

NSW History Project: Workshop Materials

Case Study: Civics and Citizenship

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Case Study 3 – The Civics and Citizenship: How do we define it? How do we teach it?

Content

- The Political Background to teaching civics
- How Civics and Citizenship fits into the NSW syllabuses
- Ideas for Case Studies and lessons
- Useful Resources.

The Political Background to teaching civics

The Civics Expert Group was established “To recommend a nonpartisan program to enable all Australians to participate more fully and effectively in the civic life of our country, and thereby promote good citizenship.”

Recommendations would include a “strategic plan of . . . public education and information on the Australian system of government, the Australian Constitution, Australian Citizenship, and other civic issues.” With the help of a national survey, “which assessed the current level of relevant knowledge in the Australian community”, the report of the CEG identified a “civics deficit” as existing amongst the Australian population, particularly amongst its youth. There was perceived to be a limited understanding and knowledge about principles of responsible government, the division of powers; and the relationship between legislature, executive and judiciary.

The report was commissioned by Paul Keating’s government and followed two previous reports – Education for Active Citizenship (1989) and Active Citizenship Revisited (1991).

In 1994, the Civics Expert Group report (1994) “Whereas the people . . . identified the following values and attitudes as integral to civics and citizenship education”.

- civility and respect for the law
- acceptance of cultural diversity in society
- individual initiative and effort
- appreciation of Australia’s record of achievement as a democracy
- appreciation of the importance of democratic decision-making
- concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people
- recognition of the intrinsic value of the natural environment.

In 1997, Discovering Democracy was launched by the Federal Minister for Education, Dr. David Kemp, representing the current government's response to the findings of the CEG report.

Discovering Democracy is intended to develop in students the "capacities to participate as informed, reflective citizens in their civic community" and to "recognize the relevance of their political and legal institutions to everyday life". These goals are founded on the following beliefs:

Effective citizenship requires an understanding of the history and operations of Australia's system of government and institutions and the principles that support Australian democracy. Students should be able to identify and explain the essential characteristics of representative democracy and the nature, role and purpose of the Australian Constitution. They should be able to describe the operations of Commonwealth and State and Territory parliaments and understand the relationship between parliament and government. They should be knowledgeable about Australia's history and the role of leading Australian political figures who have shaped the direction of Australia's civic life. Whilst the program was initially to run only until 2001, it has been extended to 2004 and so far has been funded to the tune of \$31.4 million.

How Civics and Citizenship Fits into the NSW syllabuses

The Civics and Citizenship component of the New South Wales' HSIE syllabuses Stages 1-5 is referred to as an 'embedded' component of the syllabus.

While many of us have now at least heard of the 'Discovering Democracy' program and related materials that have been produced to help us teach the civics component of the course, some teachers are still less than confident about their definition of the concepts of 'civics' and 'citizenship'. So when we teach it, where do we start? Can we have a generic meaning or must, by the very notion of civics and citizenship, it remain a general concept? Mustn't it, by the very fact that all end Stage 5 students will sit the same external test in the School Certificate in New South Wales, make it almost compulsory to end up with the same definition or will the exam stick to historical facts that can't be altered such as 'What is the Constitution?' or 'Who is the Father of Federation?' Is this component dealing only with political issues or do social and cultural issues also receive attention?

It seems that there are more questions than answers at this point, so let's work through the major NSW BOS documents and see what conclusions we can arrive at.

Let's start with our syllabuses to see the pattern of learning expected for 'Civics and Citizenship' education.

Syllabus Requirements

Stages

Civics and Citizenship Component

Stage 1: Social and Civic Participation

Students learn about:

(Early Stage 1)

- Belonging to groups
- Common characteristics amongst people
- Differences between people
- Classroom rules
- Fair and unfair classroom practices.

(Stage 1)

- Group, family and community symbols and traditions
- Roles and responsibilities within families, schools and local communities
- Why rules are necessary for family, group and community relationships
- Fair and unfair practices in their school and at home
- Ways in which people co-operate with, and care for, others and their environment.

Stage 2

- Structure, role and significance of local government and of opportunities for civic action
- That their lives are influenced by local, national and global events, both past and present.

Stage 3

- Understanding of the principles of Australian parliamentary democracy, and of State and federal systems of government
- The development of Australian identity through symbols and the influence of individuals and groups, with an emphasis on cultural diversity.

Stage 4

- The impact of colonization on indigenous peoples
- The importance of conservation and preservation of heritage.

Stage 5

- Explains political events and evaluates their impact on civic life in Australia
- Describes major features of social and cultural life at different times in Australia's history
- Compares and contrasts the social and cultural experiences of different people at various times
- Recounts some major events in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations
- Identifies various marginalized groups who have struggled for rights and freedoms
- Accounts for how and why the rights and freedoms of various groups in Australian society have changed
- Commitment to individual freedom and to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy
- Concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people.

Civics is defined as “relating to a town/community or to citizenship”.

Citizenship is defined as “has both a legal and social meaning. In a legal sense, citizenship is that set of rights and responsibilities granted to people in recognition of their attachment to a particular country. In a social sense, citizenship refers to the participation of people in their community as they fulfil and debate their rights and responsibilities.” (Stage 4-5 History Syllabus).

Ideas for Case Studies and lessons

Below are some examples of civics lessons ranging from ideas that would take a lesson or two through to ideas that may need an evolutionary process and that affect the whole school.

Lessons using the One Destiny CD ROM

From the ‘One Destiny CD ROM’, here are some activities that can be used as starting points for history/civics activities. They allow students to explore the CD either as individuals or in groups and then come together as a class to discuss their findings.

Go to the ‘Inside the Pavilion’ section and click on the ‘Keeping Australia White’ section.

This section focuses on the attitude of white Australians towards the non-Anglo-Saxon, especially the Chinese, from the 1860s until the time of Federation. It gives a history of government and social attitudes towards the Chinese as well as graphs on Chinese population in each state over time and other countries’ attitudes towards them.

Activities:

Incidents in 1888:

- What was the White Australia Policy?
- What was the Chinese Restriction Act?
- What was the attitude of England?

Chinese Migration:

How did Chinese migration change over the period of time up to 1901?

Using the graphics, explain the differences in migration patterns and colonial populations between 1860 and 1901.

Fears and phobias:

1. Were these fears justified or not? Give reasons for your answer.

Chinese Lives:

- What was the 'Harvest of Endurance'?
- From the scroll, describe the history of the Chinese in Australia.

Kanakas:

- What was a Kanaka?
- What were they used for?
- How did this make Queensland's attitude towards the anti-immigration policy different to other states?
- How did people believe the anti-Chinese feeling would help with Federation?
- What does this reflect about attitudes in Queensland toward non-white cultures? Give reasons for your answer.

Non-White Immigration and the Law

1. Click on the map of Australia.
2. Click on to a state. This will give you a timeline of Immigration Laws for that state.
3. What are the similarities?
4. What are the differences?
5. How was Queensland different?
6. Why did the Labour Movement object to this?
7. What was the outcome?
8. What does this reflect about Australian states at this time?

Aboriginal Contrasts

Botany Bay, 1901

This is a slide show with commentary showing Aboriginal corroborees and Aboriginal people in native dress as an addendum to the federation festivities. Primary source material shows attitudes to the indigenous people at the time. Alice Springs, 1901.

Shows the role Aboriginal people played in the activities of Spencer and his expedition at the time of Federation. Many slides of Aboriginal corroborees and dress. Brief commentary on what these slides represent and descriptions of Aboriginal lifestyle in 1901 in Alice Springs.

Some European Images

Graphics and stories of how Aboriginal people were perceived and treated in the late C 18th.

Some Harsh Realities

Graphics and stories of how Aboriginal people were perceived and treated in the late C 18th.

Aboriginal People and the Law

This section gives an account of the laws that affected Aboriginal people only. It looks at each state and gives an idea of the ways in which Aboriginal people were suppressed and controlled.

Aboriginal Population

State by state graphs and information on the changing Aboriginal population over the 18th century. Discusses the inaccuracy of this information.

Look at the above sections and answer the following questions.

- What part did the Aboriginal people play in the Federation proceedings?
- At Botany Bay, what perceptions do you think the Indigenous people would have given?
- What were King Plates?
- What percentage of the population did Aboriginal people represent?
- What problems were there with these figures?
- In what state were most Aboriginal people situated?
- What types of laws were there specifically for Aboriginal people?
- Why do you think Aboriginal people were not allowed to vote?
- This is a graphic from the 'Some European Images' section. What does it tell us about how Aboriginal people were stereotyped in the late 1800s?

After viewing this section, what perceptions do you think Europeans had of the indigenous population? Was this a fair perception? In what ways have policies and perceptions changed over the past 100 years?

Lessons from the Discovering Democracy website

This lesson is student centred and requires students to think about their rights and responsibilities.

Click onto HYPERLINK.

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/connect/classact/young.htm>

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/connect/classact/young.htm>

Go to the links to view more lesson ideas.

Setting up a workable Student Representative Council

Of course, a long term project, but one that would fulfil requirements of the Stage 5 History outcomes in terms of civics and citizenship. There are many great discussion articles on this including:

HYPERLINK <http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/members/pasta.html>

<http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/members/pasta.html>. This is the website for student leadership representatives in New South Wales and offers a substantial amount of material about the value of SRC's and where they fit into our schools.

Useful Resources

HYPERLINK <http://www.cybertext.net.au/civicsweb/>

<http://www.cybertext.net.au/civicsweb/> - last year, a principals' online conference was held to discuss the implications of civics and citizenship in our schools. This site will provide texts of key speakers in civics education and provide a history of where the civics in schools concept came from.

HYPERLINK <http://www.civnet.org/journal/vol3no2/upsim.htm>

<http://www.civnet.org/journal/vol3no2/upsim.htm> - a great site that not only gives a full history of the philosophy behind teaching civics in Australian schools but also useful pedagogy and methodology for doing it right.

HYPERLINK <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au>

www.foundingdocs.gov.au documents the story of Federation and is a truly rich site in its wealth of primary sources.

HYPERLINK <http://www.curriculum.edu.au>

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au> – Discovering Democracy Site

This site offers some great lesson ideas for teaching Civics and Citizenship. There are lesson ideas and case studies from schools around Australia. They also have syllabus

links appropriate to the lessons. A list of resources available through Curriculum Corporation is provided as well as other useful links and references. A site that should not be missed!

HYPERLINK <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/resource/pd/online.htm>
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/resource/pd/online.htm> - lists the resources available online that are a good starting point for both national and international civics education.

HYPERLINK <http://www.teachingheritage.nsw.edu.au>
<http://www.teachingheritage.nsw.edu.au> – NSW Heritage Office. This is a fantastic professional development site for teachers in New South Wales schools. It contains lessons, assessment strategies and outcomes that are specifically linked to the NSW Syllabuses. It covers Focus Areas including ‘Notions of Citizenship’, Aboriginal Heritage and Local History. Ideas are put forward for how to use oral history and how to use your school as a site study. It is a very comprehensive site and also an excellent starting point for New South Wales’ teachers of History.

HYPERLINK <http://www.seo.nsw.gov.au/>
<http://www.seo.nsw.gov.au/> - The New South Wales’ State Electoral Office. For teachers interested in running a simulated election, or who need classroom friendly explanations of voting procedures, this site has a great ‘Schools’ Information’ section. The site is also very good for teachers who need background information prior to teaching about the mechanics of our state voting system.

Articles:

Craven, Rhonda 1995, ‘Indigenous Australian Studies: An essential Component of Citizenship Education’, *The Social Educator*, vol. 14 no. 3, pp. 31-36.

Donnelly, Kevin 1996-97, ‘Civics and Citizenship Education’, *Policy*, Summer, pp. 21-24.

Macintyre, Stuart, ‘Civics and Citizenship Education and the teaching of history’, Unicorn, *Journal of the Australian College of Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1, March 1996, pp. 59-63.

Young, Carmel, ‘Civics and Citizenship Education and the teaching of History’, Unicorn, *Journal of the Australian College of Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1, March 1996, pp. 64-71.

Kits:

The Discovering Democracy Kit and resources provide great material including assessment and marking guidelines, as well as lesson plans. All schools should have one but they are available from Curriculum Corporation in Melbourne who can be contacted through the website above.

Exploring Citizenship: From the National Archives of Australia – Teachers Resource Kit. ‘Civic rights and responsibilities’ is the theme explored by this education kit, with a focus on three topics: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, aliens and immigrants, conscription and conscientious objectors. With reproductions of original documents, students can experience the thrill of primary research.

1901 and All That: NAA – This classroom kit for secondary schools encourages students to explore the themes of Federation from 100 years ago and to make contemporary connections. The kit contains teacher’s notes, activities, primary and secondary sources, and a decision-making game on CD-ROM.

Voices of Democracy: National Archives of Australia – Teachers Resource Kit. Designed to encourage the study of democracy in Australia, this kit has sections on John Curtin and leadership; Vida Goldstein and the struggle for women’s rights; Jessie Street, individual rights and the national interest; Paul Hasluck and education for democracy.

Convict Fleet to Dragon Boat: NAA – This CD-ROM introduces students to migrants from many different countries, through oral histories, videos of important events, two interactive games, and information on the many nationalities that make up our multicultural society.

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