Critical thinking and problem solving: reporting school-based practice.

A central element of the Connecting Classrooms Critical Thinking and Problem Solving programme is that participants have the opportunity of putting aspects of the course into practice in their classrooms, reviewing the outcomes, and sharing their findings with other course members, together with other schools in the UK and internationally.

Cohort 1, spring 2016

The following examples of practice are a sample of the first group of teachers on the Connecting Classrooms course, which completed in Spring Term 2016.

A. Raising participation from the least confident, improving critical thinking skills of all: Orchard Primary School, London; page 2

B. Higher order questioning and critical thinking project: Cherry Orchard School, London; page 4

C. How can focused support with children's questioning skills, in Year 5 and Year 1 topic lessons, improve the critical thinking of these children? Kensington Primary School, London; (page 5)

D. Developing critical thinking and problem solving in young children: Curwen Primary School, Newham; page 6

E. The Creative Curriculum: how and why do the foundation subjects play a pivotal role in teaching critical thinking skills? (page 8) Christ Church Primary School, Chelsea

F. Developing critical thinking through questioning: St Josephs Catholic Primary School, Wandsworth; (page 11)

G. Asking deeper higher order questions in geography: Hitchen Girls School, Hitchen; (page 15)

H. Decision Making Skills in GCSE Geography: Central Foundation Girls School, Tower Hamlets; (page 16).
Raising participation from the least confident, improving critical thinking skills of all: Orchard Primary School, London

What did we want to achieve?

- To increase the confidence of all children, leading to increased participation from least confident.
- To create a culture of having a go, through welcoming all ideas and letting children lead discussions and evaluations.
- To improve children’s ability to think creatively, to analyse and to evaluate their own ideas and those of their peers.

How did we go about it?

The Head Teacher came and informed the children that we have some money and would like to improve our outside area. She told the children they have the best ideas as it is theirs and they know what they want.

1: We selected a sample (SEN, PPG, already confident, boys and girls etc) of four children and asked them to take pictures of things they liked about our outside classroom, then pictures of areas they would like to improve. The class teacher uploaded and created a flip chart and the children shared this with the whole class. The rest of the class added to their ideas of what they liked and wanted to improve.

2: An adult facilitated the children with listing the ideas down into ‘do-able’ and ‘not do-able’ by discussing each idea and asking themselves and each other ‘why’ (it could or couldn’t work). The children then chose their top five from what was left.

3: Class teachers all fed the children’s ideas back in a phase meeting. The Phase Leader then sent out specific areas to each class, for the children to create a mood board to present to an appropriate leader. However, this was not the initial plan for the research, as I believe it took away from the children having ownership of it as they did not decide which one they wanted to pursue themselves.

4: The children were told their area and created a mood board using the children’s quotes and ideas. I think this would have worked better if the children also drew their own pictures or wrote their own ideas etc – but the class teachers were unfortunately pushed for time.

5: The four children selected from the beginning then shared the mood board with a partner class as a practise for presenting to the leadership team.

Unfortunately, this was as far as we got. The aim was to feed back to the leadership team, action our ideas and then re-evaluate the outside area.

How well did we achieve our aims?

I definitely saw an improvement in participation from my least confident children. Not all Class Teachers reported finding the same; however I think if the aims and methodology
behind the research had been better shared, their approach to the research may have been different, resulting in different findings.

I cannot say I saw an accelerated increase in children’s ability to think creatively, although some children are more creative (was it the research or natural progression…?) however I do feel like more children are able to evaluate in everyday situations. I also feel like the results may have been different by the end of the research as we missed a vital chunk at the end.

We have definitely created a classroom of openness and acceptance and children are a lot less dismissive of ‘silly’ suggestions and are now justifying why a suggestions would not work which requires a higher level of cognition, which is great.

What was the impact on pupils?
More children are fully engaged in whole class lessons, as I believe they no longer feel unsure about volunteering ideas etc.

Beckie Wright, Class Teacher (Humanities and RE subject leader) Orchard Primary School.
Higher order questioning and critical thinking project: Cherry Orchard School, London

What did we want to achieve?

After attending Day 1 of the course I decided that I wanted to introduce higher order questioning and encourage critical thinking across the school. I wanted children to be able to look at sources and artefacts and question their authenticity and purpose. We also wanted children to demonstrate critical enquiry skills and not just to take ‘teacher’s word for it.’ This would be most likely to work in History and Geography, however encouraging higher order questioning could be implemented across all subject areas.

How did we go about it?

On my return to school I held an inset to share the resources and the above ideas from the course. Although we agreed that we did encourage critical thinking and higher order questioning through Socratic Dialogue and P4C already, we aimed to raise the profile across the school. All teachers had higher order sentence starters questioning stems in their classroom and children were encouraged to ask questions using these. We also did less talking to allow the children to do more. So children had more control over the direction and dialogue of their learning. This almost accidentally turned into class debates which were so rich in language where children exercised critical thinking and worked on their confidence.

We at first taught children how to critically analyse historical sources and then trained them to ask all of the possible questions surrounding the piece of evidence. We encouraged children to use an open mind and understand that sometimes there is no such thing as a definitive answer. We also encouraged children to challenge our answers and not just to ‘take our word for it. This was done through extensive modelling between teachers, TAs and LSAs.

How well did we achieve our aims?

After six weeks we had another staff meeting to discuss the impact we felt these strategies had had on the children. Staff collectively decided that children were beginning to ‘think outside of the box.’ They were exercising curiosity and asking higher order questioning about their learning. During debate we noted that children’s confidence had grown and they were fluent in presenting their ideas.

S. Celebioglu, Cherry Orchard School.
How can focused support with children’s questioning skills, in Year 5 and Year 1 topic lessons, improve the critical thinking of these children? Kensington Primary School, London

What did we want to achieve?

Our first title was ‘How can we improve critical thinking in the school through our use of effective questioning?’, then it became: ‘How can we improve the questioning skills of our children in order to get them to think more critically?, then finally the title above.

Initially I wanted to improve the questioning of children by adults in order to get children to think more critically, however when I looked at adult questioning across the school this was of an exceptional level. However in some classes, children seemed quite passive, not always asking higher level questions of the teacher, of each other or of themselves. I therefore decided to try and improve the questioning skills on the children in our schools.

How did we go about it?

I distributed a really useful resource in improving children’s questioning to teachers, in the hope that they would be able to use this in class to help improve this. However, without embedding this into anything the teachers were doing, it became buried in the paper work and unfortunately teachers didn’t use it.

How well did we achieve our aims?

With the help of my Head Teacher I have come up with a way of embedding this into the curriculum and make outcomes more achievable. I am going to work with Year 5 and Year 1 to improve the questioning skills of children during topic lessons. I hope to do this by incorporating big pictures to start each history/geography topic, which children can ask questions about. To start with this will be supported by the teacher, offering questions stems of different levels. And after time, hopefully children will get used to some of these openers and come up with some more create questions, leading to more critical thinking. These questions can then be revisited at the end of lessons as a plenary or at the end of a topic.

In this way the project will be linked to the school’s priorities, namely oracy. In working with two year groups I hope to be able to more easily support, monitor and observe changes.

What was the impact on pupils?

The project is ongoing.

Other outcomes:

I have learnt a lot about my own professional practice throughout this process, and had the opportunity to reflect on this. For example it was a mistake to introduce resources to class teachers en masse, and cold, without embedding it at all in something that teachers were already doing.

Eleanor Lucas, class teacher and History and Geography Coordinator at Kensington Primary School.
Developing critical thinking and problem solving in young children: Curwen Primary School, Newham

What did we want to achieve?

We wanted to develop teaching strategies that promote the development of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (CTPS) core skills in young children. The sooner children begin to use CTPS skills, the more inquisitive they become and the more they embrace learning. Rather than it being a conscious process, CTPS skills will become embedded into cognitive processes and become a natural way of thinking. With this in mind, it is important that the journey of learning CTPS skills begins early, with primary schools being the ideal platform from which to start this process.

How did we go about it?

As CTPS skills are best taught in the context of subject matter. As such, two tasks were designed that could be adapted to a variety of subjects. The first was a picture analysis activity, Picture of Influence, whereby an image was chosen and children had to describe what they could see in the image. Linking to this, children had to describe what this suggested, making links between what they could see and what these things suggest is happening or resulting. The final stage asked for the consequences of the suggestions. The final stage was adapted in later activities; children were asked to think of questions that they would like to ask about the image, to further develop their understanding. They were guided towards higher level thinking questions, e.g. beginning ‘Why might…?’, ‘How will…?’.

The second activity, entitled Chain Reaction, again asked children to think of consequences. Building on from the Picture of Influence activity (but could be adapted as a stand-alone task), children identified something that they could see in the image, e.g. smoke coming from the ships funnel. They then thought about the consequences of this, on people and the environment, writing each next step on a piece of paper until they had exhausted their ideas. Children were then encouraged to look back over their statements and identify gaps, or where further explanation was needed to create a full picture. Only when they were satisfied that they had fully explained the chain of events, they put together the Chain Reaction paper chain.

How well did we achieve our aims?

The Picture of Influence activity requires a lot of guidance, especially when it is introduced. The task requires modelling, with the best outcome being achieved where the teacher has pre-planned suitable suggestions and consequences to enable children to be guided where they may initially find it difficult. Having different options for the final ‘box’ in the activity allows for the activity to be used at different stages of a lesson, e.g. as a starter that can be returned to when consequences have been investigated further, or as a tool for further
planning if children are asked to think of questions they want to ask about the image. The Chain Reaction activity was more focused, enabling children to consider one aspect at a time. As such, this is accessible to all abilities, where the concept or idea that is being considered can be tailored to the pupil’s ability. The notion that there can be gaps, and that the chain of events can be added to before it is completed, give the participants confidence to look back over their work and correct any errors of misunderstandings. Both tasks certainly encourage children to evaluate evidence, consider different perspectives and look for deeper meanings.

What was the impact on pupils?

Pupils were engaged and motivated to think for themselves. The Chain Reaction activity in particular promoted team work and communication skills, which resulted in children supporting each other in thinking critically about the task. They were able to consider different viewpoints and think deeply about issues, following the knock-on effects of each through to the end.

Emma White
Head of Year 5, Geography Subject Leader – Curwen Primary School, Newham.
The Creative Curriculum: how and why do the foundation subjects play a pivotal role in teaching critical thinking skills? Christ Church Primary School, Chelsea

What did we want to achieve?

In this project I wanted to consider what the nature of critical thinking is in a primary school context, then furthermore, how to structure, develop and embed it in my classroom teaching, across the whole school and within the new curriculum. Within my role as a member of the SLT and whole school Creative Curriculum Coordinator I also wanted to explore the intrinsic connection and relationship between creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. This linked well with the formal introduction of Philosophy for Children, through training and experience, across all key stages in my school.

The focus area I choose was to apply the teaching of critical thinking skills within a subject area rather than discretely. During the last academic year, my focus subject area was Geography (part of the school’s development plan) but in this project it was taught within a unit of History (The Victorians). The means by which I taught these skills were within ‘thinking routines’ taken from a project called Artful Thinking. This is an American initiative whose approach for teaching thinking uses Art as a force for developing pupil’s thinking dispositions. My specialism in Art Education and the connection between creativity and critical thinking is an area that I have been particularly interested in for teaching Art & Design in primary schools. The goal of Artful Thinking is to help pupils develop thinking dispositions that support thoughtful learning by making critical thinking a more visible and apparent aspect of classroom life. In my senior leadership role it seemed logical, whilst introducing the new creative curriculum (Geography, History, Art and DT) within our school, to simultaneously embed and integrate a common understanding and reiterate the importance of nurturing young children’s creative and critical thinking. As an outstanding school, an ongoing development focus is to ‘narrow the gap’ between children’s attainment, the progress and performance of pupil premium children and the role of pupil voice. Teaching critical thinking skills addresses these challenges through an emphasis on: language, expectations, modelling, opportunities, motivation, relationships and classroom environment.

How did we go about it?

This initial project was carried out in my own Year 5 class of 29 children (aged 9-10).

The class cohort consists of four children with SEN; two children with statements (ADHD) (Visually Impaired) and six with EAL needs.

The children took part by completing three thinking routines/ frames over five sessions (approx.30 mins). The stimuli were three different Victorian black and white photographs.

Photograph 1 with a routine called Think/ Puzzle/ Explore

Photograph 2 with a routine called Looking 10 x 2

Photograph 3 with a routine called Creative Questions (part 1, 2 and 3)
Photograph 1 and Think/Puzzle/Explore

This thinking routine was an introduction to the Year 5 history topic, Victorians and I was particularly interested in the effect that this would have on their engagement to learn, ask questions, write known facts and inspire further learning.

Three groups of learners were particularly drawn to my attention in terms of their strong interest, natural ability and affinity with this approach to learning. They were pupils with EAL, high attaining and ‘quiet’ pupils and lower attaining children with low level behaviour concerns. As a class teacher this also highlighted the merits and potential drawbacks of differentiated group teaching as opposed to mixed attainment learning in primary school.

Children’s questions focused on historical concepts such as: setting, figures, age, gender, economic status, propaganda, relationships, similarity and difference. Many of their questions reflected historical critical thinking skills such as: enquiry, evidence and communication.

Photograph 2 and Looking 10 x 2

This routine was an exploration of the children’s use of language and vocabulary. It was very clear that a paucity of language prevented some children from contributing ideas in a whole class discussion but given time and an opportunity to write down individual words or phrases, gather and formulate their thoughts, they grew in confidence. Again, this routine emphasized the historical skills of observation and communication.

Photograph 3 and Creative Questions

This part of the project was carried out over a period of time and had three different aspects: initial questions (in black), answers written after a research homework (in green) on the related subject (Queen Victoria’s family), additional answers and questions written by another classmate (in red). Lastly, there was an opportunity to reflect on any new ideas about the artwork/topic. This activity encouraged self-generated questions, collaborative learning and reflected better understanding of known historical facts (particularly from higher attaining pupils). The final part revealed how the pupils learning had progressed and how they were able to ask higher order questions; commencing with phrases like, ‘what would change if, what if we knew?’ More open and flexible thinking was also apparent from the whole class in the final session.

How well did we achieve our aims?

I have briefly described some of the impacts that I observed on pupils’ learning but decided that it would be beneficial to ask them how they had felt about these activities and experiences. I wanted the pupil evaluation form to consider the three orientations of critical thinking: making better sense of information (facts), becoming a more open thinker and becoming better and more confident at metacognition (thinking about thinking!). The context for this project was within a history unit but one of the aims is to encourage critical thinking in all core and foundation subjects.

What was the impact on pupils?

These are some quotes from the children:
I enjoyed doing this because I like looking at pictures and asking questions. I found it pretty easy most of the time but sometimes I found it challenging against my brain. I like looking at pictures to find little clues of her life and feelings. I liked looking for clues and hints in the pictures because there were things that I knew and didn’t know so I learnt new things. And it was a subject that I hadn’t studied yet. It was challenging to begin with but it got much easier and funner!

Other outcomes:

This project has given me an opportunity to consolidate my understanding of the key role that images can play in teaching thinking skills to primary aged children. It is also clear that to teach CTPS strategies you need to make them explicit and give children time and opportunities to practise them. If these are skills that can take weeks, months or years to learn, then a whole school approach is needed.

I hope to be able to share this project with the other members of SLT in my school and whole staff, and I would like to be include these findings in my Geography initial teacher training sessions.

Arabella Davies, Year 5 class teacher, Creative Curriculum whole school coordinator and member of the Senior Leadership Team, Christ Church Primary School, Chelsea.
Developing critical thinking through questioning: St Josephs Catholic Primary School, Wandsworth

What did we want to achieve?

Project aim: To strengthen the process of critical thinking in either geography or history through the development of questioning techniques.

Project impact measures:

1. Move the teacher/pupil questioning ratio from 50:50 towards 30:70.
2. Learners show a growth mindset and a higher level of thinking through the use of the types of questions they ask.

How did we go about it? (See attached PowerPoint® presentation to show more detail)

Methodology of project:

3. Through a CPD opportunity, teachers were introduced to a range of techniques for asking better questions.
4. Teachers then selected one questioning technique to use in the classroom for either geography or history.
5. Peer lesson observations were carried out to focus on the teacher/pupil questioning ratio and the types of questions asked by learners and were matched to Blooms Taxonomy.
6. Samples of work were taken to show new learning/thinking that has taken place by the learner.

Project timeline:

November – December 2015: teachers introduced to techniques for asking better questions.

4th January 2016: Whole school CPD on Critical Thinking.

5th -22nd January 2016: Teachers used better questioning techniques with their classes.

School week beginning 5th January 2016:

- Developing a no hands up classroom using the lolly stick approach.
- Learners were introduced to examples of critical thinking questions based on Blooms Taxonomy in history and/or geography.
- LSAs completed a frequency questioning tally chart and a critical thinking question type tally sheet to baseline types of questions asked.

School week beginning 11th January 2016:

- Teachers develop the Pose, Pause, Bounce, Pounce approach in the context of history and/or geography (Key Stage 1 to use daily images as stimulation and Disney characters to reinforce the approach).
12th January 2016: Staff meeting to review critical thinking strategies used.

School week beginning 18th January 2016.

- Staff developed thinking time by using the ‘Think, Pair, Share’ approach in history and/or geography. (EYFS to focus on extension questions e.g. Tell me about….? What do you think about…? How? Why? Learners undertook possible activities like Hot Seating, Role Play, Discussions, Imagery stimulation, Knowledge mind maps etc.).

25th - 29th January peer lesson observations and work sampling.

- Observers focussed on the frequency and types of questions used in the classroom by completing a:
  - Frequency of questions tally chart.
  - Critical thinking tally chart.
  - Collecting work samples to show the progress and impact of critical thinking.

1st – 11th February 2016: Outcomes were analysed and shared in school as a PowerPoint® Presentation, showing where learners progressed against the project’s impacts measures.

- The critical thinking group met on Monday 1st February to analyse results and develop a PowerPoint® to share results.
- 9th February 2016: Critical thinking projects shared at a Staff Meeting: how can we move the project forward?
- 11th February 2016: Outcomes shared at the British Council Connecting Classrooms Workshop.

**How well did we achieve our aims?**

How well did we achieve our aims? (See attached PowerPoint®, Phase 3: initial findings, for further detail.) The project achieved its aims by using three critical thinking strategies. These were:

1. Using images to develop higher order questions.
2. Through the introduction of the no hands up strategy and the use of lolly sticks.
3. Through the development of the Pose, Pause, Pounce and Bounce strategy (PPPB).

Below are our initial findings.

**Using images to develop higher order questions**

We found geographical and historical photographs and images were very powerful in helping the children develop their higher order questions. At the start of the project, the teacher and their Learning Support Assistants matched the types of questions the children asked against Blooms Taxonomy and at the end of the project they carried out a similar exercise and compared the difference in the type of questions asked. The school’s Learning Support Assistants carried these observations at times during a geography or history lesson.
unknown to the teacher (See slide 36 for results.). Initial findings suggested that the children were asking higher order questions by the end of the project.

**No hands up strategy and the use of lolly sticks**

Comments by the teachers suggested the following:

- The children were enthusiastic about the approach.
- It reduced competitive nature of some children to feel that they have to answer questions.
- Lolly sticks kept the children on task.
- It gave all children in the classroom and opportunity to share their thinking and learning.
- It improved the children’s listening skills.
- It allowed children the opportunity to think aloud in class in a safe environment.
- The children responded to questions calmly as a result of the approach.

**Developing the Pose, Pause, Pounce and Bounce strategy (PPPB)**

Comments by teachers on the PPPB strategy.

- The children are positively engaged with the process. Creates excitement.
- It allows children more time to process the question and to think.
- Is good for role modelling answers to the rest of the class.
- Improves the children’s listening skills.
- Encourages children to consider alternative thinking and to build on that thinking.
- A greater variety of answers are now given in the classroom by the children.
- Has led to children debating the thinking of their peers.
- Works well with the higher ability children.
- The children’s answers can be linked to philosophy – ‘I agree…’ and ‘I disagree…’
- PPPB is not just constrained to geography and history; it has now become successful cross curricular strategy.
- Forces the teacher to wait significantly longer for children to process questions and to think.

**What was the impact on pupils?**

Impact measure 1: Move the teacher/pupil questioning ratio from 50:50 towards 30:70.

- Initial finding: In 6 out of 7 classrooms surveyed, the pupils were asking more questions than the teacher.

Impact measure 2: Learners show a growth mindset and a higher level of thinking through the use of the types of questions they ask.

- Initial finding: In 5 out of 6 classrooms surveyed, learners were showing a growth mindset and a higher level of thinking through asking higher order questions.
Other outcomes:

At the final stage of the project the initial findings were shared at a staff meeting. Staff were encouraged by the project’s impact and as a result agreed that the project would continue throughout the academic year and they put forward some next steps for development:

Possible strategies to engage the learner with critical thinking:

- Set up a good questions board in each classroom.
- Award one member in each class a certificate for being the ‘questioner of the week’.
- Link classroom vocabulary walls to develop good questions e.g. Word of the day used to base questions around.
- Develop more P4C style debates as classroom practice and set ‘thinking’ homework, linked to the question of the week, which encourages children and parents to discuss and share ideas.
- Use questioning to address misconceptions and develop the pupil voice.
- Use talk partners to deepen critical thinking and questioning.
- Run a parent workshop on critical thinking and thinking skills.
- Target groups of children e.g. FSM, EAL, SEND, More Able, with more opportunities to develop their critical thinking and questioning skills to enhance progress.

A teacher from our school summed up the success of the project by saying “These critical thinking strategies are great! I can’t stop myself using them beyond geography and history”.

The project has positively engaged staff and learners with the strategy of critical thinking and as a result, it has been decided that we would extend our practice of critical thinking across all curriculum areas and adopt it as a whole school approach to raise the achievement of our learners.

Download:

- Presentation: developing critical thinking through questioning (PDF)

Stephen Ellis, Assistant Headteacher, St. Joseph’s Catholic Primary School.
Asking deeper higher order questions in geography: Hitchen Girls School, Hitchen

What did we want to achieve?

The focus adopted was asking deeper higher order questions. The Five Ws are already well embedded within the geography curriculum. At Key Stage 3 they are often used as a starter activity to encourage thinking outside the box, to interpret a photo or image or to set the scene or context. The introduction of deeper questioning/questions is aimed at encouraging pupils to build upon their existing “structures” and think more effectively and understand issues in more depth. They would then be more equipped to think more synoptically and consider more than one side of an issue. This would provide them with more building blocks to use deeper questioning skills to investigate issues and develop more critical independent thinking at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 – essential with the introduction of independent investigations at A Level.

How did we go about it?

The department concentrated on the development of higher order questioning at Key Stage 3 using question stems such as ‘If, What, Might, Will, Should, Could and Can…?’. These were initially used as plenary activities and later embedded in main activities and classroom discussions. Pupils were also encouraged to write their own questions on post it notes that were posted to another pupil whose homework task was to provide an answer. This sometimes led pupils to further research the issue or a consideration of other peoples’ viewpoints or the wider consequences of the issue. Pupils enjoyed receiving the answers and sharing their feedback. Interestingly, pupils’ initial attempts to pose questions sometimes veered back to the Five Ws as they could think of these quickly and so they had to think hard to get started. Some of the questions posed were closed questions and so this is an area for future focus. Year 7 have begun to differentiate between closed and open questions and their use so this will act as a future baseline.

Further use of these higher order question stems could be used to challenge pupils to focus in more depth on implications and consequences of an event or issue.

What was the impact on pupils?

Pupils enjoyed the challenge of creating questions and receiving feedback. The resulting peer and class feedback/discussions on the issue covered future scenarios and alternative geographical futures. In peer and class feedback it supported the weaker pupils in their understanding of an issue and to begin to see the wider context. More able pupils could be challenged to think of the relative importance of questions. Engagement and thinking has been enhanced and the image framework we have devised for these higher order questions can easily be used across topic areas and key stages. We are able to easily change the image stimulus and so planning time for these tasks is relatively short.

Ann Jarratt, Hitchen Girls School Geography Department.
Decision Making Skills in GCSE Geography: Central Foundation Girls School, Tower Hamlets

What did we want to achieve?

- To improve the decision making skills in GCSE Edexcel B DME Unit 3 exam paper.
- To give students the space to ask and answer questions about the resource booklet and examine the options available and the impacts and the different players involved.

How did we go about it?

Using higher order thinking questions, we put the students into groups to examine the four different options for Jamaica (using the Unit 3 paper, June 2014):

- Option 1: Encourage the rapid development of the tourist industry but discourage the bauxite industry.
- Option 2: Encourage the rapid development of the bauxite industry but discourage further tourist development.
- Option 3: Encourage the rapid development of both tourism and the bauxite industry.
- Option 4: Discourage the development of both tourist and bauxite industries and identify new ways of developing the economy.

In groups students discussed the different options available for future development in Jamaica. Using these they completed a worksheet where they needed to choose the preferred option for each group. Students identified the different players involved and how each option will impact them. We used a conflict matrix to show the opinions of different players towards each other.

How well did we achieve our aims?

Students were able to better identify how each option would impact the different groups of people. The options ranged from Jamaica developing its tourism and/or mining industries or to try something new.

Students were able to identify which groups would agree or disagree with each other, using the conflict matrix.

Students were then able to answer the 12 mark question at the end of the exam paper, making reference to the impacts on the different groups of people, both positive and negative.
Select one option you think would be the best long-term plan to improve Jamaica’s economic growth. Explain why your selected option is the best available.

Use information from the Resource Booklet and your knowledge from Units 1 and 2 to support your answer. (12 marks)

Chosen option ..........................................................................................................................

What was the impact on pupils?

Middle ability students and less able students groups were better able to answer the twelve mark question, where students had to decide on the best option for the future development of Jamaica, by weighing up the development of tourism with the further development of bauxite mining or trying something new.

Students were more engaged in the activity as they had a better all-round understanding of the impacts of their choices on the different groups of people. They were encouraged to look at the impacts as social, economic, environmental and political.

Other outcomes:

The approach and resources on how to develop key DME skills with students were shared with department for other teachers to use with their GCSE classes.

Download:

- DME group work key questions (PDF)
- Jamaica conflict matrix (PDF)
- Decision making exercise Jamaica: different groups (PDF)

Rahila Rehman, Head of Geography, Central Foundation Girls School.