Which vehicle for citizenship transmission: Social Studies or Technology Education?

Alexis Siteine

Citizenship education is generally present in educational programmes. When Social Studies was introduced into the New Zealand curriculum in the 1940s, its purpose was to prepare children for living in a democracy. Social Studies became the vehicle through which values of citizenship were transmitted to children. Recently, Technology Education has become a core curriculum area. One of the justifications for its inclusion is as a vehicle to enable students to become responsible citizens in a democracy. This paper contemplates the histories of the development of Social Studies and Technology Education, and considers the place of citizenship education within each discipline.

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993) states that the purpose of schools is to assist students to '…understand their rights, roles and responsibilities as members of a family and as citizens in a democratic society' (p.14). Social Studies education has generally been viewed as the area specifically designed to fulfil this function. Since its inception in the 1940s, Social Studies has been considered as unique in the curriculum (Archer & Openshaw, 1996; Diorio, 1992). This uniqueness partially comes from the positioning of citizenship education within Social Studies, from values exploration associated with the study of people, and from social action as a means to make economic or social contributions to society.

France (1997) discusses the development of the Technology curriculum. One of her statements challenges the uniqueness of the role of Social Studies. She proposes that the Technology curriculum is the place for the promotion of economic views, the vehicle for

the development of responsible citizenship, and the appropriate place to engage students in values issues (France, 1997). Is Technology Education the new Social Studies?

The purpose of this paper is to make a comparative exploration of the place of citizenship in Technology Education and Social Studies. This discussion is limited to the place of citizenship education in Social Studies and Technology. In order to do this, this paper:

- outlines the history of citizenship education in the New Zealand curriculum
- explores the nature of citizenship transmission in Social Studies
- discusses Technology Education as a vehicle for citizenship
- and considers the place of citizenship education in the curriculum.

The History of Citizenship in the New Zealand curriculum.

Citizenship education has always been part of the function of schools. It has been part of the process that society uses to socialise children in the knowledge, skills, values, and customs that are deemed worthwhile. New Zealand, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was embedded in the ideology of imperialism. White New Zealanders considered themselves as part of a loyal, agricultural outpost of a greater British Empire. Events associated with the world wars of this period promoted loyalist ideals and patriotic fervour.

In this climate, it is no surprise to find that citizenship education focused on obedience to authority and notions of loyalty and duty. Archer and Openshaw (1992) note that 'the 1919 syllabus in history was designed to create patriotic and loyal citizens of a great world-wide empire' (p.21). T. B. Strong, a chief inspector of primary schools in the 1920s asked, '…what higher aim can schools have than to implant in the minds of boys and girls those principles that will lead them to become worthy citizens of a great Empire!' (1921). Citizenship education was positioned mainly within the subjects of History and Civics. The Education Amendment Act of 1921 described their purpose:

> The instruction in History and Civics shall aim at instilling in boys and girls love for their country and pride in the achievements of the race throughout the Empire. Loyalty should be a dominant note . . . The inculcation of patriotism or loyalty to King and country and to lofty ideals readily finds a basis in British History (Education Amendment Act 1921, cited in McGee, 1994, p.72).

As well as through History and Civics, students were inculcated in citizenship ideals through their participation in patriotic ceremonies such as Trafalgar Day, flag saluting ceremonies, military drills, and literature. McGee (1994) describes how school journals were used as a means of identifying and implanting patriotic and loyalist ideals that reflected New Zealand society. He explains that school journals were '…calculated to develop in the minds of children . . . an admiration of truth and goodness in daily life, besides a high conception of patriotism, of national service, and the principles on which may be founded true ideals of worthy manhood and womanhood' (Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1907, E1, D, p.1 cited in McGee, 1994, p.71). Openshaw (1980) described the primary school of this era as the 'nursery of future citizens' (p.333).

At this time 'the prime function of the teaching of history continued to be seen . . . (for) . . . its ideological value as a means of education for citizenship' (Shuker, 1992, p.190). This was questioned in the Report on History Teaching (1925; cited in Shuker, 1992) and later in the Thomas Committee Report (1944).

The Thomas report called for the teaching of Social Studies as a core curriculum subject. Its main aim was to develop students who were '…able to take their parts as effective citizens of a democracy' (New Zealand Department of Education, 1944, p.27). The emphasis of citizenship in terms of loyalty, duty, and patriotism was replaced by a citizenship that required participation and democracy. These ideals were the same as those espoused by American theorists such as John Dewey (1916) who called for a

curriculum which prepared students for participatory citizenship in a modern democracy. In New Zealand that goal became the domain of a new subject, Social Studies.

The Tradition of Citizenship Transmission

Prior to the Thomas Report, Social Studies encompassed a collection of subjects that focused in some way on the study of human society. As a core curriculum subject, Social Studies referred to a single discipline with its roots in three main traditions: Social Studies taught as social science, Social Studies taught as reflective inquiry, and Social Studies taught as citizenship transmission (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1978). In the New Zealand context, Social Studies as citizenship transmission has been dominant (Barr, 1994; McGee, 1994; Openshaw, 1996). This entails a teaching mode in which teachers determine that certain behaviours, knowledge, outlooks, and values will be learned by their students (Barr et al, 1978). Social Studies was described as an '…excellent vehicle for indoctrinating the young into a set of values' (Shermis, 1992, p.8). However, while Social Studies as a basis for transmitting values was agreed upon, the nature of the ideals and values underpinning citizenship transmission was contested.

A basic premise for the encouragement of democratic citizenship is the belief that an individual's participation can at least contribute to the common good, and at most should make the world a better place. In other words, Social Studies was not just a way of learning about society, but a way of making society different from what it would otherwise be (Diorio, 1992). This would certainly be the position of social meliorists who argued that schools were:

> … the major, perhaps the principal, force for social change and social justice. The corruption and vice in the cities, the inequalities of race and gender, and the abuse of privilege and power could all be addressed by a curriculum that focused on those very issues, thereby raising a new generation equipped to deal effectively with those abuses' (Kliebard, 1986, p.29).

Social Studies took on the goal of social meliorists and Social Studies programmes reflected themes of social change and the values and skills that were associated with improving human relationships. Programmes focussed on helping children understand why individuals and groups think, feel, and act the way they do, and developed concepts about human behaviour (Ministry of Education, 1991). This emphasis drew criticism from 'back to basics' movements and technocratic proponents who perceived education as being preparation for employment:

> Few bosses are going to be interested in whether a prospective employee can paste up a montage, splice a film, paint a poster or simulate a hot cross bun! But they will certainly be interested in whether he (or she) can read, write, speak and think effectively . . . Most schools are run on public money and the community at large including parents and employers have every right to expect well-grounded, literate and competent products (Christchurch Press, 14 September 1977 cited in Snook, 1985, p. 256).

'Back to basics' proponents found solace in efficiency theorists who advocated that the purpose of schooling was the preparation of students for economic as well as social roles. Bobbit, a leading efficiency theorist argued that '… public taxation should not be employed to provide or train for mere enjoyments that cannot be justified on a basis of positive social values to those who pay the bills' (cited in Kliebard, 1979, p.275).

The notion of education as a means of social and economic change has been at the forefront of Social Studies development in New Zealand. However, recent curriculum development has seen less of an emphasis on social change in favour of economic change. Openshaw (1996) claims '… there is now strong evidence that the new economic environment underpinned by neo-liberal policy prescriptions has had a significant impact on the curriculum, forging a new alliance between social efficiency and developmental discourses' (p.168). This claim was echoed in 1994 by Dr Lockwood Smith, the National Minister of Education, when speaking of the Social Studies draft curriculum:

> It's fair to say that this draft curriculum places greater emphasis on concepts from economics than previous syllabi. I think that's sensible. It is a fact of life that students need to be economically literate to participate in the world of the twenty-first century . . . The curriculum also emphasises some of the skills required in the workplace decision-making, critical and creative thinking, communication and co-operation. It also places emphasis on individual responsibility and in taking responsibility for one's own actions (Smith, 1994; cited in Openshaw, 1996, p.168).

These positions further the premise that participatory citizenship is strongly linked to economic roles and functions. This view is strongly supported by business interests such as the New Zealand Employers Federation and The Business Round Table. This has created a tension in New Zealand Social Studies which has, historically, been oriented towards more meliorist goals. 'Efficiency proponents have argued that the best way to promote social equity is through an extrinsically defined curriculum geared to promote the successful fulfilment of economic roles and functions. These proponents have identified a major failing in New Zealand education as the intrinsic organisation of teaching exemplified in Social Studies' (Diorio, 1992, p.84). Diorio explains that intrinsic organisation refers to personal development and a morally improved society where students are active in, and have responsibility for their own learning which will lead them towards developing into responsible, social participants in society.

The value of such a view was expressed in the Social Studies Syllabus Guidelines for Forms 1-4 (Department of Education, 1977). This document explains that the goals of Social Studies are to '… commit students and teachers to respect human dignity, to show concerns to others, to respect and accept the idea of difference and to uphold social justice' (p.5). This view is reflected in the contemporary Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum (1997) which claims that Social Studies ' … helps students understand their world . . . [it] focuses on the study of society and of human activity in the contexts of continuity, change, and contemporary issues. . . Students will be

challenged to think clearly and critically about human behaviour and to explore different values and viewpoints' (p.5). This is clearly at odds with efficiency proponents.

Technology Education and Social Studies

The introduction of Technology Education into the New Zealand Curriculum in the 1990s has parallels to the introduction of Social Studies in the 1940s. This is especially evident in three areas. First, neither were complete 'unknowns' in New Zealand education, both existed in a range of guises under the umbrella of different subjects. Although Technology was not a core curriculum subject prior to 1995, it was not a new subject. New Zealand has an established history of manual training in the senior primary school and of technical subjects in secondary schools (Burns, 1992, Jones, 1995, France, 1997). It has existed in subjects such as craft, design, home economics, and vocational training (France, 1997). In a similar way to Social Studies, Technology approaches tended to cover a limited range of knowledge and skills and were delivered from a traditional perspective.

Second, both Social Studies and Technology Education have been discussed in terms of their ability to meet the economic needs of society. In Technology Education, this has been closely linked with enterprise. Curriculum developers noted calls from business-related interest groups for education to turn out people who were '…able to translate ideas into action, to cooperate in their work, and to adapt to a rapidly changing world in which our economic future depends on developing product and market niches' (Jones, 1995, p.189). The influence of efficiency theorists is evident in the arguments that link Technology Education to the commercial world. Historically, Technology Education in its vocational guise had strong links to employment. Davies Burns (1998) claims that western technology has always been concerned with efficiency, profitability, and competition. This link has been taken further in an economy-driven society of the 1990s in international arguments which have suggested that Technology Education can address the problem of economic decline by contributing to national economic growth (Layton, 1994).

Third, educators had high expectations of both Social Studies and Technology at the time of their introductions into the core curriculum. As well as the contestable body of knowledge associated with Technology Education and Social Studies, both were expected to be transformative for students and their changing society. The rapidly escalating interest in belonging to a highly technological society is associated with the increased use of electronics and computer-related technologies. This has resulted in questions being raised and concerns being voiced about the impact of technology on individuals and society (Jones, 1995). When exploring this impact, Jones (1995) claims that the educational benefits are two-fold: students are encouraged to act responsibly towards their environment, and this exploration can serve to assist students to cope with change caused by technological innovation.

These arguments have strong links to the Social Studies achievement objects as outlined in the New Zealand Curriculum (1997). The Place and Environment strand highlights '… the implications of changes to places and the environment' (p.40) and the second in the culture and heritage strand is concerned with '… the impact and the spread of new technology and ideas on culture and heritage' (Ministry of Education, 1997). This transformative nature of Technology Education is considered further in the proposition that Technology Education is an appropriate vehicle for citizenship education (McCormick, 1992; Layton, 1994; Lewis, 1991). This is proposed via technological literacy and participatory democracy.

Citizenship via technological literacy

The goal of Technology Education is technological literacy (Ministry of Education, 1995). The definition of technological literacy is obscure and continues to be debated (Barnett, 1995; Fleming, 1989; Lewis & Gagel, 1992). In some ways it is a little like a Christian deity. It has three components that work in unison with each other to form its totality, it means different things to different people, and it is elusive for some while others strongly attest to its existence and its wonders. Amongst these groups are those who believe that technological literacy is little more than an attempt to announce to the world that, 'we have arrived!' Barnett (1995) argues that technological literacy ' …

belongs more to the world of slogan-making than curriculum building' (p.136). He further claims that 'to award oneself literacy is to say this domain, our domain, is important; important like reading and writing is important' (p.120). In other words, technological literacy is simply a way of verifying or validating a new curriculum area.

Others (Burns, 1997; Gee, 1996) consider that literacy is widely accepted as a synonym for communication within a specific group. So, from this point of view, technological literacy is the ability to communicate about things technological. Yff and Butler (1983) concur with this definition but they also add a purpose for the communication. They describe the goal of technology literacy as enabling citizens:

> … to weigh alternatives and make informed decisions. It should enable them to manage their lives and cope with change to their best advantage . . . most important, it should enable these citizens to recognise when others, to whom they have entrusted the management of their social institutions, are not acting in their interests (Yff and Butler, 1983, p.14).

The purpose of technological literacy, from this perspective, is to develop responsible citizenship. Lewis & Gagel (1992) maintain that '… technological literacy becomes an enabler of good citizenship - a correlate of social responsibility' (p.131). In the New Zealand curriculum, this literacy is developed through technological knowledge, capability, and knowledge of society (Ministry of Education, 1995). However, at its core, literacy implies knowledge. How this knowledge is to be used is linked to citizenship through participatory democracy.

Citizenship through participatory democracy

If students are to take their place in a participatory democracy, they must have the knowledge that allows them entry into political and social discourse. Fleming (1989) raises the idea that many social issues are the products of technological innovation. For example, debates have emanated from technological innovation such as genetic manipulation, nuclear engineering, and industrial waste. In order to engage in social

debate about these issues, Fleming (1989) argues that members of that society need to be technologically literate. Layton (1994) questions the ability of people to vote knowledgeably and responsibly about social issues without educational input.

Technology is not just expected to be transformative for students; claims have been made that Technology can be transformative for Social Studies (Sewell & Brown, 1999; White. 2001). Many Social Studies educators have written about the demise of Social Studies since its inception. Openshaw (1996) has called Social Studies the Cinderella of the curriculum and argues that '…Social Studies remains a low priority in many schools while critics remain implacable' (p.8). Perhaps Social Studies education, in the tradition of taking on new fads, sees technology as 'the next big thing' that will 'provide the educational epiphany some are wishing for, and it does offer much to a Social Studies that has been pretty stagnant for a while' (White, 2001, p.39). Nevertheless, the justification of Technology and Social Studies as means to meet economic needs, and the influence of efficiency theorists in both curriculum areas, gives some common ground.

Further common ground is identified by Lewis and Gagel (1992). They ask whether technology literacy would be better obtained through the teaching of Technology Education as a separate subject or through a 'reflection of the technological' across a range of school subjects (p.118). Smythe (1998) asked a similar question:

> How can Social Studies, in the three or four times it is taken yearly, for the two or three weeks each topic takes, and for the three or four hours used within those weeks, contribute in a worthwhile way to children's overall education (Smythe, 1998, p.123)?

Smythe's question is rhetorical. He argues that an aim which requires students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values required to become responsible citizens in society should not rest solely with Social Studies; it should be the aim of all schooling experiences. Both Smythe (1998) and Lewis and Gagel (1992) are, in effect, questioning the capacity of a single subject to be **the** vehicle for citizenship education.

Social Studies educators are aware of that difficulty. Bloomfield (2000) contends that '… while Social Studies has a major role to play, education for citizenship . . . clearly goes beyond one subject taught for a few hours a week' (p.10). This is because citizenship education is not confined to traditional views; '…citizenship now faces the complexity of contemporary capitalist nations besieged by the globalization of technology, capital, and labor—that is to say, the globalisation of economics, culture, and politics—as well as significant challenges for contemporary social theory' (Torres, 1998, p.102).

The aims of Social Studies and Technology seem mutually exclusive to their subject boundaries. Social Studies aims 'to enable students to participate in a changing society as informed, confident, and responsible citizens' (Ministry of Education, 1997, p.8), while Technology Education aims 'to enable students to achieve technological literacy through the development of technological knowledge and understanding; technological capability; understanding and awareness of the relationship between technology and society' (Ministry of Education. 1995). The purpose for these aims is, at least in educational literature, the same thing. Technology and Social Studies, therefore, have a common goal, end, and purpose.

There is little evidence to suggest, however, that the rhetoric of policy and curriculum statements equals the reality of the classroom situation. 'It should not be assumed that written policy was implemented in classrooms in the ways that were intended by the state' (McGee, 1998, p.54). Studies indicate that very few teachers understand the subject of Social Studies and what is expected of them and their students. In fact, most teachers have failed entirely to interpret Social Studies as making students astute critics of society (McGee, 1998; Openshaw, 1991). The same can be said of Technology Education. If the purpose of technological literacy is to enable participatory democracy as Yff and Butler (1983) suggest, then this should be evident in classroom practice. This appears to not be the case.

France (1998) describes technological literacy using a metaphor of a mythical chimera. Such a beast has a stable head and body, but a tail that is always dropping off. That tail, she contends is an understanding and awareness of the relationship between technology and society. This point is justified by research which examines teachers' perceptions of Technology Education (Jones & Carr, 1992). Teachers' perceptions were governed by their past experiences rather than by an understanding about the purpose of technological literacy. For example, a teacher with an interest in science is more likely to see technology as an opportunity to explore scientific concepts. Jones and Carr (1992) note that '…no teacher had a broad view of technology which emphasised . . . technological knowledge and understanding, understanding and awareness of the interrelationship between technology and society and technological capability (p.239). Eley (1998) maintains that '…relatively few students appeared to have a concept of technology that reflects the broad definition that forms the basis for the New Zealand technology curriculum' (p.4).

Clearly, Social Studies and Technology Education are having difficulty realising their aims. The claim that these subjects are ideal vehicles for citizenship education may be true, but the evidence seems to indicate that citizenship education needs more than one vehicle. The load is too large and the issues too complex. Perhaps, as Smythe (1998) suggests, citizenship education should be carried in a convoy of vehicles. In order for this to happen, the following considerations are necessary:

- If Citizenship education is fundamental to the aims of Social Studies and Technology Citizenship then this needs to be openly acknowledged. The subject must be overtly placed in classroom programmes
- A partnership of Social Studies and Technology Education that goes beyond the use of ICT tools in Social Studies programmes should be fostered.

- The consequences of socialisation via Citizenship education requires scrutiny in order that all underpinning social and political agendas can be examined.

Conclusion

This paper began by asking, is Technology the new Social Studies? While the body of knowledge of the two curriculum areas, Social Studies and Technology Education, has not been discussed, their purposes, history, and classroom programmes show similar patterns. In partnership, both curriculum areas are more likely to achieve the transformation implicit in their respective aims.

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