Reflections and actions in Civics and Citizenship education (CCE): Teachers’ views on the CCE professional development process

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Abstract

This paper discusses the reflections and actions of Victorian teachers who have been involved in various forms of professional development (PD) for CCE in recent years. The researcher has drawn on data collected in her work with teachers in the Victorian CCE Extended Professional Development strategy and other forms of PD. First the various PD models developed in Victoria are described. Through follow up interviews with the teachers, the researcher investigated what has happened in CCE in schools since the PD, what further PD is required, and views on how civic literacy and active citizenship outcomes are being developed and delivered. These views are then discussed with reference to the literature about effective teacher professional development and the power of professional learning communities to improve student-learning outcomes. Finally, the paper discusses what actions teachers see for sustaining CCE into the future.

Introduction

The re-emphasis on Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) in recent years both here in Australian and internationally, has stimulated a plethora of ‘conversations’ amongst educators, about the scope and concept of CCE, and the various ways it can be enacted in school curriculum. The new initiatives have also necessitated the development of nationwide teacher professional development (PD) programs, to provide teachers with forums to develop their knowledge and understanding, and to explore classroom and whole school strategies that can make a difference to student learning in CCE. When the Discovering Democracy (Curriculum Corporation, 1998) materials were first sent to all schools across the nation, it was obvious that follow up teacher professional development would be needed to ensure that the resources were effectively utilized. Schools needed to look closely at how they were already including CCE in the curriculum, and how their programs might be further developed. As part of the Discovering Democracy program, the Federal government funded the states and territories to develop PD strategies for CCE. As one of the developers of PD programs for CCE in Victoria (1998-2001 & 2002-2004) I became actively involved in many rich ‘conversations’ with colleagues in...
developing our views about CCE and how teacher PD could be developed and delivered. Teachers raised a range of questions that required exploration; what does CCE involve, how does it fit in existing curriculum and wider school programs, how can CCE be connected with other issues demanding our time such as literacy, student welfare and middle schooling, and what other issues on the education agenda should we be considering as part of CCE? There was also the important question of what form the PD should take, in order to make a real difference in student learning outcomes for CCE. Should the PD build on what was already happening in schools, or suggest bold new strategies for CCE?

In the initial stage of the development of PD for CCE (1998-2001), three models were developed in Victoria: teacher networks, Grants to schools, and an Extended Professional Development Program, which all aimed to support classroom teachers in developing their knowledge and understanding of CCE, both within the Studies of Society and Environment key learning area, and across the rest of the curriculum. In theory, each program was soundly based in current literature on effective PD and as Kennedy (2000) said,

Civics is about engagement in issues and ideas that fundamentally affect the way we live. To teach civics effectively, teachers themselves must be engaged in these issues (p.4).

This paper discusses the reflections and actions of Victorian teachers who have been involved in the various forms of professional development (PD) in recent years. The researcher has drawn conclusions from work with over 400 teachers in the Victorian CCE Extended Professional Development strategy and other forms of PD. Through participant observation during the PD programs (1998-2003) and using data collected in follow up interviews, teachers views were investigated on how different structures and models of professional development can make a difference to teacher and student learning in CCE. Teachers' views about the teacher professional development process, what has happened in CCE in schools since the PD, what further PD they need, and their views on how civic literacy and active citizenship outcomes are being developed and delivered are discussed. Finally, the paper reports on what actions teachers see as vital for sustaining CCE into the future, and how their views connect with views in the literature.

Models of teacher professional development, 1998-2003

Teachers in networks, 1998-2000

Between 1998-2000, networks of teachers were formed in regional clusters across the state, to develop CCE. While a great deal of fine teacher development was achieved, evaluation studies of the programs showed that the experiences of the networks varied according to a range of factors; the knowledge and expertise
of the network leaders and the teachers involved, the number of times the
groups met, the clarity of their goals and the connection of their work with the
teachers’ daily practice (Prior & Stephens, 2001). In Victoria, it was decided that
networks would not be continued in Stage two of the PD program (2001-2004).
There had been considerable change in leadership amongst the leaders, some
felt inadequately prepared to lead the groups, and most found it hard to juggle
demands from other work.

Grants to Schools
Secondly, federal government funding was provided for Grants to Schools to
develop CCE programs. The grants provided support for practicing teachers in
25 schools to focus on CCE implementation. Again, there are well-documented
case studies of outstanding development of innovative and exemplary strategies
for CCE, and other cases where schools made more limited progress in the
improvement of student learning outcomes for CCE. Teachers commented that
‘the Grants made it possible for us to buy teacher release time for planning’, and
‘justify the development of special CCE programs or whole school events’. The
award of the Grants meant that ‘other school staff asked questions about CCE’ or
‘CCE got a mention at staff meetings’ and ‘the Principal became actively involved
in our work’.

During professional development work in Grants schools’ program, Roger
Holdsworth challenged teachers to answer these questions; are students being
provided with active and valuable roles in school, what opportunities are there
for students to experience active citizenship and how authentic is their learning?
The expectation that each Grant school should share and disseminate their
learning through a published report was an added impetus to their work.
Discussions with teachers showed that schools were developing CCE in four main
ways:

• in whole school approaches to CCE, for instance through democratic
  practice in classrooms, the establishment of school rules decided by staff
  and students, and the development of student councils where students
  really do participate in decision making that matters,
• through a range of classroom activities, including studies of the
government process, mock parliaments, or studying rights and
responsibilities through time in history classrooms, or using units from the
Discovering Democracy resources,
• through active citizenship programs, such as students writing to VicRoads
to argue that the speed limit should be reduced outside the school to
ensure student safety.
• through school community links, for example where students worked with
  local authorities to clean up the beach, or painted attractive murals on
  walls that had been covered with graffiti, to improve the local
  environment.
The Extended Professional Development Program

The third element of the PD strategy for CCE in Victoria involved the development of an Extended Professional Development Program (EPDP) for CCE involving 15-18 hours of contact time and the opportunity for tertiary credit. The team developing this program wanted to effectively enhance both teacher and student learning in CCE. We knew that limited ‘one stop’ PD where teachers spend a day listening to expert views on the subject, have their awareness raised about the topic, and then go back to their school and get on with other work, does not create meaningful change (Senge, 2000; Fullan, 2003). We needed to heed the warnings in the literature and work to develop a model of PD for CCE that met the needs teachers themselves defined, and connected the learning to teachers’ own practice in a situated cognition model. We wanted to avoid the kind of unsuccessful PD described by Miles & Louis (1990) as

…under resourced, brief, not sustained, designed for one size fits all, imposed rather than owned, lacking any intellectual coherence, treated as a special add on, and an event rather than a natural process for improving student learning (p.57-61)

The lessons from research on ineffective PD documented the view that PD must be developed over an extended time frame (Fullan, 1997) so that ideas can be enacted in school, and then space found for reflection on the successes and failures, so that continuous improvement can be achieved. Teachers were also strong in their view that we needed to develop PD that would consider how CCE might be sustained in school programs in the future, when current government funding runs out.

The program that was developed and delivered to over 400 teachers included four core units designed to:

- develop teachers' understanding of the concept and scope of CCE, through firstly, discussing existing views of CCE and current school practice, then reference to wider views on CCE,
- explore varied models and approaches to CCE including 
  Discovering Democracy and teachers' own programs,
- effectively use internet resources and information and communication technologies for CCE, and
- make connections with other issues on the education agenda for CCE.

In addition, a program of self-paced online electives were developed to encourage teachers to pursue broader elements of CCE including environmental education for active citizenship, CCE perspectives in the teaching of history, educating for global citizenship, middle schooling for CCE, investigating critical social issues in CCE, CCE and indigenous perspectives, and learning for active citizenship. In theory the core units in each program were to be spread over at
least three months, to allow teachers time to develop and share the work in their schools. In practice this didn’t always happen because of the costs of travel to country areas and other factors.

The program was evaluated highly by all teacher participants, and in their reflections they commented that the resources and approaches ‘stimulated my thinking about exciting possibilities for CCE’, ‘made me see that CCE is core work for schools’, ‘empowered me to convince my colleagues that CCE has many connections across the curriculum’. But in our reflections as program developers, we were left with very important concerns about the professional development process. After working with the teachers in the core program, funding did not allow us to do any follow up in the schools. While a needs analysis survey was sent to all teacher participants, and we aimed to address each need in the course of each program, there was no real opportunity to develop responses to the teacher needs in individual school settings. It became clear that where teachers came to the program in school teams, they had a greater chance of working collegially on their CCE strategies back in their schools, but where individual teachers attended, it was less likely for them to connect with their colleagues. Most importantly, we were not able to go into the schools and talk with teacher participants about how the PD was impacting on their students learning, which ultimately was the goal of the teacher professional development. The program budget also didn’t allow this to happen. We began to talk more to the teachers about what models for teacher professional development would lead to a greater focus on their daily practice and student learning outcomes, and we became increasingly convinced that teacher professional development models should be developed to primarily situate the teacher development in schools, or in local school clusters, but with outside expertise providing stimulus and support where required. We were interested to have further conversations to discover teacher views on the teacher professional development process.

Conditions and models for positive teacher professional development outcomes

In recent research there is a growing consensus that there are key characteristics of effective teacher PD. The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (USA) (2000) argued that PD should be based on:

- analyses of the differences between actual student performance and goals and standards for student learning,
- should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved,
- should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching,
- should be organized around collaborative problem solving,
• should be continuous and on-going, involving follow-up and support for further learning-including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives,
• should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on outcomes for students,
• should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned, and
• should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning (NPEAT, 2000).

The US National Staff Development Council’s revised statement of standards for staff development (NSDC, 2001) argued that PD that improves the learning of students must be organised in the context of professional learning communities, requires skilful leaders guiding continuous improvement, and requires resources to support teacher learning and collaboration. The NSDC process standards for staff development to improve student-learning state there should be:
• Student data to determine the adult (teacher) learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement (Data-Driven).
• Multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact (Evaluation).
• Research applied to decision-making (Research-based).
• Learning strategies appropriate to the intended goals (Design).
• Knowledge applied about human learning and change (Learning), and
• Ability for educators to collaborate.

The general orientation of the new approach to professional development is more constructivist than transmission-orientated – the recognition that both prospective and experienced teachers bring prior knowledge and experience to all new learning situations (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001). This approach was core to the EPDP we developed. Others have agreed that PD must include the knowledge and expertise of teachers, rather than reliance only on externally generated solutions to school problems (Little & McLaughlin, 1993; Darling Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Sparks, 2002). However, while the PD should be situated within schools, there is still a clear role for external providers and wider discourse about teachers’ practice, if it stimulates fresh thinking and new ideas about teaching and learning.

There has been recognition of the fact that if teachers are provided with opportunities to develop connections and share expertise with colleagues who have common interests, this can have a powerful influence on specific education reforms (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). McLaughlin (1994) argued that,

...The best teacher professional development takes place not in a workshop or in discrete, bounded convocations, but in the context of professional communities-
discourse communities, learning communities. ... teachers can and do typically belong to multiple professional communities, each of which functions somewhat differently as a strategic site for professional growth. Thus the argument is made, that enabling professional growth, is, at root, about enabling professional community (p. 31.)

In talking with Victorian teachers in the three models of PD for CCE, we discovered there were many clear instances where teachers working collaboratively in school teams were able to achieve a great deal more through setting shared goals, taking risks together and reflecting on their practice, but in addition, their connections with teachers from other schools added new ideas.

Clearly, if the goal is for students to improve their learning in CCE, teachers need forms of professional development that enable them to deepen their subject matter knowledge of CCE, and develop pedagogical practices that make a difference to student learning outcomes. They also need what Miles & Louis (1990) have described as “the will and the skill for change” (p.57-61). Whenever teachers are asked to initiate an educational reform, or change their practice, they must have opportunities for intellectual and pedagogical renewal, if the reform is to succeed (Liebmann & Miller, 2001; Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2002). But teachers must also have supportive structural conditions, and human and social resources within the school that enhance professional community (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996).

A review of the literature shows that for more than a decade, there has been considerable acceptance amongst researchers, of the power of Professional Learning Communities to enhance school improvement, and to improve learning outcomes for staff and students in schools. The PLC can become the organisational structure that hosts and scaffolds the teachers' professional development, and ensures that the desired improvement in student learning is achieved (Senge, 2000; Barth, 1990; Darling Hammond, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; Kruse, Louis & Bryk, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Newmann and Associates, 1996; Sykes, 1998; Fullan, 2001, 2003; SEDL, 1997; Hord, 1997; Wagner, 2001; Dufour, 1998, & 2003).

Through teacher reflections and through observation of the teachers work in CCE in Victorian schools, it became clear that where Professional Learning Communities do operate in schools, student learning in CCE can be improved. In Dufour & Eaker’s (2002) work on PLC’s, they say that teachers in these schools see themselves as a team of professionals, working together to apply the best findings of educational research and their own common sense to problems they confront daily. Educators then create for themselves a community in which they are all learners and seekers together. They argue that a school that is a PLC has a culture unlike schools of the past. The creation and maintenance of this culture is the foundation for change and improvement. The organisation’s culture rests
upon attitudes, values and habits of mind that can take a long time to develop. Dufour & Eaker say that a “school with such a culture can be recognised by six characteristics; shared mission, vision and values, collective inquiry, collaborative teams, action orientation and experimentation, continuous improvement, and results orientation” (p.10).

Hord’s (1997) review and synthesis of the literature identified the fact that other researchers see these attributes as part of PLCs:

- “the collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership - and thus, power and authority - through inviting staff input in decision making;
- a shared vision that is developed from an unswerving commitment on the part of staff to students’ learning and that is consistently articulated and referenced for the staff's work;
- collective learning among staff and application of the learning to solutions that address students' needs;
- the visitation and review of each teacher’s classroom behaviour by peers as a feedback;
- assistance activity to support individual and community improvement; and,
- physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation”.

(p.27)

Reflections and actions of teachers in a CCE professional learning community: a case study.
The work and views of teachers in a CCE professional learning community are discussed in the following section, to draw conclusions about whether the theories about ideal conditions for teacher professional development for CCE described in the previous section can be related to effective practice in schools. ‘Spring Valley’ school can be recognized as having the characteristics of a professional learning community. Collaboration, collective learning, a focus on student learning outcomes, shared leadership, and continuous reflection, are all core to the PD processes in the school.

The story of Spring Valley school
Spring Valley, an eight-year old primary school on the rural fringes of Melbourne, has achieved state awards for a CCE program they have developed for their grade 5 and 6 classes. The teacher team developed an integrated unit for students based around a series of clearly defined goals for CCE. ‘Alex’, a teacher leader with a passion for CCE, grabbed every PD opportunity possible in 1998-2000, and provides a classic case of a teacher involved in ‘multiple discourse communities’ (McLaughlin, 1994). Alex encouraged staff in the learning community to develop an innovative program where all the grade 5 and 6
children would develop a simulated ‘community’, so they could be active citizens living in a community with ‘real’ jobs in banks, shops, the police station, the law court, and the local council office. With the encouragement of the principal, he worked with staff to apply for a CCE Grant, to buy teacher release time for planning. He attended network meetings to gather new resources and ideas, and the team worked together to set learning goals, and plan exciting learning strategies for the children. The team of teachers used their CCE grant to work together collaboratively to generate whole school and classroom approaches to CCE, and acted as their own agents of professional development, in conjunction with external support and wider influences.

The teachers commented that ‘Alex’s leadership was inspiring’. They would meet frequently to talk about ideas, and the whole program involved team teaching. The unit began with the formation of a Junior School Council and the election of office bearers using procedures supervised by qualified Electoral officers, so the students could experience the processes of voting and democratic procedures. The teachers then used resources for CCE in the Discovering Democracy kits (Curriculum Corporation, 1999) and drew on their existing knowledge of strategies and resources to develop shared goals for the unit. They decided that all their young citizens needed to know how to work together and generate a harmonious environment. They aimed to develop students' understanding of citizens' rights and responsibilities, the process of law and the judiciary, and the functioning of a community. The establishment of the simulated community in the classroom that operated for more than a month provided students with real experiences of citizens' roles in business, community service, and government institutions. The classroom walls were collapsed to create a larger learning space, so that classes could be joined together to increase the size of the ‘community’. ‘Georgina’, one of the classroom teachers explained that,

...The students needed to develop their civic knowledge about the functioning of a community and the various roles of citizens. Teacher directed lessons played a part in developing students' understandings of jobs, businesses and services and the government process. The students were invited to apply for jobs. Student skill development was ensured through co-operative group work and individual and shared decision making as they set up shops, a law court, a police station, a parliament, council offices, beauty parlors, second hand car dealers and many other businesses and services. The social interaction amongst the students was real, even though the community was simulated. Students drew on each others’ skills and seemed to naturally gravitate to roles which suited individual abilities. For instance, students with good maths skills ran the town bank, keen artists illustrated the newspaper, and others became leaders. All students had multiple roles and varied learning experiences. Each business had to buy their land (in the classroom) and was charged according to the position they wanted. Business managers could advertise in the local
newspaper or through the local radio station. Students were given $500 per week, but had to pay tax. Children were paid extra for positions of responsibility. They could apply for loans and all learned to use credit cards, and cheque books.

While the program goals were designed before the commencement of the term long program, the staff were prepared to take the risk of developing teaching and learning strategies as a team, as the weeks progressed. They could also see possibilities for children from other grades in the school to learn and be invited into the community to participate at various times.

‘David’ commented that,

We involved the other staff when we invited their classes to become citizens of our community. They came along and utilized the facilities in the town that the children in our class had set up. In actual fact the shops, businesses and many different professions needed the custom. We had our own currency so the other classes were involved just for the retail side of things. But if there was crime in the classroom, like littering, the police arrested offending citizens and either fined them or took them to court. Lawyers then represented them and the student jury handed down the sentence. Parliamentary sessions were held twice weekly and they were many laws passed using the Westminster system. Each fortnight, local real police officers came in to extend the students' knowledge of police activities.

Being involved in the CCE Grants program supported the structural conditions for the existing professional community to grow and develop (Kruse, Louis & Bryk, 1996). It provided funds to allow staff time release to plan, develop and then reflect on their progress and to attend further external PD activities. But other critical elements of a professional learning community have been important in the positive teacher PD outcomes in the school. After spending time with school leaders, teachers and in classrooms, it was obvious that the teachers have a 'collective focus on student learning' (Kruse, Louis & Bryk, 1996) and are keen to take risks and try new strategies. They assume that the school community affords a rich context for learning where teachers can build on their collective expertise in the course of critical reflection (Little, 1999). It was clear that they work together to

...mobilize and focus teachers' energies on a collective and improved vision of students' education and, along with it, a situated vision of and support for their own learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999, p.389).

Behind the scenes of the simulated community was a professional community of teachers, meeting daily in and out of the classroom, sharing ideas, planning teaching activities to develop students' knowledge and working in a climate of co-operation.
Their success was encouraged by the Principal and wider community. Alex commented that it was the ‘development of their students’ knowledge of the role of citizens that has been the greatest reward’. The teachers believed their innovative strategies could not have been developed as easily by individual classroom teachers. It was the combination of social and human resources which led to the success of the project. The Spring Valley teachers are not only collegial within their school community. They are also connected to the wider profession. Alex was a CCE regional network leader, and involved in the PD of other teachers in statewide forums. He was a member of the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers. Other staff in his school commented that his developing knowledge and experience was a vital ingredient in their ongoing PD. Liebermann & Grolnick (1999) argued that,

...the effects of collaboration extend in many directions. Working actively with others strengthens the investment that participants have in the network; the work becomes quite literally their own. Connecting with other members across schools, institutions, roles, and geography enables participants to develop more complex views of the issues they are concerned about and encourage them to take different perspectives and different ways of knowing into account.

Spring Valley had regular visits from an external support person with extensive experience in student leadership and student participation activities and this is now a key goal for development in their CCE program. The requirements of the Grant also applied gentle pressure for the staff to keep reflecting through case writing and to articulate what worked and what didn’t. But the CCE initiatives did not stop as the Grants period ended. The team went on to develop new CCE curriculum development for other student groups in the school, and the continuation of the development of a whole school policy for CCE. As Little (1999) said,

...teacher learning arises out of close involvement with students and their work, shared responsibility for student progress, sensibly organised time and space, access to the expertise of colleagues inside and outside the school, focused feedback on one's own work, and an overall ethos in which teacher learning is valued (p.46).

The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT, 2003) argued that there are basically three ways to improve teaching: enhance teachers’ capabilities; increase their motivation; and, create conditions in schools which facilitate teachers’ use of their expertise and energy. Rarely are motivation, capability, and conditions of work addressed as a coordinated set of restructuring strategies.
The importance of the school culture in the professional development process.

Dufour (1997) also claimed that the most important element in a professional development program that promotes the creation of a learning community is the context of the school's culture—the attitudes, behaviours, expectations, and beliefs that constitute the group norm. In the US, the Education Commission of the States (2000) noted that,

...there is general consensus that the organizational culture of the school is an important factor in determining whether teachers participate in professional development, and what impact the professional development has. School cultures that encourage collegiality, reflection, risk taking, and collaborative problem solving facilitate effective professional development. In these schools there is a collective focus on students and a shared responsibility for student learning’ (p.18)

Fullan (2003) argued that if the school culture does not promote strategies conducive to teacher understanding, student understanding will not be achieved. Part of the problem is due to the fact that the culture of schools is often amenable to superficial rather than deep solutions. Teachers need daily, in-depth opportunities to build up the knowledge and capacity to carry out the deeper reforms envisaged in the best curriculum frameworks. This requires a radical change in the norms and working conditions of teachers and administrators and, in fact, the teaching profession as a whole. At Spring Valley, the two grade 5/6 teachers worked together in a team teaching situation for the whole term, and welcomed other staff wandering in and out of their classroom to talk about what was happening.

Any consultant or facilitator who has tried to help a school launch an improvement initiative has seen school culture at work. Two schools can initiate professional development programs designed to improve conditions for teaching and learning. The consultant, content, and implementation processes could be identical, but one school's faculty embraces the concept and works to adapt it to their school, while teachers at the other school are indifferent (Dufour 1997). This can be the result of two very different school cultures; one where change is embraced and collegial groups expect to work together, and the other where there is no expectation of collaboration.

At Spring Valley, a cooperative and collaborative school culture was clearly a key determinant in the achievement of learning goals for the young students that increased their understanding of what it means to be an active participant in a democratic community.
Leadership at Spring Valley school

There are many education researchers who share the view that strong and effective leaders who appreciate and respect learning, have a powerful role in the positive development of PLCs and improving learning in schools (Newmann, & Wehlage, 1995; Sergiovanni, 2001; NSDC, 2001; Sparks, 2002). It is clear that while the principal plays a critical role, the concept of ‘leader’ is not limited to the principal or senior staff, and teacher leaders in classrooms, faculties, and across school programs are vital. Many researchers now argue the benefits of ‘distributed leadership’, where every member of the community has the responsibility and authority to take appropriate leadership roles. At Spring Valley, while the support of the principal provided constant encouragement to the teachers in the CCE initiatives, Alex, played a pivotal role in the development of the CCE programs. However, leadership was also distributed on a daily basis amongst the teacher team.

Focus on continuous improvement at Spring Valley School

Since the simulated community program at the grade 5/6 level, Spring Valley has gone on to develop many other facets of CCE in their professional learning community. Most recently, the school has become involved in the Quality Schools Project, and the staff, students from prep to grade 6, and parents, now work to develop and keep revisiting the schools’ mission statement and core values. Consistent with their commitment to continuous improvement, they have also become interested in new government initiatives for values education. The school provides clear evidence of the success of PD models that function through the structures of a professional learning community and are largely situated in the school, but still see the importance of external stimulus. In Fullan’s (2003) recent work on effective schools research, he argues that for PLCs to operate successfully, there needs to be far more intensive professional learning in schools, within a culture of continuous and open deliberation. He also suggested the school’s performance needs to be continually tested by external ideas or standards about best practices. Outside curriculum ideas and student assessment information helps ensure that the process is not too insular.

Conclusions

The example provided by Spring Valley primary school of teacher collaboration and innovation to improve student learning in CCE, is practiced in many other schools. Teachers have commented that into the future, CCE programs must focus on ‘active learning strategies’, ‘must emphasise participation and democratic practice’ and ‘should be closely connected with other issues on the education agenda, including active engagement of adolescents in the middle years in authentic learning’ and ‘issues that are of real personal concern to young
people’. These learning goals and elements of ‘lived citizenship’ were experienced by the grades 5/6 children at Spring Valley. Clearly, achieving positive teacher PD outcomes for CCE is a complex process requiring adequate long-term commitment and funding, but the Spring Valley case shows that where PD is situated in the professional learning community, and stimulated by the views of other discourses, then the learning outcomes can be positive for students. The teachers quoted in this paper have responded to the renewed interest in CCE because they believe it challenges young people to think critically about what kind of society they live in, how it functions and how that society should develop in the future, with themselves as active and informed participants. They would I am sure agree with the view of McLaughlin & Talbert, (1993, p.18) that

Professional community provides the context for sustained learning and developing the profession ... Effecting and enabling the teacher learning required by systemic reform cannot be accomplished through traditional staff development models - episodic, decontextualised injections of knowledge and technique. The path to change in the classroom lies within and through teachers' professional communities.

At Spring Valley primary school, the teacher learning is connected to student learning, and the ultimate aim of teacher PD is improved student learning. When these dedicated professionals saw their young students empowered by civic knowledge, able to articulate new views and use new skills, it was all the incentive they needed to sustain and continue their efforts. Teaching in a professional community can be compared with good citizenship. Good citizenship implies an idea or ethic of desirable behaviour, and active participation and membership in both the formal and informal institutions of that society. The conversations I have had with teachers, and the observations I have made, convince me that teacher professional development in the future needs to pay far more attention to making clear links between defining and stating learning goals for students, and the collaborative work of teacher teams in schools. This implies a far greater recognition that schools are the primary sites for teacher professional development, but also recognizes the fact that the external stimulus of new ideas and resources can also play a critical role in education initiatives and reform.
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