ITC

Education for Citizenship in Scotland

Electronic Consultation Study

Evaluation Report

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May 2001

Prepared For: Learning and Teaching Scotland

Executive Summary

E-consultant is a web-based application that allows Internet users to make responses to a consultation, read related consultation documents, see who else has contributed and the nature of their response, and return to read feedback on the outcomes of the process. The website's contents, appearance, structure and functions are tailored by ITC to meet the needs of the particular consulting body, in this case Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) for their Education for Citizenship draft paper. During the e-consultation ITC monitor the site using Conditions of Use also agreed beforehand. After the e-consultation the outcomes are summarised and reported, and that is the focus of this report.

E-consultant addressed the need to collect responses from the wider community and informal responses generally. It also served as a pilot for future LTS consultations on aspects of curriculum review. E-consultant collected responses for the period 15th December to 16th March 2001.

Our analysis addresses the following evaluation questions, firstly concerning the responses:-
- How effective was e-consultant in facilitating discussion and highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement?
- What were the main issues and the areas of agreement and disagreement?

Secondly concerning the participants:-
- Who used e-consultant, in terms of their self-identification with the target groups and their interest in education for citizenship?
- Which parts of e-consultant were most and least frequently accessed?
- What were e-consultant users views about the e-consultation itself, and where did they have specific difficulties?

In our view the e-consultation did make a worthwhile contribution to the consultation process, complementing the 3 other response routes made available by LTS. The number of responses was lower than expected, especially from those not directly engaged in providing education, but offset by their topicality and some constructive criticisms.

Responses to the paper's main argument, that schools and pre-5 centres have key roles in fostering active citizenship, were broadly very supportive but qualified by some common concerns about the capacity of schools to deliver. The "key characteristics of effective responsible citizenship" were unanimously but not strongly supported. The general concern was that the statements are too 'aspirational' and should be more clearly related to processes of citizenship, including the role of parents and carers. The responses here elaborated on the concerns about the relation of aims to delivery. The comments generally endorsed the view that education for citizenship is an entitlement, and that this entitlement should be manifest in the 'whole educational experience' as well as the formally taught curriculum. The ability of schools to manage and deliver the new learning opportunities required was a serious concern. The New Community Schools, and initiatives like Community Learning Plans were thought to offer useful partnership models for interaction between schools and their local communities. Participants called for existing practices to be mapped, and benchmarks to be considered. Nevertheless there was a strong consensus that education for citizenship should be evaluated but not formally assessed or accredited. CPD and in-service training were thought to be the appropriate focus for disseminating good practice.

The 34 participants in the e-consultation were, for the most part, people directly involved in education provision as teachers or education managers. There was little participation by parents

or other interest groups as far as we can discern from the responses to our online evaluation questionnaire. Most comments were made in the first and last week of the consultation. Half of those who registered for the site did not go on to respond. This and some comments we received from would-be contributors suggest that some were put off by the prospect of their comments being publicised before their institutions response had been made on paper.

Our comments reflecting on the process are based on the outcomes and records of how the site was used, observations on the experience of managing the site and of the consultation conference events. On that basis we conclude that:-

1. There were evidently some off-putting aspects to the site, particularly the registration process, and some features were not easy enough to use.
2. The e-consultation process may benefit from more effective targeting of the various communities of practice it was addressed to. That is, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach:-
   – Education providers and managers might respond more readily to a process integrating online and face-to-face conferencing.
   – Other members of the public might respond more readily to a site with a simpler structure, fewer more general questions and a simplified version of the consultation document.

Given the range of alternative routes to take part in the consultation, there was probably a need for a stronger 'carrot' to stimulate participation in the e-consultation. Marketing and publicity need to be highlighted as key areas for further consideration. There needs to be a range of different ways of promoting future e-consultations to highlight their existence and gather public participation.

Looking to the future, we are interested in exploring with LTS the possibilities of online consultation conferencing, perhaps in the context of CPD, to identify how an e-consultation process might best be aligned with incentives to share practice experiences.

1   Introduction

Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS) has consulted on its paper Education for Citizenship using several approaches to obtain the views of the target audiences:-

- formal responses using the distributed consultation document which was available both on paper and electronically;
- feedback from a number of conferences and events planned in conjunction with various partners
- responses from young people in schools and youth forums using specialist youth consultation material focusing on the document
- electronic consultation using e-consultant.

E-consultant is a web-based application that allows Internet users to make responses to a consultation, read related consultation documents, see who else has contributed and the nature of their response, and return to read feedback on the outcomes of the process. The website's contents, appearance, structure and functions were tailored by ITC to meet the needs of LTS. During the e-consultation ITC monitored the site using Conditions of Use agreed beforehand. This report focuses on the outcomes and evaluation of the e-consultation.

E-consultant addressed the need to collect responses from the wider community and informal responses generally. It also served as a pilot for future LTS consultations on aspects of curriculum review. E-consultant collected responses for the period 15th December to 16th March 2001.

In this evaluation report we give a brief summary of the development of the *e-consultant* website, focussing on the design objectives and intended audience. The main focus of the report is on the e-consultation process and its outcomes, in terms of an analysis of the following:-

- The nature of the responses received over the 3-month period.
- The participants, i.e. their self-described interests in the consultation, their use of the website, and views on its ease of use.

We conclude with some comments on the implications for the e-consultation process, and its relation to the other consultation methods deployed by LTS on this occasion; conferences, young peoples' pack, and the traditional 'written response' route.

It is anticipated that further evaluation will be reported in August following a short research project currently being conducted by a postgraduate student on Napier's MSc course in Multimedia Technology. This will include qualitative analysis of interviews with people who did and did not use e-consultant, from the consultation target groups.

2   Development of the e-consultation

2.1   The design objectives

The aims and overall structure of the e-consultation site were agreed between ITC and LTS in November 2000, and the design implemented with software engineering support from BT in Glasgow in the 6 weeks up to its launch at the Aberdeen consultation conference on 16th December 2000.

The general aims were to widen access to the consultation by providing a means for any internet user to express their views on Education for Citizenship in Scotland, and add to the

transparency of the process by allowing e-consultant users to read and respond to previous comments.

The main sections of e-consultant were:-
- Overview: A welcoming page outlining the purpose of the consultation, and with links to the main websites for ITC and LTS.
- Information: Structured around the text of Education for Citizenship, this included links from the consultation questions to a Comment page for each question.
- Comment: Here uses could enter their responses, either in the form of a written comment or by clicking a response option for a closed question (of the "How far do you agree?" form). To respond to a previously made comment, a user could choose to "reply", and/or indicate how they rated that comment (on a 1-5 scale) as a contribution to the debate.
- Feedback: Details of the other consultation routes and event dates were included here, as a forerunner to a statement on Learning and Teaching Scotland's response to the consultation.
- Contributors: This listed the name and country of all those who had made a response.
- Log-in/Logoff: To make a response users had to state a user id and password. They selected these themselves during a (one-off) registration process that also stated the Conditions of Use and privacy policy.

To assist with the evaluation there also an on-line questionnaire for registered users to complete before exiting from the site.

A graphical outline of the site structure is included as *Annex 3* to this report.

Following comments at the Aberdeen conference that launched the consultation, two additional features were implemented in January 2001. These were:-
1. Links from the *Contributors* page, so that by clicking on the name of someone who had responded, any comments they had made were shown on-screen and any closed questions they had responded to were also indicated. After reflection on the Data Protection implications of displaying these responses without the prior informed consent of their authors, we agreed to limit the availability of this feature to LTS.
2. A "progress chart" feature. This was added to provide an 'at-a-glance' overview of the responses received so far, in the form of a bar chart that was accessible from a link in the *Overview* page. This is included as *Annex 2*.

ITC (Angus Whyte) attended the North Lanarkshire conference as a participant observer, to gain an understanding of the consultation process at these events and offer support to any of the delegates who wanted to try e-consultant using the PCs provided by LTS for that purpose.

2.2 Audience & Publicity
The e-consultant site was intended to be accessible for any interested member of the public to use. Particular efforts were made to publicise it to those that LTS expected to have the highest interest: teachers and others working in education centres, education managers (particularly those in education authorities) and other educational interest groups.

These efforts included online publicity, particularly targeting online news providers and NGfL websites, and references in all LTS publicity about the consultation process. ITC, as in previous e-consultations, limited its involvement in publicity to:-
1. Registration with the top 6 Internet 'search engines'
2. Distribution of "*quick response*" postcards at consultation conferences. These were paper self-addressed cards on which a comment could be made and posted directly to ITC. The

personal details also written on the card were then used by ITC to register the respondent on e-consultant. If an e-mail address was given a copy of the comment was e-mailed in return, along with a user-id and password. These cards were distributed at the 2nd and 3rd consultation conference, alongside the forms intended for delegates to make written comments on the event itself.

3   Process of Evaluation

3.1   Sources of evidence

Participation in the e-consultation was recorded in three ways, each providing evidence of its outcomes and effectiveness:-

- Database records: The e-consultant web site automatically maintains a database of all users who register, and their responses to the consultation questions.
- Online evaluation questionnaire: The "log-out" option in e-consultant automatically presented the user with a short evaluation questionnaire, asking their views on it's ease of use and any specific problems encountered.
- Web server log-file analysis: The e-consultant site (as is common practice for any website) has an associated set of log files. These record all 'hits' to a site, the specific pages requested, the computer address of each visitor, and 'visits' or consecutive file requests from the same computer address.

3.2   Methodology

In analysing the outcomes we have used methods appropriate to the features that distinguish the e-consultation from other methods used:-
1) The responses made online were immediately publicly available for others to read and respond to in turn.
2) There was an explicit relation between the responses and specific consultation questions.
3) Questions of the "do you agree" or "how far do you agree" form were given a quantifiable response format, i.e. respondents could rate their response from 1-3 or 1-5 respectively.

These features mean that some characteristics of the responses can more easily be summarised, processed and quantified than is the case with other methods. In some respects (2 and 3 above) the e-consultation resembled an on-line questionnaire, although an important difference is that the questions were in this case embedded in the discussion document, which could be cross-referred to online.

A more important methodological difference between e-consultation and online survey methods is that e-consultation is based on qualitative research assumptions. There was no sample, since participation is based on a civic right to express a view. We were not seeking to test the correlation between variables, and it would not have been feasible to do this even if we had thought it desirable.

Our research approach is more in keeping with action research, in that we were participants in the consultation process rather than disengaged observers. From previous experience we were aware that, if a general aim of e-consultation is to broaden the opportunities for people to have their voice represented in the consultation process, there is a general need to find ways of representing that voice. Since there are potentially many hundreds of separate 'voices', it is important to summarise and abstract from them in a form that meets the consulting body's requirements.

The number of responses on this occasion means that it is relatively easy to appreciate the range of views expressed from the 'raw' responses to the open and closed questions. However we have developed a trial set of indicators to support their analysis, and offer them for comment.

The indicators used in section 4 test the relevance of the e-consultant website design, i.e. whether it was fit for its purpose, through critical reflection on our involvement in the consultation process, and the e-consultation outcomes. We have also used a (fairly minimal) coding framework, in keeping with standard qualitative analysis approaches, to summarise features of the responses. However these codes or content categories are used as an aid to summarising and representing the points of view expressed *rather than* a means to develop theory. Our analysis also uses descriptive statistics, again as an aid to the practical task of summarising the outcomes rather than for academic purposes.

3.3   Evaluation questions

In light of the e-consultation aims and features, we want to answer the following questions.

Firstly concerning the responses:-
–   How effective was e-consultant in facilitating discussion and highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement?
–   What were the main issues and the areas of agreement and disagreement?

Secondly concerning the participants:-
–   Who used e-consultant, in terms of their self-identification with the target groups and their interest in education for citizenship?
–   Which parts of e-consultant were most and least frequently accessed?
–   What were e-consultant users views about the e-consultation itself, and where did they have specific difficulties?

4   Evaluation of e-consultant

This section seeks to answer the question "How effective was e-consultant in facilitating discussion and highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement?"

To answer the question we need to recall the features of e-consultant that were designed to meet these needs and then ask further questions about how they were used. The relevant features were:-
–   The Comment page, on which users could respond to open ended questions with their comments.
–   The ability to rate other people's comments, according to whether the user thought they were a valuable contribution to the debate, enabling a kind of ongoing 'peer review' of the discussion so that highly rated comments were indicated with asterisks.
–   The closed questions ("how far do you agree"..), responses to which were charted so that a constantly updated 'poll' could be seen on screen.

A key feature of e-consultant is the *Comment* page, structured around the consultation questions so that having selected a question a user can see the responses made so far, add their own comment and/or reply to those made already. In this way a 'thread' of comments and replies can be built up, and this is visualised on screen by showing the first few lines of each comment, with successive levels of indentation used to show which comments are replies to others.

This format is commonly used in website 'discussion forums', which are similar to internet 'newsgroups'. Both are normally structured so that users can respond to a question or discussion topic. The Education for Citizenship version of e-consultant has many questions, and has the added dimension of 'hyperlinks' to the consultation document itself. This is significant in that it reflects the *differences* between these normally ad-hoc forms of online discussion and the consultation process. In consultations a consulting body seeks to contain a dialogue within boundaries – focusing on particular target audiences, pre-identified questions, a document articulating the grounds of these, a period within which responses may be made, and a means for taking up the views expressed.

This difference is important because unlike the more ad-hoc forms of online discussion we would expect the responses made in an e-consultation to be responses *to the document*, rather than responses to other people's comments. Key questions then are:-

1) **Did the number of comments reflect expectations, relative to the other response routes?**
2) **How topical were the comments, i.e. to what extent did they address the consultation questions to which they were a response, and on what topics did people have most to say?**

However since e-consultant's Comment page does share the aim and format of newsgroups it is also important to ask:-

3) **To what extent did e-consultant users seek and respond to other people's viewpoints.**

A key aim of the consultation was to get *constructive criticisms* of the document, therefore it is also important to ask: -

4) **Which consultation questions brought most criticism of the position set out in the corresponding document section?**

A further aim was to *highlight areas of (dis)agreement*, so were the facilities that were intended to enable this used? I.e.

5) **To what extent did people assign ratings to other people's comments, to identify those they valued as a contribution to the debate?**
6) **To what extent did people respond to the closed questions ("how far do you agree"..)?**

4.1 Did the number of comments reflect expectations, relative to the other response routes?

Just over half (34) of the 64 registered users went on to make some form of response, and 24 of these made 122 comments in response to open-ended questions. The participants made 2 comments on average, although 41% of them made only one comment and 18% (6 people) contributed 63% of the comments.

It is also notable that 90% of the comments were made either in the first week (42%) or the last week (48%) of the consultation. These periods also coincided with consultation conferences, at which the e-consultation was made available by Learning & Teaching Scotland for delegates to use during break times. This coincidence may result from the publicity at these events. Although no delegates actually responded online during the conferences, a few took up the opportunity to respond using the "quick start" postcards distributed at them. However it is also likely to reflect norms of the consultation process. The early comments appeared to come from members of the education sector close to Learning and Teaching Scotland, while the later ones were made after most institutional responses would have been made. The preferred route for

these more formal responses was paper/post. One institutional response was made online, by The Highland Council, as a result of their previous interest in e-democracy and work with ITC.

Overall, the number of participants, 34, was less than we had expected, by comparison 158 responded through the formal paper route. This was despite efforts by Learning and Teaching Scotland to publicise the e-consultation, especially to the education community. We can guess at a range of factors to account for this:-

− Those individuals who wanted to respond on behalf of an organisation thought the conventional written/postal route was more appropriate, and/or their procedures for responding were organised to make this the taken-for-granted course of action.
− Those in the education sector who wanted to respond on their own behalf would not want to do so publicly before their employers official response had been submitted.
− Consultation conferences offered a medium for sharing relatively informal and relatively private responses, together with more opportunity for social networking.
− The need to register on-line in order to make a comment was off-putting and the website was not easy enough to use.
− Teachers and others in the education sector would not ordinarily use the Internet during working time to respond on their own individual behalf. Working from home, the paper/post route would seem the cheaper and easier option.
− People less directly engaged in education were not made sufficiently aware of it, and/or saw the e-consultation and its content as a form of debate that was intended for education professionals.

We currently only have a few reports to substantiate these observations, which are the topic of further research by a MSc Student, Gerardo Ongaro. The last point is addressed later in this reoprt.

4.2   How topical were the comments?

To answer this we rated each comment on the 1-5 scale in the table below, which shows the % of comments that we assigned to each category[1]:-

5	Explicitly related to the question and to the corresponding section of the document.	80%
4	As above but only indirectly or generally related to the document.	14%
3	Indirectly related to both the question and document.	4%
2	Indirectly related to either the question or the document.	2%
1	No obvious relation to either the question or the document.	1%

The high level of 'topical' responses is likely to have partly resulted from the registration process, which discouraged anonymous contributions, and from the participants being largely from the education sector.

The educational background of many participants in the Comment pages was evident in the language used. We interpreted the extent to which the language used in each comment presumed knowledge of professional practice, or competence in abstract terminology, beyond that which would be expected of any lay member of the public. For this we used another set of ratings:-

5	Predominant use of professional language/ abstract terminology	2%
4	Extensive use	2%
3	Some	8%
2	Little	32%
1	None	55%

We took the relative extent of specialist language in a response into consideration, and also that many non-educationalists, parents especially, would be familiar enough with the curriculum to understand some subject acronyms (e.g. PSD). The table above indicates that about half the comments presumed some professional knowledge. Although the language used was generally not particularly abstract, it was probably enough to convey a sense that the consultation was aimed at a specific audience.

Their background aside, the participants had most to say on (arguably) the most general of the 24 consultation questions. This can quickly be measured by counting the number of responses to open questions, the number of words in each comment, and calculating totals and averages for each question and section.

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[1] Each comment was rated independently by two coders (Angus Whyte, Gerardo Ongaro). Where ratings differed the average was used.

Participants had *most* to say about the Introduction, Section 1 and Section 3 (in that order) and about these 3 questions in particular:-

1.1.1: A broad view of the meaning of citizenship is advocated. How far do you agree with this view?
I.1: The paper argues that schools and pre-5 centres have key roles to play in educating young people for active and responsible citizenship. What is your view?
3.1.1: What are your views about the idea that education for citizenship is an entitlement for every young person?

Participants had *least* to say about most of section 4, and (overall) about these 3 questions in particular:-

2.3.4: The Review Group concluded that creativity and enterprise are important aspects of capability for citizenship. What are your views about the description of these offered?
4.1.2: How does education for citizenship relate to other social and educational priorities, such as social inclusion and improving achievement?
2.3.3: What are your views about the statements on values and dispositions for citizenship?

4.3   To what extent did e-consultant users seek and respond to other people's viewpoints?

Here we used content categories developed in one of the few previous studies of political newsgroups (Wilhelm, 2000) [2]. The categories or codes below were assigned to each comment, then the % of comments in each category was counted for each question and each section of the document:-

PROVIDE   The response is solely providing information in the form of facts or opinion.
SEEK   The response includes evidence of information seeking in the form of queries or open-ended remarks.
REPLY   The response replies to another previously posted (whether or not the 'reply' facility was actually used to make the response).

Overall 94% of the responses were of the 'provide' kind, and for most questions they all were. Participants only sought information from others in 2 of the responses (1%), and replied to others in 5%.

It is worth noting here that although this indicates very little active exchange of views this is not particularly unusual for online 'discussion forums', since there is a known tendency for people to seek out and respond to those that reflect their pre-existing views. By comparison, Wilhelm's study of political newsgroups found a 15% rate of reply.

The highest number of response levels was 3 (i.e. a reply to a reply to a response to a consultation question) for question 3.1.1. This indicates that the most active exchange of views was about the question "*What are your views about the idea that education for citizenship is an entitlement for every young person?*" Referring again to Wilhelm's study, this is low in comparison with some political newsgroups.

The lower rate for this e-consultation is probably a reflection of the nature of the task and the substantial nature of the consultation document that the responses were directed towards. There may also be issues about the ease of making a reply using e-consultant, but we are not aware of any.

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[2] Wilhelm, A. Virtual sounding boards: how deliberative is online political discussion in: Hague, B. and Loader, B. *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age* London: Routledge, 2000

4.4 Which consultation questions brought most criticism of the document?

Here we rated each comment on a 1-5 scale of "dissent", i.e. criticism of the validity of the question and/or the grounds of the argumentation in the corresponding section of Education for Citizenship. The table below shows the % of comments that we assigned to each category:-

5	Very strong criticism	3%
4	Strong criticism	6%
3	Mild criticism	13%
2	Very mild criticism	30%
1	No criticism	48%

We should point out that this was not a scale of positive or negative responses to questions of the "how far do you agree" format (see below).

We also derived average ratings for each question, then for each section of the document. These are included in table 1. Although these averages are not meaningful in themselves, the relative scores for each section (and, although we have not included them here, for each question) allow 'at a glance' recognition of which questions brought the most critical responses. These were:-

Q1.2.1 How far do you agree with the described 'key characteristics of effective, responsible citizenship'?
Q2.3.1 What are your views on the approach to defining and exemplifying knowledge and understanding associated with capable citizenship?
Q2.3.2 What are your views on the statements about the skills and competencies required for capable citizenship?
Q3.4.4 What are the implications of the suggested approach for curriculum design and management?

The nature of the criticisms is discussed later.

4.5 To what extent did people assign ratings to other people's comments?

Only 8 (25%) of the participants used the "How do you rate this comment" feature, to evaluate 36 comments made by others. This includes 19 ratings made by Learning and Teaching Scotland (Colin McAndrew and Christine Twine), which appear to have encouraged the remainder. This feature is a form of 'collaborative filtering' that has been used on other discussion sites to encourage peer validation of the views expressed, and thereby support the formation of 'online community'. However there were too few users to build up a critical mass of comments that needed filtering. The ongoing MSc research will establish how some users viewed this feature, and whether it may in fact have dissuaded people from commenting for fear their views would not be highly rated.

4.6 To what extent did people respond to the closed questions ("how far do you agree"..)?

Most participants took the opportunity to respond to these. There were 74 responses to "Do you agree" or "How far do you agree" questions, and 80% of those who used this form of response also answered open questions.

The results so-far of a closed question response could be seen at any time on the page displaying that question. This afforded a quick overview of the position that previous users took towards the issues raised in *Education for Citizenship*.

The extent of *agreement* was highest (of the closed questions) for these:-

QB.1 Do you agree that these are the key skills relevant to citizenship? (Yes 100% - 6 responses)
QA.1 Do you agree that these are the key areas of knowledge relevant to citizenship? (Not sure 86%, No 14% - 7 responses)

The extent of *disagreement* was highest for these:-
Q2.2.1 Education for citizenship should aim to develop capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. How far do you agree with this statement of the overall goal of education for citizenship? (Agree strongly: 44%, Agree: 39%, Not sure: 11%, Disagree: 6% - 18 responses).

Table 1 below summarises figures used in this section.

Q.	No.Comments	Avg.Words	No.Words	Dissent	Special	Provide	Seek	Reply	No.Levels
I.1	12	54	692	2	2	83%	0%	17%	2
1.1.1	10	75	794	2	2	80%	10%	10%	2
1.2.1	5	63	335	3	2	100%	0%	0%	1
Avg.	*8*	*69*	*565*						
2.2.1	6	45	296	2	1	50%	17%	33%	2
2.3.1	5	27	154	3	2	100%	0%	0%	1
2.3.2	4	77	324	3	2	100%	0%	0%	1
2.3.3	3	23	81	2	1	100%	0%	0%	1
2.3.4	2	16	39	1	1	100%	0%	0%	1
Avg.	*4*	*38*	*179*						
3.1.1	10	47	510	2	1	80%	0%	20%	3
3.2.1	5	30	168	1	1	100%	0%	0%	1
3.2.2	6	49	320	2	2	100%	0%	0%	1
3.3.1	3	127	392	1	2	100%	0%	0%	1
3.4.1	2	50	108	1	1	100%	0%	0%	1
3.4.2	7	55	415	2	2	86%	0%	14%	2
3.4.3	3	25	86	1	2	100%	0%	0%	1
3.4.4	3	40	131	3	2	100%	0%	0%	1
3.5.1	5	31	174	2	1	100%	0%	0%	1
Avg.	*5*	*50*	*256*						
4.1.1	7	42	323	1	1	100%	0%	0%	1
4.1.2	3	14	55	1	2	100%	0%	0%	1
4.1.3	3	32	109	1	1	100%	0%	0%	1
4.1.4	4	60	257	1	2	100%	0%	0%	1
4.1.5	5	29	164	1	1	100%	0%	0%	1
Avg.	*4*	*36*	*182*						
A.1	5	38	210	1	1	80%	0%	20%	2
B.1	4	68	286	2	2	100%	0%	0%	1
Total	122								
Avg.	*6*	*50*	*338*	*2*	*2*	*94%*	*1%*	*5%*	

5 Analysis of Responses

In this section we address the question "What were the main discussion issues and areas of (dis)agreement?". We have summarised the views expressed and the main areas of (dis)agreement below, according to the sections of the consultation document.

Introduction

Responses to the paper's main argument, that schools and pre-5 centres have key roles in fostering active citizenship, were broadly very supportive but qualified by some common concerns:-

- That schools in particular may not have the capacity to take on the role envisaged, and should not do so in isolation from other educational and wider community agencies;
- That schools themselves need to 'practice what they preach' in terms of democratic governance;
- That schools are not the only, and probably not the major, influence on young peoples' conception of citizenship and this should be considered in setting targets or success criteria.

The extent of these concerns ranged from recommendations to take a broad view of the actors who should be involved in delivery, to scepticism about the realism of the whole project. One participant saw the entire notion of education for citizenship as a proposal for indoctrination (and repeated this view in responses to other questions).

Section 1

The broad view of citizenship advocated in the document was supported by nearly all participants. The document's emphasis on experiential learning was welcomed, although the practical difficulties of involving pupils in activities outside their school were mentioned, as was the potential conflict with academic targets. Several participants drew attention to the rights of citizens to choose whether to participate or not. One local authority (Highland, who contributed their formal response) emphasised Governments responsibility alongside 'business organisations as corporate citizens'. They also recommended some re-phrasing of the "key characteristics of effective responsible citizenship". The wording in the document was unanimously but not strongly supported, the general concern being that the statements are too 'aspirational' and should be more clearly related to processes of citizenship, including the role of parents and carers.

Section 2

The responses here elaborated on the concerns about the relation of aims to delivery. This section was the most criticised and also the least commented on (on average). The main issues were:-

- How the cross-curricular nature of education for citizenship could be supported, or indeed enforced.
- A perceived lack of clarity in the detailed statements and examples of Annex A and B or (conversely) a concern that these were too prescriptive to encourage experiential learning.
- A concern that more emphasis on information literacy skills was needed, and that this should be addressed in CPD for teachers.
- The statements on values and dispositions did not mention the role of parents or how to address the differentiation of 'desirable' values from others.

Section 3

The comments generally endorsed the view that education for citizenship is an entitlement, and that this entitlement should be manifest in the 'whole educational experience' as well as the formally taught curriculum. One participant criticised the document for a perceived lack of evidence to back the Review Committee's rejection of citizenship as a subject.

The 'four means' of education for citizenship were welcomed as helpful to planning although it was also thought they could be more comprehensive and should not be prescriptive. The most commonly drawn implication of the 'inclusive and participative ethos' outlined in this section was that it would add to the task of auditing practice. The Highland Council drew a distinction between the provision of curricular learning experiences and development of a participative ethos and felt that audit of the former was probably necessary, though it would not be welcomed. One comment also called for a 'participative ethos' to more explicitly mention a multicultural approach to education.

The 'key learning experiences' set out in section 3 were also seen as welcome, especially in their experiential aspects. Highland Council emphasised the strengths and weaknesses of this – that it was the most challenging aspect of education for citizenship, and that it risked raising too high expectations of school democracy. The 3-5 curriculum opportunities brought very few comments but these saw the development of opportunities for early learning as highly significant. By contrast the 5-14 curriculum was thought to be rather full of existing opportunities, with the need to highlight these and to develop 'key learning experiences'. The post-14 curriculum was felt to hold opportunities for better integration, and for Community Education involvement. Across the whole curriculum, the ability of schools to manage and deliver these new opportunities was a serious concern. The New Community Schools, and initiatives like Community Learning Plans were thought to offer useful partnership models for interaction between schools and their local communities.

Section 4

Comments on the longer term implications again pointed to New Community Schools as a source of lessons-to-be-learned, and expressed concern that change would (and should) either be dramatic or non-existent. Participants called for existing practices to be mapped, and benchmarks to be considered. Nevertheless there was a strong consensus that education for citizenship should be evaluated but not formally assessed or accredited. CPD and in-service training were thought to be the appropriate focus for disseminating good practice. This and the role of Teacher Education Institutions were highlighted as key to the enthusiasm and commitment of staff. Highland Council also made a number of specific recommendations, calling for additional funding and support to be directed to young people's forums, school-community links, the Scottish Youth Parliament and a "Young Citizen of the Year" award.

Annexes A and B

The responses to these brought comprehensive support for the list of 'key skills', but equally comprehensive uncertainty about the 'key areas of knowledge', which were felt to be too restrictive. One commentator saw critical thinking, and perhaps philosophy, as deserving of greater support in the curriculum.

6 The Participants

The records of participants help to provide a picture of who visited the site, what they did there, who contributed to it, what they contributed, and what the contributors thought of it. The full list of participants can be found in *Annex 1*.

6.1 Who visited, and what did they do?

A picture of who visited the site can be built up from log-file analysis. The analysis only provides a 'broad-brush' picture since log files do not record specific users or details of who they are beyond their computer (IP) address. However the log files do provide a rich data set that can be used to identify what parts of the site were most frequently accessed.

The database records provide details of which comments were most frequently read. The top 3 were:-

1.1.1: A broad view of the meaning of citizenship is advocated. How far do you agree with this view?

> **From Terry Ashton on 14 December 2000, 13:15:00**
> **Too often citizenship is seen as being about getting involved in politics or in other groups, such as pressure groups. There is a need to help young people to appreciate that there are lots of ways of being an active citizen, ie contributing to the good of the country and its people, and that they are equally valuable. We also need to think about how we can help young people to feel that they are not only citizens of Scotland or the UK, but also citizens of Europs and the world.**

- Read 60 times

3.1.1: What are your views about the idea that education for citizenship is an entitlement for every young person?

> **From Lynn Hendry on 14 December 2000, 10:30:00**
> **I believe that entitlement in this area should be for every young person. This subject is not however only a curricular issue - the concept of citizenship should permeate the whole educational experience of the young person, both through formal and informal aspects of the education process.**

- Read 44 times

2.2.1: Education for citizenship should aim to develop capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. How far do you agree with this statement of the overall goal of education for citizenship?

> **From C Gee on 13 December 2000, 14:34:00**
> **I agree with the aims of the 'citizenship' in education idea. However I don't see the initiative taking off cosnidering the current pressures on the curriculum unless there is some element of compulsion on schools to make this a cross-curricular initiative rather than a Modern Studies 'topic' which by the way it is already.**

- Read 42 times

6.2   Who contributed?

There were 62 users who registered with e-consultant, including 4 employees of Learning & Teaching Scotland and 2 of ITC. Half of the 64 registered users went on to make some form of response, and roughly half of those (15) also gave responses to the online evaluation questionnaire.

In the online questionnaire, 3 questions asked the participants to provide more details about themselves than had already been asked of them when they registered with the site (registration only asked for names and locations). Their responses are as follows:-

Q.1 Please describe which of the following area(s) you work in:

(respondents could select more than one option)

parent	3
pre-5 education	1
primary education	3
secondary education	4
further or higher education	3
voluntary education	2
community education	-
education manager	4

Other: Education Adviser (Guidance and Careers); Community Development; MSc Student interested in Volunteering and Citizenship, former teacher, former Education Convenor; Educational researcher

Q.2 What is your interest in citizenship education?

- Fundamental to personal and social development and so totally relevant to my work with young people and teachers
- Responsibility for international activities
- Its contribution to strengthening local democracy
- Development linked to the New Community School agenda
- Teach Public Law and Public Administration at University level. Many students do not have even the basic knowledge about electoral system, government, difference between an MP and a minister etc
- I have children
- I believe that it is important to encourage and support people who contribute in a positive way to the society in which I live.
- Ah canna thole the wey citizenship is uized as a euphemism fir the dwynin o democracy i the Kinrik o Scots.
- Authority coordinator
- Research into the use of information and ICT, particularly in schools.
- As a Headteacher and Parent
- I am Education for Citizenship Co-ordinator at my place of work.
- Potential area for course assignment in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning and possible dissertation topic
- No direct interest

Q.3 How did you know where to find e-consultant?

- Colleague gave me the address (3)
- LTS Website (2)
- Via info from Learning and Teaching Scotland (2)
- From covering letter with consultative document (2)
- Attended LTS/CLS Conference Dundee 14/3/01
- I'm a member of the Review Group
- Via Napier e-mail
- Information given out during in-service course.
- Reference (incomplete!) in the recent issue of Scottish Libraries plus contact with LT Scotland.
- Ah didna - Ah juist wun at the Scots Pairlament wabsteid an senced an inlat tae gie mah threips oot.

6.3   What did participants think of the e-consultation?

The online evaluation questionnaire included 3 questions asking participants' views of the site :-

Q.4 Would you say that e-consultant was:

Very easy to use	9
Generally easy to use, although I experienced a few problems	4
No opinion	
Generally difficult to use, although I found some things straight forward	1
Very difficult to use	1

Q.5 If you experienced any specific problems using e-consultant, please describe them

- I know this is going to sound thick and me lecturing and all that but...how do you answer the questions?
- I was unable to access the questions to comment. The menu kept returning to the "How to comment" box.
- I have been working on responses using Word for Windows and could not use copy facility to respond in detail. I will e.mail response direct to LTS.
- Had to phone LTS to talk me through procedure.

Q.6 For future consultations, what in your view would most improve e-consultant?

- Might be my computer but faster movement between questions would be useful.
- Needs to be more user-friendly.
- Simply more consultations. This is the future way to consult! Keep up the good work. If there is anyway I can help contact me on (e-mail address supplied).
- Difficult to say as my first visit was so brief.
- Clearer instructions

6.4 Where did participants have specific difficulties?

The (above) responses to the online evaluation questionnaire suggest that most users found the site easy to use, but that a minority had difficulty working out how to answer the consultation questions. The responses do not give an adequate picture of the problems experienced, or whether it was only a problem for those users who were not experienced in navigating through web sites. It is likely that the online questionnaire under-reports problems faced by the 'novice' web user, since the questionnaire was presented to users after 'logging out', and basic skills are required to get to that point. The usability testing being carried out by our MSc student is intended to address this question in more detail.

Annex 1: List of Participants

Names of participants are listed below, they appear as they were typed in the e-consultation.

Participant
Chris Ashton, Scotland
Terry Ashton, Scotland
David Baird, Scotland
Terry Barber, Scotland
Highland Council, Scotland
LINDSAY M FARMER, Scotland
David Fyfe, Scotland
C Gee, Scotland
Kenneth Gray, Scotland
John Griffiths, England
Lynn Hendry, Scotland
Graham Herbert, Scotland
Nikolaos Iliadis, Greece
k k, Scotland
Tom Laurenson, Scotland
Janet Law, Scotland
John Mc Garrie, Scotland
Colin McAndrew, Scotland
Norman McDonald, Scotland
Bart McGettrick, Scotland
hazel mcguinness, Scotland
angus mckain, Scotland
Rosetta McLeod, Scotland
Tom Monaghan, Scotland
Daniel O'Sullivan, Scotland
graham rutherford, Scotland
Chalmers Smith, Scotland
Christine Twine, Scotland
Donald Urquhart,, Scotland
Dave Valentine, Scotland
Frederic Von Helsing, Scotland
Dorothy Williams, Scotland
Valerie Wilson, Scotland
Helene Witcher, Scotland

Annex 2: Progress Chart

The chart shows two things:-

- It shows how many people responded to each question.
- It shows the type of response that could be given to each question, with a symbol for each type:

  ☐   Question asks for views and the participant types in their response

  ●●○   Question asks "How far do you agree?", and the participant picks one of five options

  ✓✖   Question asks "Do you agree?", and the participant chooses "yes", "no" or "don't know"

Annex 3: E-Consultant Site Structure

```
www.e-consultant.org.uk
        │
     Overview
        │
  Information ──────── Foreward ── Preface ── Summary ── Introduction ──▶
  (overview & intro.)
        │           ▶ Section 1 ── Section 2 ............... Appendix
        │                                    ▲
        │                                    │
  Comment ──────── List all questions   Introduction   Section 1   Section 2 ──▶ Etc.
  (overview & intro.)                    questions      questions   questions
        │                                   ↕ ↕ ↕
        │                              Respond to question
        │                                    ↕
        │                              See previous comments
        │                              (threaded discussion)
        │                                   ↕ ↕ ↕
        │                              Read & optionally rate
     Feedback                          previous comment
        │
   Contributors                        Reply to comment
        │
  Login / Logout ──── Site Evaluation Questions
```