

## Commissioned Research Article

**Title: The Challenges of teaching  
Global Citizenship through Secondary  
Geography**

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## **The Challenges of teaching Global Citizenship through Secondary Geography**

Paula Bradley-Smith

### **Introduction**

The links between the Programmes of Study for geography and citizenship are evident in both their content and their approach. Enquiry-based learning and a high level of pupil participation are requirements in both subjects with the aim of producing motivated learners who are able to transfer their knowledge and skills. In this article, evidence will be drawn from a series of Key Stage 3 and 4 geography lessons on global issues to illustrate some of the challenges which can arise in teaching citizenship through geography.

### **Geography and citizenship**

The overlap between geography and citizenship is well documented. Many see the link as natural and obvious. Slater (2001), for example, says that,

*‘Citizens need geography and geographical understanding’ (p 42).*

She claims that geography is all about our perception of our environment and how we seek to live in it as geographically and politically literate citizens.

Others, while acknowledging the link, are more circumspect about the benefits. Grimwade (2000) warns that unless more teaching time is allocated to teach citizenship alongside geography, ‘there is a danger that geography’s subject integrity will be compromised’ (p 8) and that this could affect the subject’s long-term viability at Key Stage 3 and beyond.

Grimwade is more positive about the new emphasis given to the concept of sustainable development through the citizenship curriculum. He believes that geography has been given the lead role for sustainable development in the curriculum and this could prove highly significant given the importance currently being placed on sustainable development in the political agenda at all scales. The importance of education for sustainable development is heavily reinforced in the citizenship curriculum.

The concept of ‘the global citizen’ is one that holds particular relevance to geographers. The Geographical Association put forward a position statement on the aims of geography education in 1999.

Three out of their four aims refer to this global perspective. In addition, one aim, as defined by the GA, specifically highlights social action. Social action is a significant component in citizenship, and one of the three required skills specified in the National Curriculum for citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4.

This is how the two subject aims compare on this issue:

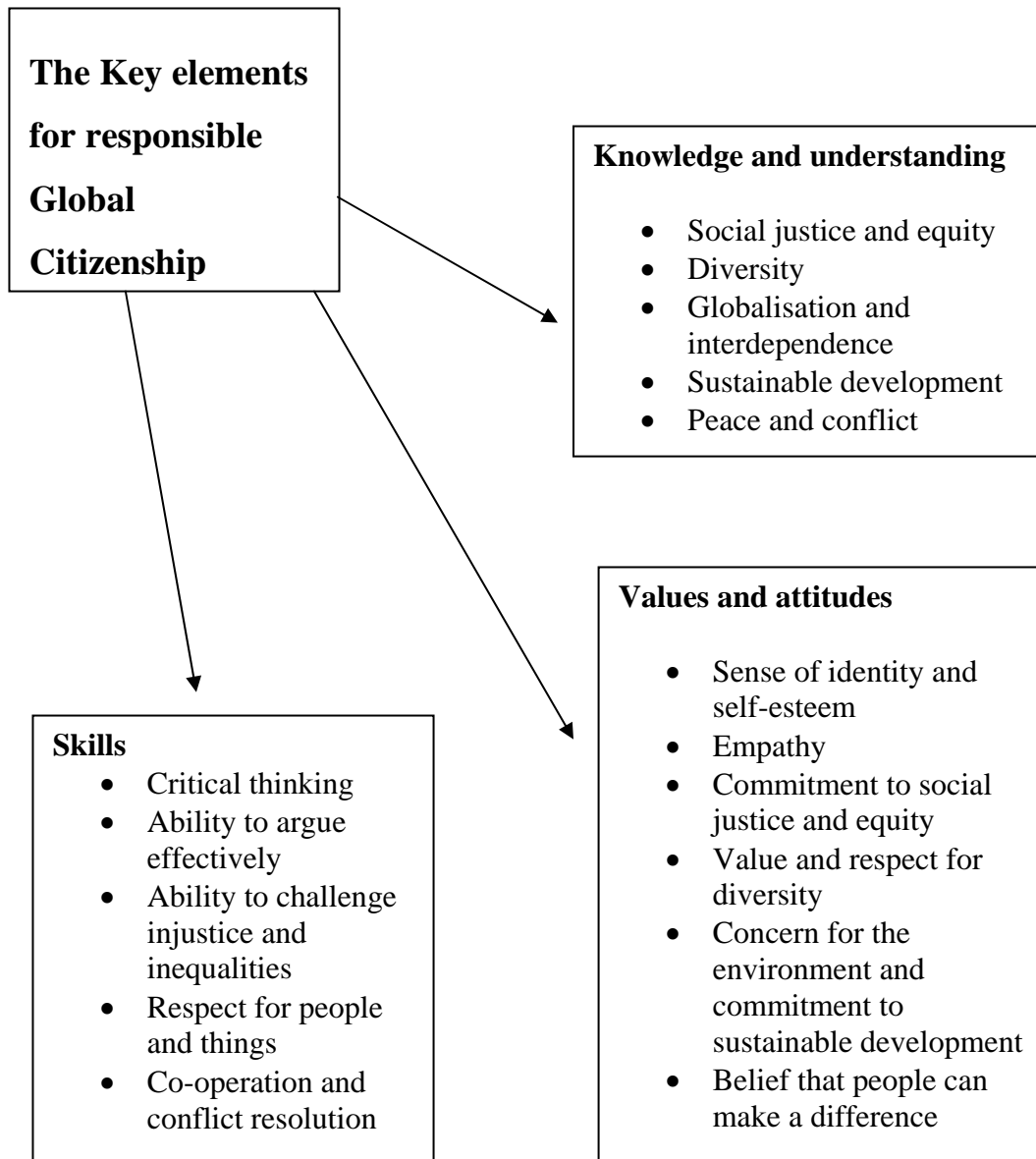
<p>For geography, as defined by the GA Aim 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop an informed concern for the world around us, and an ability and willingness to take positive action both locally and globally. (GA, 1999)</li> </ul>	<p>For citizenship at KS 3 and 4, as set out in the specification for knowledge, skills and understanding: Aim 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Developing skills of participation and responsible action.</i> Requirements include that pupils should be taught how to consider the experiences of others, to take part responsibly in activities and to reflect on the process of participation. (QCA, 2000)</li> </ul>
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This call to turn reflection into action is taken up by many NGOs. For many, it is fundamental to their core aims (see, for example, ActionAid (2000)). To social action, the NGO publications add another dimension, which involves an emotional response to global issues. Oxfam, for example, ‘believes that education should build on young people’s concerns, enabling them to become ‘global citizens’. A global citizen is someone who cares about the wider world, knows how the world works, is outraged by poverty and injustice, and takes action to change things for the better.’ (Garlake, 2000, writing for Oxfam). This attitudinal response is also characterised by Crick and Porter (1997) who emphasised that political literacy is not simply an ability to pursue self-interest; it must also comprehend the effects on others and their viewpoints, and respond to them morally.

Oxfam (2003) has outlined what it considers to be the key elements of responsible Global Citizenship as follows (Fig 1).

Fig 1 Key Elements of Global Citizenship

(Oxfam, 2003)



All of these components can be found implicitly in the specifications for geography. Thompson (2000) makes the overlap very explicit through a series of tables where the two subjects are directly compared. She shows progression in the attainment targets for citizenship and geography across all four key stages (p22) followed by a series of exemplars. Butt (2001) creates a similar comparison using the same format, and adds further useful exemplars to show how the overlap between the subjects can be mapped.

One of the real challenges for both subjects lies in the potential to explore the theme of global futures. According to Oxfam (2003), ‘the young people of today will grow up to be the citizens of the future: but

what that future holds for them is not yet clear.’ The theme of ‘What Future?’ for the global citizen is an exciting challenge for teachers in both subjects. Hicks’ and Holden’s review (1995) of student responses to questions about their futures showed that the majority of secondary school students claim to be uninterested in the future of their local area. However, more than half claim to think about the future of the world ‘often’ or ‘very often’ and most thought about it ‘sometimes.’ There is considerable potential for educators to build on this global interest and concern. A MORI survey commissioned by the Development Education Association (1998) found that 81% of students believed it was important to learn about global issues at school in order to inform their future choices.

Despite this avowed interest in global issues, however, only 39% of 18-24 year olds voted in the 2001 general election (MORI). This disaffection of young people with the political process is not just a cause for concern, but also a real challenge for the education system.

*Today the central political issue in education is how we educate pupils for a pluralist society in the traditions of a civil society while simultaneously preparing them to participate in the shaping of that society. Citizenship education has become a major device for implementing this aim.*

Arthur and Wright, 2001, p5

For geography, groups such as GeoVisions working with the GA are attempting to address some of these challenges by linking futures education with the genuine concerns of young people as global citizens. This emphasis is very much in line with the curriculum for global citizenship as outlined by Oxfam (fig 1).

Both the specifications for geography and for citizenship emphasise the importance of audience-centred learning. Enquiry-based work, discussion of values and attitudes, and reflection are integral skills for teaching and learning in both subject areas. In the long term, it is argued, it is these **skills**, rather than extensive **knowledge** of global issues, that will change thinking and give students the confidence to take action. Wade (2001) puts this case very convincingly when she concludes that,

*‘On its own, of course, education for global citizenship cannot solve all the complex problems of the world, but it could and should help to provide the basis for young people to make informed decisions and to participate in action for change.’*

There is clearly a great deal of information in the literature about the importance of global citizenship in education. The links between the citizenship and geography curricula are very apparent both in terms of

content and approaches to learning. It is through the study of global citizenship, however, that the most fertile ground for developing synoptic thinking between the two subject lies.

## Facing the Challenge

The following section describes my attempt, as both geography teacher and researcher, to put into practice education for global citizenship through secondary geography. After an explanation of the teaching and learning outcomes, I then relate the discussion back to the arguments developed above. The lessons were carried out in 2004 in a girls’ grammar school, which selects the top 25% of the ability range. Average class size was 30. The school is located in the South West of England, with a mainly white intake, reflecting the local population. Whilst the research was carried out in a school which may be regarded as atypical, the issues raised are relevant to all secondary classrooms.

### 1. Year 7: Sustainable Development in Antigua

A series of 5 lessons was devised for students in year 7 to tackle the following learning objectives for the end of Key Stage 3;

	For geography	For citizenship
KS3 Content	The effects of differences in development and their effect on the quality of life of different groups of people (6i).	Recognise the world as a global community, and the political, economic, environmental and social implications of this (1i).
KS3 Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions</li> <li>• Analyse and evaluate evidence and draw and justify conclusions</li> <li>• Appreciate how people’s attitudes and values affect contemporary issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justify orally and in writing a personal opinion about an issue</li> <li>• Use their imagination to consider other people’s experiences</li> </ul>

Students researched the history and economy of Jamaica through a range of tasks using websites and travel brochures. They watched two videos:

- One from a Channel 4 children’s programme showing Jamaican children’s own perceptions of life on their island. The programme was presented by 10-11 year old Jamaican children.
- The second was a documentary by TV Choice Productions describing and explaining the impact of tourism on Antigua (another Caribbean island).

These sources provided the background knowledge for the following tasks:

**Task: Deciding the Future for Jamaica**

Based on their research, students had to think about what had gone wrong as a result of pursuing development through tourism on islands such as Jamaica, and how they might do things differently. The way the class was organised may appear complex, but by giving students a number it was relatively simple to organise then into the various groups described below.

- Students were each given a role card for a government Minister for: Employment, Tourism, Culture or the Environment in Jamaica.
- The students worked on their own listing the key problems facing Jamaica based on the resources they had studied, linked to their ministerial role.
- They were then rearranged into in 4 large groups, each representing one ministerial role, Employment, Tourism etc. They had to share their lists of problems with the group and note down any that they had missed.
- The class was then rearranged again so that students were in a group of 4 ensuring that one person from each of the ‘ministries’ was represented in each group.

They were given the title: **The Future for Jamaica.**

In their groups of 4, the students shared the ‘problems’ they had identified, then tried to agree on some ‘solutions’.

Their solutions were to be presented by the group to the rest of the class. They could use maps, diagrams or posters to explain their ideas. After a five-minute presentation they then had to take questions from the rest of the class.

Follow-up task 1: Each student had to note down what they considered to be the best ideas from each of the presentations. They could then use these, plus their own ideas, to write up their own report on their ideas for the future of Jamaica.

Follow-up task 2: In groups, they had to write a ‘Code of Conduct’ for visitors to Jamaica. This was in the form of a leaflet/flier that would be handed to visitors on their arrival on the island.

## Outcomes

The following points were synthesised from observations made from the student presentations, listening to group discussions and marking the two follow-up tasks. There are obvious limitations because of my role as both teacher and observer, but nevertheless some valuable data was gained:

1. The problems that emerged as the most important to these Year 7 pupils were the ones with which the girls had some personal or first-hand experience.

For example:

- All 6 groups focused on the problems of Fast Food Outlets that they perceived as being the result of tourism. They were most concerned about the impact these had on local food production. The decision in every case was to ban them from the island. One group came up with the idea of introducing 'McJamaica' and 'McKing' chains, but they would only sell local (not imported) food.
  - They had genuine problems putting into words their mental images of this distant location. They tried to explain their perceptions by referring to well-known images in the media or in films e.g. 'the boats we want to have are the ones like those boats and floating shops on the TV advert for Jacob's Thai Bites.' 'The fish the tourists will come to see from our glass-bottomed boats will be like the ones in Finding Nemo, the orange and blue ones.' (This film had just been released on video).
2. Eurocentric thinking was very apparent.
    - Accommodation for tourists was to be in 'traditional huts' or 'shacks.' Interestingly such 'huts' were not represented in any of the visual material the students had been shown. The examples they drew in their pictures resembled African mud huts.
    - The 'traditional' food they thought should be sold in restaurants was, in every case, just 'rice and fruit' (especially fruit smoothies)
  3. Concern for the environment was paramount in the thinking of these pupils.

The video they had seen contained just 40 seconds (out of a 30 minute film) on how coral reefs were being affected by tourism. But they felt passionately about this problem, and its solution

occupied most of their available thinking time. Preserving the reefs in tact rather than removing sections to allow cruise ships through was their top priority. Elaborate methods of conveying tourists over the reef to the island on moving walkway/bridges or helicopters were drawn out and described in great detail.

Litter on beaches was another major concern to them. This was also mentioned in every ‘code of conduct’ produced.

The group feedback sessions were lively and engaging. Students were keen to debate with each other, and said they particularly enjoyed the idea of being able to describe a better future for a developing country such as Jamaica.

To this extent the lessons achieved their objectives in terms of the skills they were developing. In terms of content, however, the outcomes were more questionable.

It was clear from the majority of the work that these pupils had real trouble developing a ‘sense of place’ or a real understanding of issues in such a remote location. They grappled with the concept of ‘sustainability’ but in most cases could not apply it. They enjoyed the exercise, but the global perspective, in many cases, eluded them.

There were a few exceptions amongst the most able in the group. These girls had picked out some very different themes from the resources and discussions. The following comments come from this group of 5 most able in the class and illustrate what a very perceptive understanding of global citizenship 11 and 12-year-old students can have. None of these ideas appeared in any of the preparatory material the girls had been given:

- A Jamaican National Trust was suggested to take legal responsibility for environmental conservation and decision-making.
- The island could be divided into 3 areas, and power would be devolved to these ‘councils.’ ‘The councillors would be more in touch with the wishes of the local people.’
- Jamaica would be made into a Fair Trade island with all food being produced and traded in this way.
- A cultural park would be built filled with Jamaican sculptures, architecture and poetry.
- Education of children and adults would be improved ‘because the jobs in tourism are not much better than the ones they had when they were slaves.’ A minimum wage was also suggested.

Three examples of Yr. 7 student responses to the follow-up tasks are in Appendix one. They show how students were able to express their opinions about the problems of development and put forward their suggestions for the future.

## **2. Year 8 Dealing with Hazards**

The objective of this topic was to consider why natural hazards cause more damage in some places than others. An enquiry-based approach was adopted to allow for maximum differentiation and high levels of participation.

Flooding was the focus. Students looked at causes of flooding and its effects in different places. They were involved in a role play and played a board game based on 'snakes and ladders' which illustrated how quickly life and wealth could be lost in developing countries. These resources came from material produced by Oxfam: Dealing with Disasters (2000). They also watched a video on Bangladesh where the lack of proper typhoon shelters was clearly explained as being a primary cause of loss of life during storms and flooding.

The students were then asked: Why could a hazard of the same magnitude cause more damage and loss of life in a Developing country compared to a Developed country?

The answer to this question had not been explicitly given in any of the work carried out by the students up to this point, but I was confident that they would quickly reach the conclusion that poverty was a key issue.

This did not prove to be the case.

A whole class discussion developed along these lines:

- If people live next to a river that floods, why don't they move?
- The houses they build in Bangladesh are very flimsy. If they built themselves proper houses, they wouldn't be washed away.
- In the Developed countries they insure their houses. If the people in Developing countries got proper jobs they could afford insurance.

While there were a couple of dissenters, the majority of the class went along with these explanations and conclusions.

I was amazed by the simplicity of these perceptions and the lack of empathy shown for the people they had been studying. There had been a high level of engagement with the group tasks that they had been given. However, it was clear that the desired outcomes in terms of the values and attitudes of the global citizen had not been achieved in this case.

### **Year 10 Population and Resources**

96 of the total year group (120) take geography at GCSE. The geography department has just adopted the Edexcel B syllabus and in their first term in Year 10 students study the core module: Population and Resources. At the end of the module each student filled out an evaluation form. Some of the questions relate directly to geography teaching, but others were included to investigate how well students were coping with the concept of global issues and citizenship.

My intention was to explore the ‘moral response’ required of a global citizen, according to Crick and Porter (1997), and to investigate whether Year 10 students really are “outraged by poverty and injustice” and want to “take action to change things” Garlake (2000).

The technique used in the questionnaire was that suggested by MacBeath (2003), who shows that by the careful phrasing of questions, students can be encouraged to express genuine feelings and emotions in relation to particular issues.

The relevant questions from the evaluation sheets and the responses of the Year 10 students are given in Figs. 2-4 below. There is an example of one of the Year 10 student responses in Appendix 2.

Fig 2

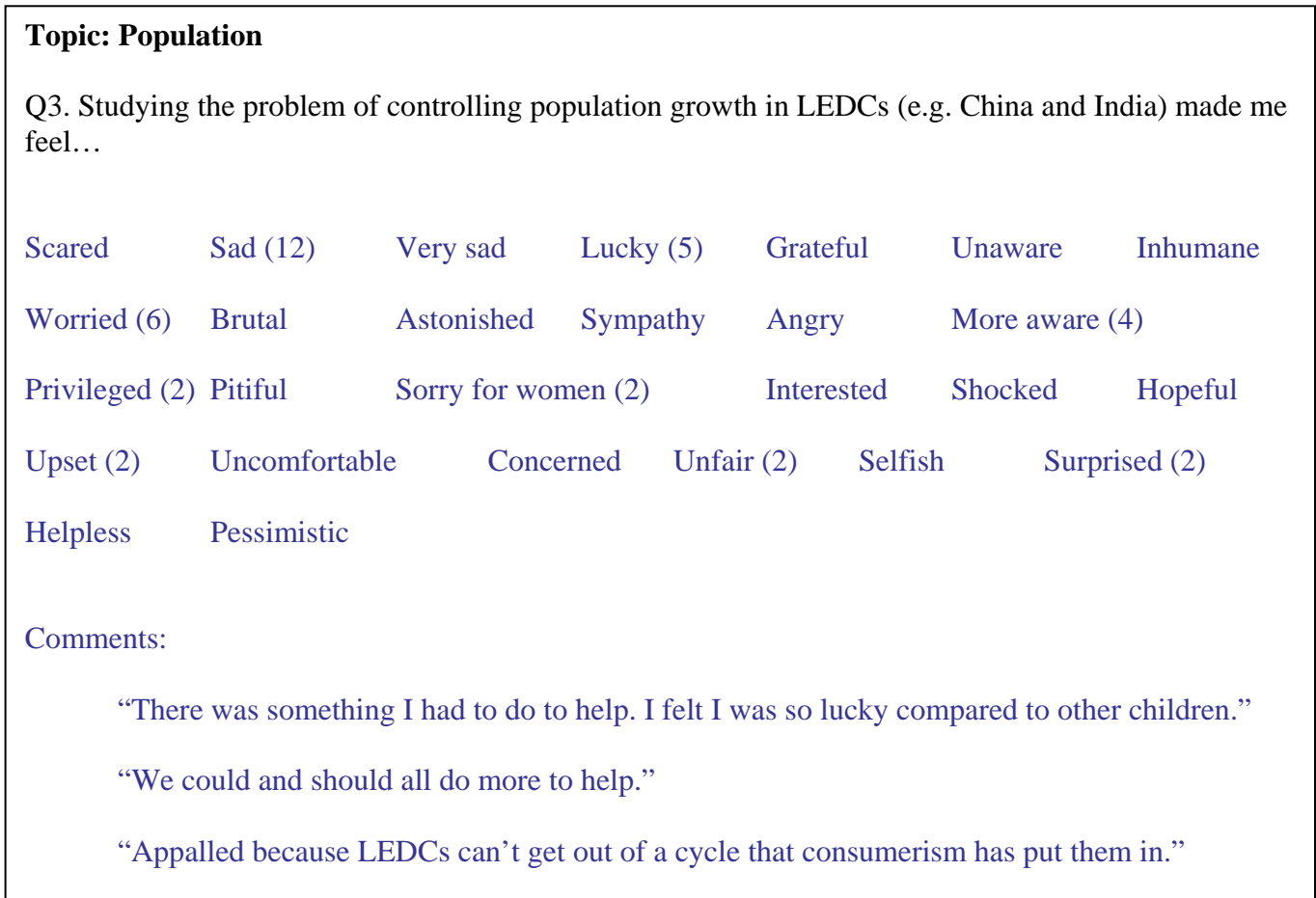


Fig 3

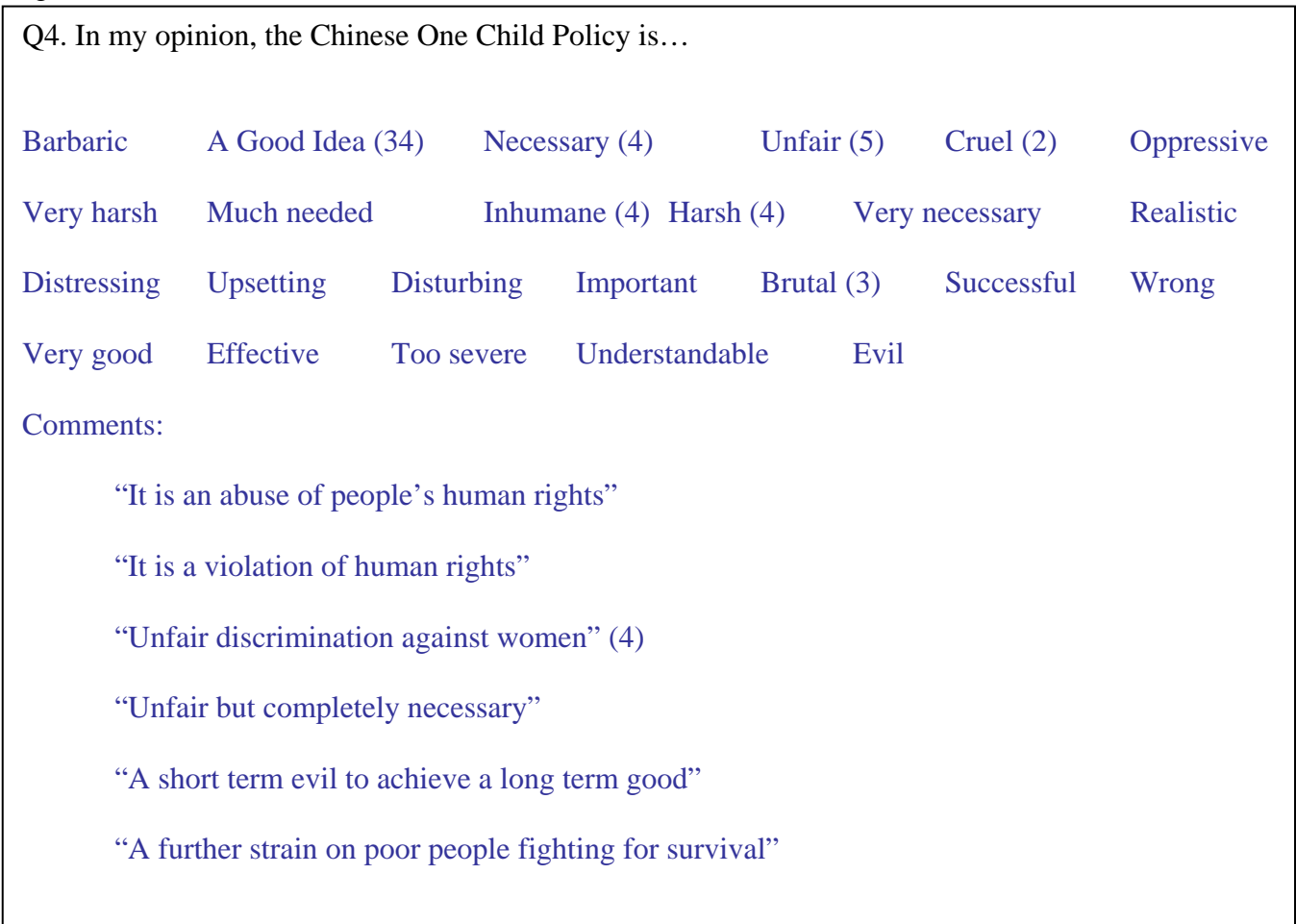
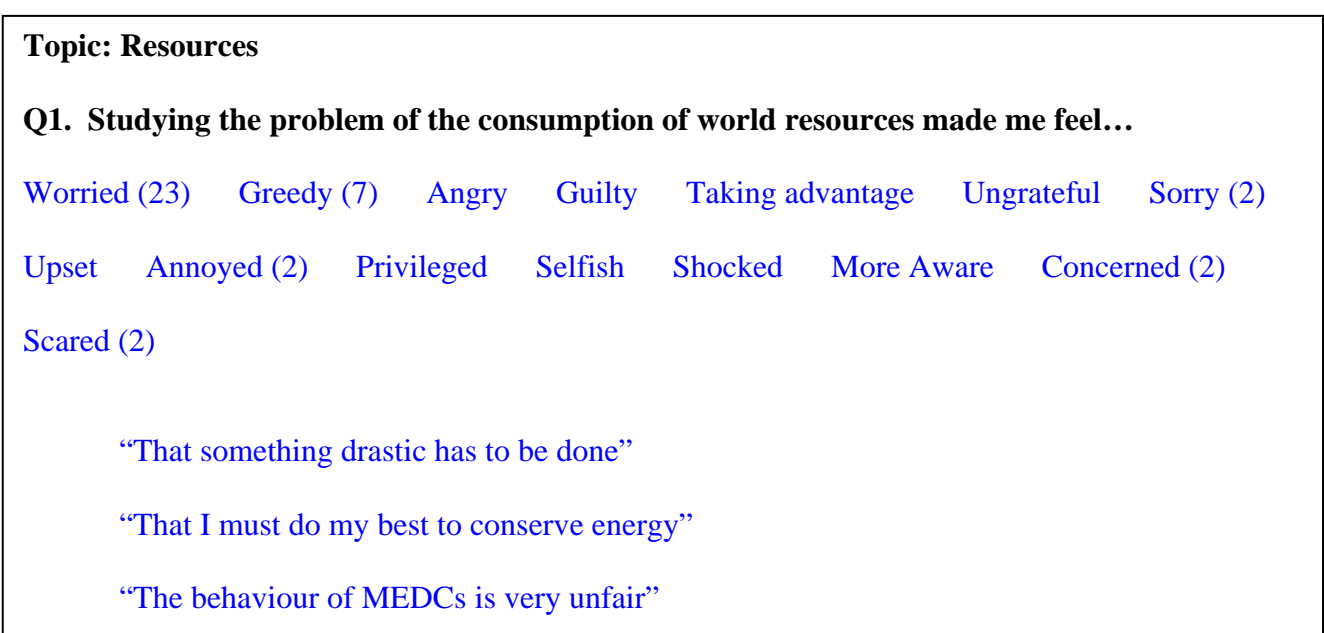


Fig 4



These responses suggest that these students do, indeed feel strongly about the global issues that they had studied. They had engaged fully with the issues, showed a strong sense of injustice and also saw their own place in needing to, or wanting to, change things for the better.

### Teaching and learning methods

I was also interested to know what teaching and learning methods were perceived to be the most successful with these able girls when tackling global issues.

A selection of the responses given to the tick boxes in the section ‘Organising my Learning’ have been summarised in Figs 5-8 below.

Fig. 5

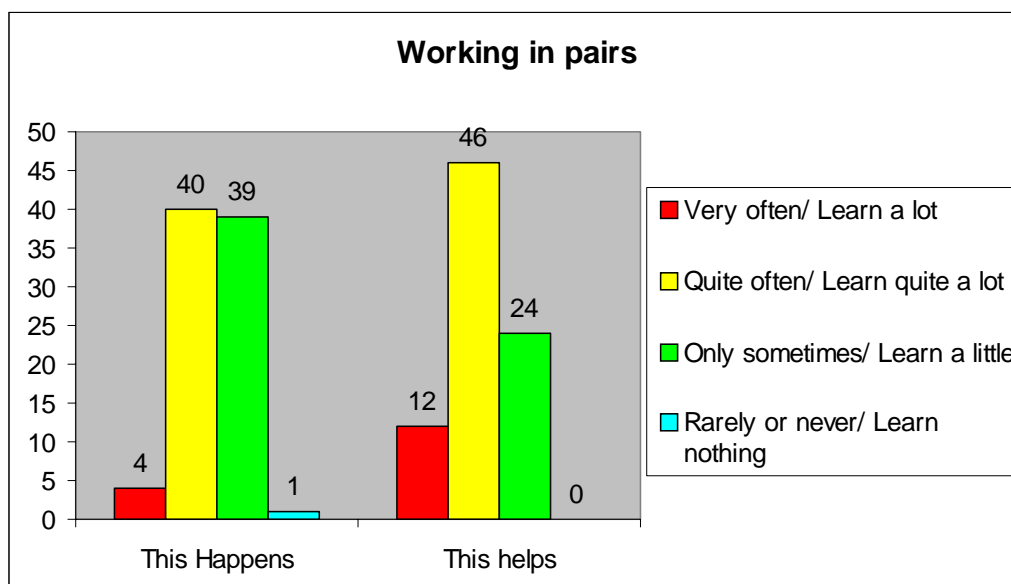
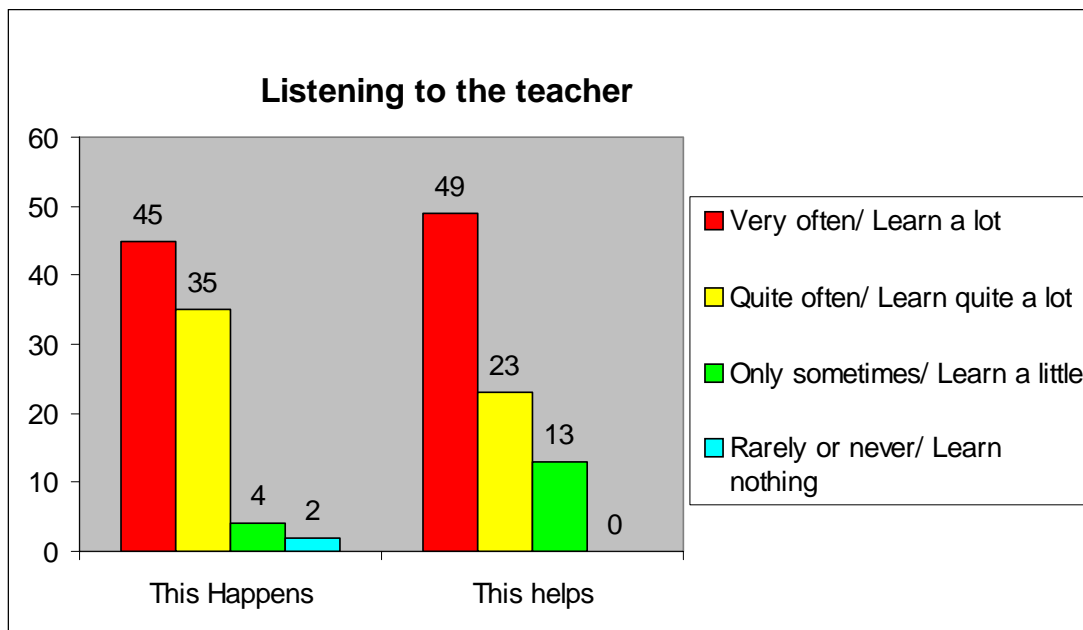


Fig. 7

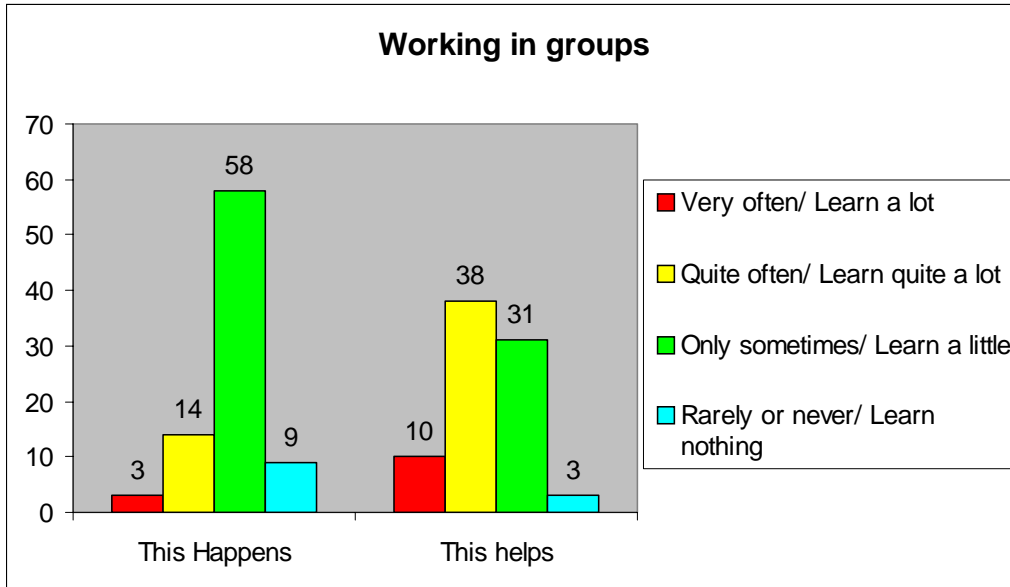
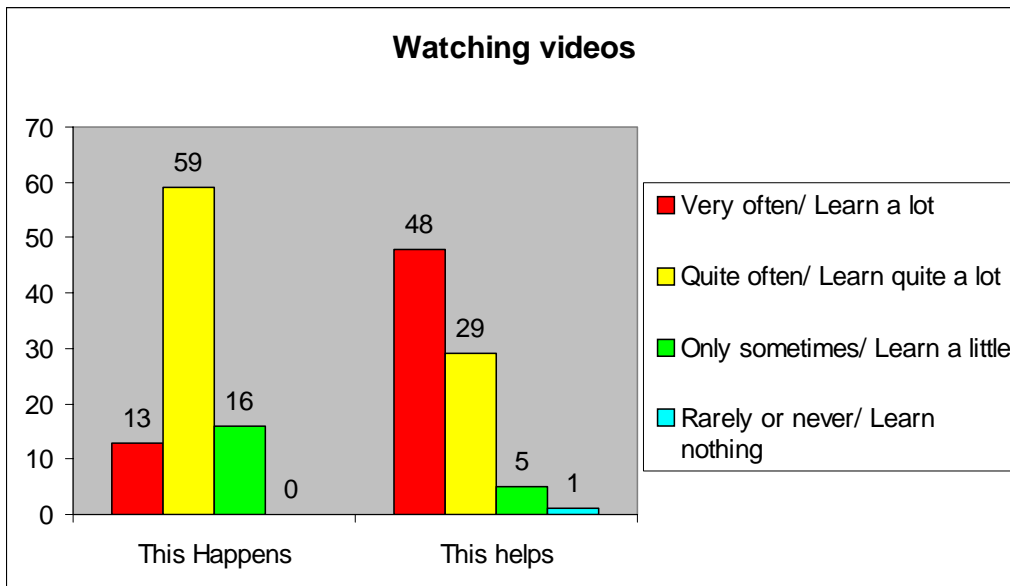


Fig. 8



The high values given to ‘listening to the teacher’ in helping them to ‘learn a lot’ was a surprise. In talking to the students about this, they said that these global challenges were hard to understand. They felt they needed the teacher’s help to unpack the complexities of what is going on. They said videos also help a great deal by giving different viewpoints. However, while they would normally prefer group or pairs work to ‘teacher talk’ this was not the case with these particular topics. The proviso was that the ‘talk’ was generally ‘short’ and ‘interesting’ (this made it acceptable, in their view).

## **Conclusion**

The central importance of teaching global citizenship in schools has been expressed by Davies (1999) as follows:

*Global citizenship is not an interesting supplement to the curriculum but is actually the foundation for national and international development and for peaceful relations.*

(Davies in Wade, 2001)

This case study of teaching global citizenship through geography highlights some important issues. Students at the beginning of Key Stage 3 found it difficult to tackle global issues and global scales. This was evident in the lessons carried out with Years 7 and 8. Many of them lacked the maturity and emotional intelligence to comprehend their place in a global community.

Some of the injunctions to engage young teenagers in the rights and responsibilities of global citizenship appear overly ambitious in this context. By the end of Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4, however, students seemed to be much more comfortable with their place in the global community. By Year 10, the able girls in this research sample were confident in expressing their opinions and responsibilities; they were able to draw on evidence to support their views and recognised that their values and attitudes were affected by their upbringing. It was clear that they felt passionately about their world, and several were, indeed, outraged by what they had uncovered.

Clearly the samples used in this study are small as well as being gender and ability specific. Nevertheless there are some wider conclusions that may be inferred from this work:

- There is a need to match content with the age and emotional maturity of the group, regardless of ability.
- ‘Unlearning stereotypes’ is another key issue that would help students in their understanding of distant locations and cultures.
- Students appreciate ‘teacher talk’ when this involves explanation of new or complex material, so long as it is focussed and brief.
- Perhaps most important of all, however, is the need to develop skills of empathy in the early years of Key Stage 3. A great deal of work needs to be done with other curricular areas such as history, RE and PSHE in managing the transfer of these skills. As teachers and students become more familiar with the processes of metacognition through the increased use of plenary and debriefing sessions in lessons, this ability to recognise and transfer their learning and skills should hopefully improve. It is an area that requires careful planning, nevertheless.

Although most of the students in this sample said that they found studying global issues difficult, they all agreed that they enjoyed it. They liked seeing how things were done in other cultures, and more specifically they liked speculating about alternative futures. According to Carter (2000), ‘all education is about the future.’ However geography and citizenship are particularly well placed to investigate the options of possible, probable, and preferred futures in ways that can be highly engaging and motivating for young people.

The links between geography and citizenship are natural and obvious. This research has shown the enormous potential that exists for teaching and learning within the topic of global citizenship. It has also highlighted the need for teachers to plan carefully both the content and their approach to teaching this subject if we are to help in the creation of effective global citizens for the future.

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[www.mori.com/mrr/2002](http://www.mori.com/mrr/2002) Young People and Citizenship

## Appendix 1

Hmwk

My proposals for Jamaica are.

- Cut out only a small section of the coral reefs where there are no fisherman this will allow the boats to come through without causing too much pollution. But if a fisherman does lose their livelihood they will be awarded compensation.
- Jamaica will join fair-trade so farmers who have been losing out will get a fair deal for all their hard work.
- All hotels must be at least 1 mile from the beach so the beaches are preserved.
- There will be a litter fine for anyone that litters - it doesn't matter if they're Jamaican or if they are Tourists.
- We will encourage people to walk and use buses rather than taking a car or taxi, helping to reduce pollution.

## **The Problems of Tourism in Antigua, and the Solutions for Jamaica!**

### **The Problems**

As representative of the Cultural ministry the negative impacts of tourism I found were that Antiguan customs are being ignored, and instead of traditional Caribbean recipes, McDonalds and other fast food outlets are dominating. Also traditional music is losing out to American/British music.

Another problem is all-inclusive hotels. Tourists staying here are less likely to go out and buy food from restaurants and souvenirs from the people living in Antigua.

Because of this, small native businesses are getting less profit and larger American companies are making huge amounts of money.

There is also the problem of the traditions of Antigua getting totally dominated by American and British cultures. Tourism, not just for businesses but ordinary people, is ruining all aspects of life as well.

### **My Proposals**

My proposals for Jamaica are that a new type of hotel is to be built. This is only to be run by Jamaicans with no interference from foreigners. Tourists live in Jamaican style shacks and the entertainment is only Jamaican. Food on sale is Jamaican and ordinary people make the souvenirs. All Jamaicans benefit from this scheme because they can sell their products, food or supply help in any way to the hotels. Activities included are banana picking which costs a small amount of money, eg \$5

Another idea is to join Fair Trade, which would mean better prices for goods and better conditions to work in.

My third proposal is that a celebration of Jamaican history is set up. It would be a major attraction, which would cost a lot to build but would bring in more money than smaller, less ambitious projects. The aim would be to teach people about the history of Jamaica, especially slavery.

Lots of locals make souvenirs, but tourists could pay a little extra to make their own. They could make traditional Jamaican souvenirs but personalise them. The money would go to the people who teach them.

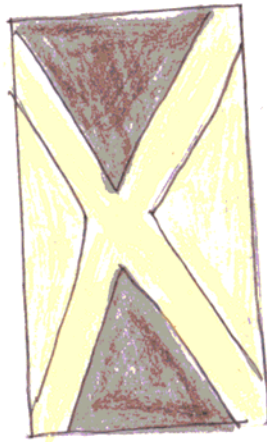
Make sure you try all our Jamaican food, in our mouth-watering restaurants!



Why not try making your own Sour-Sauce to take home with you. You can make them at Kingston.



Code of Conduct



To make your holiday pleasant please:



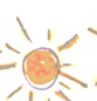
Join as many Jamaican activities as possible.



Try not to make too much litter.



Leave the place tidy.



Keep all animals under control.



Try all our delicious food in our Jamaican Restaurants.

HI / A / E / U / V / W / X / Y / Z

Did you know?

We have a museum all about the history of the slave trade.



Come to our Trade Fairtrade food workshop, held in our school. It's great fun!



Appendix 2

**Year 10 Evaluation sheet- Module 1**

**Topic: Population**

1. Before we started, I knew the following things about this topic already
  - population was increasing exponentially in most LADC's.
  - refugees can be a problem in many cases into LADC's and some waste on migrants and immigrants.
2. New ideas to me were:
  - population pyramids & demographic transition model
  - population was decreasing in MEDC's as Britain seems highly populated
  - The one child policy in china
3. Studying the problem of controlling population growth in LADCs (eg China and India) made me feel .....
 

It was very sad but we covered to sides of the story. It was very harsh and a horrible thing to do but really it has helped the population problem in the long run. It was really the only way to solve the problem.
4. In my opinion, the Chinese One Child Policy is ....
 

wrong! they should introduce this policy but with some changes. They should give contraception to prevent population growth and if a baby is fully grown it should not be killed. It should not receive benefits but it is like killing the baby.

**Topic: Resources**

1. Studying the problem of the consumption of world resources made me feel ...
 

SCARED. It made me realise the problems we face and it should be made clear. We are introduced to recycling campaigns etc but do not know the real urgency for us to recycle.
2. I think that the part I personally can play in helping to reduce this problem is ...
 

recycling bottles, cans etc in bottle banks, going to clothing banks, using the green & black bins properly but apart from that there is not much I personally can do.
3. Global warming concerns me ...
 

as population is increasing dramatically and I wonder what the world will be like in years to come. It is a horrible thought and action needs to be taken now. We only have one planet like earth, that we know of and we've misused it.