

Go for it – innovate!

Eleanor Rawling encourages you to design a new look for key stage 3 using a radical approach

A new DfES publication has recently been published *A Condensed Key Stage 3: Supplementary Guidance – foundation*

subjects and religious education (DfES, 2005). This document has arisen from pilot work on a two-year key stage 3 initially undertaken by the Key Stage 3 Strategy but now being extended. It includes guidance on planning a more flexible or condensed key stage 3 curriculum in all the foundation subjects in case schools wish to pursue this idea in some way. All the guidance is optional.

I am not advocating a move towards a two-year or condensed key stage 3. I would urge schools to continue to offer a full geography entitlement across all the years of the key stage. However, I know that some schools are having to cope with either reduced time for geography or a timetable which is arranged differently in some way – so there may be helpful ideas here. Indeed, even those with a full time allowance may benefit from seeing ways of planning the curriculum differently and over the next few years the key stage 3 review will result in some rethinking for us all.

The QCA Geography Team was asked to put together the geography section of this document and chose to do it in a way that emphasises good curriculum planning and a high-quality geography experience for 11-14 year olds. The approach taken is thus also very relevant to all schools. There are some general planning principles and approaches and then three different examples – one (A) directly planned

Content selected for in-depth study and programme of study (PoS) reference	Concepts/ideas accessed (examples)	Experience/breadth of study (examples)	Elements of PoS addressed in minor way
Year 7 Geography as exploration <i>(Aspects: places, patterns/processes)</i> 1. Exploring difficult and hazardous environments <i>Tectonic and geomorphic processes, weather</i> 2. Exploring our own country <i>Country study</i>	Image/reality, representation, identity Location, change, people-environment interaction, interdependence, physical processes Place, identity, community, interdependence	Film, television and travel writing, historical sources, explorers Mapping, use of archives and museums Local fieldwork, students' experiences, diaries, literature, poetry, advertising, travel resources	For all topics: maps, diagrams, secondary sources including the internet For all topics: population, development, countries, settlement, environmental and resource issues, economic activity
Year 8 Geography as communication <i>(Aspects: patterns/processes)</i> 1. Linking places travel/transport <i>Economic activity</i> 2. Exchanging ideas and messages <i>Development/economic Activity</i>	Interdependence, location, networks, inequality, sustainability Interdependence, uneven development	Students' experiences of journeys, travel and holidays, global trends and patterns, links with world of work Media, new technology and use of mobile phones/the internet	For all topics: maps, diagrams, secondary sources including the internet For all topics: economic activity, settlement, development, countries at different stages of development
Year 9 Geography for global citizens <i>(Potentially all aspects)</i> 1. Geography in the news: local/global <i>Potentially all themes</i> 2. Geography for a sustainable future <i>Environmental, resource issues, development</i>	Globalisation, interdependence, inequality, image, representation Cause/effect, sustainability, people-environment interaction	Topical issues, citizenship, newspapers /TV/radio, images – links with English, media studies, art/music, cultural studies Environmental projects, fieldwork, internet use, simulations	For all topics: values enquiry, use of first-hand data/experience and secondary sources For all topics: economic activity, settlement, environmental and resource issues, development

Figure 1: Example C – planning geography entitlement throughout years 7, 8 and 9.

in a traditional way from the programme of study, one (B) planned from the existing scheme of work units, and one (C – shown below) planned to be a more radical approach to using the programme of study.

Example C: Developing a scheme of work (directly from the programme of study) using a more radical approach. Going for innovation (years 7, 8 and 9)

Planning criteria:

- Start with a radical rethink of the key stage 3 curriculum, drawing on the national curriculum programme of study but not being bound by the headings and approaches.
- Bring in new developments from geography and newer resources.
- Draw on students' experiences and interests and on topical issues.
- Offer a geography entitlement for young global citizens, running throughout years 7, 8 and 9 (see Figure 1).
- Provide a more innovative course to enthuse students before they choose options.

Conclusion

I think that you will find these ideas and examples interesting, particularly the example shown here which presents a very different 'look' to key stage 3 and may give teachers an opportunity to introduce new ideas in geography, similar in some ways to the philosophy of the Pilot GCSE Geography course. If you are planning to try some new

approaches, remember to think carefully about progression and continuity with students' primary experiences and with key stage 4/GCSE. Essentially, however, example C reminds us that the programme of study really is a minimal framework – you can use it creatively to develop courses that will provide the much-needed stimulation and enjoyment for key stage 3 students. Go on – innovate! ■

Reference

DfES (2005) *A Condensed Key Stage 3: Supplementary Guidance – foundation subjects and religious education*. London: DfES (Ref 1113-2005).

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