

# global learning

~ let's talk about it

Scott Sinclair



**TIDE**~  
global learning

*Designed to view on screen or print 2 pages/ A4 sheet*

# Global Learning

Lets talk about it!

This paper was drafted for a seminar in July 2011. It provided me with the opportunity to take stock of the global learning idea and review a range of work. I share these thoughts from afar ... well, Wales! I have moved on from being Director at Tide~ but am still motivated about where 'global learning' should be going ... and how it might be possible to head in that direction.

The ideas I highlight in this document result from reflecting on the evaluation of a range of Tide~ projects.

The process owes a lot to many people in the Tide~ network but most of all to Jeff Serf [*Associate Dean, School of Education, University of Wolverhampton*], Julie Wooldridge [*now freelance ... before that involved in head teacher training*] and Cathryn Gathercole, who is now Director.



The work in primary schools facilitated by Ben Ballin and in secondary schools by Elaine Miskell has also been pivotal. The projects engaged a range of teachers and led to the handbooks [see page 5] that back up the ideas I wish to share.

This review draws on the Tide~ experience; no reference is made to my role with Cyfanfyd esdgc-schools net. The context is different though the debates may be relevant.

The views expressed are those of the author not necessarily of Tide~ global learning

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We now have curriculum experience that engages global issues

Formative evaluation has shown that teachers make the connection between this and other learning needs

The value of a learner centred approach and thinking in terms of an entitlement has been demonstrated

There is an appreciation that learning related to community cohesion, global issues, sustainability, development, human rights, democracy, and citizenship are complementary priorities

**Based on this progress there is an opportunity to think afresh about global learning as an idea ... and as a strategy**

But factors like government change, the impact of a global financial crisis, confidence in 'development awareness' and new pressures for change in schools seems to threaten that progress

Engaging young people in current debates eg about development priorities, aid, or the implications of climate change seem to have gone down the political agenda

**2011 is a good time to ask the question ...**

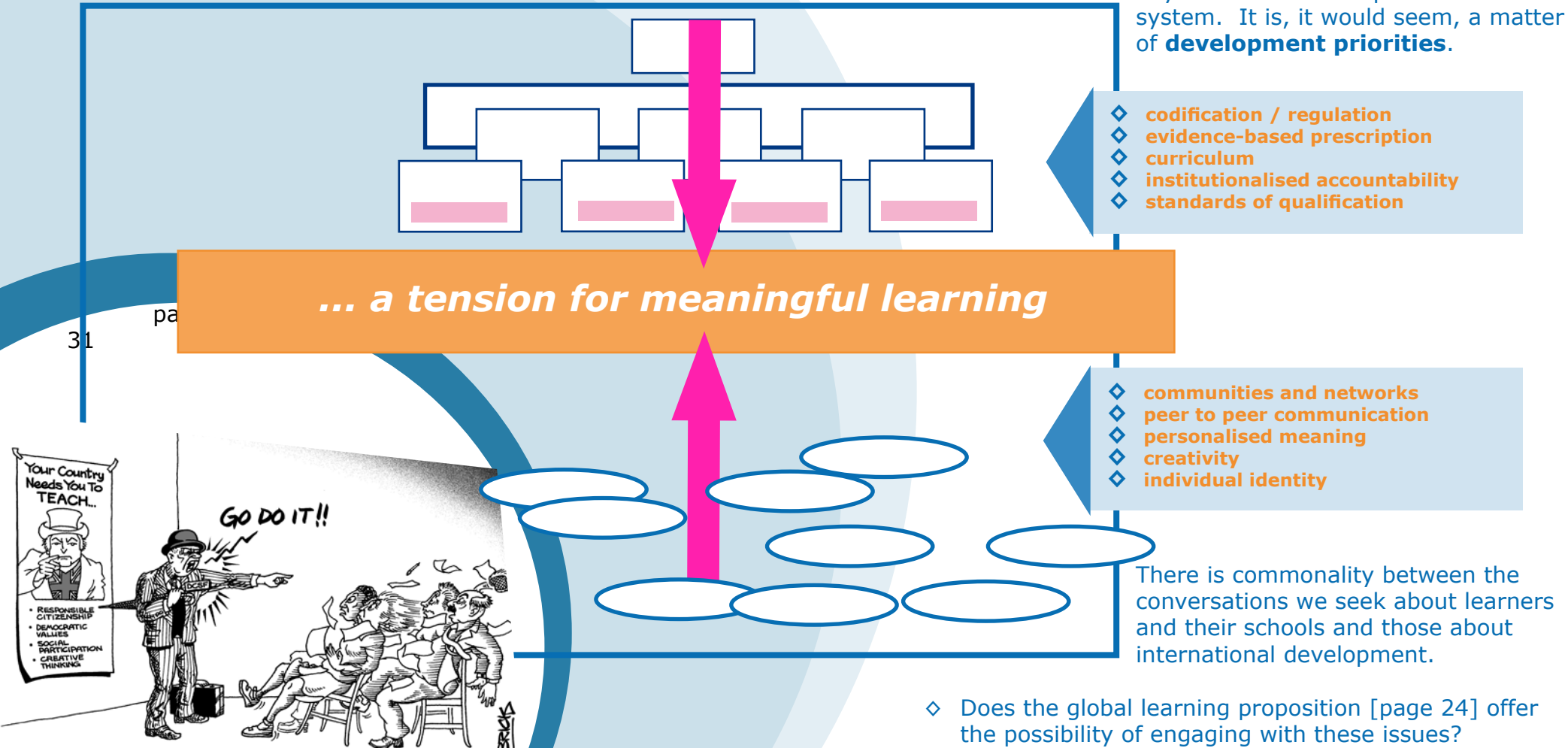
**Where next for global learning?**

## Contents ~

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2. Connections
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The tensions of global learning are reflected in those of learning itself as expressed in the diagram. It is based on one by Etienne Wenger. [2]

The question for networks such as Tide~ is how to broker space for the creativity needed, in a way that engages the power of accountability. It is the same dilemma for anyone in a leadership role within the system. It is, it would seem, a matter of **development priorities**.



Cartoons by Brick [1]  
See Appendix page 31

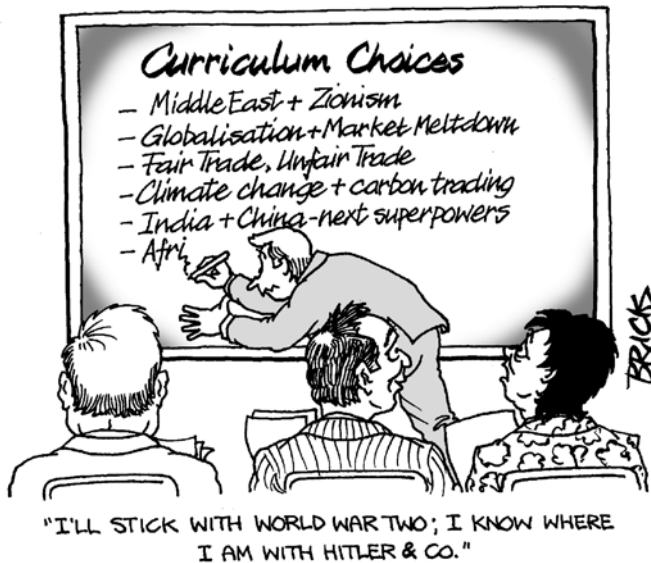
“ From *Poverty to Power* sets out a vision of women and men in communities everywhere who are equipped with education, enjoy good health, have rights, dignity, and voice – and are in charge of their own destinies.

What is required to achieve that is nothing less than a global new deal – a redistribution of power, opportunities, and assets. The alternative – a world of ever-deepening gulfs between the ‘haves’ (in terms of wealth, technology, water, soil, carbon) and the ‘have-nots’, a dualistic world of insiders and outsiders – portends the needless suffering of continents, nations, and excluded groups within otherwise wealthy countries.

Such a dystopia is both unstable and self-defeating, because the ‘uppers’ (in Robert Chambers’ terminology) will spend much of their time fending off the legions of ‘lowers’ hammering at the gates of privilege.

”

*Duncan Green, Oxfam [3]*



## Is this a good time to think about the implications of the global dynamic for our profession?

- ❑ Could we make more of the fact that locally teachers, schools, education systems, all over the world are engaging with similar global questions?
- ❑ Can a response focused by a 'lens of good causes' and 'what we can do to help' get in the way of fully exploring how we as a profession could play our part in change?

There are many imaginative organisations tackling issues of injustice, poverty and sustainability in our [global] community. Clearly we and the learners we work with have something to contribute to this work ... but is that the end of the story?

The communication trend on global concerns seems to be that both NGOs and governments prescribe selective and simplified messages, sometimes linked to heavy branding. They are often presented with a certainty that might have the effect, long-term, of reducing understanding.

If teachers are not given the opportunity to think these things through for themselves, then even those that are motivated about the global agenda become dependent on such messages, as do those influencing policy. Yet as the quote here shows, the NGOs are engaging with some big debates about 'global ways'. [3]

It is almost as if there is an aspiration by NGOs and government for more 'responsible citizenship' but less political engagement. They seem to have little appetite for critical engagement with issues of aid and development. The emphasis is one of PR, 'us and them' and pride in our efforts.

**It may not be a good time but it is the best we've got!**

*Teacher creativity is at the heart of it but there is also much work needed to challenge some teacher mind-sets ... hence the cartoon.*

Two key Tide~ publications and substantive back up material on <http://www.tidec.org> offer a synthesis of ideas and learning activities including CPD stimulus ... [4]

- ➔ *Global learning in primary schools*
- ➔ *Enabling global learning through the KS3 curriculum*

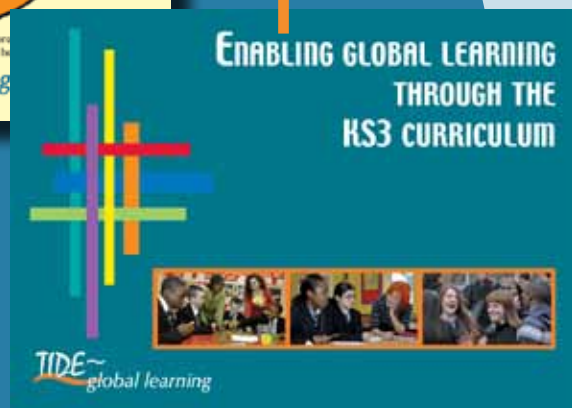
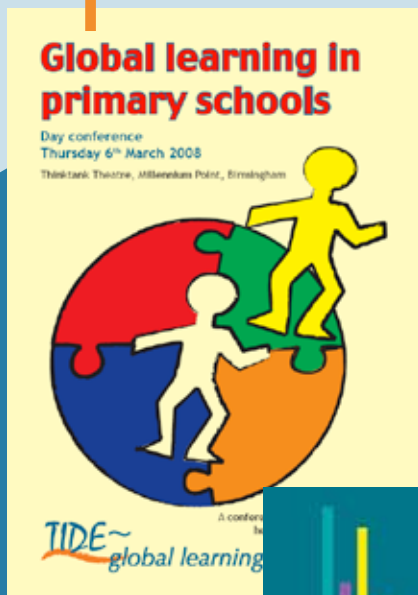
### Me ... my identity & my learning needs

#### Understanding

- social connections
- commonality
- interdependence
- participation

#### Enabling

- a vision for global learning in our school
- through subjects
- through cross-curricular approaches
- curriculum with wider purpose



### The process of 'conversations' involved in this review left us with some big questions ... many of them about leadership ... all of them demanding wider conversation.

Tide~ continues to make the assumption [and offers evidence to back it up] that there is capacity within the teaching profession to take on the challenges, to take a lead, to be creative about teaching and learning.

To get a conversation going perhaps we need to seek dissonance ... for example:

- ❑ Are we seeking to enable or to indoctrinate?

There is an idea – not a new idea – that because a cause or idea has virtue, that indoctrination is okay ... it is made good by that virtue. I don't think there is much evidence to convince us that this has ever been the case, but in the context of the issues global learning is seeking to engage with, this highlights how little we are in fact engaging with the issues.

- ❑ Are we using models of development that build capacity in schools for internal planning and self-determination or ones that reinforce dependency on external criteria?

To me some award schemes seem to use outmoded models of development but this should not be reduced to a 'goodies v baddies' debate, it is more confused than that. It is important to recognise that distinctive cultural assumptions have evolved which can make communication difficult, but the significance of what we are dealing with warrants open debate.

I guess we are all for a bit of indoctrination, but more seriously, the common focus should be ...

- ◇ what is it that we aspire to in education?
- ◇ what do we need to meet the needs of learners growing up in an increasingly globalised society?
- ◇ how do we structure learning to engage with the reality of the issues?

The Development Education Commission [5] explored the notion of **essential learning** and proposed a framework:

- ◇ to build core dispositions and values that provide a basis for clarifying underlying principles ... and responding to change;
- ◇ to engage with ideas and understandings;
- ◇ to build capabilities and skills that are part of lifelong learning;
- ◇ to offer essential experiences that motivate enquiry, stimulate creativity and provide a context for action.

# 1

## Why global learning?

For Tide~ the idea of 'global learning' rather than 'development education' as an organising concept grew out of thinking about the need to:

- ◇ focus on learning entitlement and the needs of learners growing up in an globalised society as the core challenge;
- ◇ create a more focused agenda, but one that can also engage with the complexity of contemporary issues ... the knowledge as well as the dynamic of change;
- ◇ clarify issues about quality relating to global learning and for this quality to be increasingly self-generated by teachers and learners.

It was proposed that by starting with learning and the needs of learners, better connections can be made with other learning needs. The debate about 'quality' could therefore also have a clear focus on learning experience.

The approach also sought to challenge assumptions that seemed to be gaining momentum; that the task was one of using teaching activities to manipulate prescribed views and short-term action, rather than seeing learning as part of the dynamic of change ... part of development.

Far from abandoning 'development education', the strategy at that time was to revitalise core thinking about it, and to build on the experience of teachers involved with the evolution from DEC to the network: Tide~. It also revitalised formative challenges such as those from Julius Nyerere about the need for education here in the UK as a development priority ... and the need to apply development models to our work.

The term 'global learning' itself resulted from using the term 'essential learning' proposed by the Development Education Commission [5]. Much of their work resonates with current debate.

The DEA [now Think Global] offered a definition for global learning as education that puts learning in a global context, fostering:

- ◇ 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.

enable them  
to develop  
themselves ?

## To define ... or not to define?

There remains a dilemma about whether defining 'global learning' adds clarity to the agenda or detracts from aspiration and purpose.

In discussions that led to 're-branding' Tide~ [Teachers in development education] as **Tide~ global learning** this was debated. It was seen as a strength to be able to ask a clear challenging question about how the global learning needs of learners are being addressed, but not to prescribe a definition.

It is clear from evaluations that the lack of a definition did not hinder the ability to have clearly focused projects that engaged a range of practitioners, addressed specific issues and had clear outcomes. Indeed the evidence would suggest that the openness of the strategy helped with their effectiveness. Nevertheless it needs to be reviewed because ... as one Assistant Head put it:

***"On Tide's non-prescriptive approach ... That balance is really difficult to get right and at times I thought that it was an incredible strength of Tide and at other times I have found it really frustrating"***

Can the strength be sustained but frustration reduced?

This too links to formative ideas ...

***"You cannot develop people, you can only enable them to develop themselves".***

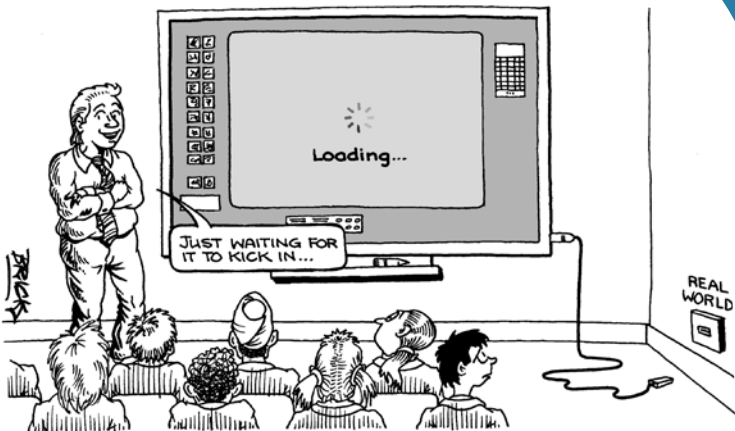
When the DEA approached Tide~ about taking up the term 'global learning' there was concern that it might lose its strategic edge. This does not seem to have been the case and the policy debates that followed were useful, as was the DEA Global Learning Charter [6].

Nevertheless, concern is expressed that the phrase might become more significant, but that the ideas behind it could be lost, as it is taken up by establishment bodies such as government departments.

Global Dimensions as introduced in a DfES document [8] proposed 8 concepts.

They are all important to global learning. They are a valuable stimulus but they offer limited potential as a starting point for planning for global learning. They are nevertheless useful to an evaluation cycle.

**Global citizenship**    **Interdependence**  
**Social justice**        **Conflict resolution**  
**Diversity**                **Values and perceptions**  
**Human rights**         **Sustainable development**



'Teaching the Global Dimension' [7] provides a comprehensive review, with different authors offering chapters on each of the 8 concepts from the DfES document [8]. An introductory chapter reviews 'issue based educations' responding to matters such as development, sustainability, peace, race and futures.

Each of these concepts has its own history and is backed by fields of study, campaigns for change and ideas for curriculum. The editors argue that each is separately important. Clearly this is so. However there is a tension between this and the need to build a citizenship literacy that understands commonalities and connections. We are not asking young people to specialise in the environment and sustainability and be excused from diversity and the need for community cohesion. We are asking them to engage with the full agenda, and to understand it in terms of the decisions they make now and in the future.

The 8 key concepts have common ground with the 7 in the Holland Report [9]; together they map out 'the field', but the learning issues for policy and practice go deeper ... and that is the context for work on future strategy.

## In the minds of learners?

It is in the minds of learners that these things need to come together as the basis for lifelong learning. This is about an approach, not just about being 'wired up' to new content ... [hence the cartoon].

The idea that what goes on in our minds might have international significance is not a new one. The preamble to UNESCO's Constitution suggests ...

*"Since wars began in the minds of men ...  
it is in the minds of men that the defences  
of peace must be constructed."*

# 2

## Connections & disconnections



The general perception that global is elsewhere runs deep and often leads to the assumption that global learning is about particular places and their issues.

There is a tendency to disconnect issues here in this country from those in other parts of the world. We reduce the learning [and political awareness] that can come from realising commonality or using experiences elsewhere to generate questions about experiences here. We still often talk as if we are outside [or is it above] the world. [See cartoon on next page]

One of the best places to start learning about the world, even about complex matters of development, is here in our part of the world. Clearly I am not suggesting that is the end of the story, but those connections can help build skills that make understanding issues in other places more realistic.

This has been a Tide~ theme since the outset with material like *The World in Birmingham* in 1979 and more recently a range of projects focusing on citizenship, not least the current 'Cities Project'. [10]

**The nature of our 21st century, interconnected global society requires us to challenge this separate 'here and there' or 'us and them' outlook and begin**

**... to look afresh at the global context that we all live in.**

# What do we mean ... global?

The general perception that global is elsewhere runs deep and often leads to the assumption that global learning is about particular places and their issues.



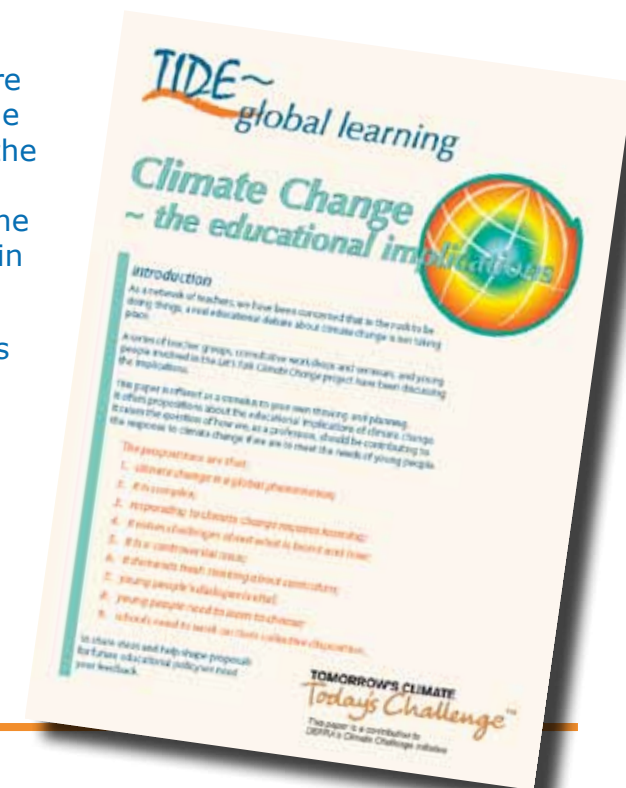
Climate change is an example that demonstrates a growing awareness of a global agenda. Both 'global' and 'local' scales are vital to understanding it.

The question *Climate Change ~ what are the educational implications?* [11] was the focus for a series of projects.

The implications were found to be wide ranging. They go well beyond debates about whether it exists or the need to switch lights off.

The work raised core challenges about the needs of learners, the quality of learning opportunities and the dynamic of uncertain futures.

The core question is about whether the need to address global issues is about information and behaviours or engaging with the dynamic of change ... or both.



Climate change is a **global** issue.

**Locally**, we in common with people **locally** in all parts of the world, are realising that there is a need to make plans and take action for sustainable development. We will be affected by the actions (or non-action) of others, as they will be by what we do.

**Internationally** there is a need to agree strategies and priorities for change.

## Connecting ...

The driver for all of the projects reviewed was "to respond to the educational challenges of global dimensions, development perspectives and human rights principles".

A Tide~ project, in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton, School of Education produced a leaflet: *Bringing it together - a consultation about learning in our globalised society* [12].

This was used in a variety of ways to stimulate discussion among practitioners and as a focus for more in depth research with staff groups in primary schools [13].

The research drew attention to ways in which staff groups were able to engage with the question ...

**How are we meeting young people's global learning needs?**

After an initial stall, groups tended to identify work that they were already doing. Many connections were made, and in the process they began to generate ideas about how to improve the quality of that work and to add to it.

This research highlights the potential of formative evaluation approaches. It provided the starting point for work that led to *Global learning in primary schools* [4].

## Connected curriculum

The introduction of the new KS3 curriculum and a QCA document [14] featuring global learning in 2008 provided an opportunity for Tide~ projects to explore similar ideas in secondary schools.

The new curriculum flexibility and emphasis on personalised and locally relevant learning experiences, offered potential for experimental work towards a more connected curriculum. This was the starting point of a range of projects contributing to *Enabling global learning through the KS3 Curriculum* [4].

**UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON** School of Education  
**TIDE~ global learning** Formative Evaluation Partnership

### Bringing it together

a consultation about learning in our globalised society

The aim of *Bringing it together* is to gain a snapshot of what experiences teachers in primary schools feel they should be providing for their children to prepare them for a rapidly changing world. There is much going on in primary schools that deserves to be 'heard' by a wider audience. This consultation is about building on that.

*Bringing it together* is focusing on the potential for schools to respond to the needs of their children, especially in the context of the very real changes that are taking place - some of which are direct results of the initiatives and developments listed here.

- Every Child Matters
- Excellence and Engagement
- Sustainable Schools Framework
- Race Relations Amendment Act
- National Strategy
- Healthy Schools
- Eco-Schools
- Global School Partnerships & Links
- Inclusion
- QES Teachers' International Professional Development
- International School Award
- Citizenship & Participation
- DfE's Global Dimensions

Schools have always had to balance potentially conflicting demands. We are particularly interested in exploring how schools ensure that the needs of their children remain paramount, taking cognisance of the fact that they are growing up in an increasingly globalised society.

Teachers have devised strategies for working in exciting and innovative ways with their children. By taking part in *Bringing it together* we hope that you will not only share your ideas with us, but also see how other teachers in other schools are preparing their children for the future.

Global learning is about meeting the educational needs of children growing up in an increasingly globalised society for example, helping them see themselves as global citizens, helping them to have a deeper knowledge and understanding of inter-dependence and to have opportunities to participate in their education - such as shaping the curriculum they experience.

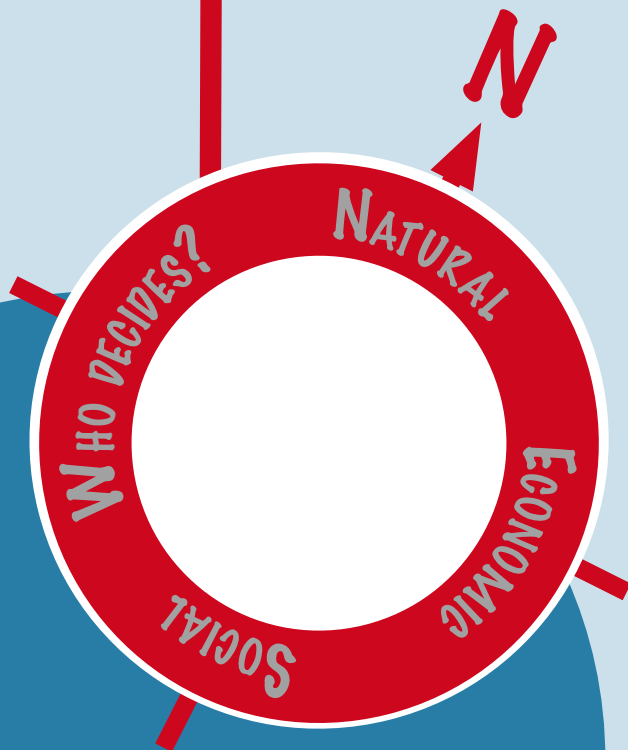
What knowledge and understanding does this involve?

Can primary-aged children do this? - if so how?

What are the benefits for the children?

How do these link to these?

What is a 'globalised society'? And what's a 'global citizen'?



**Development Compass Rose** 'DCR'[15] activities engage learners in making connections. If you are focusing on environmental issues and sustainability it is not useful to look at natural systems in isolation. It is nevertheless important to learn about such systems so that there can be critical enquiry into their relationship to economic and social dimensions. This gives context to considering the decisions involved, ranging from individual choices through to governments and international business.

Connections introduce another level of complexity; the challenge is to find ways, like the 'development compass rose', to make that complexity accessible to learners.

The 'DCR' also highlights another important dynamic ... the commonality of experience in different parts of the world. Like the compass – north, south, east & west – it has a value in terms of analysis of any place in the world and as part of exploring interdependence.

Such connections may also be at the heart of new thinking, for example, economic models that learn from natural systems as featured in *Sense and Sustainability*. [16]. Another example is the connections between ideas about 'development' and 'education' ... see page 14.

### ... and disconnecting ?

The connections that are not made influence analysis as much as those that are made.

Notions of 'here and there', 'us and them' are powerful. Even the language that is often used to describe things in 'developing countries' can make it more difficult to see connections to things closer to our own experience. There is a need for a deeper exploration of aspects of commonality in the human experience. So for example, different perspectives do not necessarily belong to different places, as is often argued in North-South debate.

## Disconnecting ...

### Mind the gap

It is very easy for material in schools to become dated and, for example, for us not to recognise the massive development achievements of recent decades.

The context and thinking about issues is dynamic. Our approach needs to make a strength of this. For example, see the website *Gapminder* [17] to take a fresh look at global statistics that bring to life change over time.

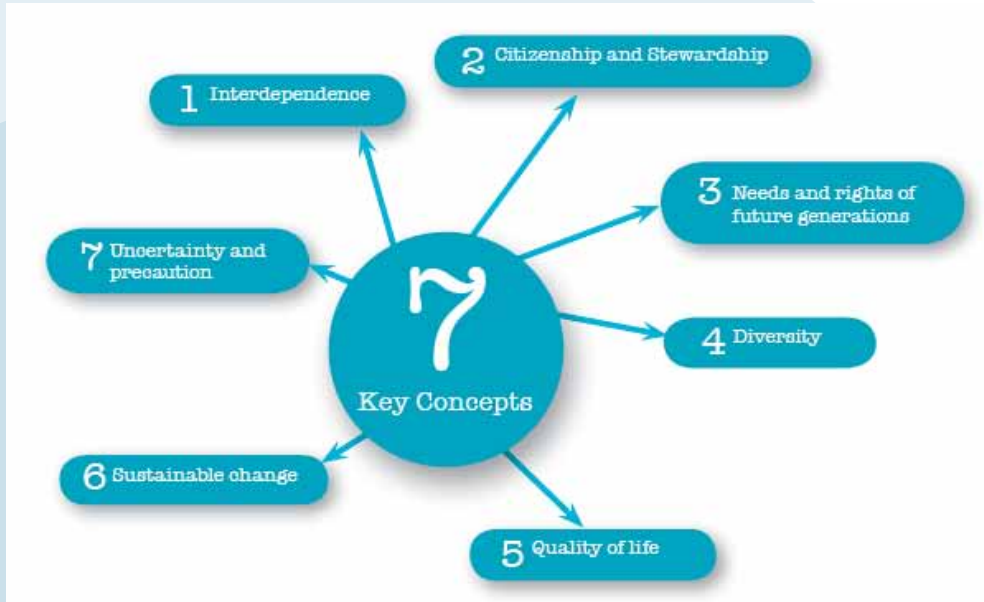
### Policy disconnect?

Disconnection at a policy level is a common frustration. Hence the cartoon ... though it is suddenly dated as a result of post election changes ... the issues about due process and coherence have not. *The Holland Report* in the cartoon's shredder is well worth a read. [9] There was some surprise when it disappeared from DEFRA and DCSF websites. It was being used as stimulus for teacher workshops on education for sustainable development. The frustration did however generate a Tide~ seminar and a series of projects that have been written up. [18]

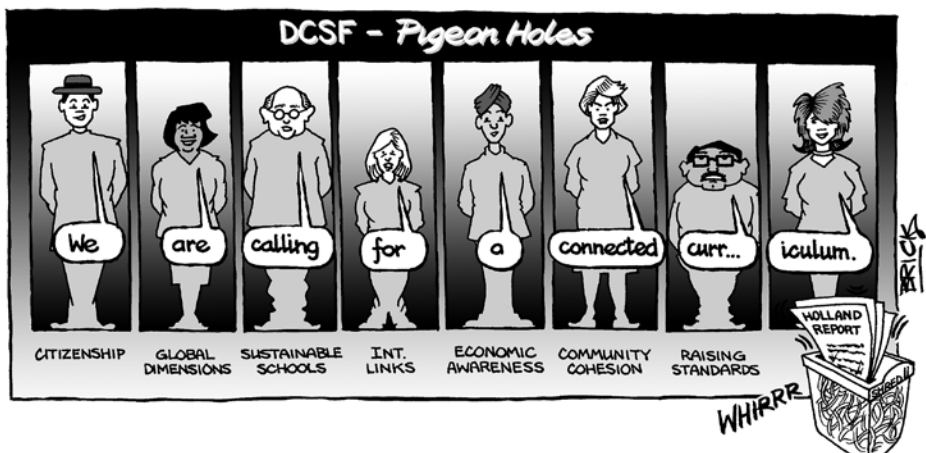
### One way citizenship?

There is much feedback about young peoples' interest and motivation. A good example of this is the research by research Lynn Davies, Clive Harber and Hiromi Yamashita that linked to the *Whose citizenship?* initiative. [19]

This highlighted another disconnect that makes the point well, about times when learner motivation for citizenship comes up against an establishment agenda that, for example, disconnects concern about Africa from policies relating to Iraq, Iran and the Middle East. As the research put it ... "don't mention the war".



*Holland Report key concepts*



## Some thoughts about development ...

- ❑ Development that sees the world only in dichotomised terms is not development [eg 'developed' west and 'underdeveloped' rest].
- ❑ Development is not simply about economics or about aid, it's about the whole story – human development.
- ❑ Development [and underdevelopment that leads to poverty] happens 'here' as well as 'there' – we need to understand both ... and the connections between them.
- ❑ Aid, by definition, can never solve the problem; fundamental change is needed ... learning is part of that.
- ❑ A human rights perspective highlights peoples' responsibilities to challenge their development agenda.
- ❑ The images used in media reporting on development only portray part of the reality ... and, far too often, only the negative realities.

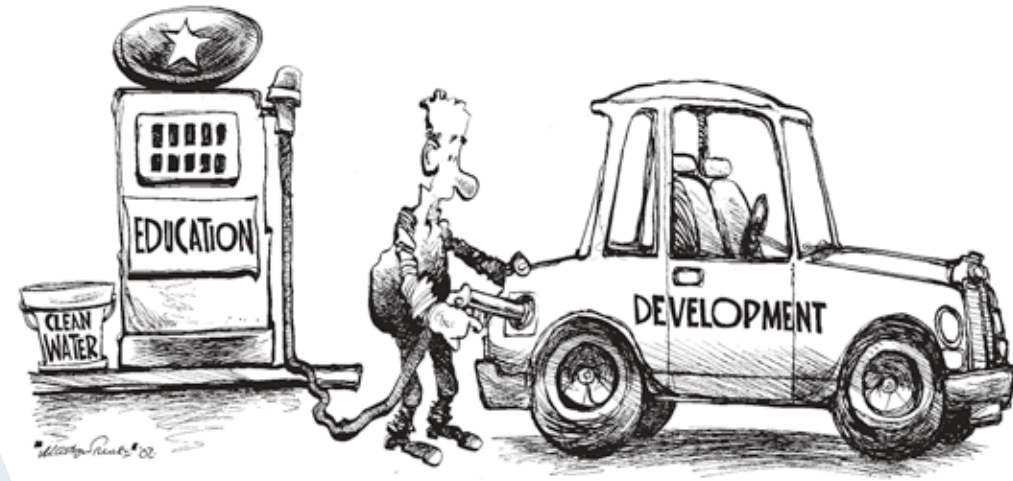
# Education

~

# Development

## How do they connect?

Is there still a tendency to disconnect the concepts we use to consider other places from those we use in our own place?



## Some connected thoughts about education

- ❑ Education that presents one view of the world is not education.
- ❑ The positive value of education cannot be assumed.
- ❑ 'Education' can be a negative experience – de-skilling and reducing our capacity for participation.
- ❑ Education should offer experiences of democracy and insight into democratic ways.
- ❑ Education can help us work on our own dispositions to change and how we can contribute.
- ❑ People throughout the world are highly interested in contributing to development ... and motivated to learn.
- ❑ The images used in media reporting on education only portray part of the reality ... and, far too often, only the negative realities.

Based on Chapter 7 80:20 *development in an unequal world* [20]

# 3

## Creativity

### enabling & 'space'

**Tide~ has, over and over again, demonstrated that giving practitioners space to think things through and work on teaching and learning plans is very creative and productive.**

This has been the experience, whether it be groups of Teachers, Heads or Advisers. Thousands have been involved over the years in generating hundreds of teacher resources. Hundreds have gained such 'space' through study visits structured to enable both preparation for the visit and opportunity to think creatively about the experience back in the realities of the classroom. [21]

I propose that an **enabling approach** is pivotal to future strategy. If we are to enable young people to develop learning that they can apply in their lives ... we too need to experience [and appreciate] an enabling approach to professional development ... see page 16.

As part of this it is important to offer opportunities to explore **assumptions** ... for example a discussion about pitfalls ... see page 17.

Work as part of an ITE course highlighted the need for student teachers to have space to think creatively about global learning and the implications for their role as teachers. There is a need for creative space to engage with the leadership roles involved as well as the pedagogy ... see article by Jeff Serf, Julie Wooldridge & myself [22]

**Supporting the sharing of teachers' experiences within a group and more widely can help individuals to recognise and value their own achievement.**

### **Making space for talk**

Providing a stimulus and an opportunity ... but resisting the temptation to over-manage or structure.

### **Sharing perceptions of the 'big picture'**

This has real value for team-building and for discussing underlying assumptions about education and teacher roles.

Experience of working in an **enabling role** led to reflections about principles for quality teacher engagement

### **Creating a sense of process**

The challenge is to enable teachers to take a more pro-active role in their own learning and professional development. A two or three session model that builds in time for reflection and an opportunity to try things out and share thoughts and experiences with a group adds to the quality of learning.

### **A coherent approach**

It is important to relate to the current educational context so that 'global learning' is not seen as an add-on but an integrated part of plans for learning.

### **Our role as facilitators not experts**

This 'enabling style' is key if we are looking to build teachers' and schools' ownership of, and confidence in, the agenda. It helps to model an 'enabling approach to learning' and it also means that we can draw out existing experience and build upon this.

### **Enabling a climate of critical engagement**

We are seeking to foster a climate that encourages real debate, where colleagues can challenge views in a supportive environment. Such a climate requires a level of confidence and it may take a while to build up.

### **Providing an opportunity to explore complex issues**

Teachers welcome opportunities to engage with current global issues on their own terms and in support of their own understanding [over and above how you might teach about them]. They value opportunities that enable them to expand their own thinking ... that stimulate and provoke rather than provide ready-made answers.

### **Building on energy and enthusiasm**

We need to work in a way that builds rather than suppresses energy and enthusiasm. This is sometimes about those taking a lead 'stepping-back' and recognising and nurturing the potential of the teachers involved.

# What are the pitfalls?

## We need to offer opportunities to consider assumptions.

Clearly we are talking about something more than including some global issues and themes in our teaching.

Are we clear about 'poor global teaching'? If we don't talk about it how do we work on improvement?

Is there a danger that 'poor global teaching' could reinforce stereotypes ... and reduce opportunities for learners to think for themselves?

One activity developed by Elaine Miskell and used by several projects to stimulate discussion, simply involves turning the debate around and starting with problems.

### What are the pitfalls that we are trying to avoid?

Addressing this question can help to clarify what we mean by 'global learning' and help us explore our assumptions.

#### 'Doing good' ... that avoids thinking

A desire to participate and address issues in a global context can often lead to 'fund-raising' style activities that are about immediate responses. There can be a place for this response, but if it is over-used and the main experience of 'global learning' for young people, there is a danger of leading to 'us and them' attitudes and a possible sense of superiority. It also promotes a simplified analysis of the need to throw money at problems.

#### Manipulative activity leading to 'right answers'

A desire to want supposed 'right answers' or responses ['we should recycle more' or 'buy fair trade goods'] can lead to prescriptive approaches or activities that are overly contrived. Young people are often quick to learn the 'right answer' rules and these exercises can quickly have less to do with thinking than about keeping the teacher happy.

#### Failing to acknowledge our own perceptions & bias

For example, in dealing with images of a place we might respond with more positive language to images of trees and green spaces and more negatively to those of crowded streets or a built environment. Understanding that others might respond differently, [that different perspectives are important to understanding issues] and that there may be reasons why we have responded in this particular way, are important for our own learning.

#### It's all doom and gloom

Floods, earthquakes, wars, climate change ... it can be a long and depressing list. There is a real danger that learning about other places and particularly the 'developing world' can be equated to learning about disasters and problems. How do we avoid overburdening young people and fostering a sense of helplessness?

Think for a moment about young people you know

... **imagine** them when they are ... 45

Share your imagining in pairs  
What will their world be like?



Each of those Pitfalls profiles a key challenge ... eg:

- ◇ to move towards activities and approaches that are reflective and promote critical thinking;
- ◇ to identify issues and stimulus material that provokes debate, challenges assumptions and raises questions;
- ◇ to use open-ended activities to enable perceptions and assumptions to be shared and discussed at the outset;
- ◇ to include 'positives' and to plan a 'futures' approach that builds awareness of processes of change and how individuals and societies can contribute.

These challenges all reflect on the implications of meeting the needs of learners and recognising the importance of learning as a contribution in its own right.

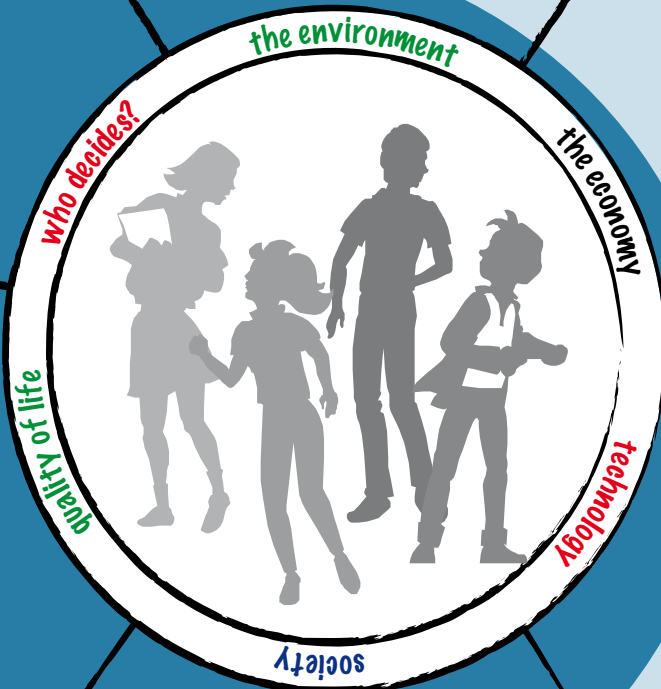
### A wheel of change

Another CPD activity that has proved useful involves small groups sharing ideas about young learners and what they might be experiencing when they are 45 ... and then considering that from the perspective of each segment in a 'wheel of change'.

It is useful to take stock of how many aspects have a clear global context, and the extent to which groups speculate negatively or positively about the future. In truth we do not know what change will bring ... and that is a key issue. However we can be confident that there will be change. How we present change is a challenge to thinking about our professional responsibility.

**Our optimism or pessimism about the future and the assumptions we make about how things are connected [and what we disconnect] shape the experiences we offer to learners.**

**Talking about it is important to that dynamic.**



# 4

## Conversations where next?

The way we present information and the underlying assumptions we make as teachers are powerful. It is observed that, as the global agenda has grown in credibility within education, some of the aspects of uncertainty have been down-played and poverty more clearly defined. But as a participant at one of the conferences put it ...

**“The South is NOT ‘poor’ in many aspects.  
Are we appreciating that  
... are we learning from them?”**

We need opportunities to think such matters through.

- Is this a good time to rethink the implications for our profession?
- Are ‘Education’ and ‘Development’ not inextricably intertwined?

**An aspiration for new conversations may seem like a modest one. But if talking is core to generating ideas that have vitality for those that are talking, then the aspiration is more one of enabling a wide range of people to contribute to a fresh vision.**

- What strategies are needed? Should there be a campaign for such conversations?

“ We cannot address today’s challenges with yesterday’s perspectives. We need new visions of what is possible.

We need new models to learn how to learn at multiple levels of scale, from the personal to the global. Increasing our capacity to learn, individually and collectively, is taking on a special urgency if we see ourselves caught, as I believe we are, in a race between learning and the possibility of self-destruction.”

- new thinking
- long-term investment
- how to talk about it

One of the projects involved a group of head teachers. They had several meetings at Tide~ and produced a paper ‘*Global learning~ leadership of learning*’ to share their ideas and concerns. This also became the focus of a conference at which Mick Waters [QCA] responded [23].

They drew inspiration from **Etienne Wenger** [2]. The quotes from him on this page set the scene for considering the wider implications of ‘global learning’.

### Why do we need a new story about our learning?

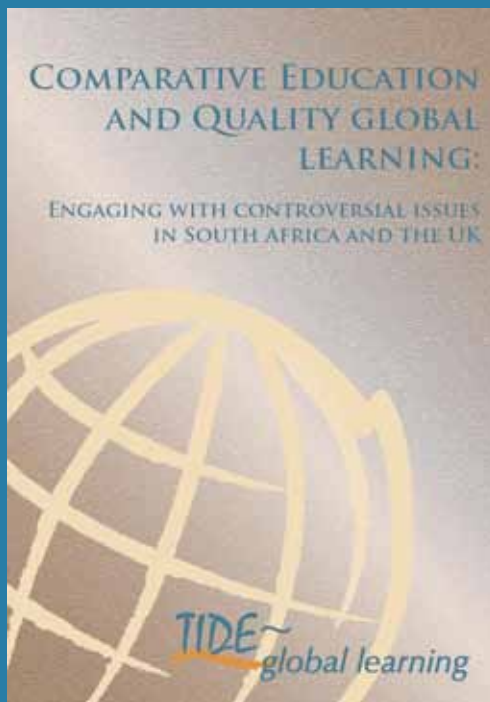
As Etienne Wenger puts it ... we all make bets when we decide how to invest our energy, passion, and resources in what we do. ... they are based on a number of assumptions that are like “moral bets”. He seeks to invest in new thinking, learning capability and ways of talking about it:

- “
- ◇ Globalization and the confluence of factors that it represents are creating an unprecedented learning challenge. This challenge has both planetary and personal dimensions. It calls for new thinking.
  - ◇ We need to focus not just on learning, but on learning capability. The bet is that increasing learning capability [individually and collectively] is the most important long-term investment for dealing with an uncertain future.
  - ◇ One major obstacle is that **we do not have very good ways of talking** about what constitutes learning capabilities.
- ”

Let’s talk about it!

As part of a Tide~ study visit course 'teacher educators' with ITE and INSET roles each contributed a chapter to the publication:

**'Comparative education & quality global learning'**



**One of the more challenging ways of learning about our own society and its education system is to see it from afar ... stimulated by observations and experiences there.**

This was a driver of the Tide~ Ubuntu projects. Over several years they involved groups in study visits to South Africa and creative work leading to 3 publications. [24]

One theme that emerged was that the UK lacked the same sense of shared vision, based on a common set of democratic values, that the group sensed in South Africa.

One participant noted ...

*"The UK could certainly learn from things that are happening in South Africa. We need a clearer philosophy/ vision for the country. Where are we going? What are our true values?... Democracy is taught through citizenship – it should be embedded in all we do."*

Another noted ...

***"I envy their sense of direction ... many of our central government policies seem disjointed and founded upon political expediency."***

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The need to address new global ways is perhaps best summed up by one of their concluding observations:

**"Education can be used .... for both 'good' and 'evil'."**

**How do we know what we are doing if we do not consider such questions**

**... if we do not talk about it?**

# A question of leadership?

Perhaps we should start by asking  
~ whose leadership?



"I'M TOLD THERE WAS A TIME THEY COULD SEE  
THE WORLD BEYOND!"

A question of leadership? Perhaps we should start by asking ~ whose leadership?

Approaches built on award schemes and prescriptive intervention have a part to play; it is clear that some heads make good use of them. They have achieved a lot, which is why we can now ask whether a continued emphasis on that style might also contribute to closing down essential school-generated conversations' and the change that could lead to.

Many initiatives seem to exclude key players [ie practitioners in schools] from much of the policy debate, by keeping them busy ticking boxes. Leadership is key but we need to check that policy does not [even by default] undermine that potential, and therefore the possibility of embedded quality.

We are seeking a confidence that engages with the dynamics of change and the contradictions of an uncertain future. This can build on the vast experience that is to be found in schools by making new connections, providing 'space' for team creativity and seeing this debate as part of revitalising what the profession is about. Clarity about global learning from a needs-of-learners perspective may enable schools to engage more effectively.

Historically, the leadership in this area has come from 'third sector' organisations. In practice the best of this work involved partnerships with those in the education sector. That work has been significant in terms of what schools are now doing and in policy. It is that achievement that makes it possible and necessary to ask new and bigger questions about long-term education practice, professionalism and policy.

**The alternative is to institutionalise what has been achieved without clarity of purpose.**

Are we preparing the ground  
for change in global ways  
... more sustainability, less  
injustice, less poverty, less war  
... or is it more about  
sustaining our historical  
advantage and  
competitive edge?

**Now that there is an approach to curriculum that seeks to engage with global issues there is a need for new thinking about how best to do this.** It is not useful to assume that the ideas generated when this agenda was seen as marginal are going to be adequate to meet the challenges as we now see them.

Nor is it consistent with objectives, about educational practitioners valuing global learning as part of their core professional function and creativity, if these ideas are used to institutionalise prescriptive frameworks.

The key to quality global learning in schools seems to be the individual and collective **mind-set** about the nature of the educational implications of a changing world.

Matters of mind-set start with how we see the basic concept of 'global'. How we use terms such as local, global and international can influence how we engage with more challenging matters, for example about interdependence and commonality.

Even in policy documents the basic terms are sometimes mixed up, and there is often ambiguity about why the global is important. It leaves us with a doubt ... are assumed so called 'shared values' masking very real divisions about purpose?

Are we preparing the ground for change in global ways, more sustainability, less injustice, less poverty, less war ... or is it more about sustaining our historical advantage and competitive edge? Is it time for a fresh perspective?

**If we are not talking about it  
... how do we know?**



# A global learning proposition

Commitment to learning related to community cohesion, sustainability, development, human rights, democracy, global issues and citizenship all contribute to a common need for global learning. They are not separate forces to be prioritised against each other.

The aspiration fits with the analysis that quality global learning will only happen if we [as teachers, as leaders, as those supporting development in education]:

- ◇ make the learning needs of young people growing up in an increasingly globalised, complex society a core educational challenge;
- ◇ enable global learning to evolve within different curriculum areas and the school as a whole in a way that can be valued by learners and teachers;
- ◇ engage with the complexity of contemporary issues and the dynamic of different perspectives;
- ◇ work on learning opportunities that are responsive to learner motivation and build an experience of participation and democratic entitlement.

**Strategically** the proposition is that teachers and other education practitioners need:

- ◇ to shape the meaning of 'global learning', to make it core to all practice and relevant to particular learners;
- ◇ to recognise the needs of learners growing up in a global context as something we should be responding to because it is central to our professional role.

**Practically** the proposition is that we all need 'space' to work together on these ideas, the practical implications in school and our own understanding of the issues.

# Leadership

## ... conversation starters?

YOU'VE GOT TO STOP  
TALKING ABOUT ME AS  
IF YOU'RE NOT HERE!!



### Some conversation starting points about leadership to make global learning a possibility.

1. Interdependence and an increasingly globalised context is key to thinking about meeting the educational needs of learners. To not do this is to fail them in terms of their educational entitlement.
2. There is need for an understanding of the context in which we make visions about education and the future. It is no good for the global context to be implicit ... it needs to be clear ... to be questioned ... to be talked about.
3. Commitment to learning related to development, cohesion, sustainability, human rights, democracy, global issues all contribute to a common need for global learning. They are not separate forces to be prioritised against each other.
4. Learners need the opportunity to have conversations about these matters too. This is something more fundamental than 'student voice'.

Conversations that enable learners:

- ◇ to develop their communication skills [to have 'conversations'];
- ◇ to connect different aspects of their learning;
- ◇ to think for themselves;
- ◇ to engage with change as part of their lifelong learning.

There is a need for conversation about aspirations ...  
strategies ... and ways to popularise ideas

Has the term  
*global learning*  
outlived its usefulness?

## Looking to the future

Has the term global learning outlived its usefulness? I think not ... so how do we revitalise its meaning, clarify principles and popularise process?

It is important to note:

a] what has changed, for example in policy areas such as education and commitment to development awareness .. and b] what has not changed, for example about the global context, or the needs of learners in that context.

We need to take stock of the long-view ...

- what have we learnt about the global learning idea?
- what have we learnt about strategy and partnership?
- what have we learnt about professional engagement and learning networks?

### How does this apply to future strategy:

- Does it help identify what could be achieved in the next ten years?
- Does it enable articulation of the global learning idea?
- Does it confirm commitment to an enabling approach?
- Does it help define appropriate models of leadership and creative networking?
- Does it increase confidence about how learning could contribute to developing 'new global ways'?

# In conclusion

It is a good time to raise the debate .....



# 4

## Conclusion

### The good news ... and the bad

The good news is that the projects demonstrate that in many schools there is much effective practice to build on, a professional awareness of the open nature of learning and motivation about learners' needs. The bad news is that much of the external pressure, from 'the system' but also from many 'change motivated' projects, detract from the potential that schools can generate creative responses themselves ... that they can take the lead.

The bad news is that though government often seeks engagement from teachers, it often seems to dismiss them when they think for themselves. The good news is that many aspects of 'the system', and many of those 'change motivated' projects and organisations, have much to offer.

Further bad news is that much that has been achieved in recent years seems to be heading for chaos. Locally [in this country] new political expediencies apparently driven by another global feature, the financial crisis, are having the effect of eroding all aspects of that support, confusing longer-term vision and undermining confidence.

Finally the good news, if we can call it that, is that the impact of global issues on us is not a question of policy or choice, it is core to our every day [economic, political, social and environmental] reality. It is anticipated that this dynamic will grow in significance for the foreseeable future and therefore is very important to thinking about learning and the needs of young people.

**Leadership at all levels has the challenge of engaging confidently with this complexity without being able to be confident about future realities.**

**There is a gap** between those thinking about education and learning and those that campaign about particular issues and want people to know about them. The context is new but the tension is not. It was the focus of an early DEC paper *What is development education?* in 1979.



## The girl who did not know ...

My experience of supporting work on a TV programme that involved sessions with teachers and then key stage 3 students, sums it up. The facilitator opened up reflective discussion with students on what they had learned about West Africa ... He captured a moment when in response to a question, a girl reflected and then said, in a considered way, **"I don't know ..."** A moment to bring pride to any teacher, she had clearly understood well and displayed a disposition for learning more. But for others, in this case the funder, this showed failing in the teaching.

The debate about global learning touches on some deep sensitivities about roles. The realities of uncertainty ... of 'not knowing,' are challenging whether you are an academic or a teacher. A difficult one to own up to. Organisations gain credibility and support for their cause by being seen 'to know.' In this context there is little motivation to share openly ... dilemmas and all.

Context is important in the school system too. The global learning proposition [page 24] has to be seen against the backdrop of many issues that influence what is happening in schools. At times of particular uncertainty, it is easy for these to overwhelm our thinking and for us to feel that the best we can achieve is to make the argument for global learning subsidiary to more dominant pressures.

Current trends make a call for conversation sound ambitious. I am tentative about the process, but clear that if, **in 2111** we as a society are to be judged as having taken matters such as global injustice or climate change seriously, then there is a need for learning and the nature of being a teacher to be on the agenda **now**.

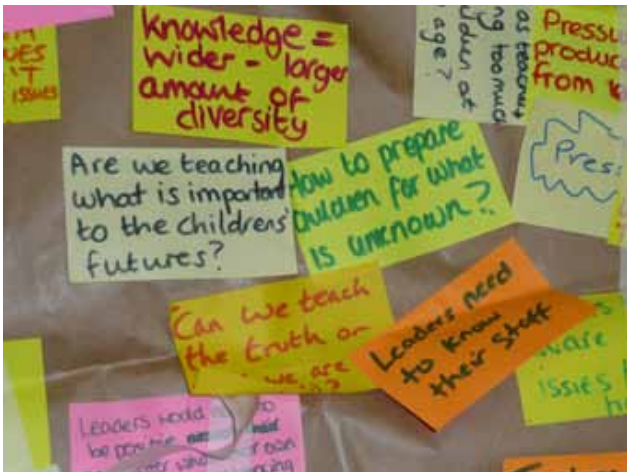
Looking to the future, to the unknown, is as uncertain as exploring 'the Seven Seas'. If we are to take on the global learning proposition, then I conclude we need a chart engaging what I choose to call the '7 Cs' .... [25]

... and finally

## Looking to the 7 Cs ...

The global learning idea, as developed by the Tide~ network has a contribution to make to thinking about teachers, teaching and our part in building a better world.

How could **new conversations** enable that process?



**Leadership at all levels has the challenge** of engaging confidently with global **complexity** and **change** without being able to be confident about future realities.

This leads to questions such as how do we:

- ❑ build **confidence** to question our own understanding of issues in a way that enables us to teach without 'knowing'?
- ❑ develop our collective skills in teaching about **controversial** issues in a way that engages with the politics appropriately?
- ❑ enable learners to appreciate aspects of **commonality** in the human experience, any place in the world ... and through that develop a better understanding of different perspectives?
- ❑ develop '**connected learning**' approaches that enable learners to build questioning skills that they can then apply to real situations?
- ❑ make the most of new **conversations** to build a disposition to shared leadership?
- ❑ stimulate a dialogue about the **contribution** that the education sector itself could make to development priorities ... and new ways of international thinking?
- ❑ challenge the dominant **complacency** about 'tick box change' ... and about our status in the world?

1. The cartoons are by BRICK in response to some of the conversations generated in the review process. They are available as a separate CPD stimulus .. see appendix. For more on John Clark's work see <http://www.brickbats.co.uk> For collection of cartoons on development see <http://www.tidec.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2a.16%20Using%20cartoons.pdf>
2. Etienne Wenger's ideas about 'communities of practice' help think about the issues ... see <http://www.ewenger.com> The diagram is based on one he used at a seminar, University of Wolverhampton. A discussion about the difficulties policy makers have engaging creativity led to much debate following the seminar.
3. From 'Poverty to Power', Duncan Green. [http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/from\\_poverty\\_to\\_power](http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/from_poverty_to_power)
4. See <http://www.tidegloballearning.net> for range of resources and articles including these two handbooks. Each are linked to wide range of classroom material and CPD activities for use in both Primary and Secondary contexts.
5. The Development Education Commission was a project set up by Tide~ and 80:20 involving representatives from England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. See in particular 'Essential Learning for Everyone: civil society, world citizenship and the role of education' \*
6. DEA [Development Education Association] now known as 'Think Global' produced a charter see <http://www.think-global.org.uk/page.asp?p=4836>
7. 'Teaching the Global Dimension: key principles and effective practice', Dave Hicks and Cathie Holden [http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Teaching\\_the\\_global\\_dimension.html?id=c8Xf5N8ExXIC](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Teaching_the_global_dimension.html?id=c8Xf5N8ExXIC)
8. Developing a global dimension in the school curriculum <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-1409-2005>
9. Sustainable Development Education Panel Report 1997, known as 'The Holland Report'. Taken down from the DCSF website. Find on Tide~ at [http://www.tidec.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Sustainable\\_Development\\_Education\\_Panel\\_Annual\\_Report\\_1998.pdf](http://www.tidec.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Sustainable_Development_Education_Panel_Annual_Report_1998.pdf) See also ... <http://www.tidec.org/further-reading-reflections/holland-report-10-years>
10. 'The World in Birmingham' was a photo-pack designed to enable discussion about development issues in Birmingham. It was developed as part of 1979 study visit project that involved groups of teachers going to Columbia, Ghana and India. The Cities Project is the most recent initiative that builds on the significance of commonality .. see <http://www.tidec.org/resources/cities-project-introduction>
11. 'Climate change - local and global an enquiry approach' see ... <http://www.tidec.org/primary-early-years/climate-change-local-and-global-enquiry-approach-feature-article>
12. 'Bringing it together: consultation about learning in our globalised society' <http://www.tidec.org/sites/default/files/uploads/bring%20tog.pdf>
13. For overview of Jeff Serf's research see ... <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=13249>
14. QCA. 'The global dimension in action : a curriculum planning guide'. Now, like the QCA, archived!
15. Development Compass Rose consultation photo-pack was launched in 1995 liked to Oxfam 50th anniversary photos. See for example: [http://www.tidec.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2c.50%20Compass%20rose\\_1.pdf](http://www.tidec.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2c.50%20Compass%20rose_1.pdf)
16. You can download 'Sense and Sustainability', Ken Webster & Craig Johnson from Ellen MacArthur Foundation home page ... <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org>
17. Gapminder ... it opens up a whole new perspective on statistics ... Give yourself time to explore ... <http://www.gapminder.org/world>
18. Bill Scott Challenge project <http://www.tidec.org/further-reading-reflections/bill-scott-learning-sustainable-development-challenge>
19. 'Whose citizenship? Report from the West Midlands Commission on Global Citizenship' \* Research overview document ... <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/education/cier/global-citizenship-report.pdf>
20. Chapter 7 'Engaging development - learning for a better future?' Colm Regan & Scott Sinclair ... [http://www.8020.ie/pub\\_8020.htm](http://www.8020.ie/pub_8020.htm)
21. Fran Martin, University of Exeter, is leading interesting ESRC research project focusing in part on Tide~ study visit concept. [http://education.exeter.ac.uk/staff\\_details.php?user=fem202](http://education.exeter.ac.uk/staff_details.php?user=fem202)
22. 'An introduction to school leadership for quality global learning in Initial Teacher Education', J. Serf, S. Sinclair, J. Wooldridge <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17496890902876183> See also: <http://www.tidec.org/further-reading-reflections/school-leadership-quality-global-learning>
23. Leadership of Learning paper <http://www.tidec.org/primary-early-years/quality-global-learning-meeting-needs-learners>
24. 'Towards Ubuntu: critical teacher education for democratic citizenship', 'Exploring Ubuntu' ... and 'Comparative education and quality global learning' <http://www.tidegloballearning.net>
25. I wonder if a 'seven seas initiative' is an idea that has potential. Feedback welcome ... [scott.7seas.org@btinternet.com](mailto:scott.7seas.org@btinternet.com)

\* due to go on new [www.tidegloballearning.net](http://www.tidegloballearning.net) site

# Cartoons ~ to get talk going

