Character and Citizenship Education: conversations between personal and societal values

Jasmine B.-Y. Sim* and Ee Ling Low

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

*Email: jasmine.sim@nie.edu.sg

One of Theodore Roosevelt's most widely quoted sayings reads: "To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." All societies have endeavoured to educate their young to be good citizens, and consequently, many theories of what constitutes good character, and of how to nurture good character have been promulgated. The world's great philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Piaget and Kohlberg have all sought to foster good character amongst the young. Good citizenship requires much more than mere intellectual achievement. What is good may not be a universal given: it relies on fundamental shared understandings of the nature of the polity, the balance of liberty and equality and so forth. However, on most accounts, it requires people to treat others with decency, respect and dignity (White, 1996; Leming, 2001).

The theme of this special issue is *Character and Citizenship Education: Conversations Between Personal and Societal Values*. Character education and citizenship education, taken separately or as a single entity are currently riding high on the political and educational policy agendas of several governments (Arthur, 2003; Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Likona, 2011). Most recently, in a speech made after the English riots in September 2011, David Cameron, the British Prime Minister said,

> And we've got to be ambitious, too, if we want to mend our broken society, because education doesn't just give people the tools to make a good living – it gives them the character to live a good life, to be good citizens. (Watt, 2011, n.p.)

In this special issue, we put together two distinct but closely connected domains, and argue for a view of character education that is essential in the development of good citizenship. This issue pulls together several papers presented at the inaugural Character and Citizenship Education Conference jointly organized by the National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education in Singapore in 2011. The aim is to deepen the conversation on what constitutes character education and citizenship education. We consider the claim that character education supports citizenship education. In this respect, we ask what and why particular values are emphasized, and identify the approaches to developing character for citizenship.

Although there is a growing interest in issues related to character and citizenship education, they may not have been discussed in these two specific terms (character and citizenship). A commonly related discourse in this area centres on values; particularly on the notion of shared or core values. Australia, for example endorsed the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* in 2005, acknowledging values education as an essential part of effective schooling (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2005). What is noteworthy is the commitment to a set of shared values known as Nine Values for Australian Schooling in the 21st century. Similarly in Singapore, the Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat recently reaffirmed "the central place of values and character development" in the new *Student-Centric, Values-Driven* phase of education (Heng, 2011, p. 7).

The emphasis on shared or core values is unsurprising given the anxieties and uncertainities generated by destabilizing forces and individualizing tendencies of global capitalism, popular culture, and new technologies and media (Parker, Nonomiya & Cogan, 1999). Wing On Lee, in the main keynote address delivered at

the conference and published in this issue, spoke broadly about the values emerging in knowledge-based economies that are characteristic of the 21st century. He cited examples of how several governments in the Asia-Pacific region have responded by giving renewed attention to developing shared values and citizenship. Education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific knowledge and skills necessary for the 21st century society. Articles in this special issue express similar concerns albeit from divergent perspectives and different approaches.

At the outset, some terms need to be clarified. A question that should concern scholars and practitioners would be the definition of each of the domains of character and citizenship education. In the following sections, we provide working definitions of these two domains, although providing working definitions may run the risk of becoming a little simplistic and may not do justice to the richness of two highly complex domains. However, from our perspectives, the attempt to provide working definitions will help to situate the issues addressed in the articles, and serve as initial talking points to generate rich conversations and further discourse surrounding the topics.

Character and character education

The formation of character "could be said to be the aim that all general education has historically set out to achieve" (Arthur, 2008, p. 80). More often, this aim has not been explicitly stated. Instead, it has been implicitly assumed. Similarly, while educators may differ in their views about whether and how values education should be adopted and applied, there is "no disagreement that schooling is not, should not be, and cannot be value free" (Lockwood, 2009, p. ix). "There is no such thing as value-

free education", Likona (1991, p. 21) argues. The question is never "'Should schools teach values?' but 'Which values will they teach?' and 'How well will they teach them?'" As Eisner (2002, p. 93) so aptly puts it, "What schools teach they teach in the fashion that culture itself teaches, because schools are the kinds of places they are."

Educating for character has been at the heart of educational philosophies, traceable in Western history to the times of Plato (Salls, 2007; Carr, 2008; Wren, 2008). John Dewey's highly influential writings on the interdependence of democracy, education and moral character are "a modern reformulation of the old belief that "virtue" can and should be taught in the schools." (Bennett & Delattre, 2011, p. 3) The question of how to develop good character is therefore not new. Likewise, the need to teach character in schools is not new either. On the Eastern front, cultivating character is also quintessential to the exposition of Confucian thought and considered "one of the richest and longest spiritual traditions in human history" (Tu, 1978, p. xvii). Described as the process of self-cultivation, the purpose is to achieve an inner sense of personal morality, known as *jen* (goodness, humanity).

"To enter into a discussion about character and, even more, about character education is to enter a minefield of conflicting definition and ideology." (Arthur, 2003, p. 1) It is ironical that one of the most prominent features of character education today is that there is not one universally held theory of what character education is, nor how best to teach it. There is so much fundamental disagreement that the only agreement among scholars is probably the acknowledgement of its importance. However, in general, we can view character education as an approach to moral education. The former is not simply about the acquisition of social skills, but an emphasis on the moral aspects of character, that is, the development and cultivation of

values and virtues (McLaughlin & Halstead, 1999; Lockwood, 2009; Likona, 2011). It is, "ultimately about the kind of person a pupil will grow up to be" (Arthur, 2003, p. 2).

Character can be broadly described as "an interlocked set of personal values which normally guide conduct…. [It] is about who we are and who we become, good and bad" (Arthur, 2003, p. 2). Value can be defined as "a criterion we employ in making judgements of the worth of a thing, a person, or an action." (Lockwood, 2009, p. x) As a personal preference, values are subjective, affected by personal experience and emotion. Dependent upon personal experience, values can change as we move through the different stages in life. Virtue, on the other hand, is a "trait or state of character of a person which is relatively entrenched" (McLaughlin & Halstead, 1999, p. 134). Virtues are socially endorsed, thus going beyond personal subjectivity. They are thus more "objectively" good human qualities, such as wisdom, honesty, kindness and self-discipline, deemed to be moral, good and right (Likona, 2011). However, virtues and values are not entirely distinctive from each other. Virtues often arise from living in alignment with core values. What constitutes good character defines the virtues we possess. Hence "[t]he more virtues we possess and the more fully we possess them, the stronger our character." (Likona, 2011, p. 23)

Likona (2011 p. 24) describes character education as "the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue". An assumption is that "choices about conduct are choices about 'right' or 'wrong' actions and thoughts" (Arthur, 2003, p. 2), and good character can be actively shaped. The key word is deliberate, because good character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, learning and practice. In other words, the goodness of a person "must be acquired and cultivated." (Hauerwas, 1981, p. 49) The focus on virtues in values education is

regarded as the traditional, virtues-centred approach to character education (Arthur, 2008).

Taking a somewhat different perspective grounded in child development, Berkowitz (1997) explores how character develops in children in order to optimally stimulate its growth, to be flourishing in schools and elsewhere. Here character is conceived as a psychological construct, and the development of character is a process of psychological development. Character is "the composite of psychological characteristics that serves to promote moral agency" (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, p. 268). Within this multi-faceted construct are psychological characteristics such as behaviour, value, affect, reasoning, self-concept, personality and so on. The development of character cuts across different learning dimensions such as social-emotional learning, values and moral education, service-learning and so forth, intended to promote the psychological development in these aspects that enable and motivate one "to engage in systematic, intentional prosocial behavior." (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007, p. 30)

Character foregrounds an individual. Proponents of character education say little about the social, political, and economic contexts in which one's character is developed or behaviour occurs (Lockwood, 2009). Viewed positively, the emphasis is on agency and choice. This recognizes that our actions are acts of self-determination, influenced by an interlocked set of personal values and a complex set of psychological characteristics. Here "the concept of character implies that moral goodness is primarily a prediction of persons and not acts." (Hauerwas, 1981, p. 49) Viewed critically, character education can be construed as problematic. Purpel (2011, p. 43) argues that public discussion of character education is a discourse created "in which schools are blamed for not 'teaching values', and families for teaching the

wrong ones." Implicitly, such an argument assumes that our social problems are not so much rooted in the failures of our social, economic and political structures as they are in the personal attitudes and behaviours of individuals. Although Purpel made his arguments in the context of the Character Education Movement in the US, his insights are useful in helping us to understand the politics of policymaking. Nonetheless, character education is more determinedly committed to different stages of learning for its own sake and not just because of the politics of policymaking (Davies, Gorard & McGuinn, 2005).

Because character education is concerned principally with morals, "character educators generally insist that there must be an acceptance of moral norms prior to any real engagement with matters that require thought and action." (Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005, p. 353). Some (e.g, Ryan, 1989; Wynne, 1989) suggest that precise responses should be taught. Under such circumstances, for example, dilemmas are used in order to provide students with an opportunity for students to consider what to do in specific circumstances. From this perspective, as education is a process for students to learn how to respond to different circumstances in life, virtually nothing in our education system can fall outside the scope of character education. Character educators hold out "the hope of what a person can be as opposed to what they are naturally" (Arthur, 2003, p. 8). Consequently, its expansive nature means that "it is built not upon curricula nor finite programmes" but it includes the entire schooling experience (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, p. 269). Furthermore, it also looks broadly to the community beyond the school for impact.

In the literature, various terms have been used to describe character education, each with its own ideological or theoretical underpinnings (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003), such as "values education", "moral education", "social-emotional learning",

"personal and social education", "religious education" and "service learning". Even "citizenship education", "civic education" and "democratic education" have often been used interchangeably with values education. While both character education and citizenship education are interconnected but at the same time distinctive from each other, we dedicate the next section to expound what citizenship education is all about (see Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005).

Citizenship and citizenship education

Citizenship is an equally complex and widely contested concept. Instead of being a universally conceived concept, citizenship may mean different things to different people, and this is attributed to cultural and historical differences, deep philosophical differences, and sometimes due to the differences in language usage and how they define the terminology (Fouts & Lee, 2005). In its simplest form, citizenship refers to membership of a state or political unit, which is now almost synonymously known as belonging to a nation-state, and even this definition is not accepted without contention (Heater, 1999; Faulks, 2000; Halstead & Pike, 2006). In a more nuanced form, citizenship can be "understood and studied as a mosaic of identities, duties and rights rather than a unitary concept" (p. 114). Modern political systems depend on a unified conception of citizenship in order to function effectively. Generally, the conception of citizenship contains a few key elements, including the notion of participation in public life, the idea that a citizen is one who governs and is governed, connotes a sense of identity, a tacit acceptance of societal values, and concomitant rights and responsibilities. However, the exact nature of each of these components, however, will depend on the political system to which they belong (Cogan & Derricott, 2000).

There are a number of possible ways of categorizing citizenship. Two distinctive approaches are the liberal and the civic republican (Kymlicka, 2002; Heater, 1999). The former focuses on the individual as a bearer of rights that the state guarantees for him or her. T. H. Marshall (1950) in his well-known treatise on the topic, divided rights into civil (e.g., the right not to be imprisoned without a trial), political (e.g., the right to vote and stand for office) and social (e.g., welfare rights such as health and education). Defined this way, citizenship is therefore tantamount to a status. Barber (2003, p. 4) has described the liberal approach as a "means to exclusively individualistic and private ends". Lister (1997, p. 23) argues that this represents "an impoverished version of citizenship in which individual citizens are reduced to atomized, passive bearers of rights whose freedom consists in being able to pursue their individual interests".

By contrast, citizenship is viewed as a practice in the civic republican approach. Drawing on models from ancient Greek city-states, the civic republican approach emphasizes the duties of citizens towards the state, particularly those involved in active participation in decision-making (Oldfield, 1990). Oldfield argues that not to engage in the practice is in an important sense, not to be a citizen. Certain qualities are associated with this duty of service to the state, for example, patriotism, courage, devotion to duty and law, and military discipline (Heater, 2004). Notably, these are "uniformly masculine" qualities (van Gunsteren, 1994, p. 42). Feminist scholars argue that the discourse has "privileged….men and marginalized women" (Arnot, 1997, p. 286). Suffice to say that the divide between the liberal and civic republican positions is not a simple bipolar one as there is a spectrum of positions within each approach. For instance, there are also rightist and leftist versions of the

liberal approach, depending on whether only very minimal rights are upheld or whether substantial rights are required to uphold social justice.

McLaughlin (1992) has distinguished forms of citizenship in terms of a continuum of maximal and minimal conceptions, a continuum related to identity, virtues, political involvement and societal prerequisites. In relation to identity for instance, McLaughlin states:

> On 'minimal' views, the identity conferred on an individual by citizenship is seen merely in formal, legal, juridical terms….On maximal terms….the citizen must have a consciousness of him or her self as a member of a living community with shared democratic culture involving obligations and responsibilities as well as rights…. (p. 236)

In his work on Asian citizenship, Lee (2012) argues that in Asia, rather than a concept related to rights and responsibilities, citizenship in Asian cultures is a relationalistic concept. In Asia, being a good person is a prerequisite for good citizenship, thus "civics" and "morals" always come together. While categorizations like the above may be useful in particular contexts, they can be restrictive in their focus and fail to acknowledge the rich diversity in the conceptualizations of citizenship.

Citizenship education has historically been an overarching goal of public schooling in every society. It can be located within the broadly drawn parameters described above. And while citizenship education takes many forms, there is a growing trend across the world that it is based upon the concepts, processes and values of education for democratic citizenship (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). In broad terms, the task of citizenship education is to promote and encourage young people to play a bigger and more effective role in the democracies of their respective countries (Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005).

Notably, policy directives are often deliberately configured so that schools create the types of citizens governments believe are appropriate to that country (Apple, 2003). Citizenship education often aims to develop attributes in learners, premised upon knowledge, skills and values. How citizenship education is approached, what knowledge, skills and values are selected, and the balance between them, would depend on how one conceives citizenship amongst the diverse and contested range of conceptions of citizenship. For instance, in relation to McLaughlin's (1992) distinction between maximal and minimal conceptions of citizenship, he states:

> Maximal conceptions require a considerable degree of explicit understanding of democratic principles, values and procedures on the part of the citizen together with the dispositions and capacities required for participation in democratic citizenship generously conceived. (p. 237)

By contrast, on minimal interpretations, he states:

> There is nothing in interpretations of this kind which require the development in students of their broad critical reflection and understanding, informed by a political and a general education of some substance, or virtues and dispositions of the democratic citizen conceptualized in fuller terms. (pp. 237–238)

While citizenship education can occur through a variety of sources, such as the family and media, schooling remains the main source of formal citizenship education for young people, as the government assumes through it, it can maintain high levels of control and accountability. Citizenship is taught as a distinct school subject (e.g., England), through subjects such as Social Studies (e.g., Singapore, the US), or blended with other learnings such as moral education (e.g., Singapore). This does not mean that citizenship educators do not see a wide range of issues and connections within and beyond their field. Scholars have called for multi-layered and multi-level forms of citizenship (Falk, 1994; Heater, 1999), and multi-dimensional citizenship education (Cogan & Derricott, 2000).

The public is foregrounded in citizenship. Citizens, however defined, from the earliest times have been expected to take an active role in the "polis". Idiots, on the other hand, "are persons who paid no attention to public affairs and engaged only in self-interested or private pursuits, never mind the public interest – the civic space and the common good." (Parker, 2003, p. xv) Reclaiming the original meaning of idiocy, an ancient Greek term "which means private, separate self-centred – selfish" (p. 2), Walter Parker contrasts the self-centred individual (the "idiot") who does not take part in, and does not have a public life, with the public actor (the "citizen"). The "idiot" undermines his or her own citizen identity and perceived self-sufficiency by his or her self-centredness, because the self and community are interdependent and mutually sustained. Parker warns that ultimately idiocy threatens "a fuller realization of the democratic ideals". (p. 3)

To be a citizen requires one to lead the "unavoidably connected and engaged life…. paying attention to and caring for the public household, the common good" (Parker, 2003, p. 11). It is necessary for one to participate in the political and socio-economic life of the community to which one belongs. While this commonly refers to participating in conventional citizenship related activities (Torney-Purta et al., 2001), Barton and Levstik (2004, p. 31) have argued for a wider set of social interactions to include "participation in the organizations of civil society – charitable organizations, parent-teacher groups, labour unions, churches, recreational clubs, neighbourhood associations, faculties, cooperatives, professional organizations, and 'societies for promoting or preventing this and that'".

Like character education, citizenship education is also concerned with morality, but mainly from how it emerges from particular social and political frameworks (Davis, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005; Haydon, 2005). In intention and in

practice, citizenship education is to promote action and thought for a democratic and pluralistic society of respective countries. The concern is with helping people to think through and learn about issues that relate to a polity, in which deliberation is a key component (Parker, 2003; Barton & Levstik, 2004). Dilemmas and difficult issues are to be deliberated upon within a specific framework of values in order to forge a common ground. "It must allow people to bring their differences into the open, discuss them, and move forward with mutually acceptable action whenever possible" (Barton & Levstik, p. 33), very different from the insistence on the acceptance of moral norms or right answers from at least some of the character educators. Barton and Levstik have described how this looks like:

> Without independent or preexisting grounds for making political judgments, citizens have to talk their way through issues confronting them. They must jointly arrive at public decisions and agree to political actions, and they have to justify these decisions and actions to each other. Common ground is not discovered through this process so much as created. (pp. 33–34)

With globalization, we cannot assume that citizenship refers to the traditional and restricted meaning of participation in, and membership of the nation-state (Pike, 2007). Global interconnectedness is resulting in shifting scales of belonging, "producing allegiances that are multiple, flexible, and relational" (Mitchell & Parker, 2008, p. 775). Today, young people can identify with multiple communities, including the full range of what can be termed, in Benedict Anderson's (1993) phrase, "imagined communities". Consequently, globalization is changing what young people need to know and be able to do in order to be effective, engaged citizens (Merryfield & Duty, 2008).

Concluding remarks

While character education and citizenship education are distinct domains, they are also closely related (Arthur, 2003; Davis, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005; Berkowitz &

Bier, 2007 Lockwood, 2009; Lee, 2010). In general, a decent society will be concerned with questions of both character and citizenship. Character education is concerned with all aspects of values-related citizen behaviour. Regardless of the purpose and approach adopted, the very nature of citizenship education, with the goal of creating citizens, is concerned with producing and encouraging certain attitudes, values and behaviours. Whether it is to enable students to fit into society or prepare to change it, or to emphasize social cohesion; these objectives cannot be met if citizens do not hold values that support them. Because character education stresses on developing foundational moral values such as respect and responsibility (Likona, 1991), as well as values inherent in democracy, including equality of opportunity, due process, the rule of law, and the like (Lockwood, 2009), it needs to be a critical element in any conception of citizenship education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Underlying the two domains are the values and virtues.

Character foregrounds the individual. But the notion of self is socially constructed (Soloman, 1994). Veugelers (2011, p. 31) highlights that:

> [t]he self is always situated and linked with others….in many pedagogical ideas and practices the social has been neglected by celebrating the individual, the self. We are not arguing to neglect the self in the social but to develop a social situated self.

Similarly, according to Tu (1978), Confucian thought views moral self-cultivation as always being carried out in the social context. A Confucianist does not refrain from involvement in the world but cultivates jen in order to be of use. Put simply, it is the ability to relate oneself to society at large, such as the ability to reciprocate the affections of others, to relate to others in a meaningful way, such as in the spirit of being filial, brotherhood, or friendship, that one becomes an authentic man truthful to both one's selfhood and one's sociality. In this sense, self and society are mutually dependent. Insofar as citizenship foregrounds the public and emphasizes community-building and relationship, it serves as the natural platform to develop the social self.

Broadly speaking, the focus on character and values can be viewed as a proactive response to preparing young people for the demands of a global knowledge economy. A rapidly changing environment characterizes such an economy where knowledge is being developed and applied in new ways, product cycles are shorter and the need for innovation is much greater. Trade is expanding worldwide, increasing competitive demands on producers. Such a context requires a population with a positive disposition to lifelong learning. Citizens therefore need to be responsive and flexible, mobile, able to think innovatively and work effectively in teams with high levels of social trust. Merryfield with Duty (2008) describe these competencies as those similar to active global citizenship. They include perspective consciousness, intercultural competence, critical thinking, and habits of mind compatible with civic responsibilities in a global age, such as to approach judgments and decisions with open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, and to develop the habit of asking whether an action or cause is for the common good.

Yet others who advocated values and character education in America and Britain have presented it as a response to a list of ills facing society, seen to originate from the behaviour of juveniles (Arthur, 2003; Davis, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005). The recent English riots are an example. David Cameron, the British Prime Minister explained the riots were a result of a "moral collapse" of the British society. He said,

> ...this was about behaviour…people showing indifference to right and wrong…people with a twisted moral code…people with a complete absence of self-restraint… Irresponsibility. Selfishness. Behaving as if your choices have no consequences. Children without fathers. Schools without discipline. Reward without effort. Crime without punishment. Rights without responsibilities. Communities without control. (Cameron, 2011, n.p.)

In the aftermath of the riots, there has been a broad-based and growing public support for "moral education" in schools to help mend "the broken society". Less dramatic than the English riots, but in the same vein is a growing concern that

Singapore has “lost glue that binds community” (Durai, 2011). Stanley Tan, chairman of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre, commented that Singaporeans have become relatively indifferent and lack a community and volunteering spirit. He warns that Singapore could become a dysfunctional society if it continues this way, and looks to schools to develop basic values of care, community and social responsibility, and social and moral dispositions such as good neighbourliness and volunteering.

The impetus for values and character aside, it must be recognized that the context for the development of values by young people has grown more complex and challenging. Globalization has led to greater mobility, where people are exposed to different cultures, locally and, and in both the virtual and real worlds. While the multicultural character of our society offers greater opportunities for experience, it also demands that all participants can work with and accept differences (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). A more problematic issue is the growing income inequality as globalization leads to a steady shift in demand away from the less skilled towards the highly skilled. This has given rise to a highly stratified society that does not live, think or act the same way. At the same time, studies suggest that young people generally lack civic knowledge and understanding (Torney-Purta et al., 1999, 2001). There is growing youth disengagement from democracy (Saha, Print, & Edwards, 2005), and a decline in civic engagement (Osler & Starkey, 2006; Putnam, 2001). What this implies is that young people may have learnt to take their citizenship and community somewhat for granted, or they have a different views about citizenship.

It is against this backdrop of the increased emphasis globally on character, values and citizenship education that we propose a special issue in the journal to focus specifically on character and citizenship education. Our first paper is by Michael Goh

who addresses the topic of “Teaching with cultural intelligence: developing students to be multiculturally educated and globally engaged”. He begins his paper with the premise that the world, both socially and economically, has become interconnected and more interdependent. He establishes a well-known fact that corporations and employers are seeking talent that can work with a multicultural workforce and globally savvy. That Singapore needs to succeed in this global marketplace and international stage of innovation is a well-stated goal with key players. That teachers are key players in equipping Singapore students to enter the workforce as multiculturally educated and globally engaged citizens is a judicious argument that will be addressed in this article. To be a key globalization player, teachers must teach with cultural intelligence. *Cultural intelligence* (CQ) is an evidence-based approach to successfully navigate diverse cultures. First developed in Singapore, CQ is now researched in 30 countries. This paper introduces the CQ framework and describes how CQ can develop active and concerned citizens who are multiculturally educated and globally engaged.

The next paper by Angeline Khoo questions whether video games can function as a moral educator. The video game industry has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise that is rivalled only by the movie industry. In 2010, 500 million video games were sold throughout the world. Video gaming has become very much part of the lives of today’s children and teenagers. As interest in video gaming grows, there is a corresponding increase in the concern about its potential harmful effects on young children and adolescents. There is ample research as well as debates on the negative effects of gaming, such as aggression and addiction. There are also studies investigating the prosocial effects of video games. Quite a few books have been written on how video games can promote learning. While it is widely acknowledged

that video games can have many benefits, there haven't been many studies on the role that video games can play in moral development and character education. This paper focuses on how video games, particularly online multiplayer games that allow interaction with other players, can play a part in gamers' moral and character development. Using the popular online game *World of Warcraft* (which holds the world's record for being the most successful online game with over 11 million subscribers) as an illustrative example, the author uses the game world and shows how gamers, through game content and game play, are confronted with such issues as moral dilemmas and decision-making, social obligations and responsibilities, perspective-taking and empathy, perseverance and delayed gratification.

Ensuring that learning takes places in service-learning or civic engagement programmes is the focus of the next paper by Robert Shumer, Carolina Lam and Bonnie Labbs. Their paper begins with presenting some models of service learning programmes for schools and colleges, demonstrating how the curriculum is developed from service and community activities. They share the forms that are used to help institutes develop a short curriculum model that adds academic content and substance to the service/community work.

The focus of the special issue moves to specific case studies in Singapore and the UK respectively. The next paper focuses on a landmark mandatory service learning programme that every pre-service teacher in Singapore undergoes. Vilma Ann D'Rozario, Ee Ling Low, Ava Patricia Avila and Stephane Cheung write about the Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) programme for all student teachers in Singapore. In line with the Ministry of Education's Vision for Singapore Teachers, the country's National Institute of Education (NIE) that prepares all pre-service teachers for Singapore's schools seeks to develop teachers who will be able to

lead, care and inspire our youth, and to forge trusting partnerships with the community for the growth and well-being of their students. NIE chose service-learning as a pedagogical tool to develop and enhance these positive qualities. Hence, service-learning in the local context has been mandatory in NIE's initial teacher preparation program since 2005. The GESL programme involves community outreach and engagement and gives our student-teachers the opportunity to serve and to learn from the community. The community becomes our teacher. Drawing upon students' reflections and feedback, this paper highlights how GESL has made a difference in student teachers, and outlines key areas of impact.

Karen Edge and Khamsi Khatera write about International School Partnership as a Vehicle for Global Citizenship Education. In England, government departments and non-governmental organizations have encouraged the formation of primary and secondary international school partnerships for the promotion of global citizenship. This paper examines the role of international school partnerships as a vehicle for developing global citizenship. They explore the influence of international school partnerships on teachers' and students' development of global awareness and intercultural understanding, and present the factors and conditions supporting classroom and school-level engagement. The paper contributes to the emerging literature on global citizenship education and international school partnerships and shares good practice of successful partnership. This paper is based on three international research studies funded by British Council, DfID, and PLAN-UK and draws on evidence from over 2000 surveys and 150 school case studies from the UK, Africa and South Asia. These studies explored the implementation of international school partnerships in schools and their influence on students, teachers, schools and wider communities.

The next paper by Theresa Alviar-Martin, Li-Ching Ho, Jasmine B.-Y. Sim and Pui-San Yap examines students' perceptions of civic competence in one Singaporean school using an interpretive perspective. Unlike many studies of civic education, the researchers draw on an ecological framework to describe interconnections between predominating conceptions of citizenship in Singapore and students' experiences in school decision-making, community service, and classroom participation. The qualitative data reveal students' perceived lack of civic competence to effect systemic change within their school environment and in the larger political arena. This perceived lack of civic competence can be attributed largely to rigid and hierarchical classroom, school, and political structures, and the pragmatic focus of Singapore society. The analysis of formal and informal citizenship curricula lead the researchers to conclude that schools with little autonomy, and operating within a public sphere that stifles opportunities for dissent, tend to function as socializing agents of the state.

The next paper is adapted from the keynote speech delivered by James Arthur and focuses on exploring the character and values of good citizens of young people aged between 3 and 25. He argues that the study of moral character has been of enduring interest to ethical theorists, and the major proponent of character as a core moral concept was the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. By contrast, with most modern moral theories and theorists, Aristotle conceived moral development as the development of personal character that is more than just reason. His paper questions whether it is the job of a school to teach moral values at all or whether this should fall within the responsibility of parents or society at large. He presents the controversial question about whether there should be an attempt to avoid the inculcation of values, and to leave students to develop these for themselves. His paper ends with a

consideration of what character values make for a good citizen among young people today.

The final paper in this special issue is the main speech by our principal keynote speaker Wing On Lee on “Education for future-oriented citizenship: the implications of education for the 21st century competencies”. He first acknowledges that globalization and the knowledge economy have opened up worldwide agendas for national development. Most immediately, the driving force for the new global knowledge economy is the intellectual capital of citizens. The urgency in building the capacity of students as future knowledge workers is apparent in education reform in many countries. The emphasis of knowledge has been broadened from the traditional emphasis on know-that, to include such other dimensions as know-how, know-why and know-who. Following this is the emphasis on social capital. Notably, much of social capital includes the “soft skills” and “21st century skills”, which broadly cover critical, creative and inventive thinking; information, interactive and communication skills; civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills. On the threshold of the 21st century, Singapore's education system faces new challenges that have emerged in the wake of the global knowledge economy. The Ministry of Education has been forward looking in introducing Curriculum 2015, a new curriculum that would develop student attributes, embedded in the "Confident Person", "Self-directed Learner", "Active Contributor", and "Concerned Citizen". Significantly, a new curricular initiative, Character and Citizenship Education emphasizes the integrative nature of citizenship and 21st century competencies and was implemented in all schools in Singapore in 2011. This acts as a “prototype” of the future-oriented citizenship education, with an emphasis on the significance of individual initiatives and the intellectual capital of citizens. His paper analyses features of this particular

approach to citizenship education, and its strengths and significance, which he calls an integrative "total curriculum approach" with a "whole-of-the-society" perspective. In addition to analysing this curriculum planning approach, the paper will also highlight the challenges of teaching 21st century skills. Importantly, this departs from the conventional paradigms of teaching, with the emphasis on teaching beyond knowledge, and developing attributes for a future-oriented society that would foster the solidarity of the local community, and at the same time, enhance the competitiveness of Singapore in "new times".

Collectively, the papers in this special issue present the latest trends and research in the areas of character, citizenship education through service learning and other innovative pedagogical modes. They challenge existing assumptions and aim to push new frontiers in both talking and thinking about and implementing character and citizenship education programmes globally. In sum, this special issue aims to begin the conversations surrounding character and citizenship education both locally and in the international arena.

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