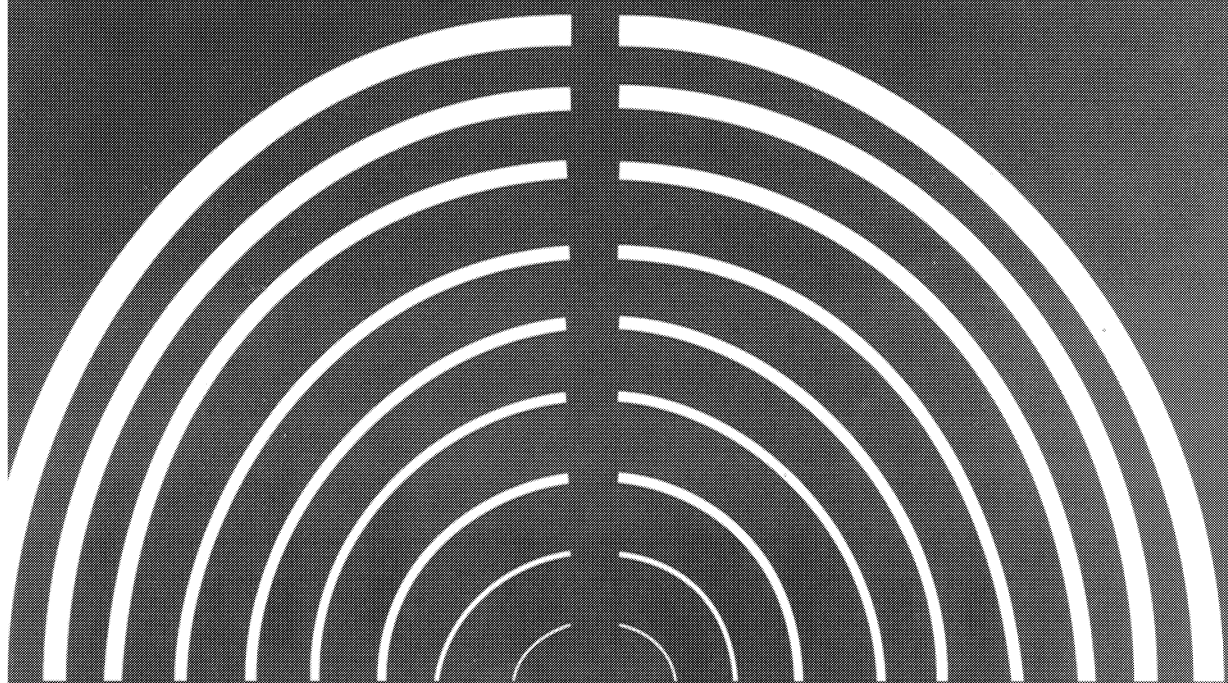

CHANGE

TRANSFORMATIONS IN EDUCATION



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VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 MAY 2000

CHANGE: TRANSFORMATIONS IN EDUCATION

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Editorial

The idea of putting together this special issue on the theme of citizenship and education arose out of a seminar series conducted in the School of Social Policy and Curriculum Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney in 1999. Although not all articles in this issue were actually presented in the seminar series, they nonetheless take up in a variety of ways the themes and issues arising from the discussions that took place on themes and issues touching upon citizenship. The collection of articles ranges widely over a number of different issues that constitute the context of current and past discussions of citizenship in a variety of ways, with differing disciplinary frameworks, theoretical orientations and emphases. What the seven articles in this issue have in common is that they take a theoretically informed, critical and engaged look at some of the major questions arising from recent debates about the meaning of citizenship, identity, culture and social differences that bear upon education.

The collection begins with a thought-provoking discussion by Tim Rowse of a conception of citizenship which draws not on the idea of rights but on that of 'capacities', specifically that of indigenous capacities. He sees Australia's policies of assimilation and 'self-determination' as ideal and practical configurations of indigenous capacities. Through a framework of neo-liberalism, Rowse sketches out a feature of indigenous citizenship as 'state-assured private powers of action' and shows how the notion of capacity remains contentious in ongoing debates about citizenship and indigenous people.

David Hogan takes up the complex and difficult question of how to reconcile a commitment to liberal democracy and a civic republican commitment to civic virtue. In a carefully crafted argument which traces the history of the liberal ideal of autonomy, he develops a case for valuing a 'post-liberal-democratic theory of citizenship' which will encompass not only principles of justice but will also provide the institutional conditions for the establishment of a democratic political community. In a powerfully written and well-theorised section of the article, he argues cogently for a 'republican' theory of education.

On a different note, Julie Gill and Susan Howard focus critically on recent approaches to citizenship education in Australia. They examine the citizenship education program, *Discovering Citizenship*, which they see as a narrow 'facts-based' program, and ask: 'What do young Australians know about civics and citizenship?' They report on a fascinating study in which a group of students engaged in the processes of deliberation as central to the practice of democracy, rather than simply learning about the structures and institutions of democratic life in Australia at the present time.

Continuing the critique of citizenship curricula, Marjorie O'Loughlin takes up the theme of deliberative democracy and argues for the need to supplement our understand-

ing of what the 'deliberative democrat' might be in culturally diverse societies. She explores briefly the notion of communicative democracy and then moves on to pose the question: 'What is the object of meaning for the citizen in a globalising world?' She concludes that citizenship education must address the issue of meaning-creation.

Robert Reynolds surveys debates around male homosexuality and law reform in Australia during the 1960s. Acknowledging the role of medical and religious discourses on homosexuality at the time, he traces the widening of discussion to encompass questions of law reform. The central argument of his article is that while these discourses displayed many emancipatory features they still were not able to understand homosexuality as a political subjectivity. Reynolds is primarily concerned with the ways in which a liberal democracy such as Australia can incorporate distinct sexual minorities in a productive and equitable way.

Penny Enslin provides a perspective on citizenship issues from a rather different place – that of post-apartheid South Africa. She comments upon the present South African citizenship education scene, with particular interest in the question of how that country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its finding might be taken up and used productively in citizenship education. Arguing against the popular view that 'national myths' furnish a basis for the development of such education, she attempts to provide what in her view is a more secure basis for the practice of democracy in a very complex society.

The collection concludes with a stimulating contribution from Dale Kreibig, who writes as one closely associated with recent efforts to develop citizenship education in Australia. She is aware of the claims that all citizens must be involved in some way in the process of democratic participation, and raises an issue sometimes overlooked in the debates about greater participation in the democratic process, namely that of the member of society who chooses not to be an active participant in the forging of democracy, but who is no less a citizen of the nation for that.

MARJORIE O'LOUGHLIN AND ROBERT REYNOLDS, EDITORS