Education for Responsible Citizenship

Rodney H. Clarken
Department of Education
Northern Michigan University

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Abstract

A rationale for and principles and ideals related to responsible citizenship for each of the seven strands of the Michigan Framework for Social Studies Education are presented along with sample aims, objectives, topics and concepts for responsible citizenship.

Responsible citizenship is the goal of all education. All subjects, but especially the social studies, can prepare students for this goal. In 1995, the Michigan Department of Education adopted the Michigan Framework for Social Studies Education that consists of seven strands with a total of twenty-five standards that contribute to responsible citizenship, the overarching goal of social studies education in Michigan. Responsible citizenship is the means for individual and collective advancement and requires service, social understanding, effort, character, civic efficacy and morals. If students are well trained in knowledge, but lack these qualities, their knowledge will prove harmful to themselves and society. The Michigan Framework for Social Studies Education identifies four capacities uniquely contribute to responsible citizenship: disciplinary knowledge, thinking skills, commitment to democratic values and citizen participation.

A concern for responsible citizenship grows along with the signs of a breakdown in our society: dramatic increases in crime, substance abuse, illegitimate births, and other social problems. Schools can help prepare students to be morally capable and responsible adults and equip them to deal with the problems facing society. Teachers can engage students in discussions on morality and character to help them understand and apply concepts such as honesty and justice to their individual and collective lives. This can be done through the study of each subject, as well as through the day-to-day practices in the school.

Principles and ideals related to responsible citizenship for each of the seven strands of the Michigan Framework for Social Studies Education are presented below. Sample aims, objectives, topics and concepts for responsible citizenship are also given.

Historical Perspective

Our purpose is to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.

This is characterized by higher levels of unity and development.
Humanity has successively passed through the stages of the tribe, the city-state, and the nation and is now entering the stage of world unity.

Development is cyclical.

Active present is the culmination of our collective past, much like an individual's present and past. The past gives meaning and perspective to the present. Learn from mistakes and learn from others.

Heroes of history to understand and be inspired by the qualities that enabled these men and women to be great. Major religions have been primary influences in the development of civilization.

aphic Perspective

We are spaceship earth.

We and the environment are interrelated and intra-related.

Resources of the world must be used for the betterment of the world and distributed fairly.

Essentially one family--we are more alike than we are different.

Appreciation of diversity--the various colors, shapes and cultures have resulted from adapting to different conditions.

Environmental and interrelated people affect people and people affect the environment. People have a responsibility to protect the environment and use it to benefit all humanity, present and future.

Unity in diversity--humankind can be compared to the flowers of a garden: the blending of different flowers increases its beauty. Diversity can be enriched through cross-pollination with other cultures.

Political boundaries do not represent the reality of human and environmental relationships.

Perspective

Justice is the foundation of civilization.

Justice and unity are remedies for an ailing world.

Rights are God-given rights.
The family is a nation in miniature and may be used to help understand politics and government.

Family is the basic unit of civilization and should be strong and healthy.

Humankind is passing from the stage of adolescence to the stage of adulthood, which requires more mature patterns of relationships.

Prejudice of all kinds must be eliminated, especially racism, sexism, classism, nationalism, and religionism.

The world is one country and humankind its citizens.

The world may be likened to the human body: the parts affect the whole and the whole affects the parts.

The unity of the planet is the chief challenge facing the world today.

There must be an equality of rights between men and women.

**Economic Perspective**

Solution to economic problems is fundamentally spiritual in nature.

Apply the golden rule and love to economics.

Extremes of wealth and poverty must be eliminated.

Adjustment of the social economy ensures stability, happiness, and prosperity.

Service.

Son has individual talents and capabilities which can be utilized in service to humanity.

Mandement on everyone to engage in some gainful employment.

Dismantle all economic barriers.

The interdependence of capital and labor.

Sharing is a solution to one form of economic problems.

A universal system of currency, weights, and measures is needed.

**Inquiry**

The broader and deeper our understanding, the better prepared we are for inquiry.

Be open to new ideas—accept the truth, whatever its source and our biases.
There is no limit to the amount of knowledge we can acquire. Just investigate the truth for themselves and not blindly follow others. Education is the primary means of promoting a better world. The future gives meaning and perspective to the present. The only thing we can be sure of is that things will change.

And social sciences should serve the interest of humanity, not the other way around. Truth must conform to scientific truth and science must be guided by morals and ethics.

Entific approach to the religions to eliminate the superstitions and misinterpretations, and a religious approach to science to maintain an ethical approach. Truth is relative and progressive, playing an important part in the many successive stages in the evolution of civilization.

Lents develop critical and analytical capacities, deal with their preconceptions and solve their own problems. Disciplined learning environment, set norms for social interaction, motivate students and help students to achieve their goals.

**Public Discourse and Decision Making**

Whatever passes beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence; i.e., civilization, liberty.

Just independently search for truth--know how groups can influence thinking and behavior. Consultation can help solve problems.

Put forth views with moderation, care, courtesy and detachment. Try to get participation from all parties.

Sensus and unity whenever possible.

Words must be translated into deeds and used for the good of all.

There is usually a good reason why people think and do the things they do. Tolerance for and acceptance of others points of view.

**Citizen Involvement**
People should be law-abiding and loyal to their governments.

The foundation of society and civilization.

Crime can be mostly eliminated through proper training that would make committing a crime so aversive that only a few would do so.

Justice is the foundation of society and civilization.

Environment affects humanity; humanity affects environment.

People are responsible for protecting and improving their environment.

Culture are undergoing a re-formation

Continuous cooperation and mutual help.

Worship when performed in the spirit of the service.

Students in service activities.

Noral excellence more than academic excellence: help students to be both intelligent and good.

A sense of service, community and cooperation in the classroom.

Can change people for the better, if it is not corrupted or used for corrupt purposes.

Way from the focus on individualism toward a valuing of community.

Habits of moral behavior in children.

Discuss, allow students to practice, and expose students to examples of virtuous behavior, such as curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences.

Well-ordered environment that preserves the dignity of all the individuals and encourages goodness and excellence.

Moral and character development as early in the child's life as possible.

Self-discipline in the students.

Students' self-esteem, motivation, character, civic responsibility, and respect for individual differences.

Aims, Objectives, Topics and Concepts Related to Responsible Citizenship

The students will understand, value and demonstrate responsible citizenship as it relates to the Michigan Framework for Social Studies Educatio
To create a classroom of responsible citizens.

Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this unit, the students should be able to:

1. Identify key aspects of being a responsible classroom, school, local, national and world citizen.
2. Value responsible citizenship.
3. Understand the various perspectives of and teach and promote responsible citizenship.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of effective inquiry, public discourse and decision making.
5. Appreciate their rights and responsibilities, and those of others, and act to protect these rights.
6. Demonstrate commitment to responsible citizenship by becoming involved in beneficial social activities.
7. Act as responsible citizens.

**Major Concepts:**

- Authority
- Citizenship
- Community
- Consultation
- Cooperation
- Culture
- Democracy
- Development
- Diversity
- Evolution
- Independence
- Institutions
- Interdependence
- Love
- Loyalty
- Morality
- Power
- Religion
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Rights
- Self Reliance
- Service
- Society
- Societal control
- Tolerance
- Tradition
- Unity
- Universality