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Pathways to Citizenship

by Simon Murray and Jochen Katzer

Like the nations that have historically predicated its understanding, citizenship is in the process of being transformed from a relatively circumscribed concept to one that is increasingly porous. It is possible, therefore, to see citizenship as beginning to involve a series of choices as well as a list of givens. The nation is now only one among many increasingly trans-national and intercultural realities that inform identity formation. That these in turn may begin to supplant nationality's role in the generation of identity means that the teaching of citizenship in a national or international context becomes particularly complex.

Despite gestures towards the recognition of the others and otherness that are now more routinely encountered, there exists a certain type of citizenship programme that attempts to reconcile difference by making citizenship essentially a process of assimilation. Alternatively, in the absence of meaningful institutions or substantive networks of association, present calls for global citizenship initiatives seem very difficult to articulate other than as environmental and human rights education, valuable though these are in themselves. As both a juridical and cultural phenomenon, the scope of citizenship is

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much wider and more complicated than both of these approaches. For good reason it is a highly contested concept, and embracing the contestability of citizenship allows an approach to its teaching that is more responsive to the needs of students. A methodology needs to be developed that recognizes the complexity of identity formation in the modern world, and is respectful of the personal, political and moral autonomy of the potential citizen. Mapping out possible *pathways* to citizenship makes it possible to explore its wide-ranging possibilities via a series of literacies or competencies. Like other literacies, these would involve specific skills.

With this in mind, the five core literacies for the potential citizen might be described as political, emotional, moral, sociological and technological. These in turn can be articulated through certain core conceptual distinctions: the public and the private; reality and representation; the local and the global; the past, the present and the future and power. These can be used in combination to structure the teaching of citizenship, allowing students to map out areas of engagement, maps that are both familiar and new, but have the real virtue of being drawn by those who will inhabit them. In this context such lists or definitions are in danger of being exclusive or arbitrary, but they constitute a defensible starting point to consider citizenship in its current configurations. That they may also become redundant should continue to animate the evolution of citizenship programmes. In this context, recent research conducted by The Council of Europe's Education for Democratic Citizenship initiative (EDC), seems consonant with this approach:

> "Citizenship cannot be reduced to a catalogue of rights and duties, but entails membership of a group or groups, bringing identities into play in a very profound way. It consequently

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> requires an ethical shift that includes a personal, collective, emotional dimension."[1]

That these dynamics can only emerge and be revealed through dialogue seems self-evident. Equally self-evident is that a curriculum that will support this dialogic approach needs to remain sufficiently open-ended to accommodate the divergent realities of students in schools throughout the world. This will involve a degree of risk-taking on the part of schools and teachers as they move away from a curriculum defined by a particular content towards one characterized by the questions it is prepared to ask. While this reflective capacity is to be encouraged in students' relation to all of their learning, it is crucial in their moral and political development if autonomy is to be regarded as a founding principle of political life. The institutions that are currently best able to define and support the juridical role of the potential citizen remain decidedly local, but at a cultural level the emergence of network identities formed on the basis of shared but shifting interest and practice also requires a new type of institutional response. In this respect, international education has the opportunity to encourage the new types of association recently characterized as "nomadic citizenship" that ranges on the frontiers of new relations. Indeed, networks of association between international schools can themselves extend this notion, links that can be driven as much by the exchange of values as by the technology that allows the exchange to take place. Perhaps more significantly, emerging citizenship academies founded on the principles of debate and dialogue provide examples of a different response to the needs of young people, needs that extend beyond their juridical role or future economic viability. In a world characterized by division, violence and inequality, is it really enough for the education of a future citizen to be measured predominantly by academic competence?

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The value of the critical approach outlined above is that it addresses the *whys* of social reality as much as the fact of it. In so doing young people are encouraged to arrive at positions of value, sites for citizenship, because they are of their own making rather than having them imposed on them from outside or above. It is the difference from being expected or even obliged to be tolerant and knowing why tolerance might be valuable. Under pressure, it is the latter position that is more likely to sustain itself.

As a mission-driven organization committed to "the ideals of international understanding and responsible citizenship, to the end that…pupils may become critical and compassionate thinkers, lifelong learners and informed participants in local and world affairs",[2] how does the continuum of education offered by the IBO help develop such young people? Taken together, the continuum of the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme might be better described as a pyramid. Measured as an education for citizenship it could also be described as a pyramid inverted in its emphasis. The cognitive and practical enquiry typified by the PYP can be seen to disappear progressively or become hidden the closer one moves towards the traditional age of political recognition and engagement. Apart from the opportunities offered through theory of knowledge (TOK) and creativity, action and service (CAS), the Diploma Programme, despite its academic breadth, represents an education where the skills for citizenship can only be *assumed* to be addressed, especially as it is still predominantly a stand-alone programme. From the point of view of an education for citizenship, the Diploma Programme seems deformed by the very socio-economic pressures that make responsible citizenship currently so important.

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Within the continuum of IB programmes one might consider the revision of the Diploma Programme by the programmes that anticipate it. In the vocabulary of the PYP programme model, can the Diploma Programme give due emphasis and be critically ambitious enough to insist that all students continue to address the genuinely political issues of "Sharing the Planet", "Who we are", "Where we are in place and time", "How the world works" and "How we organize ourselves"? Asked again at Diploma Programme level, such issues raise significant moral and political questions that might be addressed through developing the kind of literacies outlined above. Might it be possible therefore to imagine a revised Diploma Programme structure where at least some of TOK returns to subjects, an initiative already begun, and that student time currently given over to the Diploma Programme requirements is replaced with a communities project framed by the principles of the PYP and MYP? The project might be carried out either individually or in groups, in a multiplicity of formats, accompanied by a rationale that shows evidence of citizenship competencies, and would function as a point of departure from the school community they are about to leave, as well as a point of entry into their ongoing political life.

The essentially formalistic approach to citizenship advocated here is often accused of lacking obvious content or conclusion. The open field of citizen engagement does seem to require it though. As strangers are said to be the test of ethics, the inclusion of others may well become the test of citizenship. To conclude, and worth quoting at length, is one of the most insightful and disturbing descriptions of what might finally be at stake in times such as ours:

> "…a limited tolerance is clearly preferable to an absolute intolerance. But tolerance remains a scrutinized hospitality, always under surveillance, parsimonious and protective of its sovereignty. In the best cases, it's what I

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would call a conditional hospitality, the one that is commonly practiced by individuals, families, cities or states. We offer hospitality only on the condition that the other follows our rules, our way of life, even our language, our culture, our political system and so on... The visit [of the other] might be actually very dangerous, and we must not ignore this fact, but would hospitality without risk, a hospitality backed by certain assurances, a hospitality protected by an immune system against the wholly other, be true hospitality? Though it's ultimately true that suspending or suppressing the immunity that protects me from the other might be nothing short of life-threatening."[3]

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[1] Audigier, Francois, *Basic Concepts and core competencies for education for democratic citizenship, DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 23, Council of Europe*

[2] IBO Council of Foundation, 1996

[3] Borradori, Giovanna, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, A dialogue with Jacques Derrida, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003, pp128

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