Chapter 21: 
Teaching for active and informed citizenship

Weblink 2: A background to CCE in Australia

CCE has been an Australian government priority since the late 1980s, when a number of studies showed that young (and not so young) Australians had poorly developed understandings of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The rationale for increasing attention to CCE was based on a ‘civics deficit view’. In two Senate reports, Education for Active Citizenship (1989) and Active Citizenship Revisited (1991), clear inadequacies in programs in schools and teacher training institutions in addressing civics and citizenship learning were identified, and evidence was found of ignorance and apathy concerning core structural, legal and procedural aspects of mainstream political life. Since then, there has been a series of government initiatives aimed at increasing the efficacy of CCE.

In 1995, the Keating government committed $25 million to a Citizenship Education Program for professional development, and materials production. These initiatives came as a result of the findings of the Civics Expert Group report, ‘…Whereas the People’ (AGPS, 1994). There was nothing surprising about many of the facts they uncovered which identified that a large percentage of Australians were barely politically literate, and did not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to allow them to participate as active and informed citizens of Australia. The Civics Expert Group claimed that at the most basic level, CCE involves formal knowledge about the systems and structures involved in governing the affairs of Australians. However they also stated that CCE should encompass:
- ‘the basic liberal democratic values that sustain our system of government and enrich its operation;
- not just formal knowledge of the system of government, but appreciation of how it works in practice and how the operations of government affect citizens;
- the rich diversity of Australian society, the ways that different sections of society are able to live together, and the principles that enable them to do so with tolerance and acceptance;
- what it means to act as a citizen – the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the opportunities for exercising them’.

Building on the work of the Civics Expert Group, the Discovering Democracy program was announced by the then Minister, David Kemp, in May 1997. The program provided
resources and professional development for all Australian primary and secondary schools teachers (1997–2004) and:

‘... aimed to help prepare young people to become effective and responsible citizens, learn about the operation of the Australian system of government and law, explore what it means to be an Australian today, and learn about Australia's democratic heritage and the values underpinning it, including equality, liberty, fairness, trust, mutual respect and social co-operation’ (Curriculum Corporation, 1997).

An Australian government report of the international IEA Study of Civic Identity of Students in Twenty-Eight Countries found that ‘91 per cent of Australian teachers believed that civic education matters a great deal for Australia’ (Mellor, Kennedy & Greenwood, DETYA, 2001, page 125). However, in spite of the commitment of exemplary schools and in spite of funding and programs, the Erebus Consulting Group (2003) national evaluation of Discovering Democracy found that after a six year program, ‘CCE in Australia is still a glass half full or half empty’. It was concluded that there was still a great deal of work to be accomplished in schools to achieve quality programs in CCE across the nation. More than half the schools surveyed in the Erebus study (2004) approached CCE teaching and learning through a focus on either specific school events or isolated topics, and only 10 per cent had comprehensive programs of study in civics and citizenship.

Since 2004, initiatives in CCE have been extended to encompass the important area of school program development in Values Education. See www.valueseducation.edu.au/values/ for extensive information, examples of good practice, schools research, case studies, teaching and learning activities and resources.

**International perspectives on CCE**

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a renewed interest in CCE at both national and international levels, and it is a key priority in many other education systems across the world. International bodies such as the European Commission, UNESCO, and the World Council for Curriculum have been involved in international research initiatives and a range of programs to increase interest in CCE implementation.

The IEA Civic Education Study, which Australia participated in, was the largest and most rigorous study of civic education ever conducted internationally. The research tested and surveyed nationally representative samples consisting of 90 000 14-year-old students in 28 countries, and 50 000 17- to 19-year-old students in 16 countries throughout 1999 and 2000. To investigate the key findings for Australia and other
nations visit [www.iea.nl/cived.html](http://www.iea.nl/cived.html). The study found that continuing emphasis is required on CCE.

In Canada, Hong Kong, the UK, and many other nations, CCE is now a mandated part of the curriculum. In the UK, CCE has three strands: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. In Scotland, the curriculum is expected to include active global citizenship, so all young people have the ability to understand and participate fully in society at local, national and international levels. In Hong Kong, it is argued that civic education should help students develop cognitive and participatory skills that will allow them to continue learning and participating for a lifetime, so Liberal Studies, which includes CCE, is a compulsory subject. There has been a similar interest in CCE amongst educators across other Asian countries, in response to needs and issues in their own nation states, and because of the global challenges of injustice and inequalities. A number of countries make strong links between CCE and human rights education, and there is a growing consensus internationally that human rights principles should underpin education for citizenship in multicultural democracies.

**References**


**Civics & Citizenship Key Performance Measures**

**Yr 6 Civics & Citizenship Key Performance Measures (KPM)**

**KPM 1: Civics: Knowledge & Understanding of Civic Institutions & Processes**

Knowledge of key concepts and understandings relating to civic institutions and processes in Australian democracy, government, law, national identity, diversity, cohesion and social justice.

*Within primary schooling this KPM anticipates that students can:*

6.1: Recognise key features of Australian democracy.
6.2: Describe the development of Australian self-government and democracy.
6.3: Outline the roles of political and civic institutions in Australia.
6.4: Understand the purposes and processes of creating and changing rules and laws.
6.5: Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Australia’s democracy.
6.6: Recognise that Australia is a pluralist society with citizens of diverse ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds.
KPM 2: Citizenship: Dispositions & Skills for Participation
Understandings related to the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active democratic citizenship.

Within primary schooling this KPM expects that students can:

6.7: Recognise that citizens require certain skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic decision-making.
6.8: Identify ways that Australian citizens can effectively participate in their society and its governance.
6.9: Recognise the ways that understanding of and respect for, commonalities and differences contribute to harmony within a democratic society.
6.10: Understand why citizens choose to engage in civic life and decision-making.

Yr 10 Civics & Citizenship Key Performance Measures

KPM 1: Civics: Knowledge & Understanding of Civic Institutions & Processes
Knowledge of key concepts and understandings relating to civic institutions and processes in Australian democracy, government, law, national identity, diversity, cohesion and social justice.

Within secondary schooling this KPM expects that students can:

10.1: Recognise that perspectives on Australian democratic ideas and civic institutions vary and change over time.
10.2: Understand the ways in which the Australian Constitution impacts on the lives of Australian citizens.
10.3: Understand the role of law-making and governance in Australia’s democratic tradition.
10.4: Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a range of contexts.
10.5: Analyse how Australia’s ethnic and cultural diversity contribute to Australian democracy, identity and social cohesion.
10.6: Analyse Australia’s role as a nation in the global community.

KPM 2: Citizenship: Dispositions & Skills for Participation
Understandings related to the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active democratic citizenship.

Within secondary schooling this KPM expects that students can:

10.7: Understand that citizens require certain knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic political and civic action.
10.8: Analyse the role of a critical citizenry in Australia’s democracy.
10.9: Analyse the relationship between democratic values and social justice as an important aspect of Australia’s democratic tradition.
10.10: Analyse the reasons Australians make choices about participating in political and civic processes.