

## Internationalisation and the global dimension in the curriculum

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### Abstract

*This paper offers an analysis of our experience of working at a University which is currently developing internationalisation across its programme provision. We examine the role of global education within internationalisation of the curriculum and we offer some examples of learning and teaching strategies to put this approach into practice.*

*Whilst we examine our experience with reference to modules within Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development programmes in Education, we argue that the practical strategies drawn on as exemplars of practice are generic and can be transferred across subject disciplines. By incorporating the global dimension in the curriculum we aim to enrich the learning experience. We discuss the rationale for the active and participatory learning methodology we employ which involves and engages students in learning with and from one another and in questioning beliefs and ideas about issues of meaning and value. We also demonstrate how this methodology provides opportunities for deep learning.*

*Our aim is not to achieve a 'quick fix' in terms of putting a tick in the box to comply with the institutional policy requirements for internationalisation of the curriculum. Instead we advocate an approach which we believe has integrity. It is a holistic approach to planning which starts from our shared human experience and sees global education as an integral and generic dimension across the curriculum rather than something to be added on as an extra.*

### Introduction

Prompted by our experiences of working at a University which is currently developing internationalisation across its programmes and modules, this article offers some reflections on opportunities for developing a wider global perspective into the higher education curriculum with specific reference to examples from working with Initial Teacher Education students and students on Continuing Professional Development courses in Education. We offer a critique of some possible approaches to introducing global education into the curriculum and suggest that these must reflect our values as educators and our approaches to pedagogy and practice. We consider that the 'how' is important to address as well as the 'why' and, according to Edwards et al. (2003:186) in terms of the 'how' there is a gap to be filled:

... the literature addressing internationalisation of education provides relatively little guidance on how a curriculum might be internationalised. At best, reference is made to particular 'international' activities that characterise an international education – the existence of staff and student exchange agreements, study tours, the availability of language studies and so on. International activities like

these may well reflect a core characteristic of the programme, but they may also represent a list of “add-ons” that give the veneer of internationalisation.

### **Purposes and Approaches**

It can be argued that education for active citizenship in a global society requires our students to have knowledge, awareness and understanding of international perspectives and cultures and to think critically about some of the perspectives and dominant discourses upon which assumptions about hegemony may have been built. We therefore see global education as something rather different to an injection of ‘other cultures’ into the curriculum in the way that multiculturalism was sometimes seen in the past as exposure to the ‘exotic’, ‘unusual’ and ‘strange’. Such an approach, especially where adopted in the past, for example in the school sector, has been referred to as the ‘steel bands, saris and samosas’ approach typified by ‘doing’ other cultures at the level of ‘adding in’ some colourful and glamorous festivals and practices.

Our approach here is not ‘incorporating’ an international dimension in superficial ways but one of challenging our students to reflect on matters concerned with issues such as power, responsibility, fairness and co-operation. The approach we advocate is not about:

- ‘exposure’ to a range of different perspectives
- ‘injection’ of interculturalism
- ‘adding on’

Our premise is that we must start with ourselves. By this we mean that we must examine our own beliefs and values.

### **Internationalisation**

We referred to our University’s internationalisation strategy and our aim in this article is to reflect on the contribution of global education to this on some of the modules on our ITE and CPD courses in Education. Internationalisation is one of the distinctive strands of the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy and this strand is concerned to enhance the international focus of the curriculum. This in turn links to the University’s key strategic aims which include a strong commitment to internationalisation.

We are aware that there are a number of interpretations of what ‘internationalism’ is and that there is perhaps a tendency sometimes to use the term interchangeably with ‘globalisation’. Webb (2005:111) reminds us that ‘globalisation’ is often taken to refer to ‘major forces affecting the world (such as the development of information technology)’ while the term ‘internationalisation’ may be used to signify ‘the playing out of such forces in the specific contexts of nation states.’ The term ‘internationalisation’ can be rather ‘slippery’ and hard to pin down and there is scope for a range of interpretations and understandings. This view is shared by Edwards et al (2003:184) who see curriculum internationalisation as an ill-defined concept which lacks clarity. It is even more important, therefore, that we are clear how we have interpreted and understood the term.

For the purposes of this article we have interpreted our approach to ‘internationalisation’ of the higher education curriculum as one which involves the examination of, and reflection on, shared human experiences across contexts to engage learners in critical thinking about a range of perspectives. This may cause the learner to question and rethink some of their current assumptions and ideas. As educators, internationalisation of the curriculum has caused us to ask ourselves questions such as: Am I sufficiently aware of the development of the ideas, theories and practices in international settings or is the view presented predominantly Eurocentric? What is the range of different cultural perspectives on this matter

and what influence have these had? Are the examples I am providing sufficiently varied to represent diverse cultures and settings?

### **Values and approaches to learning**

Our institutional Mission Statement makes clear our commitment to 'embracing difference, challenging prejudice and promoting justice' and our institutional Values Statement makes clear that education is seen at this University as 'a means of transforming lives and shaping change'. The values underpinning this are identified as:

- integrity and mutual respect
- academic freedom and independence
- social justice for all.

Our premise in writing this article is that a commitment to 'internationalisation' implies at its core this very set of values and an explicit recognition of these has guided our approach to contributing to internationalisation through the global dimension in our course provision. We are concerned as much with the process of learning; the values demonstrated and approaches to learning through the curriculum as we are with the content of what is studied. For example, we see internationalisation as an opportunity not to just learn about and from other cultural perspectives but to also question and critically scrutinise the 'dominant discourses' and the in-built assumptions. We see students as active co-constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients of the teacher's 'expert' knowledge. Furthermore, we see it as important for teachers and students to explore different viewpoints and to become more aware of how ideas and policies have developed differently in different settings. Through questioning, prompting and probing, the teacher can scaffold this learning and help to deepen and extend previous thinking and ideas. Leask (2005:128) talks about being required to 'step out of the traditional role of the academic as 'the authority in authority' and learn from the international student in our classes'.

In our terms, therefore, internationalisation is focused as much on the teacher and the student experience in the classroom as it is on the content of what is 'covered':

...internationalisation of the curriculum is as much about you as it is about what you teach and to whom. (Leask, 2005:128)

The experience of learning in the classroom is based on socially constructing and reconstructing our world view through interaction with others. Later in this article we will examine some practical examples of how this has been applied through the development of global education in the curriculum. Our aim through internationalisation is not just to build on existing knowledge, although as we show later on in this article, the approach taken is based on drawing on existing knowledge to make sense of new concepts. But our aim is also to question where that knowledge came from and the context in which it evolved. Thus we seek to encourage 'deep' learning and critical thinking through interrogation of and reflection on the perspectives of the 'dominant culture'. The approach we have used is therefore within social constructivist learning theory, being concerned to provide opportunities to learn with and from one another through dialogue and discussion:

'To reap the benefits of diversity, you will need to encourage students to communicate, explore, explain, inquire and negotiate meaning. They will need many opportunities to interact with each other, sharing knowledge, ideas and theories from multiple contexts; to explore each other's and their own culture,

conceptual systems and values; and to reflect critically on the relationship between culture, knowledge and action within the discipline.' (Leask, 2005:122)

We argue that this international learning can take place even in predominantly monocultural student groups, provided students are given meaningful tasks and resources and stimuli. For example, at a basic level we can identify 'connections' or links we can make to other countries whether through holiday locations visited, relatives living overseas, international student links or exchanges, additional languages spoken, favourite international cuisine and so on.

### **Global links circle game**

One fun and interesting way to begin to explore our links and interconnectedness with the wider world and the global connection to our own lives and experiences is the global links circle game. We have used this with different student groups and all have enjoyed it and commented afterwards on their surprise that even in groups made up entirely of 'home' students, so many meaningful and interesting links exist. The students stand in a circle and as the ball is thrown from one student to another across the circle, the recipient briefly describes a connection s/he has with a far away place. This is inclusive as we can examine the label on an article of clothing being worn to find out where it was made or suggest a favourite food which is sourced from another country and it doesn't therefore exclude any group member. We will examine other examples of approaches and tasks later on in this article. This example is offered simply as a very introductory activity which can be the starting point for more in-depth learning and engagement.

Leask (2005:122) notes that the nature of the tasks given to the groups to work on is of key importance and that:

Merely placing students in mixed cultural groups to work on unstructured tasks unrelated to the exploration and sharing of cultural and national perspectives is unlikely to result in the development of international or intercultural perspectives.

Our contention is that this can be powerful learning for students at the level of 'profound' learning if carefully planned and resourced. Profound learning is defined by West-Burnham (2004) thus:

Profound learning is about the creation of personal meaning and so enhances wisdom and so creativity. ... the motivation to learn is moral and the outcome of profound learning is the ability and willingness to challenge orthodoxy. Such learning is sustained through interdependent engagement in problem-solving and thinking.

### **Including the Global Dimension in taught programmes in Education**

Drawing on the expertise residing in the Centre for Global Education York (CGE) based at York St John University we have been able to build opportunities which we believe contribute international learning within the planned learning experiences in some of our undergraduate and postgraduate modules. CGE is an interdisciplinary curriculum development centre set up in 1982. It moved to its present premises at York St John University in 1993 where it provides a resources centre and support for students and academic staff. The CGE's main aim is to support teachers, student teachers, teacher educators and other academics to include the global dimension in their teaching. The CGE encourages active participation in learning through a range of teaching and learning styles around the broad aim of "education

*for a just future*". It works with staff and students, contributes to courses and provides support to the wider university experience. For example CGE in partnership with York St John University and Higher York (a project linking the providers of Higher Education in York) have run a series of seminars entitled 'Hidden Histories'. Each seminar has followed the same format of three short inputs and these are presented by academics and local people working in community groups. The themes cover issues that are both local and global, making the connections between personal lives and the well-being of the wider community.

Here we will offer some examples of approaches and resources the CGE has used largely with groups of 'home' students studying across a number of our courses in Initial Teacher Education, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). We stated at the beginning of this article that in our view education for active citizenship in a global society requires students to have knowledge, awareness and understanding of international perspectives and cultures and to think critically about some of the perspectives and dominant discourses upon which assumptions about hegemony may have been built. One of the ways academic staff have tried to contribute to internationalisation of the curriculum has been through working together with colleagues from the Centre for Global Education York. The rationale for this from the authors' perspective is that we see internationalisation and the global dimension as mutually sustaining and reinforcing. Indeed our University Learning and Teaching Strategy identifies supporting and embedding of global issues in all curricula as one of the ways in which the international focus of the curriculum can be enhanced (York St John University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2007/08-2011/12).

### **What is Global Education?**

Global Education is about an education for the future that is informed by the past and the present. It incorporates the key concepts of global citizenship, conflict resolution, anti-discrimination, human rights, futures education, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development and values and perceptions. It explores the interconnections between the local and the global and it is concerned with building knowledge and understanding, together with developing skills and attitudes. Richardson (1999:1) states:

"the term global education ...implies a focus on many different levels from local....to global. It implies also a holistic view of education with a concern for people's emotions, relationships and sense of personal identity as well as with information and knowledge."

Hicks (2007) proposes a holistic view of developing global education that embraces personal and political change equally, aiming at the self-actualisation of the individual but embedded within the context of a socially and environmentally responsible local and global citizenship:

- Purpose: wholeness in self and society each interrelated sides of the same coin
- Pedagogy: both student-centred and world minded, participatory and socially critical
- Politics: - radical/holistic – focus on changing both self and society.

Global issues are part of all our lives in ways unfamiliar to previous generations. The local cannot be seen in isolation from the global as we are linked in many ways, for example:

- socially through the media; the internet; music

- culturally through the movement of people; UK society today is enhanced by peoples, cultures, languages, religions, art, technologies, music and literature originating in many different parts of the world
- economically through trade and commerce
- environmentally – there is only one planet to share
- politically through international relations and systems of regulations.

In our view, global education should not be seen as an 'extra' to a taught curriculum but rather as an integral strand that is embedded in the student experience and is reflected in the ethos of the institution. Providing courses and resources that raise global issues ensures that students' international experience is one that develops the student as a global citizen who, according to a framework developed by Oxfam (2006:3):

- is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen
- respects and values diversity
- has an understanding of how the world works
- is outraged by social injustice
- participates in the community at a range of levels from the local to the global
- is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place
- takes responsibility for their actions.

In this model, internationalisation contributes to the development of the global citizen (Shiel, 2006). Whilst developed as a guide for schools, we believe that it is equally essential for higher education as students continue to develop as global citizens.

### **Translating this into Practice**

The approach we use is consistent with an active student-centred approach to learning which emphasises engagement and participation.

'Education for Global Citizenship uses a multitude of participatory teaching and learning methodologies, including discussion and debate, role-play, ranking exercises, and communities of enquiry.' (Oxfam 2006:2)

In introducing global education, the CGE uses the analogy of the traditional Indian story, *The Six Blind Men and the Elephant*. In the story the six men explore the physical features of an elephant through touch. Each man perceives the elephant differently and an argument ensues. An observer tells them that they are told they are all wrong in their assumptions. Later they discover that in part they are each right, the problem being that they have been unable to put the parts together to make a whole.

The Indian tale illustrates how we rely upon prior knowledge to make sense of new concepts. The story also illustrates how it is the relationships between different aspects and how they inter-relate to provide a full picture. Through this story we are able to illustrate the way in which the eight key concepts of the global dimension need to relate to one another for global learning to take place. In reflecting on the global dimension it can be seen that the summation of the parts can be greater than the whole. The way in which we perceive things influences our understanding.

## **The Eight Key Concepts of the Global Dimension**

In training CGE uses the eight key concepts as set out in *Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum* (DfES 2005). This provides a foundation or common starting point that ensures a mutual understanding of global education and global learning.

### **Figure 1 (a) Eight key concepts of the global dimension (Global elephant)**

### **Figure 1 (b) Eight key concepts of the global dimension**

The eight key concepts are all legitimate subjects on their own but for Global Education it is the way in which they inter-relate and together influence both learning and teaching. As stated earlier CGE advocates active participation and through practical activities shows that the strength of Global Education is active participation.

Students studying for degrees and qualifications in education have the opportunity to participate in an introductory session on the global dimension. The introductory sessions outline global education and its importance in the curriculum. The workshop style of presentation uses interactive and participatory teaching strategies. There is also the 'Global Day' which provides a one-day immersion in the global dimension as part of the B.Ed. and PGCE courses. The 'Global Day' allows all these students to participate in a day of learning experiences which take the format of a conference with a key note talk followed by workshops which focus on different key concepts.

### **Practical examples of activities to introduce the global dimension into the curriculum**

What sorts of learning activities and experiences would students be engaged in during such introductory sessions and the Global Day? There are a number of generic activities that are used and two specific ones are chosen as examples. These are the Diamond Ranking exercise and the Development Compass Rose activity, both of which can be adapted for many different topics and courses across all disciplines.

#### **Diamond Ranking**

The purpose of diamond ranking is to provoke discussion or reflection about the relative importance of a range of factors. It encourages a focus on the single most important factor, then the next two, the next three and so on. Students work in pairs initially before joining with another pair where they have to re-negotiate. In the plenary, students share the outcomes of their discussions and see if there were any common themes.

#### **Figure 2 Diamond ranking**

The methodology of diamond ranking is generic and with appropriate statements is a useful tool across all fields of enquiry. Figure 4 has examples of statements for prompting discussion about global citizenship and global learners.

#### **Figure 3 Global Citizenship Education**

For students following teacher education courses we use the statements in Figure 5 for them to consider what they want pupils to learn in school. However these statements are applicable to any learner.

#### **Figure 4 We want our learners to:**

## **Development Compass Rose**

The Development Compass Rose is an activity developed by the Development Education Centre in Birmingham. It was designed to enable students to interrogate images and challenge their perceptions through posing questions that focus on four specific areas – the natural environment; economic issues; social issues and political issues. This activity can form the basis of work that allows students to be active co-constructors of knowledge by taking the questioning further and engaging in developing independent or group research and learning through following up the questions that have arisen from the stimuli.

### **Figure 5 The Development Compass Rose**

The Development Compass Rose activity has been developed further by Rob Unwin at the Development Education Centre in South Yorkshire to allow participants to consider the commonality of issues facing people in different parts of the world. To facilitate this, two photographs are used placed on top of one another thus providing a double compass rose. The upper photograph should be of something familiar providing a stimulus for the questioning. The students are then asked to remove the photograph to reveal an image of a similar situation but in a developing country. They are then asked to consider whether the questions that were generated are relevant to both images. Usually the majority of questions are pertinent to both situations and consequently highlight the local - global connection. For many learners this activity acts as a catalyst to their understanding of global education.

### **Analysis of our approach**

Our reasons for developing the 'global' within the curriculum are based on our conviction that this kind of approach and learning strategies contribute to profound learning for our students. This is achieved through engaging them in reflection on and re-examination of their beliefs and perceptions about issues to do with values, social justice and fairness and global citizenship. The approaches we use encourage students to question, to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills, to evaluate a range of issues and factors, to identify complex connections, to reflect on responsibility and human rights, to co-operate and negotiate with others and to gain a wider knowledge of the world. These are important aspects of learning which students develop through this pedagogy. This can be both challenging and rewarding learning. Students have opportunities for intercultural learning and for critical thinking about issues of importance and significance. Our concern in planning the global dimension into our modules and programmes is as much about the process of learning as it is with content. We want our students to be able to be active citizens in an increasingly globalised world and to operate effectively in this kind of environment.

In this article we have suggested that by introducing the 'global' into the curriculum we are contributing to embedding and sustaining 'internationalisation' in our curriculum. Our approach and motives echo those advocated by Shiel (2006: 18):

I would like to suggest that rather than focusing solely on how we 'internationalise', we would achieve more with an approach that embeds internationalisation within the broader content of global perspectives and global citizenship. Developing a global perspective alerts students to how their experiences are connected to the experiences of people throughout the world (the global in the local connection) and also serves to better prepare students for work, in a society where cross-cultural capability is essential to employment.

## The prerogative of all students

Our contention is that this sort of approach and learning experience is something to which all students should have access. This view is shared by other writers, for example Haigh (2002:62) who also takes the standpoint that 'internationalisation of the curriculum is about giving equality of opportunity and a better educational experience to all students'. Brown and Jones (2007:1) similarly share the conviction that:

Good practice for internationalisation is good practice for all students.

We share the conception of Haigh (2002:62) that:

It may prove best to conceive of all students as 'international students' and to teach a curriculum that is designed for international students and the new global economy.

We adhere to the principle that both 'home' and 'overseas' students can benefit from internationalisation of the curriculum. We do not see internationalisation of the curriculum as 'an injection of multiculturalism' for home students nor as an opportunity to showcase the unfamiliar cultures of international students as if for some novelty value. Our interest is in designing learning programmes and learning experiences which have integrity in terms of 'internationalisation', which are sustainable and embedded in good practice rather than 'added onto' or sprinkled randomly across the curriculum without rigorous and systematic planning of aims and outcomes.

We believe that internationalisation of the curriculum through the global dimension provides an opportunity to examine shared human experience and the values at the heart of our common humanity. As such we maintain that this is helping in a modest way to strengthen our institution as a learning community which is both outward facing in terms of its openness to the wider world and inwardly reflective in terms of its own values and practices.

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## Figures & Tables

### **Widening participation**

CGE in partnership with YSJ University and Higher York have run a series of seminars entitled Hidden Histories. Each seminar has followed the same format of three short inputs these are presented by academics and local people working in community groups. The themes cover issues that are both local and global making the connections between personal lives and the well-being of the wider community.

Figure 1

Figure 1 (a) Eight key concepts of the global dimension (Global elephant)

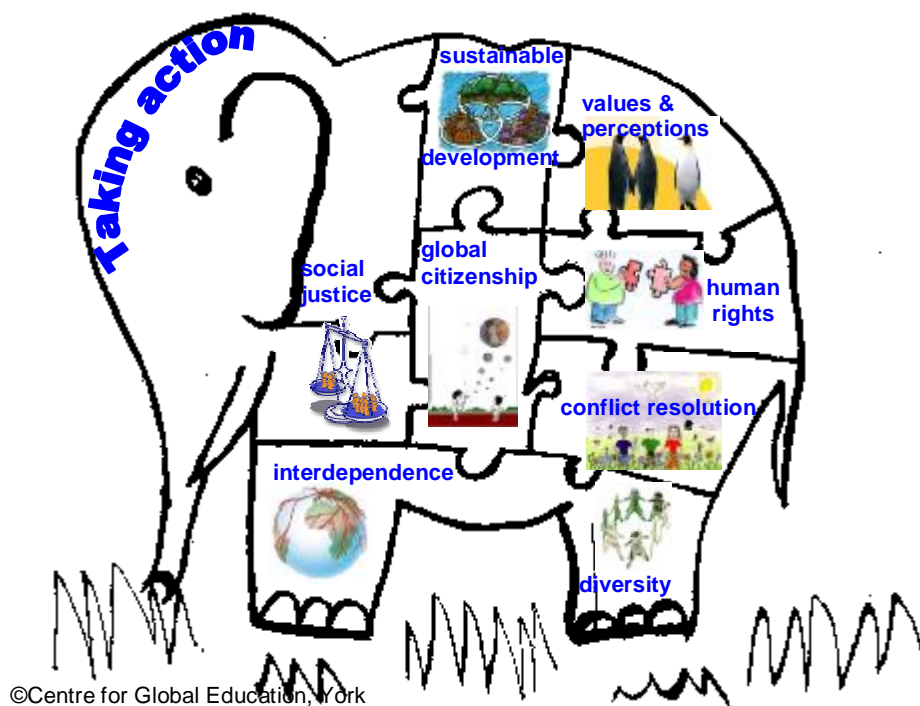


Figure 1 (b) Eight key concepts of the global dimension

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Ø <b>Human Rights</b><br/><i>Knowing about human rights including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</i></p>   | <p>Ø <b>Diversity</b><br/><i>Understanding and respecting differences and relating these to our common humanity</i></p>  |
| <p>Ø <b>Global citizenship</b><br/><i>Gaining the knowledge skills and understanding necessary to become informed active citizens</i></p>   | <p>Ø <b>Social justice</b><br/><i>Understanding the importance of social justice as an element in both sustainable development and the improved welfare of all people</i></p>                          |
| <p>Ø <b>Conflict resolution</b><br/><i>Understanding the nature of conflicts, their impact on development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of harmony</i></p>         | <p>Ø <b>Sustainable development</b><br/><i>Understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for future generations</i></p>                           |
| <p>Ø <b>Values and perceptions</b><br/><i>Developing a critical evaluation of representation of global issues and an appreciation of the effect these have on people's attitudes and values</i></p> | <p>Ø <b>Interdependence</b><br/><i>Understanding how people, places, economies and environments are all inextricably related, and that choices and events have repercussions on a global scale</i></p> |

DfES 2005:12)

Figure 2 Diamond ranking

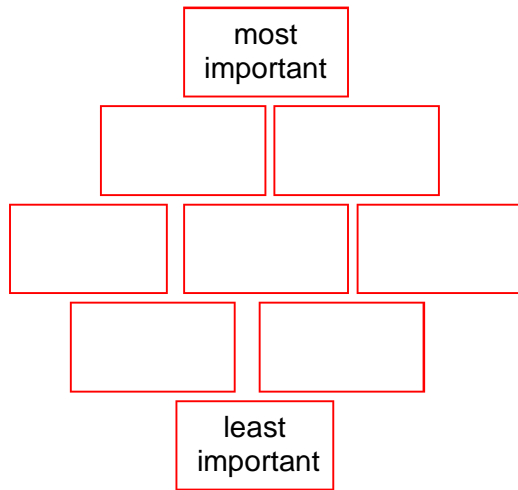


Figure 3 Global Citizenship Education

... makes links and connections between cultures locally and globally	... helps learners understand the world as a global community	... teaches learners to empathise with people whose experiences are different from their own
... focuses on topical and political issues of global relevance	... encourages learners to accept responsibility for making a contribution to the future well-being of the planet	... helps learners recognise the impact of their own actions on other people and places and ensures that this impact is not harmful
... teaches learners how to bring about positive social change locally, nationally and globally	... helps learners examine their perceptions and appreciation of other places, people and cultures and how these effect their attitudes and actions	... identifies specific issues and topics that have universal relevance and explores the different ways in which these are approached and resolved e.g. human rights


Adapted from Developing Global Citizens in Secondary Schools (Central Bureau 2000:9)

Figure 4 We want our learners to:

... be able to make connections between diverse cultures locally & globally.	...think for themselves	... learn to empathise with people whose experiences are different from our own.
... be informed about and interested in topical and political issues of global relevance.	... feel that they can make a contribution to the future well being of the planet.	... recognise the impact of their individual & collective actions on other people & places & ensure that this impact is not harmful.
... examine their perceptions and values and be open to new and different views of the world.	...care passionately about justice and fairness.	... have joined up thinking and good social skills

Adapted from draft material produced for the Department for International Development (DFID) Global School Partnerships.

Figure 5 The Development Compass Rose

<p><b>NORTH</b> <b>Natural</b> These are questions about the environment - energy, air, water, soil, living things and their relationships to each other. These questions are also about the built as well as the 'natural' environment.</p>		
<p><b>WEST</b> <b>Who decides?</b> These are questions about power, who makes choices and decides what is to happen, who benefits and loses as a result of these decisions and at what cost.</p>	<p><b>PICTURE/stimuli</b></p> 	<p><b>EAST</b> <b>Economic</b> These are questions about money, trading, aid, ownership, buying and selling.</p>
<p><b>SOUTH</b> <b>Social</b> These are questions about people, their relationships, their traditions, culture and the way they live. They include questions about how, for example, gender, race, disability, class and age affect social relationships.</p>		

Development Education Centre, Birmingham (1995)