

A Whole School Approach

How do you get teachers from different departments to commit to the global dimension?

Benton Park School, with support from Leeds Development Education Centre (DEC), worked across six subject departments to develop new, engaging lessons which would incorporate global dimension concepts.

What did they want to achieve?

Melanie Stockdale, Head of Geography, was keen to encourage the inclusion of the global dimension in a range of subjects, believing that children need to know about and understand global issues because they impinge so much on their lives. She was also keen to encourage team work among staff by working on cross-curricular themes. This fitted well with Leeds DEC's Global Schools Project whose aims are to develop greater awareness and understanding of international development amongst young people and to demonstrate its relevance to their lives.

How did they set about it?

When Leeds DEC invited Benton Park to be part of the Global Schools Project, Melanie thought she would be able to sell it to other departments because it was both important for their curriculum and came with support and funding for training, cover, and resources. She targeted teachers in other departments who she thought would have an interest in the global dimension, inviting them to a meeting with the DEC. A teacher from each of Geography, Art, History, English, Science and Spanish decided to commit to the project.

The 'eight key concepts', taken from the DFID/DfES publication 'Developing The Global Dimension in the School Curriculum' (2005) provide a framework for the global dimension in the curriculum. Each teacher carried out an audit of where the eight key concepts were covered in their subject curriculum and what ones were missing. They then developed six lesson plans on one of the key concepts to bring something new into their curriculum. For example, in Science, values and perceptions were explored while teaching about climate change; a study of multicultural poems in GCSE English was given a stronger human rights focus with the help of resources from the DEC; an Art group looked at a Mongolian yurt and learnt something about the way of life it supported, while learning to make felt.

After the new lessons had been trialled, the staff all met again with the DEC and a member of the school senior management and shared what they had been doing. *“That was a great meeting,”* said Melanie, *“because we immediately began to see the links. We could see how we were covering similar things in different subjects in different ways.”* The DEC provided staff and student evaluation sheets to monitor which concepts had been covered and how well they had been understood.

How well did they achieve their aims?

All the staff involved used new resources in a different way, to provide interesting lessons with a global dimension. Student evaluations highlighted active learning approaches such as class debates and student presentations as having the most impact. The students mentioned changes in their thinking, including: increased awareness of the need to make buildings more sustainable to reduce greenhouse gases; awareness of the impact that the ways people make and spend money have on the conditions children live under; concern about government inaction about child poverty in developing countries; and the reasons for buying fair trade products.

What do they plan to do next?

The lesson plans have been revised in response to the trials and evaluations and will be repeated with the next year group. Having worked with teachers in different curriculum areas, staff have a much better sense of what others are doing which will enable them to make links when planning the new Key Stage 3 curriculum. For example, work on slavery in English and History will be able to take place at the same time, enhancing the work in both subjects and avoiding repetition.



“After the lesson, I was able to understand the importance of the products that they make and how by buying these products we are affecting their lives in such negative ways and seriously exploiting them.”

Year 9 student after looking at images from Bolivia.



Reflections:

- Global dimension teaching resources including those produced by DEC (available via www.globaldimension.org.uk) can support teaching/learning approaches with a focus on critical and creative thinking.
- The global context can be made 'real' by the introduction of authentic resources.
- The eight concepts of the global dimension can provide a framework which helps in planning innovative cross-curriculum approaches.



More information:

- Leeds DEC Global Schools website: www.leedsdec.org.uk/global_schools.htm.
- The eight key concepts of the global dimension are in the centre spread of 'Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum' (DFID/DfES, 2005) which can be downloaded from: www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/dev-global-dim.pdf.