

Representing global connections using textiles

~ Textiles and Geography G&T Extended Learning Project



Chris Green and Katie Lloyd [The King's CE School, Wolverhampton] collaborated in planning a creative unit of work, exploring global interconnections through Geography and Textiles. Involvement in the Cities, People and Change Project provided an opportunity to think about curriculum development and learner needs in a global context.

At the time of writing, staff at The King's CE School are engaged in transforming learning opportunities as part of a major Building Schools for the Future project. Subject areas are working together in grouped 'zones' which encourage cross-curricular planning. The school has Visual Arts Specialist Status, and Textiles is very popular with KS3 students.

Chris explains:

"We developed a project with a focus on global learning, to encourage Gifted and Talented [G&T] students to think more deeply about their links with the world. We wanted to explore this in a creative way, and build on the Textiles skills being developed through Year 8, a recent Geography topic on environmental issues, and an extended learning homework project about 'global connections.'"

Teacher direction was deliberately minimal, allowing students to work independently, using enquiry questions. The focus was to build on, and enhance, prior learning in both Geography and Textiles, and develop a better understanding of the concept of Globalisation.

Learning objectives:

- To identify your personal connections with other places
- To research and explain the reasons for these connections
- To represent your global connections using a variety of creative textile methods

A combination of Geography and Design and Technology level statements relating to Level 7 for G&T were used:

- Pupils make links in their knowledge and understanding of the Geography of the UK and the wider world [Geog];
- They describe and explain interaction with and between human processes [Geog];
- Pupils respond creatively to briefs, and work with a range of materials – evaluating their work as it develops, modifying their approach [D&T].

Activity description

Year 8 students took part in a series of workshops designed to explore personal connections with the world.

- They developed a series of textiles techniques, using recycled materials, maps, and materials that they had chosen.
- Another session was dedicated to mind-mapping ideas and using the Internet for research.
- As a group, using their new techniques, the students created a large scale map-hanging: the students each had a different coloured string, and used it to draw their connections around the world [family, clothes, food, travel, interests], to create a bright, bold, textured piece which showed how the students were linked to other locations.
- Students used stitch, computer designs, printing, bonding, melting and waxing to create textiles surfaces, in order to make clothing and interior design accessories.

The final pieces of work included a newspaper, plastic bag and map dress; a melted plastic bag handbag and a framed manipulated textiles piece. These were displayed in an exhibition for the rest of the school and visitors to see.

'Quick Response' or 'QR' codes were created by the students using iPads and displayed alongside the textile pieces. The idea was to represent how we are living in a globalised society, by encouraging people who viewed the exhibition to use their smart phones to read a simple description. An embroidered QR code was also produced to explain the project to viewers.



Here is one of the codes:

Chris Green and Katie Lloyd share their reflections on using these activities with their students:

"It was encouraging that each final piece was different, demonstrating that the concept of Globalisation had been explored individually. The project encouraged students to be creative thinkers, and it fully supported their knowledge and understanding of both Geography and Textiles."

Ideas developed by Chris Green and Katie Lloyd [The King's CE School, Wolverhampton]

