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The Role of the Discovering Democracy Program in Addressing Citizenship and Civic Education Issues in Australia

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Abstract

In the 1960s Australia experienced a decline in the teaching of Civics Education. Some problems in civic education in Australia such as national identity, too much weight on Civics learning and the most serious is the lack of youth participation in citizenship. In the 1990s civic education experienced a revival, this was marked by the emergence of the Discovering Democracy program which was created to overcome existing problems. Using the literature study method, researchers examined the role of the Discovering Democracy program in Australia. Deficiencies in the understanding and skills of some teachers in the field of civic education are the focus of revamping this program. The aim is to equip young people with the necessary skills to better participate through education in schools. One way to achieve this goal is to involve students in their everyday environment. This program has a large contribution in citizenship education in Australia. Many schools report that, after this program teachers feel much more confident to teach citizenship and citizenship than before.

Keyword: Discovering Democracy Program, Citizenship Education, Civic Education

INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s Australia experienced a significant decline in the amount of formal teaching of civic education (Judith Torney, 1999). But when referring to the progress of studying in Australia, many get support from political parties. But such claims in citizenship and civic education in Australia are premature (Kennedy, 2010). Murray Print in (Torney et.al, 1999) suggests that the first five decades after federation of Australian colonies in 1901 saw civic

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education become an integral part of Australian schools. Emphasis is placed on teaching civic virtue and 'good' citizenship to Australian youth. Australia's only nationally accepted statement of curriculum purpose, highlighting civics education explicitly to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable students It succeeded in the late 1990s (Murray Print et.al, 1999)

The Australian government designed the citizenship approach from different sources and models. David Kerr concludes that most countries recognize their purpose is how young people play a role and are responsible as citizens (Heggart, 2020). Some of the problems of citizenship and civic education in Australia are the lack of youth participation in citizenship (Peterson, 2020). Too much weight is given to understanding government structures and mechanisms of political action, national identity with regard to mirgan. The most important issue is the role of the teacher; and the best position for civic education in the school curriculum. Conflicting conceptions about civic education, particularly about the extent to which citizenship should address issues of gender, ethnicity and indigenous peoples, will undoubtedly remain a prominent feature of the ongoing debate (Heggart, 2020).

To address this, the Australian government created the Commonwealth Government's eight-year "Discovering Democracy, Civics and Citizenship Education" program for Australian schools (Holt, 2001). In practice, the Discovering Democracy program has a prominent Australian History component, which tends to focus on information raising activities and awareness regarding the nation's cultural and civic past (Tilbury & Henderson, 2003). The program will refocus its efforts on addressing Education and citizenship issues in Australia. This research wants to see more about the "The role of the Discovering Democracy program in addressing citizenship and civic education issues in Australia

METHOD

This research is a research using the method of literature study or literature review using content analysis to better understand and interpret a study. This research uses data collection techniques through Google Scholar and international journals with journal criteria used based on research objectives and has been accredited. The research examined various literature in both international and national journals and books to analyze the role of the Discovering Democracy program in addressing citizenship and civic education issues in Australia. In this literature study, the data from the analysis will be discussed descriptively both to criticize and summarize selected articles on the role of the Discovering Democracy program in addressing citizenship and civic education issues in Australia. Using the Meta-Analysis procedure by

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analyzing the contents of the journal, then a review is carried out using the results of journal data that has been collected then the researcher provides views and then summarized and discussed to draw conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Civic Education in Australia

Kennedy (2003) explains that the rise of Civic Education (CCE) in Australia began around the 1997s which gained support from the majority of political parties and all levels of government. Civic Education has now become a major and important subject in the Australian Education Curriculum, despite concerns about content issues that need to be taught and suggestions for the addition of certain content, as well as the need for emphasis on some pre-existing content. The Australian Government has supported the implementation of citizenship and civic education in schools through Discovering Democracy (1997-2004).

The Discovering Democracy Guide and professional teacher development training are conducted in all Australian countries and territories to ensure the success of the program. Teachers are given a thorough understanding of the concepts and materials of Discovering Democracy, so that they are able to engage in pedagogical approaches to develop students' understanding of democratic institutions, history, values, and democratic processes in Australia (Isnarmi, 2017: 16)

The aim is (Kennedy, 2008) to be active and well-rounded citizens with an understanding and appreciation of the Australian system of government and civic life having the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in terms of morality, ethics.

Active citizenship education as a primary objective to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in a democratic Australian society in an international context, which helps prepare students for effective citizenship. Learning includes knowledge and experience of local culture and becoming a confident and creative individual. active in understanding history, governance, justice diversity. Kerr in (Heggart, 2020) concludes that most countries recognize their purpose is how young people play a role and are responsible as citizens. In Australia citizenship is taught as a separate, non-integrated subject.

Education Curriculum in Australia

In New South Wales,"to ensure that the study of Australian social and political institutions is part of every school student's experience" (Isnarmi, 2017:16). Victoria, in the Curriculum (CSF 11) which aims to help students become active and informed citizens. In

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Queensland, as in most other Territorial States, citizenship and civics are integrated into the Key Learning Area (KLA), Community and Environmental Studies strands (Kennedy, 2008). High School Curriculum, there are no specific civics subjects in the high school curriculum. There are three subjects under the Australian high school curriculum, namely the humanities and science categories. State curricula are designed with the same goals but in each state's own form.

Challenges/Issues of Citizenship and Civics in Australia

There are several problems and challenges found in Civic Education in Australia, among others. By the 1930s, changes had swept the school system. In particular, previous approaches to citizenship and civic education were seen as unimaginative and boring. Too much weight is given to understanding government structures and mechanisms of political action. Issues related to national identity include immigration, ethnicity, gender, republicanism, diversity, equality and relations with indigenous peoples, especially those relating to land rights (Bank, 2004: 4-8). Youth Participation Issues. The alleged issue is addressed in a backdrop of findings showing low electoral rates and distrust of political institutions among young people.

Young people's political literacy levels reflect a broader civic deficit characterized by a lack of knowledge and low levels of participation. Australian residents must be notified and active citizens. The school became the most obvious institution to perform the task (Print, Moroz &Reynolds 2001: 1). Young people generally lack basic knowledge of civic structures and procedures among the Australian population. In 1994 there were reports of a broader citizenship deficit – overall not an optimistic picture (Galligan &; Roberts, 2004).

Discovering Democracy Program

In Australia, civic education has become a focus of renewed interest internationally as governments struggle with issues of national identity in an era of globalisation and lack of youth participation when it comes to citizenship. The Commonwealth Government took a step towards curriculum policy by introducing its civic education curriculum package, Discovering Democracy, in the late 1990s. Civics Expert Group report (1994) people: citizenship and civic education, broadly. The Commonwealth Government is a continuation of funding for Discovering Democracy managed by a team consisting of a Programme Director, Coordinator and Committee. Professional development for teachers is carried out at State and Territory level as part of the process. The curriculum package provided free of charge concludes the existence of 'uniform support for a greater emphasis on citizenship' (Criddle, 2004) In relation to the curriculum policy of Discovering Democracy, Robison & Parkin (1997) identify an implicit

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assumption in curriculum materials that governments can control what teachers do. However, they assert that the package can be used in a different way than simply transmitting knowledge, thus rejecting the perspective of teachers as technicians and claiming for them a more proactive role as professionals in the curriculum process.

The issues of focus were the lack of youth participation, as well as deficiencies in the understanding and skills of some teachers in the field of citizenship and civic education; restrictions imposed by the congested curriculum were also listed as major problems. (Judith Torney, et al: 1999). The Federal Government spent $32 million dollars over a seven-year period to develop curriculum materials and support teacher professional development to address existing problems in Australia. At first there was little doubt that the Discovering Democracy Program could play an important role influencing the direction of civic education (Kennedy, 2008).

The Goals of the Discovering Democracy Program

Program Discovering Democracy appears to be a measure of academic achievement; perhaps evidence of social change influenced by the active and informed participation of young people would be more meaningful. The challenge for any citizenship and citizenship education program must be to support the development of critical knowledge around contemporary local and global trends and equip young people with the skills necessary to engage with these issues as social and political actors (Kennedy & Mellor, 2000).

Referring to the work of Rimmerman (2001) a new paradigm for Critical Education for Citizenship is starting to take shape. The core objectives of this approach are Encourage students to take a broad interpretation of democracy that includes community action, and the politics of protest in participatory processes. To develop respect for differences, appropriate understanding of their future path as agents of change. An appropriate curriculum should allow students to define what they understand by democracy in the broadest sense. Young people who participate in such projects will have the opportunity to develop expanded citizenship skills (Reichert, 2016).

Policy proponents hope that Discovering Democracy will make a significant impact on civics teaching and learning (Criddle, 2004). The focus is on the Australian Discovering Democracy initiative and whether it improves education to contribute to an actively engaged citizenry. Contains knowledge about democracy, democratic principles and processes, and historical developments and current issues in society. (Nelson and Kerr, 2006). Discovering Democracy clearly focuses on education for active citizenship. One way to achieve this goal is to

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involve students in their everyday environment. They will be helped to learn the skills of participating in voluntary associations and performing school and community service (Kemp, 1997: 6)

Discovering Democracy Program Features

One of the features of the Discovering Democracy Program is the use of web-based technology to advertise and promote "best practices" in citizenship and citizenship education. Theme is civic participation, the site shows in practical terms how Discovering Democracy materials can be used from elementary to secondary schools to help students understanding the concept of citizenship is important for involving them in school-based projects (Kennedy, 2008). Finally, Covering Democracy signals powerful psychological support to educators and administrators who have struggled to implement citizenship in Australian schools (Torney et.al. 1999). This program in Australia was launched by the Commonwealth government in May 1997 to provide citizenship. This program is associated with the Web sites of US state educational agencies. Citizenship education in schools across Australia, recommends the development of websites to disseminate curriculum resources.

Implementation of the Discovering Democracy program was facilitated through a variety of strategies, some originating at the national level, while others occurred at the state and territory levels. In addition to sponsoring two national forums, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs funds several national organizations to support the implementation of the Discovering Democracy program (Michael, 2000) . Implementation at the state level involves aligning the Discovering Democracy program to each state and territory's curriculum, as well as appointing state coordinators to facilitate professional development programs for teachers. A national questionnaire survey of more than 8,000 teachers in a stratified random sample of 3,526 schools was conducted to identify the nature and extent of .

This review is to provide a focus for policymakers in refining the scope of the proposed website for the Discovering Democracy program. Web-based tools exist and allow material to be updated efficiently, likely providing a means. Web-based tools designed to support the Discovering Democracy program can contain three important features, as well as several optional features.

Discovering Democracy Program in Citizenship and Citizenship Education in Australia

The first evaluation of the results of Discovering Democracy was carried out by the Erebus Consulting Group (1999) after an initial period of 2 years. However the evaluators

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concluded that the personal efforts of dedicated teachers had contributed to the success of the program and that some schools had provided a variety of activities beyond the formal curriculum, competing school priorities, time in relation to reducing the Civics component to history studies. Finally, the assessment of learning outcomes is somewhat related to content understanding, but not to the active citizenship dimension. Following the first Erebus evaluation, further financial support was provided by the government for the extension of the program until 2004. The final evaluation of Discovering Democracy concluded that impact on civics teaching in schools, including the belief that students should be active citizens and committed to the values of democratic citizenship (Reichert, 2016).

Discovering Democracy has made a long-term difference to the learning outcomes associated with active citizenship, especially in schools; and more generally to examine whether citizenship and citizenship education are preparing young people for active and democratic citizenship. Citizenship education improves in the long term in connection with; and more generally to check whether the youth is preparing. They form strong knowledge-based courses that use active and imaginative teaching and learning strategies and incorporate the teaching of civics values and skills. Teachers' responses were also more positive as they realized that their assessments of the material had been taken seriously and had been reflected in ongoing revisions. (Holt , 2001) .

The program also clearly fits with the new national goals for Australian schools, which are supported by all Australian states and territories. in the twenty-first century states that schools 'must fully develop the talents and capacities of all students. In practice when students leave school, they must have the capacity to carry out assessments. Accept responsibility for their own actions to become active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civil life. (Mubarak, 2019).

In one state in New South Wales, the Discovering Democracy appears to have acted as much a resource for teacher professional development as they did as a student resource. Almost without exception, schools reported that, after their projects were completed, teachers felt much more confident teaching civics and civics than before.

CONCLUSION

In Australia, citizenship education has experienced ups and downs, from decline to revival. This cannot be separated from the problems facing citizenship and citizenship education in Australia, including issues regarding national identity and the main problem of lack of youth participation in citizenship issues. The aim of citizenship education in Australia itself is to create

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citizens who are active in civil and government matters but still adhere to ethics and morals. Apart from that, their aim is how young people play their roles and responsibilities as citizens. In Australia itself, several different curricula are implemented in each state, but the aim is the same, to increase youth participation. Until the 1990s, the Discovering Democracy program emerged as a government effort to overcome existing problems. This program starts with training for teachers to fix everything in schools. The Federal Government spent $32 million dollars over a seven year period to develop curriculum materials and support teacher professional development. The initiators of this program hope for significant changes regarding youth participation, which is in line with its goals which focus on education for active citizenship.

One of the flagship programs of this program is web-based technology with the theme "Citizen Participation", this site shows practically how Discovering Democracy materials can be used from junior elementary to middle school to help students understand important civic concepts. (e.g., “participation,” “collaboration,” “civic action”), to engage them in school-based projects. This helps students have experience in participating. This feature was launched in 1997. Discovering Democracy has made a long-term difference in the learning outcomes associated with active citizenship, especially in schools. It is hoped that this program can be even better and able to improve citizenship and citizenship education in Australia.

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