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# Teaching Citizenship

## Preamble

The stated aim of the secondary National Curriculum for England (QCA 2007) is to enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens – not only through citizenship education but through all subjects. All teachers are enjoined to ensure that links are made between their subject 'and work in other subjects and areas of the curriculum' (QCA 2007, p. 48). To a significant extent, then, all secondary teachers are teachers of citizenship education just as they are teachers of mathematics (particularly but not only numeracy), English (particularly but not only literacy), ICT, and everything else which pupils experience through both the overt and the hidden curriculum. This is a considerable challenge, particularly as few secondary teachers have the experience or expertise to deliver across the curriculum, and even more particularly when their

responsibilities now include a subject – citizenship education – of which many have little knowledge or experience, and some have little awareness or interest. Fortunately the National Curriculum identifies and explains what many of these subject links are, but it offers less on how they might be achieved. As Bernstein (2010) notes, however, our concern should not be about covering the curriculum but about uncovering it – not regarding it as something to be delivered but as something to be understood, engaged with, investigated, interrogated, interpreted and used as a tool to enable pupil learning and pupil development.

Below we examine some of the challenges faced by citizenship education teachers, particularly the diversity of types of citizenship teacher, their backgrounds, and their needs; and provide some strategies to support and develop them.

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## Activity

Think of a recent period of history you are familiar with and the technology that might have been used in education. It could be the 1950s or a time closer to our own. Write a few sentences on what you know about it and identify the sources on which you base your ideas. What else could you do to ensure the validity of what you write?

## Activity

The caution about history issued by Voltaire suggests that it is prudent to suspect the veracity of witnesses or commentators on events or initiatives from the past. Read the following extract from the early part of the last century advocating the use of the blackboard in the classroom:

> From other departments we have learned many things. Not the least of these is the value of blackboard work. Many English teachers, however, neglect this effective means of reaching the elusive minds of their pupils. It tends to noise and confusion, they assert. But if it helps to banish the sluggishness, the hands folded on desk attitude, the deadly inertness of the classroom; if it substitutes interest for forced attention, isn't it perhaps worth trying?It is time for the "perfect discipline" of the dry as dust teacher to go. Let us joyfully bid it farewell and greet in its stead a more thought producing, soul stirring spirit. I do not claim that blackboard work will of itself do all this, but it will help, and help greatly; chiefly, it seems to me, because it gives an opportunity of reaching a child's mind through his senses and through his nervous system, the only means of making knowledge useful and permanent. This is done by appealing to the eye and by providing an outlet for self-activity. Without these two – vivid sense perception and expression – mental images are sure to be faint hazy and ephemeral. (Monro, 1918)

What would you need to know about the source to determine the legitimacy of her comments? What additional information would help?

## Activity

UNESCO suggests that technology is a combination of the knowledge and skills and creative processes that may assist people to utilize tools, resources and systems to solve problems and to enhance control over the natural and made environment in an endeavour to improve the human condition (UNESCO, 1985). Using this definition as a starting point for your thinking, identify reasons why speech and language should be regarded as a technology.

## Activity

Although Plato and his followers had much to say about the theory of education, they provide very little insight into what education in general was like at the time. However, it is clear from the literature that there was a gradual shift during this period towards providing education for its intrinsic value and enjoyment rather than solely to meet the needs of the state or in support of some higher being (Cubberley, 2007). Do you think that the advent of the recorded word made this more possible? Justify your conclusion(s).

## Activity

The advent of print enabled those including governments who controlled access to the presses to promote their own views. What affect do you think this had on the curriculum material used in the burgeoning education systems that appeared in Europe an America at the end of the nineteenth century?

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**Big Question**

Are there contemporary examples of technology that have made such a radical difference to education as the printing press and the mass-produced book and what lessons can we learn from history?