



CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

A COLLECTION OF TESTIMONIALS
FROM PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE
TEACHING OF CITIZENSHIP IN
SCHOOLS

ACT

Association for
Citizenship Teaching

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BEN WEAVER

BEN WEAVER WORKS FOR ESSA – THE ENGLISH SCHOOL STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. ESSA IS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOLS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

Over the last ten years, thanks to the Crick Report, students have learnt what it means to have their voice heard, to listen to the views of others and to discuss issues that are important to their lives in an open and more democratic environment. By informing young people, equipping them with the facts, and empowering them with the confidence and knowledge to promote their views, the Crick Report has done immeasurable good for the development of greater student participation. In their schools, in their communities and on a national and international stage, students are involving themselves in matters that are important to them.

Ultimately, by creating an environment for the development of student voice, the Crick Report fosters more fulfilled individuals and a happier society. At ESSA, we recognise the importance of a relevant and engaging Citizenship curriculum for the furtherance of student participation, and support the efforts of the Crick Report to bring this to a wider audience. Although there is still a way to go in developing the culture of student voice in this country, many individuals' lives will have been greatly improved by the development of a Citizenship curriculum.

CARRIE SHARMAN

CARRIE SHARMAN IS A CITIZENSHIP TRAINED TEACHER AND IS NOW HEAD OF SUBJECT AT TWYFORD HIGH SCHOOL IN LONDON.

In 1998 when Crick wrote his report I was 18 years old and finishing my A-levels. I had very little idea about the seemingly dusty systems of government or how I could affect change. When I started University, by chance I got involved in the student union and found that I could debate political issues with passion and bring about change. I decided to train as a Citizenship teacher so that my students could discover their own power to reshape their world, and become active, critical agents in their schools and communities.

I am currently the Head of Citizenship at Twyford High School, I facilitate our school council, and last year I was also appointed as an Advanced Skills Teacher for the Ealing borough to support other Citizenship departments and work collaboratively with other high schools. Citizenship lessons give students the opportunity to formulate their own views on social systems, to be open and aware to the decisions that are made by their representatives, and to act responsibly when they feel that action is needed. Citizenship has breathed new life into the experience students have of school and gives them both confidence and the tools to face whatever comes next.

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CHLOE PHAM

CHLOE PHAM WAS A STUDENT AT DEPTFORD GREEN SCHOOL IN LEWISHAM AND WAS ENTHUSED BY THE COMMITMENT OF HER TEACHERS AND THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL IN SUPPORTING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION. SHE IS NOW AT A LOCAL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE.

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CHRISTINA FARANDA BELLOFIGLIO

CHRISTINA FARANDA BELLOFIGLIO WAS A ADVOCATE FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION WHILST IN SIXTH FORM, HER ENTHUSIASM COMING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CITIZENSHIP TEAM AT LSN.

Citizenship in the sixth form at Aylesbury High School gave me a clear perspective on what active citizenship involves and how central it is to all we do. Contributing to the school community in various ways and working in a team to achieve certain goals were key to this. We organised a conference to raise awareness of current issues such as fair trade, asylum seekers and AIDS . We planned and delivered GCSE citizenship lessons to younger students. This improved my confidence and ability to lead discussions and deliver information in an interactive way. I was also involved in the production of a DVD introducing active post-16 citizenship to other young people. This brought me into contact with diverse groups of young people across the country and I was struck by the range of issues that different young people felt were significant and important.

I am now a medical student at Cambridge University. During my interview I got the chance to speak a lot about these citizenship activities - this went down really well, and, I am sure, helped the decision to go in my favour! I've found all the skills and knowledge I accumulated through citizenship activities have been profoundly useful. I regularly attend the Cambridge Union which offers members the chance to improve their public speaking skills, actively engage in debate with politicians and celebrities and become part of a global debating community.

Active citizenship is not something confined to school; rather, it is a life- long activity which develops you as a person and establishes a framework in which you can serve others and contribute to any community you happen to be involved with. What I gained from citizenship at school has remained with me in my university years and I know will be central to many activities in later life, for example, in my profession as a doctor, taking an active role and having an awareness of key issues in areas such as ethics and health care.

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DEIRDRE COFFEY

DEIRDRE COFFEY IS PART OF THE EDUCATION TEAM AT THE BRITISH RED CROSS.

British Red Cross has developed educational programmes and initiatives in response to the impact of citizenship in the curriculum and continued increasing awareness of international and global issues in education. The programmes have focused on key humanitarian issues in the context of four main themes: conflict, disasters and emergencies, health and promoting diversity. In particular the programmes aim to raise awareness of global development issues in schools and teacher training colleges, developing the confidence of teachers and trainee teachers to tackle these often-controversial issues in a safe environment.

As a result of this work with schools teachers commented on the impact on the young people such as noticing, "Change of attitude from uninterested in global issues to being engaged, involved and understanding better. They are using their knowledge and becoming 'global ambassadors' with other students. Student empowerment, leadership and global awareness and understanding have all been developed, along with greater empathy for our wider community" (Assistant Head Teacher, Essex.) This work has now being further developed by the British Red Cross in recognition of its successes with young people.

DR. PETER BRETT

DR. PETER BRETT – NOW A DIRECTOR AT THE ROSE ACADEMY IN CARLISLE – WAS A TEACHER EDUCATOR IN CITIZENSHIP TEACHER TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA AND A LEADING LIGHT IN CITIZED, THE CITIZENSHIP HEI PROGRAMME SUPPORTED BY TDA.

The Crick Report changed the direction of my professional life. Between 2001 and 2008 I became a Citizenship teacher educator working with around 80 beginning teachers, most of whom have exciting and successful careers ahead of them. I became a passionate and enthused 'insider' - working with CitizED, QCA and OFSTED, and becoming a (then!) DfES regional adviser for Citizenship education. I travelled across the north of England - and felt privileged to be able to seek out, write up and share some excellent Citizenship projects. As a Chair of Examiners for one of the GCSE examination boards, I saw Citizenship Studies become the fastest growing GCSE subject and provide welcome accreditation for some superb work by young people. Whenever I was fortunate enough to hear Sir Bernard speak there were, beyond the inevitable entertainment and wit, always wise and topical insights on the workings of politics. As an historian I had studied 'bottom-up' popular politics; now I was encouraged to actively promote it. Plenty of young people want to make a difference in the world; Sir Bernard's contribution has been to underline that they are more likely to be successful if they are politically literate. I ended up so enthused that I decided to return to school, employed as a Director of Learning at a new Academy. A key part of my role will be to ensure that the democratic voice of the students is central to the work of the school. Thank you!"

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ENA MENSAH

ENA MENSAH HAS A GREAT INTEREST IN POLITICAL LITERACY AND SAW HOW CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CAN EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

When I was studying for A Levels at Islington Sixth Form College in London I became involved in a citizenship project called 'Political Vibes' to encourage students to examine topical issues through music. Initially, the students were attracted by performing and writing music but they soon got hooked on researching and discussing the themes we had chosen for our songs which included globalisation, world debt, education and local crime. We held a concert and made an album of the songs. This was so successful that I helped run a 'citizenship through music' workshop for 52 other learners from across the country on. It was a great experience. The learners were really motivated to discuss some tricky and topical issues. One of them told me it was the best event they had ever been to!

Over the past five years I have participated in panel discussions with other young people promoting the benefits of getting involved more and I'm now helping to make a DVD for staff on 'learner voice and citizenship'. Recently I was the anchor interviewer at the National Learner panel celebrations. The work I have done in citizenship has helped me become more self-confident and have a better understanding of how the world works politically, socially and economically. It has also given me the belief that what I say can be transformed into positive action, irrelevant of my age. I am now more involved in the political and democratic processes because I am more informed.

HANNAH DAVIES

HANNAH DAVIES WAS A PUPIL AT MILL CHASE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, HAMPSHIRE 1996-2001. HANNAH IS NOW WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN HAMPSHIRE. WHILST AT SCHOOL SHE WAS INVOLVED IN A HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, AS A PEER EDUCATOR AND ALSO TAKING PART IN CPD FOR TEACHERS.

When you're a teenager you rarely think about consequences. You don't seem to factor in how things will affect you in years to come. Sometimes this can be damaging but sometimes the effects are good.

My teacher's enthusiasm for citizenship teaching was infectious. I would almost forget I was in a lesson as we spent our time forming and re-forming opinions, as we learnt how to put across our points of view, and how to accept differing mind sets.

This teaching has made me realise that my opinion matters and my action is needed. I have since been to Sri Lanka to help clear up the devastation of the Tsunami; I have been to Bulgaria to work with the Romany Gypsies, who face huge discrimination; and I have been to Africa to roll up my sleeves and help the children who live on so little. I'm sure that the encouragement I received at school to get passionate about what I care about played a large part in me doing these things. I am now a youth worker and find myself in the fortunate position of being able to pass this on. So, I feel the citizenship teaching I received has greatly affected my life.

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LIAM TAYLOR

LIAM TAYLOR CITIZENSHIP HAS JUST COMPLETED A DEGREE IN MODERN HISTORY AND POLITICS AND IS ABOUT TO START A CITIZENSHIP PGCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, LONDON.

The American community organizer Saul Alinsky – inspiration to Barack Obama and others - once said that the only 'real democratic programme is a democratic people - a healthy, active, participating, interested, self-confident people'. In a sentence, that is why I want to teach Citizenship. Having just left university, I could have gone on to a wide range of careers, each with different and exciting challenges. But I feel that Citizenship teaching offers an opportunity that is rare indeed: to transform the perspective that young people have on their lives, to help them realize that the social world around them is neither fixed nor natural but is made, and to see how they as citizens can take an active part in its remaking.

That might sound idealistic, but I'm not naive. As I start my PGCE year, I'm aware that teaching in secondary schools can be difficult and frustrating. One of the biggest challenges will be to overcome the common perception that politics is dry, boring and irrelevant. But I believe that if Citizenship is taught in an open, active, engaging fashion, and if it is related directly to the issues and experiences of young people themselves, it has the potential to become the most exciting subject to teach and to learn. I look forward, over the coming year, to finding out how that aspiration can become a reality.

LYNDA DIXON

LYNDA DIXON, FYNDOUNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

Students at a County Durham school bought life saving help to fellow students in an African village through their 'Water Works' project. Fyndoune Community College in Sacriston, County Durham, went into business selling Abbey Well bottled water, with the profits going to provide a well in Ghana. The students marketed and sold the water, and negotiated with a local bus company to take them to visit the Abbey Well factory during their summer holidays. The project is part of Changemakers' social enterprise programme. As a result of the project, the students became concerned at the lack of plastic recycling provision in their area. They lobbied the council, had discussions with Northumbria Water, and made presentations to the local press and other local schools to get them involved in pressing for more adequate provision.

It did not stop when the originators of the project left. It was taken on by younger students and renamed 'Water Babes'. This year they are determined to finally get the well for our school in Ghana. They have a tough job to raise £4000 in a short period of time but they enjoy a challenge and won't be put off by problems along the way.

"The Changemakers' ethics and ethos pervade all that we do at Fyndourne and I sincerely believe that we would not have done any of this without Changemakers' input in the early days."

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DAWN TERRY

DAWN TERRY IS A CITIZENSHIP TRAINED TEACHER AT NEWENT SCHOOL IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE. SHE HAS EXPERIENCE OF LEADING BEST PRACTICE WORK WITH QCA ON TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Our school has a close working relationship with Gloucestershire Police and this provided the basis for an active citizenship project. After exploring opportunities to use the expertise of the police, we decided to focus on the topic of human trafficking. Officers leading Operation Pentameter 2 were involved in a question-time session with a year 9 class about how people were trafficked into the UK. From this point the students took ownership of the project. They decided what they wanted to achieve and defined their objectives. Their aim was to develop a series of publicity materials designed for airports to raise awareness of human trafficking. They researched the topic and created the materials, including artwork and photography, as well as well as planning and hosting a presentation event to exhibit their work to key personnel.

This project highlighted the importance of students' independence in active citizenship. This approach helped them to develop both knowledge and skills and have a real impact on the world around them. It has given us the confidence to try new approaches to teaching and learning in Citizenship.

The police were overwhelmed by the students work. The project is not yet over - it is now being looked at by Birmingham Airport, the European Parliament and the police. The students evaluated the project and the feedback clearly showed that they enjoyed this unique learning experience. They felt empowered and appreciated the opportunity for freedom to experiment and develop their own understanding.

RACHEL MARSHALL

RACHEL MARSHALL WAS AN ADVOCATE FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION THROUGH HER YOUTH WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN WORCESTERSHIRE.

When I was 19, I became involved with Youthcomm, a technology and communications project for young people in Worcestershire. I became a trainee youth worker, dividing my time between youth work sessions and citizenship projects. Citizenship fundamentally changed my attitude to both youth work and my role in the community. It soon became second nature to me to add a citizenship dimension to all my youth work sessions. Youthcomm's technology focus meant that we used electronic voting equipment to engage young people in discussions and debates on citizenship topics and I've had lots of experience facilitating these sessions and getting young people to have their say. I also got involved in citizenship on a national level, taking a lead role at conferences for young people and helping to make DVDs about citizenship.

My growing understanding of citizenship also meant that I helped the young people I worked with to consider the social and political aspects of their voluntary work and see how they could be active and effective citizens who can bring about changes in their communities and beyond. Citizenship is empowering. It certainly made me feel empowered and I want to pass this onto others. I'm now at university studying English but during the summer break I've been delivering youth work sessions, with a citizenship spin, through my local church. After university I would relish the opportunity to have responsibility for citizenship in a school and take a lead on developing a holistic approach to how young people can learn through citizenship about making a positive contribution to the world around them.

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RICHARD TEMPEST-MITCHELL

RICHARD TEMPEST-MITCHELL TEACHES AT DJANOGLY ACADEMY AND TRAINED AS A CITIZENSHIP TEACHER.

A former Police Officer; I came into teaching to make a difference. Growing up in a relatively poor background, as a child I was aware that I knew little about the my country and the wider world. When I came into teaching I was determined that my students would appreciate the complex issues of growing up in a modern society. As a trained teacher of Citizenship I have found a perfect window to the world, to encourage my students to examine their status in this world.

Now in my second year of teaching and as Year Learning Leader of Year 12 at Djanogly City Academy, a racially diverse inner city school I have introduced discrete Citizenship lessons at Post 16, years 10 and 11. Thus far my students are keen on the active participation side and are organising several projects. The school has taken on board the Citizenship as it fits perfectly with our 'Every Child Matters' ethos, allowing all students to realise that they are the future of this world. Citizenship has thus far allowed me to fulfil my dream of making a difference encouraging students to learn and participate. Things can only get better!

SUE BARRATT CBE

SUE BARRATT CBE, HEAD TEACHER CITIZENSHIP AT BOURNVILLE JUNIOR SCHOOL, WEST MIDLANDS HAS BEEN A CHAMPION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR MANY YEARS.

Our school was founded in 1906 as the personal gift of George Cadbury to complete the village of Bournville. Cadbury specified that the school should provide education of the highest quality in an ethos that was forward looking and tolerant. Today, through citizenship, we continue to cherish this vision. Citizenship has been the catalyst at Bournville Junior School to enable our children to become confident individuals who are totally involved in the life of our school.

The main contributor to this is our very active school council who have an annual 'Away Day' to contribute to the overall development of the school. They have lobbied for and then designed the play area in the local park; project managed our new school toilets; written our school behaviour and anti-bullying policy; and masterminded many school and charity fundraising events. Members of the school council are also core members of various pupil committees within the school e.g. children's curriculum committee and children's behaviour committee. In addition to our local community links we strive to give our children wider experiences by linking with other schools, cities and countries. Through the development of citizenship education, our children are at the very heart of our school community and they are also becoming responsible world-class citizens.

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SUE CARTER

SUE CARTER IS A SENIOR TEACHER AT BISHOP HATFIELD GIRLS' SCHOOL IN HERTFORD. SHE HAS LONG BEEN AN ADVOCATE OF THE SUBJECT AND HAS UNDERTAKEN BEST PRACTICE WORK WITH QCA AND DCSF.

Back in 1998 I was responsible for PSHE and careers education provision at Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School, an all-girls secondary comprehensive school in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. I read the Crick Report with great interest and was keen to act on it. The potential benefit to the school seemed enormous and there were so many opportunities for citizenship that I felt the school could develop, building on our PHSE programme. The school embraced citizenship and much has happened in the intervening years.

The active nature of citizenship has been the real inspiration, with its emphasis on getting pupils involved in working within their communities to effect change and make a difference. I really do believe our young people are 'willing, able and equipped to have influence in public life.'_ Our pupils want to take responsibility, they want to get involved and they expect to be consulted. They work with key partners within their communities, demonstrating their commitment to improving the community for all. There is much to do but plenty to celebrate.

Teaching citizenship has presented me with some amazing opportunities. I have worked with QCA and LSN on a number of initiatives and I even got to travel to Charleston in the USA as part of a DfES scheme to look at active citizenship and service learning. I have been promoted to the position of Assistant Headteacher at Bishop's Hatfield and I take this to be a recognition of the importance of citizenship and all the school has achieved through its citizenship work.

