Beyond civics: Art and Design education and the making of active/activist citizens

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Chapter for Burgess and Addison, Key ideas in Art and Design Education (Routledge in press)

Key words:
Democracy, citizenship, active citizenship, cultural citizenship

> I still believe that the ground of a critical community can be opened in our teaching and in our schools. It is out of such thinking that public spaces may be regained. The challenge is to make the ground palpable and visible to our students, to make possible the interplay of multiple plurality of consciousnesses and their recalcitrances and their resistances, along with their affirmations, their "songs of love." And, yes, it is to work for responsiveness to principles of equity, principles of equality, and principles of freedom, which still can be named within contexts of caring and concern. (Greene, 1995, p. 198)

Maxine Greene argued passionately for an informed and imaginative education. Hers was a highly political vision of teachers working with students to consider and make a fairer future world through changing what happens in the present. One way to conceive of Greene's ideal is as an education for citizenship. We will propose in this chapter that the goal of citizenship education is to support young people to become and also be active and activist citizens in their world, communities and schools. We will argue, by examining the notion of cultural citizenship, that Art and Design education has an important and specific contribution to make in this endeavour.

Citizenship education – the official version

Citizenship education is mandatory in the compulsory years of schooling In English schools. Like many other national systems, the English citizenship curriculum focuses primarily on civics - the study of the rights and duties of citizens - set in a particular time and place. Students are expected to acquire understandings about the UK nation-state and its particular form of democracy, including party politics, elected houses of parliament and tiers of government. The other three specified components of the curriculum are volunteering, otherwise known as service-learning, skills in debating political issues, and financial know-how (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study)

While cynics might see this as a curriculum designed in part for a politics of austerity – being able to live on precarious wages and volunteering to pick up the slack in the postwelfare state – for the purposes of this chapter, there are four key things to note. We use the term curriculum-citizens here to distinguish the particularity of its formulation.

Firstly, the curriculum-citizens as universalised individuals with responsibilities. If they act responsibly, then citizens are accorded particular rights – freedom of movement and speech, a

safety net if they are out of work or ill, and so on. Critics challenge this very contemporary Western view (Bellamy, 2008; Turner, 2007). Political theorist Will Kymlicka (2001) for instance addresses the connections between the individual and groups, culture(s) and society and the diverse and interconnected nature of modern societies constituted as globalised nation-states. He argues that rights associated with particular identities must be understood as both individual and group - the nation-state has the responsibility to recognise the demands of social movements and alternative polities, such as first nations peoples in Canada and traditional owners in Australia-New Zealand. A 'recognition and redistribution' (Fraser, 2000) approach to citizenship attends to ways in which the rights – understood as voices, histories, knowledges and interpretations - of particular raced, classed and gendered population groups have been systemically marginalised and, importantly, how this discrimination might be addressed and redressed. Recognition of the rights of marginalised groups also means attending to the very particular circumstances of peoples whose claims to citizenship are vexed, difficult and often life-threatening – peoples who are historically mobile, peoples who have been made stateless through civil wars, borderline trading, and peoples whose identities are not associated with a nation-state at all (Appadurai, 1996). Citizenship encompasses the rights of marginalised groups to struggle against and change national government/governing practices (Lister, 2003; Taylor, 1994; Van Gunsteren, 2018).

Secondly, curriculum-citizens are sutured firmly to the nation state. However, citizenship goes beyond the state. We are interconnected through the workings of travel, interlocked economies and businesses, sophisticated information and communication technologies, and by the environmental changes that humans in particular have brought on the living world (Castells, 2000; Harvey, 1996). These mobilities, networks and bondings are part and parcel of everyday life and demand particular sensibilities of us, including a 'cosmopolitan' understanding of diverse cultures and practices (Beck, 2006) and an orientation to the material world which decentres human activities (J. J. Cohen & Duckert, 2017). In schools, these beyond-nation sensibilities may be called global citizenship and eco-citizenship. But regardless of whether they are named or not, understanding the nature of our 'runaway world' (Giddens, 1999) demands a curriculum that has strong associational and ontological, as well as epistemological, orientations. Responding to contemporary life demands, as Haraway (2016) puts it, that we 'stay with the trouble' rather than ignore it.

Thirdly, the purpose of citizenship education is asserted as preparation. Citizenship education is about learning to be a citizen at a time *in the future*. Students in schools are not seen as *already* citizens of society with current rights and responsibilities. They are to be made ready to be full and active members of society – they cannot/are not able to do this now (c.f. James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). This view takes little account of the varying ages at which young people are able to drive, parent, take on onerous caring responsibilities, contribute to family income through part time work, and the age at which they can leave home and be declared independent. Nor does it recognise that the school itself is not only a preparatory experience but might also be a public space and a polis in its own right (Kennedy, 1997).

Finally, the framing of the aims of citizenship education lends itself t to a discrete subject which an auditor might easily identify. While this might satisfy a tick-box approach to accountability, it takes little account of the reality that the curriculum is not only what is formally taught but also includes all of the informal learning that occurs through extra-curricular activities, school governance practices and organisation and school culture(s) (Marsh, 2009; Priestley, 2013). If the school is concerned with learning, being and doing citizenship, then every teacher and every curriculum subject has a part to play. As Kymlicka (1997, p. 1) puts it:

> Citizenship education is not just a matter of learning the basic facts about the

> institutions and procedures of political life; it also involves acquiring a range of dispositions, virtues, and loyalties which are intimately bound up with the practice of democratic citizenship. Children acquire these virtues and loyalties not just (or even primarily) in civics classes. Rather, they are inculcated throughout the educational system. The aim of educating citizens affects what subjects are taught, how they are taught, and in what sorts of classrooms. In this sense, education for citizenship is not an isolated subset of the curriculum, but rather is one of the
> ordering goals or principles which shapes the entire curriculum.

Educator Richard Pring (2016) supports this view and brings to it a more generous notion of citizenship than that articulated as the national curriculum-citizen. He nominates as a key to citizenship education

- Concern for the public good
- Being able to articulate an oral position in social life
- An understanding of the political context
- Critical engagement with moral and social idea
- Determination to improve civic society. (p. 7)

Pring argues that literature, history geography and the arts have a lot to teach about the qualities necessary for citizenship. This is the view which underpins this chapter – all teachers and all subjects play a part in ensuring education for citizenship.

Education for active citizenship – the unofficial version

Critics of the curriculum-citizen framing begin from the pedagogical premise that it is insufficient to learn *about* what citizens do, students must also *practice* in order to understand what is involved and to develop the embodied dispositions and skills of a citizen (Apple & Beane, 1995; Dewey, 1916). In this respect the argument begins in much the same way as driver education - knowing the rules of the road doesn't make you a driver, you have to get in the car and practice. You have to know and do, together, in order to be (Delors, 1996). This is education for 'active citizenship' (Crick & Lockyer, 2010; Potter, 2002).

Education for active citizenship focuses on process and practices which offer an alternative pedagogy to that more usually associated with civics lessons (E. Cohen, 2005).

Active citizenship as pedagogy has at its heart an implicit understanding of citizenship itself. It shifts away from simply understanding how to participate in particular processes associated with governing at various levels, to consider participation itself. Active citizenship pedagogies usually raise questions about who gets to speak and act. Inclusions, exclusions, representation – formal and symbolic - and recognition of particular identities become part of a cognitive, emotional and lived curriculum. This is often challenging for schools. As UNESCO note

> One of the major flaws in civics instruction has been that it fails to bring democracy to life in schools, and remains at the stage of merely enunciating principles and describing institutions. When the organization of a school does not lead to a democratic mode of operating on which pupils can give their opinions, children and adolescents lose interest in citizenship and see only the mismatch between what adults say and what they do, between knowledge and action, a mismatch which they usually call 'hypocrisy'. (http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_b/interact/mod07task03/appendix.htm)

It is possible for schools and classrooms to be more in tune with the democratic principles espoused in a civics curriculum. However, a democratic pedagogy across subjects does mean being open to debate. As Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2014, p. 21) point out

> It is not enough to argue that democratic values are as important as traditional academic priorities. We must also ask what kind of values. What political and ideological interests are embedded in and easily attached to varied conceptions of citizenship?

This might mean for instance raising questions about 'British values', rather than taking them as a given.

Education for active citizenship takes different forms, but usually includes the classroom and the school as polis – as an arena in which diverse young people have both rights and responsibilities and are able, as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations (UN), 1989) suggests, to have a say in matters that are of concern to them.

Active citizenship can mean a focus on student participation in school governance. Formal structures such as elected student councils, and open student forums and school/class town meetings allow for representation in decision-making (Osler, 2000). Such bodies sometimes constrain what students can do - they are confined to raising funds, organising charity drives or perhaps designing their school uniforms – and sometimes only involve selected 'good' students, not all (Bragg, 2007; Fielding, 2001). But there are numerous examples of schools in England and beyond which do encourage students to participate in more general governing decisions about policy, planning and curriculum (Fielding & Moss, 2010; Holdsworth, 2000; Mitra, 2008; Yellop, 2006).

Another approach to active citizenship education involves social action programmes which address issues of concern in the school and community. This is not the same as service learning in which students work as volunteers in existing community facilities. Rather, social action programmes take a community development approach which recognises and works with community assets and strengths to find solutions to pressing issues. Students may be engaged in school based reforms (for example, changing the schools' environmental practices through collective interventions Thomson, 2006; Thomson, McQuade, & Rochford, 2003). Or students may work with community partners to co-construct and implement community projects (see Holdsworth, Stafford, Stokes, & Tyler, 2001 for examples ranging from building community amenities to changing local by laws). Sometimes social action programmes extend to social 'organising' in which students become part of a wider social movement designed to put pressure on local or national government in order to bring about change (see Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Fine et al., 2004 for examples of students working with social movements to address racism).

There is also a classroom focus in which teachers adopt pedagogies which ensure that the classroom functions democratically. While there may be a strong element of 'knowledge' based teaching within and across subject domains, this is complemented by equally important active components where the affordances include co-designed projects with peers and adults inside - and perhaps outside - the school.

Arts subjects lend themselves to democratic practice. In drama rooms, a democratic commitment becomes collaborative improvisation and ensemble based pedagogies (Neelands, 2009). In art rooms, a *negotiated curriculum* (Boomer, Lester, Onore, & Cook, 1992) allows students and teachers to co construct a learning activity, an extended project, a single module of work or an entire year's programme. Negotiating the curriculum is not uncommon in Art and Design classrooms, particularly

in the senior secondary years, where it is common for students to engage in large projects. In order to meet the requirements set by qualifications authorities, teachers engage in ongoing negotiation with students about ideas they want to explore and the work that they have to do in order to bring their ideas to fruition. Contrary to the view that offering agency to students means handing over responsibility for learning to the student, a negotiated curriculum always works with required knowledge outcomes and teacher expertise as well as the vernacular knowledges, interests and everyday practices of students and their communities (see for example Comber, 2016; Gonzales & Moll, 2002; Thomson, 2007). However, the pressure of exam results also tends to individualise students' work, therefore ensuring that students have opportunities to work together requires explicit planning.

Some Art and Design rooms are set up as collectives. Room 13 – a visual art workspace run by students for students – is one of the best known examples (Gibb, 2012; Souness & Failrey, 2005). Rooms 13 affords young people regular experience in working together to make choices and decisions, to work as an artistic cooperative in charge of their own studio, its finances and commissions. Room 13 exemplifies the four essential elements of the rights of the child - students manage a *space*, exercise *voice*, have *influence* over what happens in their studio and beyond, and arrange *audiences* for their collaborative work (Lundy, 2007). Room 13 has now become an international movement of artists, art teachers and children (http://room13international.org). In Room 13s, students are not simply learning how to be an artist, they are already engaged in artistic practice. But much of the online material about Room 13 now emphasises entrepreneurialism. This raises interesting questions about what is and what might be learnt about active citizenship and democratic process in a child-led studio.

While education for active citizenship addresses pedagogies for art rooms, as well as other classrooms, there is another important aspect to citizenship which creates a very specific role for art educators. When we move away from thinking about citizenship as governing, and think of it as about full and active participation in society, then the question of culture comes centre stage.

Education for cultural citizenship

The term culture is contentious. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz suggested that culture can be thought of as 'socially established structures of meaning' (Geertz, 1973, p. 12). Culture is produced and situated in specific times/spaces, it is a tangle of practices, narratives and teleologies manifest, inter alia, through the inter and intra actions of materials, bodies, narratives, images, sounds, movements, platforms, genre, media. Geertz suggested that we live in a cultural context of our own making; events, behaviours and institutions are not 'caused' by context but can be explained and described contextually. Both individuals and groups are produced by, and also produce specific cultural contexts, through processes of interpreting, mediating, influencing, creating, making, maintaining and abandoning. Culture is not static, it is always in formation.

Culture is actually plural - cultures. Cultures are elite *and* popular, national *and* international *and* local, every-day *and* institutional, professional *and* amateur, kitsch *and* refined. Cultures are globally connected through digital communications, globalized media and financial markets, commercial practices, environmental risks, voluntary and forced travel across borders and global quangos. Cultures are challenged by flows, mobilities, networks from above and below; some cultural practices are marginalised in networked contemporary societies and some peoples spoken of as 'uncultured'.

The right to cultural participation is encapsulated in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that 'Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community,

to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits' (http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/). The right to culture is seen as inseparable from other human rights and vital to the health of democratic societies. As UNESCO puts it, 'Accessing and enjoying culture is an important part of being a citizen, a member of a community and, more widely, a member of society.' According to Delanty (2002, p. 66) cultural participation is not simply an important part of being a citizen, but one of its *most* important aspects,

> …one of the most important dimensions of citizenship concerns the styles and forms of language, cultural models, narratives, discourses that people use to make sense of their society, interpret their place in it, construct courses of action and thereby give rise to new demands for rights, which we may call cultural rights.

Cultural rights are central to questions of social justice and social sustainability. Miranda Fricker (2007) argues for the importance of what she calls epistemic justice, the right to have one's testimonies and interpretations of experience not only heard but also acted on. Epistemic justice is, she proposes, a fundamental prerequisite of citizenship. The maintenance of heritage languages, artistic traditions, artefacts and architectures are vital to epistemic justice, but as important is the capacity to be seen to have a credible contribution to make to the processes of social meaning-making and their political, economic and legal enactment. Taking a complementary position Paul Willis (Willis, with Jones, Canaan, & Hurd, 1990) argues that the social justice implications of cultural rights support a normative idea of an overarching common culture in which all (sub)cultures are equally valued for their difference. Everyday cultural participation, in which people do what they find valuable, enjoyable and meaningful – from singing in church, knitting, performing in community plays, to making you tube videos - is as important as any other cultural practice (Miles & Gibson, 2016).

Art and Design education and cultural citizenship

The notion of a common but diverse cultural citizenship foregrounds meaning making, and the rights of individuals and groups to offer interpretations, narratives and knowledges through a variety of cultural production practices. Here is where the arts come into their own. The arts offer a wide range of media and genre for meaning making, as well as extending meanings beyond the rational and cognitive to encompass the imaginative, the corporeal and the haptic (McDonnell, 2018). Kuttner (2016, p. 74) argues that:

> Not only can arts education serve as a space for developing and claiming cultural citizenship; we can think of arts education in general as a process of developing cultural citizens. No matter what other outcomes arts educators seek, we are teaching students about their roles and responsibilities in relation to artistic creation and consumption. We are helping to shape students' capacities and orientations towards participating in an important aspect of cultural life.

Kuttner is interested in social action and social justice and in the affordances of arts education. He suggests that the notion of cultural citizenship as meaning-making provides a way to link the everyday, heritage and bedroom cultures of young people with larger political challenges related to globalisation, privatisation and commercialisation (c.f. Dolby & Rizvi, 2008). He argues in particular for an arts education which supports young people to change their worlds – an activist view of citizenship – which uses art media, genres and platforms to express opinions and explore options for change (see Soep, 2010 for an example through youth radio).

Kuttner advocates an expanded notion of arts education with a justice-oriented citizen at its heart, critically and systematically analysing power, advocating for marginalized communities and stories, using art for justice in communities via collective action. He proposes three 'types' of co-authoring cultural citizens formed in and through art education:

(1) an informed cultural citizen who 'has the capacity to understand, appreciate, and critique works of art within a larger social, political, artistic, or cultural context',
(2) a participatory cultural citizen who is involved in 'producing, remixing, and sharing original artistic works. She has a strong connection to her own cultural heritage, along with the freedom to explore new forms of expression and to share in cross-cultural exchange' and
(3) a justice-oriented cultural citizen who can 'critically analyze the ways that the arts are implicated in processes of oppression and resistance', works to counter dominant oppressive representations and practices and uses art practice to make changes in communities through individual and collection action (2016 p. 76)

The latter two options in particular support an Art and Design education that focuses on a wide range of forms of cultural production and critical audience participation (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013).

While Kuttner writes from the United States, and his proposition is not intended to be universalised, his three cultural citizenship possibilities do have some traction in contexts where art education might support nation states reconstructing themselves to interrogate and embrace difference and diversity (seeSingh, 2012 on the role of arts education in South Africa) and contexts in which traditional arts practices and knowledges can be used to deconstruct and redesign contemporary schooling (e.g Colin, 2014 on Mexica palimpsest). There is also a strong connection to be made between Kuttner's participatory and justice-oriented citizens and socially engaged art practices where civic engagement and/or social activism are the goal (Thompson, 2015).

Art education for cultural citizenship is inclusive, and thus does not deny young people, especially those who are socially and culturally pushed to the edges, access to the kinds of cultural capitals that are held in highest esteem. As Stevenson (2003, p. 342) argues, an arts education as cultural citizenship

> … would need to follow an inclusive cultural strategy that offered school children a range of cultural repertoires drawn from across the popular and high cultural divide. A genuinely cosmopolitan education might seek to revalue cultural practices and narratives that more traditional forms of education had branded as unworthy. Yet such an approach would need to stop short of populism should it fail to instill a critical appreciation of artistic practices from classical music to performance art.

Following Stevenson, practices associated with what Kuttner calls informed cultural citizenship would still matter. If every child is to be a cultural omnivore, possessing the cultural capital that counts, then they must be engaged in an arts education, including Art and Design, that offers them the opportunity to produce meanings using their own funds of knowledge, heritages and teleologies. But it is also important that they should not be denied access to the kinds of knowledge and skills that allow them to engage critically with mainstream and elite cultural practices. This is, as Siegesmund (2013) puts it, an arts - and Art and Design - education which develops 'wide-awakeness' (Freire, 1974) to the world, and supports well-informed citizens to reimagine possibilities for living together.

There is a wealth of possibilities for developing such an Art and Design curriculum – an art education that provides powerful resources for active citizenship. When students studying art engage in

systematic research, discussion, collaboration, project management and a range of communication practices they are learning and doing processes that can be linked with democracy. This occurs when teachers are able to connect the 'stuff' of the curriculum with its pedagogies. Foci for linking content and form might include:

- ongoing discussions of the role of the artist in society. Is the artist, as the Aspen Institute argues, a citizen who 'reimagines the traditional notions of art-making, and … contributes to society either through the transformative power of their artistic abilities, or through proactive social engagement with the arts in realms including education, community building, diplomacy and healthcare' (https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/arts-program/citizen-artists/)
- the creation of intercultural art practices to bring diverse communities together to create a 'third space' for head/hands/hearts conversations (Burnard, Mackinlay, & Powell, 2016), where multi-modal and multi-media political performances decentre the usual and conventional genres and practices (Camarero & Cruzado, 2013; Tuulikki, 2017).
- learning about art works and art practices which directly address the democratic process (Gielen, 2017) - learning about works which afford epistemic justice where who speaks and who is heard, and who protests and how are central, asking what values are important in social and political life.
- studying and making work which raise questions about contemporary life – belonging – to what, at what scale; mobilities, expulsions, exclusions; instability, flux, change, shifting territories; the digital; potential new spaces for coalitions and collaborations; beyond the human.
- investigating the possibilities for art practices which shift the relationships between the human and the living and material world. Students might also recognise the powers of materials to shape practices and environments (Bennett, 2010) and the possibilities for new and less toxic art-environment entanglements (Van Boeckel, 2013). They might also examine the environmental impacts of the art room and its materials.
- the construction of opportunities for young people to articulate and speak back to their public misrepresentations and political marginalization (Gallagher, 2007), and opportunities for young people to interrogate current events and formulate opinions and solutions (Christopoulou, 2013).

These are topics and approaches that arts education, including Art and Design, is uniquely positioned to explore. They challenge the kind of statist citizenship education offered in a civics oriented curriculum, such as that espoused by the current national curriculum in England. When combined with active citizenship pedagogies these kinds of foci also offer affordances for young people to act as cultural citizens, and support a more capacious and convivial notion of education (Manchester & Bragg, 2013).

While justice-oriented cultural citizenship via art education may seem like a big ask, given the current state of English schooling and its national curriculum, and the precarious situation of arts educators in general, the Art and Design curriculum is still one which is amenable to professional adaptation and some degree of risk-taking. Teaching for cultural citizenship is surely a move worth exploring further. But in so doing, it is worth remembering the warning issued by Clare Bishop (2012) of the dangers in collapsing together art and the social, art and pedagogy. She suggests that when artistic practices merge with social and pedagogical fields, it requires us to examine our assumptions about each of the fields of operation and to 'ponder the productive overlaps and incompatibilities that might arise from their …conjunction'. Learning to think these things together will need us to 'devise adequate new languages and criteria for communicating these transversal practices' (p.274).

Bishop's caution is not negative. It seems to us that it offers an agenda for inquiry and debate which would not only have positive benefits for students, but also strengthen the professional orientations of Art and Design teachers. Asking what kinds of cultural citizens and what kinds of culture(s) are we producing today, might be a highly (re)generative conversation.

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