



Ofsted subject conference report: citizenship

Secondary citizenship: standards and assessment

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Synopsis

The conference involved 49 people, most of whom were teachers from secondary schools, but there was also representation from Ofsted, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and initial teacher training. The teachers came from a wide range of backgrounds, some being heads of citizenship departments, some new to responsibility for the subject and some new to teaching.

The conference aims were:

- to consider Ofsted's findings on national developments in citizenship
- to review the QCA draft materials on the assessment of citizenship in Key Stage 3
- to develop assessment tasks and criteria
- to clarify the outcomes expected, referenced to end of key stage descriptions and GCSE benchmarks.

Summaries of seminar sessions

Scott Harrison, HMI, Ofsted Specialist Subject Adviser for Citizenship

The opening session introduced the conference and provided Ofsted's perspective on progress to date with citizenship. Much of the conference involved workshop activity, and teachers in groups were able to introduce themselves and their school contexts in the light of this overview.

Assessment

Liz Craft, QCA Citizenship Adviser

The key requirements and principles for assessment of citizenship were outlined as follows:

- A teacher judgement must be made using the end of Key Stage 3 description (working towards, working at, working beyond).
- Schools must keep records of citizenship including results of teacher assessment.
- A report to parents on progress and achievement in citizenship must be provided for pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
- Schools do not have to report summary assessment data to the QCA.

Assessment in citizenship should:

- recognise and value the learning and achievement of **all** pupils
- raise standards and achievement through quality feedback to help progress
- provide evidence of attainment for end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessment
- give equal weighting to skills, knowledge and understanding

- involve pupils as partners
- be appropriate, valid and reliable (fit for purpose)
- provide an opportunity for all pupils to generate a response and demonstrate what they can do
- enable teachers to make judgements about progress and attainment
- use criteria that relate to end of key stage description.

The findings from early trialling of assessment materials showed that teachers should:

- be very clear and precise about how assessment content and tasks relate to the national curriculum
- ensure there are several planned opportunities for pupils to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills across the key stage
- focus on the quality of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated, for example, for active participation it is not the success or the amount of participation that is important, but what pupils demonstrate through and after the process.

And teachers should not:

- try and assess too many different aspects of citizenship through one assessment activity
- make judgements about an individual's values and attitudes.

Assessment workshops

Assessment workshops occupied two major sessions of the conference. Each group evaluated one of the citizenship assignments currently being developed by QCA as exemplary material, considering strengths and weaknesses and making recommendations for any changes.

The whole conference also discussed other aspects of assessment, including a session on assessing pupils in discussion, and GCSE and coursework.

Outcomes

At the conclusion of the conference, each group offered a view on the main assessment activity they had focused on. These comments will now be considered by QCA as the materials are prepared for publication.

Further information: Ofsted guidance and subject reports can be found on the Ofsted website (search for citizenship in the publications section) and on the citizenship pages of the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/citizenship. Further information on assessment in citizenship will be available from QCA in January 2006.