THE ONTARIO AND HELLENIC KINDERGARTEN CURRICULA:
POLITICS OF DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

by

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Globalization and neo-liberal practices have influenced education and schooling in various ways, particularly through curricula. As a result, interest in elementary school, particularly kindergarten, education has been generated by supranational organizations; specifically the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as international organizations such as the European Union and numerous federal and provincial governments, including the Canadian, Ontario and Hellenic governments. This research explores how democratic citizenship education is reflected in kindergarten curricula in Ontario, Canada and Hellas, Greece. Because of growing concerns with democratic citizenship education, in this study, I have analyzed and compared the kindergarten education curricula of Ontario and Hellas in terms of democratic citizenship education and how it is reflected in their respective curricula. I analyzed supplementary and supportive reports, guides and other educational documents about democratic citizenship education published by supranational and international organizations. In order to accomplish this, I utilized a critical pedagogic perspective through Critical Discourse Analysis. In addition, important concerns about citizenship education in kindergarten are discussed and recommendations for curriculum studies are provided. This study is significant in its exploration of the ways that democratic citizenship education is being reflected in kindergarten curricula in Ontario and Hellas and in the revelation of similarities and differences between them, as well as within a global context.
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List of Acronyms
BIAC – Business and Industry Advisory Committee
CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis
CERI – Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CMEC – Council of Ministers on Education Canada
ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care
ESD – Education for Sustainable Development
EU – European Union
EUROSTAT – Statistical Office of the European Communities
HMNERA – Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs
IMF – International Monetary Fund
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA – Program for International Student Assessment
TUAC – Trade Unions Advisory Committee
UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Guiding Quote

The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.

-- Diogenes Laertius
Chapter One

1.1: Introduction to the Problem and its Place

In Canada, citizenship education has a long and varied history. Over the years, several ideas have contributed to the structure of citizenship education in Canadian curricula. As Sears & Hughes (1996) advocate, multiculturalism has been one of many ideas for the curricular structure of citizenship education in several provinces. However, democratic citizenship education differs in the way it is presented and approached in curricula from province to province.

In the Ontario curriculum, Clausen, Horton & Lemisko (2008) indicate that the concept of democracy is more “liberal” than in curricula of other provinces of Canada. This notion is taken from the explicit definition of democracy and citizenship which can be found in the curriculum for Grades 9-10 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005):

Democracy – A form of government in which laws are made by a direct vote of the citizens (direct democracy) or by representatives on their behalf (indirect democracy). Indirect democracy involves elections with candidates often coming from competing political parties (70).

Citizenship – the condition of being vested with rights, duties, and responsibilities of a member of a state or notion (70).

In this view, democracy is “liberal” in the Ontario curriculum because, according to Sears & Hughes’ s (1996) scheme of the classification of democracy types, the concept of liberal democracy implies that individuals elected from and by the people rule and compose the government, although sovereignty continues to lie within the populace. Thus, the resolution of issues such as public good, citizens’ commitment to individual rights and responsibilities, awareness of public issues and
active participation in local and national levels of political endeavour become priorities for the Ontario citizenry.

Citizens often have multiple identities in their private lives, but are expected to exhibit a more uniform notion of citizenship in their public life. Consequently, diversity in a nation’s citizenry can be viewed through the lens of social justice, which is “assured through protective legislation of individual rights” (Clausen et al., 2008, 39). While social justice may be assured through protective legislation of individual rights, it is up to the elected representatives in an indirect liberal democracy to support, represent and advocate for the duties, rights and responsibilities of the general populace. With reference to the Ontario curriculum, the definitions of democracy and citizenship indicate a liberal type of democracy since these definitions focus on citizenship which is tied to duties, rights, responsibilities and membership.

Although these conceptualizations around (liberal) democracy and citizenship have been applied to Ontario curriculum for grades 9-10 in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) there is neither an explicit definition of democracy nor of citizenship. However, in the document Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008), citizenship is described as:

…and a responsibility as well as a right. Rights include the freedom to express beliefs and work and live in environments free from discriminatory practices. Along with these rights comes the responsibility to support equitable and democratic processes within our schools, our communities, our province and our nation. As citizens, we work hard to maintain and improve the educational, environmental, cultural, economic, political and social aspects of our society. Citizenship is a privilege that we must not take for granted (22).
Why is this the case? Clausen et al. (2008) suggest that, even though definitions of democracy and citizenship in Ontario curricula fall into a liberal type research shows that many Canadian school boards have lost ground in democratic citizenship education (Westheimer, 2008). Education goals in K-12 are focusing more steadily in preparing students for their individual future career and economic prosperity through standardized tests and assessment rather than by promoting engaged and active citizens through social studies and citizenship education. Curricula are shifting gradually away from exploring democratic responsibilities on issues of public interest and debate, which ultimately affect individual interest focusing more on economic gain (Westheimer, 2008).

In my homeland, Hellas, over the last three decades, significant demographic changes in population have occurred due to migration. Additionally, as a full member state of the European Union (EU) since 1981, Hellas is expected to adopt many of the EU regulations regarding education, among other domains. Therefore, the Hellenic government has changed its educational policy and curricula in both primary and secondary education in order to accommodate multiple identities (local, national, European) in response to the emergence of the “European citizen” and a developing sense of global issues.

Democratic citizenship education is an issue that is emerging within the broader field of curriculum studies. Democratic citizenship education refers to what future citizens are taught in schools as a particular subject (Banks, 2008) in a democratic state. The term “Curriculum Studies” refers explicitly to important and distinct issues relating to education (Pinar, 2004; Trueit, 2003) within the pluralistic milieu of the 21st century. Further to this, democratic citizenship education within curriculum studies is linked to social relevance which describes the connections of
students’ learning experiences in a classroom setting to their everyday lives (Giroux, 2001). Thus, whenever one speaks of democratic citizenship education in curriculum studies, one also invokes curriculum studies along with issues of social relevance. Within the field of curriculum studies, the kindergarten curriculum is of great educational importance, since it is the first curriculum application for young children in school.

The purpose of this study is to make visible the ways that democratic citizenship education is reflected through curricula for kindergarten in Ontario and Hellas. In today’s school reality, young students come from different countries of origin and diverse backgrounds, with different lived experiences and different perceptions informed by their realities. For students, a democratic stance helps to develop their voices and actions to challenge critically established social, political and economic structures and to develop solutions to root causes of injustice.

If current curricula and modern teaching practices are designed and implemented, especially at such an early stage as kindergarten in order to demonstrate a commitment to equality, solidarity, justice and peace, then the goal of democratic curricula should be to educate future citizens and to create a multicultural, pluralistic, democratic society.

Through this research, I would like to contribute to the field of curriculum studies by comparing how democratic citizenship education is formed in Ontario and in Hellas. First, in this chapter, I present the parameters that assisted me in focusing on this particular research area. I refer to issues of diversity in schools and society, as well as to the ways that economic and political situations influence education and democratic citizenship education in particular. In the second chapter, I present the research questions that this study seeks to answer, as well as the documents that will
be analyzed. Then, I present the rationale for my research. The third section of this chapter relates to the theoretical perspective which includes a discussion of curriculum and the role of political ideologies and democratic education. Following this is a literature review which reflects upon curriculum studies and its development, as well as citizenship education in curriculum. The third chapter relates to citizenship and character education in particular. The fourth chapter focuses on the methodology that will be used. In seeking the answers to my research questions, I use Critical Discourse Analysis.

The data collection and the analysis are made simultaneous. In the fifth chapter, I look at the Canadian legislation about democracy and citizens’ education. Then, I present the data and analyze the kindergarten curriculum in the province of Ontario, specifically the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and then *The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011). In Chapter Six, I present the notions of democracy, citizenship and education as they are delineated in the Hellenic legislation. Then, I present the data and analyze the Hellenic kindergarten curriculum and, specifically, the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003) with regards to the parts that refer to citizenship education. The seventh chapter relates the analysis of the discourse practice with regards to the reports released from the Federal Government of Canada and from the Canadian delegation of the Council of Ministers of Education who are involved in democratic citizenship education, curriculum and early childhood education in relation to the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). Then, I analyze the discourse practice of the European reports and
guides that involve democratic citizenship education, curriculum and early childhood education in relation to the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003). In the eighth chapter, I analyze the reports and research conducted by supranational organizations that also influence the development of kindergarten curricula in Ontario and Hellas in strategic and advanced ways. Specifically, I analyze the social practices and the ways knowledge is formed and naturalized in global contexts. In Chapter Nine, I provide a conclusion noting important concerns regarding citizenship education in kindergarten in both Ontario and Hellas within a global context. Furthermore, I provide recommendations based on my findings. Finally, the references follow.

**1.2: Situating Self**

I was born and raised in Athens, Hellas. Democratic principles were substantial elements in my upbringing and in the formation of my thought and character throughout my school years. I choose the name Hellas instead of Greece, the English name of my country, in order to retain the originality of my country’s name.

As a teacher in Hellas, I treat my students equally and promote democratic principles and procedures in my classroom setting. This approach is supported and clarified by the curriculum, which clearly states that children should be introduced to and brought up through democratic principles (Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1989) (HMNERA). Hellas has indissoluble bonds with democracy, a substantial concept dominant in every aspect of contemporary life. Giroux (2010) argues that in Hellas,

…education is understood as central to the fight for not merely individual and political rights, but social rights - for a notion of the public, solidarity and common good in which individual freedom
cannot be detached from the obligations of social and ethical responsibility (14).

In Hellas, teachers follow the curriculum guidelines in order to meet expectations within the classroom setting. In practice, the classroom setting includes students who come from different backgrounds and cultures who strive to find new homes and identities, to be accepted and to be recognized as equal members of the classroom and, ultimately, the society within which they live.

Over the past three decades, Hellas has been transformed from a “migrant sender” country into a “host” country (Damanakis, 2005). In the past, Hellenes used to migrate to other countries for better work opportunities while, currently, Hellas is a host country for people coming from other countries to seek a better life. This is happening mainly because of the new world focus upon economic globalization.

However, the current economic crisis in my country seems to lead young educated people to seek work in other countries due primarily to salary reductions and uncertain professional futures in their homeland. The consequences of this crisis remain vague, however, since people are still numbed from watching the implementation of the new economic measures as described below.

In order to manage the economic crisis, in May of 2010, the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached a joint agreement of $147 billion bailout over the next three years to the Hellenic government (Barkin & Taylor, 2010). In return, the Hellenic government supports policies directed by the European Union and the IMF to implement drastic economic measurements to decrease public expenditure and proceed to budget cuts in the public sector at the same time, including education.

However, the Hellenic government had already started to take new measures in all social public sectors, including education, even before the memorandum from
the EU and IMF took effect. In 2003, the HMNERA presented a newly designed curriculum program for compulsory education, which links and incorporates a variety of European and intercultural dimensions of democracy. The new curriculum was not implemented at once, simply because, a transition period was necessary in order for the kindergarten teachers to be trained accordingly. This new curriculum program was structured based on the enforcement, by law FEK 303 (2003) about *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S.) and Curriculum Studies (A.P.S.) for Elementary School*, which includes the educational topic of *Social and Civic Education*. The general principle that embraced the new curriculum program was to strengthen students’ cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society because, in reality, cultural harmony between individuals and groups coming from different ethno-cultural backgrounds was not easy to achieve.

While there were obstacles in approaching this cultural enrichment and exchange, this educational initiative was an attempt to value minority heritage and ethnicity inter-culturally, rather than to assimilate all newcomers into a homogeneous society. The Hellenic Ministry’s newly designed and implemented curriculum was my second impetus to continue my studies in education, particularly at the significant level of kindergarten, through the lens of diversity regarding the integration of future citizens into their host country.

In my opinion, diversity pervades the notion of democracy. People within a country, immigrants and habitants, consider themselves citizens of an individual nation, but they critically assess, at the same time, multiple perspectives of national citizenship. For example, one can consider oneself a Hellene and a Canadian citizen at the same time. Furthermore, these citizens encounter social, political and economic organizations, attempt to address root causes of problems and develop ways to
reconstruct them, setting the foundation stones of justice and equality. Parallel to this, there is a developing “sense of commitment and loyalty to the global community that transcends national self-interest” (Clausen et al., 2008, 39).

As a researcher, having these considerations in mind, I chose to come to Toronto, Canada, to see and experience, in person, how this educational system facilitates young children coming from other countries and how this system nurtures citizenship education democratically in a multicultural societal context. In other words, children coming from minority groups experience justice and equity in schools when citizenship education develops in them a deeper and multi-faceted understanding of citizenship rights for all students, regardless of the groups or backgrounds they come from, with proportional implications for citizens in future societies. In this light, citizenship education is nurtured democratically in “citizens in training” while it simultaneously “embraces diversity and the idea of a “multi-identified citizen” (Clausen et al., 2008, 48).

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto was the ideal place for me to develop my theoretical understanding of the pedagogy of diversity in the classroom. I chose to come to Canada because Canada and the Canadian educational system are at the forefront in designing curricula for diverse school settings. I find that, because Canada, and especially Toronto, is an exemplar of a multicultural society characterized by heterogeneity, I felt the school system would also exemplify curricula for all school levels, including kindergarten. In a class on critical literacy, I had the opportunity to do a preliminary study on the comparison between Hellas and Canada. I wanted to compare the Hellenic and the Ontario kindergarten curriculum to seek an answer to my question about how democratic citizenship education is mirrored in each setting.
I found that no other studies were available that compared curricula between these two jurisdictions. While kindergarten is a focus for democratic citizenship education in curriculum in both places, it is an area which has not been compared. The issue that concerned me was whether democratic citizenship education is merely a procrustean solution to this crucial issue in education, or if it is a genuine democratic approach to nurture social justice and equity through curricula. A procrustean solution turns us back to Procrustes in Hellenic mythology. In his stronghold in the hills, he had an iron bed on which he invited passersby to lie down and rest. Victims who were tall would be amputated to fit the bed. If the guest was too short (s)he was violently stretched until (s)he fit the bed. Procrustes would secretly adjust the bed so that nobody could ever fit the bed exactly. Contemporarily, everyone could benefit from being cautious about whether curricula reflect genuine democratic values, address social justice and equity issues, or operate merely as a procrustean bed.

As an international student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, having my teacher education and experience from the Hellenic educational system and being influenced by Canadian and Hellenic research, I intend to shed light on how the educational curricular documents reflect contemporary policies and ideas that represent specific needs and ideologies of a particular social and economic context in contemporary society. Specifically, comparing the Ontario kindergarten curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) with the Hellenic kindergarten curriculum (FEK 304, 2003), along with supplementary documents that influence their formation, will provide information about international trends regarding how democratic citizenship is echoed through curricula and how it appeals to the younger generation.
The Canadian educational context has been influenced by neo-liberal discourses associated with globalization that affect the educational domain in Ontario, home to over one-third of all Canadians and the most populous of the provinces (Joshee, 2008). Also, in the European context, “the social fact of an expanding European Union and the abolition of the east-west division opens up prospects of educational systems that transcend national cultures” (Bell, 1995, 1). Therefore, as an international student living in the multicultural province of Ontario and having the experience of the educational system in Hellas, a member state of the EU, I decided to examine how democratic citizenship education is reflected in kindergarten curricula in Ontario and Hellas. Consequently, I felt it would be important to look at democratic citizenship education through the Ontario curriculum on the one hand, and the intercultural Hellenic dimension in curriculum on the other, specifically in kindergarten.

Since I found no other studies that compare curricula between Ontario and Hellas, although there is a high interest in democratic citizenship education in kindergarten curricula, my research on democratic citizenship education in the kindergarten curricula of Ontario and Hellas is an original study. Its rationale is related to the ways that the term “democratic citizenship education” is being defined and presented in curricula. Ultimately, the target group is young students and future citizens who are at the most fundamental stage of their development. I consider this research to be important in examining whether there is an authentic effort to use democratic citizenship education curricula to benefit young students and influence them accordingly. Since there is an explicit growth in policy interest by governments and international organizations in early learning and democratic citizenship education (Chryssochoou, 2006; Clausen et al., 2008; FEK 304, 2003; Moss, 2007), this study is
of significance. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, democratic citizenship education in the Ontario and Hellenic kindergarten curricula will be critiqued and deconstructed, supported by supplementary documents. The pedagogical implications of this research involve schools, districts, universities and professionals in education and their combined stance towards external interests in the curriculum studies and education of young children.
Chapter Two

2.1: Research Questions

The classroom is as diverse as any contemporary society. Schools are microcosms of societies and the diversity within them mirrors these societies. In schools, diverse populations contain many groups that may be prone to the marginalizing effects of the dominant culture. This social segregation of the marginalized visible minorities versus the elite group is not socially just and does not promote equity (Cooper & White, 2004). This is a global phenomenon observed in my homeland, Hellas, in such places as Canada and the United States, and in other member states of the EU (Spring, 2008). Parallel to this, there is an increased interest by international organizations, and concomitant political tendencies involving education (European Commission, 2005; OECD, 2005; UNESCO, 2002), especially in kindergarten. This is obvious from a number of guides and documents these organizations develop on early learning (OECD, 2006, 2001). For this reason, comparing and describing existing national curricula is necessary so that multiple perspectives may be heard and, ultimately, spaces for democracy, equity and social justice can be secured and channelled through these curricula in classroom settings and, eventually, within the larger global society itself.

It has been suggested that curriculum designers struggle to find a balance between theory and practice in integrating children of non-dominant backgrounds into mainstream education through newly implemented curriculum expectations (Banks, 1998). However, my general research question is this; is this struggle authentic or is it merely a superficial recognition of diverse needs without really attempting to address those needs? Specifically, my research questions are:
• How is democratic citizenship education reflected in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006)?

• How is democratic citizenship education reflected in the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003)?

• How do these two curricula resemble or differ from each other in terms of democratic citizenship education within a global context?

• Echoing Diogenes Laertius’ words that opened this dissertation, “The foundation of every state is the education of its youth”, what recommendations can my work offer to curriculum construction in democratic citizenship education in Ontario and Hellas?

The examination of how citizenship education is reflected in the Ontario curriculum will be examined through the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). This curriculum replaced the Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998), and it is clearly noted that “beginning September 2006 all kindergarten programs will be based on the expectations outlined in this document” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1). Furthermore, the Ontario Ministry of Education published the Finding Common Ground: Character in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008), an outline “to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible participants” (1). Additionally, a new draft appeared entitled The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011) will be also examined in relation to citizenship education, although it is still a draft.

The examination of how citizenship education is reflected in the Hellenic curriculum will be examined mainly through the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum
Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003). This curriculum replaced the Guide for Kindergarten (Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1989) but, due to limitations of space, I will not provide an extensive history of this curricular change because the major intent of this proposal is to examine how democratic citizenship education is formed in the current kindergarten curriculum.

The Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003), as noted above, was designed according to enforcement of the law FEK 303 (2003). Therefore, I will also analyze the parts of the law that refer specifically to democratic citizenship education in kindergarten.

Governments and international organizations, such as EU, play a vital role in countries’ education formation, including curricula. In the case of Canada, the Federal Government of Canada intervenes in several educational issues, such as multiculturalism and citizenship, using a variety of methods (Clausen et al., 2008). Therefore, it will be of interest to examine its released reports (CMEC, 2010, 2001, 1999; CMEC & CCU, 2001) concerning early learning. These documents will also be examined in relation to the formation of the revised Kindergarten Program (2006).

In the case of Hellas, European guides (Council of Europe, 2010; European Commission, 2005) relating to citizenship education influence the revised versions of curricula of European member states. Consequently, these guides also will be analyzed.

Since Hellas and Canada are member countries of OECD and UNESCO, supportive educational documents developed by these organizations inevitably influence the revised editions of curricula in both countries. The documents Starting Strong I and II (OECD, 2006, 2001), the Definition and Selection of Key Competencies (OECD, 2005), the Glossary of Statistical Terms (OECD, 2007), the
Improving Health and Social Cohesion Through Education (OECD, 2010), the OECD work on Education (OECD, 2010-2011), the Education and Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2002) and Education for Sustainable Development Lens: A Policy and Practice Review Tool (UNESCO, 2010) will be analyzed as well.

2.2: Rationale

I am interested in comparing democratic citizenship education in Ontario, Canada and Hellas through the kindergarten curricula because, firstly, most of my teaching experience has been in Hellas with young students from various minority backgrounds, many of whom strive to find new identities and gain acceptance by members of the mainstream group of students. Secondly, I believe that the school system in the multicultural province of Ontario, especially Toronto, exemplifies curricula in diverse school setting for all school levels, including kindergarten. Lastly, as mentioned above, political interest has been concentrated, not only on school age (Hall, 1996; Levin, 2008; Pinar, 2004) but also on preschool age children, both in Canada (OECD, 2006, 2001) and Hellas. Further to this, curriculum can be used as a channel to reach and affect children’s school performance and ways of thinking and behaving, beginning in preschool. Therefore, I want to explore how the curricula for kindergarten in Ontario and Hellas resemble or differ from each other in terms of democratic citizenship education within a global, political and economic context as it is formed by national, international and supranational organizations and governments.

One basic question Sleeter sets is “how should knowledge be selected, who decides what knowledge is most worth teaching and learning, and what is the relationship between those in the classroom and the knowledge selection process?” (2005, 8). She indicates clearly that the answer to this question lies in the political
arena where values, morality and other important subjects and beliefs are negotiated between the parliamentary parties to become better or more efficient, and ultimately legislated and accepted into the national discourse.

On the other hand, mass media brings the global community into its own, expanding it (Holden, 2006). World-wide problems such as economic crisis, environmental concerns and political issues instantly become problems within every community, for every citizen. Inevitably, every aspect of civic life is affected and policy is shaped accordingly. In education, policy documents such as curricula and supportive documents are being revised by education policy-makers and, in turn, affect future citizens' development implicitly. Therefore, a comparative study of the two curricula will enable me to unfold how citizenship education is reflected through them.

In order for this thesis to be considered an excursion into critical pedagogy, I will offer recommendations for further curriculum construction in democratic citizenship education in Ontario and Hellas.

2.3: Theoretical Perspective

In exploring answers to the above research questions I will use Critical Discourse Analysis. Stevens (2004) indicates that “Critical Discourse Analysis is a theory and method that draws on the dialogic relationship between texts and social practices” (207). Having a critical perspective is extremely important to this study in order to unfold the concept of democratic citizenship education in curricula in Ontario and Hellas along with texts that support this concept. Therefore, I will explain how this critical stance is essential for approaching democratic citizenship education in curricula.
The concept of critical thinking has its roots in the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Horkheimer, 1985). In Critical Discourse Analysis, the term “critical” is often associated with studying power relations (Rogers, 2004; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Critical theory was defined by Max Horkheimer (1985) of the Frankfurt School in his essay *Traditional and Critical Theory*. Critical theory is social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining phenomena. Core concepts are: (1) critical social theory should be directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity (i.e. how it came to be configured at a specific point in time), and (2) critical theory should improve understanding of society by integrating all the major social sciences, including economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology, psychology and education (Popkewitz, 2000). In this thesis, I will challenge those power relations that inform social change in curricula in relation to democratic citizenship education.

Critical social theory is essential to education. As a critical form of classroom discourse that promotes quality education in terms of cultivating students’ critical thinking about institutional and conceptual dilemmas and enhances a language of critique that forges alternative and less oppressive social arrangements, critical social theory leads to the emancipation of people and systems (Leonardo, 2004).

In short, critical theory theorizes about social ills, whereas critical pedagogy offers an educational agenda for change. In this view, my research on democratic citizenship education and curricula is of a critical pedagogical approach because I offer suggestions and recommendations for change.

Willinsky (2008) argues that critical theory influences critical pedagogy in educational settings. The term critical pedagogy refers to the examination of “inequalities of power, issues of meritocracy and how belief systems become
internalized” (White, 2008, 24). In this sense, critical pedagogy plays a major role in curricula. Since curricula are used by people or groups holding particular political ideological positions (Apple, 2000), in order to approach and influence students, revealing inequalities and issues of the neutralization and the internalization of belief systems is of great importance. It is essential to investigate how democratic citizenship education is reflected in curricula, especially when students are in kindergarten as they are very susceptible to internalizing given belief systems and can be nurtured into certain ways of thinking.

Curricula, as structures, are political texts which are influenced by the social issues that concern society during a particular period of time (Pinar & Bowers, 1992). According to Giroux (1983), citizenship education, as an essential ideological principal of liberal schooling, is subordinate to the vocational character of the curriculum. However, an active citizenry, which will provide the tools to recognize the different components involved in public discussion free from domination, resistance (Schultz, 2005) and radical pedagogy (Giroux, 2001), should be promoted. This implies that students should become informed citizens, possessing a critical filter to resist stereotypical ways of thinking (Greenlaw, 2000) and capable of actively participating in shaping a democratic society.

Resistance refers to the reaction of people when they realize that they are being constrained and recognize the elements of their own captivity (Saul, 1995). This suggests that, in a democratic society, the citizenry needs to find ways to challenge and criticize the system within the public debate. The goal is more to “establish whether or not there is a reasonable doubt” (Saul, 1995, 168) rather than to find the truth or seek the answers. Therefore, democracy should be encouraged within a society by devoting time from the weekly schedule to participate as citizens in public
activity and to allow the mechanisms of criticism and non-conformity toward the
system, combined with public involvement, to take effect. In this sense, democratic
citizenship education, particularly it pertains to curricula, has a major role in the
formation future citizens in learning how to approach public debate in a meaningful
and fruitful, rather than a conformist, eliminating or structured, way.

A major component that is required for an active and engaged citizenry, apart
from resistance, is radical pedagogy. Giroux (2001) explains further that radical
pedagogy is:

… a moral and political practice premised on the assumption that
learning is not about processing received knowledge but actually
transforming it as part of a more expansive struggle for individual
rights and social justice. This implies that any viable notion of
pedagogy and resistance should illustrate how knowledge, values,
desire, and social relations are always implicated in relations of power,
and how such an understanding can be used pedagogically and
politically by students to further expand and deepen the imperatives of
economic and political democracy (xxvii).

Finding space for democratic and radical struggle in the classrooms is crucial
(Giroux, 1997, 1988), especially in a neo-liberalist era (Giroux, 2005b; White, 2003)
when educational reformers have shifted the discourse of schooling to labour-market
needs, standardization and testing. Reformers need to focus on a larger vision and
“refuse to equate nationalism to monoculturalism, and substitute the language of
community, solidarity, and public responsibility for the current emphasis on choice
and individual competitiveness” (Giroux, 1992, 4). In order to find space for
democratic dialogue by challenging the factors that promote individual
competitiveness instead of the common good and social prosperity, it is essential to
first explore the channels that peddle neo-liberal political principles to the discourse
of schooling, especially in the first school level, kindergarten, where young students
begin to develop the core concepts of democratic citizenship education. One such channel is the curriculum.

**Curriculum and the Role of Political Ideologies**

Parker (2003) defines curriculum from a political aspect as “a planned scope and sequence of teaching and learning that can be aimed directly at the development of enlightened political engagement” (41). Schools can nurture future democratic citizens through citizenship education in both curricular and “living-together” situations outside of the family. These situations are created by peer groups in school settings by addressing social issues and challenging the public sphere.

Sleeter (2005) shows that a culturally relevant and cognitively rich curriculum promotes student learning. However, because “curriculum is a medium through which a society defines itself and forms the consciousness of next generations” (Sleeter, 2005, 3), knowledge itself is embedded in social power relations. In this sense, curriculum frames and secures how and to what extent knowledge will be inculcated during the learning process. On the other hand, because knowledge is relative to social power relations, curriculum becomes vulnerable to multiple constructions which enormously influence the multicultural democratic society. Such components include but are not limited to global economy, global markets, supranational companies, trade organizations and political tendencies.

In Canadian education, the influence of the political ideologies of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism are evident, especially since the provincial government of Ontario is liberal and the federal government is conservative. These political terms and their extensions to education are explained below.
a) **Neo-liberalism**

Neo-liberalism is often found in the work of the Austrian economist and Nobel Prize winner Friedrich Hayek. Hayek (2007) argues that the best means of determining the production and prices of goods, and the control of social institutions, including schools, were free markets rather than those under governmental control. Furthermore, Hayek stated that schooling should be privatized and controlled by the forces of the marketplace. Tooley (2000) supports this view.

In Canada neo-liberal ideology is interwoven through the connection between education and preparation for employment (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006). According to Joshee & Sinfield (2010), there are four neo-liberal discourses. The first of these discourses is diversity in the business area, which is related to cultural diversity in international business, and multiculturalism in managing workplace diversity, extending to people from ethnic groups who are the main contributors to the economy (Fleras & Elliot, 1996). The second of the discourses is equality which takes the meaning of sameness. This discourse implies that those who are not as equal as others are nurtured as wanting to be the same as the “others” and ultimately be part of the dominant group enjoying the same privileges. The third discourse connected to neo-liberalism is equality of outcomes. The key element here is the relationship between the state and the disadvantaged members of ethnic communities. The role of the state is to help these individuals fit into the existing social structures, assuming that they all want the same things without challenging the systemic inequalities of the structures. But being assimilated into existing social structures, without bringing up and recognizing systemic injustices and inequalities, restrains and oppresses individual differences and deters the option of acceptance. The fourth neo-liberal discourse is social cohesion which increases social solidarity and restores faith in
government institutions. OECD (2004) shows that social cohesion discourses work by positioning diversity as a challenge towards social cohesion components.

These neo-liberal discourses cover the spectrum of human activity within the societal context. Diversity and multiculturalism are recognized as characteristics in business areas where people of diverse backgrounds play a major role in work force. The role of education at this point is inevitable. Thus, students coming from minority groups are prepared as future citizens who would like to be the same as those who belong to the dominant group, who ultimately become part of it and who enjoy the same privileges as those in the dominant culture. Furthermore, the state aims to assimilate these individuals without providing them with the option of challenging any systemic or individual differences, or with the option of acceptance or non-acceptance. Social cohesion discourse applies inevitably to education since it promotes safety and security by encouraging students to overcome differences and find common ground (Joshee and Sinfield, 2010). In other words, individuals learn to overcome differences by respecting them through tolerance and assimilation instead of tackling those differences and accepting them critically.

Apple (2005) advocates, “Neo-liberals are the most powerful element within the alliance supporting conservative modernization…. Underpinning this position is a vision of students as human capital…as future workers” (214). This statement implies that neo-liberal school reforms aim at the privatization of traditional government school services and at giving these services back to the marketplace in the form of school choice and for-profit schooling (Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2005; Crossley & Tikly, 2004; Dale, 2005; Olssen, 2004). Tooley (2000) explains further that education for the market can imply either the vocational preparation of students or the educational prospects offered by governments to increase economic competitiveness
internationally. On the other hand, “markets” in education imply educational prospects delivered by markets. In either case, education has to be seen more as a vital sector through which markets are interwoven in order to form needs and provide ways to fulfil them, rather than as a narrow setting for students’ vocational preparation.

Many critics argue that neo-liberalism, as an ideology, is designed to ensure that the privileged class, either a nation or a group of people, retain their wealth, power and dominance in a globalized economy (Crossley & Tikly, 2004). In this sense, neo-liberal policies in relation to global educational policies rely on organizations such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Olssen, 2004) to spread neo-liberal educational ideas around the globe.

Neo-liberalism is closely related to the work of supranational organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) within national governments. These intergovernmental organizations promote “global educational agendas that reflect educational discourses about human capital, economic development and multiculturalism” (Spring, 2008, 332). In education the neo-liberal agenda promotes:

- global competitiveness, the reduction of the (publicly financed) costs of education, and of social reproduction in general, the necessity for greater market choice and accountability and the imperative to create hierarchically conditioned, globally oriented state subjects – i.e. individuals oriented to excel in ever-transforming situations of global competition, either as workers, managers or entrepreneurs (Mitchell, 2003, 388).

In both the political and educational agenda there is a frequent reference to the term “globalization” and all its derivatives. The term “globalization” was coined by economist Theodore Levitt in 1985 and describes changes in world-wide economics
with influences in production, consumption and investment (Stromquist, 2002). Singh (2004) suggests further that globalization “is used variously to describe a process and phenomenon, and is deployed in a wide variety of discourses from popular to academic” (111). The term was quickly used for political and cultural changes that influence large groups of people world-wide. Globalization has been applied to several global areas, such as schooling and curriculum studies (Spring, 2008).

As previously noted, Pinar & Bowers (1992) argue that curricula as structures are political texts which are influenced by social issues that concern society during a particular period of time, such as safety, migration and literacy issues. Internationally, in many curricula one can observe changes that have occurred as a result of changes in the political and economical field (Pinar, 2003a). Politics and global economies have focused on education (from its early stages) (Alexander, 2001; Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006; Sears & Hughes, 2006) not only in terms of using economic terms such as universal, globalization, efficiency and management in curricula, but also of accountability in terms of achieving higher test scores. Luke (2001) shows that one aspect of educational globalization is “membership in and compliance with the global benchmarking discourses proposed by UNESCO or the OECD” (31) for the benefit of existing nation-states.

In particular, supranational organizations have an interest in preschool education (OECD, 2006, 2001; UNESCO, 2002) and it seems that neo-liberal dynamics have invaded schools through curriculum (Gardner, 2007; Spring, 2008; Trueit, 2003) as well as in a variety of other ways, such as corporate partnerships and in-kind technological contributions. In the long run, these changes seem not to promote politically active thinking and the emergence of social justice. Instead, they are doing just the opposite by conscripting schooling, through the emergence of
curricular change, to harness the potential of society for economic gain (Cooper, 2009).

Surprisingly, globalization speaks to the issue of “ethics” as well. OECD (2011) defines clearly its “core values”:

- Objective: Our analyses and recommendations are independent and evidence-based.
- Open: We encourage debate and a shared understanding of critical global issues.
- Bold: We dare to challenge conventional wisdom starting with our own.
- Pioneering: We identify and address emerging and long term challenges.
- Ethical: Our credibility is built on trust, integrity and transparency (OECD, 2011).

The difference is that these “ethics” are coming from the marketplace. They might be principles or values, but they are not ethics, since ethics philosophically signify the virtues of *ethos*, namely, living a good life by being moral. As Freire (1998) underlines, “the freedom of commerce cannot be ethically higher than the freedom to be human” (116). Since money and power can easily lead to corruption and market logic can lead to false and dangerous future progress and success, morality and genuine virtues can be abolished in the name of capital, and large groups of people can be marginalized due to labour market needs.

b) Neo-conservatism

On the other hand, neo-conservatives did not want government to give way on curricula and standards in schools, because the impetus of social institutions is competition (Apple, 2000). Instead, neo-conservatives suggested privatization of education with government retaining control through curriculum standards and testing. Education is linked to neo-conservatism through interference and control in curricula and pedagogy, surveillance of teachers and students and legitimization of neo-conservative and neo-liberal ideologies through schools (Hill, 2006).
Furthermore, neo-conservative ideology supports the notion of the dominant group, the “we,” which has traditional values and is the “hard working and decent” group. The “they” group is formed by immigrants, poor and other disadvantaged individuals who are considered to be lazy and immoral (Apple, 2006).

Neo-conservatism has two discourses (Joshee & Sinfield, 2010). The first neo-conservative-inspired discourse is the tolerant Canadian. This notion refers to the Canadian history of tolerance toward various groups coming together marred only by occasional acts of racism and discrimination. The second discourse is the “we/they” dichotomy. The “we” refers to the European group, which seems to be tolerant and open to others. Any problems or conflicts caused are the “others’” fault since they are neither tolerant nor accepting.

The “we/they” dichotomy was noted by the Federal Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, in his speech at Huron University College’s Canadian Leaders Speakers’ Series. He clearly stated that “they” are the “ethnic enclaves” who are increasingly “undermining the very strengths and underpinnings that have made Canada a great country” (Kenney, 2009). According to Kenney, “they” enter “our” country and rapidly increase our growing diversity. Indeed, during the last few decades, demographic changes have been noticed in the student population of Canadian schools (Richardson, 2002). However, the meaning of diversity takes different forms as concepts such as multiculturalism, integration and inclusion are interpreted or translated in different ways (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Jones, 2000).

Portelli and Vibert (2001) noted that, in spite of the differences, neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideologies tend to work towards a frame of accountability and standards. In general, both neo-liberals and neo-conservatives support government-
provided social services, such as schools that are privatized but kept under government regulation and control.

**Democratic Education**

Regardless of which political ideology influences education, in this demanding pluralistic society, it is held to be true that students have to be prepared for the work force in order to promote economic prosperity. Sponsorships, scholarships and awards provided by private institutions and multinational companies may indeed be beneficial for students’ future and achievement (Spring, 2008). However, the question is how and if this reality should be accepted and adopted without question into the educational field. From a critical point of view, all these benefits represent a marketization of schooling and a conceptually consumerist society, rather than one which is socially just.

Preparing students for the work force is not the only purpose of education. Goodlad (1984) indicates that there are four purposes of school, namely academic, vocational, social/civic, and personal. Each of these purposes represents the development of cognitive and mental skills, preparation for the work force, nurturing future citizens, and development of the individual. Darling-Hammond, Banks, Zumwalt, Gomez, Sherin, Griesdorn & Finn (2005) underline clearly that all of the above mentioned purposes should be considered when a curriculum is involved.

The educational goals and the accompanying expectations and benefits which target the academic, vocational, social/civic and personal students’ development in schools do not seem to be in place for the benefit of students (Cooper & White, 2004). In other words, there is serious doubt whether these educational goals are truly philanthropic or merely an illusion of philanthropy, hiding the real reason behind the gift-giving. They seem like a Trojan horse, hiding the conscription of youth for the
purposes of the corporate world. In short, perhaps individuals are allowing themselves to be taken in by political posturing and acts of supposed goodwill masking self-serving purposes. Do all these features start initially from children’s needs and are they for the children’s benefit? Cooper and White (2004) suggest that not all policies are implemented for the benefit of students but may be implemented for the benefit of others within the school system, rendering these policies ultimately harmful. This observation relates to my first and second research question about the ways that democratic citizenship education is reflected in the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework* (FEK 304, 2003) and the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Parker (2003) indicates that democratic education is not a neutral procedure, but one that “predisposes citizens to principled reasoning and just ways of being with one another – to work toward the fuller realization of democratic ideals” (xviii). Democratic citizens, who address and reason through problems together in order to find mutually acceptable solutions, are more likely to serve justice than people who ignore public affairs or get involved only for their personal benefit.

As previously stated, Hellas has indissoluble bonds with democracy, a substantial concept dominant in every aspect of contemporary life. Saul (1995) brings forward the idea that individualism and democracy found life in Athens. He describes in detail how both ideas grew slowly, went through a variety of economic stages in human history, evolved during the Industrial Revolution as the outcomes of this economic phenomenon and accelerated during the twentieth and especially the twenty-first century. Individualism and democracy and their characteristics pave the way for the economic measures. However, he clearly states that individualism in this era is characterized by “one of ideology’s most depressing effects” (20), passivity.
The individual, the citizen, degenerates “to the state of the subject or even to the serf” (20). In the meantime, groups gain more power since corporate systems are based on them, not on citizens. These groups are formed by individuals who exploit passivity and personal interest, because all human interaction from education to public services is being structured on self-interest. Conversely, a citizen-based society is based on “disinterest… which could also be called the public good or the common weal… and participation” (33). Disinterest and participation are also key constructs promoting the deconstruction of ideology and the development of a wider and long-term perspective that promotes democracy.

Democracy, freedom and efficacy are often translated by the marketplace as a standardization of tests, qualities, and models, according to which individuals are evaluated as efficient (Menashy, 2007) or inefficient, eligible or ineligible, capable or incapable, rich or poor, worthy or unworthy. As Peters (1999) argues, democracy is “marketized” and Waite, Field Waite & Fillion (2006) point out further that “when only one truth is told and legitimized, we are made to want what a duplicitous corporate culture promises, and so we barter one more piece of the democratic ideal” (140). All these effects apply in education in order to prepare students for future employment accordingly.

However, students as individuals are not all coming from the same background. Freire (1998) advocates that teachers cannot talk to students about respect for dignity and identity as part of the process of identity construction without taking into consideration the conditions within which they are living and the life experiences they are bringing into the classroom. Consequently, in a pluralistic society, curriculum should reflect the needs of children coming from diverse backgrounds without eliminating any group of under-privileged children. In other
words, curriculum should reflect these qualities that join rather than segregate students in terms of identity construction and democratic engagement.

Social justice demands no one’s voice be excluded, discriminated against or undermined (Giroux, 2005a, b, 1997). Trifonas (2003a) advocates that:

The focus of educational reform for achieving democracy and social justice has necessarily been retranslated over time, after John Dewey and his contemporaries, to include the recognition of the values of difference as a legitimate and integral feature of a modern civil society (3).

Nurturing actively engaged citizens, whose voices can be heard equally through democratic procedures in classrooms and in society, demands promotion of critical thinking. Cooper and White (2008) underline that “critical thinking advocates the analysing of our individual lives and the basis of choices made; the living of an examined life” (102). Democracy is not something which is given. It is a gift that everyone has to protect, promote and revisit when necessary, especially in difficult times. Facing globalization in every field of human activity, amidst a world-wide effort to undermine, transform or recapture democratic concepts, revisiting democracy and its implications in and for school curricula is of the essence.

This observation relates to my third and forth research questions about the ways that both the Hellenic (FEK 304, 2003) and Ontario kindergarten curricula (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) resemble or differ from each other in terms of democratic citizenship education. Furthermore, my work can offer insights into curriculum construction in Ontario and Hellas within a global context.

2.4: Curriculum Studies and Democratic Education

Kincheloe (2001) sees the importance of democratic social studies in a classroom setting in terms of respecting students by providing them the space to
engage with knowledge, analyze problems and reveal oppressive components within these problems locally, nationally or globally. Consequently, interacting with new knowledge and thinking more critically about concepts and interrelations of information promotes a more critical notion of citizenship.

The cultivation of students’ thinking and providing them the space to address issues of democracy and citizenship in multiple societal levels in school provides them with the cognitive and behavioural equipment to confront their societal realities as future citizens. Even so, Saul (1995) argues that “the confronting of reality usually is a negative process. It is ideology that insists upon relentless positivism. That’s why it opposes criticism and encourages passivity” (36) and explains further that “exercising the rights of a citizen means to criticize conformity, passivity and inevitability” (36).

Despite exercising these rights, a citizen must exercise the obligations towards society as well. Saul (1995) describes a citizen’s exercise of rights and obligations nicely by underlining that:

the individual’s rights are guaranteed by law only to the extent that they are protected by the citizenry’s exercise of their obligation to participate in society. Rights are a protection from society. But only by fulfilling their obligations to society can the individual give meaning to that protection (164).

In this view, a citizen’s participation in society protects his/her rights and obligations to society. According to Saul (1995), the citizen’s ability to criticize is perhaps the major tool to exercise his/her legitimacy. However, criticism is not a self-evident citizen’s characteristic. Instead, the development and acquisition of cognitive and behavioural abilities and skills of future citizens, including the ability to criticize, is a learning process which is often taught in school years.
The report of the Canadian Delegation at the *World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education* (CMEC, 2010) underlines the importance of a healthy development in the early years and the linkage with “successful adaptation” and “effective learning that leads to better outcomes in academic achievement, responsible citizenship, lifelong health and economic and human development” (5). These remarks belong to Dr. Jack Shonkoff, director of the Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Dr. Shonkoff linked these parameters with implications for policy-makers. In this light, curricula are tools that are accessible to policy-makers in order to permeate and promote a critical pedagogical education.

**Curriculum Studies and its Development**

Curriculum, unquestionably, is an official document which addresses the goals, subjects, strategies, and assessment and evaluation of students’ academic achievements (Pinar, 2003b). Politicians and economists have seen curriculum as a bridge to reach out to students in their early stages of schooling, and to “prepare” them as future citizens for a thriving work force. Is this movement pure and unquestionable? Is it safe for humankind’s future? The conceptualization of words such as “information-based,” “business thinking,” “manage,” “world-wide,” “market,” “uniform,” “globalization,” “internalization” becomes vague (Pinar, 2003a). Cooper and White (2006) point out that those concepts within the pluralistic milieu of the 21st century permeate curricula and programs. Thus, Cooper and White (2006), among others, propose a critical awareness aimed at understanding the true importance of schooling and “to develop standards around such critical ideas as what it is we are doing, why we are doing it and who the major benefactors of these transactions are” (97). Thus, the deeper meanings and relations, within education, of
these above-mentioned words and others such as “outcomes-based” and “data-driven” will be gradually unveiled.

**Citizenship Education in Curriculum**

Research has shown that citizenship education has developed active participation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) as a result of the use of some intended or formal curricula at a provincial level within the Canadian context (Sears & Hughes, 1996). Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) advocate that successful learning is related closely to the social contexts of specific learning environments, namely the school, the classroom and the community. Inevitably, every educational innovation, initiative, guide and curriculum is based on and influenced by social contexts and purposes of education. It can be surmised then, that the preparation of a good future citizen within a democracy is of great importance. However, as Waite et al. (2006) show, “little time or attention is given in today’s curriculum to fostering in children the skills, values, and dispositions necessary for them to take an active part in a democratic discourse” (139).

Within a diverse society individuals do not learn the same things. They carry their own cultural knowledge, which they share most of the time with classmates, friends and acquaintances, regardless of age. Allowing for the development of diversity in school, as well, can actually contribute to constructive participation in a diverse democracy. It is to everyone’s benefit to learn different things and not only the basic skills. Young people should acquire intellectual resources (Sleeter, 2005) of diverse societies or communities, even from those less popular or not in the “spot light”. Furthermore, young students have access to learn more about global issues and concerns at school (Holden, 2006). I would add that issues of diversity should no longer be excluded or eliminated from the curriculum. Instead, teachers and students
should become genuinely open to different values, ways of thinking, ways of confronting problems and issues and look at critically valuing, learning from, and passing on different knowledge. As Sleeter (2005) advocates, a multicultural curriculum would operate both as a social and intellectual resource.

Curriculum within a multicultural movement has suffered a lot of different changes in many countries around the globe. People from diverse social origins inside their chosen country seek social justice and equity, and, in schools, to extinguish prejudices and biases of the dominant group against them. Sleeter (2005) underlines that multicultural education has not often been reflected in curricula because it has been “often irrelevant to students from marginalized communities” (13). What is currently extremely important is to nourish and cultivate future citizens from minority and marginalized groups and historically oppressed communities to achieve the twin goals of equity and social justice.

Jones (2000) argues that three main goals of multiculturalism, namely identity, civic participation, and social justice, which the federal government of Canada focuses on, effectively meet the needs of all of its citizens at the same time. Internationally, however, it has been observed, since at least a decade ago, that there is a tension of democratic reform around the world regarding civic education (Hall, 1996). “Civic illiterates” (110), namely the students who do not know enough about citizenship and how to be good citizens, do not need a dull or abstract civics course. In order to promote appreciation of the law as a system of social choice within which different and diverse cultures have and do make different choices, there is a need for students to think comparatively about political science and civic issues among different states and from the perspectives of other nations. A comparative approach will enable students to live and work in a global era and to become aware of
alternatives. Furthermore, students will be able to examine how several social, demographic, or political factors influence different nations’ civic cultures and will be able to identify common forms of actions and behaviour (Hall, 1996). I believe that comparative thinking concerning citizenship education is barren unless it is critical as well. Comparing the impact of different political and economic factors in different nations is not enough, unless people think critically about these issues.

Critical thinking challenges values and choices that are made under different political, cultural, national and economical conditions. Exposing young students to different ways of thinking, behaving, and acting, influenced by different cultural components, enables them to explore different possibilities and better ways of believing, deciding and reacting to certain issues.

Broadening a vision of cross-cultural and international civic matters provides students the opportunity of getting to know about “them” (Hall, 1996) or “others” more than “us,” and to learn about “their” ways of protecting rights, promoting democracy and retaining social order. And they might surprise us, as their ways may be better than ours. On the other hand, a “not as good” civic culture and its implications remains a good lesson regarding avoidance of what doesn’t seem to work.

Hall (1996) underlines clearly that a radical approach to civic culture is to redesign curriculum for future parents, teachers and other educators, including kindergarten. Gutmann (1996) goes further by promoting a humanitarian approach to democratic education. She argues that students’ education should focus more on deliberative citizenship which involves multiculturalism and equal treatment among individuals. Their nationality should not be taken into account. Then educators can
start combining civic education with cultural diversity in order to achieve a robust democracy.
Chapter Three

3.1: Citizenship and Character Education

World-wide immigration and historical, political, social and cultural developments (Banks, 2008) are involved in a rapidly changing global community in both national and international contexts (Cogan, 2000; Delanty, 2000). In education, Holden (2006) avers that young children are worried about their futures; therefore, issues such as economic inequalities and world battles need to be given more space in the primary curriculum within citizenship education.

In the following section I present how citizenship and character education in Ontario and in Hellas are presented by researchers within the Canadian and European contexts.

Citizenship Education

Young (1998) states clearly “citizenship for everyone, and everyone the same *qua* citizen” (401). To clarify the concept of what it is to be a citizen, Hébert & Sears (2001) define citizenship as “the relationship between the individual and the state, and among individuals within a state” (1), while citizenship education is “the preparation of individuals to participate as active and responsible citizens in a democracy” (1). Historically, citizenship education has been considered one of the principal obligations of public schooling (Sears & Hughes, 1996).

Hyslop-Margison & Sears (2006) argue that the neo-liberal ideological context for current human capital and education practices are a threat to democratic citizenship education because such practices do not encourage critical thinking and constructive criticism, both of which are vital elements of democratic citizenship. According to Giroux (1983) citizenship education as an essential ideological principal of liberal schooling is subordinated to the vocational character of the curriculum.
Sears and Hughes (2006) explain further that citizenship is not indoctrination, but rather education. The role of citizenship education is to inform students within the classroom, not to impose on them what to think and say when they are challenged. They also propose that, if the target is successful citizenship education, it should be based on students’ prior knowledge and be built gradually and constructively.

Citizenship education has been an important part of formal education programmes, primarily within the social development areas of the curriculum (Bickmore, 2006, 1993; Cogan & Derricott, 2000) even in kindergarten (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). The complexity of contemporary society and the social, economic and political challenges have given citizenship education new meanings. For example, White (1999) suggests that citizenship is becoming redefined as consumerism, as it carries several political and economic meanings according to the political values of those who propose them within a given community. Neo-liberal forces have made consumer practices increasingly significant, influencing both the kinds of activities that are available to citizens and the way they think about citizenship. In this regard, the traditional relationship between citizen and nation-state is shifting gradually from collective responsibility for social solidarity to individualized modes of consumerism. The negative effects relating to citizenship education are inevitable, since education provides the space for political forces and corporate interests to educate future citizens to think and act over issues of identity, social values, common good and involvement in public issues according to their own corporate interests.

This focus on sense of identity, knowledge of the rights and duties, involvement in public affairs and acceptance of societal values has been woven through the global economy, technology and communication, environment and
population (Cogan, 2000). For example, national migration has made countries more multi-ethnic and multicultural in composition. Consequently, standard rules and identities in many countries are challenged simultaneously by a multi-dimensional citizenship (Cogan, 2000). As Cogan (2000) indicates “this conception must permeate all aspects of education, including curriculum and pedagogy” (12). Therefore, challenging the conventional meaning of citizenship education in a given community context is essential since national migration and transnational corporations set new dimensions, perspectives and meanings.

Apart from the different meanings credited to citizenship, there is often confusion over the meaning of what constitutes a good citizen. Osborne (2004) advocates that “a democratic society demands of its members that they be both good persons and good citizens” (13). However, a good person isn’t necessarily a good citizen. Osborne (2004) suggested that the meanings of citizenship and character education seem to be misunderstood in Canadian schools. There is evidence that the focus of character education is more on developing good persons rather than good citizens (Sears and Hughes, 2006). Osborne (2004) distinguishes clearly that the good citizen, apart from being a good person who helps others and obeys the laws, also has the will and the ability to play a vital and moral role in public life in society, at least by performing a conscious vote in elections and by being involved with and in common issues.

Because citizenship education is often conflated with the character education movement, Sears and Hughes (2006) clarify citizenship education by defining it as:

…closely tied to academic disciplines such as history and political science, is generally implemented as a subject in school…, is focused on public morality and “civic” action, is open to alternative views of the world, and sees children as active constructors of their own knowledge (13).
I will refer extensively to character education in the next section.

Within the EU context, the Council of Europe launched a program entitled “Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights” (Council of Europe, 2010). Education for democratic citizenship is defined as

…education, training, dissemination, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and moulding their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law (1).

There are reports from several European countries that provide information about education for democratic citizenship. These reports are usually in the form of

...written contributions on national education for democratic citizenship policies, legislative documents (constitutions, laws and regulations), curricula, textbooks and methodological guides, national programmes for education for democratic citizenship, articles and research studies (Birzea, 2003, 14).

Democratic citizenship education is closely related to human rights education in terms of goals and practices. Each European member state has its own education for democratic citizenship and human rights profile. The Hellenic approach to citizenship education in primary education as reflected in the curriculum is both a cross-curricular topic and a separate compulsory subject (Chryssochoou, 2006).

Education for democratic citizenship is regulated through diverse documents among the European member states. The majority of these documents are legislative texts on education or the constitution laws. There is an explicit and legitimate base for education for democratic citizenship across Europe. In spite of the historical, cultural and religious differences among the European countries, all national constitutions integrate the essential principles of democratic citizenship as the Council of Europe
states, which are the “respect of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law” (Birzea, 2003, 32).

In regards to the national laws on education, there are two types of references to education for democratic citizenship. In a broad sense as an educational goal, it includes concepts of education for democracy, citizenship education, political education or democracy learning. In this light, it is conceived as a specific aim of education policies which appears either in the introduction of education laws or as a separate section and refers to a life-long learning system. The second type of reference to education for democratic citizenship is seen as a school subject, which includes concepts of civics, or civic education. In this case, education for democratic citizenship is perceived as precedence in contents, curricula and learning activities and is limited to formal curriculum. In Hellas, the laws of education include both references, namely as an education aim and as a school subject.

There is an interest for education for democratic citizenship within the formal curriculum because it is the main apparatus for applying related policies and provides “basic knowledge on democracy and allows the systemic acquisition of civil and social competencies” (Birzea, 2003, 33). Furthermore, the formal curriculum provides a clear view of learning situations in school settings and draws the attention of policy-makers, teachers and parents as a benchmark of school assessment, which leads to diplomas and recognized certificates. The majority of official data and research refer to formal curriculum citations.

In Hellas, education for democratic citizenship in the formal curriculum is seen as a combination of a separate subject, integrated programmes and interdisciplinary activities. As such, the name that designates education for
Democratic citizenship in the formal curriculum focuses on civics or civics education. In primary education, democratic citizenship is being integrated into current curricula.

In the following section I clarify how citizenship and character education have shifted to notions of social cohesion and character movement in Ontario education policy.

**Character Education**

Since 1867, when Canada became a nation-state, there was always a culturally diverse population, including aboriginals, a French-speaking population and immigrants of other origins. Even so, the new nation-state maintained close ties to Great Britain. In order to manage diversity, Canada developed a combination of policies that controlled immigration, citizenship, and education. Through the 1970’s, 1980’s and early 1990’s, Canadians supported multiculturalism as part of their collective identity, for which they are very proud. During these years, all the provinces established their own policies relating to multiculturalism (Jones, 2000).

People from diverse social origins inside their chosen country seek social justice, equity and, in schools, to extinguish prejudices and biases of the dominant group. Joshee & Johnson (2005) argue that in Canada:

…multiculturalism has become increasingly focused on inclusion… but the competing definitions of democracy and citizenship that exist as a result of past struggles and the multiplicity of levels at which multicultural education policy continues to survive provide spaces for activists both within and outside of government to continue the struggle for expansive multicultural education (69-71).

In this sense, multicultural education policy promotes inclusion by providing space to students for challenging the differences through the notions of democracy and citizenship.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education is responsible for establishing provincial policies, curricula and supervision of their operation. Implementation of these policies
comes within the local and regional school district jurisdiction. By the mid-1990’s Ontario was one of the leading provinces to repeal multicultural policies. In the late 1990’s there was a transition from a discourse of citizenship and multicultural education to notions of social cohesion. However, the ideals of citizenship, diversity and equity remain part of Canadian education through citizenship and multicultural education.

Over the last few years, the educational discourse of social cohesion is gaining ground in education in Ontario. Social cohesion is presented as a corrective measure that leads to social solidarity and the importance of governmental institutions. Surprisingly, concerns relating to the need for policies supporting the discourse of social cohesion were first indicated in the OECD’s (2004) observation that this discourse would restore social and political stability by promoting diversity as a challenge toward social cohesion. Consistent with this view, the social cohesion discourse accommodates safety and security within multiculturalism by eliminating the threat of individuals who are not part of the dominant group. Thus, students of all backgrounds are encouraged to leave their differences behind and find common ground. Unfortunately, these practices lead to further marginalization of minority students.

The “problem” of cultural diversity in Ontario led the Ministry of Education to establish a mission of character development to build consensus and focus on commonalities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). In the character education initiative Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) there is a special section on citizenship that attempts to redefine it as being related to social cohesion:

Character development is an avenue through which students develop respect for self, others, property, the environment, diversity, human
rights and other attributes upon which we find common ground as Canadians… They develop an understanding of the interconnectedness and linkages that underlie social cohesion. Citizenship development is a deliberate effort to nurture these democratic ideals (22).

What is clear from the character education initiative for K-12 is the relation to social cohesion, which was first introduced by OECD (2004) as a discourse to bring about social and political stability through citizenship education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). As noted above, political interest has been concentrated, not only in school age children (Hall, 1996; Levin, 2008; Pinar, 2004) but also in preschool age children, both in Canada (OECD, 2006, 2001; UNESCO, 2002) and Hellas. Curricula are designed on general public interest, which often extends beyond the educational field to other vocal “individualized” public interests. Consequently, educational expertise is at risk of deferring to political processes and subsequent demands for changes in curriculum design and framework. Through curriculum, neo-liberal forces recognize that it is easier to reach and affect children’s ways of thinking, beginning in kindergarten, and to convince or even manipulate children to think and behave in a prescribed way.

It is important to nourish and cultivate future citizens from minority and marginalized groups and historically oppressed communities in order to achieve the twin goals of equity and social justice. Perhaps, by combining elements of citizenship, character and multicultural education, schools and school districts may ensure that students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, race and class, can be of good moral character and strong, self-reliant citizens in a global participatory democracy.
Chapter Four

4.1: Methodology

The comparison of the Hellenic and the Ontario curriculum for kindergarten requires qualitative research, specifically Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to seek an answer to the question of how democratic citizenship education is addressed in each curriculum. Using CDA, supplementary documents that have influenced the construction of both kindergarten curricula will be explored.

Critical Discourse Analysis in capitalized form is a research program related mainly to the work of Fairclough and students (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995). According to their framework, readings of social theory and systemic functional linguistics are involved in a three-part scheme of analysis; text (words and units), discourse practice (governing bodies that influence redefinitions and issues of discourse and representation) and social practice (larger ideas that construct knowledge and decision making, society-wide processes and practices) (Collins, 2004; MacLure, 2003).

With regards to CDA, Gee (1996) refers to the distinction between “cda” and “CDA” discourse. The lowercase “d” includes language bits or the grammar of a particular text, whereas the capital “D” includes language bits and the ways of representing, believing, valuing, and participating through them. Gee (2004) underlines that “Critical Discourse Analysis argues that language in use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power” (33). He advocates also that CDA can be used to examine specific documents, and Collins (2004) indicates that CDA can be used to explore questions of power and social injustice.
In this research, I will use Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the particular curriculum documents, to uncover the discourse practices within relevant supplementary documents and the social practices relevant to thinking about the function and construction of social change through language. This analysis will provide the opportunity to deconstruct various layers of practices that comprise the notion of democratic citizenship education.

Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) argue that CDA can be used effectively to find effective public spaces and effective ways of dialogue across difference, contributing to democratic ways of expression and thinking. In terms of democratic contents, Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) argue that:

CDA is a matter of democracy in the sense that its aim is to bring into democratic control aspects of the contemporary social use of language which are currently outside democratic control …to thematise language not only in the public space of the universities but also within the dialogue across public spaces referred to above (9).

Critical awareness of language is a fundamental element in democracy, because language is of great importance in contemporary social life and is fraught with issues of power.

CDA is central to the sense of critique of what is democratic in this contemporary pluralistic world where global and international forces are dominant. Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) advocate that “the concept of dialogue involves both space for voicing difference (including polemically) and a search without guarantees for alliances across difference” (6). Similarly, Luke (1995) analyzes the ways in which discourses naturalize power relations and social differences which are generated and maintained by these discourses. He defines CDA as “a political act in itself, an intervention in the apparently natural flow of talk and text in institutional life that attempts to interrupt everyday common sense” (13). Thus, a Critical Discourse
Analyst is interested in issues of dominance and power, and is politically committed to redress social inequities by challenging, denaturalizing, deconstructing and exposing the effects of power in discourse. Hence, citizens can intervene effectively and create political change when there is dialogue across local, national and international levels of power.

Data

The data for this study was first constituted as a pilot project conducted in the second term of 2007. During this time, in a class on critical literacy, I had the opportunity to do a preliminary study comparing Ontario and Hellas curricula for kindergarten. I found that no other studies were available comparing curricula between a province of Canada and Hellas. Furthermore, while there is a focus in kindergarten for democratic citizenship education in curricula in both places, they have, to date, not been compared. Then, I attended a course on critical democratic approaches to policy analysis and I learned about the research method of Critical Discourse Analysis, which addresses questions of language, ideology, and power. In addition, several meetings with my supervisor and the other members of the committee, as well as a class on cultural studies in education, expanded my thinking on my research and provided key research questions and a methodology.

While steeped in the data collection process for the pilot project, I kept a record of supplementary documents published by federal and provincial governments, the European Union, OECD and UNESCO relating to democratic citizenship education. Furthermore, I read and collected bibliographic data on democratic citizenship education on both study sites, and a record of flashcards and field notes, which are separated into Ontario and Hellenic contexts. These materials will be used in my analysis.
**Ethical Review Protocol**

My research is focused in curricula and supplementary documents and does not involve students. However, I underwent the University of Toronto ethics protocol. The Research Ethics Board declared that, since I wouldn’t use human subjects in my research, an ethical review was unnecessary.

**Analysis of Text**

First, I will examine the text (words), of the curriculum identified as the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). For the analysis, I will break the Program into the units of the introduction, the learning program, assessment, evaluation and reporting, teaching/learning approaches, some considerations for program planning and the learning expectations. Then I will examine the text of the *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and the new draft entitled *The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011). Analysing these texts is important to detect the determiners that contribute to the establishment of facts and authority on the one hand, and the vocabulary that contributes to the cohesion of the text as a whole on the other.

Then, I will analyze the text (words) of the Hellenic Constitution (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008) and other legislation in relation to the concept of democracy, citizenship and education after which I will analyze the Hellenic kindergarten curriculum and, specifically, the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003), using the same procedure outlined above. I will break the curriculum into the units of the aim, the programs for the education of young children, the basic principles of the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten*, projects and activities development, child and environment:
projects and activities, development of Environmental Studies for kindergarten and human environment and interaction.

Since I am neither a philologist nor a linguist, I will refer only to the vocabulary and the authoritative sentence structure in the presentation of new information. For this analysis, I will identify themes (initial part of the clause) and rhemes (the latter part of the clause), where necessary, in the sentence structures of the documents under study. The theme is usually the first major constituent of a sentence which provides information from shared knowledge or previous discourse (“The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,” n.d.). The rheme is the rest of the sentence that adds new information, in addition to what has already been said in the discourse (“The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,” n.d.). In this way, I will interpret what information is provided as known from shared knowledge or discourse and what information is elaborated or added on. In other words, I will interpret how they structure the introduction of new information. Moreover, I will analyze the consistency of the vocabulary in contributing to the cohesion of the overall written text.

**Analysis of Discourse Practice**

I use CDA methodology to uncover policies that are layered on top of one another to create a “natural” cohesive text. The “neutrality” of the text is created through repetition and constant reference to the name of the authority (Woodside-Jiron, 2004). As Trifonas (2003b) indicates, “deconstruction convenes poststructural interventions into topical variations of the educational problematic…to show that there is no neutral or apolitical safe-haven of language or representivity” (233-234). However, my analysis “shares with” deconstruction the goal of calling into question the political “neutrality” of policy statements.
In this view, another important aspect of the production and structure of the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) is the social and political context from which it emanates. I refer to the reports (CMEC, 2010, 2001, 1999; CMEC & CCU, 2001) that the provinces of Canada, including Ontario, accepted with regards to early learning, to which the Program is linked, in order to promote “minimal resistance” (Woodside-Jiron, 2004, 180). Therefore, I will look at the goals and principles that the above-mentioned documents address and which are constantly repeated and pointed to as authority within the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Similarly, European guides that are supported and conducted by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture inevitably influence the curricula of European member states, including Hellas. Therefore, supporting documents and guides, such as *Citizenship Education at School in Europe* (European Commission, 2005), and the *Democratic Citizenship Education and Human Rights* (Council of Europe, 2010), will also be analyzed in relation to the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003) using the CDA methodology.

**Analysis of Social Practice**

After analyzing the texts and the discourse practice, I will examine the ways that the curricula under study influence the construction of new knowledge and new educational approaches in democratic citizenship education within a global context.

Since Canada and Hellas are both members of OECD and UNESCO, the analysis of the supporting documents released by these organizations in relation to both the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003) is
easily possible. Accordingly, the goals and the learning procedures will be examined and deconstructed in association with democratic citizenship education in the *Starting Strong I and II* (OECD, 2006, 2001), the *Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary* (OECD, 2005), the *Glossary of Statistical Terms* (OECD, 2007), the *Improving Health and Social Cohesion Through Education* (OECD, 2010), the OECD *Work on Education* (OECD, 2010-2011), the *Education and Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO, 2002) and the *Education for Sustainable Development Lens: A policy and Practice Review Tool* (UNESCO, 2010) documents.

Turning the findings back on the prior analyses of the curricula in relation to other supplementary documents reveal how particular federal agreements, European reports and research conducted by world-wide organizations influence the development of these curricula in strategic ways. Looking at the contexts and the development of the curricula supports the analysis of social practices and the ways knowledge is formed.

Data analysis and interpretation will be supported by quotes from the curricula for deeper understanding of the analysis. Discussion and further recommendations will follow.
Chapter Five

5.1: Presentation of Data

As I analyze the curriculum, it is interesting to note the ways in which a seemingly small assumption grows into mandated goals, units and programs. For the purposes of this study, I will make my data collection and analysis simultaneous (Willis, 2007). By engaging in the analysis of the curricula and, later, in the policy documents that frame the curricular construction over time, I am able to not only describe the changes, but also to explain how these changes occurred. The selection criteria for isolating the excerpts are based on words used in relation to the concepts of democracy, citizenship and education.

First, I look at the Canadian Constitution and, specifically, the legislation about democracy and citizens’ education. Then, I present the data and analyze the kindergarten curriculum in the province of Ontario, specifically the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and then The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011).

5.2: Ontario Kindergarten Program

Before the analysis of the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), it is interesting to look at the Canadian Constitution and the legislation that refers to education and democracy. In the Canadian Constitution Act (1867), in the section concerning the legislation respecting education (section 93), there is no reference to democracy related to citizens’ rights in education. In the Constitution Act (1982), in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,
specifically in those sections relating to the fundamental freedoms and the democratic rights of citizens, there is no reference to education. However, in the section of democratic rights, there is a focus on citizens’ right to vote and a reference to the duration, continuation and sitting of legislative bodies.

Below, I analyze the text that refers to (democratic) citizenship education in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

**Text of the Revised Kindergarten Program**

First, I analyzed the parts of the text that refer to (democratic) citizenship education in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). For this purpose, I isolated specific parts of the text, then proceeded to analyze the parts of the guide, Finding common ground: Character development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and then the text that refer to The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011).

For a better understanding of the analysis, I isolated the excerpts on democratic citizenship education from each chapter and subsection of the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) separately. In this way, I proceeded smoothly and gradually to the parts that talk about (democratic) citizenship education.

### a) Introduction

I looked at the language of the introduction specifically relating to the importance of kindergarten. I isolated the following excerpts:

1. Children’s early learning experiences have a profound effect on their development. These early interactions directly affect the way connections are made in the brain. Early learning experiences are crucial to the future well-being of children, and establish the foundation for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will affect later learning and behaviour (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).
2. Children arrive at school with different backgrounds and experiences and at different stages of development. Positive early experiences with school are of paramount importance to young children (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).

3. Although kindergarten programs are critical in laying the foundations for success in learning, the kindergarten years are also an important time in children’s total development (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).

In the above paragraphs, specific patterns are obvious between the language used and the language structure to make the unfamiliar appear familiar.

In the first paragraph, a specific language pattern is used. First, the statement is made clearly, in a sentence, to establish as fact that “children’s early learning experiences” are essential for their development. In the following sentence, connections are made between these “early experiences” and the effect they have on thinking (“connections in brain”). The excerpt ends with a sentence which establishes the importance of “early learning experiences” for both the “future well-being” of the child and the “acquisition of new knowledge and skills that will affect later learning and behaviour”. Strong words are used to connect the importance of “early learning experiences” to the “future well-being” and “the acquisition of knowledge and skills in later learning and behaviour” of children. The verb “affect” is used twice and the noun “effect” is accompanied by the adjective “profound”. The noun “foundation” is accompanied by the strong verb “establish,” and the strong adjective “crucial” is also used (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).

In the second paragraph, it is stated clearly that children of diverse backgrounds are coming into Ontario classrooms. The class is not a homogeneous group, but consists of children whose parents are indigenous, as well as children whose parents have migrated from different countries. Their experiences differ from one another’s, and it is underlined that children are also in different developmental
stages from one other. Therefore, it is understood that “positive early experiences are of paramount importance to young children”. By using the strong word “paramount”, emphasis is given to the major importance of children’s early experiences in kindergarten (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).

The importance of the kindergarten years in students’ development is clearly stated in the third excerpt where it is underlined that kindergarten programs are setting the foundation not only for children’s successful learning but also for their whole development.

These three excerpts are not separated in themes and rhemes. Instead, they are full sentences that set the “truth” and make it familiar to the reader. Strong words are used to emphasize the meanings in this “truth” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).

b) The Learning Program

In this chapter, I isolated the following excerpt:

1. The kindergarten program is designed to help children build on their prior knowledge and experiences, form concepts, acquire foundational skills, and form positive attitudes to learning as they begin to develop their goals for lifelong learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 5).

This unit is a sentence that makes clear the kindergarten program’s scope. Its target is to “help children build on their prior knowledge and experiences;” then, to “form concepts, acquire foundational skills, and form positive attitudes to learning.” Lastly, there is new information introduced. It is clearly stated that, in kindergarten, children “begin to develop their goals for lifelong learning.” Life-long learning, as a characteristic of neo-liberal ideology, has appeared in the kindergarten program and in education in general. This term has been introduced and has gradually become familiar from kindergarten onward, beginning with information that is already known
to the reader and ending with new information. In this way, a new concept is made familiar and known.

In the subsection of Learning Expectations, I extracted the following text:

2. The learning expectations outlined in this document represents the first steps in a continuum of programming from kindergarten to Grade 8 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 5)

In this excerpt, it is indicated that the programming from kindergarten to Grade 8 is a continuation, with the learning expectations presented in the kindergarten program as the first steps. In this view, in kindergarten, the foundation is set for children’s future development, learning skills, knowledge and behaviour. What starts in this stage is fundamental, and is seen as the first part of a continuous integrated procedure.

In the subsection of the Overall Expectations, I isolated the following excerpt:

3. Children in kindergarten programs are expected to demonstrate achievement of the overall expectations for each of the six areas of learning by the end of the kindergarten years. The expectations are not designed to address Junior and Senior Kindergarten separately. Since children entering kindergarten vary in their levels of development and previous learning experiences, it is likely that they will demonstrate a considerable range of achievement as they progress towards meeting the overall expectations of the end of kindergarten (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 5-6).

In this unit, it is clearly stated that the overall expectations are designed for Junior and Senior Kindergarten as a continuum and it is planned that children will meet these expectations by the end of kindergarten. The message stated in the phrase, “Since children entering kindergarten vary in their levels of development and previous learning experiences,” is reiterated here in a different form as it implies diversity not only in developmental stages but also in their backgrounds. Specifically, it repeats the same message as in the previous excerpt, “children arrive at school with
different backgrounds and experiences and at different stages of development”

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1).

In the subsection of the Specific Expectations, I isolated the excerpt:

1. The specific expectations indicate in more detail what children may be expected to demonstrate as they progress through the kindergarten years – that is, through both Junior and Senior Kindergarten. The specific expectations are grouped under subheadings… within the six areas of learning. These subheadings help to organize particular aspects of the knowledge and skills in those areas, and serve as a guide for teachers as they plan the learning program. This organization of expectations in subgroups is not meant to imply that the expectations in any one group are achieved independently of the expectations in the other groups. The subgroupings are intended to help teachers focus on particular aspects of knowledge and skills as they develop and present various lessons and provide instruction for the children. Since not all young children will learn in the same way at the same time, the range of achievement of the specific expectations will vary according to each child’s stage of development (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 6).

In the specific expectations section, it is clarified that knowledge and skills are subordinated into “six areas of learning”. This categorization is made for teachers in order to better accommodate their lessons according to which area of knowledge and skills they want to emphasize and expect students to achieve. However, it is indicated that each child will reach the specific expectations differently, according to which developmental stage the child is in at this specific time. In other words, each child will adopt new knowledge and skills in different ways and at different times.

c) Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

In this chapter, I extracted the following part:

All program expectations must be accounted for in instruction, but evaluation will focus on children’s achievement of the overall expectations. A child’s achievement of the overall expectations is evaluated on the basis of his or her achievement of related specific expectations. The overall expectations are broad in nature, and the specific expectations define the particular content or scope of the knowledge and skills referred to in the overall expectations. The specific expectations will assist teachers in describing the range of behaviours, skills, and strategies that children demonstrate as they
work towards achieving the overall expectations. Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine which specific expectations should be used to evaluate achievement of the overall expectations and which ones will be the focus for instruction and assessment (e.g., assessment through direct observation) but not necessarily evaluated (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 8).

As noted above, evaluation and assessment are introduced at such an early stage as kindergarten. It is clearly stated that both assessment and evaluation are based on “children’s achievement of the overall expectations” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 8). However, overall expectations include a range of specific expectations that indicate the levels of “behaviours, skills, and strategies that children demonstrate” each time, as students progress towards “achieving the overall expectations” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 8). At this point, teachers are the professionals who decide which specific expectations will be assessed and evaluated regarding students’ achievements of the overall expectations.

d) Teaching/ Learning Approaches

In this chapter, the following part was extracted:

Using real-life contexts in which to develop activities for the kindergarten program is a highly effective way of motivating young learners. Children grasp ideas more easily and more effectively and maintain their interest in school when they have an educational program that enables them to connect their learning to their own lives and the world around them. Kindergarten programs should emphasize the interconnected learning that occurs when children are exposed to real-life situations and activities in the classroom, home, school, and neighbourhood (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 13).

In the above section, the introduction of new information is structured by using the theme “using real-life contexts in which to develop activities for the kindergarten program” and the rheme “is a highly effective way of motivating young learners” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 13). “Interconnected learning” is encouraged and promoted in kindergarten programs, as it is connected to real-life contexts. In this way, children assimilate meanings and knowledge better and
maintain their interest for school-provided knowledge through the program, since it provides them the opportunity to connect their new knowledge with their lives and whatever is occurring around them. It is interesting how school has been connected to home and neighbourhood.

In the subsection of the *Language Development and Literacy*, I extracted the following part:

Oral language is the basis for literacy, thinking, and socialization in any language. All young children need learning experiences that help them understand, acquire, and build on oral language. The foundations of language development and literacy begin to be established at birth and continue to be built through interaction and communication with adults and other children at home, in child care, in the community, and at school. To foster the language development necessary for literacy, kindergarten programs should be rich in language-oriented activities and resources that build on prior knowledge, that are relevant to the lives of young children, and that provide opportunities for thinking, problem solving, and experimenting (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 15).

It is clearly pointed out that language is the foundation of thinking and socialization. This information is given as a fact which is then analyzed. Specifically, it is explained that literacy is developed through language activities and learning material that ties in with the knowledge that students already have in terms of their lived experiences. In this light, oral language, literacy, thinking and socialization are interrelated and developed gradually “through interaction and communication with adults and other children at home, in child care, in the community, and at school” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 15).

e) Some Considerations for Program Planning

In this chapter, I extracted the following section:

Young children come to school with an enormous capacity to learn. Important learning and development occur between birth and six years in all areas of human functioning – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic. Children develop knowledge and skills at
varying rates and through various means (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 20).

It is recognized once again and is repeated that the first six years of a human’s life are fundamental for that person’s whole development. The acquisition of new knowledge and skills vary among people and occur through various methods and procedures. Repetition of this statement adds value to the information provided and is given as a fact. The new points added to this fact are the age range – the first six years – and the usage of different processes and methodologies. However, the age range of the first six years is based on previous well-established research (Dimitriou-Hatzineofitou, 2001), but there are no references to this research in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Then, in the same section, I extracted the following section:

The following chart offers guidance when making program decisions. The chart is not meant to be a comprehensive list, but highlights key observable behaviours in all five areas of development, and ways of taking them into consideration (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 20).

Developmental area: Social Knowledge and Competence

- Some Observable Behaviours: Children: are beginning to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
  Program Considerations: support and praise acceptable behaviour
- Some Observable Behaviours: Children: are just beginning to develop the capacity to relate to others
  Program Considerations:
  1. provide models and examples of appropriate ways of solving problems (e.g., using words, making positive choices)
  2. provide children with opportunities to become aware of the needs and ideas of others through discussions and sharing
- Some Observable Behaviours: Children: need and enjoy social contact to develop a sense of themselves
  Program Considerations: provide opportunities to develop social skills in a variety of contexts (e.g., in whole-class activities, at learning centres, when playing cooperatively)” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21).

The revised Kindergarten Program is divided into five developmental areas which are provided in a chart (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). It is clearly
stated that each developmental area has some observable behavioural outcomes and that teachers should consider them within the program accordingly. The developmental area in the program that is related to citizenship education is “Social Knowledge and Competence.” At this stage, children begin to “distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour,” “begin to develop the capacity to relate to others” and “need and enjoy social contact to develop a sense of themselves” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21).

The Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) provides some directions for teachers to fulfil children’s needs and meet the expectations the Program sets forth. In this view, it is suggested that teachers strive to “support and praise acceptable behaviour,” to “provide models and examples of appropriate ways of solving problems (e.g., using words, making positive choices),” to “provide children with opportunities to become aware of the needs and ideas of others through discussions and sharing” and to “provide opportunities to develop social skills in a variety of contexts (e.g., in whole-class activities, at learning centres, when playing cooperatively)” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21).

These considerations are valid and based on research findings (Dimitriou-Hatzineofitou, 2001), although the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) has again provided no references. However, approaches such as “support and praise acceptable behaviour,” “provide models and examples of appropriate ways of solving problems” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21) raise questions as to what the appropriate ways of solving these problems are, what is acceptable behaviour and what models and examples will be used. Furthermore, if the intent is to use words and make positive choices, more questions are raised about which words those would be and what positive choices are the appropriate ones for
the educational context which will develop the area of social knowledge and competence in students’ lives, especially in such an early stage as kindergarten.

In the same section, I extracted the following section:

Developmental Area: Communication Skills and General Knowledge

Some Observable Behaviours:
- are beginning to develop age-appropriate knowledge about the world around them
- learn through exploration, play, discovery, investigation, inquiry, and modelling

Program Considerations: create contexts though which learning can take place in ways that engage children and that build on and expand their learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21).

Another developmental area of the Program that is related to citizenship education is “Communication Skills and General Knowledge”. Children in kindergarten begin “to develop age-appropriate knowledge about the world around them” and “learn through exploration, play, discovery, investigation, inquiry, and modelling.” The Program suggests that teachers “create contexts through which learning can take place in ways that engage children and that build on and expand their learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21). Students build their knowledge and communication skills through contexts that provide children with the opportunity to engage with learning in order to construct and expand what they learn. In this way, knowledge is constructed and democratic citizenship education, among other educational constructs, is acquired.

In the subsection of the English Language Learners, I extracted the following part:

Ontario schools have some of the most multilingual student populations in the world. The first language of approximately 20 per cent of the children in Ontario’s English-language schools is a language other than English (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 24).

The information that Ontario schools have a high rate of diverse multilingual student population is emphasized by statistics. It is clearly noted that approximately
20 per cent of the student population in Ontario schools speaks a first language other than English. The reference to the percentage familiarizes, makes visible and establishes the new information as a reality. Furthermore, the diversity of student population that characterizes schools in the province of Ontario reinforces the importance of democratic citizenship education in school setting.

In the subsection of the *Antidiscrimination Education*, I extracted the following section:

To ensure that all students in the province have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, the education system must be free from discrimination and must provide all students with a safe and secure environment so that they can participate fully and successfully in the educational experience.

The implementation of antidiscrimination principles in education influences all aspects of school life. It promotes a school climate that encourages all students to work to high standards, affirms the worth of all students, and helps students strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. It encourages staff and students alike to value and show respect for diversity in the school and the wider society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 26).

In this unit, the new information regarding antidiscrimination education is being introduced through the assurance that every student in Ontario will have an “equal opportunity to achieve” his/her full potential. Then it is stated that, only if discrimination in education is exterminated and a secure environment is provided, students can be part of the educational community fully and successfully.

The key words here that enable antidiscrimination education to influence the school life of the students are “ensure,” “secure,” “safe,” “equal opportunity,” “full potential,” and “fully and successfully” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 26).

In the next paragraph, antidiscrimination is connected with identity and diversity in the school environment. It begins with the general statement that “the implementation of antidiscrimination principles in education influences all aspects of school life.” Analytically, there is a reference to antidiscrimination principles. In
terms of citizenship, it is stated that this “helps students strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. It encourages staff and students alike to value and show respect for diversity in the school and the wider society.” The key words, “identity” and “respect for diversity,” are tied smoothly to antidiscrimination principles and are expanded to include the wider society. This is a reinforcement of schooling as a microcosm of society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 26).

In the same subsection, I extracted the following section:

The Kindergarten Program should help children develop a sense of what is responsible, fair, and equitable treatment of themselves and others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 27).

Within antidiscrimination education in the Kindergarten Program, students are introduced to and encouraged to develop a sense of what is “responsible, fair, and equitable treatment of themselves and others.” These values are closely related to democratic citizenship education.

f) The Learning Expectations

In this chapter, I extracted the following part:

Kindergarten programs focus on who the children are…. In partnership with the home, the school plays a vital role in developing social competence by providing the tools and knowledge that children will need in order to play a constructive role as citizens (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 30).

In the theme, “in partnership with the home, the school plays a vital role in developing social competence,” it is stated clearly that the school, in cooperation with the parents, sets the foundation for the development of children’s social capability. The rheme, “by providing the tools and knowledge that children will need in order to play a constructive role as citizens,” informs us about the mission of kindergarten. In the school, the appropriate tools and knowledge will be provided to the children in order for them to become good future citizens. The word, “constructive,” used here
sheds light on the tools and knowledge the kindergarten will provide the students with in order to become good citizens.

Again, from the same section:

Children enter kindergarten with a diverse range of needs, experiences, and abilities. The rate at which children adapt to the school environment will vary (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 30).

There is recognition that children who enter kindergarten have different experiences, needs and skills. Not all children will settle in the school setting in the same way. This is a repetition, as these characteristics have been stated in the curriculum before and mentioned above. The notion of diversity of students’ experiences in Ontario classrooms validates the notion of citizenship since they are the future Canadian citizens, regardless of their background. In this light, it is interesting to look at the diversity of their experience and the notion of citizenship as presented and approached in curriculum.

Again, from the same section:

The kindergarten classroom must be an environment where children are affirmed as individuals and as members of a diverse community of learners (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 30).

The kindergarten classroom is seen as a microcosm of the society. Within a diverse group of people that comprises the society, children are individuals and members of the classroom group and future citizens of that society.

Again, from the same section:

The learning and teaching program should provide opportunities for children to discover their strengths, interests, and abilities, put forth their ideas, and develop their relationships with others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 30).

In this sentence it is clearly stated that the teaching and learning procedures in kindergarten should aim not only to develop the interests and skills of students but
also their relationships with others. The development of this skill is fundamental for
democratic citizenship education.

Again, from the same section:

Expectations for personal and social development are organized under
the following subheadings: Self-Awareness and Self-Reliance, Social
Relationships, and Awareness of Surroundings. Young children begin
their personal and social development by learning about themselves,
about themselves in relationship to others, and about themselves in
relationship to the world. Social, personal, and emotional growth and
learning develop through interactions with others, and are
interconnected with other areas of development, such as cognitive and
motor skills. For example, a small group of children engaged in sorting
math manipulatives must follow a problem-solving process both
mathematically and socially. Children learn cognitive, motor, and
social skills when they role-play at the dramatic play centre,
experimenting with a variety of social roles (e.g., store clerk, bus
driver, grandparent). Children learn to persevere and to work
independently as they solve puzzles, create sculptures, and construct

Once more it is underlined that, in kindergarten, the foundations of children’s
personal and social development are set. Children start to socialize with their peers,
their teachers and others and, through this experience, they learn about themselves
and develop their personal and social skills. However, students’ social and personal
development is interrelated with the development of other areas such as cognitive,
motor and emotional skills. They learn about themselves in connection with others
and the world interdisciplinarily, by using math, dramatic play and language
independently and in groups.

In the subsection of the Overall Expectations, I extracted the following part:

By the end of kindergarten, children will:
A. demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self image;
B. demonstrate a beginning understanding of the diversity in individuals,
families, schools, and the wider community;
C. demonstrate independence, self regulation, and a willingness to take
responsibility in learning and other activities;
D. demonstrate an ability to use problem-solving skills in a variety of
social contexts;
E. identify and use social skills in play and other contexts;

It is interesting that these expectations are couched in behaviourist terms in order to emphasize the formation of students’ behaviour. Among the overall expectations that are presented in the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) is students’ demonstration of “a sense of identity and a positive self image” as well as “understanding of the diversity” (31) in their surroundings. Furthermore, students are expected to “demonstrate independence, self-regulation, and a willingness to take responsibility” in several activities, “to use problem-solving skills in a variety of social contexts” and to “show an awareness of their surroundings” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). The words used here, such as “sense of identity,” “diversity,” “independence,” “self-regulation,” “responsibility,” “problem-solving skills in a variety of social contexts,” and “awareness of their surroundings,” are all related to citizenship education as well and specifically to setting the base for its foundations.

In the subsection of the *Specific Expectations*, I extracted the following excerpt:

As children progress through the kindergarten years, they:
1. recognize personal interests, strengths, and accomplishments…[A]  
2. identify and talk about their own interests and preferences…[A]  
3. express their thoughts (e.g., on a science discovery, on something they have made) and share experiences (e.g., experiences at home, cultural experiences) [A] (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31).

Among the specific expectation in the self-awareness and self-reliance section, children in kindergarten are expected to “recognize personal interests, strengths, and accomplishments,” “identify and talk about their own interests and preferences” and “express their thoughts… and share experiences…” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). These components are quite general at first glance, but they are the very
basis of the construction of students’ “…sense of identity and a positive self image” as indicated above in the [A] overall expectation.

Again, from the same subsection, I extracted the following excerpt:

4. Develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other’s feelings (e.g., tell an adult when another child is hurt/sick/upset, role-play emotions with dolls and puppets)...[B]
5. Demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view (e.g., help a friend who speaks another language, adapt behaviour to accommodate a classmate’s ideas) [B]
6. Talk about events or retell stories that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others (e.g., traditions, birthdays, cultural events, myths, Canadian symbols, holidays) [B] (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31).

The above specific expectations are related to [B] overall expectations which “demonstrate a beginning understanding of the diversity in individuals, families, schools, and the wider community” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). The words that are used in these specific expectations such as “empathy,” “respect,” “consideration,” “differences,” “alternative points of view,” “reflect,” “heritage,” and “cultural background” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31) are powerful key words. “Understanding of the diversity” requires students’ development of “…empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other’s feelings,” “…respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view” and “talk about events or retell stories that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others…” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31).

Again, from the same subsection, I extracted the following excerpt:

7. demonstrate self-reliance and a sense of responsibility (e.g., separate willingly from parents when they arrive at school, dress themselves at school, make choices and decisions on their own, take care of personal belongings, know when to seek assistance, know how to get materials they need) [C]
8. demonstrate a willingness to try new activities (e.g., experiment with new materials/tools, try out activities in a different learning
centre, join in the singing of a song, select and persist with challenging activities, experiment with writing) [C]

9. begin to demonstrate self-control (e.g., be aware of and label their own emotions, accept help to clam down, calm themselves down after being upset) and adapt behaviour to different contexts within the school environment (e.g., follow routines and rules in the classroom, gym, library, playground) [C]

10. demonstrate self-motivation, initiative, and confidence in their approach to learning by selecting and completing learning tasks (e.g., choose learning centres independently, try something new, persevere with tasks) [C]

11. interact cooperatively with others in classroom events and activities (e.g., offer and accept help in group situations, join in small- and large-group games and activities, join in democratic decision making) [C]

12. adapt to new situations (e.g., having visitors in the classroom, having a different teacher occasionally, going on a field trip, riding the school bus; initially: adapt with a great deal of support from the teachers; eventually: adapt with less assistance) [C] (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32).

The above specific expectations are related to [C] overall expectation which is about the demonstration of “...independence, self regulation, and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other activities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31) in students’ development. Students are expected to “demonstrate self-reliance and a sense of responsibility,” “demonstrate a willingness to try new activities,” “begin to demonstrate self-control,” “demonstrate self-motivation, initiative, and confidence in their approach to learning by selecting and completing learning tasks,” “interact cooperatively with others in classroom events and activities” and “adapt to new situations” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32). The key words that are used are “self-reliance,” “responsibility,” “willingness,” “self-control,” “self-motivation,” “initiative,” “confidence,” “interact cooperatively,” and “adapt to new situations” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32). All these above mentioned components are closely related to citizenship as they rest upon its foundations.

In the same subsection, I extracted the following excerpt:

As children progress through the kindergarten years, they:
13. use a variety of simple strategies to solve social problems (e.g., seek assistance from the teacher when needed, use pictures and/or words to express their feelings, develop an awareness of honesty, talk to peers about possible solutions) [D]
14. act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages (e.g., use an appropriate tone of voice and gestures, give compliments, give and accept constructive criticism, use “I” messages) [E]...
15. demonstrate the ability to take turns in activities and discussions (e.g., engage in play activities with others, listen to peers and adults) [E]...
16. demonstrate an awareness of ways of making and keeping friends (e.g., sharing, listening, talking, helping; entering into play or joining a group with guidance from the teacher) [E]... (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32).

All the above specific expectations refer to social relationships. However, not all of these specific expectations belong to the same overall expectation. The first specific expectation is related to overall expectation [D], which is about demonstrating the “ability to use problem-solving skills in a variety of social contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). The ones that follow are related to the overall expectation [E] with regards to “identifying and using social skills in play and other contexts” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). Students are expected to develop their social relationships by learning “to use problem-solving skills” and to “identify and use social skills” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31) in classrooms and in other settings. In order to accomplish this, students are expected to “use a variety of simple strategies to solve social problems,” “act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages,” “demonstrate the ability to take turns in activities and discussions” and “demonstrate an awareness of ways of making and keeping friends” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32). Social relationships and the components that embrace social relationships, such as “strategies,” “solve social problems,” “act and talk,” “expressing and accepting positive messages,” “take turns in activities and discussions” and “awareness of ways
of making and keeping friends” are related to democratic citizenship education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32).

In the subsection of the **Awareness of Surroundings**, I extracted the following excerpt:

As children progress through the kindergarten years, they:
17. identify people who work in the community, and talk about what they do (e.g., farmer, park ranger, police officer, nurse, Aboriginal healer, store clerk, engineer, baker) [F]
18. recognize special places and buildings within their community, both natural and human-made, and talk about their functions (e.g., farm, church, hospital, mosque, sweat lodge, arena, mine, cave) [F]
19. develop an awareness of ways in which people adapt to the places in which they live (e.g., children in cities may live in high-rise buildings and use sidewalks and the subway; children in the country may take the bus to school) [F] (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32).

The above specific expectations are related to the overall expectation [F], to “demonstrate an awareness of their surroundings” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). The key words that are used are “identify people,” “talk about,” “recognize special places” and “ways in which people adapt” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32) and they are related to the basic elements that compose citizenship.

Below, I analyze the text that refers to (democratic) citizenship education in **Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12** (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008).

**Text of the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12**

The notion of citizenship is found in **Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12** (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). Interestingly, the context has currently shifted citizenship to character education. In addition, the notion of a good citizen seems to be conflated with the notion of a good person. As already stated in Chapter Three, a good person is not necessarily a good
A good citizen obeys the laws, challenges and engages in public issues, votes in elections and promotes societal values through his conduct (Osborne, 2004). Furthermore, character education seems to be confused with citizenship education in Ontario schools.

As noted already in Chapter Three, this is of interest because, even though citizenship education has been an important component of formal education within the social area of the curriculum, the current economic, social and political challenges, as well as diversity within society, have given citizenship education new meaning (Bickmore, 2006, 1993; Cogan & Derricott, 2000). Inevitably, citizenship education within curriculum could not be unaffected, since education is a vital sector of society.

Citizenship education within curriculum provides the opportunity for political and corporate components to influence students’ education according to their benefits in several issues such as social involvement, identity, common good and values. Specifically, issues of identity, rights and duties, engagement in public issues, and values are challenged through global economy, technology and communication, migration and diversity (Cogan, 2000). Inevitably, education as a fundamental and vibrant component of contemporary society cannot remain unaffected by this reality. As a result, challenging the notion of citizenship in a given society such as Canada is essential, since diversity and corporate interest shape new meanings and dimensions. But, these dimensions might lead to ambiguous and opposite effects, such as further marginalization of minority students.

In contemporary Canadian education, and especially in Ontario, students are encouraged to find common ground, regardless of their backgrounds. Cultural diversity in Ontario led the Ministry of Education to publish *Finding Common*
Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ministry of Education, 2008) in an effort to promote character development and focus on commonalities instead of differences. Interestingly, within the character education initiative for K-12 there is a special section on citizenship in relation to social cohesion.

Specifically, it is stated that:

Character development will make our vision of education truly balanced and holistic as we revisit the foundations of an equitable and inclusive public education – namely, intellectual, character and citizenship development” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2).

Citizenship development is seen as part of a character development, which provides the pathway to the “truly balanced and holistic as we revisit the foundations of an equitable and inclusive public education” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). The theme of the sentence is “character development will make our vision of education truly balanced and holistic” and the rheme is “as we revisit the foundations of an equitable and inclusive public education” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). Character development is well related to the notion of “vision” in education, balance, holistic approach, equity, inclusiveness and public education. In this way, new information is introduced and structured. Obviously, the Ministry’s intent is to set character development within a vision of public education which promotes and nourishes a holistic approach, balance, equity and inclusiveness.

The notion of citizenship is also evident in the next excerpt:

It (a quality education) includes a focus on a whole person. It means preparing students to be citizens who have empathy and respect for others within our increasingly diverse communities. It also means providing opportunities for students to understand deeply the importance of civic engagement and what it means to be productive citizens in an interdependent world (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2).

Quality in education involves the person as a whole. It is a two-way procedure. Students are educated to be both “citizens who have empathy and respect
for others” and “to be productive citizens in an interdependent world” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). In order to accomplish that, students need to “understand deeply the importance of civic engagement” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). It is also recognized that the community is increasingly diverse. Quality education is clearly related to a productive citizenry.

Character development is not only related to quality education but it is also clearly stated that “character development is education at its best” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). The meaning of character education in the Canadian education system is clearly stated in the following excerpt:

What is character development? Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. These attributes provide a standard for behaviour against which we hold ourselves accountable. They permeate all that happens in schools. They bind us together across the lines that often divide us in society. They form the basis of our relationships and of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation for excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring and inclusive. Excellence in education includes character development. Through character, we find common ground (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 3).

It is interesting how character development’s meaning is explained above. It is presented as a “deliberate effort” to embrace and adopt “universal attributes” that lead “schools and communities” to “consensus” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 3). The word “universal” could help to move character development to the global stage as governments negotiate what a “world citizen” may be. Then, these “attributes” ensure acceptable behaviour since they “provide a standard” for students in the school setting. In this way, as students grow up, differences are gradually abolished and a basis for a “responsible citizenship” is set. These “attributes” are considered the “foundation for excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring and inclusive”
Furthermore, powerful words are used to underline the notion and importance of character development, such as “excellence,” “equity,” “respectful,” “safe,” “caring,” and “inclusive.” The word “excellence” is repeated in relation to education and both are in seen in conjunction with character development. In the end, “common ground” is found “through character” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 3).

The “vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring and inclusive” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 3) is repeated in “respectful, caring, safe, inclusive: Learning cultures and school communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 4).

Furthermore, character development is linked to other components such as “learning and academic achievement,” “respect for diversity,” and “citizenship development and community partnerships” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 4), as stated in the following extract:

Character development is not a stand alone initiative; it has linkages with learning and academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development and parent and community partnerships (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 4).

In this sense, citizenship education is interrelated with academic performance, diversity and “community partnership.” The new information is introduced with the theme “character development is not a stand alone initiative;” and the rhyme “it has linkages with learning and academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development and parent and community partnerships” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 4).

It is stated that, the Ontario province’s vision regarding character development has to demonstrate clear meaning in order to “ensure that there are common understandings of the key beliefs and principles on which the Character Development
Character development is articulated as follows:

Character development in Ontario schools... is about inclusiveness, equity and respect for diversity; is about ensuring that there are opportunities to engage students in general, and disengaged and marginalized students in particular, in the initiative; is about all students and all schools. It is not about the “few” or the exclusion of some (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7).

Character development is related to “inclusiveness,” “equity and respect for diversity,” “opportunities to engage students in general, and disengaged and marginalized students in particular” and “about all students and all schools,” among other components (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7). Interestingly, it is indicated what character development is not about, and that is “not about the ‘few’ or the exclusion of some” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7).

Furthermore, character development is articulated as:

Character development in Ontario schools... is about a process of engagement in which communities come together to build consensus on the values they hold in common. It is not about a government imposing a set of moral standards (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7).

In the above extract, new information is introduced through the theme “a process of engagement in which communities come together” and the rheme “to build consensus on the values they hold in common” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7). Parallel to this, strong words such as “engagement,” “consensus” and “in common” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7) are used to emphasize the meaning of this statement. In addition, it is clearly stated that character development “is not about a government imposing a set of moral standards” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7).

In the chapter Engaging Our Students, Our Schools And Our Communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8), it is stated that:
Student success, however, is multidimensional. In addition to academic success, studies indicate that Ontarians share a belief in the need to develop character and to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible participants (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8).

In the above extract, citizenship education as part of the character development initiative is closely related to student success. In particular, success is characterized as “multidimensional” in the sense that, apart from “academic success,” character development and students’ preparation “for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible participants” are essential. And this parameter is reinforced by “studies indicate that Ontarians share a belief in the need to develop character and to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible participants” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8). The notion of “responsible participants” related to “productive… participants” is related to consumerist ideas of “spending and getting” in order to maintain a “vibrant” economy.

In the extract below, citizenship education becomes more apparent through the “Character Development Initiative”. Here, a clear statement is made with regards to the transparent role of the government in education:

Through the Character Development Initiative, the government addresses a complementary and equally critical aspect of student success focused on developing the student as a learner, as an individual, as a citizen and as an active member of the school and broader community. The concept of character development is rooted in the belief that parents, schools and communities share the responsibility for, and the benefits of, the development of our young people as empathetic and involved citizens. This K-12 initiative involves all members of the board, school and community in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that students require to become caring and socially responsible members of society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8).

As stated clearly above, the government uses “Character Development Initiative” as a means of influencing student success as a whole. Specifically, the
government is interested in “developing the student as a learner, as an individual, as a citizen and as an active member of the school and broader community” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8). In this view, policy-makers see the student not only as a learner in school but also as a future citizen in society. Therefore, all the involved members of the society, such as teachers, parents, policy-makers, schools and community partners, undertake roles in the whole development of students as future citizens and in the commitment to develop “the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that students require to become caring and socially responsible members of society” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8).

However, the notion of “citizen” to policy-makers is quite interesting. As it is clarified in Chapter Three, a good citizen is a person who obeys the laws, plays an essential and moral role in public life in society, votes in elections consciously and engages in common issues (Osborne, 2004). In this diverse Canadian society, the formation of citizens’ identities, civic participation and social justice should be cautiously considered (Jones, 2000), especially since tensions exist within democratic reform, internationally, through civic education (Hall, 1996).

Through citizenship education, students are prepared “to participate as active and responsible citizens in a democracy” (Hébert & Sears, 2001, 1). Hyslop-Margison & Sears (2006) stress that both critical thinking and constructive criticism are essential components of democratic citizenship which is part of the formal education programs within the social area of the curriculum (Bickmore, 2006, 1993; Cogan & Derricott, 2000), including kindergarten (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Education provides space for political initiatives and economic gain to promote certain ways of thinking and kinds of activities for students – the future
citizens – over issues of identity, social values, the common good and engagement in public issues. These components, woven throughout the global economy, technology and national migration, challenge conventional social structures and societal conditions, including conventional meanings of citizenship education (Cogan, 2000) and, as such, set new meanings and dimensions world-wide.

Policy-makers monitor those tensions within democratic reform world-wide and, specifically, the challenges and changes of social, economic and political components in contemporary society. Inevitably, citizenship education takes on new meanings, such as consumerism, which is closely related to political and economic values (Taylor, 1991). As I have already stated in Chapter Three, consumer practices have been considered of great importance to citizens and influence their way of thinking accordingly. However, challenging the conventional meaning of citizenship education can be dangerous because policy-makers twist definitions to promote government agendas and corporate interest. Consequently, the “new” meaning of citizenship education can be dubious or falsified.

Furthermore, in the same chapter, it is stated that:

The commitment of everyone in the school and community to engaging students in building inclusive school cultures characterized by positive attributes and responsible citizenship is essential to this initiative. Character cannot be acquired passively, nor can it be delivered solely as units of curriculum. Character must be developed through active participation and supported by dialogue, reflection and action. The Character Development Initiative is grounded in the vision of an education system in which students play a pivotal role, and are actively engaged in their own learning, in the life of the school and in their communities. Character development is about citizenship in action (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8).

In the above extract, the focus of the character initiative states that all involved partners have to work towards the students’ engagement “in building inclusive school cultures characterized by positive attributes and responsible
citizenship” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8). In addition, the procedure relating to “how to develop character” is given. Character development requires “active participation and supported by dialogue, reflection and action” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8) as well as a continuity in students’ active participation and engagement “in their own learning, in the life of the school and in their communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8). The words “engaging” and “active” and their derivatives are repeated in order to give greater emphasis to students’ roles regarding citizenship. In fact, it is clearly stated that “character development is about citizenship in action” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8).

In the extract below, the “vision for education in Ontario” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9) is stated:

Our vision for education in Ontario is one of excellence in academic achievement and the development of both character and the competencies of responsible citizenship. We are committed to excellence and equity. As the province strives to provide the best possible education for all students, there is a need to transmit from one generation to the next the habits of mind and heart that are necessary for good citizenship to thrive (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9).

In the above extract, the word “excellence” is repeated in relation to both academic performance and the development of character and responsible citizenship (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9). New information is provided here. In the last sentence of the above paragraph there is the theme, “as the province strives to provide the best possible education for all students” and the rheme, “there is a need to transmit from one generation to the next the habits of mind and heart that are necessary for good citizenship to thrive” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9). In this way, the educational aim of providing the best education to students is closely related to citizenship development.
Furthermore, it is indicated that “students are at the centre of everything” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9). By providing the “best possible education for all students” and “good citizenship,” Ontario invests in the future of the province. This is confirmed by the next statement saying that “our citizens are our province’s best asset. They contribute to nation building and to the continued development of a civil society” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9). In this light, importance is added to citizenship education for future investment.

In the next extract, character development potential is presented analytically:

Character development, when fully implemented, permeates the entire life of the school. It is woven into policies, programs, practices, procedures, processes and interactions. It is a way of life. It recognizes that a respectful, caring, safe and inclusive school climate enhances learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9).

In this extract, character development is comparable to “a way of life.” It can weave through and be woven into all aspects of educational processes and structures as it reinforces the learning process. Since citizenship education is part of character development, as already stated, citizenship education is also woven into all aspects of educational procedures and processes.

As cited in Cooper & White (2012), Maxine Greene says that schooling makes students into “proper servants of the technocratic society” (153). This statement describes and summarizes nicely the meaning of the above extract as it relates to contemporary society. When character development, including citizenship education, is implemented in school, “it is woven into policies, programs, practices, procedures, processes and interactions.” Then, strategically oriented, it prepares students to learn in “a respectful, caring, safe and inclusive” environment. Finally, it becomes “a way of life,” which students experience as adults. Nevertheless, the whole procedure seems like a vicious cycle in which students are prepared
accordingly for adulthood. In the bigger picture, this procedure is a perfect mechanism for policy-makers’ plans and decisions about which values, principles and skills are necessary for students to develop in order to cope with in their obligations as future citizens. At a first glance, the language used by the policy-makers is selected carefully and is pedagogically accepted. However, the essence of the messages that pass through that mechanism and, furthermore, the operations and impacts in students’ education in school settings are quite blurred and complex when it comes to governmental intervention, corporate interest and long term benefit.

Citizenship education and its components are more evident in the next extract:

We believe in the potential of our students to be responsible members of our communities and in their ability to demonstrate the universal values that we espouse as a society. We want our schools to continue to be safe models of effective relationships where students learn about and put into practice attributes such as respect, responsibility, fairness and empathy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9).

The educational aim is not only for students to be “responsible members” of the society but also to “demonstrate the universal values” that this society encompasses and incorporates (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9) with a gradual extension to the global. Furthermore, policy-makers aim to make schools “models of effective relationships where students learn about and put into practice attributes such as respect, responsibility, fairness and empathy” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9). The words “respect, responsibility, fairness and empathy” give emphasis to “effective relationships” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 9).

As stated already, citizenship education is part of character education. Below, emphasis is given to this relation by referring to abstract research studies. Specifically, it is stated that:

Studies in character education have demonstrated that, when implemented on a school-wide basis, positive results and improvements are realized in the following areas:…
• equity and respect for diversity
• school culture, civility and feelings of safety
• civic engagement

In the extract above, the emphasis on character education and citizenship is further developed through the theme, “studies in character education have demonstrated that, when implemented on a school-wide basis” and the rhyme, “positive results and improvements are realized.” Furthermore, the word “engagement” is repeated twice (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 12). Overall, words, such as “equity,” “respect,” “diversity,” “culture,” “civility,” “safety,” “civic engagement” and “engagement in social justice issues” are frequently used in relation to character development. Citizenship education is inextricably linked to character development since “it prepares students for citizenship and civic involvement and to be fully engaged, responsible members of their communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 14).

In the extract below, a number of words such as “learning and academic achievement,” “respect for diversity” and “citizenship development” are repeated to emphasize the fact that these are important components of character education:

Learning and academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development and parent and community partnerships are all essential to the character development initiative. Each contributes to the development to character and to students’ educational experience. These essential elements cannot exist in isolation, or solely in policies, practices and programs. They are linked together and enhance one another, forming the foundation of character development. Together, they create the conditions for respectful, safe, caring, inclusive learning cultures (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 16).

Furthermore, academic performance and citizenship are again closely related, since they “cannot exist in isolation, or solely in policies, practices and programs.” In addition, they reinforce one another and shape character education, creating, at the
same time, “the conditions for respectful, safe, caring, inclusive learning cultures” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 16).

In the following extract there is a reference to research evidence in order to reinforce the link between the academic performance and the character development initiative which includes students’ involvement in school life:

There is a growing body of research evidence that character development and greater student engagement in the life of the school are linked closely to academic achievement. …A study by the OECD (2003), which examined data from 42 nations, concluded that one in five students in Canada has a low sense of belonging at school. This results in lower academic achievement during the schooling years, and often leads to continued difficulty in adulthood (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17).

The reference to the OECD’s research evidence (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) shows that the topic has been taken seriously into consideration and is both countable and computable. Apparently, research results from an economic organization’s involvement in education are taken into consideration since they are used to reinforce the linkage between learning achievement and “student engagement” in school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17).

Below, there is a clear reference to democracy. It is pointed out that:

Ontario’s growing diversity provides our students with a rich opportunity to explore and develop the attitudes and the interpersonal and community-building skills that a mature democracy demands (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17).

The new information represented by this point makes use of the theme, “Ontario’s growing diversity provides our students with a rich opportunity” and the rheme, “to explore and develop the attitudes and the interpersonal and community-building skills that a mature democracy demands” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17). In this sense, democracy is characterized as “mature” in a society where there is growing diversity. Through this diversity, students are provided with a variety
of stimuli to develop communication and behavioural skills in order to cope with the constraints imposed by society.

In the following extract, the students’ effective function in a diverse society is linked to the global economy. But, it appears that there is inadequate analysis and an abstract reference regarding this linkage between students’ effective function and the global economy. Instead, the linkage between students’ effective function and diversity is further explained:

Today’s students need to function effectively in our diverse society and in our global economy. With increasing ethnocultural and racial diversity the need to find common ground based on our values and beliefs, in communities and as a province, takes on greater significance. Building consensus on what we hold in common is essential for the development of peaceful communities and enduring relationships” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17).

Furthermore, in the above paragraph, it is underlined that a key concept to an “ethnocultural and racial diversity” is finding “common ground” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17). This common ground will be built on common values, beliefs and consensus and will bring peace and “enduring relationships” into society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17).

Other qualities relating to character development are described below:

Students develop character through their interactions with others in their diverse classrooms and communities. Qualities such as empathy are best nurtured through relationships that cross the lines that often divide people in society. We want our schools, our communities, our province, our nation and our world to embody the qualities of effective relationships (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 17).

In the above extract, an emphasis is given to relationships that are developed in a diverse society. The word “empathy” is given as an example of a quality of effective relationships that characterize not only the microcosm of a society but also the whole world.
In the next extract, there is a reference in Ontario curricula that address citizenship development among other stakeholder, specifically teachers.

Curriculum documents for Ontario’s public education system currently provide teachers with expectations that are geared towards social, interpersonal and citizenship development (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 19).

In the next extract, there is an emphasis given again to diversity and how relationships affect it.

Ontario schools are communities in which students develop the respect for diversity that is the foundation of all positive human relationships. Respectful interactions validate the unique identity of each individual and all members of our diverse communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20).

Human interactions form the basis for diverse relationships. However, it is indicated that respect is the connecting link between people of diverse backgrounds in order to form identities.

Below, another characteristic of character development, equity, is indicated. Approaches to equity are derived through policy documents and programs from kindergarten.

Whereas policies, legislation and programs define the scope and expectations of equity initiatives; character development provides motivation and brings humanity to the implementation of equity initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20).

In the next extract, there is an explicit reference again to citizenry. However, it is referred to in relation to notions of “respect,” “dignity,” “diversity,” “empathy,” “integration,” “inclusion” and “unity” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20).

Respect for the dignity of all people is an essential characteristic of our society. In the future, our citizenry will continue to be increasingly diverse. People come to Canada, and particularly our province, from around the globe. Ontarians represent the world in miniature. Their perspectives, cultures and world views enrich the fabric of our society and provide deep opportunities for all people to develop the attributes that ensure integration and inclusion. They also require us to find unity and a common bond within our diversity through the values we hold in
common. These values will provide a focus for developing equitable and inclusive schools. A civil and compassionate society has, at its core, both respect and empathy. These qualities extend from one person to another and form the basis of positive and enduring relationships that create the human connectedness necessary for social cohesion and for both individuals and society to thrive (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20).

Citizenship is interlocked with diversity and human relationships that form social cohesion. First, the function of respect is repeated to give greater emphasis to the importance of an increasingly diverse society and to human relationships. Canada, and especially the province of Ontario, is presented as “the world in miniature” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20) because its foundations are constituted by people from around the world. Therefore, there is an increasing need to surface those characteristics that unite citizens and lead to “integration” and “inclusion.” In other words, there is a need for people in the society to find common ground through the values they share. This procedure can be initiated, fed and reinforced in a school setting by fostering and focusing on those values. In this way, inclusive schools will be created that will be characterized by “respect and empathy” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20). Through these values, students develop those skills necessary for constructive human relationships that lead towards social cohesion.

In the next extract, there is a reference again to “policies, programs, practices and interactions.” In relation to “character and equity,” as well as to “respect for diversity,” a culture is generated from diversity and through educational “excellence” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 21). These words are repeated again so as to emphasize how character development has an impact on education and creates a society characterized by social cohesion:

A culture of character and equity in Ontario schools means that respect for diversity must be at the heart of our policies, programs, practices and interactions. This culture includes every child; eliminates barriers; involves the broad community; and builds, enhances, and aligns with
existing initiative. It is the foundation of excellence in education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 21).

In addition, there is another characteristic, morality, which is related to citizenship and education:

Education has a moral imperative. When we prepare students for responsible citizenship we are also fostering responsible stewardship. The qualities we nurture in our students today will contribute to and enrich the quality of their relationships and human interactions (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 21).

As indicated above, morality is linked to responsible citizenship fostered through education and promotes positive human relationships. It is obvious that such relationships are of great importance.

In addition, there is a repetition of the words “equity” and “excellence” in relation to education:

Our quest for character and commitment to equity and excellence must be relentless. They unlock the full potential of inclusive education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 21).

Equity paves the way for the creation of a society that has moved beyond the burdens of diversity and is characterized by social cohesion. Furthermore, character education fosters those characteristics, but is closely related to excellence at the same time, leaving no room for doubt that it is a major component for successful democratic education.

There is a separate chapter entitled Citizenship Education in Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008), even though there is clearly a reference to citizenship in relation to character education. In this chapter it is stated that:

Character development is an avenue through which students develop respect for self, others, property, the environment, diversity, human rights and other attributes upon which we find common ground as Canadians. It creates and expands opportunities for students to learn about, analyze, question, and contribute to, the building of their
Character development and citizenship education are closely related, as indicated above. However, in the above extract, it becomes clear how they are related. First, the value of “respect” is essential to every aspect of human life, which leads towards finding “common ground” as Canadian citizens. Through character development, students develop those skills necessary to build a society, a “nation and the world,” promoting “social cohesion” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22). All these characteristics are categorized as “democratic ideals” fostered through “citizenship development” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22).

The essence of democratic citizenship education is presented below:

It is important that we engender the ideals of democratic citizenship in our students. Citizenship is a responsibility as well as a right. Rights include the freedom to express beliefs and work and live to environments free from discriminatory practices. Along with these rights comes the responsibility to support equitable and democratic processes within our schools, our communities, our province and our nation. As citizens, we work hard to maintain and improve the educational, environmental, cultural, economic, political and social aspects of our society. Citizenship is a privilege that we must not take for granted (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22).

Within a publicly-funded school setting there is a commitment “to inspiring and engaging our students’ idealism and enthusiasm in understanding, critically analyzing and practicing the democratic processes” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22). Apart from encouraging students to engage in democratic processes and procedures, policy documents also point in this direction. For example, curriculum formation supports democracy involvement, as stated in the following extract:

Through curriculum such as language, mathematics, social studies, the Arts...students are learning positive and pro-social concepts of ideal citizenship. Through service learning, students have opportunities to
experience both the need for and rewards of building community. Through increased participation in board and school committees and initiatives, students learn to share in constructive decision-making. Through leadership experiences, students act upon their decisions impact on the lives of others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22).

Clearly, “ideal citizenship” is taught through cross-curricular activities in school, rather than separately. In addition, students learn how to form a community through community service activities, take active part in “board and school committees” and in leadership initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22). In this way, students learn how to share ideas and solve problems, as well as how such decisions influence others’ lives.

Community service activities are a requirement for students’ graduation. However, the important component here is that “their strong sense of volunteerism is nurtured through these activities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22). Volunteerism is considered a necessary part of community building and involvement in civic issues:

Civic engagement is an important component of education for citizenship. It also provides opportunities to develop competencies and connectedness between our students and their schools and communities. Service learning provides safe environments to learn and practice the skills and knowledge required to take on greater opportunities and challenges in the future. It can also invoke in our students the joy of giving, sharing, building, and understanding themselves in the context of a caring society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22).

In the following extract, there is an extensive reference to leadership activities within a school setting:

Increased opportunities for involvement in leadership in the classroom, in schools, in the board and in the community develop many of the skills required for positive and effective participation as citizens in schools and communities. In these contexts, the Character Development Initiative challenges students to:

- make principled decisions
- think critically about their world
• anticipate problems and contribute to solutions
• develop higher levels of personal and social responsibility (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22).

Critical thinking is introduced above as a skill that students can develop through character development initiatives. However, in this context, the term “critical” does not relate so much to social justice and the questioning of systemic injustice, but rather to the analysis of curricular content. Other skills that are repeated are “decision making,” “problem solving” and “sense of responsibility.”

In the next extract, the important features of active and involved citizens are presented:

Developing an understanding of how organizations function, how decisions are made and the importance of casting one’s vote are vital to students’ education and to their future roles as engaged citizens (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23).

Again, a reference to students’ leadership is presented below:

Student leadership should not be limited to the few; each and every student in our schools should have opportunities for leadership. It may be through acts of courage such as letting the teacher know that bullying is occurring, or through acts of compassion such as taking the lead in educating other students about street children. It may be in group work and cooperative learning in the classroom, in making positive suggestions for improving the learning environment or in mediating a conflict. Student leadership also involves civic engagement, participation in decisions about their education and service learning. It is learning the skills of positive advocacy for themselves and for others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23).

Student involvement and engagement in leadership activities in school can take many forms, as noted above. Leadership initiatives are expected to be taken by everyone in the classroom.

The above mentioned students’ activities are repeated below and there is also a reference to supporting research that links “knowledge, skills and character attributes” that students have to develop in order to participate actively. Therefore, in the next extract it is indicated that:
Active student engagement in learning, civic participation, service to others and leadership roles requires the development of knowledge, skills and character attributes. The research of Althof and Berkowitz (2006) affirms the interconnectedness of these elements. It states that ideas in this field converge on the notion that competent, engage and effective citizenship is necessary for a full political, economic, social and cultural partnership. This requires a set of citizenship competencies that include:

- a strong knowledge of civics and governance
- critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills
- communication, social and participatory skills
- an understanding of and commitment to character development

These strands of competent citizenship can be taught and practiced in classrooms and in schools in partnerships with communities. This requires adult and student commitment to character building in all facets of learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23).

In the above extract, there is another issue that emerges through the research reference. This issue is “the notion that competent, engaged and effective citizenship is necessary for a full political, economic, social and cultural partnership” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23). Citizenship education is clearly linked to and interrelated with the economy and politics. For effective citizenship that relates to economic, political, social and cultural components, students need to develop “knowledge of civics and governance,” “critical thinking,” “problem-solving and decision-making skills,” “communication, social and participatory skills” and “understanding of and commitment to character development” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23). Furthermore, school and community cooperation is necessary for citizenship education, along with a continuity and commitment to character development in the learning process (life-long learning).

In the following extract, the transition of future engaged citizens from a school setting to a community and eventually to the world is further analyzed:

Understanding their communities and how events and circumstances impact on people and environments gives students a window to the world. They need a continuum of opportunities to discover what it means to be a citizen. These range from recognizing the daily behaviours that make our world a better place, to taking responsibility
for others in need, exercising their right to vote, and taking action on issues of justice. Schools must take a leading role in citizenship development as students assume increasingly important responsibilities for the improvement of their communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23).

In the above extract, several words such as “responsibility,” “exercising their right to vote,” “justice,” “leading role” and “improvement of their communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23) are repeated. Thus, these strands of citizenship education are awarded importance.

It is noted that, in the province of Ontario, school boards started the implementation of the Character Development Initiative in the 2007-2008 school year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). The role of school boards is to “expand access to, and opportunities for, civic engagement and citizenship development of all students” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 28). On the other hand, students are expected to get involved and engaged with community and citizenship.

In this chapter, I looked at the Canadian Constitution and other legislation about democracy and citizens’ education in Canada. Then, I presented the data and analyzed the text of the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) in terms of democratic citizenship education in the province of Ontario.

Below, I analyze the text that refers to (democratic) citizenship education in *The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-11).

**Text of The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program**

While it is still a draft and is not yet introduced as a curriculum document, a brief reference to points raised about democratic citizenship education in the new draft is considered below.

In the *Introduction* and under the subheading *Foundations for a Healthy School*, there is a specific reference in the vision of “elementary schools for the twenty-first century” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5):

Ontario elementary schools strive to support high-quality learning while giving every child the opportunity to learn in the way that is best suited to his or her individual strengths and needs. The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program is designed to help every child reach his or her full potential through a program of learning that is coherent, relevant, and age appropriate. It recognizes that, today and in the future, children need to be critically literate in order to synthesize information, make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and thrive in an ever-changing global community. It is important that children be connected to the curriculum; that they see themselves in what is taught, how it is taught, and how it applies to the world at large. The program recognizes that the needs of learners are diverse, and helps all learners develop the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they need to be informed, productive, caring, responsible, healthy, and active citizens in their own communities and in the world (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5).

The above extract, begins with a statement about elementary schools in the province of Ontario and the general goal that is set “to support high-quality learning.” The Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten is the first step in this direction. In other words, this program is designed to serve this purpose of high-quality learning by being “coherent, relevant, and age appropriate” in order for students to “learn in that way that is best suited” to their “individual strengths and needs” and to “reach” their “full potential.” There is also a link between present and future with the reference to an “ever-changing global community” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5). The word “global” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5) has been repeated several times in the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and is referenced here for the transition to be made from present to future, from
local to global. Furthermore, the need for the connectedness between children and curriculum is underlined explicitly for the first time in this draft and ties in nicely with the importance of being “active citizens” not only locally but also world-wide (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5).

This new information is introduced by the theme, “it is important that children be connected to the curriculum” and the rheme, “that they see themselves in what is taught, how is taught, and how it applies to the world at large.” In addition, the use of the adjectives, “informed, productive, caring, responsible, healthy, and active” gives great importance to the citizen’s characteristics (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5).

In the chapter, Some Considerations for Program Planning, under the subheading Equity and Inclusive Education, there is a reference to citizenship. It is based on the principle that “respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children’s rights, optimal development, and learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 41).

Thus, “equity and inclusive” education is promoted, based on the diversity of Canadian society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 41):

The Ontario equity and inclusive education strategy focuses on respecting diversity, promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating the discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit the ability of children to learn, grow, and contribute to society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 41).

One more major component of citizenship education is “antidiscrimination,” since its principles promote a positive atmosphere in school settings for students to overcome differences, work together, reach their full potential and build strong identities, as noted below:

The implementation of antidiscrimination principles in education influences all aspects of school life. It promotes a school climate that
encourages all children to work to high levels of achievement, affirms the worth of all children, and helps children strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. It encourages staff and children alike to value and show respect for diversity in the school and the broader society. Antidiscrimination education promotes fairness, healthy relationships, and active, responsible citizenship (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 41).

Diversity is an essential characteristic of society and, therefore, school activities should be related and connected to the societal diversity. Thus, parents and caregivers are encouraged to participate actively in various school activities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011). In this way, adults become active participants in school life, become more involved in activities with children and create a smooth transition into a diverse society.

The following extract is from the chapter *Personal and Social Development*. The subheading *Overview* presents how personal, social and cognitive development relates to the early learning process, success and citizenship:

The personal and social development of young children lays the social and cognitive groundwork that fosters a love for school, engages the children in the process of learning, and supports future success in school and in life. Early learning programs focus on who the children are, and support and encourage them to reach their full potential. In partnership with the home, the school plays a vital role in developing social competence by providing the tools and knowledge that children will need in order to play a constructive role as citizens (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 50).

In the extract above, a piece of information emerges and clarifies constructive citizenship and the school’s role. This information is reinforced through the theme, “in partnership with the home, the school plays a vital role in developing social competence” and the rheme, “by providing the tools and knowledge that children will need in order to play a constructive role as citizens” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 50).
In the following extract, diversity and citizenship are closely related. This extract is from the chapter *Personal and Social Development* under the subheading *Social Development*:

Interactions in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program support children’s development of the tools and knowledge they require to be constructive citizens. The classroom must be an environment in which children are affirmed as individuals and as members of a diverse community of learners. Understanding the influence of social and cultural contexts on learning enables educators to recognize and support the children’s developing competence and to find a variety of ways in which the children can express their accomplishments (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 51).

As noted above, constructive citizenship begins in kindergarten. New information is introduced by the theme, “interactions in the Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten program support children’s development of the tools and knowledge” and the rheme, “they require to be constructive citizens” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 51). There is a repetition of the statement, noted above:

…the school plays a vital role in developing social competence by providing the tools and knowledge that children will need in order to play a constructive role as citizens (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 50).

In this way, the connection between school programs, early learning in kindergarten and constructive citizenship becomes evident through the key components of “tools and knowledge” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 50) that are provided in kindergarten through the Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten.

Democratic citizenship education in the Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten becomes more analytical in the following extract. Specifically, in the chapter *The Learning Areas: Program Expectations*, subheading *Personal and Social Development* and the unit on *Emotional Development*, the major notion is that “children have a strong sense of identity and well-being” (Ontario Ministry of
Education, 2010-2011, 60). This idea is accompanied by the overall expectation, among others, that:

by the end of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, children will...demonstrate independence, self-regulation, and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other activities; (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 60).

In the above excerpt, the key words are “independence,” “self-regulation” and “take responsibility” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 60). Furthermore, this overall expectation is closely related to the specific expectation below:

As children progress through the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program, they: interact cooperatively with others in classroom events and activities (e.g., offer and accept help in group situations, engage in small- and large-group games and activities, participate in democratic decision making) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 66).

Clearly, as indicated above, democracy is promoted in school as early as kindergarten. Through the program, students are encouraged to participate actively in several school activities with other students and make decisions through democratic procedures that students learn to follow through group interactions.

Below, I present the notions of democracy and citizens’ education as they are presented in the Hellenic Constitution (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008) and in other legislation. Then, I present the data and analyze the text that refers to (democratic) citizenship education in the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003).
Chapter Six

6.1: The Hellenic Curriculum Documents

In this chapter, I analyze the Hellenic kindergarten curriculum by making my data collection and analysis simultaneous (Willis, 2007), as in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the Finding common ground: Character development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and then The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-11) in the previous chapter. Again, the selection criteria for the excerpts I have isolated here are based on the words used in relation to the concepts of democracy, citizenship and education.

First, I will present the notions of democracy, citizenship and education as delineated in the Hellenic Constitution (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008) and in other legislation. Then, I will present the data and analyze the Hellenic kindergarten curriculum and, specifically, the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003) with regards to the parts that refer to citizenship education.

6.2: Hellenic Constitution and the Law 1566

Before the analysis of the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003), it is important to highlight some references to democracy, citizenship and education as they are presented in the Hellenic Constitution (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008), which represent the foundation of the Hellenic civilization. In this way, more light will be shed on the Hellenic notions of democracy, citizenship and education.
Specifically, in article 1, paragraph 3, “all powers derive from the people for the people and exist for the people and the nation” and in article 2, paragraph 1, “respect and protection of the value of the human being constitute the primary obligation of the State” (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008). In the constitution in the second section, there are elements relating to the concept of “citizenship,” which refers to “Individual and Social rights” (articles 4-25), “the exercise of the right to vote is compulsory” and “the free and unfalsified expression of the popular will as an expression of popular sovereignty” (articles 51-52), and “respect towards the Constitution and the law concurrent thereto, and devotion to the Fatherland and to Democracy constitute a fundamental duty of all Greeks” (article 120) (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008). Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos (2008) use the word “Greeks” instead of “Hellenes” in their translated book of the Hellenic Constitution, as well as all derived words. Therefore, I left the translated words as such.

As indicated above, notions of power, people, respect and protection are closely related to the notions of nation and state. The notion of citizenship is closely related to “individual and social rights.” Specifically, the “right to vote,” “free expression,” “respect towards the Constitution and the law” and “devotion to the Fatherland and to Democracy” (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008) are closely related to citizenship.

Furthermore, in article 5, paragraph 1, it is clearly stated that:

All persons shall have the right to develop freely their personality and to participate in the social, economic and political life of the country, in so far as they do not infringe the rights of others or violate the Constitution and the good usages (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008, 22).

One of the major citizens’ rights, as indicated above is “to develop freely their personality” and, interestingly, “to participate in the social, economic and political
life” with the condition that citizens “do not infringe [upon] the rights of others or violate the Constitution and the good usages” (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008, 22).

Likewise, in the same article, paragraph 2, it is clearly noted that “all persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life, honour and liberty irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs” (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008). The Constitution also refers specifically to education, art and science in article 16. Paragraph 2, which indicates specifically that:

Education constitutes a basic mission for the State and shall aim at the moral, intellectual, professional and physical training of Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness and at their formation as free and responsible citizens (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008, 32).

It is clearly indicated above that education is a priority for the Hellenic State. Furthermore, education focuses on major and specific aims. These aims are morality, intellectuality and professionalism, as well as physical, national and religious development. These are the elements that influence responsible citizenship.

Apart from the Hellenic Constitution that refers to education in a general way, there is Law 1566 (1985), which identifies the Structure and function of primary and secondary education and other provisions and refers to education in a more specific and concrete way. Among the main orientations to education policy with regards to citizenship, Article 1 of the Law 1566 (1985) states:

Σκοπός της πρωτοβάθμιας και δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης είναι να συμβάλει στην ολόπλευρη, αρμονική και ισορροπημένη ανάπτυξη των διανοητικών και ψυχοσυμποτικών δυνάμεων των μαθητών, ώστε, ανεξάρτητα από φύλο και καταγωγή, να έχουν τη δυνατότητα να εξελιχθούν σε ολοκληρωμένες προσωπικότητες και να ζήσουν δημιουργικά. Ειδικότερα υποβοηθεί τους μαθητές: α) Να γίνονται ελεύθεροι, υπεύθυνοι, δημοκρατικοί πολίτες, να υπερασπίζονται την εθνική ανεξαρτησία, την εδαφική ακεραιότητα της χώρας και τη δημοκρατία, να εμπνέονται από αγάπη προς τον άνθρωπο, τη ζωή και τη φύση και να διακατέχονται από πίστη προς την πατέριδα και τα γνήσια στοιχεία της ορθόδοξης χριστιανικής παράδοσης. Η ελευθερία της θρησκευτικής τους συνείδησης είναι απαραβίαστη... γ) Να
The purpose of primary and secondary education is to contribute to the full, harmonious and balanced development of mental and psychological, and physical capacities of the students so that, regardless of sex or origin, they have the potential to develop into complete personalities and live creatively. Specific benefits to the students are: a) To become free, responsible, democratic citizens, to defend national independence, territorial integrity and democracy, inspired by love for human life and nature and possessed of loyalty to the homeland and the original elements of the orthodox Christian tradition. Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable... c) To develop creative and critical thinking and concepts of collective effort and cooperation so that initiative and responsible participation can contribute decisively to the progress of society and the development of our country (Law 1566, 1985).

Interestingly, the purpose of both primary and secondary education is students’ development in order “to become free, responsible, democratic citizens, to defend national independence, territorial integrity and democracy, inspired by love for human life and nature and possessed of loyalty to the homeland...” (Law 1566, 1985) and “to develop creative and critical thinking and concepts of collective effort and cooperation so as to take initiatives and through their responsible participation to be able to contribute decisively to the progress of society and the development of our country” (Law 1566, 1985), among other benefits. Democracy is, therefore, a fundamental characteristic in the formation of citizenship. However, according to Law 1566 (1985), a citizen participates responsibly and progressively in a society when thinking is cultivated in such a way that it is creative and critical in a collective and cooperative atmosphere. As a result, critical thinking and cooperation, along with democratic education, are substantial elements of the Hellenic primary and secondary education.
Furthermore, the Hellenic Ministry of Education, Life-long Learning and Religious Affairs “is promoting a stronger identity by focusing on the concept of ‘citizen’ and by emphasising the common core of European and global values and skills needed in the new world environment” (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2004/5, 8). Among the changes that the Ministry has promoted in educational policy was the name of the Ministry itself. The name “Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs” was renamed the “Hellenic Ministry of Education, Life-long Learning and Religious Affairs” (FEK 2234, 2009).

In addition to the change of the Ministry’s name, there were further changes in education itself, such as in the notion of citizenship education in curriculum. Specifically, the European, international and global dimensions of citizenship education were re-integrated into the new design of the compulsory education curriculum. Furthermore, kindergarten is included within this unified design for the entire educational system (FEK 303, 2003).

In primary education, citizenship education is taught both as a separate school subject and through cross-curricular educational activities (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2004/5, FEK 303, 2003). In kindergarten and in the first four years of primary education, elements of social studies and civics are taught mainly through the Environmental Studies curriculum. In the fifth and sixth years of primary education, students learn about the national, European, international and global aspects of citizenship through Social and Civic Education, taught as a separate school subject (FEK 303, 2003).

In the next section, before analyzing the text of the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003), I will first analyze the text of the legislation that forms the new Hellenic Curriculum for kindergarten.
6.3: **Law FEK 303 and the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten**

As already indicated in a previous chapter, this new curriculum program for kindergarten was based on the enforcement of law FEK 303 (2003) regarding the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S.) and Curriculum Studies (A.P.S.) for Elementary School* which includes the educational topic of *Social and Civic Education*. Then, the new curriculum program was introduced officially by law FEK 304 (2003) regarding *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S.) and Curriculum Studies (A.P.S.) for Elementary School* which includes the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S.) and Curriculum Studies (A.P.S.) for Kindergarten*.

Below, I have analyzed the text of the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S.) and Curriculum Studies (A.P.S.) for Elementary School, Social and Civic Education* (FEK 303, 2003).

**Text of the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S.) and Curriculum Studies (A.P.S.) for Elementary School, Social and Civic Education**

In 2003, the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs introduced new legislation regarding the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Elementary School*, following the suggestions of the Hellenic Pedagogical Institute and other relevant institutions. One of the subject areas presented in the new legislation was the discipline of *Social and Civic Education* (FEK 303, 2003), even though *Social and Civic Education* was not a new discipline in the previously existing curriculum.

In the introduction of the new legislation, the need for the legislative framework to support the new curricular design was presented analytically. In the
following excerpt, that presentation began with a general assumption, then proceeds to more specific information and then cycles back to conclude with the initial general assumption combined closely with the new data provided:

The education system certainly is a key institution that helps shape the personality of the student and his/her harmonious integration into society. However, it becomes imperative to effectively enhance learning and socialization functions of the school to establish a strong school educational environment. Consequently, they need an educational plan, starting with compulsory education in the light of new data and the desired goals. This planning should result in forming an education system responsive to the dynamics and the challenges of our time, as the basic configuration of the current education system ... requires brave adaptive changes (FEK 303, 2003, 3733-3734).

In the above excerpt, the new legislation begins with a general recognition that “the education system certainly is a key institution that helps shape the personality of the student and the harmonious integration into society” (FEK 303, 2003, 3733-3734), addressing and recognizing the importance of education in students’ development as future citizens of society. This general statement about the importance of the education system is then tied to more specific school functions such as those which “effectively enhance learning and socialization functions of the school.” This quotation is a theme, followed by “to establish a strong school educational environment” as a rheme (FEK 303, 2003, 3734). The missing link
between the general statement relating to the importance of the education system and the specific school functions that are necessary for work is the emerging need of “an educational planning, starting from compulsory education in the light of new data and the desired goals” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734).

This new information relating to educational planning is further explained as it envisions the formation of the “current education system” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734) which ties into the initial clause about the education system, “the education system certainly is a key institution that helps shape the personality of the student and the harmonious integration into society” (FEK 303, 2003, 3733-3734). Further, emphasis is given to the need for reconfiguration of the current education system as a result of the educational planning that is required in order to meet the needs of the new data. This emphasis is given through the repetition of the new data by indicating that the new education system “must respond to the dynamics and the challenges of our time” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734) and must be applied to compulsory education. In order to accomplish that and meet the new needs, “the basic configuration of the current education system ... requires brave adaptive changes” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734). The adjectives “brave” and “adaptive” highlight the magnitude of the meaning of the word “changes”.

In the following excerpt, more light is shed on the “brave” and “adaptive changes” of the “current education system” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734). Thus, the new legislation establishes the following changes:

Προς την κατεύθυνση αυτή θεωρείται αναγκαίο να προωθηθούν:
α. η εξασφάλιση συνθηκών που επιτρέπουν στο μαθητή να αναπτύξει την προσωπικότητά του με ισχυρή αυτοαντίληψη, συναισθηματική σταθερότητα, κριτική και διαλεκτική ικανότητα καθώς και θετική διάθεση για συνεργασία και αυτενέργεια μια προσωπικότητα υπεύθυνη, δημοκρατική και ελεύθερη, με κοινωνικές και ανθρωπιστικές αρχές, χωρίς θρησκευτικές και πολιτισμικές προκαταλήψεις,
Towards this direction, it is necessary to promote:

a. ensuring conditions that allow the student to develop his personality with a strong self-concept, emotional stability, critical and dialectic ability and a positive attitude towards cooperation and self-motivation; a personality which is responsible, democratic and free, with social and humanitarian principles, not religious and cultural biases.

b. to create conditions which give each individual the possibility of life-long renewal of knowledge and skills.

c. developing the ability of each individual’s critical approach to new information technology and communication.

d. The maintenance of social cohesion through equal opportunities and fostering common attitudes and values.

e. The growing awareness of European citizens while maintaining our national identity and our cultural self-awareness and

f. develop a spirit of cooperation and teamwork.

(CEK 303, 2003, 3734).

After identifying the necessity to change the current educational system based on the new circumstances and challenges of this modern era, specific directions are indicated in compulsory education. The first direction to be promoted is the development of an integrated personality ruled by a sense of responsibility, democracy, and freedom and principles, such as humanity and social solidarity. Some other characteristics that should be developed within a school setting are those of “self-concept”, “emotional stability”, “critical and dialectic ability” and a “positive attitude towards cooperation and self-motivation”. The second direction to be followed is the creation of environmental conditions for students that will promote life-long learning. The third direction is the creation of such conditions that students
will develop the skills of “critical approach” towards information technology within school settings. In addition, further characteristics, such as those of “social cohesion,” “equal opportunities,” “common attitudes and values,” “European citizenry,” “national identity,” “cultural self-awareness,” “cooperation” and “teamwork” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734), should be promoted.

In the following extract, the transition from national education to the formation of European education, which echoes the formation of each European member state’s education, is analyzed further:

Moreover, similar is the direction of the European Union's education. The preservation of the democratic political life, freedom, religious freedom, solidarity, collectivity, internationalism, justice, culture, labour, intellectual culture and social cohesion in the open and pluralistic societies, flank the common view of future European Education.

The goal is a common aspiration for the development of national education policy of individual European countries, considering of course that the educational system of each country differs and is determined by the elements for national and other characteristics of society. In this context, then, and subject to the need to develop the quality of education, our education system must be seen as well, along with appropriate adjustments, which would make it more qualitative, more dynamic, more effective (FEK 303, 2003, 3734).
In the above excerpt, the transition from the Hellenic educational formation to the European Union’s educational formation emphasizes the similarity in the directions that education needs to follow in both cases. Again, important characteristics are mentioned, such as “democratic political life,” “solidarity,” “freedom,” “collectivity,” “justice,” “labour,” “culture” and “social cohesion” that compose the “common view” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734) of European education. It is recognized that the member states are “open and pluralistic societies” which are invited to adopt this “common aspiration” in the “national education policy” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734), along with other special elements that characterize each society. As such, European education policy follows the same directions that the Hellenic education system is invited to adopt through this new legislation which, then, echoes every other European member state’s education policy formation. Furthermore, emphasis is given to the need for the development of quality in education which will then enable the effectiveness and dynamism of the education system.

The benefits of the integrated development of students’ personality are highlighted in the section of the General Principles of Education:

Η εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία πρέπει να διαμορφώνει συνθήκες που προάγουν τις αξίες της δημοκρατίας, του σεβασμού των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, της ειρήνης και της ελευθερίας. Με την εκπαίδευση επιδιώκεται η ολόπλευρη ανάπτυξη της προσωπικότητας του μαθητή και η επιτυχής κοινωνική ένταξη του, αφενός μέσα από τη συγκρότηση και αποδοχή κοινών αξιών και αφετέρου με την ανάπτυξη νοητικών, συναισθηματικών και ψυχοκινητικών ικανοτήτων και δεξιοτήτων. Με την έννοια αυτή ο μαθητής καθίσταται ικανός να αντιμετωπίζει με επιτυχία προβλήματα και επιπλέον να διαμορφώνει άποψη και να λειτουργεί ως υπεύθυνος και ενεργός πολίτης σε ένα διαρκώς μεταβαλλόμενο και απαιτητικό κοινωνικό περιβάλλον. Κύριοι άξονες αυτής της προσπάθειας θα πρέπει να είναι:
Α. η παροχή γενικής παιδείας,
Β. η καλλιέργεια των δεξιοτήτων του μαθητή και ανάδειξη των ενδιαφερόντων του,
Γ. η εξασφάλιση ίσων ευκαιριών και δυνατοτήτων μάθησης για όλους του μαθητές.
The educational process should establish conditions that promote the values of democracy, respect for human rights, peace and freedom. Education’s goal is an integrated personality development of students and their successful social integration, both through the creation and sharing of common values as well as the development of cognitive, emotional and motor abilities and skills. In this sense, the student is able to deal successfully with problems and also to shape opinions and act as a responsible and active citizen in an ever-changing and demanding social environment. Major axes of this effort should be:

A. providing general education.
B. the growing skills of students and promotion of interests,
C. ensuring equal opportunities and learning opportunities for all students,
D. strengthening the cultural and linguistic identity in a multicultural society.
E. awareness of the need to protect the natural environment and adopt similar standards of conduct.
F. preparation for the use of new information and communication technologies,
G. physical, mental and social development and

In the above excerpt, education’s basic goals are the integrated development of students, their social inclusion by creating and “sharing common values” and the promotion of “values of democracy, respect for human rights, peace and freedom” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734) within the school setting. These values characterize the future citizen who will be “responsible” and “active,” capable of dealing with problems successfully in a growing, demanding society. Along with cognitive, emotional and motor skills development, students should also develop those social skills necessary
to perform an engaged and active role as future citizens in an ever-changing society where democracy, human rights, peace and freedom are substantial elements.

One of the main educational directions that should be followed in order to educate and equip a student properly as an active future citizen in school is “the cultivation of students’ skills and the emergence of their interests” (FEK 303, 2003, 3735). In the excerpt below, I further analyze the different elements that compose this preparation:

*It is obvious that education should be characterized by thematic breadth, and supports active participation and methodological approaches to knowledge, to provide the necessary background knowledge and the tools that will help each individual to meet the need for expertise, as dictated by present developments and future prospects. The student should learn, in school, mainly "how to learn" to actively and creatively approach knowledge. The school should also teach the student "how to do," to be applied in everyday life, social activity and professional engagement, the knowledge and skills acquired. In this way, and provided that we set new foundations for a more effective link between school education and the labour market, Curriculum (A.P.S.) will contribute to, among other things, tackling unemployment, social exclusion and all forms of social pathogenesis (FEK 303, 2003, 3735).*
In the above excerpt, students’ preparation in school should focus on access to a wide range of knowledge and tools necessary to meet the expectations for growing “expertise” in a demanding society. The role of the school is to teach students “how to learn” and “how to do” in order to be able to provide solutions and confront problems in everyday life. In addition, school develops students’ skills and abilities in order to be professionally advanced and socially active. Students’ “professional engagement” is emphasized by the theme, “provided that we set new foundations for a more effective link between school education and the labour market” and the rheme, “curriculum will contribute to, among other things, tackling unemployment, social exclusion and all forms of social pathogenesis” (FEK 303, 2003, 3735). The newly designed curriculum is inevitably closely related to issues of the labour market, unemployment and students’ expertise and is deftly channeled into the curriculum by legislation.

Another characteristic that is underlined is the provision of equal opportunities and access to learning for all students. In the following excerpt, this characteristic is further analyzed:

Providing equal opportunities and learning opportunities is a basic principle of a democratic society in which the education system plays an important role in alleviation of social inequalities. School-offered equal education must be ensured for all students, and especially for those who belong to "minorities" and for students with disabilities or...
special educational needs, to protect them from social exclusion and unemployment. Ensuring equal opportunities for learning should not be interpreted as a set of uniform educational provisions leading to uniform procedures and attitudes (FEK 303, 2003, 3735).

In the above excerpt, the characteristic of equal opportunity and access to learning for all students is linked to democratic principles, even for those who belong to “minorities” or those with special needs. The issue of eliminating social exclusion in these groups is closely related to the issue of the risk of unemployment. However, it is clarified that “ensuring equal opportunities for learning should not be interpreted as a set of uniform educational provisions leading to uniform procedures and attitudes” (FEK 303, 2003, 3735). In other words, it is stressed that there is not a single recipe for everyone, neither in learning procedures nor in behaviour.

The strengthening of a student’s cultural and linguistic identity in a multicultural society is another direction that needs to be followed in order to develop an active future citizen. In the excerpt below, this direction surfaces another new component:

Η ελαχιστοποίηση των αποστάσεων και η παγκοσμιοποίηση της οικονομίας, με τις νέες δυνατότητες επικοινωνίας και ανταλλαγής πολιτιστικών αγαθών, εντάσσει τα άτομα σε ένα πολυπολιτισμικό περιβάλλον. Η χώρα μας, ως πλήρες και ισότιμο μέλος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, πρέπει να προωθεί την ανάπτυξη σε όλους τους τομείς μέσα από την αμοιβαία κατανόηση και συνεργασία με τους άλλους ευρωπαϊκούς λαούς. Επιπλέον, όπως συμβαίνει με όλες τις ευρωπαϊκές κοινοτίες, η σύνθεση της ελληνικής κοινότητας μεταβάλλεται συνεχώς, εμπλουτιζόμενη με άτομα και φορείς διαφορετικών γλωσσικών και πολιτισμικών παραδόσεων, με αποτέλεσμα την αύξηση της πολιτισμικής ποικιλότητας, κατάσταση που μπορεί να θεωρηθεί υγιής υπό το πρίσμα της αναζωογόνησης των κυριαρχον παραδόσεων. Η πραγματικότητα αυτή επιβάλλει στον κάθε πολίτη να αποδέχεται και να σέβεται την πολιτισμική ετερότητα των συμπολιτών του, ώστε όλοι να ζουν αρμονικά σε ένα περιβάλλον πολιτισμικώς, εθνικάς και γλωσσικάς πολυμορφίας... Ταυτόχρονα, όμως, πρέπει να διατηρεί την εθνική και πολιτισμική του αυτότητα μέσα από την ανάπτυξη της εθνικής, πολιτισμικής, γλωσσικής και φρησκευτικών αγωγής. Εξάλλου, αποτελεί θέση όλων των χωρών της Ε.Ε. η προστασία της ιδιαίτερης φυσιογνωμίας της εθνικής εκπαίδευσης και η αποδοχή των εθνικών ποικιλομορφιών και,
The minimization of distances and the globalization of the economy, with new possibilities of communication and exchange of cultural goods, put people in a multicultural environment. Our country, as a full and equal member of the European Union, should promote development in all sectors through mutual understanding and cooperation with other European nations. Moreover, like all European societies, the composition of Hellenic society is constantly changing, enriched with individuals and organizations of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, thus increasing cultural diversity, a situation that can be considered healthy in light of the regeneration of the dominant traditions. This reality imposes on every citizen to accept and respect the cultural diversity of his fellow citizens, so that everyone can live harmoniously in an environment of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity. Simultaneously, however, (individuals) must maintain their national and cultural identity through the development of national, cultural, linguistic and religious education. Moreover, a position of all EU countries is to protect the special character of the national education and the acceptance of ethnic diversity and, therefore, those elements which contribute to shaping the national and cultural identity of the student - tomorrow's citizens (FEK 303, 2003, 3735).

In the excerpt above, a new fact is established; that of the “multicultural environment.” The new information is introduced by the theme, “the minimization of distances and the globalization of the economy, with new possibilities of communication and exchange of cultural goods,” and the rheme, “puts people in a multicultural environment.” The key factor that contributes to the establishment of this fact is the “globalization of the economy” and “minimization of distances” in relation to “communication” and exchange.” Parallel to this, the European Union encourages mutual understanding and cooperation between the member states so as to promote development in an increasingly cultural, ethnic and linguistically diverse society. Every member state of the European Union is allowed to maintain its own national and cultural identity, within their education systems, but should also introduce and stress issues of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, which every
student should learn to “accept and respect.” Those characteristics will form future citizens’ “national and cultural identity.”

The core purpose of Social and Civic Education in early childhood and compulsory education is:

- η πνευματική ανάπτυξη, με την προώθηση της γνώσης και της κατανόησης του βαθύτερου νοηματος και σκοπού της ζωής και των οικουμενικών και διαχρονικών αξιών της ανθρώπινης κοινωνίας, με απότερο στόχο την εφαρμογή τους στην καθημερινή ζωή,
- η ηθική ανάπτυξη, με την ενθάρρυνση των μαθητών ώστε να αξιολογούν με κριτικό πνεύμα θέματα ελευθερίας, ισότητας, δικαιοσύνης, ανθρώπινων δικαιωμάτων, καθώς και των δικαιωμάτων και των υποχρεώσεων τους στην κοινωνία,
- η κοινωνική, οικονομική και πολιτική ανάπτυξη, με τη στήριξη των μαθητών ώστε να αποκτήσουν τη γνώση, την κατανόηση και τις δεξιότητες που είναι απαραίτητες στοιχεία για την ελευθερία, υπεύθυνη και ενεργό συμμετοχή τους στο κοινωνικό, οικονομικό και πολιτικό γίγνεσθαι,
- η πολιτισμική ανάπτυξη, με την ενίσχυση της εθνικής και πολιτισμικής ταυτότητας των μαθητών, τη συνειδητοποίηση της φύσης και του ρόλου των διαφόρων ομάδων στις οποίες ανήκουν, και την αποδοχή της διαφορετικότητας και του πλοηγαλισμού,
- η ανάπτυξη της ελληνικής μας ταυτότητας και συνείδησης με βάση την εθνική και πολιτιστική μας κληρονομιά,
- η καλλιέργεια των κοινωνικών σχέσεων και της κοινωνικής συνοχής, της ατομικής ευθύνης και της κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης (FEK 303, 2003, 3962).

- intellectual development, by promoting knowledge and understanding of the deeper meaning and purpose in life and the universal and timeless values of human society, with a view to their application to everyday life,
- moral development, by encouraging students to critically evaluate issues of freedom, equality, justice, human rights and the rights and obligations in society,
- social, economic and political development, by supporting the students to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills that are necessary for free, responsible and active participation in social, economic and political affairs,
- cultural development, the strengthening of national and cultural identity of students, awareness of the nature and role of various groups they belong to, and acceptance of diversity and pluralism,
• the development of our Hellenic identity and awareness in national and cultural heritage,
• the cultivation of social relations and social cohesion, individual responsibility and social solidarity (FEK 303, 2003, 3962).

The key words used to describe Social and Civic Education’s purpose are “intellectual development,” “universal and timeless values,” “moral development,” “social, economic and political development,” “cultural development,” “diversity,” “Hellenic identity” and “social relations,” “social cohesion,” “individual responsibility” and “social solidarity” (FEK 303, 2003, 3962).

The new legislation regarding education paved the way for the new curriculum for kindergarten, the **Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten** (FEK 304, 2003), which I focus on and analyze below.

**Text of the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten**

First, I will analyze the parts of the text that refer to citizenship education in the **Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten** (FEK 304, 2003). For this purpose, I have isolated specific parts of the text that refer to democratic citizenship education.

In the chapter *Aim*, it is stated clearly that the aim of kindergarten is defined by legislation:

Σκοπός του Νηπιαγωγείου σύμφωνα με την κείμενη νομοθεσία είναι να βοηθήσει τα παιδιά να αναπτυχθούν σωματικά, συναισθηματικά, νοητικά και κοινωνικά μέσα στο πλαίσιο των ευρύτερων στόχων της πρωτοβάθμιας και δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Το Νηπιαγωγείο, ως φορέας κοινωνικοποίησης του παιδιού (μετά την οικογένεια), θα πρέπει να εξασφαλίζει τις προϋποθέσεις ώστε τα παιδιά να αναπτύσσονται και να κοινωνικοποιούνται ομαλά και πολύπλευρα (FEK 304, 2003, 586).

The aim of kindergarten, in accordance with the legislation, is to help children develop physically, emotionally, mentally and socially in the context of the wider objectives of primary and secondary education. Kindergarten, as a vehicle for socialization of the child (after the
family), should ensure the conditions for children to grow and socialize smoothly and with versatility (FEK 304, 2003, 586).

As stated in the excerpt above, children’s physical, emotional, mental and social development is a priority in primary and secondary education. It is emphasized that kindergarten is the place where children begin to develop their social skills with others, apart from family members.

In the chapter, *Programs for the Education of Young Children*, there is a reference to international organizations and their involvement in curriculum and education:

*Διεθνείς οργανισμοί και φορείς εκπαίδευσης στις σχετικές οδηγίες τους τονίζουν την προτεραιότητα που πρέπει να δοθεί στην ενεργητική, βιωματική και συνεργατική μάθηση (FEK 304, 2003, 586).*

*International organizations and education providers, in their relevant instruction, stress that priority should be given to active, experiential and collaborative learning (FEK 304, 2003, 586).*

By referring to the international organizations jointly with education providers, it makes the claim more powerful. They provide instruction and support the “active, experiential and collaborative learning” to be set as a priority in school settings. The role, the penetration and the prestige of international organizations in education are becoming stronger, since this is a joint reference which includes the education providers.

In the chapter, *Basic Principles of Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten*, the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework is defined as “an organized system,” which sets the goals of learning, the procedures to be followed, the teacher’s actions and the conditions in which learning and teaching is achieved. This reinforces and supports the kindergarten curriculum’s role in the
school setting as a major framework concerning what is being taught and how it is
being taught to young students:

The Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten
is an organized system of work which outlines what children should
learn, the procedures to achieve the general goals established and
what the teacher should do, and sets the framework within which the
learning and teaching is accomplished (FEK 304, 2003, 586).

From the chapter, Projects and Activities Development, I extracted the
following:

The Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten
determines the direction of the program design and development
activities in Language, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Creation
and Expression (Visual Art, Dramatic Arts, Music, Physical
Education) and Information for kindergarten children. These
programs do not mean teaching discrete objects and are not
recommended for self-teaching, but for planning and implementing
activities that have meaning and purpose for the children themselves
(FEK 304, 2003, 587).

It is clearly stated above that the kindergarten curriculum is separated into
programs which coincide with the developmental areas of Language, Mathematics,
Environmental Studies, Creation and Expression and Information for kindergarten
children. These areas are not taught separately in the classroom. Instead, they are interrelated and often overlap during the process of teaching.

Citizenship education is not a distinct area in the kindergarten curriculum, but it is part of the Environmental Studies program. However, it is also taught throughout the curriculum, regardless of the area to which it may belong, as it intertwines with other programs during the teaching process. Thus, it is part of the curriculum but does not possess a discrete entity of its own. This is stated in the extract below, in the chapter *Child and Environment: Projects and Activities Development of Environmental Studies for Kindergarten*:

Basic knowledge and procedures from the field of Natural Sciences, Geography, History, Religion, notions of Social and Civic Education and data for Environmental Education, Health Education, Traffic Education approached through interdisciplinary activities related to Environmental Studies. Even simple concepts of math and activities from creation and expression are intertwined effortlessly. At the same time, enriched language, developing communication and utilization of appropriate technology are fostered to the extent possible. The objectives, content and indicative activities for environmental studies for kindergarten are developed around two themes:

i. Human environment and interaction


In the extract above, an explanation is provided in terms of what is included in the Environmental Studies program. Citizenship education is referred to in Hellenic
terms as “notions of Social and Civic Education” and is more closely related to the first category of “human environment and interaction” (FEK 304, 2003, 588), since it is connected with the child’s relationships with others.

In the chapter, Human Environment and Interaction, under the subheading The Child in Kindergarten and the Relationship with Others, there is a reference to the acquisition of social skills in kindergarten:

In the complex environment of the kindergarten, new social experiences acquired by the children and the resulting multidimensional knowledge formed in the social life is an important achievement in the evolution of the learning process. The child is a member of a family, a neighborhood, a village or city and experiences, in his microcosm, the requirements, the compromises and conflicts involved in organized social life, but the experience is usually in the shelter of the family, which manages to absorb and filter excessive antagonisms and conflicts...Children in kindergarten should develop self-esteem, basic skills of cooperation and also realize their uniqueness, and identify similarities and differences with others and respect them. They should also become able to describe their surroundings and know the basic differences between this and other wider environments through encouraging comparisons being made. It
is evident that the development of social skills at the kindergarten level is inseparable from the content that emerges from the activities of language and the involvement of children in activities in other programs (FEK 304, 2003, 588).

In the excerpt above, the learning procedure relating to social skills development begins with general ideas and moves gradually to more specific ones. It is clearly stated that a child in kindergarten experiences new social interactions and subsequently acquires new knowledge around and about social life. It is repeated that learning new social skills in kindergarten is of great importance in a child’s learning process. Then, reference is made to the child being a member of its social environment and experiencing human interactions within the protection of the family.

The main skills specified are those requiring development in kindergarten; self-esteem, cooperation, uniqueness, identification of similarities and differences with others and respect. Children should learn about the environment they live in and compare it with others, in the wider social context. All these skills are learned interdisciplinarily through language activities and activities from other programs.

Under the subheading, The Child in the Wider Human Environment, there is a reference to children’s play:

Young children, through physical movement and play, expand their perceptions of their environment. They explore the immediate environment. They recognize that the environment around them can vary and that they can differentiate it with their own intervention. They discover that people, things and ideas travel from one place to another (FEK 304, 2003, 588).

Once again, as emphasized above, children at such an early educational level discover the environment they live in through play and physical movement. They then
realize that they can intervene, influence and change this environment. Finally, they realize that people, objects and ideas are mutable and are able to change places and functions.

The methodology that is used to achieve the objectives of the programs consists of cross-thematic activities which are both developmentally appropriate and engage students’ interests. Through these activities, students “develop their personality…, socialize and… experience the world in human and natural environments” (FEK 304, 2003, 590).

The skills that are intended to be developed are self-esteem, cooperation, teamwork and respect for the similarities and differences among people. Students are encouraged to learn these skills in kindergarten through interaction in a variety of activities in a safe and stimulating environment both in and outside the classroom (FEK 304, 2003). Furthermore, according to the new curriculum, students should be given many opportunities to engage in different interdisciplinary activities, to take initiative and responsibility for their actions, to express their views and experiences freely, to treat mistakes appropriately, to negotiate any conflicts or tensions arising during group activities and to develop positive feelings about themselves.

In addition, students should be encouraged to be aware of their personal uniqueness, to identify similarities with and differences between other people, and to respect them. In other words, they should learn to accept and respect people with different linguistic, cultural or religious backgrounds and to build friendly ties with them in a cooperative climate through a variety of group activities. The proper development of all these skills in kindergarten develops future citizens’ capabilities, as this will enable them to participate actively, cooperatively and critically in political and social issues by identifying conflicts, addressing problems and further engaging
in finding solutions. In addition, they will be able to ensure their rights and fulfill their obligations towards the state and its laws.

In the next chapter, I analyze the discourse practice, namely the social and political context, from which the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003) emanate. In this way, I uncover policies that are layered on top of one another to create “natural” cohesive texts through repetition, consistency of the vocabulary and reference to the name of the authority.

First, I refer to the texts (Cool, 2007) and reports (CMEC & CCU, 2001; First Ministers of Social Services, Canada, 2003) that the Federal Government of Canada signed with the government of Ontario concerning early learning, to which the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and, specifically, democratic citizenship education is linked. Specifically, I look at the goals and principles that the above-mentioned documents address and which are constantly repeated and pointed to with authority within the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Then, I refer to the European guides supported and conducted by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture that inevitably influence the curricula of European member states, including Hellas. Therefore, supporting documents and guides such as *Citizenship Education at School in Europe* (European Commission, 2005), and the *Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning: A European Reference Framework* (European Commission, 2004) are also analyzed in relation to the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003), specifically in relation to democratic citizenship education.
Furthermore, I analyze supporting documents released by OECD and UNESCO in relation to both the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003), since Canada and Hellas are both members of these organizations. Accordingly, the goals and the learning procedures are examined and deconstructed in association with democratic citizenship education in the documents of *Education and Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO, 2002), *Starting Strong I and II* (OECD, 2001, 2006), *Definition and Selection of Key Competencies* (OECD, 2005) and the *Education for Sustainable Development Lens: A Policy and Practice Review Tool* (UNESCO, 2010).
Chapter Seven

7.1: Discourse Practice

Woodside-Jiron (2004) indicates that “to ensure the success of policy, one must engage in discourse practices that eliminate as much resistance as possible” (190). Therefore, analysis of discourse practice is necessary because it will assist in uncovering processes of text production, distribution and consumption. That is to say, it will assist in clarifying policy processes that produce the text, the purpose for the text production and the implementation of those policies. In this case, discourse analysis will uncover processes relating to curriculum production in both the Ontario and Hellenic contexts.

For this purpose, first I analyze the discourse practice with regards to the reports released from the Federal Government of Canada and from the Canadian delegation of the Council of Ministers of Education who are involved in democratic citizenship education, curriculum and early childhood education in relation to the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). Then, I analyze the discourse practice of the European reports and guides that involve democratic citizenship education, curriculum and early childhood education in relation to the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003).

In the following section, I analyze the discourse practice of the texts and reports of the Federal Government of Canada and the Canadian delegation of the Council of Ministers of Education that involve democratic citizenship education, curriculum and early childhood education in relation to the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).
7.2: Discourse Practice of Canadian Reports on Citizenship

**Education**

There are policies designed by all ministries in Canada to support and encourage democratic participation and enhance the bonds between educational settings and various social groups, such as families, neighbourhoods and workplaces (CMEC & CCU, 2001).

The Ontario Schools Code of Conduct sets the pace by noting that:

…a school is a safe place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. All students, parents, teachers, and staff have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety of others or oneself... Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others (Ontario, 2000, 1-2).

In this view, it is essential to analyze the texts and reports that the Federal Government of Canada, in accordance with the government of Ontario, issued and released jointly or separately concerning early learning, to which the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and, specifically, democratic citizenship education is linked. Through this process, specifically, I look at the goals and principles that the above mentioned documents address and which are constantly repeated and pointed to as authority within the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

The Canadian Federal Government has not developed national policy or legislation on mainstream early childhood care because education is not within its direct jurisdiction, apart from the programs designed for and applied to First Nations people living on reserves. Public education is funded by the provinces and territories.
The federal government’s role is limited in financially supporting Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) by providing funding through the Canada Health and Social Transfer, which has been an intergovernmental agreement since March, 2003 (Doherty et al., 2003).

In Canada, current discussions around educational policy in early childhood have established a new approach relating to the significance of this particular period and the need to support young students, regardless of whether or not their parents are in the workforce (Cool, 2007). Furthermore, Cool (2007) clearly states that:

… education and child care fall primarily under provincial jurisdiction, and the federal role is limited largely to the transfer of funds to provincial and territorial governments for early childhood programs and services (2).

The federal government is directly involved in providing early learning to children “of First Nations communities, military families, and immigrants and refugees” (2). Specifically, the federal government encouraged dialogue and cooperation with provinces and territories regarding the support and improvement of early childhood education and care services. In this light, a series of programs for young children were initiated such as The National Child Benefit (2009), the Early Childhood Development initiative (2000), the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (First Ministers of Social Services, 2003) and the bilateral agreement-in-principle between the government of Canada and the government of Ontario, Moving Forward on Early Learning and Child Care (Government of Canada & Government of Ontario, 2005). In this way, the Federal Government supports financial research, initiatives, collaborative programs and national organizations that focus on early childhood care, recognizing the importance of early childhood programs in the process of life-long learning (Cool, 2007).
The financial support and the implicit involvement of the Federal Government in early childhood education programs and initiatives add value to the importance of preschool education in each of the provinces and to Canadian society in general. McCain & Mustard (1999) outline further the importance of early years’ development in society and its impact on the global economy:

A society that wants to have a highly competent population for the future to cope with the demands of the emerging knowledge-based world and global economy will have to ensure that all its children have the best stimulation and nourishment during the critical early years of development, regardless of family circumstances. Investments in the early period of life are as important as investments in education, post secondary education, and health care (17).

Furthermore, the above statement ties economic goals to citizenship goals from early childhood education with an explicit view to future society formation.

The importance of early years in students’ development is highlighted in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). However, in the Program, it is further underlined that kindergarten programs, especially, set the foundation for both students’ whole development and their successful learning.

The importance of the early years in child development was indicated also in the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (CMEC, 2010). There is a strong linkage between healthy development and “effective learning that leads to better outcomes in academic achievement, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, and economic and human development” (5). These components have already been integrated in the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008).

In the report, Educating for Sustainability. The Status of Sustainable Development Education in Canada (CMEC, 1999), citizenship is defined as:

... exploring issues of sustainability students must grapple with the concept of the common good and individual responsibility, both of
which are central to the idea of citizenship. They are asked to decide how a particular policy may promote or hinder the common good in terms of its economic, environmental and social impact. In making such a determination students must have reference to the values of the society and must explore how their own actions contribute to or detract from the required response (CMEC, 1999, 75).

In the definition above, citizenship and economics occur together, which were also previously referred to in the same sentence, “effective learning that leads to better outcomes in academic achievement, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, and economic and human development” (CMEC, 2010, 5).

As stated above, Canada is a member of the OECD. The report of the Canadian delegation at the Meeting of the OECD Education Committee at the ministerial level (CMEC, 2001) revealed remarks about discussions with the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) and the Trade Unions Advisory Committee (TUAC). Since it is a report of the Canadian delegation about the meeting of the OECD Education Committee at ministerial level, I chose to include these remarks in this chapter.

BIAC underlined to the Council the need to provide the skills to future workers in order to cope with the increasing demands of modern jobs and rapid technological development. In order to accomplish that effectively, the idea of lifelong learning was strongly supported by BIAC representatives. Furthermore, they argued that, since there is an increasing need in the work field for workers to have a wide variety of skills, it is necessary to enrich curricula with information and communications technologies in education. It is these communications technologies that will become increasingly important in terms of future economic and employment goals:

Statements made by the BIAC delegates focused mainly on issues related to “Employability,” or more specifically to the need to address the current and anticipated shortages of skilled workers due to high
demands in the innovation-based businesses and industries. BIAC delegates were strongly supportive of lifelong learning strategies (which they also call “life-wide” learning) as a way to overcome the shortage of skilled workers. In addition, BIAC delegates pointed out that, in the context of the knowledge based economy, companies will increasingly need workers with good generic skills, such as the ability to organize, conceptualize, work in teams, communicate, and use information resources effectively. For those purposes, therefore, BIAC recommended that academic curricula give increasing importance to ICT skills while maintaining other basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, as core objectives of the education system (2-3).

Interestingly, BIAC representatives attended the meeting of the OECD education committee at the ministerial level and made recommendations on “lifelong learning” and curricular enrichment with technology knowledge and skills acquisition for a future advanced and demanding working environment. BIAC’s positions reinforce the Waite et al. (2006) view that the corporatist agenda seeks “to regiment students into roles as obedient producers and consumers, into ‘knowledge workers,’ in today’s terms” (139). The revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) supports BIAC’s proposal by using strong vocabulary that connects the importance of “early learning experiences” to “future well-being” and students’ “acquisition of knowledge and skills in later learning and behaviour” (1). Throughout this process, the notions of life-long learning and enriched technological knowledge and skills acquisition become value neutral as they are introduced into and become familiar features of the kindergarten curriculum.

The Trade Unions Advisory Committee (TUAC) proposed, on the other hand, that all the members involved, such as Ministers and teachers, should cooperate in order to focus on future success. In short, the message seems to be, “be reasonable, do it my way.” Specifically, it is indicated that:

TUAC delegates, for their part, expressed their readiness to contribute to and support innovation in teaching and learning. However, they also emphasized with the Education Ministers that constructive partnerships between the main actors — the Ministers, the teachers
and their unions — will be key to any future progress. Therefore, they called upon the Ministers to develop policies to ensure not only that schools are equipped appropriately and teachers are trained adequately for the knowledge-based economy, but also that policies are put in place to improve the practice of teaching and the management of educational institutions. Finally, both groups expressed similar views on the need to recognize learning and access to the various sources of learning as an integral part of the life of all individuals and to find ways to recognize and validate learning in non-formal settings. On that last point, both groups noted that current credential systems have not kept pace with the needs of the changing environment and felt that in light of the increasing importance given to informal learning, ways to access and validate new methods of acquiring skills beyond formal academic institutions needed to be considered. This idea was echoed by Ministers in their discussion on the need to change some of the objectives of education and training in view of the changing skill requirements and the new technologies in the workplace (CMEC, 2001, 3).

Again, trade interest is focused on education through TUAC officials’ presence at the Ministers’ meeting concerning educational goals. They proposed that the Ministers “…develop policies… for the knowledge-based economy” (CMEC, 2001, 3). This appears to be the Ministers’ responsibility, according to TUAC at least. TUAC agreed with BIAC on the importance of learning and accessibility to learning sources not only in a school setting but also in informal settings. Continuing in this direction, emphasis was given to weighing new ways of skill acquisition in informal settings, due to ongoing changing needs of the work environment. This need for change in education was endorsed by the Ministers as well. In this light, individual educational components, such as democratic citizenship education, are at risk of falling prey to corporate interests, especially when they penetrate education officially through the highest levels of educational policy.

The relationship between the “knowledge economy” and education (CMEC, 2001, 4) was emphasized by the Secretary-General of OECD, Mr. Donald Johnston, in the light of life-long learning and training for all. He underlined the notion that education is the cornerstone of development. In addition, there was reference to a past
meeting relating to political willingness to support life-long learning and overcome burdens of discontinuity in life-long learning from early years’ education through to adult education, digital gaps and the need of new skill acquisition aimed at the development and advancement of the knowledge economy. Analytically, it is argued that:

The Secretary-General of OECD, Mr. Donald Johnston, opened the proceedings by stating the importance of education as the key to development in the new knowledge economy. He referred to the last meeting of OECD ministers of education where strong political support for lifelong learning was expressed and where three themes were explored: the gaps in providing lifelong learning for all (early childhood education, adult education and the digital divide); new opportunities and new skill requirements in the knowledge economy; (CMEC, 2001, 4)

The importance of early childhood education emerged once more through CMEC. It is interesting that this was brought up by the Secretary-General of the OECD in the Council of Ministers for Education. Additionally, there is an obvious will on their part to politically support life-long learning throughout all educational levels, starting from early childhood education to adulthood, in light of the needs of the knowledge economy. Clearly, Mr. Johnston is attempting to tie early childhood education to the workplace through “skill requirements in the knowledge economy” (CMEC, 2001, 4). Their priority is the development of the so-called knowledge economy and the key is education. And the specific kind of education that will accomplish this is citizenship education.

Again, an organization for economic development adds fundamental value to education, starting from the early years, in order to accomplish goals for success and development within the economy. It combines education with the economy and economic development by displaying the necessity of skill acquisition required to keep pace and to cope with the growing advancement and new needs of the
workplace. But, in this sense, children are conscripted in that there is a lack of
morality and freedom of choice. In the end, democracy is compromised. Questions
must then be raised over citizenship becoming so closely tied to employment. In
short, is that all a good citizen should be and do?

In addition, the notions of life-long learning and informal educational settings
are supported in order to accomplish this development of the knowledge economy.
Interestingly, the economic organization is present at meetings of Ministers of
education and attempts to gain consent for political support on this project.

The components of economic development, necessity of skill acquisition,
advanced needs of the workplace, life-long learning and informal educational settings
are woven through the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of
Education, 2006), as demonstrated in Chapter Five. Having explored this context, the
notion of democratic citizenship education as part of the curriculum is directly
connected to business and financial interests.

The effort to promote life-long learning and training in order to accomplish
economic development is highlighted explicitly by BIAC and TUAC references that
claim that early education and citizenship, by extension, is a crucial priority of
governments. However, in the excerpt below, it was indicated that social associates,
presumably BIAC and TUAC themselves, can intervene in curricula construction and
formation, and that salaries should be taken into account when education occurs
within informal educational settings. Furthermore, workers’ abilities should be valued
to a greater degree.

In the discussions with BIAC and TUAC…, it was clear that initial
education was considered the primary responsibility of governments,
but that social partners have a right to influence curricula; learning in
non-formal settings should be recognized, including in salary; and
more use should be made of the skills and competencies of workers
(CMEC, 2001, 5).
Interestingly, the term “social partners” is not defined further. It is unclear as to whether it is about corporations, stakeholders, citizens or all of the above. My view is that, by using this term, it implies all of the above, since it is recognized that the primary responsibility belongs to the government. In this case, it sounds like the “social partners” are the ones lobbying for greater access to young children. This makes it very worrying, since the pretext appears to be that they have the children’s best interests at heart. The government’s intentions are clearly related to economic gain, preparing children to be future citizens ready to contribute to the development of an economically successful and prosperous society. What is wrong with this picture? The process is inherently manipulative and undemocratic.

In addition, emphasis is given to learning in non-formal settings, a component that is also adopted in the revised *Kindergarten Program* (2006), as students learn interconnectedly when they are exposed to activities in classroom, home and neighbourhood. Perhaps it is no coincidence that these remarks have been made in 2001, five years before the revised *Kindergarten Program* (2006) publication.

It is stressed by the BIAC and TUAC, among the Ministers, that life-long learning, economy reinforcement, skills acquisition, technology knowledge and government involvement are important elements for the demanding workforce. But emphasis is also given by the above stakeholders to the importance of early childhood education. In this sense, life-long learning acknowledges the citizen’s dignity and promotes human and sustainable development. But development at what cost? There is an emphasis on work and market place needs, but there are no references to citizens’ or individuals’ needs. These needs may be treated as equal, in order to become neutral and equal, or the same. In this light, does this represent a “human development” and “sustainable development” (CMEC, 2001, 6) or economic
development and workplace development? Or are these needs treated as equal and, therefore, the same as economic development and workplace development?

In Canada, research conducted by Statistics Canada indicated that students’ values were related to their families’ situations (as cited in CMEC, 2001). One promising approach was to have all the interested parties involved, namely students, parents, communities and schools, since students are integral to their environment:

Minister Robichaud noted that Statistics Canada’s research linking values of students reflects what is happening in families. He spoke of New Brunswick pilot projects involving mediation and parent committees, where mediators act between students, parents and community, and the school. He noted that his preferred approach was to involve all stakeholders and that students cannot be separated from their environment (CMEC, 2001, 13).

This view is also supported and encouraged in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and the new draft entitled The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011).

The Canadian delegation is willing to promote the OECD’s initiatives relating to education results, access to policy information and research and cooperation with other international organizations in the field of education and future preparation. In this light, some of the objectives are to:

Promote OECD activities which focus on education outcomes, sharing information on best policies, promoting policy-related research, and collaboration with other major international organizations with an interest in education and training… Support OECD project priorities related to:

a. Education statistics and indicators
b. transition from school to work
c. education policy implications of ICT
d. equity and lifelong learning
e. learning needs of adults
f. teacher preparation and supply
g. citizenship and social cohesion (CMEC, 2001, 14)
The last objective of the Canadian delegation is “citizenship and social cohesion” (CMEC, 2001, 14), which is a project priority for the OECD at the same time. Again, citizenship is closely related to and interrelated with issues of the knowledge economy, workplace needs, policy, life-long learning, teacher training, research and sustainable development. Interestingly, all the above mentioned components are referred to in this, apparently, non-linear order, as if they were all equal and neutral terms. In addition, all of them are incorporated and reflected in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and the new draft entitled The Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011).

The importance of consistency and continuity of policies through the educational stages in a child’s educational process is emphasized by Doherty et al. (2003) in Canadian report for ECEC in OECD:

The way the transition from home to kindergarten or child care is handled for an individual child tends to depend very much on the policies and practices of a given school board, school or child care setting. The transition from kindergarten to Grade 1 is facilitated in all provinces/territories by the fact that the kindergarten curriculum is either embedded in a broader curriculum that spans kindergarten to Grade 3 or 4, or has similar though more basic outcome statements in the same areas as those used for higher grades. In either case, experiences and expectations in kindergarten are clearly positioned to be stepping stones to Grade 1 (Doherty et al., 2003, 66).

The revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) providing consistency and continuity with regards to citizenship education reflects Doherty et al.’s (2003) point of view. This means that economic organization and government policies follow the same direction,
creating a well-structured web policy, which disguises newly presented economic-related terms such as “knowledge economy,” “workplace needs,” “policy,” “life-long learning,” “research,” “social cohesion” and “sustainable development.” This is also nurtured and cultivated through a broader curriculum spanning kindergarten to higher educational levels. In this sense, whatever the government policies are, the children are conscripted in abiding by economic policies that pretend to be educational ones, supposedly driven by children’s best interests. Furthermore, citizenship education is nurtured from kindergarten in a way that is tied to economic prosperity and this continues into primary and secondary education.

Apart from OECD reports on ECEC, the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC), in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (2001), report that, in Canada, all the parties involved in education, namely “policy-makers, researchers, and teachers continue to develop citizenship education curricula and to integrate peace, human rights, and global education into school programs” (i). Apart from basic elements of citizenship education found in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the Ministry released the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (2008), which raises those issues. This serves long-term world-wide migration and employment-seeking goals in developed countries. Global education sets up another aspect of the web of “blurry policy” and places local citizenship education within a global economic scene. In this view, students of diverse backgrounds will learn and will be politicized for the country’s economic advantage. However, this issue will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

The Council of Ministers indicates that citizenship education is a field of great importance and interest in many provinces in Canada. Therefore, stakeholders in
education, namely policy-makers and teachers, conduct research in the field of active citizenship in a country that is characterized by and consists of people coming from diverse cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, they develop new curricula concerning citizenship education, based on the findings coming from their research (CMEC & CCU, 2001). This coincides with the development and publishing of the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). Again, government policy about citizenship education addresses a country’s population of diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic background and permeates curriculum. This is further reinforced by “research findings” conducted by economic organizations and often lack methodology or valid references. The government does not always act in the students’ best interests, but it appears to consistently act in corporations’ best interests.

In Canada, citizenship education in formal education aims at educating students to become responsible future citizens. In all provinces and territories, it is part of the core curriculum for elementary and secondary education in various ways. In some provinces, citizenship education is introduced to students as a specifically focused curriculum and, in other provinces, as part of the social studies curriculum. Citizenship education, as a curriculum or as part of it, aims at cultivating and engaging students regarding the meaning of democracy, tolerance, peace, equality and respect for human rights (CMEC & CCU, 2001), terms that can be found in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and, especially, in the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008).

The above analysis replies to my first research question of how democratic citizenship education is reflected in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario
Ministry of Education, 2006). In Ontario, democratic citizenship education development has been influenced implicitly and limited by the Federal Government of Canada, mainly through research and funding initiatives. In addition, it has been influenced by the Canadian Ministers’ of Education participation in meetings and conferences held under the auspices of organizations such as the OECD. Further analysis on the role of the OECD in democratic citizenship education in the Ontario and the Hellenic curriculum for kindergarten will follow in the next chapter.

The analysis of the meeting reports revealed that the characteristics of citizenship education raised and pointed out in the meetings by government officials were adopted and integrated into the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and later into the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and the new draft was entitled The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011).

In the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), the developmental area in the program is related to citizenship education and includes basic concepts of it in the section on Social Knowledge and Competence. At this stage, children begin to “distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour,” “begin to develop the capacity to relate to others” and “need and enjoy social contact to develop a sense of themselves” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21). However, suggested approaches such as “support and praise acceptable behaviour,” and “provide models and examples of appropriate ways of solving problems” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 21) raise questions about appropriate problem-solving strategies, acceptable behaviour, and models and examples used within educational contexts which develop social knowledge and competence in students’ lives,
especially in such an early stage as kindergarten. Thus, what is missing here is the pedagogy – the “how to” that will accomplish all this. Unfortunately, this missing part reduces the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) to a mediating document that allows government greater power over the school system and reinforces government policy about citizenship education at the same time.

In kindergarten, children begin to socialize with their peers, their teachers and other adults, and through this experience they learn about themselves and develop personal and social skills, their relationships. Acquisition of these skills is fundamental for democratic citizenship education. However, students’ social and personal development is interrelated with the development of other areas such as cognitive, motor and emotional skills. Students learn about themselves in connection to others and the world through cross-curricular activities, by using math, dramatic play and language independently and in groups. In this way, democratic citizenship education, among other educational constructs, is acquired. Then, it is fair to say that true citizenship education is acquired through avenues other than those documented through government policy. In other words, government may have an agenda that does not favour “true” citizenship education, but calls it that for the purpose of deriving benefit from the educational system for purposes of future employment.

Another component is antidiscrimination education, introduced to ensure that students in Ontario have equal opportunities to achieve their full potential. Antidiscrimination key words, such as “ensure,” “secure,” “safe,” “equal opportunity,” “full potential,” and “fully and successfully” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 26), are connected with identity and diversity in the school environment. Within antidiscrimination education in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) students are introduced to and
encouraged to develop a sense of “responsible, fair, and equitable treatment of themselves and others.” These values are closely related to democratic citizenship education and are carefully selected to address antidiscrimination education in the Ontario kindergarten. The economic factor which is closely related to citizenship education compromises the values of “responsible, fair, and equitable treatment of themselves and other,” destabilizing true democratic citizenship education at the same time. Therefore, encouraging and teaching young students to reach their full potential through safety, equal opportunities and equitable treatment aims, in this case, at economic prosperity rather than genuine equality and democracy.

It is recognized that “children’s early learning experiences” are essential for their development (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 1). Therefore, the importance of the kindergarten years in students’ development is identified as being of great importance, as kindergarten programs set the foundation not only for children’s successful learning but also for their whole development. In addition, the overall expectations outlined are designed for Junior and Senior Kindergarten as a continuum, whereas assessment and evaluation are based on children’s achievement of the overall expectations. The importance of the kindergarten years as well as the continuity of the overall expectations coincides with economic organization and government policy. This policy set promotes continuity in order to nurture students from the first educational stages in democratic citizenship education to achieve economic goals. This is also indicated by the import of the terms “assessment” and “evaluation,” which are also connected to economic terminology.

Among the overall expectations presented in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) is students’ demonstration of “identity,” “positive self image,” “understanding of the diversity,” “independence,”
“self-regulation,” “responsibility,” “problem-solving skills” and “awareness of their surroundings” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). The words used here are all closely related to citizenship education. Children in kindergarten are expected to reach the specific expectations of self-awareness and self-reliance, and specifically “recognize personal interests, strengths, and accomplishments,” “identify and talk about their own interests and preferences” and “express their thoughts… and share experiences…” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31). Acquisition of basic concepts of “empathy,” “respect,” “consideration,” “differences,” “alternative points of view,” “reflect,” “heritage,” “independence” and “cultural background” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 31) are essential elements, closely linked to democratic citizenship education. Similarly, other notions of democratic citizenship education such as “responsibility,” “willingness,” “self-control,” “self-motivation,” “initiative,” “confidence” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, 32), “cooperation” and “adaptation” are set as specific expectations. All these above mentioned components are closely related to citizenship as they rest upon its foundations.

While the words documented in the curriculum are carefully selected, the point that is often missed is that there is little or no pedagogy surrounding these terms. In other words, teachers are not being instructed as to how these things should look in the classroom. As a result, they cannot be implemented in any concerted way without a great deal of professional development. As such, curriculum provides the channel that paves the way for neo-liberal forces to impose their will, namely the recruitment of future efficient employees who will help to buoy up the economy in economically uncertain times. It appears that this will proceed into the foreseeable future.

In 2008, the Ontario Ministry of Education published the *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (Ontario Ministry of
Education, 2008) in an effort to promote character development and focus on commonalities instead of differences. Interestingly, character education initiatives for K-12 included a special section on citizenship in relation to social cohesion. Citizenship development, as indicated above, is seen as part of character development, providing a pathway that is “truly balanced and holistic as we revisit the foundations of an equitable and inclusive public education” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). Students are educated to be both “citizens who have empathy and respect for others” and “to be productive citizens in an interdependent world” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). Government documents seem to be “even-handed” in linking citizenship to productivity, a well-known neo-liberal corporatist term.

Citizenship education is interrelated with academic performance, diversity and “community partnership”. Character development is related to “inclusiveness,” “equity and respect for diversity,” “opportunities to engage students in general, and disengaged and marginalized students in particular” and “about all students and all schools,” among other components (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 7). Thus, citizenship education is linked to academic performance, diversity and partnership, whereas character development is linked to a broader and general sense of inclusiveness and respect for diversity in a hollow effort to promote true democratic values. But, these components documented imply government intentions to link citizenship education to productivity and to the future.

Since citizenship education is part of character development as already stated, citizenship education is also woven into all aspects of educational procedures and processes. Furthermore, character development “prepares students for citizenship and civic involvement and to be fully engaged, responsible members of their
“fully engaged” and “responsible” is vague. To my understanding, the meaning of those terms reflects the importance of getting and keeping a job to help the economy which, in turn, will sustain social solidarity and cohesion. Furthermore, training through life-long learning will contribute towards social cohesion. Therefore, life-long learning is inextricably linked to citizenship education and the work force in order to create a successful economy in a prosperous society.

Democracy is characterized as “mature” in a society where there is growing diversity. Through this diversity students are provided with a variety of stimuli to develop communication and behavioural skills in order to cope with the constraints imposed by society. However, the “mature” citizen learns, as a student, how to behave properly and acceptably within a diverse societal context, but does not learn how to fight back or challenge the status quo.

In addition, students’ effective functioning within a diverse society is linked to the global economy. But, while there is a clear linkage between education and the global society, what may be missing is research on students’ achievement as it pertains to the economy. First of all, student achievement or “effective functioning” is notoriously hard to define, simply because any assessment or evaluation represents a “proxy” rather than the actual acquisition of knowledge. Secondly, how are we assessing effective functioning in the global economy? Unfortunately, teachers are not provided with enough professional development opportunities to implement this or any other policy relating to global economies. As such, this causes them to “yield the field” to those who claim to know – the Ministers of Education – who are really only making policy for government, not for the educators or their students. Furthermore, the Ministers of Education, as government representatives in
international organizations, adopt and transfer organizations’ findings, conclusions, suggestions or input into their national educational system, as “important concluding remarks.” Parallel to this, citizenship education nurtures and prepares students to retain this pattern by having students behave properly and by keeping diversity under control, in the sense of “keeping the voices down,” in favour of economic interest and advantage.

Although character education is referred to in relation to notions of “respect,” “dignity,” “diversity,” “empathy,” “integration,” “inclusion” and “unity” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 20), citizenship is also closely related to diversity and human relationships that form social cohesion. Equity, in turn, helps to lead a diverse society gradually to social cohesion. While I agree that this is a good thing under auspicious circumstances, such conjunctions with economic development reduce the meaning of these words to notions of economic benefit and success. Bearing this in mind, does government have an ulterior motive? In this light, “social cohesion” may be another word for “obeying” or “keeping voices down” or “expressing a different opinion not heard enough for social stability’s sake.” Furthermore, morality is linked to responsible citizenship. It is obvious that such relationships are of great importance and character education fosters those characteristics. At the same time, character education is closely related to excellence and successful democratic education. On the surface, I agree. But, it seems to be very theoretical since powerful terms, such as “democratic education,” “social cohesion,” “equity,” “diversity,” “morality” and “inclusion” deserve to be challenged when they are used in the arena of economic profit focusing on a successful and prosperous society.

An effective citizenry relates positively to economic, political, social and cultural components when students develop “knowledge of civics and governance,”
“critical thinking,” “problem-solving and decision-making skills,” “communication, social and participatory skills” and “understanding of and commitment to character development” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 23). In this case, citizenship education is clearly linked to and interrelated with the economy and politics. But, this value is not neutral by nature. It became neutral through carefully selected words which were reinforced. Furthermore, school and community cooperation is necessary for citizenship education along with a continuity and commitment to character development in the learning process that leads to life-long learning.

The new draft entitled *The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011) supports Ontario’s goal of high-quality learning. The notion of the “ever-changing global community” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5) has been referred to several times in the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). In this draft, this notion is repeated in order for the transition to be made from present to future, from local to global. Furthermore, the need for the connectedness between children and curriculum is highlighted for the first time in this draft and it is tied nicely to the importance of being “active citizens” not only locally but also world-wide (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 5). The global concept of “active citizen” becomes more evident here as economies are grown globally, while others are in crisis. This instability influences economic stability and, further, social cohesion. On the other hand, migration grows as a result of economic insecurity. Therefore, governments seize the opportunity to connect more children to this curriculum and to elevate citizenship education within the global context. Being “active citizens” world-wide means that citizens should retain social cohesion and, further, economic prosperity within a broader context, beyond the narrow borders of a local society. And, this goal
is served by government policy through which economies become stronger as neo-
liberal forces influence curriculum.

Citizenship here is based on the principle that “respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children’s rights, optimal development, and learning,” within the diversity of Canadian society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 41). Therefore, school activities should be related and connected to the societal diversity, as it exists within communities. Therefore, parents are encouraged to participate actively in various school activities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011). But, what are the government’s intentions? Are they driven by children’s interests or by economic benefit?

Antidiscrimination, as a major component of citizenship education, is also repeated in this draft, since it promotes a positive atmosphere in school settings for students to overcome differences, cooperate, reach their full potential and build strong identities. It seems that policy-makers salt “noble” words throughout these documents that are really encouraging compliance and obedience.

Concepts of democratic citizenship education become clearer in this draft as the major notion is promoted that “children have a strong sense of identity and well-being” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 60). Basic elements are “independence,” “self-regulation” and “responsibility” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011, 60). Clearly, democracy is promoted in school as early as kindergarten. Through the program, students are encouraged to participate actively in several school activities independently or in groups and make decisions through democratic procedures that students learn to follow through peer interactions.

In the next subsection, I analyze the discourse practice of the European Union bodies’ reports and guides that involve democratic citizenship education, curriculum

### 7.3: Discourse Practice of European Union Reports on Citizenship Education

It would be an omission not to refer to the European Union reports on citizenship education, since Hellas has been a full member state since 1981. The directions suggested through these reports have been integrated or partially adopted by member states within their educational policy.

The Council of Europe has been interested in democratic citizenship education since 1997, when it started carrying out the project on *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (Audigier, 2000). The project includes a forum of discussions among education ministries representatives, experts and practitioners from European member states who have worked on concepts and definitions, strategies and practices in *Education for Democratic Citizenship*. The aim was to help decision-makers and practitioners to apply those policies, strategies and practices in their national context. The project concluded in 2005.

In 2005, in the introductory part of *Citizenship Education at School in Europe* (European Commission, 2005), it was suggested:

> In recent years, fostering social cohesion and more active participation by citizens in social and political life has become a key issue in all European countries. It is also an objective firmly supported by the European Commission. In its 2004 communication *Building our common Future: Policy challenges and Budgetary means of the Enlarged Union 2007-2013*, the Commission clearly identified the development of European citizenship as a foremost priority for EU action (Figel’, 2005, 3).
As stated above, the formation of a European citizenship is a priority for the EU. In this context, notions of social cohesion and active participation are at the forefront among European state members, including Hellas. The context here is much broader than in the Ontario case and includes a number of independent countries, which follow European regulations.

In the excerpt below, citizenship education within the European context is described in more detail:

The development of responsible civic behaviour may be encouraged from a very early age. Citizenship education, which includes learning about the rights and duties of citizens, respect for democratic values and human rights, and the importance of solidarity, tolerance and participation in a democratic society, is seen as a means of preparing children and young people to become responsible and active citizens (Figel’, 2005, 3).

Citizenship education’s key characteristics are “learning about the rights and duties,” “respect for democratic values and human rights,” “solidarity,” “tolerance,” “participation,” “democracy” and “responsible and active citizens.” All these characteristics form responsible citizenship and can be developed and fostered in the early years. In the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003), emphasis is given to the early years in kindergarten, which is the first school setting where children begin to develop their social skills with their peers and adults, apart from family members, friends and community.

These words differ from the Canadian context. The definition of citizenship education within the European context is somewhat more transparent. In contrast to the European context, Canadian policies appear to promote specific goals, related to the economy, rather than to citizenship.

In the excerpt below, it is indicated that:

In recent years, initiatives on the part of several international organisations and research institutions have sought to encourage the
idea of citizenship education and research into related issues, as well as teaching in this field. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) actively promoted the idea of citizenship education on a global scale through its UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995 to 2004)... (European Commission, 2005, 7).

In the above excerpt, it is verified that international organizations have suggested and promoted citizenship education and related issues with regards to globalization, in some cases. Interestingly, a variety of stakeholders such as UNESCO express their views on citizenship education, even though they are not from the field of education. Furthermore, it seems that their views help inform European citizenship education. But, I think that since these organizations, such as UNESCO, have member countries from around the world, they are not impartial. On the contrary, a political agenda is inevitable when it comes to citizenship education. Therefore, the connection between citizenship education, neo-liberal forces, political agendas and economic profit is reinforced much more within the “blurry web” policies. But, this connection is not as evident and strong within the European context as it was in the Canadian context. UNESCO’s role in citizenship education will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Surprisingly, there is also a reference to international organizations and their involvement in curriculum and education in the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003). These organizations encourage an active and collaborative learning procedure in school.

The relationship between the societal component and the economy is evident in the next excerpt:

At EU level, the Lisbon strategy has mapped out the route towards a knowledge-driven economy and a new European social agenda up to 2010. Social inclusion and active citizenship are important policy objectives central to the Lisbon process. In this context, the education system may be regarded as the most important medium through which to impart and demonstrate the principles of equity, inclusion and cohesion. Therefore, social inclusion and active citizenship feature
prominently in the three strategic goals for European education and training systems adopted by the European Council in March 2001, covering quality of, access to and openness of European education to the world… (European Commission, 2005, 7).

In the above excerpt, it is underlined that knowledge, economy and social development are interrelated with social inclusion, equity, and active citizenship within education policy. However, the connection between a knowledge-driven economy and active citizenship still does not appear to be as forceful as in the Canadian context. Within the European context, the components of social inclusion and active citizenship lead to qualitative, accessible and open European education in a world-wide context.

In the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Elementary School, Social and Civic Education* (FEK 303, 2003), it is stressed that students should be prepared, in school, to access a wide range of knowledge and tools of acquisition necessary to meet the expectations of a demanding society. In addition, school develops students’ skills and abilities in order to be professionally advanced and socially active. The newly designed curriculum is inevitably closely related to issues of labour market, unemployment and students’ expertise and nicely mediated through legislation into the curriculum. Thus, this may be a bit more subtle than the Canadian documents, but it is still manipulative.

Within the Hellenic context, future responsible and active citizens will be characterized by values of democracy, common values, respect for human rights, social inclusion, peace and freedom (FEK 303, 2003); qualities that education creates, fosters and promotes. In this way, students become capable of dealing with problems relating to their success in a growing and demanding society. Along with cognitive, emotional and physical skill development, students should also develop those social skills necessary to perform an engaged and active role as future citizens in an ever-
changing society, where democracy, human rights, peace and freedom are substantial elements. Interestingly, the European vision of citizenship complies with those elements presented in the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Elementary School, Social and Civic Education* (FEK 303, 2003). Since the European reports on *Education for Democratic Citizenship* were preceded by FEK 303 (2003), citizenship education within the Hellenic curriculum is influenced by documented European reports. Furthermore, FEK 303 (2003) is a document used to promote the same characteristics as in Canada, albeit perhaps a little more subtly.

In the following excerpt, social cohesion and common identity in Europe becomes of great importance:

> With the recent enlargement of the EU, the concept of citizenship is once more high on the political agenda. As Europe grows bigger and closer, it has become increasingly important to provide young people with an idea of what is meant by responsible citizenship within a democratically based society. So too, therefore, is the need to provide them with the essentials of a positive civic attitude. In the interests of social cohesion in Europe and a common European identity, pupils at school need to be informed specifically about what it means to be a citizen, the kinds of rights and duties that citizenship entails and how to behave like a ‘good citizen’ (European Commission, 2005, 7).

> Students should be nurtured to become responsible citizens in a democratic society by sharing a common European identity and acknowledge their rights and duties and behave accordingly. However, the forms of positive civic attitude and what a “good citizen” stands for are not clarified.

Further, it is indicated that:

> Politicians have also agreed on the need to bring the EU closer to the citizens and that democracy should be consolidated by fostering their active participation in the life of society. It is for this reason that a working group on an ‘Open Learning Environment, Active Citizenship and Social Inclusion’ was set up within the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture at the beginning of 2003. One of its aims is to ensure that the learning of democratic
values and democratic participation by all school partners is effectively promoted in order to prepare people for active citizenship…. For this reason, the working group has been provided with relevant data on citizenship education by its EU member state representatives (European Commission, 2005, 8).

According to the European Commission (2005), an active European citizen is imbued with democratic values and participates in social issues democratically. The political agenda promotes democracy, citizenship education and social inclusion as a priority and takes all the measures necessary towards this direction. It is quite impressive that there is no reference to the knowledge economy, as there was previously. I think there is an effort to emphasize the genuine and non-economic words which describe an active European citizen but, since there was a reference to the knowledge economy, ultimately, the knowledge economy may devolve to monetary power.

Below, citizenship within a European identity context is clarified:

As a starting point, a ‘citizen’ may be regarded as a person coexisting in a society. In recent decades, societies have changed and, with them, the theoretical conceptions and practical implementation of citizenship. The concept is steadily broadening and changing, as lifestyles and patterns in our relations with others become more diversified. Far from being limited to the national context, the notion of harmonious coexistence among citizens relates to the concept of a community embracing all contexts – local, regional, national and international – in which individuals live (European Commission, 2005, 9).

A citizen is considered to be a person who coexists with other citizens in society. However, this concept takes on different meanings as relationships and societal dynamics change and differentiate over time. The key aspect is that the concept of citizen goes beyond a local and national context and extends to international settings.

Apart from the concept of citizen, the notion of responsible citizenship is defined below:
The notion of ‘responsible citizenship’ raises issues concerned with awareness and knowledge of rights and duties. It is also closely related to civic values such as democracy and human rights, equality, participation, partnership, social cohesion, solidarity, tolerance of diversity and social justice. The concept of ‘responsible citizenship’ is now increasingly widespread, particularly in that a series of relevant recommendations and resolutions promoting the issue have been adopted by the member states of the Council of Europe... (European Commission, 2005, 9).

As stated above, a responsible citizen is one who has knowledge relating to human rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, responsible citizenship consists of values of “democracy and human rights, equality, participation, partnership, social cohesion, solidarity, tolerance of diversity and social justice” (European Commission, 2005, 9). Again, there is not a reference to the economy, while in the Canadian reports there was a repetition of the word. This may imply that the economic factor does not influence democratic citizenship education in Hellas as much as within the Canadian educational context.

Another essential definition that is provided is that of citizenship education:

Citizenship education in the context of the present survey will refer to school education for young people, which seeks to ensure that they become active and responsible citizens capable of contributing to the development and well-being of the society in which they live. While its aims and content may be highly diversified, three key themes are of particular interest. Citizenship education is normally meant to guide pupils towards (a) political literacy, (b) critical thinking and the development of certain attitudes and values and (c) active participation (European Commission, 2005, 10).

As stated above, citizenship education focuses on nurturing active and responsible citizens who will promote a society’s prosperity and well-being. This can be accomplished by introducing students to political literacy, critical thinking, development of certain attitudes and values and active participation. The reference to the contribution to “… the development and well-being of the society…” (European
Commission, 2005, 10) may well refer to the economy, but it is not specified in points (a), (b) or (c).

The term “political literacy” involves students’ learning about “social, political and civic institutions, as well as human rights” (European Commission, 2005, 10) and researching the conditions under which other citizens coexist, social problems and concerns. In addition, students should learn about national constitutions, recognize the historical heritage, and linguistic and cultural diversity. This looks like it is reasonably exempt from political tampering in terms of economic interest.

Citizenship education’s second component is critical thinking and this refers to certain attitudes and values which concern acquisition of social skills for active participation in public life, acknowledgement and respect for oneself and other people, self-confidence as well as social and moral responsibility acquisition (European Commission, 2005). In my opinion, critical thinking can challenge hierarchies of power that serve to marginalize individuals and groups based on perceived inferior social or physical capitals. In this way, by accessing critical thinking, one can decide whether government is doing creditable work or launching a personal agenda. Furthermore, critical thinking also references characteristics of solidarity, values construction on a diverse social basis, ability for peaceful resolution of conflicts, contribution to a safe environment and the ability to think of ways of eradicating racism and xenophobia (European Commission, 2005).

Citizenship education’s third component speaks to active participation that entails students’ opportunities to become more engaged not only in the school community but also at the local, national and international level. In addition, they are encouraged to practice democracy at school and to connect with each other.
Furthermore, students develop projects together with community associations and international organizations or other communities (European Commission, 2005).

The European Commission (2005) indicated that, among the aims that policymakers have in all European countries, a major goal is to establish strong social cohesion and solidarity. However, the European Commission recognizes the need to define the concept of responsible citizenship at the national level. The problem is that defining citizenship is complicated, since “its meaning and the way it is perceived differ from one country to the next, and some national languages do not even have a directly equivalent term” (European Commission, 2005, 13). This is a key aspect because it differentiates Canadian “citizenship,” social cohesion and solidarity from terms used by its European counterpart. In addition, the concept of citizenship may vary in different contexts. In some countries, citizenship implies the legal connection between the State and the citizen whereas, in other contexts, it implies the social aspect of citizens as part of a society in which they coexist with other people. All countries link the concept of responsible citizenship, more or less, with values of “democracy, human dignity, freedom, respect for human rights, tolerance, equality, respect for law, social justice, solidarity, responsibility, loyalty, cooperation, participation and spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development” (European Commission, 2005, 13). In the Canadian context, terms such as solidarity, responsibility, loyalty and cooperation may be metaphors for greater compliance.

In Hellas, as a European member state, the concept of “citizenship” is defined as:

A legal and political status by which the citizen acquires some rights as an individual (civil, political, social) and some duties with respect to a political group. Citizenship is based on an attribute acknowledged or conferred to citizens by the state and rests on the supposition that citizens share some values and rules of behaviour enabling coexistence
among them and providing them with a specific collective identity (European Commission, 2005, 66).

The Council of Europe (2010) indicates that Education for democratic citizenship means:

education, training, dissemination, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and moulding their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe (2010) introduced human rights education, closely related to democratic citizenship education but different in scope. Democratic citizenship education focuses more on democratic rights and duties and active participation with regards to civic, political, social, economical, legal and cultural issues in society. On the other hand, human rights education focuses more on human rights and people’s freedoms.

At this point, it is further suggested by the European Commission (2005) that education plays a vital role in citizenship formation for students. Socialization within a school setting is equally as important within family, friends or community. One of the basic aims of the school is to provide students with those skills and knowledge in order to contribute to society positively and to work towards its development as adults.

In this light, citizenship education is connected to curriculum. Specifically, it is suggested by the European Commission (2005) that “all levels of the education system should play their part in implementing this concept in the curriculum, either as a specific school subject or a cross-curricular theme” (17). It is also suggested that students’ knowledge, skills and behaviour are formed through multidisciplinary approaches in order to live peacefully in a democratic society.
Citizenship education can be found in European member states as a separate compulsory or optional subject, or integrated into subjects, or as a cross-curricular educational theme. In Hellas, citizenship education is a compulsory separate subject “integrated within other subjects, or present as a cross-curricular theme” (European Commission, 2005, 19), specifically in primary education. Interestingly, conceptions of economic viability are not mentioned here.

My second research question on how democratic citizenship education is reflected in the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003) is answered here. This document sets the goals of learning, the procedures to be followed by teachers and the conditions under which learning is achieved.

Citizenship education is not a distinct area in the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten* (FEK 304, 2003) but is part of the *Environmental Studies* subject. However, basic concepts of citizenship are taught throughout the teaching process, regardless of the subject to which it belongs. Citizenship education is referred to as “notions of Social and Civic Education” and is more closely related to the category of “human environment and interaction” (FEK 304, 2003, 588) since it indicates a child’s relations with others. Further, it coincides with the European Commission’s (2005) suggestion that citizenship education should be integrated into the curriculum at all educational levels, including kindergarten.

In kindergarten, social skills development begins with general ideas and moves gradually to more specific ones. At this developmental level, a student experiences new social interactions and subsequently acquires new knowledge about social life (FEK 304, 2003). The main skills expected to be developed and acquired in kindergarten are self-esteem, cooperation, uniqueness, identification of similarities
and differences with others and respect (FEK 304, 2003). The recommended learning procedure that should be followed is that all these skills are to be learned through various cross-thematic activities, which are both developmentally appropriate and which meet students’ interests. Through these activities, students “develop their personality…, socialize and… experience the world in human and natural environments” (FEK 304, 2003, 590). This approach is also followed by other European countries regarding citizenship education. Although these learning procedures appear to be somewhat more candid than the Canadian agenda of creating curricula that valorize economic productivity through employment. Elements of coercion occur in the Hellenic curriculum as well.

According to the curriculum (FEK 304, 2003), students should be given opportunities to take initiative and responsibility for their actions, freely express their views and experiences, learn to accept the consequences of their mistakes, negotiate any conflicts or tensions arising during group activities and develop positive feelings about themselves. In addition, students should be encouraged to be aware of their personal uniqueness, to learn to accept and respect people with different linguistic, cultural or religious backgrounds and to work together in a cooperative climate through a variety of group activities. All these properly developed skills in kindergarten lead to future citizens’ capabilities and readiness to participate actively, cooperatively and critically in political and social contexts by identifying conflicts, addressing problems and further engaging in finding solutions to emergent issues. In addition, they will be able to enjoy their rights and fulfill their duties (FEK 304, 2003). These elements are addressed also by the European Commission (2005), as they attempt to form responsible democratic citizenship in terms of political literacy, critical thinking, attitudes and values and active participation, at least on a basic level.
According to the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Elementary School, Social and Civic Education* (FEK 303, 2003), citizenship education nurtures students’ personalities characterized by responsibility, democracy, freedom and principles, such as humanity and social solidarity. Some other characteristics that should be developed within a school setting are those of self-concept, emotional stability, critical and dialectic ability and positive attitudes towards cooperation and self-motivation. Equally important is the creation of a school environment that will promote continuous learning for all students. Another important aspect is the creation of such conditions in school settings that allow students to develop the skills of critical approaches relative to information technology. In addition, further characteristics such as those of “social cohesion,” “equal opportunities,” “common attitudes and values,” “European citizenry,” “national identity,” “cultural self-awareness,” “cooperation” and “teamwork” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734) should be promoted. In other words, many of the characteristics that are stressed by European Union bodies (Council of Europe, 2008; European Commission, 2005) for citizenship education have been incorporated into the curriculum for compulsory education in order to reinforce a European identity among Hellene future citizens.

Social and Civic Education’s purpose is characterized by concepts of “intellectual development,” “universal and timeless values,” “moral development,” “social, economic and political development,” “cultural development,” “diversity,” “Hellenic identity” and “social relations,” “social cohesion,” “individual responsibility” and “social solidarity” (FEK 303, 2003, 3962). These concepts are incorporated within the *Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for*
Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003) and are highlighted by European reports on democratic citizenship formation (European Commission, 2005).

The transition from the Hellenic education formation to the European citizenship education formation and the transition from European citizenship education components back to the Hellenic education emphasizes both the similarity and the interconnectivity in the directions that education follows. Again, important characteristics are mentioned in the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Elementary School, Social and Civic Education, such as “democratic political life,” “solidarity,” “freedom,” “collectivity,” “justice,” “labour,” “culture” and “social cohesion,” that compose the “common view” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734) of European education. It is recognized that the European Union member states are “open and pluralistic societies” which are invited to adopt this “common aspiration” in regard to the “national education policy” (FEK 303, 2003, 3734), along with other individual features that characterize each society. In this view, European education policy is ruled by the same directives that the Hellenic education system is invited to adopt through this new legislation and, additionally, it echoes the formation of the Hellenic education system and every other European member state education policy initiative. Furthermore, emphasis is given to the need for the development of quality in education, which will encourage the effectiveness and dynamism of the current education system.

Equal opportunities and access to learning for all students are linked to democratic principles, including those who belong to minority groups or those with special needs. It is noted in FEK 303 (2003) that the issue of eliminating social exclusion in these groups is closely related to reducing the risk of unemployment. However, it is stressed that there is not a common learning approach for everyone.
The risk of unemployment is seen here as a mitigating factor rather than of being an issue that should become a major purpose of education.

The concept of economic interests sets new parameters for citizenship education. “Multicultural environment” is now an established understanding, reinforced by the globalization of the economy and the minimization of distances in relation to communication and exchange. Parallel to this, the European Union encourages mutual understanding and cooperation between the member states so as to promote development in an increasing cultural, ethnic and linguistic diverse wider society. As already noted above, every member state of the European Union is allowed to maintain its own national and cultural identity within their education system, but is also encouraged to introduce and stress issues of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity which every student should learn to accept and respect. Those characteristics will form future European citizens’ national and cultural identity. Therefore, both European and Hellenic education policy stive to find ways of matching and incorporating economic gain, social solidarity and diversity within democratic citizenship education starting as early as kindergarten.

In the next chapter, I analyze social practice with regards to the supporting documents released by OECD and UNESCO about democratic citizenship education in relation to both the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003), since Canada and Hellas are both members of these organizations. Accordingly, the goals and the learning procedures are examined and deconstructed in association with democratic citizenship education in the documents of Starting Strong I and II (OECD, 2006, 2001), Definition and Selection of Key Competences: Executive summary (OECD, 2005), Glossary of Statistical Terms (OECD, 2007),
Chapter Eight

8.1: Social Practice

The critical discourse analyses of texts and discourse practice revealed the ways in which democratic citizenship education is reflected in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003). As Woodside-Jiron (2004) indicates, discourse practice is part of social practice, the analysis of which will reveal connections between them. Rogers (2004) explains further that the societal context regards broader governing bodies “including policies, mandates, and political climates that influence the local and institutional contexts” and adds that “each of these contexts is embedded within and informs the other” (244). The term “institutional context” includes the social and political bodies that delineate the local context. This is part of a naturalization process that lies within text analysis, through the ways in which ideologies “embedded in discursive practices and made more effective by becoming naturalized” (Woodside-Jiron, 2004, 200) are revealed. The naturalized text, as shown in previous chapters, is presented through consistent vocabulary or reference to research evidence. Then, “particular interpretive principles come to be associated in a naturalized way with particular discourse types” (Fairclough, 1992, 84). Analyzing the power relations within a naturalization process, the linkages between policy and the receivers reveal the way that social change occurs.

In this way, democratic citizenship education is reflected in the curricula under study. Supplementary documents reveal how particular federal and government agreements and European reports influence these curricula in strategic ways. In other words, while I showed that these documents influence the curricula, what needs to be
shown is how this works and how curricula are connected to government and corporate initiatives that conspire to make children servants of the state. Ultimately, who benefits from this influence? Is it truly the children, or is it the government in conjunction with neo-liberal forces? These aspects I intend to analyze in this chapter.

Specifically, in this chapter, I analyze the reports and research conducted by world-wide organizations that also influence the development of these curricula in strategic and advanced ways. Looking at the contexts and policies relating to the development of curricula supports the analysis of social practices and the ways knowledge is formed and naturalized in global contexts. First, since Canada and Hellas are member states of OECD, I will analyze the social practices suggested by OECD reports on democratic citizenship education in kindergarten curricula and subsequent social change. Then, I will analyze the social practices of UNESCO reports on democratic citizenship education in kindergarten curricula. In the final part of the chapter, I analyze the subsequent social change that these organizations seek to bring about with regards to democratic citizenship education and the curricula under study. Both OECD and UNESCO strongly influence and are strongly influenced by globalization policies.

8.2: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Reports

The OECD has shown an increasing interest in early childhood education. This stage includes the age range for kindergarten. Therefore, the term “early childhood education” is used interchangeably with “kindergarten.” The connections to globalization policies and the participation of many countries world-wide seem to be a plan by which neo-liberal forces attempt to utilize education to encourage future
citizens to behave in certain ways that are helpful to the economy and to the subsequent increase in the growth of capital for influential members of the society. The OECD’s interest is evident from the two reports that were published, dedicated exclusively to early childhood education, *Starting Strong I* (OECD, 2001) and *Starting Strong II* (OECD, 2006).

In *Starting Strong I* (OECD, 2001), twelve member countries were reviewed. The main goal of these OECD policies is evident from the beginning:

Pursuant to Article 1 of the Convention signed in Paris on 14th December 1960, and which came into force on 30th September 1961, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shall promote policies designed:
- to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;
- to contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development and;
- to contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis in accordance with international obligations (OECD, 2001, 2).

As clearly indicated above, the OECD’s main goal is sustainability of economic growth in accordance with employment, quality of life, world economic growth and world trade expansion. In this light, interest in early childhood education seems to be more closely aligned to corporate and economic goals than to interest in children’s development.

Policy attention has focused on strengthening the quality of early childhood education in relation to life-long learning, access and other sectors such as health, employment and social integration policies (OECD, 2001). This focus is due to increased labour market needs and to increased social, economic, cultural and linguistic diversity in OECD countries that accept people who seek asylum or immigrate for work. This diversity has an inevitable impact on early childhood
education services, as the OECD indicates. Additionally, related policies should secure the well-being of the children and families and promote social cohesion. Several measures taken towards this direction are the establishment of social support networks for minority communities and financial benefits for families. While those measures may benefit families, they seem to benefit the OECD more, in the long run. OECD’s benefit arises from the gradual assimilation of parents coming from minority groups into the mainstream society, the social and financial settlement of their families and the coverage of their children’s education from the early stages. Thus, having covered their family’s basic needs, parents are expected to contribute their best to the workforce and economic success.

In this light, neo-liberal forces seem to open up avenues for parents to work to support the economy. At the same time, the same forces support and promote extended education for young children. This could work in favour of neo-liberal desires by having parents relinquish control of their children to those policies that have so much power that they could take control of the children from the cradle on.

Furthermore, it is stated clearly that “one common view is that children are in need to be readied to learn or readied for school so that they can eventually take their places as workers in a global economy” (OECD, 2001, 41). In addition, within an integrated curriculum, the focus is the “whole child,” the development of communication skills and several other areas of learning such as numeracy and literacy (OECD, 2001, 42). Again, a well-educated society is better for the economy. Furthermore, there is a tendency to approach early childhood education as the preparation of young students to be able to “acquire the abilities that they will need to participate in school, work and society-at-large” (OECD, 2001, 43). In other words, early childhood education should provide children with “a firm foundation so that
they are well-equipped to fully develop their potential and play a full and active part in the community and the economy” (OECD, 2001, 43). Once more, it is emphasized that students’ active participation as future citizens should be tied to both economic growth and social prosperity.

Strategies of inclusion are adopted and suggested by most of the OECD (2001) countries for students in early childhood education coming from diverse ethnic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, as well as for those who have physical or mental disabilities. One of the strategies followed is the mainstreaming of education. Most of the OECD countries support early childhood education by “increasing the educational opportunities of those at risk of social exclusion, especially children in poverty or from immigrant backgrounds” (OECD, 2001, 60). However, there are barriers remaining for social inclusion, but several approaches are proposed such as “multi-cultural and anti-bias approaches to curriculum” (60). Nonetheless, the OECD (2001) points out that maintaining an inclusive educational system rather than two separate systems – a mainstream and a special system – costs less. This uncovers the motives behind the Organization’s interest for “genuine” social inclusion.

According to the OECD (2001), quality in early childhood education is an important factor and it is governments’ responsibility to define and ensure it, while quality assessment and evaluation belong to local stakeholders. Governments improve the quality of early childhood education by using the following instruments:

They legislate and make regulations; they provide adequate funding and management; they fund selectively to reinforce particular elements of early childhood management or programming that need particular attention at a given moment; they train and set the working conditions for the early childhood profession; they ensure that adequate monitoring, research, data collection, and evaluation mechanisms are in place (OECD, 2001, 74).
Interestingly, governments, in cooperation with local stakeholders such as local governments and organizations, “guide the system” (OECD, 2001, 75) through various tactics such as framework reports and guides, research-based information, construction of “a culture of quality” at all levels of education including kindergarten, codes of ethics and, in some countries, causes establishment of “a system of democratic checks and balances, in which genuine decision-making, access to information and some powers of supervision are given to parents” (OECD, 2001, 75). It is indeed very complicated and difficult to question a system that is so well organized in terms of the cooperation of all parties involved under the catchy and often grandiose terms of research, culture of quality, codes of ethics, genuine decision-making and parents’ involvement. And again, it is strange how an organization for economic development talks about democratic balances and ethics, when its first priority is oriented by its title.

Furthermore, the OECD (2001) indicates that there is a tendency toward closer cooperation between early childhood education services and compulsory education. But, the OECD (2001) underlines the need for “consistent and comprehensive data collection on expenditure at both national and international levels” (87) while at the same time raising the need for “financing strategies to expand supply and raise quality” (93). This reminds me of the neo-liberal quote of “doing more with less,” implying that people are wasteful and lazy. On top of this, it promotes key aspects of pedagogical guidelines and general goals for children, aiming at raising quality in education. In this light, national curricula have been developed by many member countries of the OECD orienting the general goals and specific aims for children (OECD, 2001).
The internationalization and globalization in early childhood education is evident in OECD (2001) reports in that all the member countries under review have adopted general goals for children in this age range. In particular, there is a reference in EUROSTAT, the Statistical Office of the European Union, that similar goals in all European countries are “development, autonomy, responsibility, well-being, self-confidence, citizenship, preparation for school life and future education” (113). Furthermore, there are similar aims in the specific developmental domains of “physical development; socio-emotional development; the development of cognitive skills; the development of aesthetics and creativity; a positive relationship toward the environment” (113), as well as similar subjects and learning areas for students. In addition, close cooperation between school and parents is promoted.

However, there are differences among OECD countries in educational approaches, since they should take into consideration children’s different rhythms, individual needs and adaptation before giving emphasis to one or another approach (OECD, 2001). Apart from similarities and differences in early childhood education structures among OECD member countries, the Organization also emphasizes that the success of early childhood education policy consists of eight key points. These are:

- a systemic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation…,
- a strong and equal partnership with the education system…,
- a universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support…,
- substantial public investment in services and infrastructure…,
- a participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance…,
- appropriate training and working conditions for staff in all forms of provision…,
- systematic attention to monitoring and data collection…,
- a stable framework and long-term agenda for research and evaluation (OECD, 2001, 126).

According to the first key point, OECD member countries developed early childhood education policies that focus on “children as a social group with rights, and not just as dependents on parents or as primarily in need of childcare to enable their
parents’ employment” (127). This statement shows in an explicit way how policy around early childhood education is both blurred and nicely wrapped. On the one hand, it is about advanced economy, staff employment, expenditure and funding education and government involvement and, on the other, is about raising the quality of education, life-long learning, an inclusive approach to diversity, coherence and continuity in education, cooperation with parents and other organizations for a better early childhood education. Furthermore, children at this age are supposed to be seen as future citizens with rights, according to the previous statement. However, economic prosperity, both in the short and long term, is the key issue in national, international and global societies. Not all aspects of early childhood education are priorities but, instead, are woven through the economy while the economy penetrates and supports all these aspects at the same time, including citizenship education.

Since notions of the economy are woven through key points of early childhood education, the democratic characteristic in citizenship education becomes blurred, as well. Inevitably, as the OECD (2001) shows, early childhood education is part of a broader educational system reinforcing the continuity, life-long learning and quality in all levels of education. Ultimately, the goal is economic success in society. This influences curriculum development in kindergarten, not only at the national level but also at the international and global levels. Therefore, the notion of democratic citizenship education in national curricula goes beyond the narrow limits of a country and extends internationally and globally, motivated by economic interests while aiming to ensure those interests at the same time. Perhaps, this blurriness nicely serves this purpose. And, organizations such as the OECD (2001, 2006) protect, ensure and strengthen this blurriness, since it serves their interests in numerous ways, such as by supporting member countries’ meetings, exchanging ideas and practices,
conducted research and releasing reviews naturalizing the new knowledge, practices and approaches. Interestingly enough, their research “evidence” often lacks references to basic research and methodology elements such as the population, the researcher, the methods used and references, thus making the research itself somewhat questionable.

The *Starting Strong I* (OECD, 2001) report on twelve member countries reviewed was followed by the *Starting Strong II* (OECD, 2006) report. The new countries’ reviews revealed ten policy areas that governments and stakeholders should take under consideration:

To attend to the social context of early childhood development. To place well-being, early development and learning at the core of ECEC work, while respecting the child’s agency and natural learning strategies. To create the governance structures necessary for system accountability and quality assurance. To develop with the stakeholders broad guidelines and curricular standards for all ECEC services. To base public funding estimates for ECEC on achieving quality pedagogical goals. To reduce child poverty and exclusion through upstream fiscal, social and labour policies, and to increase resources within universal programmes for children with diverse learning rights. To encourage family and community involvement in early childhood services. To improve the working conditions and professional education of ECEC staff. To provide freedom, funding and support to early childhood services. To aspire to ECEC systems that support broad learning, participation and democracy (OECD, 2006, 4).

In this report, policy development on early childhood education is reinforced by the OECD’s suggestions of consensus-building after sharing ideas and collaborative experiences ruled by governments’ positions and children’s rights. The blurry policy structure at this stage is indicated by the OECD’s statement that:

> official policy in the early childhood field can meet resistance or be ignored unless it is based on prior consultations with the major stakeholders, and provides a space for local initiative and experimentation. (OECD, 2006, 221)

This is interesting in that it encourages parents and other stakeholders to uphold the OECD’s policies while it pretends to provide leeway for local ideas. Given
the blurriness of the policies, this is unlikely to happen. But, again, monitoring and assessment are conducted by stakeholders who have easy access to those initiatives and experimentation outcomes, which place accountability at risk.

The OECD (2005) also suggests key competences for a well-functioning modern society and individual success. A competency is defined here as “an ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context” (4). Key competences are interrelated with demands that current societies have of their citizens. Success in society is defined in terms of economy, democracy, social cohesion, equity, human rights and environmental sustainability (OECD, 2005). Again, another report from the organization relates economic interests to notions of democracy, social cohesion, equity and human rights. In other words, all these things relating to social justice are subsumed by economic concerns. This is very telling about the direction citizenship and democracy is taking in these two societies, Ontario and Hellas.

Further, OECD Education Ministers stress that “sustainable development and social cohesion depend critically on the competencies of all of our population – with competencies understood to cover knowledge, skills, attitudes and values” (OECD, 2005, 4). In order to achieve social cohesion in a pluralistic society, there is an increasing need to communicate and cooperate with people coming from diverse backgrounds. In this way, social bonds can become stronger, as can social capital. The competencies required relating to this direction are to “relate well to others, cooperate, work in teams, manage and resolve conflicts” (12). These competencies, as well as the terms “social competencies” and “social skills,” are often repeated in the kindergarten curricula under study. Surprisingly, these terms are also referred to in this report and are subsumed under economic concerns. Therefore, these
competencies tie abstract concepts of social justice and democracy to an overarching concern relating to economic matters.

Furthermore, basic elements of other competencies are introduced into the Ontario and Hellas curricula for kindergarten, such as the competencies to “act within the big picture, form and conduct life plans and personal projects and defend and assert rights, interests, limits and needs” (OECD, 2005, 14). All these competencies belong to a bigger competency category which is entitled “acting autonomously” (14). The term “big picture” means that one should recognize how decisions and actions will fit into the wider context of society. The OECD promotes the defence and assertion of individuals’ rights and needs through active participation in democratic institutions as well as political processes. However, this promotion cannot be detached from economic success, since future citizens prepared to become competent and skilled individuals are, at the same time, able to contribute to society’s economic growth. Therefore, society’s fruitfulness in autonomous terms equals society’s economic success.

Social skills acquisition in kindergarten curricula and the OECD’s reports on early childhood education show the importance of preparing future citizens for pluralistic societies that are constantly changing as populations move from one country to the other, as the demands increase and as technology develops. Stakeholders make sure that economic success is ensured without causing any trouble to a society’s apparent surface calmness. Instead, commonly accepted and preferred terms are repeated in different curricula, reports or guides in order to convince people that all these necessary changes are for their benefit. In this view, democratic citizenship education in kindergarten curricula is controversial, to say the least.
It is interesting that the OECD (2007) has published a *Glossary of Statistical Terms* which provides definitions of terms that are used in almost all statistical domains. This Glossary was developed as part of a collaborative work effort of international organizations, on the one hand, such as the OECD, the IMF and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), and national statistical agencies on the other. The scope of their work is to outline, develop and establish a statistical guideline which is helpful for the practice and use of common statistical terminology by these national organizations when conducting international comparisons. The guideline is revised and updated whenever new statistical domains are of interest or when the old ones need revision. This shows the effort that the OECD makes in order to correlate its findings with research and keep them up-to-date. Therefore, not only are more stakeholders called upon to contribute to this effort, the definition of the terms themselves may not be a neutral enterprise.

The *Glossary of Statistical Terms* (OECD, 2007) provides definitions of such key concepts as education and citizenship, when referring to the source of the statistical guideline from which they were extracted. Definitions were taken from guides produced by international organizations and statistical agencies whose main domain of involvement was economic rather than educational. Further, these definitions represent a reproduction of original definitions extracted from these statistical guidelines and later transferred to a glossary produced by another international organization. In this sense, the particular definitions of the terms given are further reinforced, updated and standardized. First, education is defined:

… as organised and sustained communication designed to bring about learning. *Context:* Communication in this context requires a relation between two or more persons involving the transfer of information (messages, ideas, knowledge, strategies, etc.). Organised means planned in a pattern or sequence with established aims or curricula and which involves an educational agency that
organises the learning situation and/or teachers who are employed (including unpaid volunteers) to consciously organise the communication. Sustained means that the learning experience has the elements of duration and continuity. Learning is taken as any change in behaviour, information, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, skills, or capabilities which can be retained and cannot be ascribed to physical growth or to the development of inherited behaviour patterns.


In the definition, there is a reference to teachers who are represented as “employed” or “unpaid volunteers.” In this sense, teachers are considered more as workers who get paid rather than as professionals who are educated and trained to educate students. As such, even terms that have a common meaning to the general public, such as “education” can be conscripted to promote a specific agenda.

Thus, citizenship is defined as:

… the legal nationality of the persons concerned (i.e. of live births, parents, descendants, brides, grooms, divorcees)


In this definition there is a focus on the legal aspect of citizenship. However, it is no longer about responsibilities to a society but is reduced to a geographical fact relating to place of birth. As such, it is devoid of emotion and values and has been neutralized.

Part of the OECD Secretariat is the Directorate for Education which aims at constructing a “stronger, cleaner and fairer world economy” (OECD, 2010-2011, 1). Clearly, economy is closely related to education since the OECD Secretariat created a Directorate for Education, which gives prestige and validity to educational matters. In this light, education is the platform or the base for a “stronger, cleaner and fairer world economy”(1). One must ask what these terms really mean. What does “fairer”
mean? Who gets to say when it is in place? Will everyone benefit? For whom is it “fairer?”

The entire work of the Directorate for Education is based on the analysis of international and domestic comparative research data on education policy construction aimed at establishing competent educational programs and “best” results. Furthermore, they encourage several partners, such as political parties, society and business, to explore and exchange ideas and practices in order to “improve” the learning procedures and expected outcomes. The OECD conducts research and collects data for various sectors of activity such as trade, agriculture, technology, economic development and education. Nevertheless, based on the OECD’s policy-making experience and indicators, the Directorate orients and focuses future research in educational issues that emerge in order to form educational policy (OECD, 2010-2011). The question is, for whose benefit is this done?

The creation of the Directorate for Education clearly points to the interests of the OECD in education and policy-making. By using the OECD’s experience in policy construction, involvement of additional parties to join in revealing new ideas and practices relating to education and by using indicators from international research to support policy of effective educational systems and successful outcomes, this supports and enhances the Directorate’s work. Ultimately, political (governments) and economic (business) policies, woven through education implicitly, interfere with educational policy and expected educational outcomes, to the benefit of government and business. The work is elegantly enhanced by comparative and selective research data that are invoked to support it further. This work ultimately promotes economic cooperation and development, the OECD’s objective at the expense of truly democratic education.
To meet this objective, the Directorate for Education is committed to supporting and promoting, among OECD member countries, the adoption of an integrated model of education which will enable countries to “improve the quality, equity, efficiency and effectiveness of their education systems” and “foster economic and social development, innovation and sustainable growth and social mobility” (OECD, 2010-2011, 1). Again, the implicit impact of governments, business and social parties’ feedback on educational policy “helps” to improve growth and development. The Directorate for Education encourages member countries to follow an integrated educational policy that will enable them to promote “equity” and “efficiency” in education. This implies that one policy structure will fit all educational systems among OECD countries and will, in this way, yield the best outcomes for successful economic development. This scheme seems a lot like the standardization movement in the United States and United Kingdom. Again, various questions are raised about the reason behind these plans and who benefits most from this, those who are being standardized or those who are doing the standardizing? This is an important consideration because, if it is for the good of society, citizens are viewed as sheep needing to be led, thereby contradicting earlier notions about autonomy. Clearly and logically, the OECD stands to benefit the most by improving the “bottom line” in terms of profit margins for corporations and governments. It is another slick manoeuvre to exploit societies through social engineering.

The Directorate for Education puts education at the forefront of economic development by stating clearly “in today’s globalized economy, education is a driving force for growth and development” (OECD, 2010-2011, 2). These two concepts are interrelated and interconnected. Except for the focus on teacher training, efficient teaching and learning methods that will lead to students’ effective knowledge and
skills acquisition, the OECD focuses on economy, markets, employment, and world trade in countries which are also “committed to democracy” (OECD, 2010-2011, 2). It is evident in this document, as it was in the previous ones, that democracy is linked to economy and education in an effort to become a neutral procedure. Perhaps, the purpose is to promote economic gain through education aimed at creating compliant citizens.

In addition, it is stated that “knowledge increases both wealth and well-being” (OECD, 2010-2011, 3) and it is embraced by relating, expanding and connecting the improvement of education systems from early childhood to life-long learning. Further to this, in the OECD’s report (2010-2011), the acquisition of knowledge, skills and tools is necessary in order to promote competitiveness, effectiveness and fairness. Again, there are deliberate associations of things not normally associated with one another. “Fairness” refers to equitability, but competition implies winners and losers. The term “effective” seems to allow for the weeding out of the less fit and it is those who will forfeit their valuables to the winners in what would be called a “fair” game. In short, this is an exercise in “economic Darwinism” – the survival of the fittest and it is not fair or equitable in any sense:

Education is a critical part of any response... Yet education systems need to do a much better job in providing equitable educational opportunities - starting in early childhood, and continuing throughout life. They need to equip people with knowledge, skills and tools to stay competitive and engaged. Education is an investment in the future. Our work on education aims to make that investment strong, effective and fair (OECD, 2010-2011, 3).

According to the OECD (2010-2011), ultimately, the relating of education to economy and “sustainable economic recovery” in particular, is inevitable. The message the Directorate of Education passed to all members concerned is that education constitutes a major part of the economy and maintains the balance between
labour markets, the economy and a variety of social consequences. This is true in a neutral sense. However, the OECD twists this to their purposes. In this sense, improving education in the way that the OECD wants it to be accomplished has substantial implications for economic prosperity, which sustains labour markets and social parameters for the furthering of prosperity and aforementioned labour markets. The message becomes more concrete and is strengthened by using words taken from the economic sector, such as “education” and “economic recovery,” “labour market” and “social consequences.”

Without continuing commitment to education, sustainable economic recovery will elude us. As far-reaching as the labour market impacts of the crisis are, the potential social consequences may last even longer (OECD, 2010-2011, 3).

This is a veiled threat, suggesting that, unless people are willing to be educated in the ways in which the OECD dictates, the economy will fail and society will be in chaos. Clearly, it is positioning the OECD to gain power over the society by tying educational matters to their own agenda.

There is an entire chapter dedicated to “early childhood education and care” in this work (OECD, 2010-2011, 5). The subtitle “Laying Strong Foundations for Lifelong Social, Economic and Educational Development” (5) recognizes that, at this stage, the groundwork has already been established for the structuring of individual development. The words “lifelong,” “social” and “economic” are linked once again with “educational development.” The neo-liberal notions of “lifelong” and “economic” are mixed and matched with “social” and “educational development.” In this sense, learning skills and new knowledge acquisition in a life-time expansion is fundamental for “economic”, “social” and “educational development.” In this case, it is not only the words used but also the word sequence or order that becomes important (“lifelong” - “social” – “economic” – “educational development”).
market economic terms lie between and are embraced by the “social” and “educational” terms. This is deliberate as a negative term bounded by positive terms seems less negative and appears to be more acceptable – a “necessary evil.” The Directorate also talks about “quality,” “well-being,” “learning” and “policies” in early childhood education:

Early Childhood Education and Care Laying strong foundations for lifelong social, economic and educational development
How do we define quality in early childhood education?
What factors enhance children’s well-being and learning?
What policies make a difference in how well children do? (OECD, 2010-2011, 5).

Again, word order is important. “Policies” is constructed as a way to put the plan into effect. The cooperation and exchange of experiences among professionals around the world is also reinforced and encouraged in early childhood education by the Starting Strong Network (OECD, 2010-2011). The Starting Strong Network was developed to promote this kind of cooperation and work, and to lead to effective programs in early childhood education.

The Starting Strong Network helps countries to develop effective and efficient approaches and good practice in the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC). It does so through its clearing house of new policy research, data and methodology development, workshops and by fostering contacts among professionals world-wide (OECD, 2010-2011, 5).

Here, quality in early childhood education and care is closely related to efficient policy development. However, is it policy development that brings quality to early childhood education? Aside from the development of quality in early childhood education, the OECD’s research focuses on the quality of the labour force, on the working parents’ needs and, most importantly, incorporating early learning within social policies (OECD, 2010-2011):

How can countries improve quality in early childhood education and care? Policy work on Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood
Education and Care will investigate what defines quality, which policies can promote and enhance quality, and how such policies can be effectively put in place. This project focuses in particular on the challenge of moving from policy analysis to successful implementation…. Our work also focuses on raising the quality of the workforce in early childhood education and care as well as integrating early learning with broader social policies and the needs of working parents (5).

The importance of early childhood education on “lifelong social, economic and educational development” (OECD, 2010-2011, 5) is also stressed by the emphasis on “equitable access,” “quality early childhood education” and “families.”

Equitable access to quality early childhood education and care can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children and support the broad educational and social needs of families (5).

These points are raised and repeated in past OECD reports (OECD, 2001, 2006). In this sense, every child of this age will receive a quality education and will be covering family needs. But, at this point, the argument is reinforced by a quantitative finding that, overall, over two-thirds of children 3 and 4 years old attend school among the OECD member countries (OECD 2010-2011, 5). This statement does not justify OECD’s recommendation. It is an unlikely scenario that all parents’ needs will be satisfied if they just sent their children to school.

The Directorate for Education refers to citizenship education as well. Citizenship education is linked to virtues and behaviour.

Education empowers individuals by increasing their knowledge and their cognitive, social and emotional skills, as well as improving habits, values and attitudes towards healthy lifestyles and active citizenship. (OECD, 2010-2011, 21)

Most of the above mentioned virtues and behaviour are also referred to in past OECD reports (OECD, 2001, 2006) about early childhood education. The validity of the OECD’s suggestions in citizenship education, among other mentioned virtues, is reinforced by the Directorate for Education that is part of the OECD Secretariat and
supports the organization’s commitment to ensure a powerful and “fairer” world economy. The quote itself is a “motherhood” statement in that it is easy for everyone to accept. The problem exists in the definitions given to these words by their users and the vagueness of what “fairer” means.

The authority of the OECD’s policy suggestions is further reinforced by the establishment of a Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). CERI (OECD, 2010-2011) not only conducts comparative research into every aspect of education and covers the entire age range, but also explores new areas and stimulates innovation in education. Their outcomes and results interfere with and impact policymakers in education, including early childhood education, part of the age range they are interested in exploring at this particular educational stage:

CERI has established an international reputation for pioneering educational research, opening up new fields for exploration and combining rigorous analysis with conceptual innovation. CERI’s extensive research work covers learning at every age, from birth to old age. It goes beyond the formal education system... Drawing on extensive expertise and methodologies from across the OECD area, CERI’s work is designed to interest all stakeholders, and specifically policymakers, research communities and educational leaders (OECD, 2010-2011, 21).

However, we only see this research in its final form, devoid of references, research question and methodologies. Therefore, the research’s credibility is highly questionable. Furthermore, it is questionable as to whether this research is data-driven policy-making or “policy-driven data-making.” In other words, it is doubtful whether the OECD’s research is sincere or it is merely a way to promote a pre-existing agenda. Furthermore, while there are references and repetitions in several reports about quality in early childhood education and its associated characteristics, there is a general lack of quality and apparent rigour in this research.
The OECD collects information about the quality of education provided by several countries and reflects these countries’ effectiveness in fostering, supporting and reinforcing social equity. But collecting information is merely collecting data rather than conducting credible research without a clear picture of who conducts the research, what the research questions are, the population and the methodology followed. Furthermore, the Organization looks at the quality of education in a school setting or system that supports learning outcomes, based on students’ attitudes and knowledge. These parameters are assessed through a tri-annual Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which is implemented and carried out across different countries (OECD, 2010-2011).

OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses the extent to which students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies. PISA has become the ‘gold standard’ for measuring the performance of education systems. It provides a framework through which countries and economies regularly evaluate the quality of their educational outcomes, equity in the distribution of their learning opportunities and value for money in their educational services (OECD, 2010-2011, 23).

PISA surveys are administered every three years in the OECD member countries and a group of partner countries and economies, which together make up close to 90% of the world economy. Key features of PISA include its:

• Policy orientation, which connects data on student learning outcomes with data on students’ characteristics and on key factors shaping their learning in and out of school.
• Innovative concept of “literacy”, which includes the capacity of students to apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas and to analyze, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, interpret and solve problems in a variety of situations.
• Relevance to lifelong learning, which does not limit PISA to assessing students’ competencies in school subjects, but also asks them to report on their own motivation to learn, their beliefs about themselves and their learning strategies.
• Regularity, which enables countries to monitor their progress in meeting key learning objectives (OECD, 2010-2011, 23).
This program (PISA) is an example of the usage of neo-liberal codes such as life-long learning, policy, competency, world economy and innovation in education to steer educational purposes toward world economy, prosperity and success. There is even a point made about “value for money” which, while important, should not be a deciding factor if education is to be viewed as a service rather than as a commodity.

By implementing PISA and by conducting surveys across countries, such as the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), the Organization aims at putting into the spotlight the educational systems and the components that meet or exceed the expectations for improvement (OECD, 2010-2011). The success of those systems or their particular and partial components emerges from students’ achievements in school settings. Ultimately, OECD constructs educational policy that will develop students’ skills by inspiring learning environments. However, this does not mean to suggest that there is not an economically motivated agenda.

Citizenship education is a basic component of quality education that the OECD promotes in many of its reports (OECD, 2001, 2006). In a working lunch, during a meeting of the OECD Education Ministers (Van Der Hoeven, 2004), the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of The Netherlands, which is a full member state of the EU, separated the concept of citizenship in the past from the concept in use today. Everyone could understand the meaning of citizenship back then within the European concept, when there was the ruling class and the people, the citizens.

Until recently, ‘citizenship’ was a concept understood by everyone in society. The word ‘citizen’ called up associations with the eighteenth century, when Europe was made up of the aristocracy and common citizens, or commoners. Citizenship was a concept of the past (2).

Citizenship has acquired new meaning in the present. According to the Minister’s opinion, citizenship is not understood by all as it was in the past. Instead,
citizenship is considered as a major problem in the light of immigration and "the lack of citizenship" or "lack of civic responsibility" (Van Der Hoeven, 2004, 2). Certainly, there is an effort to redefine the concept in economic terms. In addition, the redefinition gains more value, since it is coming from an official’s estimations. Nonetheless, she indicates, further, that politicians consider this a very serious social problem which they have to confront since immigration and globalization challenge the concept of citizenship in terms of identity formation and social values. In this view, she recommends that "immigrants have to be naturalised or made ‘true citizens’ of a country". Otherwise, "societies will slowly disintegrate" (Van Der Hoeven, 2004, 2). This is another veiled threat that serves to "include" minorities so they can contribute to the economy. If they are not assimilated, which is a negative term, they will be marginalized, unable to help. Thus, these positive arguments support neoliberal motives. Further, she recognizes education as the channel to prepare children to be good citizens, particularly in economic terms.

Citizenship, as a concept, should be revisited and redefined. In addition, the role of education in citizenship formation should be re-examined (Van Der Hoeven, 2004). The Minister tries to go deeper into the citizenship concept by separating the classic form from the current one. According to the classic form, “citizenship primarily focuses on the relationship between the state and its citizens” (Van Der Hoeven, 2004, 3). However, in the present, the concept takes on a wider meaning. Nowadays, “citizenship is about the participation of people in public life. It is about sharing the rights and obligations that ensue from this participation. And it is about the personal skills that are necessary for this participation in public life” (Van Der Hoeven, 2004, 3).
The Minister of The Netherlands explains further that citizenship goes beyond the limited borders of a tight relationship between citizens and government involvement. It also implies the relationship between citizens as it is expressed publicly within social institutions, such as schools, universities and associations (Van Der Hoeven, 2004, 3). In this view, by broadening the concept of citizenship beyond the tight relation between citizen and state to the relations among individual citizens without the explicit involvement of government, she leaves space, allowing external factors such as markets to interfere within educational domains. In this point, she refers only to vocational education and not to other levels; however she clearly leaves space for further involvement in educational settings, regardless of level.

Government’s role is essential, since social participation cannot be fulfilled in the narrow confines of a family context. Parents cannot always find the right answers, set the best examples and choose the right practices to promote social justice. This is more obvious in families of immigrants. Therefore, social participation is reinforced by citizenship education in schools, which has to be emphasized (Van Der Hoeven, 2004). But, democratic citizenship education in schools is challenged, since there is an explicit effort to redefine citizenship in economic terms. The challenge grows bigger and more complicated when it comes to practicing democratic citizenship education in classrooms where student populations are becoming increasingly diverse.

The Minister concludes that, in current years, “a democratically oriented sense of citizenship” is meaningful when law-abiding citizens are also involved in social issues (Van Der Hoeven, 2004). In other words, she argues that, by taking action collectively in order to solve problems within the small social groups to which they belong, such as in work or in their neighborhood, social cohesion is ensured.
Apparently, social cohesion is the ultimate goal of society under the current circumstances of diversity and multiculturalism. Through this prism, the concept of citizenship is changing. It takes on a new form, a new meaning. It is not only the tight relation between the citizen and the state but it goes further to the social interactions and relationships between individuals. Thus, by starting this approach as early as kindergarten, citizens are raised and nurtured within the modern concept of democratic citizenship in their school years. Gradually, from school citizens they become citizens within their community, their work, country and the world. It sounds like social engineering by reframing people’s concepts and maintaining those through an institution such as schooling in order to eradicate previous notions. Thus, the existing notion becomes the socially acceptable one.

Leseman (2002) argues that it is important to provide early childhood education and to prepare children coming from lower socio-economic families and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds for mainstreaming primary education. Furthermore, the system services need to be updated and improved because of the growing demands relating to women in the work force. Additionally, with the proper interventions, possible social problems that children may have can be detected, addressed and prevented early within Early Childhood Education. The OECD reports (2001, 2006) concerning early childhood education indicate and support those elements.

Leseman (2002) underlines as well the importance of early childhood in a person’s life and also that people acknowledge this. He clearly states that “early childhood is a particularly sensitive period, marked by a high degree both of adaptability and vulnerability in the developing child to the stimulation and stresses of his or her environment” (4). He advocates that this capability of children is the
springboard “for preventive interventions as part of a broader social inclusion policy” (4). In addition, children who attend education-focused preschool programmes have better performance in cognitive and linguistic skills, and children coming from language and cultural diverse backgrounds especially have an advantage when they enter primary education (formal instruction). However, the research on this is weak. Many researchers feel that there is an appropriate “window of opportunity” for learning and we are currently forcing children to learn before they are ready. The result is increased stress and poorer performance in later years, particularly as education becomes not only extended at both ends, but also becomes more stressful due to the “high stakes” introduced by government policies. The purpose of sending children to school early is to provide cheap child care so their parents can contribute to making the economy more robust by including both parents in the work force.

With regards to citizenship, education nurtures future active citizens and provides knowledge, encourages positive social conduct in terms of “values and attitudes towards healthy lifestyles and active citizenship” (OECD, 2010, 12). Active citizenship is highlighted by being connected to “healthy lifestyles.” At the same time, it is recognized that education is the foundation for constructing active citizenship that promotes well-being and social prosperity.

The ways that education nurtures future active citizens are multiple. Education provides information, develops cognitive and social skills, promotes understanding about the benefits that immigrants bring to society, cultivates and strengthens active participatory behaviour and raises interest for political concerns and civic issues (OECD, 2010, 12). This effort is fruitful when every aspect of the school is positive in encouraging active student participation in public discussions for school and social issues. Unfortunately, it is only fine as long as no one dissents. When the voice from
the margins presents a dissenting view, this becomes a problem that is resolved by excluding the individual through incarceration, trying to convince him that (s)he simply has misunderstood by removing privileges or by discrediting the person. Again, it is not a neutral proposition and is aimed at trying to make everyone conform, supposedly for the benefit of society, but in reality for the benefit of the economy, which could be argued is ultimately for the benefit of society, although it tends to make some of us rich along the way while marginalising others. In essence, while it appears to be equitable, it is not. This means that, the whole school climate promotes the adoption of active participation in the public sphere. This “active participation” is not undirected, however.

However, in the same report (OECD, 2010), it is indicated that every school’s effort to engage students in active citizenship will fail unless there are coordinated efforts coming from the family, friends and local communities. This reminds me of “hazing,” an odious practice conferred upon “newbies” by forcing them to conform through humiliating them. In this case, the rest of the society is conscripted into the plot to keep dissenters fearful of speaking out. In this way, there will be continuity in the development of an active participation attitude in civic issues in every student’s school, family and community life. This is a common stance of all OECD reports under study. Furthermore, the earlier the child starts to develop these cognitive, emotional and social skills within the family or early childhood education, the better to enhance and develop personality features and positive attitudes toward social cohesion (OECD, 2010). Therefore, it is clearly stated that “for equity purposes, education policy should help address the skills deficits of children who have missed the opportunity to develop basic competencies early in life” (OECD, 2010, 13).

George Orwell (1949) wrote a book entitled *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which
government, in the form of “Big Brother,” monitors all behaviour and metes out “justice,” rewrites unflattering history and enslaves people through their own need to belong to a social order. In addition, student ethos is being developed gradually within the school, family, community and societal environment. Student involvement in civic activities in various societal settings cultivates and sharpens their civic conduct and develops their values. As a result, students develop citizenship skills and attitudes as part of a healthy lifestyle (OECD, 2010, 12). Personally, I believe that this is not a good thing. After all, the OECD has an agenda. While I think the concept is good, the intent is still to influence society through social engineering.

The OECD argues further that educational policy-makers should be looking at modest improvements of curriculum, extra-curricular activities and in the learning environment, specifically in “school norms and ethos” (OECD, 2010, 13); that all this could enhance citizenship skills and lead towards social cohesion. This is all about standardization – a neo-liberal agenda. In this way, future citizens can address societal challenges and contribute to society’s benefit, with limited public costs and without major investments or changes because they will all be doing it in the same way. If this is ever successful, societal challenges will no longer exist, except in terms of crises external to the country. ‘Without major investments or changes’ is clearly a benefit to government and the dominant culture rather than to those who require the addressing of social ills. It is clearly stated (OECD, 2010) that “significant investments have already been made to raise competencies that help improve social outcomes, since these are known to affect educational and labour market success” (13). Student ethos is linked to citizenship education which is linked to economic factors. This ends up being a contradiction, since economy does not involve ethos or virtues or morality because the main goal is the benefit not human morality. The agenda behind this
contradiction serves economic interests, which are softened in the conscience of people. Eventually, for economic interest’s sake, issues of morality are sacrificed.

The OECD hastens to point out that all parties involved in the success of the school-based efforts to promote societal development should be aware of their own roles and responsibilities and coordinate with each other. The implication here is that, currently, they are not aware of their roles and responsibilities and that government has the answer to the questions that the people have never asked. This means that schools should synchronise with families and local communities, based on children’s experience. In addition, educational institutions should have continuity in providing services to children throughout their school years’ education. In this view, the OECD stresses that governments should ensure policy coherence by being the link among all stakeholders, namely among ministries, central and regional governments and different educational levels. This is a power grab. If there is not a current process for this, government will ensure there is one, but it will not be a neutral one because government has aligned itself with economic forces that have resulted in the neo-liberal “invasion.” This can be directed by applying management structures and adopting a “holistic” governmental approach to societal development (OECD, 2010).

Since Canada and Hellas are both member states of UNESCO, a reference to UNESCO reports about democratic citizenship education and kindergarten curricula follows.

8.3: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Reports

UNESCO released reports related to citizenship education and democracy, but not as many reports as the OECD has released about these issues. In these reports,
there are similarities with those of the OECD’s in the usage of words, structure and in the points raised. Analytically, UNESCO initiates projects and gathers data on educational practices and innovations around themes of justice and democratic issues such as equality, identity, representation, citizenship and globalization (CMEC & CCU, 2001). To this end, UNESCO has initiated a pilot project with the participation of several schools around the world, aimed at strengthening education’s role in peace building, respect for human rights and democracy. This initiative is called the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) and involves a variety of activities such as twinning between schools that participate in this project and exchanges of human and material resources (CMEC & CCU, 2001). Again, this is a function of standardization, promoted through team-teaching. It is very neo-liberal in origin as it represents a strong move towards standardization processes.

Interestingly, UNESCO (2002) supports “building knowledge societies through quality education… linked with issues of linguistic and cultural diversity particularly in relation to the maintenance of a culture of peace” (9). Furthermore, UNESCO emphasizes sustainable development and future citizens’ preparation through “respect for each other through understanding and the development of universal values such as tolerance, democracy, and non-violence…” (9), within “a globalizing economy and a society increasingly driven by digitalized knowledge” (3). The key words quality in education, sustainable development, diversity, respect and democracy, are repeated in various OECD reports (2001, 2006, 2010) and are linked to citizenship education and woven throughout treatises on the increasingly globalized economy.

The Education Sector of UNESCO has developed and released a policy and practice review tool for the Education for Sustainable Development Lens (ESD)
(UNESCO, 2010), which reflects neo-liberal motives. Its aim is to help member states of UNESCO redefine the existing formal educational programs. Further, it

...reflects a close relationship to sustainable development, prioritizing knowledge, skills, values and action competence for integrating and balancing the “pillars” of Sustainable Development: society, environment and economy, and culture (20).

One of the key dimensions of ESD is the idea of active citizenship and its development (UNESCO, 2010). In order to balance and integrate new tensions between local communities and global components and, ultimately, to make progressive changes regarding sustainable development, ESD works towards “integrating knowledge, skills and values to promote informed citizenship” (23). According to this policy guide, education should be focused on active and informed citizenship, which is the cornerstone of a sustainable and peaceful society. The best way to inculcate citizenship education is to engage students and encourage “action competence” beginning with their own questions and problems and by exposing them to structured learning activities within communities in order to promote peace building, sustainability and further changes in societies. In this way, citizenship education begins working within local communities and gradually embraces global sustainability by raising global concerns and issues that inevitably affect and influence local communities. Action competence is described as:

the capacity to envision alternatives, clarify the values and interests that underlie different visions, and make choices between visions. This includes developing the skills to plan, take action and evaluate actions needed for active and informed citizenship (23).

Nonetheless, curriculum and policy structure is explicitly involved in every dimension relating to Education for Sustainability Development (ESD), including citizenship education. Therefore, the goal is to find balance between the best components of the traditional curriculum and the new important issues that emerge
from new modern challenges in society (UNESCO, 2010). Moreover, ESD is being looked to for primary education, as it is considered to be the base for grounded life-long learning and active citizenship (UNESCO, 2010). I believe that UNESCO also has an agenda. ESD is the key to influence education according to neo-liberal views. Again, while I think the concept is good, the interest and the intent are still to conscript society through social engineering.

In the following subsection, I analyze how democratic citizenship education in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and in the Unified Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten (FEK 304, 2003) resemble or differ from each other within a global context.

### 8.4: Democratic Citizenship Education in Ontario and Hellas within a Global Context

There is literature relating to the OECD that goes beyond the notion of national citizens and talks about global citizens and how they should be educated. Citizenship is looked at through the lens of globalization, especially since, in current years, people are often required to work overseas and around the world. Thus, they have to think and live in an open and global way. The notions of global leadership and multidisciplinary knowledge are tied to a citizen’s success in a global work setting. It is indicated that leadership on a global scale needs both character and skills acquisition. Therefore, it is suggested that character education is essential for competent leadership (Kim, 2007). For the purpose of this thesis, democratic citizenship education and character education are conflated.

In Canada, education is based on a diverse society and is influenced inevitably by the implications of globalization. Therefore:
…many jurisdictions are responding to the changes brought about by globalization by creating high standards of educational excellence and implementing strategies to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability (CMEC, 2000, 8).

In other words, everyone else is getting “in on the act” and people will lose out if they do not. This is another fear tactic, trying to make people comply through competition with other countries or “jurisdictions.”

Furthermore, issues of global education are embodied in all Canadian provinces’ and territories’ citizenship education and social studies curricula at all levels (CMEC & CCU, 2001). CMEC (2000) argues that students will face basically three trends:

…internationalization and globalization, the explosion of knowledge and increased pace of technological development, and the burgeoning complexity of life in organized society. This world will demand from our children an enormous ability to adapt, to communicate, to solve problems and to create, from whence springs the need to update current programs and curricula (23).

What is left unsaid is, “And if they don’t…” It seems to be another fear-mongering tactic. In Ontario, educational reforms are related to programs and subjects change at all educational levels, including kindergarten, in order to “create a new, more rigorous, transparent curriculum aimed at raising standards and facilitating achievement” (CMEC, 2000, 23). CMEC (2000) underlines further the need to change educational systems and programs according to the world’s economic requirements. In this way, new educational programs that correspond to the economic challenges and the competition will assist in developing Canadian students’ skills and qualifications that will make them eligible to compete in international and global market challenges (CMEC, 2000). There is some good in this, but the problem is that people are not being consulted; only led. We may agree that this is needed, but who has the right to make our decisions for us?
The analysis of social practices, basically through OECD and UNESCO reports the ways democratic citizenship education is formed and naturalized in global context answers my third research question of how the two curricula under study resemble or differ from each other in terms of democratic citizenship education within a global context.

In the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), in the *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (2008) and in the new draft entitled *The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011), one can find most of the key words, goals and expectations presented in the OECD (2001, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2010-2011), CMEC (2001), UNESCO (2002, 2010) and the Ministers’ reports under study that embrace and ultimately redefine democratic citizenship education. In this light, curriculum is influenced by international organizations controlled by corporate interests in cooperation with government officials. Democratic citizenship education aims at a sustainable societal context characterized by diversity, respect, tolerance, values, equity, competency, social cohesion, well-being, social prosperity and, above all, economic success. The competencies required are cooperation, good relations with peers and adults, team work and conflict management. Apparently, democratic citizenship education itself is used for economic prosperity in a successful society.

Interestingly, in the meeting of the Canadian, European and Asian Ministers of Education (CMEC, 2001), views and experiences were exchanged on positive social values in schools. In this context, national education views are shared among stakeholders coming from financial levels and governmental sectors. The learning quality and close cooperation between governments and employers regarding the characteristics of initial education and life-long learning, starting from early
childhood, emerge as fundamental points that life-long learning initiatives should focus upon. Again, citizens’ early childhood education and life-long learning are considered to be important factors and concentrate the interest of economic organizations and political parties towards the success of the workplace and the knowledge economy world-wide (CMEC, 2001). Inevitably, there is a transition from the national educational level to global education.

In short, we are commodifying abstract notions in order to subjugate entire societies to be willingly enslaved to market values because we actually believe that government is benevolent and has our own best interests at heart. However, governments around the world are in a fight to the death to preserve what they now call “country.” It is as much about identity as it is about anything else.

Critical Discourse Analysis revealed that both the Ontario and Hellenic curricula texts produced policy processes that are implemented in the early educational stage of kindergarten in order to serve a purpose. Clearly, economic goals are closely tied to citizenship goals right from early childhood education and inevitably influence future social formation.

In the following chapter, conclusions and recommendations regarding democratic citizenship education in kindergarten are provided.
Chapter Nine

9.1: Conclusion

Citizenship education in the Hellenic and in the Ontario curriculum are important foci within education, especially in kindergarten, when students are at the most susceptible age for developing their thinking and advancing their understanding of what it means to become a citizen in a free society. Therefore, in this study, I have explored ways that democratic citizenship education is reflected in kindergarten curricula in the province of Ontario, Canada (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) and Hellas (FEK 304, 2003; FEK 303, 2003) using Critical Discourse Analysis. Additionally, I have analyzed supplementary educational documents published and distributed by supranational (OECD 2010-2011, 2010; UNESCO, 2010; OECD, 2006, 2005; UNESCO, 2002; OECD, 2001) and international organizations (Council of Europe, 2010; European Commission, 2005) and governments (CMEC, 2010, 2001; CMEC & CCU, 2001; Van Der Hoeven, 2004) that influence kindergarten curricula in Ontario and Hellas.

The significance of this study is in that it explores the ways that democratic citizenship education is reflected in the Ontario and Hellenic curricula and it compares similarities and differences between these two within a global context, given that there is an interest of governments and supranational organizations in early learning and democratic citizenship education (Clausen et al., 2008; Chryssochoou, 2006; FEK 304, 2003; Joshee, 2004). In other words, at stake is the kind of future citizen kindergarten curricula seeks to form.

In Canada and Hellas, the policy-makers’ goals are to establish social cohesion and solidarity. In both countries, the concepts of citizen and citizenship education
have similar meanings. In the Ontario and the Hellenic context, citizenship is linked to democracy, rights and responsibilities, freedom and equity. However, in the Ontario context, terms such as solidarity, responsibility, loyalty and cooperation may be metaphors for greater compliance, because it has been indicated that citizens “work hard to maintain and improve…economic…aspects of our society” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 22).

There seems to be a gap between theoretical definitions of democratic citizenship education and related issues, and the reality of practice. This gap is taken advantage of by those supranational organizations that have attempted to and have succeeded in intruding into the curriculum in order to relate democratic citizenship education to productivity and economic success. There is also a link between citizenship education and citizens’ participation in the political and economic life of the country in the Hellenic context (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008), which allows the space for policy invasion with regards to corporate and political interest.

Economic interests have indeed found a way into kindergarten curricula disguised in several different ways. These ways are represented by policies that serve economic gain by using economic terminology within education. Repetition of those terms, their word order, the organization of conferences around education at the Ministerial level of member countries, and research conduct all suggest that there are and continue to be increasing insurgence of corporate-political, or neo-liberal, forces operating within the kindergarten curricula of both of these countries.

The political implications that favour and facilitate neo-liberal influences became clearly visible through Critical Discourse Analysis. As noted in Chapter Two, Joshee (2008) indicates that the major characteristic of neo-liberalism is “a vision of
society as a market place” (36). Mitchell (2003) specifies further that, in education, the neo-liberal agenda promotes:

- global competitiveness, the reduction of the (publicly financed) costs of education, and of social reproduction in general, the necessity for greater market choice and accountability and the imperative to create hierarchically conditioned, globally oriented state subjects – i.e. individuals oriented to excel in ever-transforming situations of global competition, either as workers, managers or entrepreneurs (388).

From the political point of view, because the neo-liberal agenda has very strongly invaded the political scene, it is becoming evident that traditional concepts of democracy are being challenged and redefined. However, and perhaps simply because this situation appears to be hidden from public view, there is a very real need to provide a transparent response. While we can not turn back the tide of encroaching globalization and the insurgence of powerful neo-liberal forces, it can be suggested that teachers and administrators ensure that they learn about this affront to democracy and question policies that lead to a reduced democracy.

Such concepts of democracy, used in this way through the collaboration of government and business, the definition of what it is to be neo-liberal, serve only to conscript citizens to adhere to corporatist ways of thinking and acting. The neo-liberalist agenda is closely related to the OECD’s broader educational agenda which includes democratic citizenship education from kindergarten within the Ontario and Hellenic governments. The goals, which this supranational organization has set regarding the formation of future citizens, confirm Spring’s (2008) position that “global educational agendas…reflect educational discourses about human capital, economic development and multiculturalism” (332).

In addition, such neo-liberal views of democracy promote government self-interest by creating, in conjunction with corporate interests, a more vibrant economy. Furthermore, it is a way to utilize an existing societal structure, education, to develop
the aims of government, which are becoming increasingly neo-liberal in nature. All these manipulations are possible, especially since traditionally held ideas of democracy represent a beloved and very dear concept in people’s minds because they continue to believe that it provides them the opportunity to have a voice in public debate.

**The Ontario Context**

Historically, Canada has endorsed a culturally diverse population since 1867, when this nation-state was established. The country maintained close ties to Great Britain and developed parallel policies to maintain control of education, citizenship and immigration. Essentially, in this context, Canadian policy concerns focused upon citizenship, identity and social justice (Jenson & Saint-Martin, 2003). In Canada generally, people coming from diverse backgrounds seek social justice, equity and elimination of prejudices and biases. In this sense, multicultural education policy promotes inclusion by providing space for students to challenge dissonant differences through notions of democracy and citizenship. The Canadian legislation about democracy and citizens’ rights does not include or relate to education. Instead, there is only one reference to citizens’ rights to vote in the *Constitution Act* (1982).

The basic characteristic of the student population that characterizes schools in the province of Ontario is diversity. Therefore, democratic citizenship education becomes important in the school setting. Through antidiscrimination education in the revised *Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006), students are introduced and encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, fairness and equity toward themselves and others. These values are closely related to democratic citizenship education.
The notion of diversity of students’ experiences in Ontario classrooms validates the notion of citizenship, since they are the future Canadian citizens, regardless of their background. Therefore, an acceptable, fair, responsible and equal behaviour toward themselves and others begins to be forged within the kindergarten classroom. But, again, which behaviours are acceptable, who defines and determines them and what are some of the questions that need to be asked?

Over the last few years, the educational discourse of social cohesion and the policy of character development (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) have gained ground in education in Ontario. Surprisingly enough, character development tends to involve universal attributes, which lead toward common ground and consensus in the school environment. Thus, “these attributes provide a standard behaviour against which we hold ourselves accountable” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 3). In my opinion, however, universal attributes echo global characteristics which are acceptable according to neo-liberal desires.

The concept of a good person is often confused with the concept of a good citizen (Osborne, 2004) and, in Ontario schools, these two concepts seem to be confused, since character education includes citizenship education in relation to social cohesion. Also, in the Ontario school system, character development, part of which is citizenship education, exists in continuity from kindergarten to Grade 12. This continuity in education system is strongly supported by neo-liberal agenda as indicated in Starting Strong I (OECD, 2001) and is congruent with the Ontario Ministry’s intention to promote character development and to highlight commonalities between people coming from diverse backgrounds rather than their differences in order to promote social cohesion.
Neo-liberal influences are evident in terms of democratic citizenship education. Students learn from kindergarten to be both citizens who have empathy, respect for others and are “productive citizens in an interdependent world” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 2). They are also becoming increasingly diverse. Productive citizenry requires students’ understanding of civic engagement and is further related to quality education. Productive citizenry, a financial term, becomes equal, neutral and strong next to the terms of civic engagement and quality education. Thus, new neo-liberal related information is introduced and becomes neutral and strong while, at the same time, the reactions and voices from those who might be wondering who is passing on this new information, for whose benefit and why become muted.

The ultimate goal of character education is for students to find common ground through commonalities in order reach excellence. This idea is reinforced and expanded further by “studies [which] indicate that Ontario shares a belief in the need to develop character and to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive and responsible participants” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, 8). The notion of the responsibility and productivity of students as participants in the future society is related to ideas of employment and consumerism, requiring training and retraining regularly in jobs in order to maintain a “vibrant” economy.

In the latest draft, The Full-Day Early Learning - Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011), there is an explicit reference to the global community which implies a transition from present to future, from local to global. In addition, for the first time, there is an explicit reference to the need for the connectedness between children and curriculum and the importance of children being
active citizens not only locally but also world-wide (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011).

Furthermore, democracy is promoted in kindergarten (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010-2011). Students are encouraged to participate actively in a variety of school activities with their peers and make decisions through democratic procedures that students have learned to follow through group interactions. Interestingly, the new draft of the Ontario kindergarten program promotes and supports the global notion of students’ social knowledge and skills acquisition at such an early stage, as well as decision-making through democratic procedures within group activities.

**The Hellenic Context**

Within the Hellenic Constitution and legislation, notions of power, people, respect and protection are closely related to the notions of nation and state. The notion of citizenship is closely related to individual and social rights, the right to vote, freedom of expression, respect towards the Constitution and the law, and devotion to the Fatherland and to Democracy (Mavrias & Spiliotopoulos, 2008). Contrary to the Canadian legislation, in the Hellenic Constitution there is a reference to the link between democracy and citizenship.

The Hellenic legislation sets education as a priority for the Hellenic State. Furthermore, education focuses on the major and specific aims of morality, intellectuality and professionalism, as well as physical, national and religious development. A responsible citizen is characterized by those elements.

In the Hellenic legislation regarding education, creative and critical thinking, as well as cooperation and collective participation, are promoted in order for students to be prepared to contribute to society’s development and progress. In relation to
democracy, these are the substantive elements that form the Hellenic primary and secondary education.

In my homeland, Hellas, migration has brought significant demographic changes in population over the last three decades. Additionally, the country has been a full member state of the European Union since 1981. The Hellenic government has changed the existing curricula in both primary and secondary education in order to accommodate both the identities of the Hellenes and the European citizen as well as a developing sense of global issues.

The European context is much broader than in the Ontario case. It includes a number of independent countries, which follow European regulations. With regards to citizenship education, the definition within the European context differs from the Canadian one. However, it is only somewhat more transparent and sincere. I believe that the Canadian context promotes specific goals related to the economy, not to citizenship – unless citizenship is tied to economic productivity, which, in the Canadian context, it appears to be.

Within the European context, there is the need to define the concept of the responsible citizenship at the national level. But, it has been addressed that the problem is in the definition of citizenship, which is complicated, since “its meaning and the way it is perceived differ from one country to the next, and some national languages do not even have a directly equivalent term” (European Commission, 2005, 13). The problem with the definition of citizenship is that it differentiates the Canadian concept of citizenship – social cohesion, solidarity and other such terms – from its European counterpart. In the Canadian context, terms such as solidarity, responsibility, loyalty and cooperation may be metaphors for greater compliance and obedience.
However, the current economic crisis and the extreme austerity measures in my country have led young educated people to migrate and seek work in other countries. The Hellenic government had already begun to develop new measures in education, even before the eruption of the economic crisis. In 2003, the HMNERA presented a newly designed curriculum program for compulsory education, which links and incorporates a variety of European and multicultural dimensions relating to citizenship and democracy. Again, in Hellas, as in Ontario, many of these new policy initiatives reproduced, represented and reflected neo-liberal underpinnings.

**My Personal Context**

I came to Toronto, a multicultural and multiethnic city from its very foundations, to see, understand and experience democracy in person, since my birth place, Athens, has acquired similar characteristics over the last three decades (Damanakis, 2005). Furthermore, my main concern, as a kindergarten teacher, was to experience how the Ontario educational system facilitates children in kindergarten coming from diverse backgrounds and how this system nurtures citizenship education democratically in a multicultural context. Therefore, being a student myself, OISE was indeed the ideal place for me to develop my theoretical understanding of the pedagogy of diversity, democracy and citizenship in the classroom.

During the courses that I took for the Doctorate Program, while I was part of a diverse classroom in which we were discussing and analyzing current and classical concepts with regards to education, my thoughts were constantly expanding. Within a group or individually, I was often required to challenge concepts of democratic approaches, critical thinking, freedom of speech, inclusion, respect, diversity, social solidarity, policy, neo-liberal tactics, globalization, human rights, multiculturalism, ethos, morality and a multitude of other concepts. At the same time, I was listening to
other students’ points of view on those concepts; students who were struggling to find answers and common ground regardless of whether they were international students, like me, or Canadian citizens.

Soon enough, I came to realize the theme of my thesis. What I did not realize, until the writing of my last chapter, is that democratic citizenship education is taught by a teacher who has first to be taught in person. In other words, I grew and learned as a teacher to challenge several components of democratic citizenship education in a diverse contemporary classroom. Especially, for a kindergarten teacher who teaches young children who are beginning to develop concepts of democratic thinking and behaviour in a constantly changing world, I realized that teaching young children issues of diversity, respect, democracy, morality, ethos, rights and responsibilities and active participation in public issues did not include conventional proper or improper behaviour, but rather behaviour which is shaped by values that these children are invited to learn. In other words, students’ behaviour would be defined in so far as it would not infringe the rights of their peers. Furthermore, I believed that students would learn to engage and challenge issues of injustice, unfairness and discrimination.

I had not considered the issue of students’ participation in the social, economic and political life of the country as such, until I used Critical Discourse Analysis in the curricula. There is indeed a gap between the definition and practice of democratic citizenship education which leaves enough space for neo-liberal agendas to take over. I agree that students should be able to have those skills required for contributing to economic, social and political life, but I totally disagree that economic interests should dominate, determine and become ends in themselves within educational policy and curricula, thus eliminating issues of morality and integrity in its essence.
The notion of a constantly changing world became a reality for me. When I left my country six years ago, nothing suggested that Hellas would experience and face such an economic recession and relentless denigration by the media. Therefore, while I was writing the chapters of my thesis, democratic citizenship education set itself at the forefront of the current events. I am a Hellene citizen who came to Canada to study and work, to learn from a different and similar educational and social system and to return to my country, Hellas, to pass along the knowledge and experience I have gained. However, things changed. Hellas, the country which had been transformed from a migrant sender country into a host country (Damanakis, 2005), over the last three decades, once again has become a migrant sender country.

My thesis happened to be written in a very difficult period for Hellas. Ironically, this country is considered to be the cradle of democracy and the experimental case for neo-liberal forces, at one and the same time. And this is so because, although the Hellenic economy, as the economy of each European country, is monitored by the competent bodies of the EU, there was incompetence in diagnosing the economic problem before taking drastic measures. Instead, the IMF came to the rescue of the current economic crisis, invited by the European Central Bank and the European Commission. All of them reached a joint agreement in 2010 of a $147 billion bailout over the next three years for the Hellenic government (Barkin & Taylor, 2010). The problem becomes more complicated, if we take into consideration several other issues, such as improper political manipulations and manoeuvres, statistical errors created on purpose or by accident, the role of the media in the representation of a false, fragmented or true reality and the riots that erupted in response to unbearable economic measures and drastic cuts to social benefits. But, this is neither the purpose of my thesis, nor the place for debate.
What bothers me most is that what I learned in the courses related to democracy, policy web, critical thinking and education at OISE, became a reality in my country, not somewhere else, in another universe. This means that neo-liberal forces, in this case, the IMF, the European Central Bank and the European Commission imposed drastic economic measurements and budget cuts in the public sector, which inevitably influence education. In Hellas, education still struggles to remain a public service and not a commodity. Despite the implementation of these drastic and enormous economic measures intended to decrease public expenditure and decrease salaries and pensions, there has been no improvement in the economic deficit. On the contrary, many people, especially young individuals, have lost their jobs because many businesses or public sectors closed, or people were forced to retire with limited earnings. As a result, many young citizens are seeking jobs in other countries.

Therefore, I believe that my thesis on democratic citizenship education is more relevant now than ever before.

**The Globalization Context**

From a postmodern perspective, things will not go back to the way they were. There will be some things that we will have to accept about the new world order. In the Ontario curriculum, democracy and citizenship education are related to a liberal type of democracy (Clausen et al., 2008) and focus on citizenship in connection with duties, rights, responsibilities and membership. However, the concepts of democracy and citizenship education are not defined in the revised Kindergarten Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006). However, in the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008), citizenship is tied to “…economic, political and social aspects of our society”
This clearly implies that the new world order is steadily shifting citizenship education towards preparing future citizens for economic prosperity, which is the equivalent of social prosperity, instead of preparing active citizens who will challenge inequities and explore democratic responsibilities and possibilities on public issues. Furthermore, curricula are shifting away from democratic citizenship challenges within a societally diverse context and are leaning toward economic challenges as well as social cohesion and solidarity in relation to corporate profit.

On the other hand, Hellas adopted many of the EU regulations regarding democratic citizenship education in order to accommodate multiple identities. Thus, the Hellenic government changed the educational policy and curricula in primary and secondary education so as to incorporate the notion of the “European citizen” and issues emerging through the process of globalization.

In addition, both countries adopted and integrated concepts and views which supranational organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO support and promote regarding democratic citizenship education and related issues. This is evident in several ways, such as in the usage of the same terminology in curricula and in the organizations’ reports on education, as well as by the participation of Ministers of Education in the conferences they organize and by providing feedback, experience and follow-up reports. The relationship between the economy and democratic citizenship education has also expanded from the local and national context to an international and global context. Neo-liberal forces engage systematically to equate those two contexts by chiselling away at the base of curriculum development by influencing democratic citizenship education in kindergarten. By being “nurtured” in this context, students may develop into docile, compliant and uncritical future citizens.
Future citizens will learn how to contribute to the economic success of a society because, by contributing, they will also contribute to social prosperity at the same time. The notion of globalization becomes a necessary concept, since more and more people are required to seek jobs in countries other than their homelands and, therefore, they migrate. Neo-liberal forces are aware of this necessity and they ensure, through appropriate policy, the enhancement of the education of citizens not only of migrant sender countries but also host countries. In this way, the education of citizens and future citizens, their children, will be reinforced with cherished concepts in both the economy and the social integration, not only of immigrants but also of those who belong to the dominant culture. Thus, the goal is the promotion of economic prosperity of the host country, which is equated with social cohesion and prosperity. However, the reverse process seems not possible. In other words, social prosperity and cohesion neither equals nor necessarily brings about economic prosperity.

Consequently, having schools teaching concepts such as democracy, equity, respect, human rights, social cohesion, inclusion and critical thinking is not a bad idea. The issue is that what is taught is directed from outside of the school’s jurisdiction. It is being “forced,” in a way, and the definition of the terms has been changed to suit the dominant culture. Clearly, there is tension between the need for democracy to be taught and the way it is being re-interpreted that may serve to enslave the very society that it purports to be setting free. Ordinarily, introducing new approaches or information into education is a positive thing and legitimate, especially in democratic citizenship education. However, it becomes negative when it is unconditionally accepted, not based on reliable research and is not implemented for the children’s benefit.
Globalization is another policy concern that emerges from the OECD (2006) report. The report describes the current social reality that inevitably informs education policy. Long-established notions of culture, history and knowledge have become faded. At the same time, globalization paves the way for populations to move from one country to another, for advanced technology and science to flourish in the midst of political instability, and for war and riots to break out amid competitive trade relations and instability. These are the issues that neo-liberal forces attempt to control through citizenship education, beginning in kindergarten.

The linkage between education and the global society is evident. However, I am unaware of any research on student achievement as it pertains to the economy. Student achievement is difficult to determine, because any assessment of student achievement represents a rough idea of the information that students have learned rather than the actual acquisition of knowledge. Neither is it possible to assess students’ effective functioning in the global economy, because teachers are not provided with enough scaffolding to implement this or any other policy relating to global economies. As a result, this provides an opportunity for those who claim to know – the government representatives and the Ministers of Education – to pass on their “knowledge” to national educational systems, adopted through findings, conclusions or suggestions from international organizations in which they participate. As such, they are really only making policy for government and economic investment, not for the educators or their students. In this context, citizenship education prepares students to behave properly and retain social cohesion, in the sense of keeping their voices down in favour of economic advantage. Students never learn how to fight back or challenge new iterations of “democracy.”
The neutrality of the neo-liberalist agenda’s new concepts that governments try to promote and pass on to younger generations through curricula is false and illusionary. Various concepts such as democracy, diversity, equity, inclusion, respect, social cohesion, social solidarity and human rights are introduced and promoted by both the Ontario and the Hellenic curricula as if they are honest and genuine.

Policy-makers have gradually changed the meaning of “citizen.” For example, in the diverse Canadian society, it has been indicated (Jones, 2000) that the formation of citizens’ identity, civic participation and social justice should be revisited with caution, especially since there is a tension of democratic reform through civic education in many countries (Hall, 1996). This democratic reform is moving away from the classical notion of a citizen who obeys the laws, promotes a fundamental and moral role in public life, votes and actively participates and engages in common issues (Osborne, 2004). Especially, when it comes to education, who is causing this transformation, what is the benefit, who is gaining from this and why should be taken into serious consideration.

The classic notion of citizen is not the only one to shift its meaning due to economic evolution. The same happens to other related issues such as identity, social values, the public good and active participation in public issues. Brokers of political initiatives and economic gain take advantage of educational policy in order to promote certain ways of thinking and kinds of activities to future citizens, for their own benefit. The main goal is to reform the meanings of identity, social values, public good and engagement in public issues in order to bring about economic success.

Evolution is inevitable and not a bad situation. But, when the evolution of concepts such as democracy, social justice, social cohesion, equity, common good, values and inclusion reaches into the education of young children, there is an ethical
obligation to consider whether it is for children’s benefit or whether it serves external stakeholders’ benefits. As Cogan (2000) indicates, global economy, technology and national migration challenge conventional social concepts and structures. As a result, new meanings and dimensions appear not only in Canada and Hellas, but world-wide. Thus, the difference relating to this process is, on the one hand evolutionary but, on the other hand, represents social engineering for economic gain.

Therefore, it is not “normal” evolution as it is clearly being manipulated by neo-liberal forces. When it comes to citizenship education, policy-makers monitor those tensions of democratic reform world-wide, as with OECD conferences at the Ministerial level, in relation to changes of social, economic and political issues in contemporary society. Citizenship education, then, is given new meanings, such as that of consumerism, a term closely related to political and economic values (White, 1999) and that of seeking, retaining and being better through life-long learning in a job, regardless of whether it is in the home or host country. If, however, challenging the conventional meaning of citizenship education is inevitable, it can be also tricky because policy-makers are driven by political agendas and corporate interest to twist their definitions to promote their benefits. Consequently, the “new” citizenship education obtains a doubtful or superficial meaning.

Citizenship education, as it is now defined, is clearly interrelated with the economy and politics. For effective citizenship that relates to economic, political, social and cultural components, students need to develop critical thinking, decision making, communication, social and participatory skills, problem solving skills and a sense of responsibility. These are some of the skills that students are required to develop through character development initiatives. In an effort to keep the voices and reactions down in order to preserve social cohesion, the notion of the term “critical”
does not relate so much to social justice and the questioning of systemic injustice, but rather to think through ideas on a relatively superficial level.

Critical thinking is a common feature of the Canadian and the Hellenic education system which is promoted through curricula, beginning in kindergarten. I believe that in both educational systems this notion is promoted on a superficial level so that it does not obstruct social cohesion and economic success. As such, critical thinking lacks a convincing pedagogical foundation. Critical thinkers who may truly and genuinely challenge democratic ideals and concepts of social cohesion, documented by government, may harm social cohesion. In this sense, social cohesion may be at risk. However, critical thinking might have a positive effect on minority groups since it provides them with the opportunity to question government policies that benefit the dominant culture.

In order to ensure social cohesion and the success of the implemented policy, the government itself introduces the term “critical thinking” and defines its meaning. In this way, government retains control and manages any potential negative outcomes that might occur. At the same time, government neutralizes the newly introduced policy while appearing to introduce new learning methods that challenge the status quo. However, critical thinking, when used in a genuine way, challenges hierarchies of power that serve to marginalize minority individuals and groups. In this way, critical thinking can reveal whether politicians are doing creditable work or are launching personal or political agendas.

The OECD is present at meetings of the Ministers of Education and seeks their consent for political support on their priority of the development of the so-called knowledge economy. The development of the knowledge economy is accomplished through life-long learning in formal and informal educational settings. The key to this
is education and, specifically, to democratic citizenship education which, as part of the curriculum, is directly connected to corporate and financial interests.

In this sense, children are conscripted to be driven by economic interests where there is lack of morality and freedom of choice. Consequently, this represents a lack of democracy, or is merely a euphemism for democracy. Furthermore, questions must be raised over citizenship becoming so closely tied to employment.

Responsible citizenship includes an element of morality fostered through education and promoted through positive human relationships. It is obvious that such relationships are of great importance. I believe that the elements of ethics, morality, social justice, equity, inclusion are included in true democracy since people have a voice and decisions are made by and for them. However, when corporate interest and government agendas are involved in democratic citizenship education, these elements vanish or obtain another meaning. Thus, everything rotates around the economy because this new world order driven by neo-liberal forces is powerful enough to mutate all the concepts based on social values. This is described nicely in Maxine Greene’s words, as cited in Cooper & White (2012), that schooling makes students into “proper servants of the technocratic society” (153).

Citizenship education has been closely related to economic desires. In addition, citizenship education includes student ethos. However, students’ ethos cannot be related to economic factors, since the economy is devoid of ethos or morality because the main goal is profit, not human morality. The OECD agenda includes ethos because it functions as a safety umbrella for human differences, diversity, multiculturalism and ethnicity – issues that can cause serious problems when control is lost. Ethos and morality are virtues that control human impulsivity and integrity. Therefore, citizens coming from the mainstream and minority
backgrounds are fond of virtues intended to provide a public feeling of safety. At the same time, those virtues serve OECD intentions to retain social stability and economic success.

Thus, economic interest intentions pretend to represent children’s best interests. Instead, their intensions are clearly related to corporate gain, preparing students to be efficient and productive future citizens ready to contribute their best to the development of an economically successful and prosperous society. But, without human values, morality and ethics, humanity and social justice vanish, democracy mutates or is compromised and every human activity revolves around economic power.

The goal is economic success in society which influences curriculum development in kindergarten, not only at national levels but also at international and global levels. Ultimately, the democratic character of citizenship education becomes blurry, since the policy that incorporates it is blurry. This blurriness is evident in the difficulty to realize, at first glance, who is suggesting and implementing new concepts and knowledge, what the intentions are, what the purpose is, who the stakeholders are, and what the procedure and the benefits are. The key to make all these transparent is Critical Discourse Analysis which, in this case, revealed that organizations such as the OECD (2006, 2001) and UNESCO protect, ensure and strengthen this blurriness, since they promote their interests through various ways by organizing member countries meetings, creating sections and directorates for Education, conducting research and releasing reviews that neutralize contested new knowledge, practices and approaches. All these add prestige and value to the economy at the expense of legitimate education.
Economic organizations and government agendas create a “blurry web” policy which involves economy, politics, education, social benefits, markets and migration. Thus, newly presented economic related terms, such as knowledge economy, workplace needs, policy, life-long learning, research, social cohesion and sustainable development, are neutralized. This neutrality occurs and is cultivated, among other ways, through development of a broad curriculum spanning kindergarten to post-secondary education. Through this procedure, students are conscripted into abiding by economic policies that pretend to be educational ones, supposedly driven by children’s best interests.

In this light, curricula devolve to hollow documents that function as tools for governmental will, giving government more power than the school system and pedagogic practices. In parallel, they reinforce government agendas that favour superficial citizenship education and serve the purpose of exploiting the educational system for purposes of future employment and economic prosperity.

Pedagogy is either limited or missing from the curriculum, since the words which are documented in the curriculum are connected to economic terminology. Teachers do not necessarily understand concepts such as “globalization”, or “knowledge economy.” Furthermore, they are not instructed as to how these concepts should work in the classroom. Thus, they cannot often implement positive policies without professional development. As such, curriculum is the channel that works as a tool for neo-liberal forces to recruit future efficient employees who will help boost the economy in these economically troubled times.

Democracy appears shallow when it serves economic purposes rather than people’s voices and existence. Social skills acquisition in kindergarten curricula and the OECD’s reports on early childhood education show the importance of preparing
future citizens for pluralistic societies that are constantly changing as populations move from one country to the other, as the demands increase and as technology develops. Stakeholders attempt to ensure economic success without causing any trouble to a society’s apparent surface calmness. Instead, commonly accepted and preferred terms are repeated in different ways with different interpretations and definitions in a variety of curricula, reports or guides in order to convince people that all these necessary changes are for their benefit. In this view, democratic citizenship education in kindergarten curricula is controversial, to say the least.

OECD member countries are encouraged to adopt an integrated educational policy to promote equity and efficiency in education through the Directorate for Education. In other words, one policy model will basically fit all educational systems of OECD countries, and will contribute toward economic success. This echoes the Procrustean bed metaphor presented earlier, and seems a lot like the standardization movement in the United States and United Kingdom. Corporations and governments benefit from this scheme, but they manage also to convince citizens that they benefit from it as well. And this is accomplished by leading citizens and equipping them to find and keep a job world-wide, being able to spend money, being productive and keeping the economy vibrant. In this sense, the OECD benefits because the benefit to the citizens is superficial in that it is concrete but not necessarily sustainable.

The notions of competitiveness, effectiveness and fairness in a society sound very powerful but, when analyzed, reveal notions of profit and loss, competence and incompetence, and inequity. The promotion of economy over education and democratic citizenship education foreshadows the danger of a chaotic society, unless the economy meets the necessary goals of a democratic society. Therefore, to safeguard this potential backlash, supranational organizations attempt to ensure that
future citizens be educated as the OECD dictates and that they should be oriented toward its agenda. The important thing is that the economics should not be the only factor determining whether education is a service or a commodity.

In case future citizens fail to acquire the basic qualifications and skills to cope with and support this dubious brand of social success, the result spells low participation in the economy and the need to look at other forms of economic support, such as welfare payments, which act as a drain on an otherwise robust economy. But, this argument promotes economic organizations’ desires as well. On the one hand, having citizens in debt and on social assistance eliminates their power of actively participating in public issues and social justice but, on the other, having citizens who are well educated promotes economic development and social prosperity, according to the corporate agenda, but it is harder to control.

In addition to this argument, there is another veiled threat coming from neoliberal forces through education, which serves to “include” minorities so they can contribute to the economy. Early childhood education will enable them in many ways to assimilate, such as preparing their children to adapt to the new environment, socialize, becoming active and “equal” members of the society and acquire the skills and qualifications for a job and serve the economy. Thus, adults can work without worrying about their children’s safety and education. Curriculum ensures antidiscrimination policies, inclusion, equality, social cohesion and solidarity and cooperation, necessary and basic notions for future cooperation among citizens of a diverse society. But, if they are not assimilated they will be marginalized, unable to help and reinforce the economy.

All these efforts for economic agendas to prevail over citizenship education through perverted information aim at the ultimate objective of who gets to rule the
world. We are experiencing a new form of colonization by economic superiority. The objective is that whoever has the money has the power. This is not something new, but it seems nowadays more virulent than ever before since it has been globally expanded and more powerful stakeholders have become involved. The blurry system that political and economic agenda have created together has managed to conscript future citizens and their parents, schools and communities so that everyone believes they have something to gain from it and no one can think otherwise.

The blurry policies of corporate interests that governments promote serves another purpose as well. When governments attempt to interfere with social norms and values, they are often guilty of social engineering. I use the term “guilty” because social engineering often flies contrary to people’s individual rights and freedoms. “Political correctness” is an example, whereby people skirt issues that they probably should not be ignoring. Van Der Hoeven (2004) brought up that issue by stressing that, within a community, citizens develop social relationships and students learn about them outside the school. Eventually, respect for differences and socially acceptable values and norms become political correctness. In this way, most people’s thinking has been so directed that they think political correctness is good to have. But, political correctness is also used to gloss over evident social issues or even to test people’s reactions to questionable social practices.

Thus, by starting this approach as early as kindergarten, citizens are raised and nurtured within the modern concept of democratic citizenship in their school years. Gradually, from school citizens they become citizens within their community, their work, country and the world. In my opinion, it is all about social engineering by reframing people’s concepts and maintaining those through an institution such as schooling in order to eradicate previous notions of fairness and justice. Thus, the
existing notion becomes the socially acceptable one. Dictators around the world have attempted to control people’s concepts and behaviour in more brutal and draconian ways, but it is still the same. It is about directing peoples’ thoughts and lives, rather than allowing the concepts held by society to emerge on their own. The difference in this modern world is that there is no visible dictator and certainly not only one. That is what is so repugnant about the work of many governmental agencies. There is no one who claims responsibility for all the social injustices and there is no one to hold accountable.

UNESCO (2002) supports and addresses the same issues as the OECD does, such as those of knowledge building, quality education, linguistic and cultural diversity. In addition, the concept of the culture of peace is promoted. Furthermore, grounded life-long learning and active citizenship in primary education is promoted as well (UNESCO, 2010). Again, nice words are documented but, ironically, the same governments or, in other words, member countries who brought into being WWI and WWII are now trying to promote peace. If someone disagrees, then it may be revealed that this is merely a veneer covering a much more sinister agenda.

In my opinion, it is up to the individual citizen and the schools to become more critically aware by attuning themselves to these issues, to look behind the scenes and to question government motives. In kindergarten, especially, parents should focus more on what is being taught in terms of citizenship education and the societal development of their children. If teachers, parents, principals and community partners truly believe that government is acting in their best interests, that is fine, but there is a lot of evidence suggesting that, in the face of encroaching globalization, the war is on and that countries will fall victim to more powerful countries unless they invest in some form of public institutions such as church, education, health, social services or
the like. The easiest route to take is education since it has been a long time since church and state were joined at the hip, at least in Ontario’s case. In Hellas, the state and the church are joined, at least in the Constitution. Furthermore, the student population is much more concentrated in a school setting than in a church and, especially in kindergarten, children are just beginning to develop socially, fertile ground for processes of indoctrination.

In this case, I believe that a more critical view from all parties involved, over questioning motives around implementation of new policies in education could be antithetical to what our children are currently being taught and why. I educated myself to do this through Critical Discourse Analysis and, therefore, I strongly suggest that there is value in citizen’s educating themselves; especially those who have an ethical responsibility to their students, such as principals, teachers and parents. The whole procedure will answer many of their own questions about what is happening around us, such as riots and protests, and “inappropriate” ways of confronting demonstrations which are dangerous for public safety.

It is difficult to criticize in depth an educational policy that is so blurry and well-constructed by many different parties. There is no beginning or end, at first glance at least. Again, the evolution of technology and science, and economic competitiveness leads towards the development of programs that will enable Canadian students to acquire those skills to compete in global markets (CMEC, 2000) without the “guidance” of supranational organizations. Students are humans who need guidance and mentoring rather that sterile leading. Those who make decisions for our children should care about their integrated development as human beings rather that making them conscripted future citizens who care only about wealth, economic power and advancement with no morality, true respect or critical awareness. Students can
learn how to contribute to the public good, including the prosperity of the society and to be able to work while, at the same time, being able to thrive and be happy and care about other people.

International organizations’ main goal is the sustainability of economic growth. This includes employment, quality of life, world economy growth and world trade expansion. In this light, early childhood education becomes the method for nurturing future citizens in a way that is closely aligned with corporate, economic and political goals.

**9.2: Recommendations**

Echoing Diogenes Laertius’ words “the foundation of every state is the education of its youth” that opened this thesis, democratic citizenship education is vital because it sets the foundation of the state or, in other words, it educates its youth, the future citizens. Education starts officially as early as kindergarten and at this stage, students are at the most fundamentally susceptible stage of their development as they form basic concepts of thinking and behaviour. Curriculum sets the goals and the expectations that children are invited to reach and accomplish. In Ontario and Hellas, curricula for kindergarten have been influenced by political agendas which serve financial interests. These external influences have invaded education to serve political and economic purposes, and have presented them as benefits to children.

Answering my forth research question, the pedagogical implications of this research involves schools, districts, universities and professionals in education and their stance towards external interests in curriculum studies and the education of young children. The gap between theory and practice becomes wider, especially when teachers do not have a clear picture of what democratic citizenship education means
and the terms and issues that surround them. Furthermore, the implications are also blurry, since citizenship education is interrelated with economic gain.

Teachers, as one group of the basic stakeholders in education, should develop and maintain a critical stance towards external interests in curriculum studies and the education of young children, especially, since teachers are aware of students’ needs and what could best work in the classroom. However, perhaps teachers do not understand what the term “global education” actually means or how to teach it so that it truly reflects educational priorities. It is very important first to understand the new concepts themselves which have begun to appear in the curriculum. Thus, a critical stance to new concepts and ideas in education is necessary to first understand their meaning and motives and then to understand the benefit for children and, if appropriate, the way that these concepts can be implemented and applied in the curriculum. Then, teachers should indicate those elements that threaten or jeopardize the moral and ethical stance of education and speak out for their students. In this way, teachers will help prevent students from becoming willingly compliant, purveyors and workers in the face of a desperate world-wide race to provide and maintain vibrant economic circumstances. Teachers, through PLCs, can inservice and educate themselves as to this realignment of the purposes of education and the impact that it can have on students.

On the other hand, principals and districts need to be aware that not all policies benefit their students and the suspect ones should not be complied with. Furthermore, parents should not become deaf around policies that influence their children’s education, especially, around educational policies and new concepts that form their children’s democratic citizenship education. Therefore, they can also be
educated around this important issue in terms of open forums and discussions with professionals coming from the field of education.

In addition, universities and professionals in education should be alert to the ways that neo-liberal forces influence educational policy for their own benefit. Bringing such issues into the public realm helps to combat political correctness and raise awareness of the ways neo-liberal forces attempt to penetrate education. These are only some of the measures that can be used to prevent neo-liberal desires from gaining by politicizing the education of young children.

Policy-makers should critically confront new ideas and innovations before integrating them into the curriculum in order to keep it “up-to-date.” They should examine, first, whether the policy is truly for the benefit of the children or merely for the benefit of external influences, which will eventually become non-beneficial for children in the future.

I suggest that the best way to move forward for each and every one of us, collectively or individually, is to attempt to become more critical in assessing governmental edicts. In short, it is to remain vigilant and cautious regarding in whose interests the government works for themselves alone or for the rest of us, collectively. This may seem bizarre, since governments, as elected bodies, speak on behalf of the people and for the people. However, through policies such as those questioned in this thesis, it is becoming more and more apparent that government is supportive of government, not of the people. In other words, they are supposed to guide us, but the process is blinding us to reality. In short, government is not being candid in convincing us to the stakes involved. It is up to each of us to develop an understanding of how society is being engineered and changed through the advent of neo-liberalism.
In addition, since democratic citizenship education can have different meanings in different countries and in different areas, I recommend conducting further research between Canadian provinces within curricula in primary education, starting with kindergarten, and to compare results with other countries involved in the same research efforts.

Lastly, I refer below to *The Unknown Citizen* by W. H. Auden which summarizes what I found in my thesis:

(To JS/07/M/378 This Marble Monument Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a Frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

-- W. H. Auden
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