
Towards a Citizens' Curriculum

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#citizenscurriculum



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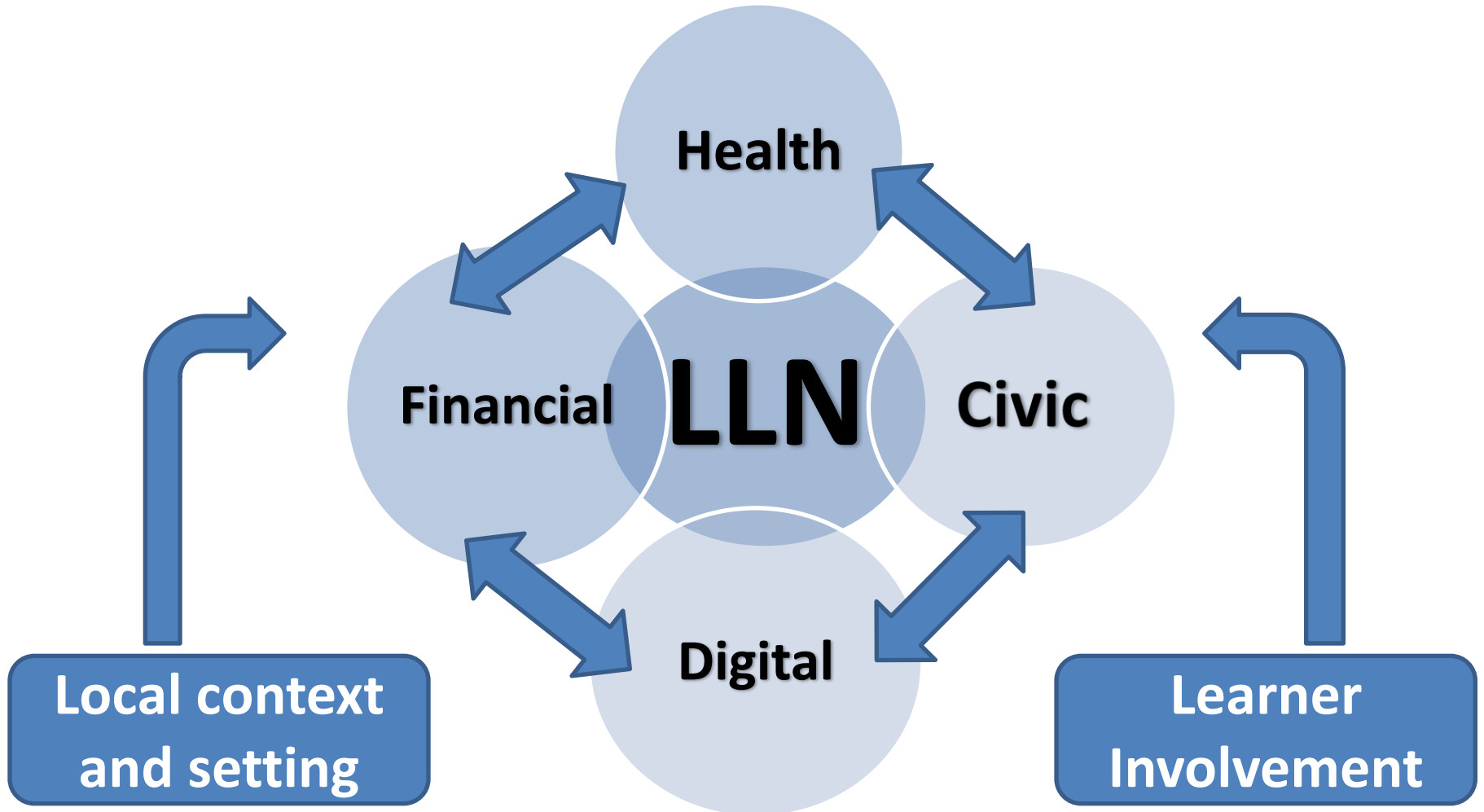
“A citizens’ curriculum is learning which is locally-led, developed with the active participation of learners, and interlinks the life skills of language, literacy and numeracy with health, financial, digital and civic capabilities.”



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Citizens' Curriculum **Capabilities**



Tom Schuller • David Watson

Learning Through Life

Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning

Summary



- Schuller and Watson (2009)
- NIACE / NRDC Evidence on impact of embedded basic skills – Eldred (2005); Casey (2006)
- Co-design of the curriculum - *A New Curriculum for Difficult Times* (Beer, 2013)



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Why is this work important to NIACE?

- More flexible, creative and innovative models are needed to engage and motivate learners and meet the challenge of poor basic language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills in the context of rapid social change
- The Citizens' Curriculum puts into practice a key recommendation from **Learning through Life**
- Our **pilots** – 16 providers in a range of settings – helped us to learn more about how a Citizens' Curriculum approach can work in practice, and evaluate its impact
- In turn, this gives us **an enhanced evidence base** about the impact of this type of learning and enables us to **feed key messages to policy-makers**



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Citizens' Curriculum Pilots

The English for Action Pilot



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Citizens' Curriculum Pilots

The Leicester College Pilot



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The remit?

- To develop a Citizens' Curriculum for adult learners who are from marginalised communities
 - ❖ Probation
 - ❖ ESOL
 - ❖ Families
 - ❖ Homeless
- The course must interlink the following capabilities; **health, civic, financial, digital** as well as **language, literacy and numeracy**
- To help improve a better quality of life and chances in employability
- The purpose of the project is to compile the results of/ outcomes from the pilot programmes into a report for April / May 2015

The plan for Leicester College

3 areas around
Leicester city

Topic based

4 hours per
week
For 10 weeks

Level 1 Health
and Social
Care learners

Focus on
volunteering
in the
community

Leicester College
Curriculum Area ESOL
Citizens' Curriculum Passport



learning for success



It's important to keep safe any documentation you receive as part of this programme – this includes your Passport booklet, stamps and/or declaration form.

Main topics of focus

My story

Multicultural
Leicester

Volunteering

Active
citizenship

Homelessness

Refugees and
asylum
seekers

The
environment

Equality and
diversity

Human rights

Community based action

- Belgrave: Action Homeless
- Highfields: City of Sanctuary
- West End: Leicester Food Bank



The results are...

- **Learners** enjoyed the course and would like to do more course work in this topic style
- **Learners** would like to do more charity fundraising activities
- **Learners** would like to take part in more assemblies
- **Learners** practised and improved their language skills in real world setting
- **Learners** grew in self esteem

The results are...

- Leicester College Curriculum area ESOL have been invited to meet with HRH Princess Royal.
- Leicester College Curriculum area ESOL are sharing their experience with own and other organisations.
- Findings will be shared with new Government post election to implement a new Citizens' Curriculum based on project.

Key Overall Findings - Providers

- Added value to the curriculum offer, which became more engaging through the interlinking of English, maths and language skills with other capabilities
- An improved curriculum offer which, through greater learner involvement, was felt to be more responsive to the needs of learners



Key Overall Findings - Practitioners

- Improved ability to make learning relevant to adults' lives and articulate the wider benefits of participation in learning, through a focus on the interlinked capabilities of the Citizens' Curriculum approach.
- For practitioners with less experience in the creation and co-design of flexible provision tailored to the needs of individuals, a greater appreciation of the value and benefits of this approach and keenness to embed this further in their practice.



Key Overall Findings - Learners

- Improved attitudes to learning, particularly with regard to English/language and maths, leading to progression into further learning opportunities.
- Improved skills and attitudes supporting employability, including increased motivation to seek work and/or participate in voluntary work, and for some learners, progression into employment or work placements.
- Improved engagement in the wider community and improved confidence and ability to use public services



Frequently Asked Questions ...

- Do we have to deliver all of the capabilities?
- What content should we teach for each of the capabilities? What about resources?
- Tutors don't have expertise in some of these areas, what can we do?
- What's the role of accreditation in the Citizens' Curriculum approach?



Discussion Questions

1. In what ways could you adopt a more participatory approach, to involve learners in the design of your curriculum?
2. In what ways could you embed the Citizens' Curriculum capabilities in your provision?
3. What would be the **benefits** and the **challenges** of adopting a Citizens' Curriculum approach? What would help to overcome the challenges?



NIACE Policy 'Asks'

“More emphasis on informal, non-formal, as well as formal learning to enable people to gain economically and socially useful skills.”

“Continued investment by the UK Government in Community Learning in England, with a review of the distribution of the funds.”

“A new study-programme approach, using the NIACE Citizens' Curriculum, to meet the needs of those with the lowest skills levels, which incorporates informal, non-formal as well as formal learning”.



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Next Steps for the Citizens' Curriculum

- More pilots in new settings – English and Maths for unemployed adults, ESA claimants and plans for work with young migrants
- More detailed evaluation and impact assessment including longer term analysis
- Further practitioner support around health and civic capabilities
- A 'technical consultation', looking at how the Citizens' Curriculum might form the basis of any 'study programme for adults'



Towards a Citizens' Curriculum

<http://www.niace.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/citizens-curriculum>

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