Hilary Claire
1941 – 2007

Hilary Claire, who has died as a result of a tragic riding accident, was the inspiration and organiser behind the primary strand of the CitizED website. She was the founding member of PENAC (primary educators network for the advancement of citizenship) - a network of teacher educators who provided material for the primary strand. Led by Hilary, they solicited articles and resources for the website and organised conferences which supported the teaching of citizenship in primary schools.

A belief in the power of both citizenship and history teaching to inspire children and address key issues of social justice and equality was at the heart of Hilary’s work. She was brought up and educated in South Africa during the apartheid era and this strongly informed her commitment to equality and democracy. In England she became a primary teacher, a deputy head and then an advisory teacher on race and gender equality before taking up academic posts at South Bank University, The Open University and most recently at London Metropolitan University in 1997. Here, she taught on history and citizenship courses for both undergraduate and PGCE (primary and secondary) programmes. A colleague from the university writes:

From the start Hilary was full of verve, dynamism and enthusiasm, whether teaching or leading meetings. She engaged with colleagues and students alike, supported them and worked incredibly hard with and for them. But she could also challenge people (never aggressively) when she thought that they were careless of the principles that then underpinned the work of the Education Department and her own stance in education. Hilary was unswervingly committed to anti-racism and anti-sexism- a commitment which was evident in all aspects of her life.

She also taught on PGCE courses at other universities as a guest lecturer, delivered workshops at conferences and in-service courses for teachers. She worked with the QCA to look at effective citizenship in primary schools and to produce exemplary materials for the assessment of citizenship. In summary, she was a pioneer in encouraging the imaginative teaching of history and of social and political issues: teaching in primary schools is better as a result of her work.

Hilary was also a prolific writer. As well as a memoir of growing up under apartheid, *The Song Remembers When*, she also published many articles and books about history, race, gender and citizenship. She contributed to the Multiverse website, the CitizEd website and *Primary History Journal*. In *Reclaiming Our Pasts: equality and diversity in the primary history curriculum*, Hilary demonstrated how an inclusive approach to history could inspire and challenge children and yet remain intellectually rigorous. ‘*Not Aliens*’, Hilary’s close study of the lives of London children, showed how young people may not necessarily be as informed as adults, but nonetheless care just as passionately about family, community, justice and a better world. This book is still recommended reading on many primary teacher training courses. In ‘*Teaching Citizenship in the Primary School*’, Hilary did that most difficult of things: she gave sound, creative and practical
advice on how teachers could make a difference in the classroom. Her last book, published the week before she died, was ‘The Challenge of Teaching Controversial Issues’. She was proud of being the co-editor of this book because it brought together writers from all over the world who had creative suggestions for teaching about politics, racism, climate change, global conflict and social justice. This was an apt book to mark the end of Hilary’s career.

On a personal note, I was privileged to work with Hilary over the last ten years, as a co-editor, co-author and co-researcher. Hilary knew that the way to get the best out of people was to respect their personal lives and to value this as much as the academic. Our emails would range from comments on our research to gardening or grandchildren. When contributors sent draft chapters for our book she was perceptive and helpful in her comments but never critical. She cared about people as individuals and made sure that each contributor was sent a hand-written thank you note with their copy of the book.

Hilary was a much respected colleague who will be greatly missed. Her writing will continue to inspire teachers, tutors and trainee teachers for generations to come.

*Cathie Holden
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