

Think Piece

Planning and Developing the Curriculum Part 1

PGCE Activities

Activity 1 - Topic or subject based curriculum?

Read my view about the importance of subject knowledge and subject-based curriculum planning in the short paper, [Topic-based or Subject-based](#) and consider/discuss the policy of the school to which you are attached in relation to topic work. Prepare a short statement about how geography specialists will play their part in enhancing the KS3 curriculum at your school experience school, whether the curriculum framework is subject or topic-based.

Alternatively work in small groups so that some groups argue for a topic based and some for a subject based curriculum. Then share these views and debate the issues.

Activity 2 - Levels of curriculum planning

Consider [Figure 1](#). How would it need to be amended for the situation at GCSE and A/AS level? Where do the national criteria (for GCSE and A level) and the examining body syllabuses/specifications fit in? Who carries out the equivalent of key stage planning for KS4 and KS5? And in what depth do they do this?

Work in small groups to consider and suggest amendments, particularly to the third column. Feedback ideas to the whole group and discuss the extent to which curriculum development is required for GCSE and AS/A level.

Activity 3 - Using a curriculum planning circle

[Figure 2](#) shows a Curriculum Planning Circle. In small groups and with either the KS3 curriculum or a GCSE syllabus in mind, spin the curriculum planning circle and imagine starting planning from the item which ends up at the top of the page, whether it refers to planning principles, reviewing resources or assessment. Consider what sequence of development you would then follow and what kind of curriculum might result.

You might want to consider the whole of KS3/KS4 at a broad level or you may prefer to have a particular theme in mind (e.g. climate change; China, the new superpower; personal geographies) for your planning and development activity.

Activity 4 - Evaluating a KS3 curriculum plan

As an example, [Figure 3](#) is a KS3 curriculum plan developed around the idea of changing scales of enquiry and for which year 9 (personal scale) was partially inspired by the resources and activities of the

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Young People's Geographies project (<http://www.youngpeoplesgeographies.co.uk>). What you should remember is that your creativity can really come into play now, in both KS3 and at 14-19, to produce fresh new curricula that will stimulate and reinvigorate geography in your school. For a template to use when developing your KS3 curriculum plan visit <http://www.geography.org.uk/secondary/ks3resources>.

Work individually to study Figure 3. What do you think are its strengths and weaknesses? Could it be applied to the school you are attached to? How would you need to adapt it? Compare notes with colleagues in a small group.

Activity 5 - Getting to know the Key concept, Cultural Understanding and Diversity

Study [Figure 4](#) (individually or in pairs) 'Getting to know the Key Concept, Cultural Understanding and Diversity'.

Either: Jot down ideas for a short scheme of work developed from a local place or situation and aimed at developing cultural understanding. What would be the topic? What resources could you use? What kinds of student experiences would you focus on? Can you use the final column (outcomes) in Figure 4 to envisage a piece of assessment appropriate?

Or: Use the template from Figure 4 and the questions they provide to complete a similar page for another chosen concept. This could be another big concept e.g. globalisation, conflict, diversity or a more specific concept such as migration, de-industrialisation, desertification.

Activity 6 - Planning a scheme of work (or unit of work)

Look at [Figure 5](#) and [Figure 6](#).

Either: What do you think of the enquiry template in Figure 6? In small groups analyse its strengths and weaknesses and compare notes with other groups.

Or: Individually, use the blank enquiry template (at <http://www.geography.org.uk/secondary/ks3resources>) to plan your own scheme of work focused on a topic of your choice. Evaluate the experience. How easy or difficult was it to use this template? Compare notes with another student. Summarise the good and bad points about using a template like this as opposed to developing your own?

Activity 7 - What kind of curriculum planner are you?

(In small groups) Consider [Figure 7](#). What kind of curriculum planner are you or the school to which you are attached? Try placing yourself (or your school) on the continuum and justify the position.