

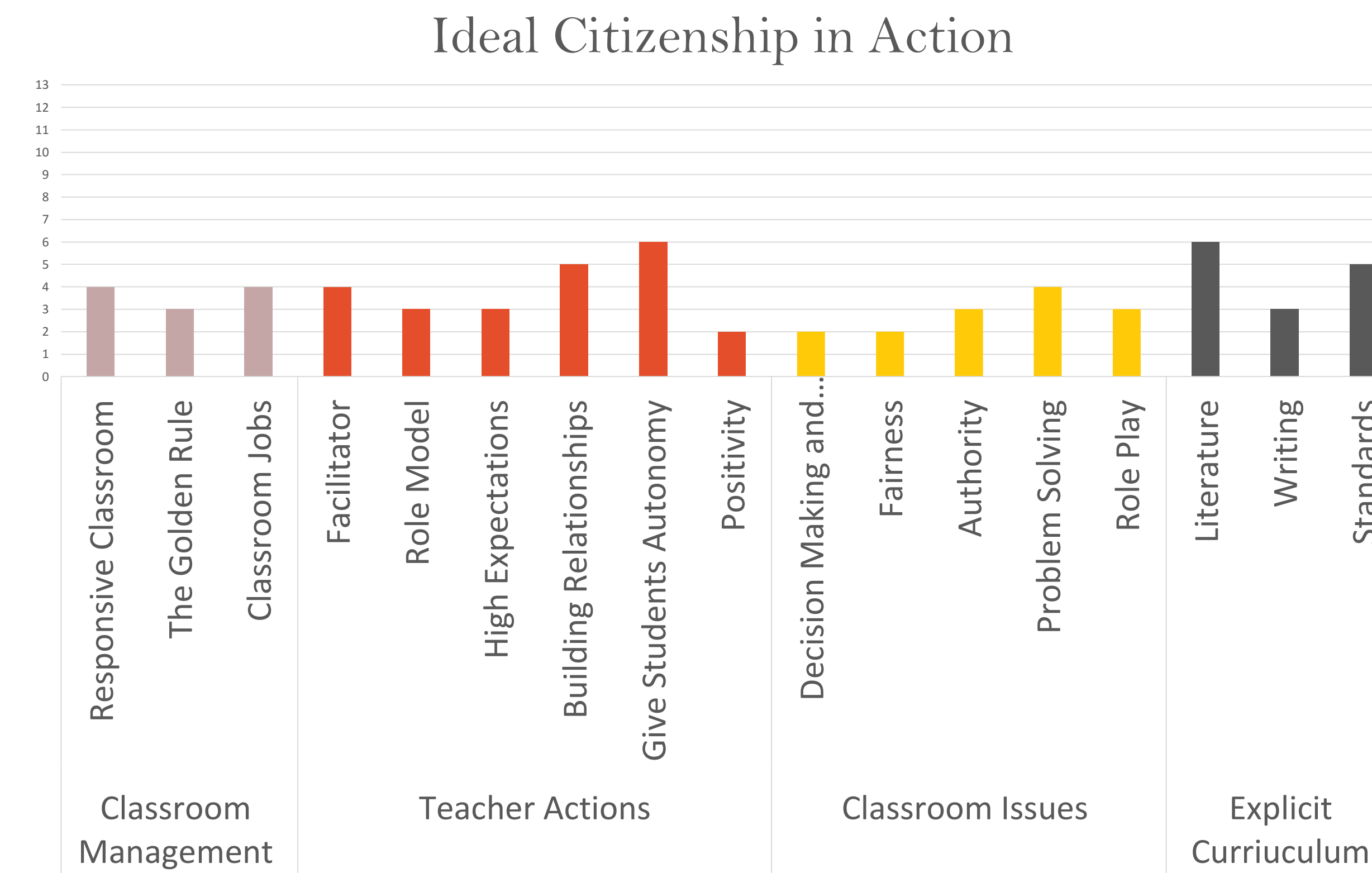


The Role of Schools in Washington, D.C. and Beijing in Producing High-Functioning Citizens of the Local Community

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Abstract

This study explores how primary teachers in Beijing and Washington, D.C. prepare students to become active citizens of their local communities. I sent a questionnaire to twenty English teachers in Beijing that contained sixteen questions on the purposes for teaching, the morals or values they hope their students to develop, the incorporation of the local community of Beijing in the curriculum, and their perspectives on the ideal citizen. I interviewed thirteen educators in the Washington, D.C. area using similar questions. The framework is based upon the three typologies of citizenship, as well as a local, geographical definition of community. The results of this study suggest the promotion of personally responsible citizens in Beijing and in the Washington, D.C. area, the promotion of participatory citizens.



Results

Beijing

- Deviance from encouraging participation in the political process
- Emphasis on students becoming personally responsible citizens
- Study of aspects of the local community, but a lack of active community engagement

Washington, D.C.

Ideal Citizenship In Theory

Many of the teachers I interviewed noted specific characteristics that they believed an ideal citizen should possess. The following six qualities and dispositions were mentioned the most frequently:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Concern for the common good
- Care and empathy
- Listen to different perspectives
- Voice and support opinions

Ideal Citizenship In Practice

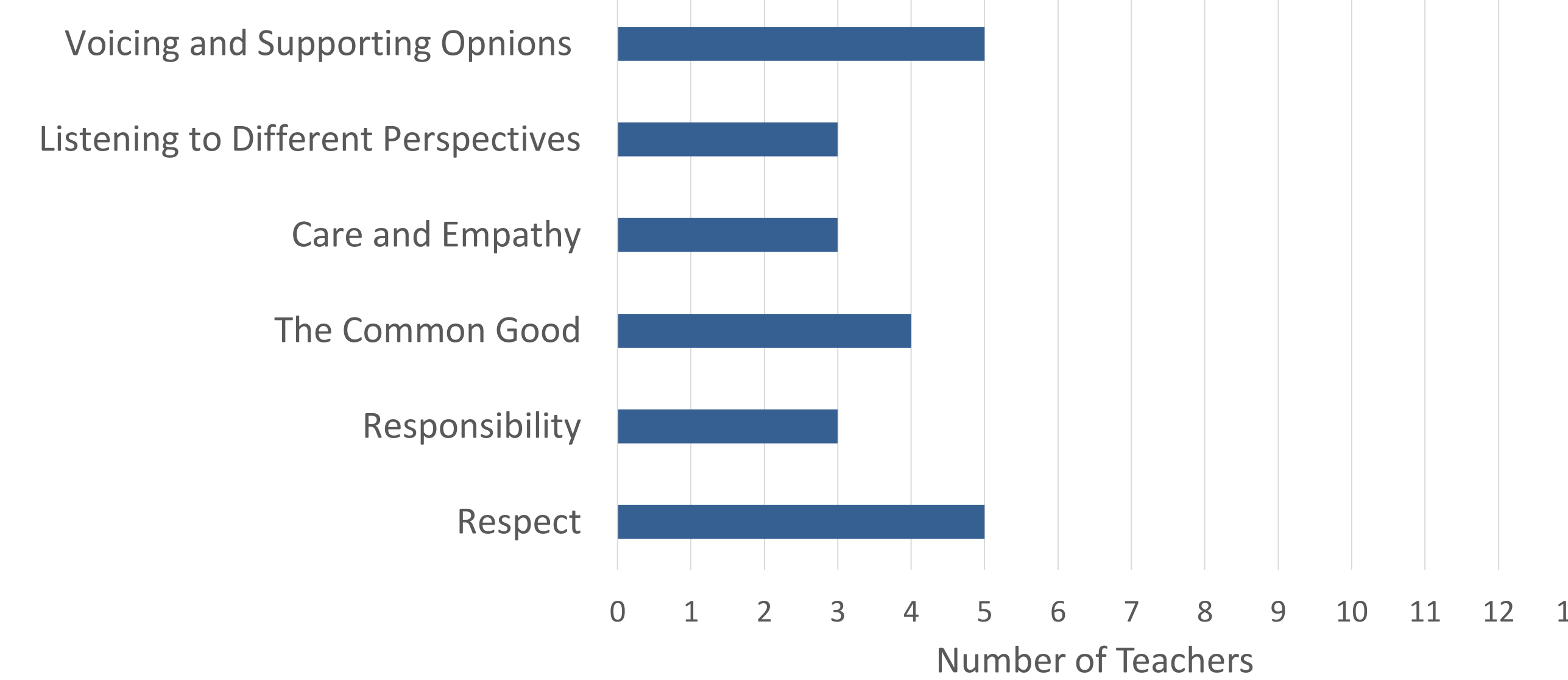
I found that teachers prepare their students to become the active, involved citizens they described through the implicit and explicit curriculum. They do so in the following ways:

- Classroom management
- Specific teacher actions
- Discussion of classroom and school issues
- In the standards
- Through literature and writing

Washington, D.C.			Beijing, China		
Category	Number of teachers	Approximate % of teachers	Category	Number of teachers	Approximate % of teachers
Gender			Gender		
Female	9	69%	Female	19	95%
Male	4	31%	Male	1	5%
Years of Experience			Years of Experience		
1-5	6	46%	1-5	0	0%
6-10	2	15%	6-10	0	0%
11-15	1	8%	11-15	3	15%
16-20	2	15%	16-20	5	25%
21-25	0	0%	21-25	12	60%
25+	2	15%	25+	0	0%
Age			Age		
20-25	1	8%	20-25	0	0%
26-30	6	46%	26-30	0	0%
31-35	1	8%	31-35	0	0%
36-40	0	0%	36-40	7	35%
41-45	1	8%	41-45	12	60%
46-50	1	8%	46-50	1	5%
50+	3	23%	50+	0	0%
Degree Education			Degree Education		
English	10	77%	English	4	20%
Other	3	23%	English	13	65%
Master's	11	85%	Other	3	15%
Bachelor's	2	15%			

Demographic Information of Respondents

Qualities of an Ideal Citizen



Data and Methods

For data collection in Beijing, I utilized a questionnaire containing questions based on a previous study of teacher conceptualization of citizenship education. The questionnaire contained:

- A rating scale about purposes of teaching
- Open-ended responses about morals and values promoted in the classroom
- Question about the amount of time spent on community service per week
- Questions about the ideal citizen and how they prepare students to become ideal citizens

For data collection in Washington, D.C., I utilized semi-structured interviews with questions based on those in the questionnaire.

To analyze the data, I employed a combination of descriptive and analytical coding, as well as word counts. I completed instrumental case studies for 8 teachers in Washington, D.C. in addition to grouping the data by themes. I approached the analysis using abductive reasoning.

Guiding Questions

1. What do teachers believe about citizenship and the ideal citizen?
2. How do these beliefs affect their instruction?
3. What actions do they take to create ideal citizens?
4. Do teachers think about the local community in their instruction?
5. If so, how do teacher promote interactions with the community within their classroom?

Implications

- For Beijing data, my findings support China's effort to maintain a socialist and harmonious society, as citizenship education is restrictive.
- For Washington, DC data, my findings vary for the conceptions of citizenship, but most teachers fell under participatory citizenship.
- Critical thinking was a highly rated quality. However, it was generally not implemented in classrooms.
- No evidence of illusory form of citizenship education, even among those teachers who associated with personally responsible citizenship.
- Few opportunities for purposeful community engagement.