

Conducting a Geography Department Audit

How can we make our geography curriculum more relevant to our students?

- Start with issues important to students (clothes, sport, environment, health) – make clear the global connections.
- Focus on topical issues (e.g. asylum seekers, the heroin trail) and their relevance to local and national events.
- Build the curriculum around the students' knowledge of other places and communities.

How can we avoid a one-culture approach?

- Ensure a wide range of case studies – a thematic approach.
- Develop displays.
- Seek alternative perspectives from people involved in the themes and issues we are studying, seek to communicate with them (e.g. using email or the web).

How can we use the expertise of staff and students?

- Utilise staff's enthusiasms, experience and knowledge of particular places.
- Canvas students – encourage 'virtual fieldwork' through the internet.

How can we ensure that the commitment to the global dimension is sustainable?

- Write the global dimension into work schemes and assessment systems.
- Ask department members to identify the global dimension in lesson plans.

How can we place a greater emphasis on values and attitudes in the geography curriculum?

- Encourage closer work with other departments like RE and English – and debate through role-play and simulation.
- Base teaching more on issues and encourage more questioning from students.
- How can we develop 'global citizens' through the geography curriculum?
- Use strategies like 'thinking skills' for deeper understanding of issues and a sense of responsibility.
- Develop and apply transferable concepts like social justice and sustainable growth.
- Consider the impact of individual and collective action on the issues.
- Consider the global effect of local action.

Do we need to examine our own roles as teachers?

- Give students more responsibility for learning and collaborative effort with teachers acting as facilitators.
- Take care not to impose teacher attitudes and values.

How can we recognise values and attitudes in geography?

- Start with a baseline assessment of students' thinking and reassess after the unit.
- When studying distant places ask:
 1. What does it look like?
 2. Are they rich or poor?
 3. What do people do?
 4. What is their life like?
- Student self assessment:
 1. What have I learned?
 2. What have I realised?
 3. What do I appreciate now that I didn't before studying this unit?

Adapted from Brentwood County High School's Geography Audit.