

# Developing the International Dimension at KS3

The new KS3 National Curriculum for geography may fill you with excitement or trepidation, but as **Catherine Owen** reports, no one can deny that it provides the opportunity for teachers to ensure that their students are learning geography that is relevant, up-to-date and engaging through the freeing up of the curriculum.

- Refocusing KS3 geography schemes of work
- Putting assessment for learning at their heart
- Providing students with a firm foundation on which to build at GCSE
- Developing students' love of geography
- Providing students with opportunities to learn in different ways in different contexts.

## Process

Sitting down with a blank sheet of paper in front of us was a liberating, if slightly intimidating, experience. We started by coming up with a list of big questions that we wanted to tackle, then put these into half-term slots for years 7 and 8. The next stage was to produce a document that became known as the 'Global Plan' (Figure 1). This document took the form of a table, with each big question taking up one row and with columns for objectives, concepts and skills, possible activities, key assessment and other considerations.

The next stage of the process involved what we call the 'student voice'. We showed the global plan to a group of year 11 students who had just finished their GCSE exams and asked for their thoughts about the big questions and the proposed activities and assessments. The overwhelming response was 'We want to do this', which was pleasing. They also came up with suggestions about which activities would be most motivating for classes and contributed their own ideas for developing these activities. Three year 11 students even volunteered to produce 'model' assignments for different units so that we could show the younger students what the work could look like. The department all felt that it was vital to involve students in the decision-making process if we were to

achieve a programme of study that would be relevant and engaging to young people.

Two members of the department took responsibility for developing the first two schemes of work from the global plan, which needed to be ready for teaching in September 2007. These schemes of work were developed over the summer and were taught as planned. During the department self-evaluation week in November we took the opportunity to carry out a second student voice activity, this time asking a focus group of students who had been taught from the new schemes of work about their effectiveness. They said that so far they had enjoyed using the laptops, mini-movies with music, poster work, group work and doing PowerPoint and other presentations to the class. They thought that the work in geography wasn't too easy or too hard and that lessons could be improved by more use of ICT and going on more field visits – 'it makes it real and easier to understand'. All six of us in the department also evaluated the schemes of work lesson by lesson at the end of the term during a twilight inset session. We found that we had all greatly enjoyed using the schemes and only wanted to fine-tune a few of the activities and assessments for teaching next year.

## Developing the global dimension

According to QCA (2007), the global dimension:

*'Explores what connects us to the rest of the world. It enables learners to engage with complex global issues and explore the links between their own lives and people, places and issues throughout the world. The global dimension can relate both to developing and developed countries, including countries in Europe. It helps learners to imagine different futures and the role they can play in creating a fair and sustainable world.'*

The big questions from our new plan that obviously contribute to developing the global dimension are:

- Where in the world am I?
- Should tourists be attracted back to Kenya?
- Can we feed the world?
- Is your world moving you?  
(An exploration of earthquakes and their impact)
- Can trade be fair?
- How can plants and animals adapt to extreme climates?
- Are the Olympic Games good for the host country and its people?

**A**s Head of Geography in a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school in Somerset I am lucky to have a department of five specialist geographers to support me in developing new curricula. Geography has traditionally been a popular subject in my school, but with increasing competition from new subjects we are keen to ensure that students feel the subject is of direct relevance to their lives, so we are also keen to involve students in the planning process. In this article I will explore how my department is making the most of the opportunity to develop and enhance the key stage 3 geography curriculum, with a particular focus on developing the international dimension.

## Context

The schemes of work that my department had been using were getting tired and losing focus – as were many of our key stage 3 students! We also needed to rewrite our schemes of work to suit a condensed (two-year) key stage 3, starting in Sept 2007, so we decided to restructure the curriculum, aiming to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum a year earlier than most schools. This restructuring was guided by the following objectives:

Key questions/ enquiry	Concepts/widgets and skills	Activities	Assessment	Other considerations
<p>Where in the world am I? CO/PC</p> <p>Know where we live at local, regional, national and global scales</p> <p>Understand what makes our area distinctive</p> <p>Appreciate that different people have different views about the local area</p>	<p>Place, space, scale, interdependence</p> <p>OS maps, atlases, internet research</p>	<p>3D Brent Knoll – model made and annotated using OS maps</p> <p>South West Postcard – research using tourist brochures written up as a postcard</p> <p>UK and Europe map – complete base map using atlas – learn for test</p> <p>Wonderful world map – add amazing facts to a A3 base map using internet research</p>	<p>Space capsule – one sheet of A4 to explain where they are in the world using text, maps and pictures</p>	<p>Report AR levels in November</p> <p>Postcards could be displayed on string across classroom ceiling</p> <p>Remember to encourage students with merits etc!</p>
<p>Weather and microclimates PC</p> <p>Know how to measure the weather</p> <p>Understand basic weather systems</p> <p>Analyse data to produce own forecast</p>	<p>Physical processes, interdependence</p> <p>Oral presentation</p> <p>Using weather instruments, bar graphs and GIS</p>	<p>Make own weather instruments and record microclimate data</p> <p>GIS map of school highlighting microclimate</p> <p>Find out about weather systems</p> <p>Compare weather forecast with actual weather (homework)</p> <p>Produce own weather forecast</p>	<p>Where should a picnic bench be located in the school grounds? <i>Peer assessment of GIS map</i></p> <p>How do we know if we need an umbrella? <i>Peer assessment</i></p>	<p>Opportunity for fieldwork within the school grounds</p>
<p>Should tourists be attracted back to Kenya?</p> <p>Know how to measure development</p> <p>Understand that the reasons for poverty in Kenya are complex</p> <p>Understand the benefits and problems of tourism in LEDCs</p> <p>Evaluate the suitability of Kenya for future tourism, considering sustainable options (eco-tourism)</p>	<p>Human processes, place, interdependence, diversity, environmental interaction</p> <p>Persuasive writing</p> <p>Extending vocabulary</p> <p>Interpreting photos</p> <p>Using statistical development indicators</p>	<p>Explore the richness of Kenya's diverse culture, landscapes and wildlife</p> <p>Use development indicators and photographs to make judgements about Kenya's level of development</p> <p>Explore the reasons for poverty in Kenya – drought, unfair trade, HIV, lack of free secondary education</p> <p>Consider reasons for the growth of tourism in the 1980s and its decline in the 1990s</p> <p>Look at examples of eco-tourism around the world</p>	<p>Proposal for Kenyan Government – should tourists be attracted back to Kenya?</p>	<p>Report AR levels in April</p> <p>ECM – Work on HIV contributes to the 'be healthy' agenda</p>

Key question and objectives	Activities/assessment	My thoughts...
<p>Where do our clothes come from?</p> <p>Understand that countries trade with each other and that there are pros and cons to producing goods in NICs</p>	<p>Where do coats and bags come from? Locate on map</p> <p>Watch China clip of World 2000 DVD</p> <p>Write a diary entry for a Chinese teenager just starting work in a factory, including good and bad points</p>	<p>I wanted to start with the students' own lives, building on what they already know and setting the topic in context</p>
<p>Where do our clothes come from?</p> <p>Understand that there is a global division of labour and know what is meant by globalisation</p>	<p>Geog.3 – Walter's global jeans</p> <p>Globalisation movie – discuss questions raised. Geog.3 – Nike case study or simulation</p> <p>Geography of the Internet movie – consider impact of internet on globalisation</p>	<p>This lesson introduced the concept of globalisation through a brand that students already knew a bit about. Students enjoy the funky movies from <a href="http://www.geographythemovies">www.geographythemovies</a></p>
<p>Why is Rosa doing Annie's job?</p> <p>Analyse the impact of globalisation in LEDCs and MEDCs</p>	<p>Rosa and Annie movie, then complete mystery card sort (from <a href="http://www.sln.org">www.sln.org</a>) and either write answer or answer questions from Geog.3 – Is globalisation a good thing?</p>	<p>I think that it is important for students to think about the impact that global changes have on individual people as well as countries, so this mystery was ideal</p>
<p>Are diamonds forever?</p> <p>Understand some of the issues associated with a primary industry</p>	<p>Listen to 'Diamonds from Sierra Leone' by Kanye West</p> <p>Work through activities from Global Eye diamonds website. How can we tell people about conflict diamonds?</p>	<p>I hope the use of such recent music will hook students in to this topic and that they will enjoy working through the activities using laptops or a network room</p>
<p>Who makes your computer games?</p> <p>Understand some of the issues associated with a global secondary industry</p>	<p>Watch the animation from <a href="http://www.cafod.org.uk/watch_listen/latin_america/tale_of_two_cities">www.cafod.org.uk/watch_listen/latin_america/tale_of_two_cities</a>, then complete 'The Computer Game' simulation. Which injustice was most upsetting?</p>	<p>Again, this simulation takes the impact of global trade arrangements to a personal level. I am a bit worried about the practicalities of doing this simulation!</p>
<p>Why is Omar stitching footballs?</p> <p>Understand why some children work and the conditions they endure</p> <p>Evaluate the value of boycotts</p>	<p>'Why is Omar stitching footballs' movie, then either use related Geog.1 activities or carry out simulation from <a href="http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/working_children_activity.pdf">www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/working_children_activity.pdf</a> and discuss the talking point questions</p>	<p>The particular strength of this activity is the consideration of boycotts – do we do Omar a favour by refusing to buy the footballs he is making? It is also important to empathise with other children</p>
<p>Can trade be fair?</p> <p>Know what fair trade is</p> <p>Understand the benefits and limitations of fair-trade schemes</p>	<p>Show the Enrico the cocoa farmer movie, then use the related Geog.3 activities or play 'The Chocolate Game'</p> <p>Taste-test fair trade and supermarket own brand chocolate</p>	<p>Students are becoming much more aware of Fair Trade products, but often don't know about the arrangements behind them</p>
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Look at the People Tree website and discuss what they do. Students design and justify an advertising campaign to raise awareness of People Tree's fair trade products– using a TV advert (moviemaker software), poster or radio broadcast (audacity software).</p>	<p>I think that students will really enjoy designing their advertisements and will be able to tackle the issues associated with fair trade in detail. They will have the opportunity to include aspects of the higher national curriculum levels</p>

Figure 2: Can trade be fair?

As an example of one part of the global plan, I will now describe the process I went through to develop a scheme of work entitled 'Can trade be fair?'. This scheme of work covered 10 lessons with year 8 students. Once more, I started by coming up with a list of key questions, then thought of one or two learning objectives related to each question (as shown in Figure 2). I then scoured textbooks, my resource folders and the internet for ideas for activities to enable students to achieve these objectives. As always, I started with the SLN website and found several ideas for mysteries and such like. For starters I looked at [www.geographyatthemovies.co.uk](http://www.geographyatthemovies.co.uk) finding movies about globalisation, fair trade and child labour amongst others. I also reviewed my DVD collection, finding a useful piece on China on the *BBC World 2000* series. A real find was the *Global Eye* diamond trade resource ([www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary\\_spring06/focuson/index.html](http://www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary_spring06/focuson/index.html)). I obtained a copy of *The Computer Game* – a free resource from CAFOD – and found another simulation ([www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/working\\_children\\_activity.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/working_children_activity.pdf)). I found several useful pages in my *Geog.123* textbooks, including double page spreads on globalisation (Nike case study), child labour and fair trade (coffee case study) with information and questions. Finally, for the main case study to be used for the assessment, I looked at [www.peopletree.co.uk](http://www.peopletree.co.uk), having been alerted to the excellent work of this organisation during a lecture at the 2007 GA Annual Conference.

We have two 50 minute lessons a week at key stage 3, so I fitted some key questions into one lesson, with others stretching over two. In several lessons I gave teachers a choice between textbook activities and simulations so that they could adapt their lesson plans to suit their own needs and the needs of their classes. Most of the activities used are new, but some have been brought back in from the old schemes of work, such as the fair trade chocolate taste test. Figure 2 shows a summary of the how the scheme of work ended up.

### What happened next?

We have continued to produce schemes of work each half-term, with the rest of the department becoming involved in the production of these schemes. It has been difficult to find the time to evaluate the schemes of work at the end of each term, as we have been involved in coursework marking and moderation and exam preparation, but we have held informal evaluation meetings so teachers at least had the chance to provide feedback if they wish. We will carry out another student voice evaluation at the end of the year and are



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considering ways of inviting parents to comment.

At the end of this unit of work we held a break-time celebration of excellence for the students who produced the best assessments so far this year. Members of the senior leadership team (SLT) and pastoral staff were invited to see this assessment work, spreading knowledge of what students are doing in geography around the school. Almost 90 students displayed their work in three classrooms and we were visited by most of the SLT and all of the relevant year heads and assistant year heads, as well as several of the students' tutors. This celebration was very enjoyable and was held up as an example of good practice in the next Heads of Department meeting.

Carrying out such a dramatic rewrite of the schemes of work has been very time consuming, but also extremely satisfying. Teachers report that, as well as achieving better results for assessments than in the past, classes are also behaving better, as they are motivated by the engaging and relevant new schemes of work. I am also glad to have jumped before we were pushed in terms of meeting the require-

ments of the new curriculum, as being an 11-18 school we have the new A level syllabus to deal with next year!

### Conclusion

In *Geography in Schools: Changing practice* Ofsted (2008) reported that:

*'In secondary schools, the number of students opting to study the subject beyond key stage 3 continues to fall. In part, this reflects the increased range of subjects available, both academic and vocational, but is also reflects students' dissatisfaction with a geography curriculum which they perceive as irrelevant. In many secondary schools, a narrow range of textbooks and a focus on factual recall rather than on exploring ideas fail to capture students' interest.'*

It is up to us, as geography teachers and curriculum creators, to rise to the challenge and provide a curriculum that inspires our students. Geography is an amazing subject – are you ready to use the flexibility of the new curriculum to make your lessons relevant and interesting for your students? ■

### References

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### Websites

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