

Top Ten Ideas: Geography in the Wider Curriculum

GA Secondary Phase Committee



This edition of *Top Ten Ideas* explores ways in which geography can contribute to the wider school curriculum whilst maintaining its rigorous subject integrity.

These ideas are the outcome of a short workshop at a recent Committee meeting. Each idea is being developed into a case study that you will be able to download from the GA website and will be explored further at the GA conference in April 2011.

1. **Eco-Schools.** Geography contributes to all nine topic areas in this initiative and can be a key player in delivering the 'linking to the curriculum' element. Leading and supporting the Eco-Schools initiative helps to support the geography curriculum in numerous ways. The GA recently produced its manifesto, *A Different View*, in which 'living geography', 'geography and young people' and 'geography and the real world' are central pillars. Eco-schools can be an effective way to deliver a quality geographical learning experience. At the same time it supports the wider PLTS and cross curriculum dimensions.
2. **Global school partnerships.** Linking with schools in other parts of the world through organisations such as [Global Gateway](#) has enormous potential benefits for the geography curriculum. For example, the opportunity for a young person in the UK to enter into discussions with someone their own age in Zambia about HIV/AIDs can be a profound geographical learning experience but also contributes to almost all of the seven cross-curriculum dimensions (especially 'global dimension and sustainable development').
3. **Collapsed timetable days.** Geography departments are ideally suited to lead days in which cross-curricular dimensions are the main focus, but are delivered through a geographical issue. One Manchester school recently led a day focused around issues of immigration which enabled students to learn through a wide range of geographical concepts and allow the school to celebrate the provision of both PLTS and the wider cross-curriculum dimensions.
4. **BBC School Report.** In one school in Cardiff the lunchtime 'geography club' planned, prepared and presented short films and radio items about geographical issues that were in the news and that they thought were most important to them. As well as an obvious curriculum enrichment activity it is an excellent vehicle for supporting wider cross-curriculum dimensions, especially 'community participation' and 'technology and the media'.
5. **Oxfam Youth Conferences.** The GA's manifesto celebrates 'living geography' and 'young people's geography'. What better way to encourage practical action than through these conferences held annually? In 2009 the conference focused on climate change, whilst in 2010 it focuses on poverty. Again, this is an opportunity to encourage both PLTS and wider cross curricular dimensions.
6. **Plan ahead.** Get ahead of the game with a global dimension school [calendar](#). Prepare assemblies to give to your SLT, with the help of your extra curricular geography club. Raising awareness about the diverse subject matter which makes up modern geography can be pleasantly surprising for some school leaders!
7. **Collaborate whenever possible.** Work with other departments to develop activities that encourage sharing of ideas but maintain strong subject integrity. One example of this is provided by a school in

[Staffordshire](#). This particular travel writing task and assessment was jointly constructed with the English department. When it was created they wanted to assess both the geography and the quality of English.

8. **Sign up for the Youth Parliament Competition.** This is run through the [Citizenship Foundation](#). The focus chosen for debate can obviously be a geographical one! Examples used have been around youth access to space in the city and public transport issues. Log onto the YP website, there are some [good current debates](#) on issues such as sustainability, recycling and climate change.
9. **Schools can apply for Fair Trade School status.** It takes around a year to gain the school status. You have to link with at least two other departments in school, do something in Fair Trade week, link with the community, and aim to increase your school's purchases of fair trade products.
10. **Set up a Model UN activity in your school.**
11. **Charity appeals.** During times of the year where charity appeals take place across school, e.g. Red Nose day, Water Aid, Comic Relief etc. use curriculum time to show how geographical knowledge relates to the appeal.
12. **Primary links.** Use primary liaison links as an opportunity to put geography into the students' lives.