

Teaching Citizenship: The Primary Teachers' View from
Two Districts of Hong Kong

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Degree of Doctor of Education

University of Technology Sydney

February 2008

Certificate of Authorship/originality

I certify that the work in thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

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Acknowledgement

The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to Mr. Alex Fung, who was very helpful in handling the data input and the statistical procedures. Many thanks go to my supervising professors: Professor Andrew Gonczi, Professor Laurie Brady, and Dr Kitty TeRiele, Dr Alison Lee, local supervisor, Professor Kerry Kennedy and all the experts who so generously offered me their help and advice. Special gratitude goes to Ms Amy Chan and Ms May Lam my dear friends who helped me with editing and formatting the paper. Votes of thanks also go to all the participating teachers and principals of Sai Kung and Wanchai areas, for giving the research their staunch support. Last but not least, the author wishes to thank her family, Patrick, Miriam and Joshua, without whose tolerance and support, the completion of this project would have been highly unlikely.

Abstract

The literature shows that the teaching of civics and values evolved from religious, normative approach to rational/objective approach to the emphasis on character development. Development in teaching citizenship followed the ideology and social political changes of the surrounding society. Teachers' views were found to be very important in the implementation of citizenship education.

Hong Kong's Government agreed that citizenship encompasses both self and collective realization (Lee 2001). Many initiatives and guidelines have been produced for moral and civic education since 1980. Budget cuts and teachers' heavier burden to fulfill the requirements of educational reforms have made implementation difficult. The voice of the primary teachers was seldom heard.

This research set out to identify the qualities which primary teachers in Hong Kong associated with "good citizenship". Teachers were asked to prioritize the qualities of a good citizen, identify influences on the development of good citizens, and describe the development of their own citizenship and the teaching of such content in classrooms and throughout the school. Finally, teachers discussed suggestions for in-service training for teaching citizenship.

A translated version of a citizenship survey, focus group and individual interviews were used to collect the data for analysis. This was an exploratory/interpretive research using quantitative and qualitative methods. By using stratified, random sampling procedures (in accordance to the major types of school sponsoring bodies in Hong Kong), the survey was sent to the full time teachers of 12 schools in two districts. 359 responses were collected, representing a 79% response rate. Correlation statistics and factor

analysis procedures were used to analyze the quantitative data collected.

The qualitative data collected explored the reasons behind the teachers' choice. Focus groups and individual interviews results revealed the teachers' view of content of citizenship that fit the students' needs; best practices in school and classrooms; and types of training and resources needed in teaching citizenship education.

The research findings showed primary teachers' prioritizing on teaching skills, knowledge aspects of citizenship for students. Parents, teachers and friends were identified as influential in the development of citizenship. Teachers acknowledged the importance of helping students learn through processes or experience. Modelling and examples are important too. Results also showed that teachers from religious-based schools had stronger agreement in teaching of citizenship than did teachers from Government schools.

Results were discussed, analyzed with reference to literature and previous research, and recommendations were made. The thesis concluded with suggestions for future research.

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