regarding issues of exclusion. Osler and Starkey argue that such regulations need adjusting to keep them in accordance with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC) in order 'to ensure that learners who are subject to disciplinary exclusion have a right to be heard' (Osler & Vincent, 2002 cited in Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 45).

This situation contrasts with the more democratic Welsh perspective: 'In Wales, as a result of a proposal put forward by the Children's Commissioner, the Assembly has revised exclusion procedures, so that from 2004 secondary school pupils have a right of appeal' (Shaw, 2003 cited in Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 45). Such differences between the countries serve to reinforce the contrasting emphasis that is placed upon children's rights and democratic participation in the broadest sense, and more particularly within the context of citizenship education. Historically, the framework in Wales has tended to be less prescriptive and less centrally determined. That is, until September 2006, when school councils were finally made statutory by the Welsh Assembly Government. Interestingly, however, the chief inspector of Welsh schools, Susan Lewis, has said that 'participation has been enhanced as a result of the statutory obligation to set up school councils, but in the strongest leadership it is embedded into the culture of the school' (Porter, 2007). The latter is not insignificant, for the tendency to embed citizenship activities more commonly through whole-school approaches rather than the academic curriculum (Garratt & Shallcross, 2002) is not untypical in Wales. For example, pupil forums often develop 'bottom-up', with teachers listening to the needs of pupils and enabling them to develop a range of inter-personal and developmental skills. A possible advantage is that pupils left to their own devices can establish their own rules and regulations, rather than follow any previous adult-led blueprints.[4] This has the potential to lead to new and *different* forms of compromise and is consistent with the findings of EPPI (2005), which suggest that appropriate pedagogies for citizenship education should involve empowering students and engaging learners as whole persons so that teachers may relate differently to them. In Wales, opportunities like these have arisen largely from the current PSE framework in which 'environmental' concerns, rather than curriculum issues, provide the fulcrum on which active citizenship turns (CSV, Cymru Wales, personal correspondence). The direction of the early influential documents, especially *Community Understanding* (CCW, 1991), and the avoidance of curriculum pressure appear to have provided a buffer against the power of the restrictive and potentially dominating performative culture. Even recent legislation to make school councils statutory in Wales has resisted the imperative towards assessment!

While the construction of citizenship as a curriculum subject in England has tended to impede the progress of open and participatory approaches, there have nevertheless been

pockets of good practice, often in settings that are informal and community-based. For example, an evaluation of a UK-wide programme: *Citizenship Values Award Pilot Scheme* illustrates some of the ways in which school councils can enable young people to experience autonomy and engage in more authentic democratic processes (Garratt & Shallcross, 2002). This evaluation was based on observations of practice and stakeholder interviews across schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In total, eight schools in England and Wales were visited over a period of six months and case study material was collected. In one such school in the south of England, secondary student members of the council were allocated small budgets in order to improve their school community. The rationale was to engage young people in a process of rational and democratic decision-making, which would acknowledge them as responsible citizens, with freedom from teacher surveillance. A model that trusts young people to take responsibility for themselves, thinking and acting autonomously, appears more likely to enhance learning and personal development than schemes that pay lip service to such ideals, while simultaneously engendering surreptitious forms of 'management' and/or manipulation. Similar pockets of positive practice have been reported elsewhere: in one case teachers and pupils have worked hard to develop a 'citizenship culture … [with] a strong sense of participation and identity' (Wales, 2005, p. 29). This framework provides students with 'a sense of belonging. The school council is not just a token gesture. It has a budget of £50,000 – a real symbol of trust' (p. 29), and young people are thus more actively involved in open consultation where their decisions are likely to make a difference. This privileges a participatory ('cosmopolitan') model that acknowledges human diversity in a way 'that recognises that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights' (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 24), and reinforces the point that participation is enhanced when lesson content is pertinent to student experiences (EPPI, 2005).

This open and participatory approach contrasts with the more typical pupil experience of school councils in England. The journal '*0–19*', which represents 'young people's voices', interviewed a number of young people and invited them to reflect upon their role in their school council. One girl reported: 'at our school, we spend half the time waiting for teachers to turn up and when they do and you suggest something, they just go on about the budget'. She added: 'I've noticed that if you ask teachers to treat you like an adult, then they just think you're a bad tempered rebellious teenager who wants to go out clubbing every night and get piercings all over the place' (*0–19*, 2004). This approach reinforces teenagers as 'Other', where they find themselves in a no-win situation; damned as a rebellious teenager if they have an opinion, and damned as apathetic if they do not. It further reinforces the idea of young people as 'becomings' or 'not yets … not yet knowing, not yet competent, and not yet being' (Verhellen, 2000, p. 33). Similarly, findings suggest that many 'students appeared unsure as to how council members were elected or how often they met' (Kerr, Ireland, Lopes, Craig, with Cleaver, 2004, p. 11) and were unsure of any potential benefits arising from the council. For example, a year 10 student 'got basically shouted at' when making suggestions about changing the school uniform and another claimed that 'they don't listen to you … it's what the teachers say, and that's it' (Kerr et al., with Cleaver, 2004, p. 12). Yet, when students felt they had a voice that others listened to, this increased their sense of belonging and commitment to the school community: 'If someone values your opinion, you feel better in yourself. I think schools really do need to start listening' (0–19, 2004).

This point can be extended by reference to a programme for citizenship in Personal Social and Health Education, operating in a secondary school in the north-west of England, based on the 'Secondary School Council's Toolkit' (available for each key stage and

accessed via a link from the DfES website) which suggests how to 'develop' the role of the school council. The aim is to enable students to become pro-active in democratic processes and raise awareness of issues within and beyond the local community. The language invokes a particular notion of 'effectiveness', rather than a discourse which is 'person-centred' (see Fielding, 2004). The framework within which the programme is subsumed presents a blueprint for 'training to take part in student councils'. This is elaborated with reference to the toolkit which offers advice on: 'How student councils fulfil requirements of the national curriculum on citizenship'. Thus, the emphasis of the programme appears to focus on meeting preordained criteria enshrined within targets for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 of the National Curriculum and the rhetoric for this becomes near teleological. The shift in language from a discourse that is empowering, to one that is inherently prescriptive and self-referential (and more concerned with outcomes of formal assessment vis-à-vis the culture of performativity) can be identified through the stipulated responsibilities of link teachers:

> Attending year council meetings and supporting students in leading meetings; reporting back to other heads of year; reflecting on how the school council is progressing; monitoring and evaluating the development of the school council in collaboration with student members.

Thus, what appears or masquerades on the surface as a move towards a person-centred approach such that 'every pupil (child) has the right to express his or her views and be listened to …' (vis-à-vis Article 12, UN-CRC) may actually be construed as a powerful assertion of the performative.

By using the council format as a means to satisfying a performative function, models of empowerment in practice are much more reductive than they appear at first sight. They work both to enable and/or constrain the democratic possibilities open to young people, while simultaneously demonstrating to inspection teams that schools are on track in relation to citizenship education. Indeed, since the introduction of the Ofsted Framework (2005) in England, members of school councils are expected to participate in school inspections. From an educational perspective, our contention is that school councils should be protected from unwarranted teacher (and inspector) interference, attempting to 'manage' and control young people's freedom of expression and personality. Teacher supervision in the council format can be regarded as a device, or Gramscian 'articulation' that transforms creative moments into more structured ones, weakening young people's commitment to experiment (Furedi, 2001) and thus inhibiting participation. As one headteacher in Jerome's (2006, p. 325) study unfortunately remarked: 'we don't want the lunatics running the asylum'. This not only pathologises and patronises pupils, but by presenting citizenship education (somewhat disingenuously) as person-centred, significantly masks the fact that its practical ambition is instrumental. This is a transparent breach of Article 29, UN-CRC and it is clear that the purpose of *effective* citizenship is technical and procedural, based on a discourse of management and measurement rather than one that encourages experimentation and discovery, and is particularly evident within the English educational context.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have drawn attention to some seemingly taken for granted assumptions yet unintended consequences of education for citizenship, which currently have a tendency towards different outcomes in England and Wales. Quite deliberately, we have brought together examples from a range of empirical studies to critique existing practice within the

field. We acknowledge some of the difficulties that educators face, but note that such difficulties can sometimes create space for educational opportunities for teachers and teaching. Jerome (2006, p. 326), for example, has argued that 'citizenship is at least feasible in that it is possible to find spaces within curriculum restrictions [in England]', although such spaces, as noted earlier, should be genuine rather than mis-educative. Fielding's (2001) distinction between what he calls the 'person-centred school' and the 'effective school', which reveals a number of important dichotomies, may well be informative in this context. Briefly, person-centred schools demonstrate a concern for people (in a progressive rather than individualist sense), some integrity of ends and means, expressive freedom and reciprocal learning. Effective schools, in contrast, focus on results or outcomes, and manage freedom while supporting individualist learning. For us, person-centred necessarily includes aspects of both individual and collective experiences. Together these form the constituents of a collaborative learning process that re-conceptualises the structure of schooling, generating pedagogies that are learner-centred and approaches to achievement that are holistic (EPPI, 2005).

While we cannot pretend there are easy solutions to a largely intractable problem, we suggest that part of the way forward is for teachers and schools to extend their pedagogical gaze beyond the confines of the domestic curriculum. Seeking opportunities for international collaborations between schools, for example, which are of mutual benefit to the home school and international partner, might enable each to learn from the others' experience and in the process extend the concept and practice of citizenship towards global considerations, in the process crossing geographical borders and institutional barriers. In the way that the Welsh Assembly has been agile in ensuring that schools are required by statute to embed councils within primary and secondary sectors of education – as part of whole-school provision, they have been similarly swift in implementing guidance to support Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: A Strategy for Action (DELLS, 2007). We suggest that such nuanced moves towards a more 'person-centred' model, relating learning to experience and promoting respectful teacher–student relationships, are the type of pedagogical practice which scholar-teachers[5] (Said, 2001) should be striving to promote within their teaching. The goal should be that through these initiatives young people will become citizens in a more inquisitive and critically informed way (Fielding, 2004; Flutter & Ruddock, 2004), with the caveat that 'active' citizenship, like 'volunteering', is not something young people can or should be made to do (Piper & Piper, 2000). Rather, it is something they might be more willing to engage with when they believe there is something in it for *them*. We suggest that while the recent review of the Welsh curriculum might have ominously led towards 'citizenship' becoming more firmly embedded within formal statutory provision (an arrangement more akin to the English curriculum), Welsh curriculum planners, operating in a distinct historical, social, cultural and legislative context, should be applauded for resisting the trend towards formalisation and dependency on assessment, neither of which create the optimum conditions for citizenship education and pupil voice to flourish:

> For learning to matter, it must have real power in people's lives … learning has to matter in the process of learning itself. This includes a sense of satisfaction through achievement. It also includes a sense of ownership – learning for oneself, not just for Miss or Sir, for Ofsted or a national target. It includes … the power to seek out and shape ideas or words that matter to you … and the power to change the rules through a political process. (Alexander, 2001, p. 31)

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Notes

1. According to Crick (2000), democracy is a promiscuous word, archetypically difficult to pin down with as many meanings as there are uses for the term. We acknowledge its conceptual complexity and wish to preserve the essentially contested nature of the term.
2. This has been further enhanced with the introduction of a range of GCSE short courses in Citizenship Studies (key stage 3 = age 13/14; key stage 4 = age 15/16).
3. The dominant conception of citizenship education in Curriculum Cymreig focuses upon the cultural influences of language, religion and traditional practice, rather than membership that is based purely on residency (Andrews & Lewis, 2000).
4. Our indication of a preference for an approach which privileges input from the child should not be taken to imply a full acceptance of a 'childhood as a state of grace' philosophy. Rather we are concerned that 'citizenship' is one area that each generation should be allowed to consider for themselves. If citizenship is moulded by elders, it ensures a reproduction of the same, i.e. the maintenance of the status quo. School councils that are a mask for directed learning obviously risk a self-defeating cynical response.
5. For Said (2001, pp. 502–503), the scholar-teacher has a critical disposition but one in which s/he is receptive to understanding, interpreting and questioning others, as well as the status quo. The wisdom of the scholar-teacher is 'not to consolidate authority, but understand, interpret and question it … [examining] the moral questions that may be hidden in the clamour and din of the public debate', in this case on matters concerning citizenship.

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