

Creating International Agreements that establish Norms, Standards, and  
Practices for Civic Education: Reservations from a Comparative Perspective

Carole Hahn

Professor of Educational Studies

Emory University

Atlanta, GA 30322

USA

[chahn@emory.edu](mailto:chahn@emory.edu)

Paper presented to the “Future of Civic Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century conference co-sponsored by the Center for Civic Education and the Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, James Madison’s Montpelier, VA. September 26, 2008

In recent years, there has been much interest in civic education internationally, as evidenced by the number of books and articles on the topic, the number of international conferences and new networks that have formed around civic education, as well as the many resources devoted to civic education reforms within countries. We now have quite a few edited volumes that contain chapters describing policies and practices in civic education in different countries (Arthur, Davies, & Hahn, 2008; Banks, 2004; Cogan & Derricott, 1998; Cogan, Morris, & Print, 2002; Grossman, Lee, & Kennedy, 2008; Kennedy, 1997; Lee, Grossman, Kennedy, & Fairbrother, 2004; Torney-Purta, Schwille, Amadeo, 1999) and books that report on research on civic education conducted in a variety of countries (Hahn, 1998; Stevick & Levinson, 2007; Vontz, Metcalf & Patrick, 1998).

There have also been a series of conferences that have brought together civic educators from different parts of the world, such as those sponsored by CIVITAS International, the Asian Consortium for Citizenship Education in the Schools (ACCES), the Global Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and the Citizenship Education and Teacher Education (citizED) network. The latter is based in England and co-sponsors the journal *Citizenship Teaching and Learning* with the European network CiCe (Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe). Additionally, the Council of Europe and the European Union sponsored a European Year of Education for Democratic Citizenship through Education and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) sponsored the 30 nation civic education (CivEd) study from 1994-2002 (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfelt, & Nikolova ,

2002; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001) and is currently working on the next large scale cross-national study entitled the International Civics and Citizenship Study (ICCS). Further, the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) now has a special interest group of researchers studying education for citizenship internationally. All of this activity reflects the amount and intensity of interest in education for citizenship within and across many countries since 1990.

### *International Interest in Civic Education*

There are a number of reasons for the increased interest in civic education internationally. With the fall of the Soviet Union, policy makers in countries in central and Eastern Europe sought to develop civic education programs to instill democratic attitudes and dispositions in young citizens. Numerous non-governmental organizations in Europe and North America formed partnerships with civic educators in newly democratic societies to design curriculum, write instructional materials, and conduct pre-service and in-service education programs for teachers. Similarly, as authoritarian regimes in Asia, South America, and Africa gave way to more democratic states, policy makers and educators in many parts of the world focused on the need for effective civic education for democracy.

In the 1990s, in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia there was concern about declining percentages of young people who voted and/or reported having an interest in political issues. At the same time, many scholars pointed to the work of Robert Putnam and others who identified a declining participation

in civil society organizations. Additionally, many media stories in these English-speaking countries as well as in Japan and other Asian countries reported increases in youth criminality and alienation. Policy makers hoped that civic education could prevent such problems.

In Europe there has been an interest in developing a European identity alongside national identity and in some African countries there has been interest in developing a national identity alongside ethnic identity. At the same time, globalization, migration, and multiculturalism have posed challenges to diverse societies across the world. For our purposes here, the important point is that many forces have converged to stimulate interest in civic education internationally.

As a result there are now many venues like this one where civic educators and/or policy makers or researchers have the opportunity to share experiences and viewpoints. For many of us, the past 20 years have been an exciting time to be in the field of civic education because of the many opportunities to share interests and experiences with our colleagues who come to discussions with varied viewpoints, rooted in differing historic, cultural, and educational traditions.

### *A Comparative Perspective*

The more I participate in such discussions, read about civic education in different countries, and observe civic instruction in differing cultural contexts, the more I am convinced of three advantages to approaching the field comparatively (Hahn, 1998; 2006). First, education in general and civic education in particular serves as a wonderful

window on a culture. As we learn about the particular knowledge, skills, dispositions and values that a society wants to instill in its young, we learn much about the diversity of cultures in the world. I, for one, find that inherently fascinating.

Second, as we engage in such discussions and read one another's descriptions of goals and practice in civic education, we learn much about similarities (as well as differences). I feel affinity with a global society of civic educators who share similar hopes and dreams for our societies and our youth. Similar—but not the same.

Third, I believe that viewing civic education from a comparative perspective serves as a mirror as well as a window. It enables us to look back on our own taken-for-granted practices with fresh insights. Like the fish is not aware of the water in which it swims, or the human of the air he or she breathes, civic educators can easily overlook aspects to what is “just the way it is.” Stepping out of one's culture enables us to learn more about our own culturally embedded assumptions, goals, and practices.

While experiencing these advantages to civic education comparatively and internationally, I have come to appreciate the importance of the socio-cultural context in which civic education takes place. This leads me to being skeptical about “one size fits all” approaches and to thinking that civic educators can or should develop a set of universal standards, norms, or desired practices. Rather, I think we might develop a set of questions that could be asked of civic education goals and practices in differing socio-cultural contexts. In the remainder of this paper I will elaborate on some of the similarities and differences in civic education internationally that have lead me to this position.

*What's Included? What's Excluded in Civic Education Cross-nationally?*

On the one hand, civic educators may agree that their goal is to instill civic knowledge, skills or abilities, and dispositions or values in young people. On the other hand, there is much variation in priorities and in how national policy makers choose to balance those elements. Most importantly, what “counts” as civic education varies considerably and there is much variety in the role that schools are expected to play in the process.

In the United States and Germany the various states and *Länder* expect their schools to prepare youth for citizenship in a democracy. For that purpose, they publish curricular guidelines that specify some of the knowledge that students are expected to acquire, such as knowledge of the Constitution or Basic Law, major institutions and processes in the federal system, and national history. In the United States, some states list competencies, such as being able to analyze public issues, consider alternatives, and develop positions. Today most US states require students to take a course in civics or government for high school graduation, or at least to receive instruction in the national and state constitutions (CIRCLE, 2007). In Germany, although the name of the course may vary across *Länder* and whether the subject is delivered in a separate course or in combination with other social sciences varies, some instruction in political education is provided. Both countries have traditionally given substantial attention to political education or political literacy (knowledge and skills).

The political aspects of civic education are of less importance to civic educators in many other countries. In England, political literacy is only one of four dimensions and

indeed seems to receive the least attention among the four. The other dimensions identified in the Citizenship order are social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and most recently added, social cohesion, or “identities and diversity: living together in the UK” (Kerr, Smith, & Twine, 2008). It is only since 2002 that schools in England and Wales have been expected to deliver citizenship and it is left to the schools to decide whether they will do that in a subject (most often called citizenship studies for 14-16 year olds), or in a variety of subjects, such as history, English, and religious studies, or primarily through the ethos of the school and extracurricular activities. In the many schools that I have visited in England over the past 20 years, I see a high priority given to social and moral responsibility. School staff give talks on responsible behavior at bi-weekly assemblies, students study about different religions’ approaches to ethical and moral issues in religious studies lessons, and students in their tutor groups (like homeroom or class) participate in charity events to demonstrate community participation. But there is much skepticism of developing political knowledge. Educators and political leaders of both the right and the left feared indoctrination by the other side. As schools decide how to implement the new Citizenship policy, I have often heard educators say, “but we don’t want those dry civics classes.” Expectations for citizenship education vary among the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, but overall political literacy is not a central feature.

In a cross-national study of civic educators reported in a book edited by Lee and Fouts (2005), teachers who were surveyed from England identified concern for the welfare of others, moral and ethical behavior, and tolerance of diversity within society as most important characteristics of good citizenship; knowledge of current events, of the

world community, and knowledge of government were rated lower—with knowledge of government being quite low (Davies, Gregory, & Riley, 2005).

In the same study teachers from Australia identified concern for the welfare of others, moral behavior, and tolerance as important characteristics of a good citizen and knowledge of current events, the world, and government as less important; again knowledge of government was given very low priority (Prior, 2005). Australia, like England, has not traditionally expected schools to prepare youth for citizenship. In recent years, the Australian government invested large sums of money in curriculum development, in-service teacher education, and providing free materials to all schools as part of the *Discovering Democracy* project. However, there has been uneven use of the materials because courses in civics and history are not required (Print, 2008). In many ways, civic education in Australia has not been a high priority, and that which exists is primarily delivered through the general ethos of the school and existing subjects such as history or geography, or Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE)—not separate courses in civics. Further, greater emphasis tends to be put on social responsibility and being a member of a community than on political literacy.

In the same study of civic educators that I mentioned above, researchers in Hong Kong reported that their sample teachers characterized good citizenship, in descending priority, as fulfillment of family responsibilities, moral and ethical behavior, and knowledge of current events, and knowledge of government (Lee, 2005). This is not surprising. Lee explained that culturally Hong Kong's roots are in Confucian society. A good citizen was someone who is a good person carrying out their responsibilities first to

the family and then to the wider community. Lessons in moral education in Hong Kong, as in other Chinese societies were aimed at developing good moral character.

Numerous authors writing on the history of civic education in Hong Kong describe a tradition of “depoliticization” in civic education under British colonial rule (Fairbrother, 2008; Lee, 2005). It was only in the few years leading up to and since the handover that civic education guidelines were written; those guidelines have included teaching students about local political institutions, democratic processes and principles, the importance of the rule of law, and the indirect electoral process of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. Hong Kong students have traditionally learned about Chinese history and culture. In recent years, there is also an expectation that they will develop a national identity with China. Importantly, although there has been much written about civic education in Hong Kong, and syllabi have been written for a variety of courses, such as Civics, Economic and Public Affairs (EPA), and Government and Public Affairs (GPA), many schools have not actually taught the courses. Rather, other more high status subjects filled most students’ timetable (schedule). In the latest reform Liberal Studies is an interdisciplinary subject drawing on social studies and sciences and is supposed to provide students opportunities to investigate issues.

Although Hong Kong is unique in its relationship to first Britain and then China, it is not unique in the region in terms of emphasizing moral aspects of citizenship over political aspects. In Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and Japan, civic education is viewed as containing both moral education and social studies (Grossman et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2004). Indeed conferences and articles often refer to “civic and moral education” as if they are one thing. In Taiwan, the recent reform in social studies curriculum looks

very similar to the ten themes identified by the National Council for the Social Studies (1994). However, there has been criticism of the Americanization of the curriculum, noting that it does not sufficiently take account of the unique historic, cultural, economic, and political context of Taiwan (Doong, 2008).

I could continue to cite other examples, but I believe these are sufficient to demonstrate that in different civic cultures, policy makers, educators, and parents are likely to give differing priorities to political knowledge, moral behavior, and social responsibility as components of education for citizenship. I will turn now to two components of society with differing relationships to civic education cross-nationally, religion and patriotism.

### *Religion, Norms, and Dispositions*

Religion plays a different role in and/or in relation to civic education across national contexts. In countries such as the United Kingdom and Denmark there is a state church and a predominantly secular society. In Germany there is a tradition of offering either Protestant or Catholic religion classes (or ethics) and in the Netherlands, Protestant and Catholic schools receive equal funding from the state. Across these countries, students may study about Islam and other faiths, as well as Christianity and Judaism, particularly as their societies have become more religiously diverse. In religious studies classes I have observed in England, students wrestle with many moral and ethical issues that are public as well as personal issues, such as those dealing with the environment, gay

rights, and poverty at home and abroad. Students are encouraged to take positions on public issues in light of their religious convictions.

In contrast, students in the United States study landmark Supreme Court cases about the separation of church and state. Although some teachers encourage their students to research and discuss differing views on issues such as school prayer, gay rights, and abortion policies, many teachers avoid these issues because they fear that religion is too controversial and could offend students' families with differing religious values (or in other ways upset parents or the local community).

India takes a very different approach to religion. The 1947 Constitution established India as a free and independent, secular democracy (Joshee, 2008). However, the word 'secular' carries a different meaning than it does in the United States and much of northern Europe. Schools in India celebrate many religions and religious holidays. School assemblies, like those in the UK, often carry moral messages, but in India those messages are conveyed through the writings of diverse religious traditions. Students acquire civic education through courses in social science, but also in the ethos of the school, which celebrates diverse religions, as well as cultures and languages.

In Pakistan (Ahmad, 2008; Dean, 2008), Indonesia (Fearnley-Sander, 2008), and Malaysia (Bajunid, 2008) civic education includes principles of Islam (and in Malaysia, also respect for other religious communities). Islamic studies, moral education, and civic education are intertwined. Dean (2008) notes that in Pakistan, as in India, the founders initially sought a secular state, but over time subsequent regimes have required more and less emphasis on teaching Islam in schools. The school is expected to prepare good Muslims who will thus be good citizens.

Israel poses yet another model. Established as a Jewish state, but having a population that consists of both religious and secular traditions and Arab and Jewish populations, there are three separate school systems and all three teach civic education: Hebrew religious schools, Hebrew non-religious schools, and Arab schools (Ichilov, 2005, 2008). In the Palestinian territories on the West Bank and Gaza there is yet another curriculum for civic education (Moughrabi, 2008).

Although in the United States and in Germany, civic education and religious education have been seen as two separate domains, for many cultures and nations the two are not separate spheres, but rather intertwined. The US *National Standards for Civics and Government* speak of civic life as distinct from private life (and traditionally in the United States religion was considered to be in the private arena) but such a distinction is not universally held. I believe it would be very difficult to develop international norms with respect to religion and civic life that would be meaningful across different worldviews.

### *Patriotism/Nationalism/National Identity*

Another topic that can impact civic education which is seen quite differently cross-nationally, as well as within countries, is patriotism or national identity. Love of country, positive attitudes toward one's country, and identification with the country or national culture are not necessarily the same thing. Nevertheless the variations should be considered in a discussion of civic education internationally. In the cross-national study of civic educators, there was considerable variation in whether teachers identified a good

citizen as patriotic (Lee & Fouts, 2005). Teachers from England and Australia rated patriotism very low in terms of being important to good citizenship, whereas US teachers in the study gave it a rating only slightly lower than social concern and knowledge.

Civic education scholars in the United States tend to say little about the development of “love of country,” yet they recognize that attitudes toward one’s country develop in the formal, as well as non-formal, aspects of civic education, particularly since 9/11. James Banks and others write about the importance of developing a reflective identification with the nation state and the world community and balancing national unity (social cohesion) and (cultural) diversity (Banks & Banks, 1999; Banks, et al., 2005).

In the United States young people develop a sense of national identity and positive attitudes toward their country from activities in school as well as from their families and experiences in society, such as the playing of the national anthem before sports events. Many states in the United States require schools to lead a daily pledge of allegiance to the flag, although this is not done in all schools. US schools celebrate national holidays and teach about American heroes such as Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and civil rights leaders from Harriet Tubman to Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. US students study their nation’s history as a narrative of progress, in which social movements struggled for an ever-widening conception of “equality and justice for all.” Several researchers have found that students from different parts of the country and from differing demographic groups identify with their nation’s story referring to historical events using pronouns such as “we” and “our” (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Hahn, 1999). Although this identification with the nation’s history is widespread, not all researchers have found it with all students. For example, in studying

one high school class in Michigan, Epstein (2001) found that some of the African-American students in the class described a narrative of oppression and resistance that was different from what some of the white students in the class recalled.

In my visits to schools in Germany, students often explained that they would never say they were proud of their country because to do so would evoke associations with National Socialism and the Holocaust. I understand that the current generation of young people is now saying that it is all right to feel pride in their country's achievements without referring to past atrocities. Still, I doubt that German educators would list national identity or patriotism as a key component of civic education.

In England, particularly since the 7/07 London bombings, there has been much discussion about what it means to be British, and how to develop a sense of national identity and social cohesion among young people from different religious, racial, and ethnic communities. For this reason the new theme was added to the citizenship order: identities and diversity: living together in the UK. There has been debate about whether attention to this theme will help to promote tolerance, anti-racism, and resistance to Islamophobia, or whether encouraging students to identify with a common public and fostering positive attitudes toward being "British" might lead to exclusionary attitudes.

With less ambivalence toward patriotism, "national education" is a major goal in Singapore and China. In Singapore there is concern about the need to develop a stronger sense of national identity in the face of multiculturalism and globalization (Tan & Chew, 2008). Since the opening of society to market reform, in China there is less emphasis on Marxist and Maoist political ideology than there was in the past. However, there is still

a high value placed on developing a love of China and pride in the country's achievements (Fairbrother, 2008; Lee & Ho, 2008).

In a number of countries in Africa, civic education is seen as important to developing a sense of national identity and unity that transcends ethnic and tribal communities as well as to develop democratic norms. Studying civic education teachers and students in Ghana (Groth, 2006), Kenya and South Africa (Kubow), and Malawi (Divala & Enslin, 2008), researchers have identified different understandings of democracy and national identity to those found in traditional Western liberal democracies.

This discussion of varied perspectives on the role of civic education in instilling positive attitudes toward the nation further demonstrates how complicated it would be to develop international standards and norms in civic education. Let us now turn to practices to see if that might be any easier.

### *Instructional Practices for Civic Education*

In the United States, the document *The Civic Mission of Schools* (Carnegie and CIRCLE, 2003) describes six promising practices in civic education based on available evidence from the United States. Those practices are: classroom instruction in social studies, discussion of current issues, service learning, extracurricular activities, student voice in school governance, and simulations.

*Classroom instruction in social studies.* Researchers have found that US students who received specific instruction in civics and government, and those who had more

course work in social studies had higher levels of civic knowledge than students without such deliberate instruction (Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greenberg, & Hahn, 2001; Hart et al., 2007; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Similar results were obtained with samples of students in Ukraine and South Africa (Craddock, 2005; Finkel & Ernst, 2005). Further, US students with higher levels of civic knowledge were more likely than their peers to anticipate voting as adults (Torney-Purta et al., 2001) and when they reached voting age to actually vote (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). Further, in the longitudinal study of school influences on later civic engagement, young adults said that their interest in politics increased as a result of taking a course in civics or government (Hart, et al., 2007).

*Discussion of current issues.* Researchers since the 1970s have concluded that when US students have the opportunity to explore public issues about which people disagree (controversial issues) and the students perceive that they are encouraged to express diverse views, then there are benefits in terms of increased political interest, trust, and efficacy, as well as an increased sense of citizen duty (for a summary of that research see Hahn, 1998). Similarly, in the IEA Civic Education (CivEd) study of 14-year olds, an open classroom climate for discussion was associated with civic knowledge in 19 of the participating countries; it was associated with students' expectations that they would vote in 20 of the countries studied (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). In most of the countries the association was weak, though statistically significant, and for a third of the countries, it did not appear to be an important factor.

Evaluations of a number of civic education projects in the United States point to the benefit of students exploring and discussing issues. These include evaluations of the

projects *Kids Voting*, *We the People and the Constitution...*, ...*Project Citizen*, and *Deliberating Democracy* (see Hahn, 2008 for a summary of those evaluations).

Evaluations of similar projects in which US based non-governmental organizations partnered with civic educators in Ukraine and other East European countries, as well as in South Africa, to deliver civic education yielded similar findings. When students had deliberate instruction in civic content, they increased in knowledge; when that instruction included issues-centered discussions and student centered activities, then students also developed positive attitudes and dispositions (Avery, et al., 2006; Craddock, 2005; Finkel & Ernst 2005, Vontz, Metcalf, & Patrick, 2000).

Despite similar findings in a number of different countries, I do not think we can claim that the practice of giving students opportunities to explore controversial issues in an open climate classroom will be effective in all countries. For example, we do not yet have research to determine if this practice is equally effective in Asian countries with very different pedagogical cultures. In societies that value harmony and seek to avoid conflict and where class sizes typically are approximately 50 students to one teacher, issues-centered class discussions may be less effective than they have been in the samples studied so far.

Even in countries with similar civic cultures, I found distinct pedagogical cultures when it came to the discussion of controversial issues (Hahn, 1998). In diverse schools in the United States I observed classes in which students debated school issues such as dress codes and discussed national and international news events that evoked less controversy. In Germany I saw many lessons in which students listed the “*Pro*” and “*Contra*” positions of a possible public policy and then explained what they thought the

best policy would be and why. In varied schools in Denmark I observed students conducting surveys in their community to assess attitudes toward some public policy. I also observed Danish students debating classroom and school issues, such as what topics to study in social studies and how to spend money from the school council budget. In England I saw students expressing their views on alternative actions in terms of morality in their religious studies classes. Thus, even if civic educators in a few countries can agree that students should have practice in exploring controversial public issues, researching and listening to diverse positions, and expressing their views, the ways in which teachers facilitate that experience is likely to vary from one country to the next.

*Service learning.* Service learning is another practice that is quite widespread in the United States and that the *Civic Mission of the Schools* report recommended. This is consistent with the culture that de Tocqueville observed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when he noted that Americans often joined associations and volunteered in numerous ways in their communities. In recent years, service learning has been promoted to prepare students for their role as participating members of civil society. Researchers have found that students who participate in service learning during their school years are more likely than their peers without such an experience to vote and to continue to engage in volunteer work in their communities as adults. (Hart et al., 2007).

In England, there is a tradition of encouraging students to raise money in schools for charities and adults volunteer in numerous ways in their communities. Community Service Volunteers (CSV) is an organization that promotes service learning (but they find schools object to the term ‘community service,’ which is a punishment that judges require of individuals for crimes). In other countries, where the expectation is that the state will

provide for the health and welfare of citizens, there is not likely to be much enthusiasm for service learning. Perhaps not surprisingly in the IEA study, 50 percent of 14 year olds in the United States reported that they had participated in a group conducting voluntary activities in the community and 16 percent of students in Germany said they had such an experience. Fewer than 10 percent of students in Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Sweden had participated in a volunteer group.

*Student voice in school governance.* Student councils exist in many schools in the United States and Germany, as well as in many other countries (Torney-Purta, et al., 1999). However, there is much variation in the amount of power (and money) student councils/Parliaments have. In the United States student councils often plan school dances and other social events. In England, they often make recommendations on school uniform policies. In Denmark, I observed student councils deciding how to spend the budget that they received from the local school board; they also joined student councils across the country to raise funds for programs in developing countries. In some schools in England, Australia, and the United States there have been initiatives to make student council members more responsive to their constituents so that all of the student body is involved in school governance—not just a few chosen students.

*Extracurricular activities.* Students in the United States often participate in school sponsored sports programs, music programs, clubs, and groups with specific civic aims, such as mock trial teams. In the IEA study, students who participated in extra-curricular activities had higher civic knowledge scores than US students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities (Baldi et al., 2001). In England, Germany, and Japan students

participate in after-school clubs, but not the competitive school sports teams that are characteristic of American high schools.

*Simulations.* In the United States a frequent practice is for schools to hold mock elections at the time of state and national elections. And many middle and high schools sponsor mock trial programs. In civics and government classes as well as history classes, it is not unusual for students to participate in simulations of the Constitutional convention, Congress, a court, or their state legislature. Such simulations are less prevalent in civic education in other countries. I recall a colleague from Germany who once brought a group of teachers to attend the National Council for the Social Studies conference in the United States. He told me that the German teachers were troubled by the fact that the US teachers seemed to worry a great deal about motivating students with various activities they would perceive to be fun.

*School cleaning.* A practice that would be quite alien to most students in the United States and Germany is important to schooling in many Asian countries. In homeroom or work groups, students in Japan, South Korea, and China clean their school. They also plan school wide festivals and celebrations and they are responsible for organizing and carrying out many club activities after school. These are all ways in which students learn to work together and develop a sense of responsibility and group solidarity, as well as develop leadership skills. This kind of civic action is quite different from the civic/political action in which students in some European countries, such as Greece, protest, become involved with youth political parties, and work to change government policies (Torney-Purta, et al., 1999).

*Conclusion*

I hope I have given a flavor of the rich diversity of norms and practices in civic education internationally. It is because of these culturally embedded differences that I am skeptical of a project to develop international standards, which imply a kind of “best practice.” In recognizing this diversity, I am not arguing that cultures, even civic cultures are static; they are constantly changing and what may have been typical at one point in time may change. I am also not advocating a kind of cultural relativism, but rather encouraging civic educators to consider how approaches in other countries may or may not be insightful to their own.

Importantly, I do believe that civic educators can learn much from one another’s experiences. It might be possible to develop sets of questions or alternative scenarios to stimulate cross-national discussions. Other projects have developed lists of concepts and principles for civic education that might be adapted to differing socio-cultural contexts (Banks, et al., 2005). The IEA studies assess student knowledge of civic concepts that are taught in many countries, and they assess student attitudes and experiences to ascertain how student perspectives are similar and different across countries; they do not advocate for a particular approach (although they have represented Western liberal views of democracy and democratic education in the past). With the availability of the Internet, it might be possible to share videos of civic education in differing cultural contexts and to set up a kind of Facebook social networking site for civic educators. I look forward to hearing other possible ways to stimulate discussion of civic education internationally.

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