



# DLQ Policy Paper



## **D8.05: DLQ Policy Paper**

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# Introduction

Digital Latin Quarter (DLQ) is a Lifelong Learning project that is primarily concerned with giving a voice to young people. It is a project about cultivating attitudes, engendering awareness and understanding, and putting the Europe of tomorrow in the hands of the youth of today. Using the medium of digital media production, DLQ supports the development of responsible and informed young digital media-literate citizens and facilitates their access to the ubiquitous media channels of the virtual world for their personal development and growth.

More specifically, the DLQ project focuses on the needs and expectations of two main target groups. One group consists of youth leaders, professionals, and in general people who are involved in second-chance education (youth workers), and the second comprises of individuals, who have withdrawn early from the formal education system or who are at risk of withdrawing from formal education. The project aims to design and implement an accredited media production training programme for youth leaders and second-chance education workers, in order to support their use of new digital media platforms as learning tools in this model of training. Moreover, through this project, an all-inclusive suite of media-based, traditional, and embedded-learning key competence development resources for youth-at-risk are designed, developed, and delivered. Finally, this project aims to provide a series of virtual collaborative environments linking youth workers and youth-at-risk from four European Union (EU) member states; specifically, Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, and Lithuania.

It is important for youth workers, who are working in less formal environments to provide second-chance education opportunities to early-school leavers and to use techniques such as experiential learning, enquiry-based learning, and embedded learning so as to stimulate learners and support their personal, social, and emotional development. Building key competences of young Europeans to live and work as responsible, tolerant, respectful, and innovative citizens in the digital age is one of the scopes of DLQ and for this reason, DLQ's bespoke ACT Curriculum is central to the success of the initiative undertaken through the DLQ project. The DLQ ACT Curriculum has been designed on the premise that the integration of digital media in the classroom in combination with pedagogies related to embedded learning, can provide a creative pedagogical outlet for young people, who

experience difficulties in formal education settings. Using the DLQ ACT Curriculum as a basis, a Train-the-Trainer Courseware is also offered for youth workers, and a Road-map for Skills and Career Opportunities in the Digital Media/Film Sector is provided for youth interested in pursuing a career in the field.

This DLQ policy document provides an overview of the pedagogical strategies that need to be followed for successful implementation of embedded learning techniques and integration of digital media in the classroom; two of the key features promoted by DLQ, as well as the benefits that each has to offer. As such, this policy paper aims to present how the DLQ project and its major outputs – primarily the DLQ ACT Curriculum – fulfil the scope of the project and provide an alternative method of engaging youth in developing digital media skills through the embedded learning approach and the integration of digital media in the learning process.

# Embedded Learning

The notion of embedded learning does not constitute something novel; however, a combination of needs and a shift in the way that embedded learning was perceived in the past have contributed in making embedded learning an important learning approach. The notion of embedded learning is that learning is a procedure that entails both practice as well as participation. Thus, by becoming a part of a greater whole in a broader work environment a person's learning capacity and ability is enhanced (Strattner & Oblinger, 2008).

According to the Skills for Life strategy, "embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language, and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence, and motivation necessary for them to progress, gain qualifications, and succeed in life and at work" (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). The idea behind this teaching and learning approach lies in the fact that the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom is enhanced and becomes more relevant to the learners when applied in realistic context-based settings. The learners experience how that theoretical knowledge unfolds into real-life practices, especially when related to specific working environments. The competences gained by learners through this approach help in making their learning more engaging and memorable, while in the process, skills related to social competences, cultural awareness, numeracy, literacy, and critical thinking are enhanced.

## Embedded Learning in DLQ

The European Reference Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning presents the key abilities that individuals need to have in order to be able to be employed, achieve social inclusion, and lead a successful life in today's knowledge society. Education and training opportunities across the EU should support the development of these competences in all young people and adults undertaking any substantial form of education and/or training (European Commission, 2007). The DLQ ACT Curriculum is designed based on the premise of the European Reference Framework for Key Competences, and specifically focuses on the promotion and development of the following key competences: numeracy, literacy, critical

thinking, social and civic competences, and finally, cultural awareness and expression.

The Curriculum is designed based on the learning approach of embedded learning, with the objective to showcase activities for youth that help them develop the aforementioned competences through the art of film-making. In addition, the pedagogical strategy employed in the development of the ACT Curriculum focuses on building positive relationships among the youth, making learning more engaging and memorable for them, and finally, providing young people with positive discipline.

In order for successful learning to result through the implementation of embedded learning techniques, various factors and elements need to be taken into account. These factors have been considered during the development of the DLQ ACT Curriculum, as explained in this section. At first, it is important to assess each learner's level and skills as they relate to the specific setting in which they wish to be placed. This will also determine if different groups of learners need to be created (beginner/advanced, etc.) and will also determine the pedagogical material that should be used. The ACT Curriculum allows for this initial assessment of participants' prior knowledge and skills through the creation of crew members in which youth can assign themselves roles (18 Administrative, Creative, and Technical roles are explored through the curriculum) based on their interests and abilities. As a result, the whole curriculum and activities can be catered to their interests and needs.

Pedagogical material and relevant activities need to be easily differentiated based on each learner's competence level. In addition, they need to be based on specific and measurable objectives, as well as expected outcomes. Objectives set should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound). The pedagogical activities and relevant material should be part of a curriculum that is designed based on the principles of embedded learning and linking to the real-life work-related context in which learners will be immersed. The whole concept of the DLQ ACT Curriculum effectively fulfils these ideas. It is a curriculum that is based on the embedded learning, as well as the enquiry-based approach, and each unit is designed based on specific SMART objectives and accompanying activities that are designed to promote the achievement of the aforementioned competences, while at the same time being easily customised to the competence level of each participant youth.

Finally, the learning process and outcomes should be assessed, as this is a critical factor

determining the level of success in the implementation of the programme. Assessment should be both formative (continuous) and summative (final). It should take place both throughout the duration of the learning process, assessing the progress of each learner, and at the end with a specific task that compiles knowledge from the whole learning period and helps assess whether the objectives have been achieved and the expected outcomes have been met. In the ACT Curriculum, formative evaluation activities are included at the end of each unit, so as to reassure that the youth are progressing and as a result, achieve the expected outcomes. At the end, the summative evaluation comes in the form of the videos that they need to create, based on the eight styles presented throughout the programme.

The DLQ model and ACT Curriculum explore the techniques underlined by the embedded learning approach for the development of digital media skills as a means of providing second-chance education opportunities to early school-leavers or youth at risk of abandoning formal education. Besides following appropriate pedagogical strategies for the successful implementation of embedded learning, it is also important to consider certain strategies that aid in the successful integration of digital media in the learning process, as described below.

# Digital Media Integration

Technology, digital media, and social media are becoming even more dominant in society. As a result, educators need to include these new mediums of communication in their pedagogical practices, since they form a vital part of the life of youth, who are nowadays growing up digital by default. Digital media integration refers to the effective use of a variety of digital media by learners as part of a curriculum that is structured around the pedagogical use of such digital media as a means of achieving specific objectives and attaining expected outcomes. For this reason, objectives set should be SMART and should directly relate to clearly set attainable learning outcomes. The pedagogical activities designed within the curriculum should be student-centered and cover a wide range of skills, giving the opportunity to learners to experiment with all the equipment at hand. They should be easily differentiated so as to reach out to young people of various levels of competence in digital media. It is important that these activities follow a bottom-up approach; starting with activities that focus on knowledge about the digital media involved and the theory behind them, and building up to their application in learning, to synthesis of new outputs and products by the learners themselves through the incorporation of the resources at hand.

Through their experience with digital media in the specific educational setting, learners need to be able to draw from their past experience, connect what they learn to their current context, and project future outcomes that they can achieve through the digital media skills attained. Digital media have the potential to nurture a new way of learning and thinking that accommodates individual talents, skills, and interests, aiming to promote positive change in the life of young people, who are looking for alternative means of education and are not easily integrated in formal education settings.

## Digital Media Integration in DLQ

DLQ draws upon the impact that digital media have in today's society, so as to offer the bespoke ACT Curriculum that provides creative ways of engaging with digital media in a setting outside of formal education. In order for the DLQ model and ACT Curriculum to be successfully implemented, it is important to consider how digital media should be integrated

in the learning process. If the benefits that this medium has to offer to young people are to be exploited in a pedagogically constructive way, then there are some elements that need to be considered, as discussed above.

The DLQ ACT Curriculum focuses on the genre of film as a digital medium. By integrating film in the ACT Curriculum, which draws on techniques of embedded learning as described above, young people are provided with the opportunity to be immersed in real-world work experiences within the broad area of film, while being taught skills that reach across the curriculum. Beyond learning to work together in a team, learners develop diverse skills in organisation, management, budgeting, composition, and critical thinking. Being able to create a short film from storyboard to finished product not only provides learners with a wide range of skills, but it also provides them with a feeling of success and accomplishment, something that is of vital importance to these young people, who might not feel that they have achieved much through their past educational experiences.

In addition to the DLQ ACT Curriculum, the project offers career guidance to youth interested in pursuing a film-related job. Through the Road-map for Skills and Career Opportunities in the Digital Media/Film Sector, youth in each of the four participating EU member states can be informed of employment opportunities in their country relating to the digital media/film sector and the 18 ACT roles explored through the ACT Curriculum. Furthermore, the DLQ project offers youth workers with the opportunity to develop competences in digital media themselves, through the bespoke Train-the-Trainer Courseware that is provided for them, in preparation of implementing the ACT Curriculum. Tutor resources are also provided to the youth workers with substantial supplementary information. Finally, the DLQ project offers the portal of DLQ TV, on which all the video output and films of all the youth in the four participating countries are portrayed. As a result, the exhibition of the youth's achieved outcomes is allowed, and the exchange of cultural awareness and expression is pursued.

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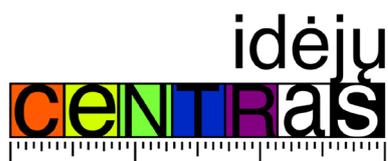
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