

Editorial Introduction

The fifth annual Citizenship Education Research Journal (CERN) has been compiled from the scholarly investigations of researchers and educators in Canada. This volume focuses on a mindset which values collective responsibility and care through committed meaningful action(s) and its necessity for improving Citizenship Education in local, national, and global contexts in order to address injustices and create a more socially just world.

Sustainable development of a world that is peaceful and humane is linked to quality education of current and future citizens. UNESCO has called for Citizenship Education in the 21st century as a vital part of any education system and emphasized “citizenship education can be regarded as an ethical (or moral) education.” Addressing issues of educating responsible citizens who are aware of self-respect, collective ethical principles, and the will to live with and for others are the main concerns of the authors in this edition. They address possibilities and complexities in their investigations and invite youth and adults to engage more in civic activities, identify injustices through thinking critically about conflicts over rights, and call for informed committed action; all of which require development of more pedagogical models in Citizenship Education.

The fifth annual edition of CERJ includes six peer-reviewed papers, four of which focus on cross-cultural partnerships for youth-driven inquiry and action within Pedagogies of Repair and Reconciliation (Tikkun) in local communities. The Tikkun Project has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada. It supports inquiries “by” youth leaders and “with” youth participants in their communities, and informs transformative Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) conducted at five global sites-Kosovo, South Africa, and three Canadian cities. The Tikkun Project includes youth researchers, multiple community organizations, and cross-disciplinary university researchers and aims at promoting skills for further youth civic engagement and leadership.

First, Yvette Daniel and John Antoniw provide an introduction to the Tikkun project, explaining the youth-focused partnership between Canada and international communities, and clarifying the aims of this partnership. Their ultimate goal is understanding youth’s perspectives and roles in civic engagement for repair and healing. They feel that their youth participants, instilled with an ethic of responsibility, take on projects that meet the needs of their communities focusing on change through small steps. Taking small steps towards creating change is the core of Tikkun.

The second paper authored by Lisa Korteweg and Alex Bissell focuses on an indigenized approach to youth participation for civic engagement in North Ontario. This research has been inspired by an Indigenous youth-generated report which highlights the needs of Indigenous youth in their own words and based on their own experiences. The authors explain that as non-Indigenous educators/researchers who are seeking support for Indigenous youth activism, they must challenge their own assumptions and equip themselves through hearing Indigenous youth and creating spaces for them to speak their truth.

The third paper of this edition, authored by Nombuso Dlamini, Yvette Daniel, and Cynthia Kwakyewah, is an analysis and reflection of a Tikkun Project about girls’ civic participation in urban settings in the Greater Toronto Area. In this paper, the authors particularly emphasize the interconnections between urban spatiality and social experiences to explore the issues and challenges facing urban female youth in the context of the study.

In the fourth paper, drawing from the epistemological and pedagogical orientation of embodied feminist pedagogy, Frances Cachon argues that feminist pedagogy values many of the same principles as justice-oriented civic education. She suggests that feminist pedagogy can be a

potential strategy for educators/researchers who are seeking to cultivate social justice in their communities through citizenship education.

Following the Tikkun Project reflections on a “shared responsibility to heal and transform the world” through small action-oriented steps, Bryan Smith and Pamela Rogers take us to a broader context, a national level. Through articulating and theorizing the possibilities and limitations of a decolonizing citizenship, they invite us to re-conceptualize the notion of citizenship and the definition of our collectivity from sharing a unified, national identity towards having a shared fate in a shared context. This investigation creates a context for a subsequent paper where they will explore the applicability of these ideas in pedagogical settings aiming at decolonizing education.

In the last paper, Said Al Badri, who has experienced two different educational cultures in Oman and Canada, raises an issue about Oman’s educational system. Comparing what he has experienced and observed in Canada, he explains that Oman has not integrated enough controversial discussions into its education programs; he suggests including these types of topics in Oman’s curricula and preparing teachers to address critical issues in their classrooms would be a helpful step towards developing critical thinking and educating socially-justice oriented citizens in Oman.

To conclude, this edition of CERJ critically explores aspects of citizenship education which aim at educating youth and adults to become more responsible citizens, individually and collectively in their communities, who raise the issues of injustices in their environment, and take committed action(s) towards possible solutions. Authors of this edition inform us -as educators and scholars- of the necessity and potential values as well as existing issues and complexities of this aspect of citizenship education. They look for possible theories, pedagogical models, and practices through which citizens of all ages can be more aware of their rights and responsibilities, speak out against injustices, and act with conscience and reason.

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