The shaping and reshaping of citizenship education in Australia

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THE *DRAFT SHAPE PAPER* really performs its function of shaping civics and citizenship education, but it should be more appropriately considered as reshaping. The paper has done a brilliant job in integrating citizenship education ideologies developed over time in Australia.

Consolidation of the Australian concept of "civics and citizenship"

The *Draft Shape Paper* retains the name of the title or subject of "civics and citizenship". This description, and the differentiation between civics and citizenship, is "overwhelmingly Australian", according to Kennedy (2008, p. 192). This is a reinstatement of the civics and citizenship idea introduced since the publication of *Discovering Democracy* in 1997 (Curriculum Corporation, 1997). It is worth noting that this Australian concept has prevailed through various governments, from Keating, to Howard, Rudd and now Gillard, supported by both the Liberal and the Labor parties. When the idea was first introduced, the differentiation between civics and citizenship was rather intuitive, and not as clearly defined. Over time this idea has become enriched and consolidated, and is now more clearly defined in the *Draft Shape Paper*. "Civics" refers to the knowledge, understanding and skills relating to the organisation and working of the society. Such definition is a affirmation of the idea of the Civics Expert Group published in 1994. "Citizenship" is referred to as the civil (rights and responsibilities), political (participation and representation) and social (social values and community involvement) dimensions of citizenship, a concept. This is very much Marshall's (1950) definition of citizenship. The insistence of this concept has also achieved some international impacts, and the title "Civic and Citizenship" was adopted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) 2009 *International Civic and Citizenship Education Study* (ICCS), although there was almost no questioning of

the possible semantic implications between "civic" and "civics". Interestingly, the ICCS was hosted by the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER), and thus the Australian influence towards this international study is quite visible. Definitely, "civics and citizenship" has become a unique and significant addition to the literature of citizenship.

From remediation of civics deficit to constructive shaping of citizenship

Whereas the *Discovering Democracy* paper was designed as a kind of corrective measure to address the "civics deficit" conceived at the time (Kennedy, 2008; Print, 1995), this *Draft Shape Paper* is a forward looking re-shaping of citizenship. It has reflected the existing social, ethnic and political concerns of the Australian society, and the country's positioning in the international arena, as well as its role in Asia. It is an excellent summary of civics and citizenship ideals for developing informed, active and participatory citizens who would have both sufficient *knowledge*, *understanding* and appropriate *skills* and *values*, *attitudes* and *dispositions*, in Australia and globally. Most importantly, it acknowledges Australia as a diverse and inclusive society; multi-cultural, secular yet respecting multi-faiths, with particular mention of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This reinstates the country's political ideal of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice, human rights and the rights to dissent, common good and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The deliberate mention of both rights and responsibilities can be interpreted as a subtle emphasis on responsibility to balance rights, as traditionally the citizenship discourse revolves around various aspects of human rights (rather than responsibilities) (Print & Gray, 2000).

The paper adopts the concept of multiple citizenship, which acknowledges that citizenship perspectives can be affected by personal, social, spatial and temporary situations (Cogan & Derricott,

2000). More importantly, instead of seeking a legal definition of citizenship (by birth or naturalisation), the paper emphasises that citizenship is a "state of being" (para. 15). This emphasises that contextual situation plays an important part in the shaping of citizenship concepts. The notion of citizenship in the paper highlights the significant implications of temporal situations in the conceptualisation of citizenship. Most immediately, it integrates multiple dimensions of citizenship that reflect the reality of Australian society, acknowledging diversity and at the same time calling for inclusivity. And the inclusivity of diversity echoes very well with the theme of the national citizenship booklet *Australian Citizenship: Our Common Bond* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Inclusivity provides a common bond for Australian citizens. The shift from the traditional legal definitions of citizenship to a "state of being" (para. 15) characterises an existential participatory definition of citizenship. This means that citizenship is not simply a legal identity, but a personal identity, and at the same time it emphasises the need to respect other citizens' personal identities within the society. It therefore repositions citizenship from a static concept to one that is fluid and open to conceptual changes, depending on both the national and personal situations. Notwithstanding, all these allowances for change are based upon democratic beliefs, rights and liberties (Commonwealth, 2012). The outcome of informed and active citizenship is to "improve society" (para. 19), with a common goal to shape the future society for common good.

Regional citizenship: special engagement with Asia

The *Draft Shape Paper* has actually extended beyond its local, national and global contexts, to highlight the regional influence that may affect citizenship perspectives. There is a special mention of Asia in the Rationale section; for example in paragraph 11, it states "able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia". Similarly, there is a special section about "Australia's engagement with Asia" from paragraph 54 to 57, that is quite distinctive and visible. The document is quite open towards the possible impact of Asian perspectives, particularly "enable students to explore and appreciate different approaches to civics and citizenship and forms of government in Asian nations" (para. 55). Analysts of Asian citizenship point out the close relationship between "civics" and "morals" (Lee, 2012; Kennedy & Fairbrother, 2004). Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the first of the educational goals listed for active and informed citizens in the paper is to "act with moral and ethical integrity" (para. 11c). Subsequently, there are further reminders of "the ethical implications of human activity and knowledge" (e.g. para. 32). Additionally, there is a suggestion of harmony, which has been identified as a distinctive citizenship feature in Asian cultures (Lee, 2012). However, harmony in this respect is mentioned in relation to local, regional and global communities, rather than citizen relationships.

The citizenship education curriculum and learning outcomes

The section "Learners and Learning: F–12" provides a comprehensive picture of progression in citizenship learning and growth. As citizenship is very much related to values, it is always difficult to chart the growth in values, unless one is adopting Piagetian/Kohlbergian cognitive approaches of moral development. The learning stages of citizenship in this section are really commendable, as they provide a progression of perspectives, yet adopt a "broader" social-cultural approach; and as the paper describes it, it is a "social inquiry process" (para. 23). In the main, closer to adult citizenship, there is a higher expectation for independent judgement, critical thinking and reflection, collaborative learning, understanding of democratic institutions, and active participation. Further, to become informed citizens, students are expected to master a series of information processing and decision-making skills, including inquiry and research, analysis and synthesis, collaborative problem solving and decision making and communication. While the literature of citizenship debates whether students can be considered as "full" citizens (because they are not up to the age to vote), paragraph 29 provides a firm statement that "children, including young children, are citizens". This is a significant departure point for education for civics and citizenship. Schooling, in addition to developing knowledge, understanding and skills, is "a period of empowerment for, and transition to, adult citizenship". Teaching approaches are seen from broader perspectives as well, extending from class-based activities, to whole-school activities and community activities, and the informal curriculum. The recommended teaching design is to create solutions for authentic situations and issues (para. 76).

Conclusion and critique

As mentioned earlier, the significance of this *Draft Shape Paper* is its consolidation of the Australian concept of civics and citizenship. This is a significant contribution to the area of citizenship education. At a personal level, it emphasises the significance of the "state of being", and acknowledges the changing social situations that would constitute temporal citizenship. It embraces diversity, leading to the concept of multiple citizenship and inclusivity. It is open to the regional dimension of citizenship, in addition to the personal, national and the global dimensions. In other words, it foregrounds Australia's engagement with Asia, and is receptive to the different perspectives of citizenship that can emerge from different forms of government in Asian countries. The paper therefore adopts a 'broader' approach, and this is clearly indicated by frequent mention of the need for broader perspectives, to incorporate as much diversity in the interpretation of citizenship as possible.

Despite these significant contributions and advancements, however, there are some issues that the Draft Shape Paper may need to consider for further refinement. First, the concept of "civics and citizenship", despite being confirmed and consolidated is still weakly defined. The definition of "civics" is still very general, in that it only briefly refers to the organisational and working of the society. While the mention of *Discovering Democracy* enhances the legitimacy of this concept, the disappointment is that the paper offers no further elaboration. I would expect, if the function of this paper is to consolidate this unique contribution to citizenship concepts from Australia, there should be more elaboration and analyses about the concept of civics, as distinct from citizenship. The definition of citizenship is not exciting either—it is only a mechanical reproduction of Marshall's concept of civil, social and political citizenship, and this has also been done without elaboration. Thus, the part on the definition of civics and citizenship is visibly done in terms of coverage, but weakly done in terms of elaboration and further development of the ideas since Marshall and *Discovery Democracy*.

Second, the *Draft Shape Paper* has captured some important citizenship documents such as *Discovery Democracy* and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australia* (MCEEDYA, 2008). Yet there is a significant document relevant to

the topic, but not mentioned: *The National Framework: Nine Values for Australian Schooling* (Commonwealth, 2005). The Australian government has taken several years (since 2003 or even earlier) to develop this framework (Curriculum Corporation, 2003). It was published in 2005, and schools were actively encouraged to adopt the framework. This framework is still available in the government's official website (http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/val_national_framework_nine_values,14515.html). However, in the *Draft Shape Paper*, "doing your best" and "trustworthiness" are not mentioned. Other than being mentioned once as an educational goal in terms of "moral and ethical integrity", "integrity" is not in the values lists that occur several times in the paper. The Values Education framework has made an explicit emphasis on "responsibility" as a standalone value, but the *Draft Shape Paper* no longer mentions responsibility without talking about rights. Moreover, "fair go" was quite a special way to express "fairness" in the framework for the pursuit of common good, but the *Draft Shape Paper* drops this expression. Does this therefore imply some value shifts in Australia?

Finally, despite the comprehensiveness in its integration of multiple dimensions of concepts of civics and citizenship, the focus of the descriptions in the *Draft Shape Paper* is largely focused on individual citizens—an emphasis of personal citizenship (in the traditional sense of individual freedom and liberty) rather than societal citizenship (in terms of encouraging citizens to organise activities and organisations to advance the social system). It is surprising that civil society is not mentioned at all. In respect to the school curriculum, other than very general mention of class-based or whole-school approaches, the civic experience of students in the classroom and the school is almost not mentioned. According to the IEA civic education studies, one dimension which is lacking but important in developing citizenship attributes is whether students have experienced open classroom discussion, whether there are opportunities for students to organise student bodies and activities, and whether they experience democracy in schools (Hahn, Kennedy & Lee, 2008). While the paper presents the right of dissent and the importance of students' critical and creative skills, there is almost no emphasis on active citizenship in terms of being concerned about and critical of existing policy issues and problems as a means of improving the system.

Overall, while the paper seems to have inserted all the possible positive descriptions about citizenship, it essentially subtly promotes a version of "more civics, less democracy", as described by Kennedy (2008).

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