

PGCE Citizenship

Part 2

Key concepts - Pedagogy

This approach to citizenship is underpinned by four overarching concepts.

- How human communities work with knowledge
- The role of narrative in human community
- Social structures as systems of trust
- Structures of power and personal motivation

These concepts inform and shape the content of a citizenship programme that is designed around four main Learning Themes. These Learning Themes will be broken down into units of study, which will address the requirements of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Citizenship, namely

1. Knowledge, skills and understanding required to become an informed citizen
2. Developing skills of enquiry and communication
3. Developing skills of participation and responsible action.

The concepts of citizenship presented here provide a framework within which the factual knowledge and information relating to the subject area can be organised, retrieved and applied to other units of study within citizenship and across the curriculum (see appended Scheme).

A Constructivist and Critical Pedagogy

The pedagogy of citizenship is necessarily constructivist and critical. That is students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works, with a more or less implicit story of their own life and their own culture. They have already developed implicitly or explicitly some of the beliefs, values and attitudes which form the components of their own worldviews. These initial understandings and commitments need to be engaged through teaching and learning, which can then provide space for reflection, development, change, adaptation and action in the light of new learning.

At the heart of the pedagogy of citizenship is the notion of a dynamic interaction between the individual learner with self, others, community and the world. When the individual learner's story enacts with the stories of wider culture and with the stories of the learners own community, then active and critical citizenship education is facilitated. It is critical because it facilitates reflection and action in a direction which seeks the improvement and welfare of the individual, their local and global community.

This requires schools engaging in citizenship education to be explicit and clear about the vision and values which shape their own school community, and to adopt a broadly conceived, whole school approach to citizenship education. It also enables a localised and diverse response to the government agenda on citizenship, which can be appropriated by different communities according to their specific priorities and needs.

The learner in citizenship education is engaged as a whole person, with history, hopes, relationships, feelings, dispositions, awarenesses as well as the ability to think. These broader aspects of being a person are essential to the process of citizenship education.

The pedagogy of citizenship actively requires the development of higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, creative thinking, systems thinking. It also requires the development of emotional intelligence and spiritual and moral intelligence. The learning objectives of citizenship education, which relate to the learning process, are highly similar to learning objectives which promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Thus a consistent whole school approach to the pedagogy of citizenship, both within timetabled citizenship time and across the curriculum, will reduce 'innovation overload' and help in the promotion of effective learning.

Citizenship education and Lifelong Learning

The active and responsible citizen is also an effective lifelong learner. Smith and Spurling (1999) argue that lifelong learning relates to learning that takes place *throughout the lifespan*. It refers to learning with the widest possible boundaries,

including the main types and classes of learning, and both informal and formal education and self-directed learning. It is relatively continuous, with a broad momentum that is maintained throughout life. It is intentional on the part of the individual or the organisation and is expressed in some form of personal or organisational strategy, formally or informally, which may be re-appraised over time. It is closely linked to notions of personal fulfilment, vision and motivation.

At the moral level, lifelong learners are likely to live by four basic moral principles: personal commitment to learning; social commitment to learning; respect for others' learning and respect for truth. They argue that these principles have internal consistency even though they may be contested and are more difficult to verify empirically.

The accent for Smith and Spurling is on *continuity, intention* and *unfolding strategy* in personal learning, and beside these are four principles of *personal commitment to learning, social commitment to learning, respect for others' learning* and *respect for truth*.

Learning How to Learn

Thus the development of citizenship education within a school can make a significant contribution to the capacity of students to learn how to learn. Current research into the assessment of learning power indicates that there are at least five components of the power to learn – these are:

- Learning Dispositions
- Learning Awarenesses
- Learning Skills
- Learning Identity
- Learning Relationships
- Learning Story

The focus of citizenship lends it particularly to the exploration of learning identity, learning relationships and learning story – through the topical and contemporary

subject material which is explored and the nature of learning for citizenship. The links between Citizenship and PSHE are seamless, and are likely to be addressed within the same programme of study, and underpinned by the same conceptual framework.

There are obvious links between learning to learn, identity, vocation and careers and guidance and citizenship education opens up interesting arenas for the development of formative assessment, and self assessment FOR learning.

Whole School Ethos and Citizenship Education

The nature of citizenship education requires a commitment to a coherent and participatory school culture. All aspects of school life promote or detract from healthy education for citizenship. This includes assessment practices, pastoral care, school organisations such as School Councils and external relations with the local community. Whilst school leadership and management is beyond the scope of initial teacher training, it will be important for student teachers to be aware of these significant factors, and thus able to assess and comment on the contribution of the school leadership to this important area.