

Subject Specialism is at the heart of holistic teaching and Citizenship education is at the heart of a whole school approach

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Citizenship education ensures that young people can have both discrete teaching within a whole school approach. Bringing together what [The 1998 Advisory Group on Citizenship guided by Sir Bernard Crick originally proposed](#). All subjects should be involved in whole school approaches, but to do that we need subject specialists.

The [government's December 2021](#) response to its [ITT market review](#) is not just a risk for one ITE institution over another, or one subject over another, it is a risk for the quality and breadth of all subject specialism. Colleagues in this [blog series](#) have written much about this from the perspective of [reflection](#), [subject knowledge, concepts and skills](#) and [expertise](#).

We may egoistically, as teachers, want to live up to our students' idea that we know everything – but the reality is that we can't; we rely on the expertise of other subject specialists and teachers within the school team so that we can make learning a knowledge-rich and experiential journey.

Take the recent [DfE Political Impartiality Guidance relating to how schools and teachers should teach about political issues](#), many teachers faced with such guidance may be concerned at the volume of practicalities to consider when teaching about topics related to political literacy. These topics often concern events and actions that children see happening all around them and need specialist guidance to help them navigate. Teachers want them to develop essential skills that are intrinsic to their healthy development as democratic citizens. This is what Citizenship teachers are subject specialists in, and what our [PGCE Citizenship](#) initial teacher education programme at IOE is designed to provide.

"Good citizenship teachers do this. But often we find teachers, in particular non-specialists, are concerned about getting this wrong," [says Liz Moore, CEO of the Association for Citizenship Teaching](#). Specialist citizenship teachers are providing rich education to help young people proactively ensure they are equipped with skills and knowledge to traverse complex themes around, [media literacy](#), [climate change](#), [politics](#), [peace and conflict](#), [race and identity](#), [economic and financial literacy](#), [legal literacy](#) including about international agreements and [human rights](#). Good citizenship teachers enable young people to know how to analyse and debate [controversial issues](#), and how to make effective, valuable and measured [change in society](#), demonstrated by the young people at Hamilton Academy Leicester in their YouTube [#OurVoiceYourChoice video](#).

At [IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society](#) this year we are strengthening our community subject knowledge further through the [Teachers and Citizenship Knowledge project](#) in this citizenship education specialist community project we are bringing together citizenship academics and specialist teachers and student teachers to explore and examine the knowledge and skills content in themes around The Prevent Duty, human rights, conspiracy theories and media literacy, race and racism, peace and conflict and influencing political decisions. These are core concepts that require specialist citizenship teachers to be at the heart of teaching around contemporary concerns in discrete lessons and throughout whole school approaches working to connecting subjects thematically.

Such ITE at IOE ensures that all teachers have a foundational knowledge of pedagogy, and just like in the [often commented on Finnish education system](#), we educate subject specialists that can work

together. The [2018 House of Lords](#) report on citizenship demonstrates that specialist citizenship teaching is essential for society. To ensure that schools have rich opportunities for communities of learning, we don't need more generalists, but more specialists in all subjects.