

Trainee teachers' views on democratic citizenship education: The cases of the PGCE and Teach First

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Democratic citizenship education (DCE), the process by which democratic societies teach democratic values, can be considered a key component of the education of future citizens. As significant responsibility for DCE falls to teachers, it is necessary to examine teachers' views about their role in the process. Initial teacher preparation, in any form, can be one-way trainee teachers begin to form these views. The purpose of this small-scale research is to better understand trainee teachers in two distinct programmes in England, a university-based PGCE and Teach First. The present study seeks to determine the extent to which participants in these two programmes have beliefs and philosophies of education in which DCE is a component. A semi-structured interview, using a card selection method, was devised to elicit participants' philosophies and beliefs about the purpose of education and DCE specifically. Six participants in each programme were recruited and participated in the interviews. Findings show that the PGCE participants' responses focused on the themes of community and critical thinking. The Teach First participants focused on a different conceptualisation of community, individual skills for success, and students' strengths. The study concludes that the PGCE participants held beliefs that are generally aligned with this study's conceptualisation of DCE; Teach First participants held a wide range of attitudes towards DCE, but generally did not see it as a priority of education. These findings can have implications for initial teacher training. Democratic societies and teacher education programmes must reflect on the role of education in building democracy and teachers' role to do so.

Keywords: initial teacher training; teacher beliefs; democratic education; citizenship education; qualitative research

Introduction

Teacher education in the UK has seen significant changes in the in the early years of the twenty-first century. While the university-based postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) is still offered by many English universities, various American-style "alternate" routes (i.e. not based in a traditional, university-based course) to teacher certification have been introduced. Teach First (TF), launched in 2002, was one such initiative. Modelled on Teach for America, the programme aimed to recruit some of the highest achieving university graduates, provide intensive summer training, and place them as teachers in high-needs schools in England. Unlike the "traditional" university-based PGCE, trainee teachers are expected to develop their teaching skills on the job at their school placement.

A range of stakeholders, including politicians, teachers, school leaders, and communities, naturally use many lenses to debate the value, appropriateness, and effectiveness of Teach First and similar "alternate" school-centred teacher training. The present exploratory research serves as one such lens to understand the views and beliefs of trainee teachers in their first-year teaching with Teach First in comparison to trainee teachers in a PGCE programme. Specifically, it examines their beliefs on democratic citizenship education (DCE).

DCE is the process by which education systems prepare students to be citizens in a democratic society. Democracy is more than a system of political power, but also a set of ideals, values,

and norms held by society. For a democratic society to function, these ideals, values, and norms must be passed from generation to generation. This can happen in formal educational settings or implicitly through society.

Recently, various democratic institutions have been tested in previously unimagined ways. In the United States, the Trump administration has eschewed both formal and informal political conventions. The British exit from the European Union has the potential to reshape not just the United Kingdom's relationship with the continent, but also the tenor of British society. Western countries have seen a rise in nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-refugee sentiment, sometimes with violence ensuing (Anderson-Nathe & Gharabaghi, 2017; Jackson, 2017). If societies wish to preserve their democratic ideals whilst responding to these issues, the members of these societies must be equipped to be effective democratic citizens. While producing such a cadre of citizens is a complex task, education systems and teachers are a central component. Therefore, understanding teachers' and trainee teachers' views and beliefs on the topic of DCE is itself essential.

The larger research project addressed multiple research questions to build an understanding of trainee teachers' attitudes and beliefs relating to DCE. The present paper focuses on one pivotal question: to what extent do trainee teachers in the two groups have beliefs and philosophies of education in which democratic citizenship education is a component?

Theoretical framework

Democratic citizenship education (DCE)

Although writers such as Plato and Rousseau have alluded to DCE (Glass, 2000; Michelli, 2005), it was first most explicitly described by Dewey (1916/2004). He saw DCE as the process societies employ to prepare its future citizens to participate democratically. According to him, such participation was more than voting; "But there is a deep explanation. A democracy is more than a form of government, it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (1916/2004, p. 83). Dewey differed from predecessors in that his conceptualisation of democratic education was not focused on the explicit procedures of democracy or regarding obedience, but rather a sense of community. Others have built off this definition; Berkowitz, Althof, and Jones (2008) describe citizenship education as educational strategies that promote democratic participation of citizens. Much like Dewey's, this definition succinctly summarises the idea of democratic education, but neither provide a particularly specific definition that illustrates this concept.

Gutmann (1999), drawing from Dewey and others, offered her own definition of democratic education. She argues that democratic societies try to promote future citizens who are moral and active in the institutions of democracy but does so without compromising the values inherent in a liberal democracy. Therefore, she argues, "Democratic education thus appreciates the value of education as a means of creating (or re-creating) cohesive communities and of fostering deliberative choice without elevating either of these partial purposes to an absolute or overriding end" (p. 46). This view of democracy presents a paradox; cohesive communities are in constant tension with deliberative choice. Society can achieve perfect cohesion, but at a cost to individual choice. Conversely, absolute free choice can be a detriment to a perfect community. Democratic societies therefore seek a balance between these two concepts.

This conceptualisation for understanding democratic education is effective as it provides a clear definition of what democracy is, unlike Dewey's vague approach. However, the definition itself lacks a pragmatic application; trainee teachers could struggle to connect these lofty theoretical concepts to real classrooms. Therefore, while an effective overarching conceptualisation, the work of others can be used to supplement Gutmann's conceptualisation of democratic education.

Crick (1999) lists five key values in democratic education: freedom, toleration, fairness, respect for truth, and respect for reasoning. Additionally, an advisory group, chaired by Crick, issued a report on improving British democratic education in schools and offers three elements: social and moral responsibility, political literacy, and community involvement (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998). Halstead and Pike (2006) offer their own list of aims of citizenship education: to produce citizens who are autonomous, critically reflective, informed, committed, and active.

These sets of ideals and concepts are all very closely linked and fit within Gutmann's framework of democratic education. For example, *toleration*, *community involvement*, and *committed* are aligned with Gutmann's view of *cohesive communities*; *respect for reasoning* and *critically reflective* are similarly aligned with *deliberative choice*. Simultaneously, they offer a more "concrete" conceptualisation of democratic citizenship education.

Many authors either use *democratic education* or *citizenship education* to refer to the same concepts. *Citizenship education* can also be used outside of a specifically democratic context. A *democratic classroom* can also refer to set of practices to apply the ideals of democracy to classroom governance and curricular content. To avoid ambiguity, I here use the phrase *democratic citizenship education (DCE)*.

Trainee teachers' beliefs

Building an understanding of trainee teachers' philosophies, beliefs, and attitudes is a significant area of research within education (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). These beliefs relate to a wide range of subjects within education, for example, educational research (Joram, 2007), effective teaching (Chan & Elliott, 2004), or the role of the teacher (Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Such research can inform further research about teachers' subsequent application of beliefs to their practice. Additionally, these understandings are valuable for initial teacher education programmes in considering elements, priorities, and desired outcomes of teacher education.

Initial teacher preparation can be a crucial time for trainee teachers to develop their philosophies (Brownlee, Schraw, & Berthelsen, 2011). Some researchers have shown that teachers' personal epistemology and beliefs can change significantly over the course of teacher education and early teaching years (Bendixen & Corkill, 2011; Walker, Brownlee, Exley, Woods, & Whiteford, 2011). Similarly, participants in teacher training programmes enter with sets of pre-existing beliefs about education, which they may either be reluctant to reconsider (Fives, 2011) or which may undergo significant transformation (McDiarmid, 1990).

Studies have employed a variety of methodologies and methods to understand teachers' beliefs—a concept which presents numerous difficulties. Action research (e.g. McDiarmid, 1990), case studies (e.g. Calderhead & Robson, 1991), interviews (e.g. Joram, 2007) questionnaires (e.g. Chan & Elliott, 2004), and mixed methods (e.g. Cheng, Chan, Tang, &

Cheng, 2009) have proven to be common ways for researchers to better understand trainee teachers' beliefs. The wide range of approaches and conclusions offered by these studies demonstrate the difficulty and nuance involved in initial teacher training and the beliefs of those who participate in it.

Synthesis

From this previous research on trainee teacher beliefs, we can conclude that trainee teachers hold beliefs and attitudes about a wide range of concepts, approaches, and philosophies related to teaching or education. These beliefs and attitudes can be influenced by their teacher training, their own educational experiences, or external influences. The trainee teachers could, for example, accept, reject, feel positively or negatively, towards any concept, approach, or philosophy. Naturally, they too can hold these views towards democratic citizenship education. However, previous research has examined neither attitudes and beliefs in trainee teachers nor the influences of those beliefs. This framework guides the present exploratory study as it seeks to build an understanding of those attitudes and beliefs from two different contexts.

Methodology and methods

To address the research question, this study focused on two cases. Six participants were recruited from Teach First and six from a selective PGCE programme. The primary method of data collection was through individual interviews. As part of a larger study, additional methods were employed; as they are not relevant to the present study, they are not discussed here. Throughout the study, BERA ethical guidelines were followed.

The cases

A set of participants was recruited from the 2013-14 PGCE programme at the University of Cambridge. The course was a fairly typical PGCE programme in that it had a similar structure to those offered at other English universities: it was a one-year, postgraduate course. At the start of the year, the participants' time was largely based in the faculty; over the academic year, their time shifted to primarily placements with mentor teachers in schools. Topics covered in the teacher training included professional studies, sessions in individual subjects, and seminars within placement schools.

At the time of the research, the PGCE at the University Cambridge had consistently been highly ranked in independent assessments of initial teacher education programmes. Ofsted, the British education inspection department, had awarded it a "perfect score." The programme advertised that "competition [for places in the programme] is very strong." Entrance required participants to hold an honours first-class or upper second-class degree.

Simultaneously, an additional set of participants was recruited from the first-year cohort of the Teach First programme. The programme consisted of an intensive six-week summer training course; following this, the programme participants began solo teaching in the autumn. Trainee teachers committed to a two-year position in a school in a low-income area of England. Throughout the position, programme participants continued to receive support and professional development from TF, which eventually led to qualified teacher status. The training provided to programme participants included both professional studies and subject knowledge. An expressed mission of the programme was to address the achievement gap and inequalities due

to socio-economic disadvantage.

TF, as an educational institution, is assessed by Ofsted, and at the time of the study, had received a rating of “Outstanding” with a near perfect score. To join the programme, individuals had to submit to a “rigorous selection process” and were required to possess an upper second-class (“2:1”) degree. At the time, TF had been rated as a “top graduate employer” in the United Kingdom.

TF had been selected as a case for this study because of its continued central position in discussions surrounding initial teacher training in the United Kingdom. The Cambridge PGCE was selected because of similarities to TF in entrance requirements; a high-achieving graduate could have a similar chance of success in applying to either programme.

This is not to suggest that the whole population of participants of the two programmes are the same. There are various factors that could encourage an applicant to prefer one over the other. For example, TF participants receive a salary during the programme, whilst PGCE students do not. Location could be another factor; Cambridge students are largely based in Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas for their placements. Additionally, potential participants can be attracted by certain philosophical draws of either of the programmes. Teach First makes addressing educational inequality a central tenet of its mission. It also has a unique brand that is valuable for future career prospects. It has partnered with various corporations like Google and PwC to provide development for careers outside education, with some even offering benefits like the ability to “jump” stages of job applications. Conversely, the University of Cambridge offers its own brand that may have a similar appeal. Thus, the cadres of participants for these two programmes can be quite distinct before the programmes even exert any direct influence.

The participants

Permission to recruit participants was obtained from programme leadership for both Teach First and the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge. A general appeal was emailed to students in the final term of their PGCE. Teach First students were recruited through an online message board system and through social media groups. The criterion to participate was any individual in either programme preparing to become either a primary or secondary teacher of any subject.

The appeals stated the study was about trainee teachers' beliefs but did not specifically mention democratic citizenship education to avoid priming and biasing participants' responses. Each of these appeals yielded a small number of participants, but not the desired size. Additional participants were recruited through a snowball recruitment technique; participants, colleagues, and other contacts encouraged participation from other eligible participants. Practical restraints of time and the programmes' schedules meant that purposeful, representative, or random sampling had to be sacrificed for convenience sampling. This led to a total of twelve participants, divided evenly between the two cases.

The Teach First participants were evenly split with three men and three women. Four were in the 18-24 age bracket and two in the 25-34 age bracket; all identified their race as white. As required for the programme, all had completed an undergraduate degree. One had previous experience in a career outside education. Three were working as secondary English teachers, and one each in primary education, secondary geography, and secondary science. Thus, while the demographic breakdown percentages do not match the entire TF cohort, they did represent

a range of backgrounds. Note that for ethical reasons, the specific demographics of each participant cannot be enumerated as this could reveal individuals' identities.

The PGCE participants equally came from a range of backgrounds. Four were women and two were men; their ages split evenly, three in the 18-24 age bracket and three aged 25-34. They too all identified their race as white. In addition to all having an undergraduate degree, one had completed a master's degree in a field other than education. Three, however, had some experience working in schools as teaching assistants or a similar capacity. The distribution of their subjects was one each in primary education, secondary geography, secondary history, and secondary mathematics; two were in secondary English. They are broadly similar to the other case's participants in terms of their demographic backgrounds. Again, their individual traits are not listed to protect their anonymity. (Subsequently, individual participants will be identified by pseudonyms.)

The sample does present typical limitations from the onset. A study of this size naturally has limited generalisability. The opt-in nature of the study presents a selection bias; participants with a particular interest in or particular values about educational research may be more inclined to participate than less-interested peers. Although informed that participation was anonymous and that their programmes would not be informed, some participants may have chosen to take part with the hope of making a positive impression on their tutors or mentors. However, these limitations are viewed as admissible. Because the purpose of the research is not to understand all trainee teachers' beliefs, but to build an understanding of some sets of beliefs, the perhaps-skewed sample still holds valid beliefs themselves that ought to be examined. Furthermore, because a random sampling technique was not employed, some sampling bias must be accepted.

The sample size also raises issues of reliability. It is quite likely that a selection of twelve different participants could provide very different results. Similarly, if the same participants participated again at a later point, they could profess to hold very different attitudes and beliefs. This, however, does not negate the importance of these attitudes and beliefs at the time of participating. As exploratory research, this must be accepted; indeed, it presents opportunities for interesting further research.

The interview

The primary source of data was through an individual semi-structured interview with each participant. Interviews were held in in the final term of the school year and generally lasted about an hour. Individual interviews were chosen as a good method to allow each participant's beliefs to be highlighted, rather than potentially being influenced by others in a group interview. Furthermore, attempting to arrange the practical considerations of a group interview with trainee teachers' schedules likely could have discouraged participation. An interview also had the advantage over written questionnaires by allowing the interviewer to probe responses and encourage elaboration.

The interview's content was developed from the research focus: to understand the participants' attitudes and beliefs about democratic citizenship education (as well as associated beliefs that are not addressed in the present paper). This research is based on the framework that teachers (and trainee teachers) hold attitudes and beliefs about the purposes of education; these beliefs may or may not include DCE to varying extents. A range of influences, including teacher preparation courses, may influence these attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, the questions were structured into three major segments before a final concluding question, outlined below.

Interviews began by explaining the purpose of the study and confirming the participants' informed consent. Interviewees were assured, "There is no right or wrong answer," and that the study was interested in understanding their genuine beliefs. The first segment of the interview served to build a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee as well as to activate the interviewees' thoughts on their teacher training. Participants were asked about their reasons for becoming a teacher, how they chose their level and subject, and why they selected the programme they did (either TF or the Cambridge PGCE). They were also asked about their general reactions to their course.

The second segment discussed the participants' views on education. Trainee teachers may not have consciously considered their beliefs or philosophies of education. To aid the conversation, participants were provided ten cards with different viewpoints about the purposes of education. These served as prompts for them to consider; they were able to consider each and gauge their reaction to it individually. Nine of these statements were derived from Michelli and Keiser (2005), Crick (1999), and Halstead and Pike (2006). Collectively, their research offered a range of statements regarding the purposes of education; therefore, they were an effective array of prompts for participants. Some of these cards related closely to the Gutmann's (1999) conceptualisation of democratic citizenship education, whilst others were quite distinct. A tenth card was simply labelled "Other." The ten statements are listed below in Table 1.

All ten cards were laid out face up before the participants in a random order, with the *Other* card last. They were told the cards represented different philosophies regarding the role of education; they might agree with some or all of them. They were then asked to select one they believed should be the most important role of education and explain why. Following a discussion extrapolating their rationale and interpretation of the first card, this was repeated for a second and optional third time. If they felt their first or first and second card summarised their views, they could say they were satisfied and not asked to choose an additional card. In the final question of this segment, interviewees were questioned about a card related to the conceptualisation of democratic citizenship education that they had not selected.

In the third major segment, the questions focused on the participants' teacher training programme. They were first shown an outline of the course topics to aid their recall and asked components of the course they found most influential. Next, participants were asked to consider the cards again, but this time to select the card they felt their programme would most agree with. For each of these questions, the interviewer encouraged them to explain their choice and why they felt that way. This segment was most related to research questions that were part of the larger study not expounded upon here. This segment is discussed presently for the sake of transparency and to present a complete description of the interview process; additionally, participants' comments made during this section of the interview could have relevance to the present study.

In a minor, final segment of the interview, participants were provided a definition of democratic citizenship education adapted from Gutmann (1999). Participants were asked for their reaction to the concept. The content of this segment relates back to that of the second section, but the question was withheld until the end so as to not influence the interviewees' responses in the third segment. Finally, interviewees were given the opportunity to expound about any of the topics discussed, their teacher preparation course, or anything they felt was relevant.

As with much research exploring individuals' beliefs, it can be difficult to ascertain the validity of participants' responses. Various measures were taken to encourage open, genuine responses. Introductory statements were made about "no right or wrong answer" to combat the social desirability bias. Additionally, the card selection process presented varying (and potentially competing or unpopular) statements equally and without favouritism. Finally, the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed the interviewer to press for more elaboration and explanation, which in turn could have encouraged more valid responses.

Analysis

Interviews with the participants were recorded (with the interviewees' permission) and subsequently transcribed.

Theoretical perspectives and inductive approaches were used to develop codes. That is, Gutmann's (1999) conceptualisation of democratic citizenship education provided the initial theoretical codes. Thus, transcripts were manually coded for talk related to *cohesive communities* and for *deliberative choice*. *Alternative purpose of education* was also used when the participant presented a different purpose.

Additional codes were developed through a close reading of the transcripts and by identifying themes that were discussed by the participants. These themes were then organised into cohesive codes by collapsing related concepts and separating dissimilar concepts. Therefore, the codes used for a final round of analysis were: *community (cohesion & cooperation)*; *community (conforming & fitting in)*; *critical thinking*; and *success and survival*. Subsequently, the transcripts were re-examined with attention to the codes to be applied to relevant segments of text.

Findings

Interviewee's dialogue throughout the interview provided useful information about their beliefs. Although their beliefs and philosophies were most directly questioned during their card selection, much of the most salient and revealing information came from their explanations, rationale, and further commentary. Many of the participants had quite varied interpretations of the meanings of particular statements; conversely, some found the same interpretation in different and unrelated statements. Of the twelve participants, three were satisfied with their first two selected cards and declined to choose a third. Some interviewees reported having difficulty selecting between two statements, with one eventually being chosen as only slightly more preferred than the other. Given the small sample size and diversity of responses, the interviewees' selections were not particularly suitable for quantitative analysis. The statement selections for participants, separated by case and in total, is summarised in Table 1.

The table illustrates that the choices of the PGCE participants are rather varied and evenly distributed. The exception is the statement, *promote students' problem solving and critical thinking skills* (n = 5); no other statement was selected by more than two participants.

The table also shows that amongst Teach First participants, three statements appear in at least three participants' responses: *teach socially and morally responsible behaviour* (n = 4); *provide the skills necessary for students to become successful and contributing members of society* (n = 3); and *teach socially and morally responsible behaviour* (n = 3). These selections alone accounted for 10 of the 16 statements selected by Teach First participants.

Table 1
Card listings and selection numbers

<u>Card statement</u>	<u># PGCE</u>	<u># TF</u>	<u># Total</u>
Teach socially and morally responsible behaviour	2	4	6
Promote students' problem solving and critical thinking skills	5	1	6
Provide the skills necessary for students to become successful and contributing members of society	1	3	4
Make students effective in public life through knowledge, skills, and value	2	2	4
Provide a holistic approach to education which focuses on individual students' needs and self expressions	0	3	3
Encourage students to become involved in the life and concerns of their community	2	1	3
Teach personal development through learning principles (as opposed to facts) that have relevance across time and cultures	2	1	3
Teach the methods of discovery and reason through an exposure to the world's greatest thinkers and works	2	1	3
Teach the essentials of academic knowledge in traditional basic subjects	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0
[No card selected]	1	2	3

Because of the aforementioned variance in interpretations, analysis based on the selections alone would be incomplete and a potentially invalid interpretation of the participants' views. Regardless, the card selections demonstrate some initial differences between the participants' stated beliefs in the two group. As differences are more clearly seen in analysis of the further data, the findings of participants' views on DCE are presented below; findings for the PGCE and TF are presented separately.

PGCE students

In analysing the transcripts of PGCE student interviews, two major concepts were seen in many participants' responses, each discussed below: community and critical thinking.

When examining the PGCE participants' conceptualisations about community, it is apparent many of their responses focused on actions like living in society, interacting, and working with others. This occurred even in instances where the participant chose a card seemingly unrelated to the action of community. For example, Christopher selected the *Promote students' problem*

solving and critical thinking skills card, but said,

When you live with people and work with people, and you work as teams and you try to produce things, whether they're new things or old things, you need to be able to problem solve. And that will be something we need to do as humans.

While a key component of this segment is the concept of problem solving, for Christopher, this is linked with living with others and working as teams.

Other PGCE participants shared similar sentiments, often focusing on the idea of working together and mutual contributions. Another participant summed up this sentiment, "Happiness comes from interacting with others." All six of these participants talked about this sense of community for its own sake and benefitting the entirety of the community.

The second theme to emerge in the PGCE students' interviews was of critical thinking and problem solving. As would be expected, much discussion on this topic stemmed from the card *Promote students' problem solving and critical thinking skills*. However, the topic still emerged organically in the one participant (Claire) who did not select this card. While the other participants were quite explicit about the importance of problem solving, Claire's sentiments were implicit:

And learning principles that you can apply across time and cultures, they're [students] going to come across so many things in their lives, that having something—having had that sort of knowledge in their learning [that] is applicable to a huge amount of things.

While she does not use the term critical thinking, she is referencing the idea; she wants students to take learning from one situation and apply it to other contexts. The participants viewed critical thinking as an end—it had its own value.

One PGCE participant, Christine, saw the idea of critical thinking being a key component of communities. Without being prompted to connecting the concepts, she said,

That, to me, is about students' independence and empowerment. So, I think that it is really important we don't just turn out either students who just accept current cultural norms or students who simply rebel against what we tell them. I think if we can help students to identify questions and problems and give them the tools with which to think about them, properly and critically, applied broadly that can help them individually in social situations but also more broadly when they move into adulthood, to help them to deal with worldwide problems and more broad social issues.

To Christine, deliberative choice is essential—students should neither automatically accept or rebel. This is necessary for social situations and for confronting societal issues. Christine described these concepts before having been prompted about DCE specifically, or even being asked about community or societal living.

When presented with a succinct definition of democratic citizenship education, all the PGCE participants agreed it was part of their role as a teacher. They did, however, differ in the extent to which their role was explicit rather than implicit. One stated, "Yeah, I think it is quite crucial. It's not explicit, but it's definitely there." Another participant stated the opposite, "In a subject like geography, we teach it very, very explicitly because we teach things like how communities work and how communities work together." Regardless of these differences, all the PGCE participants expressed a positive attitude towards the concept.

Teach First

Analysing the transcripts of the six TF participants showed two major themes prevalent in each

of the interviews; a third minor theme was also present in some. The three themes were skills for success, community, and realising students' strengths.

The theme of individual students' skills for success is very prevalent throughout the interviews with TF participants. They reiterated that a major role of education was to ensure that students achieved success. Many participants discussed the importance of learning skills to do this; three had chosen the *provide the skills necessary for students to become successful and contributing members of society* card. One interviewee, William, put this in a very striking manner,

But you have to give them the skills in order to be a dustbin man, working in Tesco's, be a policeman, be a prime minister, you have to give them the skills that will get them there. And I'd like to spend more time talking to them and fostering these skills and, you know, really nurturing them...

In discussing individual success and skills, William used employment (in a wide range of roles) as an indicator for success. Five of the TF participants spoke about skills; four discussed them in the context of employment.

The one participant who did not use employment in a discussion about skills for success was Joanne. Interestingly, she had chosen the card *Promote students' problem solving and critical thinking skills* but spoke about it in a different way than her PGCE counterparts. Instead of speaking about the purposes or values of critical thinking itself, she discussed it as a skill that leads to success. She stated, "They [problem solving and critical thinking] are skills I'm really trying to invent in my teaching and the things that I've had to do to be successful or to be where I am." Joanne does not explicitly equate success with employment but leaves ambiguous what success itself actually is. Like other TF participants, she is clear that a key role is providing students with skills for success.

A second major theme in the TF responses is that of community, specifically with a focus on behaviour and a sense of obedience. Many of them expressed that learning acceptable behaviour was an important role of education; some linked this to the concept of success. Ben talked extensively about individuals in society and the importance of behaving appropriately: Or, at the very least, if a school doesn't reinforce what the parents teach in terms of social and moral behaviour, it shouldn't actively detract from that. Because allowing certain behaviours or not as being as strict on them, the effect is you basically tell the kids that it's okay to be truant or run around the school. Of course, if they had any job in the world, that wouldn't be okay.

Four other interviewees expressed similar ideas about the behaviour in school being behaviour that would be valued by the "real world" of work.

For the TF participants, community was something to be conformed to. One interviewee stated, "I'd say just helping them [students] learn what sort of behaviour—what sort of skills and knowledge—is going to make them well like and valued by society is probably important for them." For him, being part of a community is about fitting with accepted behaviours; this view is largely representative of the views of other participants.

Half of the TF participants discussed a third theme: the role of helping students realise their strengths. For the three who mentioned it, the topic came up towards the end of the discussion, subsequent to prior "first choices" of the purpose of education. This purpose was often mentioned as being linked to one or both of the major themes. For example, William discussed it as a component of being part of a community:

So rather than just saying, “This is how you behave to be a member of society”—I think you should do that—but once you do that, now say, “Think about it for yourself. How do you think you can develop to be more useful or more valuable to society, playing to your strengths” ... so helping identify their strengths and decisions.

While this quote demonstrates the concept of fitting in with the community, there is also an element of individual strengths. While only two other participants mentioned this concept, it was distinct and noteworthy.

When questioned explicitly about their beliefs about democratic citizenship education, the TF participants offered very mixed reactions. Two of the six unequivocally rejected that it was a role of education. Both stated their role was helping individuals rather than society as a whole. Ben was one of these participants; in a prior discussion, he had said, “It still should be [that] a school’s function at the end of the day is to release into the world people—if you don’t think that people coming out of a school should be able to take part in society, then why does a school exist?” According to him, the individual people should be prepared for society. Ben also had talked about preparing students to acquire the skills necessary to survive society and gain employment (quoted above). These sentiments substantiate his statement rejecting the role of teachers in democratic citizenship education.

The remaining four said they saw DCE as a role of education, to varying extents. Two of these were not opposed to the concept of democratic citizenship education but felt it too abstract or difficult to teach. They also both cited the current demands imposed by curricula and schools, particularly in relation to tests. The final two professed a positive attitude towards the concept but were divided on the extent it should be explicit. While one felt it was something that should be implicitly modelled, the primary school participant felt it was a role that primary education should openly and actively carry out. This demonstrates vast diversity in beliefs and attitudes towards DCE; this is despite the TF participants’ largely shared sentiments when questioned about the purpose of education in general.

Discussion

Given the findings presented above, this section seeks to provide a perspective on the beliefs and attitudes of trainee teachers towards democratic citizenship education and compare the two cases of this study.

The PGCE participants express ideas that are generally aligned with this study’s conceptualisation of DCE. The two major themes that were present in their responses, community and critical thinking, are closely related to Gutmann’s (1999) definition. Their discussion of community closely reflects the conceptualisation of “cohesive communities,” that is, ones in which society and individuals work together for mutual benefits. In addition, the concept of critical thinking is similar to the idea of “deliberative choice.” While Gutmann’s definition focuses more on deliberations regarding societal values, Kymlicka (2008) and Martin (2005) extend this notion to wider choices and actions that affect society, such as policies or community decisions.

In addition, the participants’ reactions to the presented definition of DCE were generally enthusiastic and receptive. Taken together with their earlier statements, this suggests these participants have a generally positive attitude towards DCE and recognise it as a role of education. Despite this, there is little evidence to suggest a particularly strong endorsement of it; many of their supportive statements suggest implicit approval. At no point does a participant

outright proffer DCE as a primary purpose of education.

The Teach First participants expressed an opposing view of the purpose of education. When they discussed community, it was in a very different context. Instead of societies and individuals working towards mutual benefit, individuals must work to fit into communities and ensure their behaviour conforms. This is compounded by their emphasis on skills and strengths for individual success. These views reflect the trend observed by Michelli and Keiser (2005) that educational systems are moving away from a purpose of democracy-building towards a focus on technical, economic outcomes.

When asked directly for their reaction to DCE, the TF participants offered a wider range of reactions. With some supporting and some rejecting it as a purpose of education, the key conclusion is that their views cannot be summarised into a single, shared view. However, of those who did express support when presented with a definition of DCE, none had previously offered any comments that would suggest it was a priority in their purpose of education. Others went on to say that it was too difficult to implement due to other obligations. Therefore, their attitudes and beliefs towards DCE could be described as generally varied, but generally not a priority as a purpose of education.

Comparing the two cases collectively shows a sharp difference between the two groups. They have different levels of cohesiveness of belief (with PGCE participants tending to be more cohesive). They also collectively differ in the extent to which DCE tends to figure centrally in their beliefs about education's purpose.

Conclusion

There is great difficulty in attempting to understand individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and philosophies with a strong degree of validity. This study relied on asking the interviewees directly; the social desirability bias may have influenced the participants to provide what they thought would be the "right" answer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Potter & Hepburn, 2005). This particular conceptualisation of DCE, or even consideration of the purposes of education, was possibly new or unfamiliar to the participants. The attitudes or beliefs of trainee teachers may still have been "fluid" (Fives, 2011). The design of the interview schedule attempted to mitigate these by asking for general reactions to the purpose of education before asking about DCE directly. Cards provided the participants with prompts to start the discussion, while open ended questions encouraged more detailed (and valuable) explanations.

Caution should be taken before generalising the findings from these participants to the entirety of their respective programmes. With such small sample sizes and potentially unreliable sampling methods, it is presently impossible to ascertain the extent to which the participants' views are prevalent.

Regardless, these findings are themselves meaningful. The fact that some participants in these two programmes professed these views is itself salient. The present findings raise the question of the extent that these views are prevalent in participants of these two programmes. Are they widely held, or were the participants in the present study unusual outliers? Are the suggested findings sincerely held beliefs, or are they more superficial in nature? Are the minor differences seen here endemic of teachers from each case? Do the teacher education programmes exert any influence on teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards DCE? Future research, particularly on a

larger scale, using innovative methods of eliciting individuals' beliefs, or going into greater depth can continue to contribute to these interesting questions.

Additionally, these results are significant in terms of the dozen participants in this study. Even if their respective views are not widely held, these participants do report to hold them. As they each became teachers, those beliefs may affect their practice and may influence the beliefs of their colleagues and students. The extent to which this is the case can be the focus of further research. Whether or not the beliefs they hold are widely prevalent, understanding them contributes to a wider understanding of teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

Aside from prompting questions for further research, the present study has implications for initial teacher preparation. It can serve as an indication of the attitudes towards DCE that some trainee teachers hold. Just as the participants in this study have done, teacher educators can reflect on the beliefs they and their programmes hold towards the purposes of education and DCE. They can consider whether the views expressed by the participants in this study are aligned with the beliefs they would expect their trainee teachers to hold. Such conclusions can prompt discussions about how teacher education approaches DCE, both explicitly and implicitly.

As Gutmann's conceptualisation envisaged it, democracy is a paradoxical balance between cohesive communities and individuals' deliberative choice. By its nature then, democracy will always be precariously situated. If society expects teachers to work as builders and guardians of democracy and to educate democratic citizens, their beliefs and attitudes of such an education cannot be ignored.

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