

Community Engagement

Community Learning

Definition of community

- Wide range of associations in relation to lifelong learning but is essentially a social construct
- Common identifiers are shared within a social group e.g. symbols, experiences, age, labels
- Lave and Wenger (1991) 'Community of practice'
- 'Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems...Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.' (Wenger circa 2007)

The nature of community learning

- Learning as a process of developing knowledge, skills and understanding
- Variation in the capacity of individuals to understand
- Community learning therefore about learning by the community rather than in the community
- Community learning as a process of community self-development involving cooperative lifelong learning (Ellis, 2003, 2005)

What is community learning?

- Element of social justice
- Key areas in relation to community learning (Knowles, 2005)
 1. Preparing the learner
 2. Establishing a conducive learning climate
 3. Creating a mechanism for mutual planning
 4. Diagnosing learning needs
 5. Formulating programme objectives
 6. Designing a pattern of learning experiences
 7. Carrying out such learning experiences

Question to discuss

- Given the nature and diversity of communities, what do you see as the main challenges for developing educational programmes within communities?

New Labour and Social Exclusion

- Explored a number of key areas e.g. improving prospects of NEETS, rehabilitation of offenders, community renewal
- Remit was to create prosperous communities that created opportunity and improved quality of life
- Replaced in 2006 with Social Exclusion Taskforce, closed in 2010 with work transferred to Office for Civil Society
- Recognition of the role education plays in alleviation of issues relating to social justice



NIACE – National Institute for Adult Education

- Key priority areas
- Life skills
- Learning in and for the workplace
- Family learning

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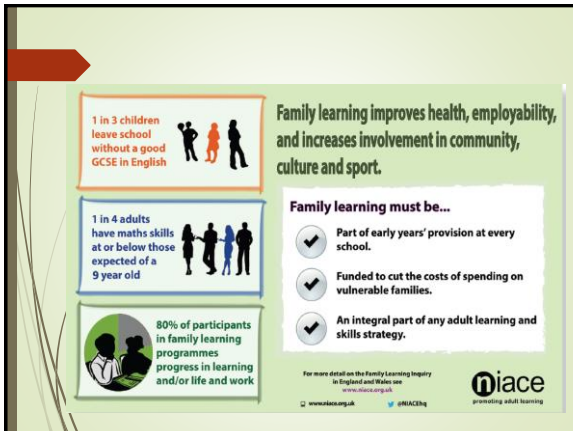
Community learning initiatives

- Family learning programmes
 - NIACE – a 'learning family'
- Benefits can be linked to:
 - parenting;
 - mental health;
 - financial inclusion;
 - children's wellbeing and
 - intergenerational relations.
- Inquiry into role of family learning by NIACE 2013



Report Recommendations (England)

- Family learning should be integral to school strategies
- Should be a key element in adult learning particularly for those furthest the labour market to improve employability
- Children have a right to grow up in a learning family, government should strive to support that with public body support for targeted groups
- Should be included within key government department policies and strategies to maximise cross curricular achievements
- Regular funding reviews
- Need to establish a joint national forum on family learning to support policy, quality practice, advocacy



1 in 3 children leave school without a good GCSE in English

1 in 4 adults have maths skills at or below those expected of a 9 year old

80% of participants in family learning programmes progress in learning and/or life and work

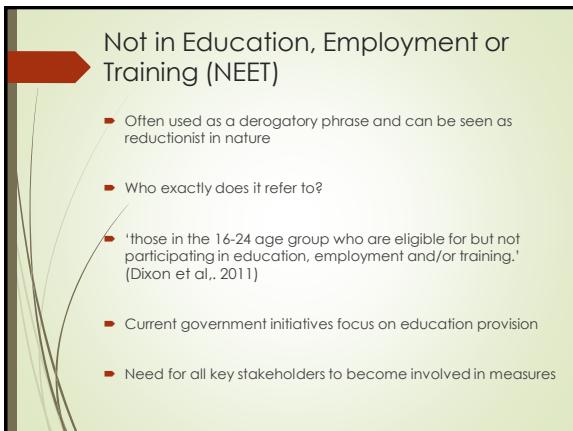
Family learning improves health, employability, and increases involvement in community, culture and sport.

Family learning must be...

- Part of early years' provision at every school.
- Funded to cut the costs of spending on vulnerable families.
- An integral part of any adult learning and skills strategy.

For more detail on the Family Learning Inquiry in England and Wales see www.niace.org.uk

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Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

- Often used as a derogatory phrase and can be seen as reductionist in nature
- Who exactly does it refer to?
- 'those in the 16-24 age group who are eligible for but not participating in education, employment and/or training.' (Dixon et al., 2011)
- Current government initiatives focus on education provision
- Need for all key stakeholders to become involved in measures



Other community learning initiatives

- Substance misuse and gang related issues
- Health and well being initiatives
- Migrant communities
- Older learners
- Rural learning initiatives

The role of stakeholders & funding

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| Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Local authorities ■ Third sector ■ NIACE – Adult Learners' Week | Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Transformation Fund – established following 'The Learning Revolution' White Paper (2009) ■ Community Learning Trusts |
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Schooling and Community Learning

- Schools as main agent of community-based learning activities
- Limitations? – needs to be grounded in the experiences of the individual outside the school
- Difference between schooling and learning

How well does a school perform in terms of community learning?

- Need to consider it in relation to the communities they reside in
- Poorer communities?
How does it deal with aspirations?
Does it focus on the able only?
Does it envisage itself as part of the community?
- Increasingly becoming a political issue
- 1970s – increasing political interest in failing schools

- What forms of education have the greatest social advantage? How much should be contributed to supporting them?
- The need for minimum of literacy and knowledge for a society to function along with acceptance of common values
- Education of a child contributes benefits to all
- Two broad areas of schooling types
 1. General education
 2. Vocational training

What are the benefits of denationalizing education?

- Increase in choice for parents
- Money could be spent elsewhere
- Consumerist approach – take your business elsewhere
- Benefits of competitive enterprise

- Stratification of residential areas...implications?
- How much choice do parents have within the current educational system?
- Cannot have true market style economies within education therefore remain at periphery

Education as a marketplace

- Choice of school is area most comparable to market economies
- Cannot have freedom of choice based on monetary worth so how does it work?
- Official testing is the way forward – rank and compare schools
- Two main problems with this approach

- Clear tension between hitting performance targets and becoming more 'community friendly'
- Increasing emphasis on performance can increase this tension (Crowther *et al* 2003)
- No real clear answer to this dilemma
- Schools likely to become more disengaged from their community

Relationship between school and community

- First duty of a school is to serve children and young people in the area
- How it does this is variable
- How does the school relate to the community to which it belongs?
- Needs to be open and accountable to their communities for community learning to work



- Can also be impacted upon by leadership style of head-teacher
- Local Management of Schools policy late 1980s
- Welsh Government Schools Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005



Other ways to assist

- Extended provision – more about social care than learning but does impact. Makes them more 'community friendly'
- Government based initiatives i.e. Sure Start
- Community based initiatives



TASK

- In groups research and feedback on the current initiatives and challenges to community adult learning on one of the following areas:
 - Wales
 - Scotland
 - England
