

Make it happen: effective practice in post-16 citizenship - Booklet

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Introduction to the pack

This is the second video resource pack produced by the Post- 16 Citizenship Development Programme, funded by the DfES and managed by the LSDA.

The Programme has involved school sixth forms, further education and sixth form colleges, employers, training providers, and youth and community groups, in finding out what works in the provision of citizenship for 16- to 19-year olds.

The pack is intended for staff development purposes and, in addition to this booklet, includes: A VHS of the main video illustrating citizenship teaching and learning; A DVD of the main video with additional video sequences.

The purpose of this booklet is to: Describe briefly the key features of teaching and learning in the context of post-16 citizenship; Offer guidance on approaches to handling issues that may be controversial or sensitive.

It is suggested that you read the booklet first to become familiar with the content, and then use it alongside the VHS/DVD to explore aspects in more depth.

Introduction to post-16 citizenship

Young adults will only be able to realise their full potential as active and effective members of society at large, and of all kinds of public and voluntary bodies, if those responsible for their education, training, employment and other forms of development provide the necessary models and learning environments for active and participative citizenship. FEFC (2000)

Key features of citizenship teaching and learning

This resource focuses on key features of teaching and learning that enable young people to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary for exercising their rights and responsibilities and for acting, with others, to influence what goes on in their communities (local, national, global).

Citizenship education requires opportunities for learners to:

- identify, investigate and think critically about citizenship issues, problems or events of concern to them
- decide on and take part in action, where appropriate
- reflect on, recognise and review their citizenship learning. QCA (2004)

All three opportunities are important, although they may not all be possible in every activity or in the suggested sequence. Citizenship is most effective when it takes place in a stimulating environment in which learners can express their opinions responsibly, engage in decisions about their learning and participation, and recognise what they have learnt.

Investigating citizenship issues

Investigating citizenship issues enables young people to deepen their knowledge and understanding of citizenship, and to use their enquiry, communication and other skills when participating in their communities.

What is a citizenship issue?

Citizenship issues are distinct from personal issues of concern to private individuals. For example, a problem with managing a household budget is a personal issue, the minimum wage is a citizenship issue; eating healthily is a personal issue, the politics of food is a citizenship issue.

Citizenship learning has a distinctive focus on real political, social, economic and environmental issues, at local, European or global levels, that concern young adults as citizens – members of society with legal rights and responsibilities.

Activity

Explore the VHS/DVD to identify the range of citizenship issues being investigated.

Are the issues being investigated by your learners' citizenship issues? Check the extent to which the issues are:

Public
i.e. beyond the personal

real
i.e. actually affect people's lives

topical
i.e. current today

ethical

i.e. relate to what people think is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant in society

sensitive

i.e. affect people at a personal level, involving family or friends

controversial

i.e. people disagree and hold strong opinions about them.

DfES (2004)

How might an issue be chosen?

The aim is to develop a supportive culture in which young people choose their own citizenship issues for investigation. Learners tend to find topics more relevant and motivating if they identify what is of concern to them.

However, at times it may be helpful to assist choice, for example to develop learners' understanding of what makes their concern a citizenship issue, extend their interests and/or develop their confidence in engaging with a wider range of citizenship topics or types of investigation.

To what extent do you enable young people to choose issues for themselves?
What are the potential consequences of learners choosing their own issues and how would you handle these?

Activity

Watch each of the video sequences.

[main video 02:48] [main video 06:11] [main video 15:12]

How have these citizenship issues been identified?
Write the number for each example on the continuum below.

[Left] by staff for learners

[Centre] by learners from within broad themes suggested by staff

[Right] by learners taking the initiative within a supportive culture

How might a citizenship issue be investigated?

Citizenship education has a central core of learning objectives (knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts and values) that need to be addressed through the active involvement of learners in their communities. 2

Types of investigation, which are not mutually exclusive, include: projects – individual or group; research in the community; and simulations.

Projects and community-based research can develop awareness of how information is collected and presented for public consumption by government, media or others. This

may include consultation to inform decision-making. Such investigations can help learners to acquire skills in:

enquiry, e.g. draw up questions to be asked about an issue, use Internet searches and library facilities, carry out interviews

analysis, e.g. evaluate evidence, interpret statistics, recognise bias

presentation, e.g. write reports, speak publicly, make displays.

Simulations involving imagined or hypothetical situations enable young people to refine their skills and explore aspects of citizenship that they may be unable to experience first-hand.

Activity

Explore the VHS/DVD to identify the different types of citizenship investigations.

Consider the types of investigation being conducted by your learners.

To what extent are they developing:

- **knowledge**, e.g. facts about an issue
- **understanding** of citizenship concepts, e.g. of rights and responsibilities
- **skills**, e.g. of enquiry, analysis, debate, negotiation, presentation.

How might investigations be supported?

The most motivating forms of investigations are youth-led and action orientated, but these can be enhanced by a facilitator using various interventions that are designed to enrich learning opportunities. Such interventions include coaching, mentoring, and the use of specific teaching and learning techniques to suit different types of citizenship content and learners with different needs and learning styles.

Of particular relevance to citizenship are strategies that can encourage learners to look at issues from different viewpoints and gather factual evidence to inform their own views: distancing; compensatory; empathetic; exploratory; engaging [see page opposite].

[DVD Extra 1]

[Main Video 20:54]

What strategies are being used in the video sequences to help learners understand the issue?

Activity

Match each 'problem' below with an appropriate strategy by drawing a line between the two.

Problems:

- The issue is too sensitive to discuss from a personal viewpoint
- Learners express strongly held views based on ignorance
- Learners lack experience of the issue
- The issue is not clear
- Learners have no interest in the topic

Strategies

-Use role plays and simulations to extend learners' factual knowledge and understanding of different viewpoints [empathetic].

-Invite learners to investigate (conduct interviews, Internet research) and make presentations on their findings [exploratory].

-Use analogous situations or an examination of the history of a topic, e.g. discussion of case studies [distancing].

-Use role plays, multi-media resources or speakers to bring the issue home or encourage learners to choose a citizenship topic that is personally relevant [engaging].

-Ask learners to sift and sort information, and to make the case for an opinion other than their own [compensatory].

What approaches can be used for dealing with issues that are controversial or sensitive?

It is inevitable that citizenship activities will raise issues that will be sensitive to someone or arouse strong feelings, views and differences of opinion. Staff members need to think through the approaches they might use for handling these situations.

As young people should be encouraged to take the lead in their investigations, they too will need to be aware of these approaches and understand that:

- within a democracy, people can legitimately disagree
- there are acceptable ways of dealing with disagreement
- views should be expressed in ways that are respectful and non-intimidating.

As a starting point it may be helpful to negotiate a basic set of ground rules for investigative activities involving discussions and group work, for example to avoid personal remarks that could prove sensitive to specific individuals.

To build a climate that encourages the expression of opinions, but also respect for others' feelings and views, group facilitators may use different approaches. These approaches, which are not mutually exclusive, include:

- **acting as a neutral chair** (the 'Dimpleby' approach)
- **adopting a balanced approach** – where a facilitator enables a range of opinions to be presented
- **making a stated commitment** – where a facilitator is open about their views

- **challenging consensus** (devil's advocate) – where a facilitator takes a position deliberately different from the majority of the group.

Activity

Watch the video sequences.

For each sequence, identify the approach(es) used by the facilitator and note the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

[Main Video 08:06]

[DVD extra 2]

Sequence 1

Approach(es):

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Sequence 2

Approach(es):

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

To what extent do you:

- use one or more of these approaches when facilitating a discussion?
- encourage your learners to develop and use these approaches?

What does thinking critically mean?

One definition of critical thinking describes it as 'reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do' (Ennis, 1987)

Lipman (1991) suggests that critical thinking helps to 'protect us from being coerced or brainwashed into believing what others want to compel us to believe without our having an opportunity to inquire for ourselves', with 'suspension of belief' or 'a tentative scepticism' being the order of the day until the inquiry is concluded.

Critical thinking exposes possible bias and prejudice – a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against it being true. It requires learners to be aware of their own assumptions and values, and the impact these have on their opinions and behaviour, as well as to acquire the skills and tools for analysing what others say, write or do.

An early emphasis on concepts will help learners to recognise what they already know and develop new levels of thinking through exploratory talk, argument and interventions that encourage the pooling of ideas. This will provide learners with the analytical skills and language they will need to make sense of citizenship issues (Douglas, 2004) Debates, providing they include preparation and a follow-up process, offer a rich opportunity for learning how to:

- **make judgements about the reliability of sources of information**, including accuracy of information, e.g. when researching an issue using the Internet or media sources

- **identify techniques** that are being used to argue a case, persuade others, e.g. how to distinguish facts from opinion, recognise different rhetorical techniques, such as the use of assertion, 'persuader words', emotive language, false dichotomies and visual techniques
- **draw conclusions** based on the evidence, e.g. as presented in the debate and in follow-up discussions.

Activity

Watch the video sequences involving learners preparing for, conducting and following up a debate.

[DVD extra 3a]

[DVD extra 3b]

In what ways are the learners preparing for the debate in terms of the factual knowledge and techniques they will need to present, evaluate and challenge the arguments?

What techniques are being used by the speakers to win the argument?

In what ways are speakers being challenged, e.g. to back up what they are saying with evidence or to respond to contrary evidence, criticism of the accuracy of their information or logic of their argument?

[DVD extra 3c]

In what ways does the follow-up discussion enable the learners to critically analyse the arguments presented during the debate and draw their own conclusions on the debated issue?

Reflect on ways you might encourage learners to think more critically about their citizenship activities.

Citizenship action

What forms of action might be taken?

Responsible citizenship action involves young people in using their skills of enquiry, communication and participation to, for example:

- **raise awareness of a citizenship issue**, e.g. through a wider debate, conference, article, drama or exhibition
- **influence decisions** by taking part in democratic processes, e.g. through a youth council, public consultation or election
- **increase representation**, e.g. by presenting a point of view on behalf of others at a meeting, encouraging and empowering others to participate in democratic processes
- **make a change for the better**, e.g. by providing a service of benefit to others, organising a support group, supporting Fair Trade or activities to protect the environment
- **challenge an injustice**, e.g. by expressing views publicly, writing letters/emails to newspapers, MPs/MEPs or other relevant people

- **resist unwanted change**, e.g. by organising a petition, producing a leaflet or video campaign, setting up an action group, lobbying representatives of relevant organisations to gain their support.

Activity

Explore the VHS/DVD to identify examples of citizenship action.

How might the forms of action shown in the video sequences involve learners in using their skills to make a difference at a local or national level?

To what extent do your learners follow up their investigations with appropriate action? What forms of action do they take?

How might risky action be managed?

Some forms of action may be more risky than others, for example in terms of legal, health and safety and/or institutional policy reasons.

Whilst not wanting to discourage young people from taking action on an issue, it is important that both staff and learners are aware of the regulations under which their organisation operates and the resulting constraints. There is a need to think through the possible consequences of the proposed action.

It may be necessary to structure more carefully the action, carry out discrete monitoring of the activity or negotiate alternative action, to safeguard participants and/or the organisations involved.

Activity

Watch the video sequences of discussions about action that might be risky to manage.

[DVD extra 4a, 4b, 4c]

What are the implications of the proposed actions discussed in the video sequences?

What strategies are suggested for dealing with these?

What would you suggest if your learners propose similar forms of action?

To what extent are your learners encouraged to identify the risks and potential consequences of their proposed action?

Recognition of citizenship learning

This is assisted when learning objectives and assessment approaches have been agreed with learners and planned into their activities, with opportunities for progress reviews.

Formal assessment is not essential, but all learners should be encouraged to reflect on what they are learning, make connections with other things they have learnt and gain constructive feedback to help decide on their next steps.

How can reflection be encouraged?

Without reflection and the opportunity for sense-making the learning potential of citizenship activities is diminished.

Activities to stimulate reflection on citizenship learning can include:

- **discussion**, e.g. in pairs/groups, that is structured around thought-provoking questions or requires learners to explain something they have learnt
- **writing**, e.g. in a journal or in response to questions on a feedback sheet, that encourages learners to organise and clarify their thoughts and feelings about a described issue or event
- **visual methods** such as a video diary, artwork or mind-maps that facilitate the expression and linking of ideas.

Activity

Watch the video sequences.

[DVD extra 5a, main video 18:22]

To what extent are your learners involved in identifying their learning objectives and planning assessment to support citizenship learning?

What are the arrangements for supporting your learners in the reflection process?

In what ways could you enhance provision for the recognition of learning through reflection?

How can reviews support learning?

Reviews, at mid-point and/or at the end of a series of activities or a course, help learners to understand and value their learning by enabling them to gain constructive feedback from peers, staff or other adults and use this information to:

- identify progress against learning objectives
- make judgements about their achievements to date
- negotiate next steps, such as further learning objectives and how these might be met.

Reviews are made easier where records and other evidence have been identified by learners – kept for example in a Progress File – to provide a basis for dialogue about the skills, knowledge and understanding they have developed.

Watch the video sequences.

[DVD extra 5b]

[main video 20:54]

What arrangements have been made for reviews that support your learners in gaining constructive feedback and identifying evidence of their citizenship learning?

Evidence – proof of what has been achieved – can range from simple logging of achievements, dated and perhaps endorsed by others, to the development of portfolios of citizenship work (hard copy or electronic) that may be submitted for certification. It can take a variety of written, visual, aural, physical and multi-media forms, for example:

- learning plans, diaries, journals, logs, notes, self-assessment and review sheets or reports written by learners
- reports or witness statements from others who have worked with and/or observed the learner, such as peers or community partners
- photographs, artwork, displays, video/audio tape or CD recordings of role plays, simulations, interviews, talks or performances
- Powerpoint shows or web pages presenting the outcomes from citizenship projects or research, using text, sound and/or graphics
- certificates for awards and qualifications.

How can citizenship achievements be recognised?

Recognising young people's achievements plays a vital role in motivating them and helping them and others to value citizenship learning.

There are various ways of recognising citizenship achievements. These range from informal assessment, for example through questioning at the start and end of activities, to the more formal recognition of achievements through structured assessment tasks, local awards or national qualifications that may involve external assessment of knowledge, skills and understanding.

A variety of events can be used for celebrating overall achievements, including:

- open days
- presentation evenings
- exhibitions
- displays in workplace or community settings.

Activity

Explore the VHS/DVD to identify different ways citizenship learning and achievements can be recognised.

What kinds of recognition of achievements are currently available to learners in your area of work? How do you celebrate achievements in citizenship?

Where are you now?

To what extent do you feel confident in your understanding of the key features of teaching and learning post-16 citizenship, as outlined in this resource?

Circle the relevant score for each item on the scale from 0 (not at all confident) to 4 (very confident); leave blank if unsure.

Investigating issues

Supporting learners in choosing issues for 0 1 2 3 4 investigation that are citizenship issues

Facilitating discussions on sensitive/or 0 1 2 3 4 controversial issues using different approaches

Supporting learners by using different strategies 0 1 2 3 4 to develop their understanding of issues

Developing learners' skills in critical thinking 0 1 2 3 4

Citizenship action

Supporting different types of action 0 1 2 3 4

Managing proposed actions that are risky 0 1 2 3 4

Recognition of citizenship learning

Supporting learners' reflection on their 0 1 2 3 4 citizenship learning

Supporting reviews of citizenship learning 0 1 2 3 4

Recognising achievements 0 1 2 3 4

What next?

What was your most significant insight from exploring this resource and how might you use it in your citizenship work?

For those aspects you feel less confident about, how will you address your own learning needs?

In what ways might you use this resource to help colleagues develop their confidence and skills in supporting citizenship?

For further information about citizenship, examples of practice, resources and guidance on staff development, visit the following websites:

LSDA Post-16 Citizenship website: www.post16citizenship.org

QCA website: www.qca.org.uk/citizenship DfES website: www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship

References and acknowledgements

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This booklet has drawn on the following sources:

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DfES Progress File: www.dfes.gov.uk/progressfile

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