

Título:

HOW DO GLOBAL SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IMPACT ON THE CURRICULUM IN ONE PARTICULAR LARGE SEMI URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Autor:

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Introduction:

The theme of the global dimension has become a significant part of school life at the large semi urban Primary School where I am head teacher. In the two schools I have lead I have encouraged global partnerships to enhance the curriculum and give opportunities for professional and personal development of staff.

This involvement varies and includes key aspects of the global dimension in formal planning in each year group to informal participation by children, staff, governors and parents in related events and activities. A global dimension base exists in my present school to support and advise teachers and managers in the West Midlands when planning and reflecting about the global dimension within the curriculum. This base was originally supported by our Local Authority and is now funded by the school budget. A large proportion of our school staff have visited partner schools in both The Gambia and China which has supported opportunities for their own development. We have hosted visits from groups of Chinese pupils and are currently planning for our children to visit China. Ofsted has congratulated our school in a number of reports in relation to our use of the global dimension as a vehicle for a range of valuable learning opportunities.

This large investment in time and curriculum profile of the global dimension and the maintenance of active, thriving school partnerships leads me to ask an important question: how do global partnerships impact on the curriculum at our school? In other words does the time, resources and emotion invested in maintaining a partnership impact significantly on the children at our school? Also, do the generally positive judgements of parents, governors and inspectors reflect what actually happens?

I believe that many qualitative judgements about school performance and pupil outcomes lack rigour and strong evidence to support them. One example of this was after a recent (June 2011) single subject PSHE Ofsted inspection at our school: '...curriculum is imaginative and stimulating and includes international links.' Also, 'The school is at the forefront of initiatives such as international links with China and The Gambia...' Other inspection reports have made similar judgments: 'It's links with a school in The Gambia are an outstanding feature that broadens pupils awareness of the wider world', and, 'curriculum...has some outstanding elements such as the international dimension through the school links with The Gambia' (Ofsted: 2002). Judgments such as these will have been triangulated by using a variety of sources and invariably they are based on interviews with children and staff. A parent questionnaire will also supply opinions. There is evidence that outcomes relating to aspects of PSHE are enhanced by these partnerships but I wish to find further evidence of this and discover if other pupil outcomes are enhanced. I am also interested in the rationale used by different agencies to make judgements about the quality of global learning.

There is a general feeling that pervades education and generally in society that it is important for our children to have an understanding of the world and to be able to reflect on their relationship with it. 'Think Global' have produced a report 'What parents want' (2011) which presents the findings of a YouGov survey of parents attitudes towards their children's education. The research concludes that, 'the vast majority of parents of children under 18 recognise their children are growing up in a globalised, interdependent world'. Parents say they want the curriculum to reflect this and see education about the wider world 'as a core part of what schools offer, not an added extra'. A sample of parents at Hagley Primary School have responded to questionnaires requesting their views on the place of global learning in school life and the role of school partnerships. The sample of parents was randomly selected but with the guideline of having 4 children from each class (2 boys/ 2 girls). From a total of 72 questionnaires sent home 25 were returned.

The vast majority of parents value this aspect of the curriculum. The reasons given for the inclusion of global learning can be categorised into a number of broad themes:

Knowledge and understanding of other cultures, languages and religions.

Economic/Commercial competition requiring greater knowledge of other communities.

3. Broader understanding of multi cultural Britain.

4. Impact of lifestyles on others.

5. Value themselves, their environment and others.

6. Appreciation of what we have compared to others.

The majority of respondents refer to learning about other cultures. A significant number believe that giving their children skills and knowledge that will help them compete economically is an important reason, not surprising in this affluent area of the West Midlands. Some parents also make perceptive comments relating to the impact of our lifestyles on others and see that as an important motivation for exposing their children to global education. A small group raised the issue of helping others and feeling it is important that our children realize how lucky they are compared to people in other parts of the world.

Reasons for involving the school in partnerships can be categorised into a number of distinct themes:

Sharing experiences with other schools.

Real (not text book) experiences.

Creating a social/personal dynamic.

Perhaps it is, like apple pie, obviously a good thing that a function of the curriculum is to teach children about the wider world, but what and how should we teach and do school partnerships enhance the quality of learning that takes place?

Previous literature on this topic reflects a range of views about the value of school partnerships. The Department for Education (2006) produced a guidance document, supported by Gordon Brown which gives conflicting advice but also encapsulated this debate: partnerships 'help young people to understand the differences as well as the similarities between their lives' but also how they can: 'show how limited the provision of education is in so many counties'. An Oxfam publication 'Building Successful School Partnerships (2007) highlights the educational pitfalls such as :

'promoting pity and sympathy'; 'reinforcing stereotypes' and 'cultivating paternalistic attitudes and feelings of superiority'. Dr Fran Martin (Times Educational Supplement: 13th March 2010) has similar concerns : 'There needs to be a different way of thinking to avoid partnerships having these neocolonialist or racist undertones'. As I learn in greater detail how teachers in my school view the aims of global education, and how it is planned for, I will be able to make informed judgements on whether there is a mutually agreed idea of quality practice and if the planning and learning reflect this consistently throughout the school. I will also learn whether working with other schools enhances and supports our practice.

When considering impact on the outcomes of our children it is important to look beyond the curriculum as seen in classrooms throughout the school. Impact can be from other, less obvious, sources. For instance, the skills and knowledge developed by staff who experience the management of a school partnership which impacts on their teaching and planning.

Personally, I have been interested in school partnerships since 1993. This interest originated while headteacher of a small rural school in Worcestershire. Contacts were made, letters exchanged between staff and children and projects identified. As confidence grew staff visits were organised and the partnership expanded beyond the school into the village community. Looking back it is easy to be critical of the rather haphazard nature of how things developed, however, at that time many school partnerships were in High Schools with foreign language themes or links with an emphasis on fund raising in order to 'help' our friends in an exotic but less advanced place. The reason for involving our school in a real partnership rather than a textbook simulation was rarely discussed explicitly. Generally, it was thought to be a good idea that children were exposed to different cultures. The National Curriculum seemed to agree and advocated the study of other places whether that was in the UK or further afield. Teachers were motivated and excited by the contact which was fueled further by the prospect of visitors from this 'other world'. As more knowledge was gleaned about this place differences and similarities were apparent. Children were fascinated that other children in The Gambia wore a similar uniform, they enjoyed singing, were members of cubs and scouts. They also quickly recognised differences in each others lives, some related to poverty in material possessions and lack of health and education services that many of us take for granted. At this point our partnership included a charitable dimension with fund raising for a range of ,usually, education or health related projects. Curriculum planning was mainly as things happened and lacked the rigour of whole school continuity or the reflection on quality global learning core ideas. Excellence was entwined in the experiences of the children but it was spasmodic and possibly equalled by poorly thought through learning opportunities. A larger school and new partnership

gave me the opportunity to start again and start the link with reflection on the questions : why are we doing this and what do we want our children to gain from it? A partnership agreement was discussed, written and signed with our partner school but what has been the result? It is this thought that has lead me to my initial question:

How do global school partnerships impact on the curriculum in one particular large semi urban Primary School? In order to give the evidence gathering structure and focus I have also included three sub questions adapted from a paper by Jeff Serf (2009).

How do teachers perceive the core ideas and principles of global learning in primary schools? How do teachers engage learners in these ideas and principles using global partnerships? How do teachers perceive the quality of outcomes that result from this engagement?

The purpose of this paper, in part, is to consider what teachers in my school believe to be the core purpose of global learning and to evaluate whether this view is reflected in the curriculum that is offered to our children. Before I undertook my research I would have split teachers' views of the 'point' of global learning in the following way:

For children to learn about the world through:

- * a factual awareness eg rivers , capitals, flags, agriculture, industry etc.

- * a cultural view eg religion, music, clothes, language etc.

- * developing geographical skills.

- * supporting aspects of citizenship and PSHE especially with regard to 'fair trade' and the impact western lifestyles have on economically poorer countries.

In other words much of the work connected to global learning is factual learning about another place. An interesting comparison can be made between our two partner schools set in very different contexts. The Gambia is situated in West Africa and surrounded by either the Atlantic or Senegal. It ranks low on all economic comparisons and has few natural resources. Our partners in Yangzhou, China are situated in one of the most prosperous parts of an increasingly prosperous nation, however, there are extreme contrasts within China between rural and urban communities.

An important question should be asked: are we guilty of telling a 'single story' about The Gambia or China? Chimamanda Adichie talks about the danger of a single story of Africa that is constantly repeated and only tells about poverty and war. When this story is the primary source of information through the media that our young children are exposed to there are obvious dangers that a distorted view will remain lodged in their minds. When this story is also repeated at home this danger increases and when school again repeats this story without opportunities to question it the distortion becomes acute. Fran Martin (2011) considers why this 'single story' is repeated and through the lens of postcolonial theory questions the impact of study visits on teachers' world views both in the north and the south. Do our children only see China as an urbanised society filled with super fast trains and high rise buildings? Is The Gambia only a poor country, prone to malaria with schools of happy smiling children but with few resources? Our view of Africa is developed by our experiences. Most of us do not travel to this vast collection of separate and diverse countries but absorb consciously and unconsciously images and sounds that, in the main, are presented to us by the media. It is not surprising that asked to create a mental collage of images most people would fill it with exotic animals, bright fabrics, simple huts, drums, fly covered children and machete wielding young soldiers. In my school we attempt to present an overwhelmingly positive presentation of life in our partner school, community and country. This is achieved by repeatedly celebrating similarities and differences and presenting positive role models often through visitors to our school. However, there are times when stereotypical impressions are conveyed to our children.

The Gambia, like many countries with partnerships in the UK, is an ex colony and a current member of the commonwealth. China has many historical connections with the UK but hasn't experienced long term domination and influence in the same way.

Has this different history affected attitudes of staff at my school and importantly the attitudes of staff and leadership teams at our two partner schools? I shall explore this by reflecting on responses from staff.

Edward Said, in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), considers the attitudes of the West towards much of the rest of the world. For the term 'orient' much of the globe that is termed 'developing' could also be included. He described a 'binary' view that presents opposites of rich/poor, advanced/backward, educated/not educated etc.

This view of communities not set in a western context was, and it could be argued still is, prevalent. Post colonial theory arose out of this examination of this North/South, Developed/Developing relationship. It is a view that is illustrated best in an early attempt at labelling these communities and regions i.e. first and third world. Third world and by implication third class. Why does this continue to be a distinction that needs to be made? Does this mass categorisation of multiple cultures under one pejorative term give an accurate picture of the huge variety of societies that exist?

In my evaluation and analysis of teacher views of quality global learning and how this is expressed in the curriculum I am interested to reflect on any differences or similarities between the partnerships with The Gambia and China in a number of ways:

- * The type of activities planned

- * The attitudes of staff in the UK

- * The attitudes of staff in partner schools

In other words does a post-colonial inferiority complex pervade their relationships? Is there a postcolonial foundation to their partnerships? Do these two partnerships differ and if so why?

An eclectic mix of positivism and interpretism would seem to me to be the most useful way forward. I will produce data that informs me of quantitative measures. For example the proportion of the curriculum in particular classes that is allocated to partnership connected work, numbers of children engaged in hosting visits from partner schools or types of learning activities that are planned. To interpret and evaluate more deeply such numerical data I intend to set up opportunities for group discussion with teachers to avoid any feeling of intimidation. I will then ask teachers to complete anonymous questionnaires with a range of both closed and open ended questions. It should be recognised that, according to Hennink et al (2011) an interpretive approach has the distinctive feature of the researcher understanding the context of their research. They should be empathetic and able to interpret and understand because they themselves know the context. I have this close knowledge of the context and issues, therefore, I must be vigilant to strike a balance between my experience and bias when seeking information from others.

My school is one of the largest in the local authority. With 630 children there are 21 classes, 3 in each year group, and about 27 teachers. It is not the intention of this research to generalise about what happens at my school to other schools in the region or country but investigate what happens and identify if there is good practice that can be replicated elsewhere. The number of variables amongst even this relatively small population of teachers is huge and would include age, teaching experience, qualifications, previous involvement in the global dimension, age range taught etc. I will select a group of teachers that I do not claim to be a sample as defined by Thomas (2009:pg 104) i.e. 'a subset that is representative of a larger population'. My selection will attempt to take a 'snap shot' of practice in my school and, consequently, will use criteria that select teachers from all year groups. However, I will select a mixture of teachers who have been very involved with school partnership work at a very practical level including visiting link schools and those that have not had this direct involvement. Silverman (2000) encourages the selection of 'deviant' cases that are likely to give information that may challenge previous beliefs and theories. I am not approaching this research with a theory as such but possibly implicit in my questions and the experience I bring to the project is the suggestion that global learning is valuable to a child's development. Selecting teachers in the group to be investigated who have not shown a great deal of engagement in the past may produce some interesting comparisons for consideration.

The first two sub questions that I have posed strike me initially as the most straight forward. To answer the first question teachers and managers can be set tasks that will give me a picture of their understanding of the core aims and principles of global education. I am interested in this knowledge and view of teachers in my school but I do not wish to follow the approach by Serf (2009) who presented his sample of teachers and managers with a background paper to consider and structured statements of what might or might not be considered quality global education. This strikes me as overly supportive and directs participants in the research towards perceived good practice not what a teacher's understanding is of global education or what happens in their classroom.

However, to avoid unnecessary stress that could be caused by having no prompts or structure, and to aid thought processes, I will engage teachers in group discussions. The discussion will be steered by me and will aim to revolve around the main question and 3 sub questions identified earlier. I will attempt to avoid the 'Hawthorn Effect' by being non judgmental and then asking all participants to complete anonymous questionnaires with both open ended and closed questions. Some of the jargon of global education can be incomprehensible to many excellent practitioners, consequently, I will use a variety of specialist and 'child speak' terminology. This part of my research has a qualitative

nature because I cannot possibly know without doubt if I have discovered the truth about a teacher's knowledge and opinions in a relatively short interview.

As I stated above, I will also have to consider my position as head teacher and most senior member of the school with influence that the teacher may find intimidating if honestly answering questions about their knowledge and practice. I have been encouraged school partnerships for over 25 years and so interviewees will have an impression of my views about the value of well thought out school partnerships. To monitor any behavioural change due to an awareness of being observed I will set up a control group with another member of staff responsible for interviewing a group of teachers using the same questions and prompts. They would also complete the same anonymous questionnaire in order to achieve the best standardisation as possible. The anonymous questionnaire will also be given to all teaching staff and a selection of non teaching staff. Parents and governors will complete an adapted questionnaire in order to gain a variety of perspectives and achieve triangulation.

Permission to do this research has been obtained from my governing body and supported by my performance management group. I must ensure that teachers interviewed understand they will not be identified in the final report by not referring to names or classes when discussing data and by generalising rather than giving specific details of practice.

The second sub question is about how teachers are planning for opportunities to engage in global education. I intend to analyse teacher's formal short, medium and long term planning. An excellent opportunity has arisen for detailed data as the school is engaged in year group evaluation and recording of global learning across the curriculum as part of a review that is also taking in sustainability and the outdoor environment. I will also be creating opportunities to use evidence of one off planned and unplanned activities and events that take place in the school. Some of this evidence has the quality of a quantitative approach as I will collect details of time devoted to global education through our partnerships and the types of activities children engage in. The issue of what is global education and the many overlaps into different curriculum areas will be important to reflect on.

The third sub question is an attempt to go beyond what happens, to what is the quality of what happens and how a partnership with a school in a developing country enhances the quality of outcomes. At this point I reflect back to the main research question and ask if considering the impact on the curriculum is too narrow. Should I be looking at the impact on all aspects of

children's development? Views of parents, governors and other staff would be more relevant if they are evaluating broader aspects of children's experiences. In fact, should I consider the impact on all aspects of the school? The professional development opportunities, the broadening of teachers world view, the team bonding effect of group visits in often challenging circumstances. For the purpose of this research I will focus on the impact partnerships have on the important areas of social and emotional development but also collect data of other use of partnerships in the curriculum.

When my research is completed I will have substantial data from which to make judgements about the approach to global learning in my school. I will also have a better understanding of how school partnerships impact on this learning and teaching and, in turn, what is the effect on pupil's emotional and social outcomes. The research will also shed light on continuity and consistency of practice and attitudes and understanding of global education which will inform the future planning of training. As I analyse the data, both quantitative and qualitative, I will look for themes, connections and relationships.

O'Leary (2004:261) suggests that 'you may end up engaging in cycles of inductive and deductive reasoning'. I will bring my own bias and experience to my analysis while also seeking to 'explore data without predetermined themes or theory in mind' (O'Leary: 2004) using a grounded theory approach.

Sub question 1: How do teachers perceive the core ideas and principles of global learning in primary schools?

After a series of 'conversations' and questionnaires no significant differences were apparent between the responses of those involving myself and those lead by another member of staff with a background and experience of using partnerships in their teaching.

All teachers expressed strong support for including global learning in their teaching, however, the reasons for doing so and their definition of global learning did vary. The overwhelming reason for inclusion was seen as making our children aware of other people's lives. Comments such as: 'developing an understanding of different cultures', was a common response. 'Encouraging tolerance and understanding', was another frequently expressed opinion and 'awareness of diversity' was a phrase used more than once. A pleasing response was the expression that global learning and working with our partner school was a two way process. My own intuition tells me that this is a

significant change from the early days of our partnership work when many meetings would begin with a significant proportion of staff wanting to plan for charitable activities.

'Working together as a partnership'.

'Learning about the lives of the children in our partner schools and how they are similar to and different from our children'.

'An awareness of others can also reinforce what it is which makes us distinct'.

'To develop an understanding of similarities and differences'.

'Empathetic to others needs and feelings'.

Why has this apparent change happened? Frequent visits to our partner schools and hosting teachers from them has created personal relationships that are real and lasting and which expose the participants to challenges and problem solving created by these relationships. Through this a solid understanding evolves of each others lives and a more sophisticated appreciation of the positive qualities and problems that each of us is faced with.

A small proportion of teachers developed the views of some parents and talked about the need to prepare our children as a member of a global workforce. Interdependence was mentioned a number of times: 'to be responsible as a global citizen and consider the impact of their own actions', 'global citizens', 'part of a wider world'.

A move seems to have taken place whereby the school population perceives our partnerships as learning from each other rather than supporting or helping another school, although in the case of The Gambian link there remains an element of wanting to 'help' due to the very obvious lack of resources and opportunities for teacher development.

Critical analysis of how 'help' affects our partnership and whether token physical support actually has a positive impact is needed. This could take place with a more structured 'study visit' approach during which quality time is set aside for reflection.

Consultation through questionnaires with our school governors produced very similar responses. Two statements by governors indicate a high level of sophistication and sensitivity:

'Children can learn that while cultures and aspirations differ in their expression and execution, an understanding that there are strong similarities is equally valuable'.

'For children not to be afraid of diversity, but to understand, appreciate, welcome and embrace it as part of the richness and fun of learning'.

Sub question 2: How do teachers engage learners in these ideas and principles using global partnerships?

Table 1, below, was formulated and developed after an analysis of key skills identified by teachers at my school. I have selected those areas of the planned curriculum that were identified by the teacher as contributing to global learning. This was an activity instigated by the senior leadership team following a period of curriculum review. It was agreed by the staff that after a large amount of re planning of topics throughout the school with an emphasis on our school priorities of : sustainability, global learning, outdoor education and cross curricular connections a review was necessary to check for continuity and consistency. Global learning was an element that all staff reflected on and included in this review.

It is important to note that our school lies somewhere midway on a curriculum continuum that spans the extremes of rigid and inflexible units of work and a child initiated, flexible approach that allows children the opportunity to suggest avenues of investigation and gives teachers 'permission' to prioritise skills rather than content. Our school is comfortable with planned cross curricular topics that allows for the 'pupil voice' to contribute to the direction of a topic but usually based around a pre planned structure. Discrete lessons also take place regularly in the core subjects.

The information in Table 1 has been organised to highlight planned work in each of the three year group classes from Year R to Year 6. The topic title is given and some of the main areas covered are listed. Although not exclusively in geography a large proportion of the planned global learning identified was within this subject, consequently, I have included a breakdown of the National Curriculum references that were considered to be covered within this topic. I have also included reference to global learning key concepts that were categorised in 'Putting the World into World-Class Education' (DfES, 2004). They are: 1.Citizenship 2.Social Justice 3.Sustainable development

4.Diversity 5.Values and perceptions 6.Interdependence 7.Conflict resolution 8.Human rights. Many of the planned topics included opportunities for developing an awareness and understanding of these key concepts which can act as an important support for teachers who lack either the confidence or the expertise in the area of global learning. The final column on table 1 refers to whether the topic is supported by one of our established partnerships with The Gambia or China.

Analysis of school planning that explicitly aims to create opportunities for learning beyond the UK:

TABLE 1	Topic	Main themes	Geography Skills Understanding (National Curriculum ref')	Global and Dimensions (8 key concepts)	Linked to global partnership?

Year R	<p>1. Chinese New Year.</p> <p>2. Chinese language lessons.</p> <p>3. Rain Forests</p> <p>4. The Gambia</p>	<p>1. How it is celebrated.</p> <p>2. Mandarin lessons.</p> <p>3. Flora and fauna/preservation</p> <p>4. Gambian gardens. Sustainable gardens</p>	<p>1. <i>1a, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3b, 3d, 6b.</i></p> <p>4. <i>1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3d, 3e, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6b</i></p>	<p>1. 1.citizenship 4. diversity</p> <p>4,5.</p> <p>3. <i>1.Citizenship 2.social justice 3.sustainable development 6.interdependence.</i></p> <p>4. 1.citizenship 3.sustainable development 4.diversity 5.values and perceptions 6.interdependence</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. Yes</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. Yes</p>
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Year 1	1. Healthy Eating	1. Food origins	1. <i>1a, 1c, 2c, 2e, 3a, 3b, 3d, 3e, 6a, 6b</i>	1,2,3,4,5.	No
	2. Mandarin lessons			4,5.	Yes
	3. The Gambia	3. Toys/recycling/packaging and waste	3. <i>5a, 5b, 1a, 1c, 2c, 3b, 3e, 6b,</i>	1,3,4,5,6.	Yes
	4. Barnaby Bear	4. Contrasting locations	4. <i>1a, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3b, 3d, 6b</i>	4	Yes
	5. Around Our School	5. Traffic/pollution	5. <i>1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3d, 4a, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b.</i>	1,2,3,6.	Yes

Year 2	1. Travelling to school	1. Ways of travelling, pollution/congestion, comparison with The Gambia.	1. <i>1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b.</i>	1,3,4,5.	Yes
	2. Mandarin lessons.			4,5.	Yes
	3. Music and dance from around the world.	3. Indian, Gambian, Chinese dance and music.			4,5.
Year 3	1. Climate Explorers.	1. Compare zones. Deforestation /global warming.	1. <i>1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2g, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6d, 7a, 7b, 7c,</i>	1,3,5,6.	No
	2. Music/dance from around the world.	2. Appreciation/learning of music.		4,5.	No
Year 4	1. The Tudors	1. Historical perspective. Use of maps and globes.	1. <i>2a, 2c,</i>		No
	2. India-land of the tiger.	2. Compare and contrast localities.	2. <i>2a, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3d, 3c, 3f, 5a, 5b. 6b.</i>	1,5,6.	No

Year 5	1. The Dragon Revealed.	Comparison of Hagley /Yanzhou. One child policy. Describe where places are.	1. 1a, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2g, 3a, 3 b, 3c, 3d, 3f, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6d,	1,2,3,4,5,7,8.	Yes
	2. Chinese and Gambian dance and drumming	2. Dance and		4,5.	Yes
Year 6	1. Around the world in 80 days.	1. Investigating countries on a route around the world.	1. 1a, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2d, 3a, 3b, 6c.	4	No

It is clear that a significant amount of global learning takes place under the subject of geography. This may seem rather obvious as geography will naturally support the study of distant and local places and provide an ideal vehicle for many of the 8 key concepts identified earlier. However, there is a danger that teachers see this as the sole preserve of geography and with it the view that global learning is entirely concerned with the study of information about another place, whether it is flags, rivers or capital cities. This can also apply to appreciation of another culture. The way people in other places eat or dress. The way people worship or the language they speak. Of course these are important things for children to discover and appreciate and enjoy but there are massive opportunities that will be wasted if this quest for information is all that comes from this study. Have we created a wide spread of opportunities to engage our children in quality global thinking time that gives opportunities to think creatively and critically?

TABLE 2	citizen-ship	Social Justice	sustain-able Develop-ment	Diversity	Values and percep-tions	Inter-dependence	Conflict resolu-tion	human rights
Year R	3	1	2	3	2	2	0	0

Year 1	3	2	3	4	3	2	0	0
Year 2	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	0
Year 3	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	0
Year 4	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Year 5	1	1	1	2	2	0	1	1
Year 6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	10	4	8	14	13	6	1	1

Table 2 is a breakdown of part of Table 1 and gives a clear view of the number of opportunities in the planned curriculum for development and understanding of the 8 key concepts identified in 'Putting the World into World Class Education'. I do not pretend that the opportunities listed on table 2 are the only reference made to these concepts within those classes or that the quality of the learning that takes place is outstanding or even consistent with each other, however, it is an interesting comparison of the apparent inconsistency between year groups of planned opportunities to develop understanding in these important areas of the global curriculum. There are inconsistencies in the amount of planned opportunities and which of the key concepts are planned for. Table 2 clearly highlights the apparent differences in the number of planned opportunities to develop understanding of the key concepts between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There are at least double the number of planned opportunities in Key Stage 1 despite there being year group less. An important trend seems to be evident here when we also look at the number of planned topics with a global learning focus that use one of the established partnerships with China or The Gambia as a vehicle for their work. In Key Stage 1 the partnerships seem to be consistently used to enhance their topics while only one year group in Key

Stage 2 have planned for this. Why is it that there appears to be a lack of consistency in both the number of planned opportunities for global learning and the use of global partnerships as a resource to enhance teaching and learning in the planned curriculum?

It should be noted at this point that Year 2 planning includes a pre planned study of The Gambia and that Year 5 also plan for a topic on China. Both year groups include our school partnerships within the module. There are also many opportunities for 'one off' work which takes place throughout the school regularly. Examples of this can be observed around the times of hosting visitors from other countries, including our partner schools, when whole school events take place or projects are developed that include all year groups. An example of this would be sustainability focused projects with The Gambia and China. Each year all year groups have chosen a theme such as 'energy' or 'transport' and have engaged in planning that demands classes in our school and our partners school to consider their own practice and compare them with one another.

The data in table 2 also raises questions about the planning for particular key concepts in global learning. There appears to be certain concepts that are included consistently throughout the school and others that are rarely touched on. For instance, planning to include an appreciation of diversity takes place regularly whereas planning to include reference to conflict resolution or human rights is rare. Why is this? Do our teachers plan with a clear understanding and agreement that these 8 key

concepts are a priority and should be developed through our planned topics? Or, are there important issues to do with ensuring consistent planning, teacher priorities and teacher understanding of these concepts?

Sub question 3: How do teachers perceive the quality of outcomes that result from this engagement?

In questionnaires and discussions teachers repeatedly mention that our partnerships make things 'real' and 'concrete'. The view that a partnership makes a more meaningful connection is prevalent in a number of responses. Motivation of our children is also felt to be a very positive aspect of our partnerships particularly through exchange visits, 'skyping' and other methods of communication. Providing a real context is considered to be of value by a large proportion of our staff. Projects delivered by teachers with enthusiasm because they have visited a particular country and live amongst the local community is, again, highly valued.

The impact on staff development should not be underestimated. Examples abound of relatively inexperienced staff being exposed to opportunities in new contexts. These experiences enhance their development and impact on their performance at our school. Many new initiatives have also resulted from exposure to different methods and ideas. The question of attitudes towards our Chinese and Gambian partnerships and whether, due to our countries different histories and stage of development, children are presented with stereotypical impressions or a postcolonial view has been considered and researched. Visitors from both settings come to our school regularly and the type of activities planned are similar in nature. The attitude of staff, however, varies. Support for resources and professional development at a fundamental level is considered a characteristic of our Gambian partnership. This does not exist in our relationship with China. Curriculum projects are often driven by our staff through our Gambian link but a more equitable relationship exists with our Chinese colleagues with teachers from both schools suggesting and organizing initiatives. This is an important issue and one that I have included in our School Development Plan to consider.

Conclusion:

It is apparent, from national surveys (NAHT 2011), that teachers believe in the importance of aspects of global education (81% of teachers and 95% of heads), however, only 39% of teachers and 52% of heads feel confident to do so. From my analysis of planning, teacher selection presentations and group interviews this is also an issue in my school.

Overwhelmingly teachers feel there is something intrinsically important to be included in the curriculum but are not consistently aware of what this is or how it should best be presented to their children.

This points to a major challenge to future global teaching in our primary school. What is it that prevents our teachers feeling confident and optimistic about their ability to teach this area of the curriculum and how do I as a school leader facilitate improvement? Is it a question of defining exactly what global learning actually is? The web site of 'Think Global' (The Development Education Association) defines global learning as 'learning set in a global context'. It goes on to say that it should foster:

Critical and creative thinking;

Self-awareness and open-mindedness towards difference;

Understanding of global issues and power relationships; and

Optimism and action for a better world.

Along side this are the eight key concepts referred to earlier in this piece which are 'at the heart of global learning' (Think Global web site). From my surveys and discussions with teachers, governors and parents it is apparent that Global learning is still widely perceived as learning about other places and not as learning set in a global context. Even my own definition was unclear as earlier in my reflections I attempted to support a parent questionnaire with a statement defining global learning as 'developing an understanding of the world beyond our own community'. Of course, this contradicts the broader definition that includes all learning that is set in a global context. This would include local issues that impact, or are impacted by, forces beyond the immediate community of the school or the families within the school. Local to global is not just a neat strap line but advice that clarifies the term 'global learning'.

Is it an issue of pedagogy or is there a wider issue of teacher knowledge? Do teachers have the general world knowledge of how economies and political systems operate to feel confident to 'think on their feet' and maximize learning opportunities as they arise in the same way that a mathematical or literacy opportunity is naturally exploited?

Encouraging our children to think critically feels right but do we only allow this in schools when it suits the status quo, or at least not far off it? Developing a critical and creative approach to

children's thinking will surely need more than set times for this to happen and will produce moments of anxiety for teachers and school leaders. A critical child will want to investigate issue and challenge accepted views. This is difficult to develop in isolated pockets of the curriculum. It will challenge some well embedded views and practice from wearing a school uniform to celebration of the Queens Jubilee. How many teachers recently felt the uncomfortable, almost sheep like acceptance of these celebrations in school? How did we encourage a critical approach and a balance that, at least, gave our children the opportunity to debate and consider the established views of retaining a royal family? Henry Giroux (2008) describes the example of post September 9th in the United States when what he describes as 'Emergency Time' developed and to criticize loyalty towards the 'war against terrorism' was viewed as unpatriotic by many and the danger of curtailing freedoms of speech a real threat. He suggests 'Public Time' as a way of reclaiming schools as: 'democratic public spheres in which students can engage in dialogue and critique around the meaning of democratic values, the relationship between learning and civic engagement , and the connection between schooling , what it means to be a critical citizen, and the responsibilities one has to the larger world.'

In the DEA Think-piece 'Critical thinking in the context of global learning' (Shah,H / Brown, K, 2009) elements of critical global thinking are explored and the implications for the classroom considered. Developing systematic thinking in our children is an area that the authors argue is vital. It is through this approach that the appreciation of the interconnection between the parts of a system can be understood and a better understanding of the whole developed. This may give huge encouragement to those teachers who believe that an effective curriculum is one that includes opportunities for cross curricular work in order that important global issues can be explored without the false and limiting barriers of curriculum subjects. Developing critical and creative children is vital if we want them to engage in serious debate with important global issues and be able to 'question, evaluate and make judgements about many contested positions'(DEA, 2009). We find it difficult to open a newspaper without reading opposing views on a variety of topics that could be studied under the heading of global learning. In my own school articulate and interested children have recently attended Parish Council meetings and spoken against proposed building on green field sites within our community. These same children have spoken to our school during assemblies to tell teachers and children why building should not take place. On the surface their arguments seem logical and convincing, however, it is vital that reasonable questioning takes place to ensure that the school population is not swept along on a wave of poorly thought through and biased propaganda. During this exchange the children were asked what wild life would be affected? Was it rare? What would be built on the site? Was it needed in our community?

Through this process children are given the opportunity to critically assess arguments and transfer these skills to other contexts i.e. is Fair-trade an approach that always benefits the producer? By using practical, local examples our children were able to begin exploring some complex and sophisticated concepts, such as values literacy, by debating some challenging topics that had no easy solutions and that different people seek different outcomes for a range of reasons.

A critical child may also be encouraged to think more reflectively about what is in the UK a common feature of school life, charitable fund raising. A recent visit to our school of Spanish teachers highlighted a distinct difference in approaches between our countries. In Spain this would seem unusual but we regularly celebrate our success with our children, however, do we encourage this critical and creative thinking or merely declare the larger the better rather than encourage our children to critically assess cause and affect and consider long term development approaches rather than 'sticking plaster' charity. Should the role of emergency relief be a cross country governmental and/or adult choice rather than a school activity that is in danger of reinforce inaccurate stereotypes? Here we have an example of an opportunity that many teachers will feel uncomfortable with or lacking in the required knowledge to confidently explore. Does charitable giving to support a school for instance help or encourage a dependency culture and a tone of power imbalance that skews future partnership work?

Roger Hart (1992) describes a Ladder of Young People's Participation on which the lower steps reflect manipulation, tokenism and decoration of young people but the higher steps reflect young people as consulted, informed, initiating and decision making. How often do our schools truly explore why a particular fund raising activity is taking place and what the impact of giving to that cause will be? The implications of developing a critical child also sets enormous challenges for our teachers and University lecturers involved in training of future generations of teachers. In order to develop questioning young people critical and questioning teachers need to model this approach. My school has begun to consider a relevant approach through 'philosophy for Children' (P4C). Senior members of staff have undergone training and we are about to trial projects in a number of classes. 'Philosophy for Children offers a way to open up children's learning through enquiry and the exploration of ideas' (P4C website). It encourages critical thinking and creative solutions to questions posed by the children themselves and has already had an affect on how teachers approach discussion and decision making with their classes. An example of this was in a recent Year 4 lesson when the teacher set her class a problem: ' the local council want to use our school forest as a site for waste disposal, what do you think?' This was a technique to stimulate debate that has occurred

frequently in our school and the children were motivated and excited to take part, however, a major difference was that the teacher did not automatically accept that this was a bad idea. She listened to the well thought through arguments against such a project and then came back with another question: 'where we will the waste be disposed of if not here?' For a moment children were quiet. A long and serious discussion took place about other suitable places and moved on to taking it to another country. Some children were horrified at this and asked the class to consider the same happening the other way round. Others could even recall newspaper articles of radio active waste arriving in England for treatment. Was this a good thing? Critical thinking was taking place here and the teacher was able to engage and extend the class by using this approach and by having some knowledge of the worlds economic, political and social relationships.

Two important points arise from this example. Do our teachers have the world knowledge to 'think on their feet' as children steer the direction and pace of their learning? Are teachers comfortable to let go? 'Teachers need to let go and learn with the children...because children love to teach teachers' (Schools, but not as we know them?, Scott B, 2010). Bill Scott has identified two complementary approaches to education for sustainable development : ESD1 and ESD2. The first is about promoting changes in what we do, he suggests this could be described as learning for sustainable development. The second is about enabling sustainable living. This could be described as learning as sustainable development and promotes critical thinking and the testing of sustainable development ideas 'to explore the contradictions...and to make sound choices in the face of the inherent complexity and uncertainty of the future' (Scott, B, 2010). It is vital that if quality global learning is to develop further in my school an ethos of critical questioning is embedded throughout school life. In order for quality global learning to develop further a number of aims have been added to our School Development Plan:

Encourage critical and creative thinking in order that children do not automatically accept views and opinions without evidence and careful reflection. Give staff opportunities for professional development both in awareness and understanding of key global concepts and approaches to critical thinking (eg Philosophy for learning) Ensure planning includes opportunities for consideration of key global learning concepts and is consistently applied throughout the school. Ensure that future visits to partner schools by our staff are termed as 'study visits' and that pre and post visit consideration of key global concepts is included as an important part of the programme. Consider the power relationships entwined in our partnerships and how balanced and equal they actually are.

A major challenge for teachers and school leaders is:

establishing an ethos of critical reflection that can be modeled throughout school-life by all staff, including non teaching staff, and developing a knowledge of the world that includes economic and political systems and how these impact on government and individual decision making. This is a challenging task but vital if teachers are to be able to 'think on their feet' and model effective critical thinking.

The Primary School Curriculum can support these aims and help develop responsible, reflective and critical young people.

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