

The article "What Research Tells Us about Citizenship Education in English Canada," by Alan Sears addresses the findings of Canadian research in the development of citizen education. He does this by breaking down the findings into what is culture, grassroots citizenship, behind classroom doors and hope in the classroom. He draws from a variety of sources dating back to the 1960's however as Sears suggests, this research is not enough. He concludes that more research is necessary in developing an analysis on citizen education.

Sears highlights the importance social studies has on citizen education. He brings forward that social studies is not only the primary source of citizen education but is often its only driver. He does state other courses can play important roles however there is no denying the role social studies plays. The recent trend has been the promotion of multiculturalism, bilingualism and globalization. Research into the "hidden curriculum" however has shown a bias of the white French/British middle class culture while multiculturalism has been more celebratory. Other trends have been the misrepresentation of women in the curriculum. These findings by Sears and other researchers have mostly been based on the study of provincial curriculum. Sears suggests that to further understand how citizenship education is taught in our country, we need to research behind classroom doors.

In the article, Sears stresses the importance of in-class research. He does discuss research previously done however these aren't enough. Non the less, the analysis was valuable. One factor that has contributed to the lack of citizenship education is the lack of class involvement. A study conducted in Vancouver found that even though new progressive ways of teaching were being taught at local universities to student teachers, they weren't being implemented. New teachers often retreat to more conservative methods of teaching as they are often overwhelmed in their early years. Young teachers have also been known to avoid controversial issues in the classroom to better manage it. The trend in recent years has been for teachers to wait for the global issue to be resolved, then look back on it years later. Unfortunately this disables opportunities for students to get active and participate in their community, a corner stone of citizenship education.

Sears's article is a fascinating glimpse into the role citizenship education has played out in the last half of the 20th century. He does not however offer many solutions besides the need for more research. His suggestions revolve around how research should be conducted, for example more in-class research, and not curriculum or pedagogical changes. Besides these shortcoming, "What Research Tells Us about Citizenship Education in English Canada" provides valuable insight to current role citizenship education has in Canada.