CITIZENSHIP-AS-PRACTICE: THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF AN INCLUSIVE AND RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF CITIZENSHIP

by Robert Lawy and Gert Biesta, University of Exeter

ABSTRACT: Over the last few years there has been a renewed interest in questions of citizenship and in particular its relation to young people. This has been allied to an educational discourse where the emphasis has been upon questions concerned with ‘outcome’ rather than with ‘process’ – with the curriculum and methods of teaching rather than questions of understanding and learning. This paper seeks to describe and illuminate the linkages within and between these related discourses. It advocates an inclusive and relational view of citizenship-as-practice within a distinctive socio-economic and political, and cultural milieu. Drawing upon some empirical insights from our research we conclude that an appropriate educational programme would respect the claim to citizenship status of everyone in society, including children and young people. It would work together with young people rather than on young people, and recognise that the actual practices of citizenship, and the ways in which these practices transform over time are educationally significant.

Keywords: citizenship, citizenship education, inclusive, relational

1. Introduction: Citizenship in a Changing World

Citizenship is a status bestowed on all those who are full members of a community. All those who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be measured. (Marshall, 1950, pp. 28–29)

Writing in the aftermath of the Second World War, T.H. Marshall’s major achievement was to articulate a coherent description and
analysis of citizenship, founded upon clear and cogent views about what it means to be a citizen. Crucially, his typology was grounded within an historical framework involving three elements that were developed in successive centuries. The civil component, which he traced through legislation that developed largely in the eighteenth century (between 1688 and 1832), includes the right of freedom of speech, the right to justice and the right to own property. Political rights, including the right to vote and to stand for political office, followed in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century when the franchise was extended to include the majority of the adult population. The final component, social rights, which included social security, health care and education, developed mainly in the twentieth century. Each of these three components corresponds to a particular set of institutions – civil rights to the court system, political rights to the institutions of local government and parliament, and social rights to the welfare state.

Marshall believed that increasing wealth combined with the expansion of the welfare state would irrevocably ameliorate and cut across class inequalities and allow for the expansion of social rights. He did not consider citizenship and class inequality to be opposing principles but ‘raised the question of whether modern citizenship had become a condition of class inequality’ (Isin and Wood, 1999, p. 26). By so doing he sought to tie ‘the growth of the institutions of citizenship to the growth of capitalism’ (Hall et al., 1998, p. 303). One of his principal claims was that ‘with the introduction of universal social rights, citizenship would become a form of equalization in which individuals gained a common identity that cut across class divisions’ (France, 1998, p. 98). Hence, the introduction of social rights would render citizenship compatible with capitalism by universalising identity and by civilising the impact of the market.

Whilst there has been disagreement about the detail of policy required to achieve these ends there was, up until the 1970s, a general accord amongst the three main political parties in Britain, that greater equality could, and should, be achieved through the expansion of the welfare state. However, despite the persuasive claims of this thesis, the social Keynesian revolution and the accompanying post-war reconstruction and policy changes have not resulted in a fairer and more equal distribution of society’s resources (Hutton, 1995). Although the expansion of welfare provision has had some emollient effects on the market it has done little to allay the inherent tensions and contradictions between the ‘principles of equality that underpin democracy and the de facto inequalities of wealth and income that characterize the capitalist market place’ (Turner, 2001, p. 190).
Marshall’s essay was written during a time of great optimism, when Britain had just emerged from a debilitating war in Europe in which the British people had been drawn together in a common cause. Nascent issues which were bubbling under the surface of society, such as those relating to the position of women and the need to recruit foreign labour to compensate for the labour shortfall, were yet to become pressing issues. For the time being, Britain remained a quintessentially male-dominated, able-bodied and paternalistic society characterised by an ‘absence of any understanding of ethnic and racial divisions’ (Turner, 2001, p. 191).

The character and complexion of citizenship in Britain has undergone a profound and substantial transformation in the last 50 years (see Bulmer and Rees, 1996; Pattie, et al., 2004; van Steenbergen, 1994). These changes have included the opening up of national borders and the increasing globalisation of the economy and of mass communications technologies. Despite these changes the Marshallian discourse of citizenship has continued to cast a long shadow over contemporary discussion about citizenship policy and practice (see Roche, 1992). Whilst it would be perhaps unfair to describe Marshall as an apologist for this, his focus upon individual agency and his failure to consider the structural constraints of the market and the possibility that the state may work in the interest of one class or group of élites rather than function as a neutral referee, was ‘naïve even in the context of 1950s Britain’ (Faulks, 1998, p. 44).

Rather than addressing fundamental questions about the contemporary relevance of a concept that has been superseded by changes in the national and global economy, a key concern of politicians and educational policy-makers, particularly in the last two decades, has been to fabricate policy that best inclines young people towards a set of values and attitudes that are commensurate with a view of citizenship forged in a different era (see Biesta and Lawy, 2006). Having said this, there have been some changes in the degree of emphasis that has been placed on different aspects of policy and its presentation. For example, there has been a more overt concern with the duties of citizenship as opposed to the emphasis on rights; also a rhetorical turn from the neo-liberal idea of the consumer citizen, precedent in the 1980s and the 1990s, to a ‘third way’ approach, within a social and communitarian attitude. Notwithstanding these changes, the emphasis upon ‘universality’, and the corresponding ‘denial of difference and diversity’ (Martin and Vincent, 1999, p. 235; see also, Säfström and Biesta, 2001), which was undeniably part of the Marshallian settlement, has remained a dominant theme within the discourse.
In this paper we claim that the notion of citizenship articulated in official policy and practice discourse is no longer appropriate for the 21st century. Central to this view has been an assumption that young people should act and behave in a particular way in order to achieve their citizenship status. Hence, the conditional status of what we refer to as citizenship-as-achievement has been linked to the language of duty and responsibility, whether articulated in the passive and benign form in the 1950s and 1960s or in its later more ‘active’ manifestation in the 1980s. Our contention is that citizenship-as-achievement represents only a narrow interpretation of the idea of citizenship, and that the notion of citizenship-as-practice, articulated as an inclusive and relational concept, provides a much more robust framework for elucidating what it means to be a citizen. Citizenship-as-practice not only encompasses problems and issues of culture and identity but draws these different dynamic aspects together in a continuously shifting and changing world of difference. Such a view of citizenship, as we will argue, provides a more robust entry point for understanding and supporting young people’s citizenship learning in this area.

In the next section we trace the broad policy background and agenda for citizenship education. We describe the general development of the citizenship curriculum that has been introduced and formalised into the English National Curriculum in schools, and is being piloted in a number of further education colleges as a non-compulsory option. Following on from this we introduce our distinction between citizenship-as-achievement and citizenship-as-practice. We show how the idea of citizenship-as-achievement has impacted on curriculum and policy interventions and practices, and show how a different understanding of citizenship-as-practice might shift the emphasis in the discourse away from questions of efficiency and ‘good’ practice, towards an altogether different set of relational questions and concerns. In the final section we draw together the main themes of the paper. We draw upon some empirical insights from our own research both to help substantiate the arguments that we have made, and to illustrate the benefits of using the concept of citizenship-as-practice. We propose an approach to citizenship-as-practice that is thoroughly democratic, and potentially empowering in its outcomes. It would respect the claim to citizenship status of everyone in society, including children and young people.

2. Citizenship in Britain

In the post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s there was a general acceptance, by both Labour and Conservative governments, that as
long as citizens supported the nation state in times of crisis, showed respect for the law, and exercised their democratic responsibility to vote in elections, they could and should remain largely passive. Indeed, there are commentators who, even today, have concluded that the debate about citizenship can been synthesised into an essentially straightforward and naïve discussion apropos mechanisms to increase the participation of young people in the electoral process. Young people, it is claimed, lack interest in the democratic process for a variety of reasons, which include both structural causes and their individual proclivities (see Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995). Other commentators (for example, Deveraux et al., 1995) argue that the problem of non-participation is an outcome of the outdated UK electoral system and structure that is in need of reform. Such accounts have been favoured by politicians. They have provided simple and easy-to-administer solutions to the problem of non-participation which lay the blame upon young people themselves rather than more complex causes. As we indicate below, this has helped to absolve the state from addressing its social responsibilities and duties.

The initial challenge to what we would claim was a relatively benign citizenship agenda came from the New Right in the 1980s. According to Olssen (1996) this changed the relationship between the individual and the state from one where the individual was ‘relatively detached from the state’ towards one where the state has become directly involved in the creation of enterprising and competitive and ‘perpetually responsive’ (ibid., p. 340) individuals. It followed a sustained period of economic and political unrest and was championed by Margaret Thatcher, who insisted that a culture of ‘welfare dependency’ had become endemic in society and that individuals should take responsibility for their own actions. These responsibilities extended through the family and were only mitigated through ‘good neighbourliness’ – whereby citizens were encouraged to work voluntarily with others in their own communities to make them better and safer places to live in (France, 1996). This thesis, which discounts broader social and economic factors that lie beyond the control of individuals, proved an effective challenge to the consensual social welfarism of the 1950s and 1960s that had seemingly become an impediment to Britain’s competitiveness in an increasingly global market (see Faulks, 1998).

A central concern of the administrations of Thatcher and Major was to redefine the citizenship agenda, and the relationship between the individual and the state. Although this redefinition did not preclude – at least in theory – the need for shared values and reciprocal obligations and loyalties, in practice it was more concerned with the
individual as an autonomous chooser who is self-reliant and takes responsibility for her/his own actions. Under the Major government (1992–1997), there was some softening of the rhetoric particularly in terms of the explicit ‘valorization of the individual entrepreneur’ (Hall et al., 2000, p. 464), however the cornerstones of the New Right agenda, with its emphasis on personal responsibility and individual choice, were retained. Exemplified in documents such as the Citizens’ Charter, the citizen was reconfigured as a consumer of public services who was now empowered to seek compensation or redress for unsatisfactory service (see Miller, 2000).

The election of a Labour government in May 1997 after 18 years of Conservative rule offered what seemed to be a different if not radical alternative to the individualistic rhetoric, including the expectation that the welfare state would begin to be rebuilt. However, in many important respects, the Labour administration under Tony Blair (1997–) has continued with the pattern set by the administrations of Thatcher and Major (Tomlinson, 2001). Although more prominence has been placed upon the social values and the social responsibilities of citizens (Etzioni, 1993), this has not presaged a wholesale shift in policy. The ‘governmentalization of the discourse of citizenship and community’ (Delany, 2003, p. 598) has imbued it with more active flavour; nevertheless, it has managed to achieve this without compromising its essential individualism. In key areas such as health and education where spending has increased, the Labour government has maintained the rhetoric of choice, delivery and accountability (Biesta, 2004a). Whilst there are vague references to institutions and organisations such as the family, workplace and other associations which bond individuals to society, these are located within a framework that starts with clear assumptions about what it means to be an ‘active’ citizen and about what one needs to do in order to achieve that status. This approach, as we will show in the next section, is clearly reflected in educational policy and practice.

3. Creating Active and Responsible Citizens

In recent years young people have been targeted by a raft of government policies and initiatives aimed at countering the claim that they have become alienated from the political and democratic process. For the most part education for citizenship has been seen as an exercise in civics education and ‘good’ citizenship rather than as a way of developing and nurturing the social and critical capabilities of young people. Questions about how and what they need to be taught to become ‘good’ and ‘contributing’ citizens have been addressed in
a variety of policy documents and educational reports (Commission on Citizenship, 1990; Dearing, 1994; Further Education Funding Council, 2000; Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). The predominant emphasis has been upon largely technical issues – for example, those pertaining to the introduction of citizenship as an additional subject in an already overcrowded curriculum (see Garratt, 2000), and to technical improvements in the quality and efficiency of teaching and the materials used for teaching – rather than upon more fundamental questions about the quality of democratic learning or about the processes of industrial, democratic and educational change.

Education for citizenship was incorporated into the National Curriculum in England (1988)\(^1\) as one of the five cross-curricular themes and ‘from its inception, the cross-curricular “theme” of Education for Citizenship was an area of particular political and educational sensitivity’ (Beck, 1996, p. 350). The altruistic intention of Curriculum Guidance 8: Education for Citizenship (National Curriculum Council, 1990, p. 1) was to provide ‘a framework for curriculum debate’. Initially, this seemed to offer the hope of more radical and democratic approaches to the problem of citizenship education. However, following a series of compromises, the ensuing discussion was turned into an exercise in educating young people for citizenship, that provided little opportunity for ‘adequately contextualising or conceptualising, let alone debating the merits and de-merits of the variety of conceptions of “active citizenship”’ (National Curriculum Council, 1990, p. 356).

In September 2002 citizenship became a compulsory subject for 11–16 year olds. In setting out the terms of reference for the Advisory Group on Citizenship (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, [Crick Report] 1998), which laid out the fundamentals of the reform, David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, made it clear that he expected the Group to operate ‘within the best traditions of past initiatives and reports’ (Kerr, 1999, p. 278), and provide advice on effective education for citizenship in and outside of the formal curriculum in schools. Therefore, in practice, the Advisory Group, whose recommendations led to the non-statutory guidelines for citizenship education for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) at Key Stages 1 and 2 (5–11 years of age) (Department for Education and Employment/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1999a, b), and to the statutory arrangements for citizenship education at Key Stages 3 and 4 (11–16), was severely constrained by its terms of reference and a political imperative that had compelled it – in a not dissimilar fashion to that which
occurred earlier – to conceptualise young people’s citizenship as a desirable ‘outcome’ rather than as a process of transformation. As Bernard Crick put it in 2000: ‘the aim of the new subject [citizenship education] is to create active and responsible citizens’ (Crick, 2000, p. 67). As if to emphasise this, Hargreaves (2001) has proposed the adoption of what he terms ‘high leverage strategies’ to specify ‘the conditions under which current “best (and worst) practice” in citizenship education might be identified’ (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 496).

The same agenda and political imperatives that have helped to define developments in the compulsory phase of education have also been evident in the post-compulsory sector. Whilst there are references to citizenship as an entitlement and key life skill and to notions of participation in the Advisory Group report (Further Education Funding Council, 2000) there is little to suggest a significant move in favour of a ‘joined-up’ approach to the values of democratic learning. Nonetheless, efforts have been made, through 21 projects that have been funded through the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), to develop and assess the impact of different models of citizenship learning and teaching on young people, and to identify forms of citizenship provision which appear most effective (see National Foundation for Education Research [NFER], 2004, p.i). The most successful were described as “citizenship communities”, in that they aimed for a citizenship ethos to run through all aspects of their organisation, their work and their links with the wider community (ibid., p. 37). However, rather than pursuing this line of democratic learning and participation, the NFER report suggests that such integrated models and approaches are for the most part not feasible because of ‘logistical, financial and practical reasons’ (ibid., p. 38).

The recently published Tomlinson Committee report (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a, b) provides perhaps the greatest insight into the thinking behind all of these developments. The focus of the Working Group has been upon the creation of ‘a 14–19 phase characterised by inclusiveness, challenge, quality and choice, where all students are able to achieve qualifications which reflect their very best performance’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a, p. 8; original emphasis). It is interesting to note that the Committee report sidesteps the issue of citizenship by suggesting that achievement in it will ‘contribute to the main learning requirements of diplomas at the appropriate level’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a, p. 23). What is missing is anything other than a vague suggestion in the final report (Department for Education and Skills, 2004a, b) represented in only four short references of the need to
incorporate citizenship into the new framework. There would seem to be a presumption that citizenship can be achieved and that ‘good’ and ‘contributing’ citizens will somehow emerge once the appropriate structure is set in place.

In the penultimate section we question the fundamental basis of an approach that is founded upon the assumption of citizenship-as-achievement, and suggest an altogether different approach to the problem of citizenship. We show that this conceptualisation of citizenship-as-practice, and the educational implications that arise from it, is based upon a different and more meaningful and educationally and socially relevant conception of what it means to be a citizen.

4. From Citizenship-as-Achievement to Citizenship-as-Practice

We have shown that the overriding concern of social and educational policy has been to nurture and guide young people towards a pre-described outcome. It has been about how best to engender a particular species of citizenship amongst young people, in school, college and in other youth and community-based contexts – to find the ‘best’ and most ‘appropriate’ methods and approaches of achieving what is regarded as a common goal that young people can aspire to. This emphasis upon social engineering, upon the ‘manufacture’ of compliant yet ‘active’ citizens remains a fundamental component of the mainstream discourse of citizenship and citizenship education (see also Biesta, 2004b). It reveals the extent to which current policy and educational practice have been informed by the idea of citizenship-as-achievement. Citizenship-as-achievement is founded upon the assumption that citizenship is a status that individuals can achieve. It is associated with a particular set of claims about what makes a citizen and about the necessary conditions of that status. Furthermore, it is associated with a particular view of the citizen-consumer, as a rights holder and claimant, who is explicitly concerned with her/his own interests. This view of citizenship is consistent with the Marshallian view that we have outlined, and has been represented in policy. It is associated with a particular understanding of what it means to be a citizen and is tied to a developmental and educational trajectory and a commensurate set of rights and responsibilities.

The major problem with the idea of citizenship-as-achievement – a status that is achieved only after one has traversed a particular developmental and educational trajectory – is that it does not recognise the claims to citizenship of young people. This does not necessarily mean that young people should bear the same formal responsibilities
as their adult counterparts (for example, in respect of their voting rights), but it does acknowledge that all young people are integral to society and that their lives are implicated in the wider socio-political, economic and cultural order. This engagement with the conditions of their lives is crucial. It not only furnishes young people with experiences of their role and place in society – their lived experience – but offers opportunities for their actual participation in society.

Citizenship-as-practice does not presume that young people move through a pre-specified trajectory into their citizenship statuses or that the role of the education system is to find appropriate strategies and approaches that prepare young people for their transitions into ‘good’ and contributing citizens. Indeed it makes no distinction between what might otherwise be regarded as a status differential between citizens and not-yet-citizens. It is inclusive rather than exclusive because it assumes that everyone in society including young people are citizens who simply move through citizenship-as-practice, ‘from the cradle to the grave’.

To conceptualise citizenship in this way as an ongoing practice involves a fundamental change in the way that it is conceived and articulated. Citizenship is no longer a solely adult experience but is experienced and articulated as a wider shift in social relations common to all age groups (Wyn and Dwyer, 1999). It is reflexive because it feeds-back on itself, and is relational because it is affected by different factors, including social and structural conditions that play upon it. As such it cannot be simply learned in school or in any other institution but is common to all situations. Recognising this, researchers such as France (1998), and Hall et al. (1999, 2000), have attempted to shift the emphasis in citizenship research from questions about the efficiency, effectiveness or quality towards a more direct concern with full and complete lives of the young people. Working in informal youth work contexts, and making use of a variety of ethnographic and other techniques and methods, these researchers have sought to give voice to young people in ways that are inclusive, and do not marginalise and exclude young people as outsiders from a process that they are part of. There is a fundamental recognition that any changes in the conditions of young people’s lives – and here we include the effects of, for example, being able to vote in elections or drive a car, as well as other more fundamental changes – will be matched by contingent changes in their perceptions, and that these will invariably cause the young people to re-appraise their understanding of themselves and of those around them (see Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).
Working outside formal educational settings Hall, Coffey and Williamson (1999, p. 505) have sought ‘to capture and document some of the active processes by which young people negotiate their transitional status’. In so doing the researchers emphasise the importance of ‘space’ and of ‘place’ as concepts which provide young people with ‘room to nurture and explore their emergent sense of themselves as individual people’ (ibid., p. 506), and also locate some sense of belongingness and community through their shared identities. France’s research was conducted in the early 1990s, and was based around a youth centre in an area of high unemployment in a working class community in Sheffield. He sought to identify ‘the different social processes which affected both how they [young people] experienced citizenship and how they perceived themselves as present and future citizens’ (France, 1998, p. 102). Denied workplace identities, he describes the ways in which young people substituted these identities and relocated their meanings for alternative and ‘newer’ consumer and lifestyle identities in other domains of their lives. He goes on to suggest that the participation of young people in activities and practices on the margins of the law has been perceived as a community threat. In turn, this has led to increased surveillance of young people. Hence, ‘the failure of community to recognize “difference” or the right of young people to have some form of control over their lives created conflict and feelings of exclusion’ (ibid., p. 104).

We have suggested that citizenship-as-practice is concerned with the conditions of young people’s lives, and with the processes through which they learn the value(s) of democratic citizenship. This presupposes an attitude wherein everyone, including teachers and young people in schools and colleges, is routinely engaged in a continuous and thoroughgoing public dialogue (Martin and Vincent, 1999). As Hall, Williamson and Coffey (2000) note, ‘contemporary political and policy discussion has been, for the most part, much less concerned to critically interrogate the concept of active citizenship, than to debate how such a thing might be achieved’ (ibid., p. 464). We have claimed that a proper starting point for such an approach needs to be grounded in the experiences of young people.

Although researchers such as those that we have described have started to question the underlying assumptions of the dominant citizenship discourse, schools, colleges and youth-based organisations responsible for the ‘delivery’ of this type of prescriptive curriculum (Bloomer, 1997) have continued to do so in ways that would seem to be disconnected, or at least to lack meaning, for young people (see Lawy et al., 2004). While some democratic practices can be experienced
and understood vicariously, for the most part they need to be experienced at first hand by young people, through their participation in different activities and practices inside and outside of school, college and the workplace. The idea of citizenship-as-practice respects the claims and interests of young people as social agents within a set of formal relations (Donald, 1996). Furthermore, it invests in their understandings and their agency and does not seek to impose a particular interpretation upon them.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

An important educational implication arising from the idea of citizenship-as-practice is that it augurs a different way of articulating and understanding the relationship between citizenship and learning. Instead of seeing citizenship as the outcome of learning trajectory, citizenship-as-practice suggests that young people learn to be citizens as a consequence of their participation in the actual practices that make up their lives. From the point of view of democratic citizenship their lives comprise a complex mix of democratic and non-democratic practices that are never ideal (see Murphy, 2004). Whereas in some cases young people may be able to influence the conditions of their own lives and of those around them, in other cases their influence is marginal or they have no influence whatsoever. Citizenship-as-practice enables an understanding of the dynamics of citizenship learning that is related to the real lives of the young people. Our ongoing empirical research, which is informed by the idea of citizenship-as-practice, has generated some important insights in respect of the dynamics of citizenship learning. These would have remained largely invisible had the perspective been focused upon the idea of citizenship-as-achievement (see Biesta et al., 2005). Two findings from our current work illustrate the implications of the citizenship-as-practice approach for education and research on citizenship learning.

We have found that young people routinely participate in a range of different practices such as the family, peers, school and college, leisure, work and the media. These provide qualitatively different opportunities for action and hence qualitatively different opportunities for learning-from-action. In some situations young people are taken seriously and have real opportunities for shaping and changing the conditions of their lives. However, in other situations young people are not seen as legitimate participants, their voices are ignored and they have little opportunity for shaping and changing the situations they are in. This suggests that citizenship learning
cannot be understood as a one-dimensional process, rather it is grounded in a complex myriad of experiences that are practised in the day-to-day lives of young people.

A second finding is that young people’s learning in school and college is not always or necessarily associated with a positive experience of citizenship or citizenship education (see also Rudduck and Flutter, 2004). Notwithstanding this, the majority of the young people reported positively on their relationships with individual teachers and with peers, indicating that institutions and the arrangements within them are significant in determining the quality of citizenship learning. This is supported by young people’s accounts of their experiences in family and work contexts where the quality of interpersonal relationships proved a significant influence; furthermore, by their experiences in institutional and structural contexts (for example, leisure contexts) where their involvement is voluntary rather than compulsory in its character and shape. All of this raises questions about the extent to which citizenship learning is context-bound or person-bound. It also begs the question of the relationship between different positive and negative experiences and more particularly how young people organise various, and sometimes conflicting, experiences. Citizenship-as-practice makes it possible to explore these questions and gain a more sophisticated understanding of young people’s citizenship than is possible from the perspective of citizenship-as-achievement.

To fully understand what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society is to recognise that citizenship is an inclusive and relational concept which is necessarily located in a distinctive socio-economic, political and cultural milieu. Our aim has been to illuminate the linkages between this broad understanding of citizenship, and the educational practices that follow directly from it. We would claim that the aim of citizenship education has been quite simply to ‘manufacture’ or ‘engineer’ a particular species of citizen – furthermore, to measure the achievement of that aim against predetermined and taken-for-granted criteria of efficiency and effectiveness.

Taking the post-war 1950s settlement as an appropriate starting point for our analysis, we have described some of the important changes that have taken place since that time. As we have indicated, there have been global shifts in the interrelations between nation states and in the relationship of individuals to those states. These changes, set alongside changes in the relations between individuals in those states, have had far reaching implications. The opportunity afforded by the changes that we have described, to move away from an approach that has continued to be focused upon teaching and
learning about and for citizenship, has not been taken. Indeed, we have contended that the ‘project’ of citizenship education, articulated in official policy and in the formalised citizenship curriculum, has failed to address what we believe are the principal issues.

Whilst we recognise the value of citizenship education for young people that is focused upon their rights, duties and responsibilities, and of policy initiatives directed to the improvement of teaching, we maintain that appropriate policy and curriculum responses have been reduced to questions about efficiency, effectiveness and the quality of teaching. Any thought that ‘the increased participation of students in the learning process, the greater contextualization of the knowledge and, most importantly, the involvement of student-owned knowledge in school curricula might produce more empowered learners’ (Paechter, 2000, p. 112) has been set aside. Where young people have been encouraged to participate, they have been persuaded to pursue a range of activities ‘for the good of society’ rather than engage in cooperative, thought provoking and critical practices, to empower citizens. Although the UK government has initiated a lifelong learning agenda and is attempting to address questions of inclusion and exclusion (for example, Coffield, 1997; Macrae et al., 1997), the responses and implications have yet to be coordinated within an overarching and coherent (citizenship) strategy, let alone one that privileges the educational experiences and identifications of young people inside and outside school, college and university.

To view young people as moving into citizenship status represents, in our view, an impoverished view of what it means to be a citizen that necessarily marginalises and excludes them from the mainstream of democratic life. In this paper we have argued for an inclusive citizenship attitude which recognises the full societal contribution of young people. Young people do not qualify as citizens through some magical mechanism or ‘rite of passage’ nor by engaging in a particular mantra or by reproducing a set of practices. Their citizenry is not a status or possession, nor is it the outcome of a developmental and/or educational trajectory that can be socially engineered. It is a practice, embedded within the day-to-day reality of (young) people’s lives, interwoven and transformed over time in all the distinctive and different dimensions of their lives (Hall and Held, 1989; Isin and Wood, 1999).

Finally, we would claim that the educational responsibility for citizenship should not be confined to schools and colleges, nor should it rest with teachers or the structuring of the curriculum. It is a responsibility that extends to society at large (Biesta, 1997). Hence, an appropriate educational programme would move beyond
'passive' and even more 'active' models of citizenship and would work together with rather than on young people to nurture their democratic attitudes and dispositions (see Biesta, 2004b). Such an inclusive and relational outlook would respect the claim to citizenship status of everyone in society, including children and young people, and recognise that it is the actual practices of citizenship (citizenship-as-practice) and the ways in which these practices transform over time that are educationally significant.

6. Notes

1 The claim of the Secretary of State for Education and Science (Kenneth Baker) in outlining the bill to parliament was that the government was regaining control of the curriculum through a national core curriculum. This was achieved through a bureaucratic system under which detailed subject specifications were laid down. Accordingly, pupils are tested nationally according to standard attainment targets at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16.

2 The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) has superseded the Further Education Development Agency (FÉDA). Together with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) it is responsible for commissioning research and development in the field of further education.

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Correspondence
Robert Lawy
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of Exeter
Exeter EX1 2LU
R.Lawy@exeter.ac.uk

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