

# Meeting the challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> century education and a global economy

Student research teams present  
their initial findings





# Foreword

This publication presents the initial findings from a joint project between SSAT and NESTA in which groups of students identify some of the key challenges facing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in the context of a globalised economy, and how they think education should best respond to these.

Issues such as an ageing population, environmental sustainability and globalisation will present today's young people with problems to contend with as well as opportunities to grasp. To succeed in the future, young people will need to have the confidence, skills and understanding not only to respond to change but also to become the instigator of change themselves.

In all the debates about the future of education, it is surprising how often the voice and engagement of students is overlooked. This project demonstrates that young people can contribute new thinking, ideas and insights on education and how it should be delivered. It also shows that, with the right support and encouragement, they have a key role to play in helping transform learning so that it is fit for the future and gives them the skills and knowledge they will need.

**Benedict Arora**  
Director of Education, NESTA

**Sue Williamson**  
Director, Leadership and Innovation Networks, SSAT

**March, 2010**

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# Introduction

In response to an invitation for schools to submit proposals for student-led research projects, 11 schools across the UK were invited to explore how they might meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century education and a global economy. Students and teachers identified the key questions they aimed to address, agreed initial action plans and identified possible research methodologies, also identifying skills and attributes they wished to develop. In some cases the project proposals were entirely student-led, while others were based on co-construction with teachers.

The SSAT student consultants visited each school to lend support and training, also setting up [www.c21edu.ning.com](http://www.c21edu.ning.com) to facilitate the sharing of ideas between schools.

As part of the project, students were invited to produce an article reporting on their progress after six months. These articles are collected here, most authored by students leading the projects and two co-written by students and teachers.

Dominic and Simon from King Edward VI Grammar School led their student consultant team, using a virtual learning environment to find out what ICT skills Year 9 students would like to learn before identifying students who had the knowledge and expertise to teach them. The student-led programme that emerged has been negotiated, designed, taught and evaluated by students.

Students at Stoke Park School have been exploring how students' knowledge and abilities in the use of hand-held technologies owned outside school could be utilised to improve learning within school. Research methods included an extensive survey of staff and students, leading to controlled in-lesson experiments and observations.

Homewood School's project Webcam Around the World aims to improve communication between students at the school and those in other countries, giving students the opportunity to share ideas and find out about different cultures at first hand. In using new technologies, they began to address the issue of e-safety and how they can ensure that young people can communicate online effectively.

Harry, a Year 8 student from Hove Park School, describes their community-based project. He writes about research they conducted into religious beliefs and cultures represented in the school, its wider community and within its international partner schools. The project, still at an early stage, aims to explore how students' own involvement in promoting the understanding of different cultures and beliefs can improve community cohesion.

The Next Generation Kernow project, from Saltash.net Community School, shows how students' experience in the classroom can be improved by enhancing communication and encouraging dialogue about teaching and learning. Most notably, their Big Brother-style

diary room has provided students with a safe environment in which they can voice their opinions and respond to enquiries from teachers.

In Buile Hill's case study, students and staff work together to explore how to encourage opportunities to develop creativity and innovation across the curriculum, with the aim of improving and widening students' experience of learning and increasing their engagement and sense of achievement.

Evie, Josh, Alice and Oliver lead their Closing the Gap project, which explores how the development of a relationship with a school in Sri Lanka may provide opportunities for students to develop cultural awareness and understanding. Use of an online forum and student input into the curriculum through enrichment days are just two of the strategies developed by students to promote the project and its aims.

The student team at Sawston Village School have been creating a 'global village' in which ideas on teaching and learning can be shared and explored by students from a number of different countries, as well as providing opportunities for students across the world to network more informally at home and school. This has also involved improvements to communication in the school, across and within student and staff groups.

In their 'technology on trial' project at Ringwood School, students are leading research with their teachers to identify how a wider range of new technologies could be used to improve learning in and beyond the classroom. Students have adopted several different methods of research including questionnaires and learning walks and plan to invite teachers to explore and evaluate the use of the technologies in practical settings.

After being inspired by a lesson about fair-trade, students Chloe, Annabelle, Kristina and Holly set out to produce a global teaching resource. They worked with Stephen, a Year 11 student with expertise in web design, to create a website which teachers can use to upload and share lessons which have been successful in the classroom.

Students from Horbury School began by conducting research to gain insight into the different cultures and nationalities represented within their school community, before developing links with three schools in Europe to learn more about them and to share research into students' experience and views of teaching and learning.

All projects represent innovative approaches and illustrate the often unexpected outcomes and understandings which arise as a result of students leading learning.

**Hannah Taylor**  
Student Consultant, SSAT

**Gill Mullis**  
Student Voice Coordinator, SSAT

# What do you think are the key challenges facing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Claire Blackett and students Matthew Kirkwood, Luke Burges, Faye Alderson, Connor Simpson, Stephanie Mwangiru, Chantelle Winskill, Mariyam Iqba, Libby Davidson, Andrew Liever, Paige Staverly, Farrah Kelly and Demi Kelly, Buile Hill Visual Arts College

## **Student voice – the creative innovation team**

The creative innovation team consists of 13 students drawn from Years 7 to 11, working with the senior leadership team (SLT), representatives from the local authority (LA) advisory team, the leading learning group, teaching staff and the student council.

Our aims for this project were co-constructed by students and teachers to reflect what results they wanted to see from the project and what they would like to gain from their involvement:

### **Securing attention, engagement and mutual respect**

- Developing a listening campaign that responds to students' perceptions of learning.

### **Raising aspirations**

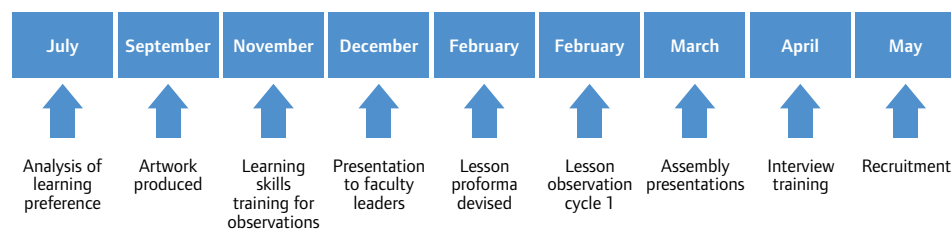
- Broadening students' horizons by offering experiences and opportunities they would not otherwise get.
- Developing a culture of achievement and 'belonging' in school.

### **Equipping students with skills for the future**

- Building students' repertoires of spoken and written languages.
- Developing our leadership skills.
- Developing an ability to think both creatively and logically when solving problems.
- Narrowing the gap in FSM/sub-group attainment.

The timeline was produced through consultation with the senior leadership team and with an LA school improvement officer and has been reviewed as the project has continued.

**Figure 1:** Creative Innovation timeline



### The story so far...

Our project is about changing the face of creative learning at Buile Hill Visual Arts College, sharing ideas for developing skills, attitudes and learner attributes to enable creative innovation. The project was introduced through Year 11 art and design lessons by the art staff. We decided to have a separate allocated time so we arranged to meet over lunch every fortnight.

The team led their own learning, using the key questions as prompts and devising their own learning agenda, for example discussing prescriptive teaching and comparing it to approaches which encouraged a more student-led style. Views on which style was more suitable differed. We understood that some students preferred to be told specifically step-by-step what to do and others relished the freedom. Questions arose from discussion sessions which made the team really reflect upon their preferences. The following are examples of the key questions that the group discussed:

- Do you need courage to be innovative or creative?
- Is being able to think the unconventional something to be applauded?
- How valuable is the exploration of unlikely connections?
- Do we view time constraints as an ally or an enemy to creative innovation?
- Do you feel your work should be given a deadline?
- Is it better to be certain or uncertain of a creative outcome?

Some of the responses were as follows:

*I want to try more things and be introduced to new techniques. I want to do things that are unexpected and creative. I think an unclear ending makes it truly creative. You have to believe in what you are doing. (Hannah)*

*The teacher has let us explore our own ideas and mistakes and it is beneficial. I do want to take risks in my work instead of playing it safe. You are truly creative in the middle of your work. (Jade)*

*It is better to be certain of a creative outcome. I like to know what I am working on. (Nicole)*

*If you are truly creative you don't have to have an ending. (Farrah)*

**Figure 2:** Example of visual media response



The team then developed a range of visual media pieces that celebrated their viewpoints. We are currently scanning and printing these out to distribute around school, the process in itself providing the opportunity to develop skills in using mixed media techniques and filtering using Adobe Photoshop. The idea of the work being displayed provides a sense of ownership and indeed illustrates 'student voice' as it is directly designed from responses students have had regarding their learning.

### **Budget decisions**

Asserting a corporate feel to the team was raised as a priority; the team wanted to adopt an emblem or logo which would identify the creative innovation team and that would maintain their collective approach. The funding allocated would enable this to happen, since printing costs will have to be met for the visual displays. Our student budget holder, Matthew Kirkwood, is ultimately in control of the budget but decisions are made in consultation with senior leaders and staff at our fortnightly meetings.

### **Overview of lesson observation training**

The whole focus was to have an impact on creative learning and in order to do this we felt we needed to know more about learning and explore and identify what good learning looked like.

The team viewed a video using the contemporary figure of Lauren Cooper from Catherine Tate's sketch 'Am I bothered?' The purpose was to highlight a negative attitude towards learning. This became a conversational focus regarding what the team and staff could do to improve this attitude. This then led on to a discussion of what good creative learning in Buile Hill Visual Arts College should look like. How could we improve on existing provision?

In order to equip students with a broader understanding of what conditions are required for learning, the LA school improvement consultant provided a training session on the characteristics of learners. Characteristics of 'growth' mindsets and 'fixed' mindsets formed part of a discussion about potential repercussions on learning, in which students highlighted possible barriers to learning that could apply to both staff and students. We also understood from this that the attention you give at the start of the lesson differs from that given in the middle. Visual clips were used to highlight how our attention spans can be blinkered so that we only focus on one area and miss out actions that happen around the periphery.

*My favourite and most useful part of today was about the teachers being growth fixed as now you can tell what type of teacher you have and whether they have a fixed or growth mind about you. (Chantelle)*

*We also learnt about how long a teacher gives you to answer a question, and if you get too long does it affect the answer? (Connor)*

*We learnt that instead of looking for everything in an observation look for specific foci, e.g. types of questions, time limits, how long it takes pupils to understand. (Andrew)*

## **Impact**

The team has just completed their first presentation at a staff 'leading learning' meeting where an overview of the project was given and staff highlighted a willingness for the students to come in and observe. The students are forthcoming with opinions and feel part of a collective that is at the forefront of change. All the team are very positive about the spring term where the first round of observations will take place and these will provide a solid base for identifying impact. Student voice is really still in its infancy, but has the potential to make such a difference to teaching and learning as well as student-teacher relationships.

## **Facilitator's view: Claire Blackett**

The SLT facilitating this team has felt tremendous support from staff who are willing to work alongside these students and support their intentions. Teachers who have opted into the student observations are by their very nature open-minded people. Staff and student relationships will improve as the students become more autonomous and work in consultation with staff regarding their learning needs. Students will have a voice and will become actively involved in their learning. They will be the agents of change at a student leadership level. I would envisage the team providing consultation to curriculum planning and review.

## The future

We want to participate and be actively involved in curriculum planning as we feel we can consult effectively on what will engage our minds and concentration.

*My teacher is really interesting as he brings history alive. (Stephanie)*

We want to share the way he delivers debates, he provides the detail and concepts but focuses on emotion and feeling. We want to become a creative innovation team so that we can become more aware of the innovative learning around school. We want to celebrate and share good practice between staff and students. We want to feed our findings to the school council. We want to start international links and extend the visual and creative learning at Buile Hill Visual Arts College. We will celebrate new innovation. We can provide student leadership and voice training. We want to speak to staff and peers, recruit others, interview and train to keep the team alive.

We will start observations in February using a new student observation proforma which we are going to devise, agreeing the criteria. We want to explore global links and promote ourselves on a regional and national platform. We will use the school website as a base for this. We aim to participate in a residential based on leadership facilitation training and we will use this to inform the way we cascade to staff and peers.

# Webcam Around the World

Lily Smith, Eddie Mills, Hannah Sizer and Holly Clarke, Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre

Webcam Around the World is a student-run project designed to improve communication and understanding between students in schools from different countries. We plan to do this by setting up links with schools around the world and offering students the opportunity to talk and share ideas with other young people via a safe webcam network.

For our initial application for funding we were asked to come up with key questions. Ours are:

- What can we learn from other cultures?
- Why is communication important?
- How does modern technology shape this?

In our planning for the project we began to understand why communication between countries and having an understanding of other cultures is important. We can share ideas and skills and learn more about other countries and cultures, taking advantage of new technology to make this easier.

The project idea was discussed and developed at a student conference in Warwick, attended by representatives from our system redesign team from school. We brought back our ideas and introduced them to the whole system redesign group, and then later to members of staff who might wish to be involved. We also spoke with our headteacher about the project and its relevance. Following discussions, four student members of the team, with the support of our system redesign team leader, went on to form the group that is currently working on the webcam project. They received training on how these kinds of projects are developed, and how to manage time while working on them.

We hope that through the use of this project safe contact between students of different countries will be encouraged, as will language and communication skills and the understanding and acceptance of other people's cultures and environment. We also hope that involvement will enable everyone to gain a better perspective of what is going on in the world around us, not just from watching the television or reading newspapers but by speaking with people for whom the news is what is happening to them in their everyday lives.

We realised that to enable this project to work we were going to need to provide training in the technology's proper use, both for ourselves and for the people who will use the webcams. We plan to do this by creating an information pack. This will include the webcam, instructions about how to use it, and rules and guidelines on how use it safely. We may also seek advice from our school computer technicians on how this should be done.

One of the first things we had to decide after we received the funding was how we were going to use it. We spent £600 on signing up for a 12 month membership of a site called Rafi.ki which will manage the links between schools and has supplied us with fifteen webcams. These will be distributed among the schools involved in the project with some to spare in case of breakages or loss of webcams. We may also have to spend some of the funding on receiving advice and training.

We believe that this project is relevant to the issues of global links and understanding as it will encourage contact between people in different parts of the world and create communities or groups of students and young people, irrespective of country or culture. We hope it will also help those involved to gain an awareness and understanding of the cultures and lives of the people with whom they are communicating.

Most of the problems we have encountered while working on this project have been resolved. One was the issue of e-safety, however the site we are using to run the project is considered safe and rules and regulations about the users' safety were outlined in the contract we signed when subscribing to their services.

It is hard to define success criteria for this project, for we hope that it will be an ongoing development of improving the scheme and introducing it to different people. However, we do have aims such as when we hope to have our first online conversation and how many schools we wish to get involved; completing each of these aims will also be small successes.

While developing this project as a team we have learnt about how such projects are put together and how vital planning and thinking ahead are, to ensure that those involved get as much as possible from the project. We have also learnt about the importance of teamwork and communication between team members. Finally we have learnt more about the importance of communication between different cultures, and how this can and should be improved.

We hope that what we have learned will improve how well the project runs. If we fail to make an effort to have regular contact and communication with the schools involved and with each other, we could face large problems caused by misunderstanding and lack of communication.

In order for this project to succeed, having the right resources is going to be very important. The smooth running of the project will somewhat depend on the reliability of the webcams supplied by Rafi.ki. We will also need to make sure that all the schools involved have received the information pack, which we may need to make available in more than one language.

# A collaborative project with students from another country to learn about other cultures and education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Jessica Cooper, Lauren Townend, Claire Crow and Matthew Kent,  
Horbury School

Our project is about cultures and education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our key questions were:

- How does the 21<sup>st</sup> century pupil want to learn?
- How do extra-curricular activities help pupils?
- What cultures are in our community?

As we are a specialist language college we thought this global project would be very beneficial to the international aspect of our school. Student voice at Horbury is about students meeting together to discuss particular subjects and issues, for example the junior leadership team (JLT), the international student group (ISG), the learning research group (LRG), the sports council and the charities group.

## **Our team**

Our team were all originally from the ISG; six people from that group volunteered to get involved in the project for the experience and challenge. In our team we have a mixture of males and females from Years 9,10 and 11. We are hoping to involve earlier years when the project has developed more.

## **How we organised ourselves**

We meet at least once a week and delegate each job to a member of our team: we have an email contact, budget manager, meetings organiser and dates secretary. Our email contact deals with the links between schools and works closely with the meeting organiser making sure all team members are informed about where and when meetings are taking place. The budgeting manager deals with all the financial matters, from photocopying costs to booking flights overseas. The dates secretary is responsible for key dates including deadlines, conference dates and updates on the Ning social networking service which is used to share progress.

### **Global links**

As our project is based on international education, we have three main links with schools in the Netherlands, Sweden and Turkey. To produce these links we used emails and Epals, (since this was recommended by the ISG) which has made a lot of links through the website and which is currently used by many of our student voice groups to help contact schools abroad who have shared interests in different projects.

We chose these schools because they seemed the most interested in our project and they were looking for an overseas project to be involved in.

### **Steps in school**

During our mentor period we sent out a questionnaire to 50 students (five girls and five boys from each year) and 25 staff, which asked questions about cultures and education. This was introduced by a multimedia presentation emailed to students and staff, explaining our project and the purpose of the questionnaires. Primarily the aim of this was to learn about the variety of multicultural families represented within our school and what it means to be international and/or European.

We attended the SSAT national conference in Birmingham and presented to headteachers, including our headteacher and two of her colleagues, about our project. In school we will be presenting to heads of department and the senior leadership team, and to fellow students in house assemblies. We will be asking for more volunteers to help with our project and simply explaining the project again to them.

### **Our budget**

One student from our team is in charge of our £1,200 budget; we have already spent some on the production of our questionnaires and will soon be spending some on our flights and expenses to and from places such as Holland, Turkey and Sweden.

### **What we have learnt so far**

We have learnt about education and cultures in Horbury School and about our community.

Over 10 per cent of students in Horbury School have a member of their family with an international background, varying from French and Spanish to Polish and Russian. Through our questionnaires we have found that there are more religions within our community than we first thought, including Islamic, Christian and many more.

We have found out that 20 per cent of pupils would like to learn through more educational games, and want more interaction between teachers and students about peer assessment and mentoring. Also 35 per cent would like to have more extra-curricular activities before and after school, which they can take part in to learn and enjoy particular subjects.

Involvement in the project will help the students involved to gain experience for later on in life, building confidence and teamwork skills. We have already gained understanding and experience in learning to negotiate, collaborate, become independent and become better team members. Most of all we have learned how to successfully manage our time, working

around lesson timetables and meeting room availability, and how to communicate with a greater understanding on everyone's behalf.

We are developing English, ICT and geography skills and in the future we will probably need better modern foreign language skills.

## Research used

We have used Epals to research information on schools and we used the internet to find flight information and where schools are situated. We were looking for schools in accessible countries for future students to visit and work closely on different projects or for school work and exchanges.

Most of our research was carried out using questionnaires issued to 50 students and 25 members of staff. This was an easier option for us as we could work around timetables, delivering the questionnaires in form period at the end of the day; in addition to this we were able to ask form mentors to hand a questionnaire to one person from each year group. We are currently planning our community questionnaires which will survey approximately 50 members of the community varied in age, gender and nationality. The results from these questionnaires will be used to incorporate different styles of learning into lessons and school life.

In the new year we will send a revised version of our questionnaires to our selected schools and we will be able to report back to the staff and students in their country.

Visits will be used to research different learning styles used in classrooms in our partner schools and then we will return and trial these methods in the UK. This is currently being organised by our budget manager and dates secretary.

## Difficulties

We have come across many barriers while taking part in our project, mostly about communication as it is hard emailing people in a different country because of language barriers.

Also, students in our school had difficulty understanding some of the questions on the questionnaire as they were quite complex. We are redrafting our questionnaire so that both students and teachers can understand them and are looking at whether we can translate some of the questions for our partner schools.

We experienced many different language barriers while planning our project. Although students learn English from an early age in Holland, we still had difficulty communicating.

We had great difficulty working around lessons. This was due to the timing of exams and studying for our GCSEs. We overcame these issues by using lessons in which we were up-to-date with work and coursework or where it was possible to catch up on work at home. We also took time on staff development days, coming into school for the day to progress our project further. We had difficulty finding our teacher for help with ideas and areas for improvement.

### **Future plans**

We have now started a link with a school in Turkey, where they are doing their own project about entertaining, including the teaching of traditional dances and songs.

They are very eager to take part in our project to learn about cultures and education and how they differ between England and Turkey. They are also excited about meeting students from an exchange or partnership.

### **Advice to other schools**

We advise students in other schools who would like to attempt this project to:

- Plan ahead.
- Set deadlines.
- Take time on different aspects of any presentation.
- Get everyone involved.
- Not be afraid to ask for help.
- Remember your school work is important.
- Delegate each job.

The project is very difficult, so you will need to ensure you take extra care in every aspect.

# Building Global Understanding and Community Cohesion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Harry Harris, with support from Lucy Gilmour, Lily Copeland, Isabel Bailey, Ryan Sutton, Naomi Krikman and Lily Taylor, Hove Park School and Sixth Form Centre

Hove Park School has more than ten international students doing a variety of things to help the school with international and local issues, such as charity work, foreign exchanges, special projects and languages. In November 2009, seven of these students created a PowerPoint presentation and video for a very important project titled Building Global Understanding and Community Cohesion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This project has a long name but a good aim. To make the title easier to understand (which took us a whole week), it means making the world a nicer place for everyone to live. We chose to do this project because it links in with our philosophy and citizenship lessons and it is one of the most important issues that face us in daily life.

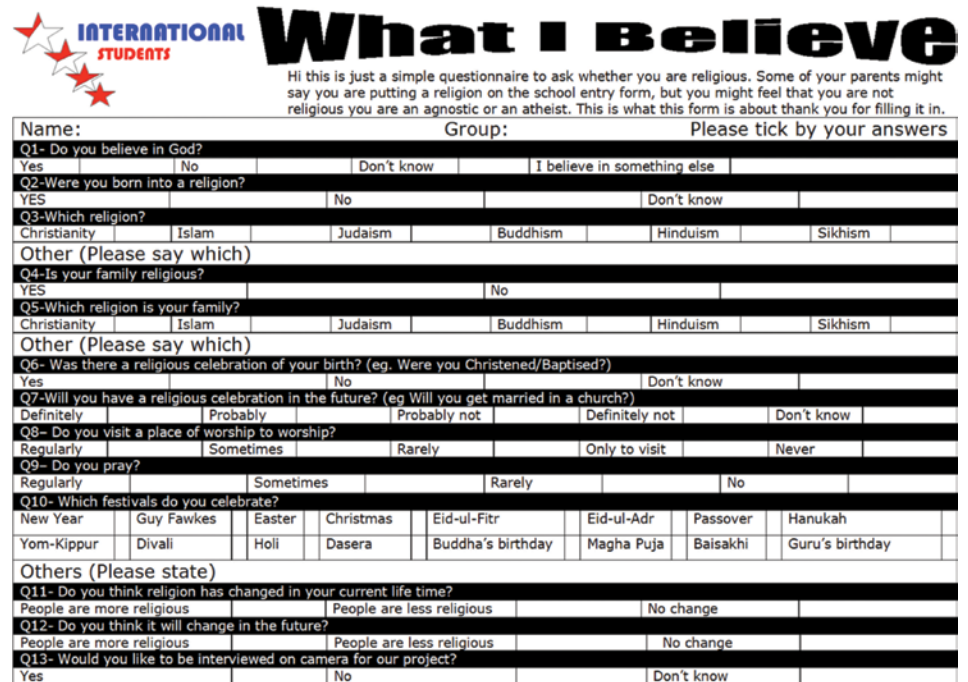
We applied to be international students at the beginning of Year 7 and soon eight of us were chosen. During the past year, two people have left the team due to having to miss lessons or sporting activities.

Our project is based around the issue of our community. We did some research into beliefs in England, Brighton and Hove, our school and our international partner schools. We were surprised to find out that according to the 2001 census, 23 per cent of England is non-religious. Our partner schools' religions are very different, for example in Poland 95 per cent of the students are Roman Catholic and in Turkey 100 per cent of the students in our partner school are Muslim.

We were even more surprised to find out that Brighton and Hove is the least religious city in England, with 27 per cent of people defined as non-religious. This was, however, not as surprising as our school's results when we compared existing school data with the results from our research. School data, based on application forms, indicated that most pupils are Christian or non-religious. To make sure our information was correct, we handed out questionnaires to half of the pupils in our school. We asked questions like:

- Do you believe in God?
- Have other people's religions influenced your beliefs?
- Do you think religion has changed in the past few years?

Figure 3: What I Believe questionnaire



**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS** **What I Believe**

Hi this is just a simple questionnaire to ask whether you are religious. Some of your parents might say you are putting a religion on the school entry form, but you might feel that you are not religious you are an agnostic or an atheist. This is what this form is about thank you for filling it in.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Please tick by your answers

Q1- Do you believe in God?  
 Yes  No  Don't know  I believe in something else

Q2- Were you born into a religion?  
 YES  No  Don't know

Q3- Which religion?  
 Christianity  Islam  Judaism  Buddhism  Hinduism  Sikhism

Other (Please say which) \_\_\_\_\_

Q4- Is your family religious?  
 YES  No

Q5- Which religion is your family?  
 Christianity  Islam  Judaism  Buddhism  Hinduism  Sikhism

Other (Please say which) \_\_\_\_\_

Q6- Was there a religious celebration of your birth? (eg. Were you Christened/Baptised?)  
 Yes  No  Don't know

Q7- Will you have a religious celebration in the future? (eg Will you get married in a church?)  
 Definitely  Probably  Probably not  Definitely not  Don't know

Q8- Do you visit a place of worship to worship?  
 Regularly  Sometimes  Rarely  Only to visit  Never

Q9- Do you pray?  
 Regularly  Sometimes  Rarely  No

Q10- Which festivals do you celebrate?  
 New Year  Guy Fawkes  Easter  Christmas  Eid-ul-Fitr  Eid-ul-Adr  Passover  Hanukah   
 Yom-Kippur  Divali  Holi  Dasera  Buddha's birthday  Magha Puja  Baisakhi  Guru's birthday

Others (Please state) \_\_\_\_\_

Q11- Do you think religion has changed in your current life time?  
 People are more religious  People are less religious  No change

Q12- Do you think it will change in the future?  
 People are more religious  People are less religious  No change

Q13- Would you like to be interviewed on camera for our project?  
 Yes  No  Don't know

Our results were different from the data from the application form (see Figure 4).

Our main aim is to promote the understanding that other people should not be treated differently because of their religion. We are also linking this project to our philosophy and citizenship lessons. Another issue was telling our international partner schools about our project and how they could be a part of it, as well as letting our school community (and wider community) know that our project is important and could possibly shape the future. The research, our video involving other students and their views, and discussions with our partner schools are the beginning. We still need to think for the future, for example how we could improve our video and how we will express our feelings to our partner schools.

So why would a world without community cohesion be a bad one? There have been many incidents in the past involving racism, fascism, intolerance, abuse and discrimination. Our project is about keeping the world free from this.

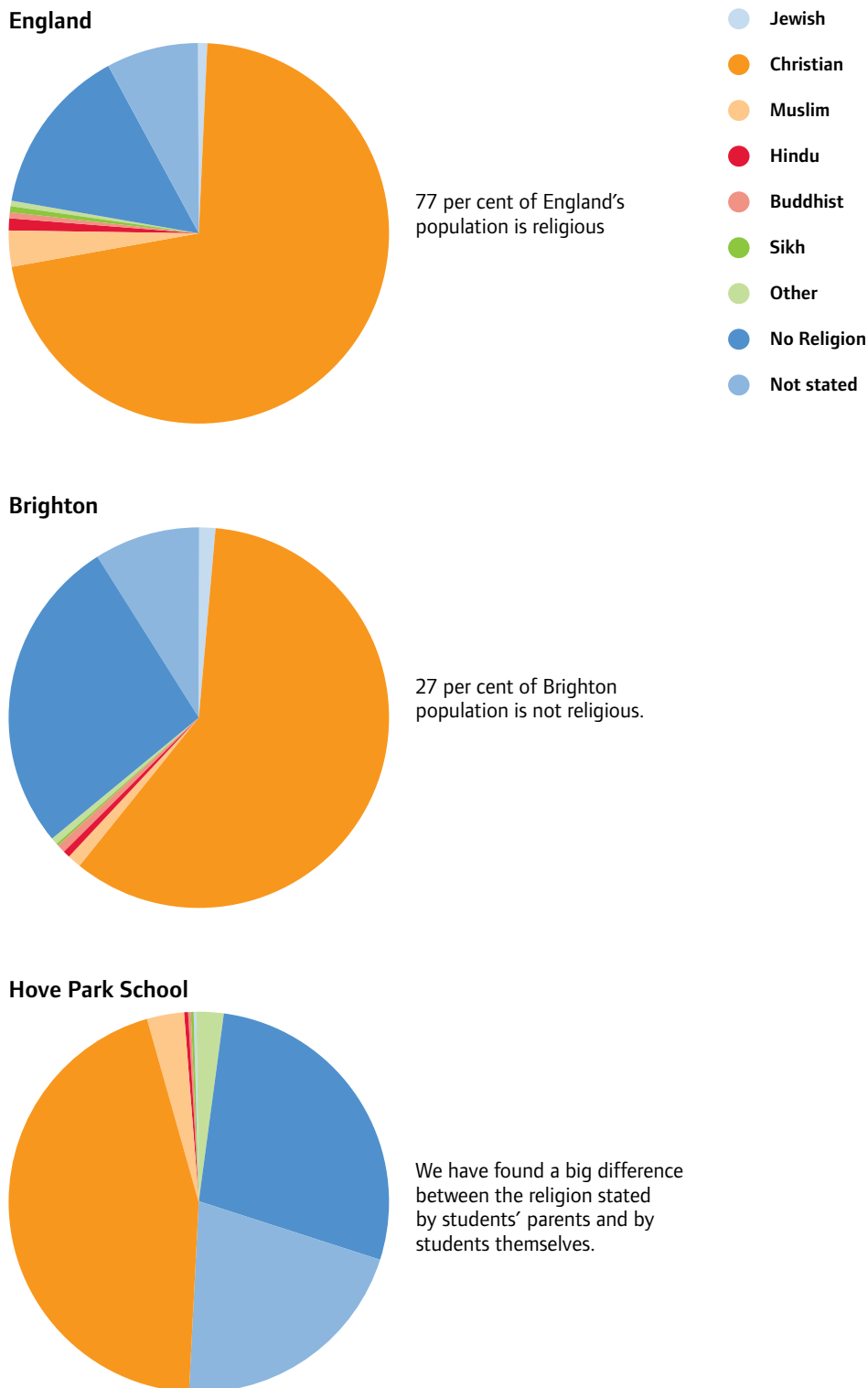
We are getting so much out of this project. We have learned so much and met so many people. We have highs and lows: a high point has been telling 150 delegates at a conference in Birmingham about our project and a low point has been losing some international students because of missing lessons. Our teachers say that 'seeing the students taking charge of their own learning and making their own decisions was truly inspirational' and that 'I am impressed by Year 8 students so boldly leading themselves and their peer group towards global citizenship'. They helped us a tiny bit too.

So far we have collected information on our school's beliefs and compared them to our partner schools. This helped us when we were filming our video. We still need to collect ideas on how to make 'community' happen and also to collect the rest of the questionnaires from the other half of the school.

When you are reading this please think about what you do every day. Get up, go to work, eat dinner, watch TV and go to bed? Well there are people out there who are victims of

discrimination and they don't live an easy life like the average person. They do the same things, but they always have the impression that something bad will happen. This is horrible to think about. So hopefully our project will help people to understand.

**Figure 4: Our beliefs**



# Project 9: ICT curriculum co-construction

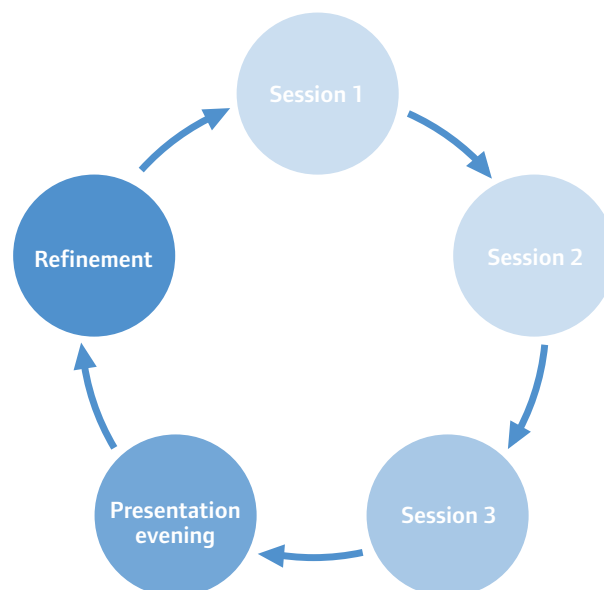
Dominic Mitchell and Simon DeBere, King Edward VI Grammar School

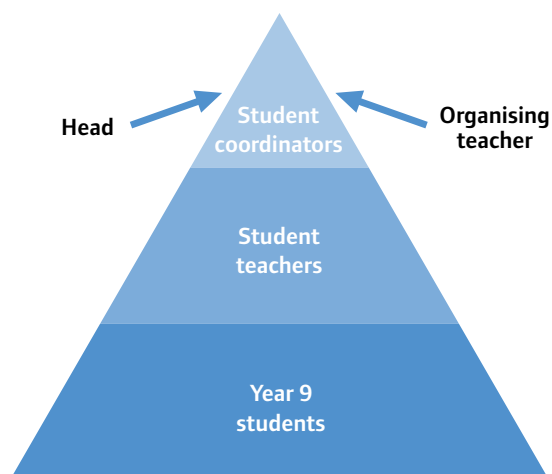
We were offered the opportunity to produce an exciting, useful and unique curriculum for Year 9 pupils through our school's Project 9. One of our key goals was to ensure that the students being taught had as much say in the decision-making processes as possible. However, the project was also designed to fill in a gap in the curriculum at our school: the lack of ICT as a discrete subject in the curriculum meant that both those with the skills and those wishing to gain the skills had few opportunities to do so. Within such a broad field, it was accepted that students would have a better knowledge across a wider range of areas than any teaching staff could provide. We felt it would be much more appropriate, therefore, to draw teachers from the student body.

## Planning

Two students were offered the task of running the project, with all decisions then left to them alongside six Year 13 students who they selected as the student coordinating team. The initial planning stage involved deciding how to tackle what seemed like a mountainous

Figure 5: Structure for teaching sessions



**Figure 6:** Project participants

task, but we came to a consensus as to how the sessions should be broken down and how we could go about giving pupils as much say as possible. Figure 5 shows how we believed the sessions should look, while Figure 6 illustrates the basic hierarchical structure of the project. After this brainstorming, it was decided that primary research was the only way to progress.

## Research

This stage consisted of presenting to the Year 9 students, before conducting a questionnaire with a list of suggested ICT modules (which were to be ordered by preference) and an open box for any other suggestions. The data provided some interesting results which showed that our predictions were not very accurate and we would not have provided what the pupils wanted, had they not been given input. Having collated the data, we conducted some statistical tests and thus we had a good foundation as to which modules would be offered when we were to interview the potential teachers.

## Student teacher selection

We were delighted that, having presented to each year group from Year 10 upwards, there were numerous names put forward and therefore we were forced to interview each pupil individually. We were searching for enthusiasm and some area expertise, but we also encouraged those who were more interested in simply the teaching side. After finalising the modules we were able to teach, they were again offered to the Year 9 students so that we could sort the group sizes out and move forward.

## Student teacher training

Although the enthusiasm was promising, we decided that the student teachers needed some training in the basic skills required. Some members of staff conducted this and we guided the student teachers to produce some lesson plans, in order to monitor their progress. The students worked in their groups very well and efficiently planned and organised their time.

We decided that the first sessions should consist of some teaching and then later sessions would involve a project or assigned piece of work, which we consequently planned for.

One fundamental aspect of the project was the use of the school's virtual learning environment. This was a tremendously useful tool, in both the research and planning stages. It enabled us to conduct electronic questionnaires and made it very easy to analyse the data. Secondly it was put to good use when training the teachers, as forums were created within it where questions could be posed by the student teacher and lesson plans could be submitted. This also meant that it could effectively play a monitoring role. It was overall an exceptionally useful device for communication, enabling easy email contact between staff, student teachers and co-ordinators.

### **The sessions**

Having now successfully completed a full cycle of the process, entailing three lessons, it is pleasing to say that the results have been promising. The sessions were run as three half-days off-timetable. The groups covered a wide variety of areas and as a demonstration of the versatility of the project, there were very able students working in groups alone who started to develop their own video game from scratch. We also deliberately ran a group which focused entirely on audio features so that we could cater for a visually-impaired student. This adaptability of the idea is perhaps its forte.

The first session was both an introduction and a teaching-focused one: here the pupils were introduced to the area they would be studying and taught as much of the basic detail as possible to get them started. The second session built on the first, the idea being that they had practised the skills in the intervening period. It also introduced the project piece which they were to complete, showcasing the new things they had learned. Finally the third session allowed them to complete their individual projects and present them to the rest of the year.

We believed and still believe that it was vital for them to produce something to be proud of – something of note which they could show to others – in order to give them the motivation to work and satisfaction when finished. As a concluding part to the session we presented all participating students with a certificate of their achievement.

### **Evaluation**

Now after running a complete cycle of sessions we are still currently in the process of evaluating its merits and failings, with the hope of improving it in the new year (when it will run again for a different set of pupils). We have spoken to, given questionnaires to and recorded video interviews with pupils and student teachers alike to gauge their thoughts on the process. We wish them to be as critical and analytical as possible, so that we can actively refine the steps we have taken (and of course, as teenagers they have been!).

There has been lots of positive feedback from all strata and this is comforting. Many pupils were delighted at being given the chance to have their say and recommended it to anyone. The headteacher, who always supported the project, said he has been impressed to see the initial idea flourish to action so quickly.

## **The conference**

In November we were given the opportunity to present at the SSAT conference at the ICC in Birmingham. It was a brilliant and thoroughly rewarding experience. We delivered an hour-long workshop about the project, giving both an outline and analysis of progress so far and where it could progress in the future. On opening the floor to delegates we received many questions about the mechanics and outcome of the project as well as many insightful ideas about its modification. It was great to talk to so many enthusiastic people who were wholeheartedly committed to the development of learning and interested in our ideas.

## **The future**

After our detailed evaluation we will run the project again after Christmas, but we still see this as only the beginning of student-led teaching within our school. This project hopefully will repeat the cycle year-on-year through the school. In developing the project, we will look to minimise teacher input, so that eventually past student teachers can be training new student teachers. However we do not see the boundaries of this project lying only with ICT: in other areas such as sport, art, drama and music, student expertise could surpass that of teachers. Our goal should be to produce programmes across a wide range of year groups and subjects, where student teaching plays a very active role in the learning process.

# Technology on trial: a student research project

Abigail Grace with support from George Whittingham, Evie Davies, Max Beresford, Alexandra Cheater, Gareth Cork, James Carr, Laura Dickson, Lewis Broadway, Liam Aldridge, Sam Poulter and Stavanna Read, Ringwood School

Last spring a group of students at Ringwood School made a successful bid to investigate which technologies are necessary to meet the challenges of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The students volunteered or were asked to join the group because of their interest in technology or the development of future learning styles. We wanted to explore questions such as:

- Which skills do students perceive as being essential to successful learning for a globalised economy?
- Do students feel they have to ‘power down’ when they enter a classroom?
- How can we use technology to enhance learning while avoiding ‘technology for technology’s sake’?

It all began with a presentation made by a smaller group at a conference for aspiring headteachers. After discussing some ideas about possible alterations to learning we reported back to staff at Ringwood. These included looking at lesson timing, skills-based learning and learning spaces. The ideas we came up with about learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century were then presented at Warwick University at an SSAT/NESTA conference.

Another opportunity to get students together and talking about how learning can be updated was the Manifesto for Change competition run by the English Secondary Students’ Association (ESSA). We also spoke to teachers and students from other schools on an innovation day which we organised. These events enabled us to discuss our ideas with others from beyond our own school as we believe that feedback helps us to develop further.

It was from these student-driven projects that a new group formed to try and make our ideas a reality in our school. Students were elected by the group to take on the roles of group leader and treasurer and we were able to start choosing what area of learning it was that we wanted to focus on. Group leader, Abigail, said that she “really wanted to keep the focus on students working for students to improve their learning environment”.

In order for the project to be effective, there were certain qualities that we considered important to develop. For instance the group attended a leadership training day, which group member Evie found built her confidence and motivated her to make changes, no matter how big or small. In addition, we believe that the way we communicate our ideas has a huge impact on how successful they are. It is because of this that we drew on the philosophy of student voice at Ringwood and worked alongside staff to find an option that was agreeable to everyone.

The group trialled different technologies and discussed which we thought could be appropriate to different areas of the curriculum. When doing this the team tried to remain open-minded about different learning styles and abilities; as George stated, "it is important to remember that everyone learns differently and technology can be used to personalise learning". By making video proformas for each device, we were able to evaluate how useful they would be to learning in a medium more exciting than a simple text document (see Appendix A).

The technologies ranged from voice recognition software to digital pens. We found that not every item was advantageous to every student. To avoid 'using technology for the sake of technology' it was important for us to acknowledge that each student learns in a different way, before we could hope to accommodate them. While specialised technologies can be of use to some students, as a group we decided to focus on the handheld technologies that many students are already using. Taking a 'learning walks' approach meant that we were keen to share our ideas and gain new perspectives.

Students arranged a visit to Wildern School in Southampton where the students were more than happy to answer our questions on their use of TV, Twitter, iPods and the Nintendo DS. Similarly they were interested in our ideas about using mobile phones; our school mobile phone policy was student-driven, agreed by governors and has proved very successful (see Appendix B). A recent article in the Times Educational Supplement ('Friend or foe', 27 November 2009) acknowledged that there is a growing realisation that, despite their potential nuisance value, they also represent "a huge untapped learning resource – and a cheap one at that!"

In order to begin harnessing new technologies, we worked with an enthusiastic French teacher to co-construct effective learning strategies. It was important to us that we met often in order to maintain momentum; we had lunchtime or tutor time meetings most weeks and used our school email as a useful communication and delegating tool. A survey of his French class showed that all of the students had a mobile phone with over 95 per cent of them having Bluetooth and camera accessories. The use of mobiles in a language lesson can vary from creating sound files or videos to using Bluetooth to do peer assessment.

Max, a student in the class, pointed out that "you need a teacher who is willing to incorporate technology into the lesson". It is therefore important we understand that many teachers would not feel comfortable being filmed, for example. In order to overcome this barrier we have decided to hold an ICT fair as a less threatening way to encourage the use of technology in the classroom. We intend to invite teachers to explore mobiles, text polling (a method of voting or asking questions during a lesson whilst remaining anonymous and without interrupting, using mobile phones), Skype and other handheld technologies that might appeal to them. After this we can monitor feedback by using questionnaires or interviews with the staff who attended. We really feel that this is a good way of gaining teachers' cooperation and henceforth increasing the use of beneficial technology being used appropriately.

Over the last few months we feel we have succeeded in developing our initial ideas through a variety of methods (questionnaires, learning walks, trialling technologies and attending technology exhibitions) as well as maintaining momentum within the group. While we have spent some of our budget, which is controlled by two nominated group members, our spending has been sensible and a result of group decisions.

The Flip Video has without doubt been a favourite buy as the hand-held camera allows remarkably high-quality films to be easily put on the computer via the USB attachment. No cables, no batteries, no fuss. They have been used in history and language lessons as a tool to record group discussions, exam questions and group scenarios; there is then instant feedback to the whole group. As a means of developing short revision-style commentaries

on topics for GCSE and AS Level, they have proved most effective and allow a bank of student-made resources to be prepared and shared.

We feel our project has enabled us to explore the range of products available to enhance learning, and from this we have identified which are appropriate and beneficial to a variety of learning areas and styles. We were invited to give a presentation at the SSAT national conference in Birmingham recently and made good use of the time to visit an exhibition, discover some new ideas and meet new people. The contacts made will be followed up in the coming months. The project has helped us to change the way technology is seen in the classroom, "keeping our students and their mobiles...switched on!" (Digital Natives).

If you wish to see our film or one which inspired us, you can view them at:

Manifesto for change – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XWSk-8jcmM>

Digital Natives – <http://education.ning.com/video/1027485:Video:25574>

# Technology on trial:

## Appendix A

**Table 1:** Review of product: Digiscribble

Product being reviewed	Digi Scribble
Age of person reviewing the product	14
On a scale of 1–10 how confident is the user with modern technology?	9
What does the product do?	It can clip on to a piece of paper and then you write onto the paper with the pen that also comes with the product. You then connect it to the computer and it transfers your notes across. You can also plug it in and write straight onto the computer.
On a scale of 1–10 how easy was it for the user to understand how to make it work? (Did you use the manual or did you just experiment?)	8 I could use it quite easily but had to look at the manual just to make sure I was putting the pen together properly
On a scale of 1–10 how good was it for its purpose, once the user understood how to use it? (For example, even if you knew how to use it, did it work 100 per cent of the time?)	10 The product worked 100 per cent of the time. It picked up the writing perfectly and was really easy and quick.
What did the user like about the product? Why?	I liked how you could put it straight onto the computer really easily and how it picked up the writing really well. I liked this because it made it so easy to use.
What didn't the user like? Why?	I don't think that there is anything wrong with this product because it is so easy to use and works really well.
Where can this product be brought? (For example, an internet site? PC world? From the company only?)	It can be bought from quite a few websites here are some found on Froogle: <a href="http://www.google.co.uk/products?q=digi+scribble&amp;scoring=r">http://www.google.co.uk/products?q=digi+scribble&amp;scoring=r</a>
How much does it cost?	<a href="http://www.millenniumcomps.co.uk/product.php?xProd=1073&amp;xSec=77">http://www.millenniumcomps.co.uk/product.php?xProd=1073&amp;xSec=77</a> £57.20
Is there only one company who makes it? Other brands?	<a href="http://a1computermedia.com/product/APCOM-PC-SCRIBBLE.htm">http://a1computermedia.com/product/APCOM-PC-SCRIBBLE.htm</a> Epens, £37.01
Possible situations in learning where this product would be useful? (Think about subjects, topics, ages, different learning abilities, trips etc.)	You can use this to take notes in class and print them off or send them to other pupils. You can also write out your work and send it to your teacher. Or on school trips you could take notes and put them onto the computer.

# Technology on trial: Appendix B

## **Student policy on the use of mobile technology in school (based on comments from members of the student voice strategy group)**

### **Rationale**

The school's policy on mobile technology used by students should reflect the age in which we live. Technology is changing and will continue to do so. School policy needs to adapt to keep up with the evolving modern world.

Many mobile technologies can be highly effective aids to learning and their use is often appropriate and completely acceptable. Teachers however are best placed to make this judgment, not students, and mobile equipment should therefore only be used in the classroom at the teacher's discretion.

The teacher's judgement will also be an expression of trust in the students to use this equipment when it is appropriate to do so. Students, for their part, have a right to expect teachers to approach this issue fairly and objectively. As a school we need to ensure the policy is applied consistently.

### **Examples of applications**

Music can be really helpful in supporting concentration especially in subjects like art, music and technology. In languages, listening to an iPod might also be appropriate and iPods can have important applications for recording in areas such as languages and English.

Mobile phones are an essential means of communication and research is taking place to see whether text messaging could help more than emails in communicating with the student body.

Photographs and video can be useful ways of showing stages in the production of work.

### **Guidelines for use**

1. As a courtesy to teachers and other learners, mobile phones to receive calls **MUST** be switched off during lessons.
2. Headphones must not be worn or seen around necks between lessons and, as a safety point, should not be worn when students are cycling to and from school.
3. The volume emanating from personal equipment should never be audible to others in the room as a mark of courtesy, to avoid distractions and to reduce risk to hearing.

4. There will be times in lessons when teachers wish to speak to the entire group. At these points it is sensible and courteous for personal equipment to be turned off promptly.
5. Where there is the intention to take either photographs or video footage of other students this should not occur without seeking the permission of the teacher and the students concerned. Examples of where this might happen include capturing a drama scene or recording a science experiment. Students should respect this and failure to do so may result in equipment being confiscated, since filming may be viewed as an invasion of privacy.
6. Audio recording of lessons may only be completed with the prior permission of staff.
7. Handheld technology should not be brought into school on exam days but if absolutely necessary must be placed (switched off) in a student's bag outside the exam room. Staff and invigilators will not be responsible for any electronic item during exams.

# Next Generation Kernow

Zoë Vincent, Saltash.net Community School

Our project, Next Generation Kernow (NGK), uses a variety of in-school activities to look at how we learn and to ensure that students enjoy doing so.

The idea is, essentially, to improve learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century at Saltash.net Community School, by identifying effective learning and what learners need in order to thrive. Our key question, decided on by our student group and agreed by teachers is: how can we adapt our school to meet the needs of our learners? We decided that this would create more confident young people who are in charge of their own learning. This would be invaluable to them throughout their school career and then into university and the world of work, and is why we wanted it to be a student-led project.

Figure 7: Next Generation Kernow webpage



Students initially found out about the project through Twitter, the online social site. After much interest was displayed, students and teachers completed the application process and were awarded the money to start the project. To get more people from the school interested, a page on the social network Ning was added so students and teachers could start discussing ideas.

The group was opened to students, teachers and parents because we felt that, in order to succeed, it was necessary to obtain as many different opinions and viewpoints as we could. We left the group open to everybody but a request had to be sent before anyone could become a member. At the moment, the majority of the team consists of students from Year 7 through to Year 13, but we have several teachers whose skills are useful to the project: our assistant headteacher, deputy headteacher, ICT network manager and chair of governors, along with several parents. While this teacher support is vital to the success of our project, we wanted to keep it run primarily by students as the project is principally to benefit them.

Early on in the project we realised that communication was an issue. Not everyone picked up Ning notifications and meetings were not always conveyed by the school bulletin. However, we have found emailing teachers quickest and the most reliable, as they have their laptops on throughout the day and are very likely to receive emails promptly. After we saw that not everyone read the bulletin or had it read out in class, we decided to go into assemblies to give our messages about meetings and opportunities directly. This worked well as we could explain more in person than could be written down and we found twelve students for the project this way. Similarly we found that the SIMs system that teachers use for registers could be valuable to us and later in the project we distributed radio broadcasts using this technology.

Another factor that has contributed greatly to the running of the project has been the council meetings. Two sixth form members of our group went into the school council meetings, where representatives from each year discuss problems in their year group and gather ideas on how to solve them. We voiced the Next Generation idea and it was established that each year would be interested and willing to help. Similarly, we went to the sixth form council meetings every month and it was this that led us to Theme Day and the trialling of some of our ideas.

We only came up with our final project ideas quite late because there were so many different ideas for improvements from all the years. One that we agreed on first was e-safety, because groups have been working on it since last year and we felt that, being a specialist school in computing, we needed to ensure that our students stayed safe online. Since we are looking at learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we know that computers and the internet are an important factor in learning and in the world of work, and we want to encourage students to use information technology and the internet for their studies. However, aware that the internet poses potential dangers and that not all students are familiar with them or what to look out for, we thought that it was important to educate them in this.

Currently, when students log on to the intranet they are met with the terms of use which highlight the necessity of using the intranet and internet safely and correctly, and the sanctions if they do not. We discovered that virtually no one has read these and think that it is because they are a long passage of text which is not particularly reader-friendly, especially for the younger students. While we realised that the terms of use are necessary, we did not think that the safety message was getting through and we thought that a better, more interesting message with more impact could be created and distributed.

This came in the form of a series of videos made by the older students at Saltash, aimed at the younger years. These were based on the Think U Know campaign, an online site aimed at helping under-16s with problems such as cyber-bullying, and raising awareness in how to deal with it. The videos featured actors drawn from Year 12 students with storylines

concerning issues such as bullying and stalking, and were a success with both younger and older students who found them interesting and informative.

The second part of our project, the school radio station, was to help improve communication in the school and to act as a supplement to the bulletin. This was made easier because we had already purchased radio equipment and had some students in the NGK group who knew how to use it. Our first broadcast, with adverts, news, weather and music, received mainly good feedback from students and teachers. One form tutor reported that “my year sevens giggled all the way through, they loved it” and another mentioned that it was “good to have news from in and out of the school”. Many of the tutor groups “paid more attention than when [the teacher] read out the bulletin” and some of the forms were keen to become involved in the future.

The third part is called the Big Brother diary room and gives students a chance to share their ideas and views about school privately or publicly in a diary room format. Most students are familiar with the television programme Big Brother, and it was from this that we took our idea. A Mac computer with a camera was set up in an unused cupboard adjoining an ICT classroom, and students can go in and record themselves. The room was properly decorated with drapes and a Big Brother-style chair to make it professional, interesting and cosy.

We thought that different departments could ask a question each week, for example ‘What was your best practical this week?’ for science. Students can say anything they like as long as it is not abusive and they do not mention anyone by name; they have to adhere to our acceptable use policy, which is displayed on the computer. Videos saved to the public folder can be viewed by teachers and the NGK team – saving videos to this folder effectively means that you don’t mind anyone viewing them. Saving videos to the private folder ensures that only the designated diary room member of the NGK team will see it, and allows students to be anonymous when voicing ideas or issues. These could include anything from comments on classes to bullying, and when possible we would offer help if the student wished it.

With only ‘record’ and ‘stop’ buttons, the computer is easy to use and we found that during the trials students had no problems with it. The chair was a particular success and the room received very positive feedback. Students were generally very respectful towards the room and equipment.

The final part of our project, Primary School ICT, was designed to get our feeder schools more actively involved with Saltash.net so that they can enter Year 7 with a better knowledge of ICT. This would bring everybody up to the same standard for when they enter the school and enable all students to learn faster. The idea will be implemented through an after-school club run by Saltash.net students, using fun learning activities to teach the primary students.

If we teach them what they want to learn, for example how to film and edit videos, we think that they will gain an enthusiasm for the subject and feel encouraged to take it further. The idea of fun activities worked well in a club that used to run at school, where girls could learn ICT through themes of fashion and other such topics, so we think that it would be a success. As our school has good facilities and is relatively central in Saltash, we decided that the club would best be run at Saltash.net instead of at the smaller primaries.

Each term Saltash.net arranges a day off-curriculum, Theme Day, in which the different years can participate in various extra-curricular activities. These include drink and drug awareness, driving advice for the sixth form, subject reviews and guest speakers. As it was difficult to take people out of lessons to help with our projects, we decided to use the November 2009 Theme Day to trial the school radio and the diary room.

The group of Year 8s who were familiar with the radio equipment conducted a live radio show at lunch, which was broadcast in the main hall. This went down very well with students

and staff. They also recorded a programme to be played in registration which also received positive feedback.

Because the sixth form were not consistently busy on that day, we decided to take groups of them out at a time to the diary room where they recorded messages about their school career, possibly to go on a DVD to be included in the yearbook. They, too, enjoyed the room and liked the fact that they could go in as groups or on their own.

However, not all this has happened without problems. The main difficulty, identified very early, was the lack of good communication and it was this that led to the setting up of the radio station and diary room. Coordinating meetings with all the students was also problematic as, with a wide range of students doing different breaktime and lunchtime activities, it was hard to find dates which suited everyone and to let people know when meetings were taking place. We solved this by speaking to the students face-to-face in assemblies and finding people in their tutor rooms to arrange dates. This worked well as it was a more direct approach than using the more passive bulletin or Ning page.

In addition we were told that as the diary room has only one exit, everything inside had to be fireproof. This meant that we had to take the drapes down, therefore detracting from its professional look. At the moment the NGK sixth formers and our assistant headteacher look after the project budget and we are hoping to use some of the money to refurbish the diary room for the students.

Participating in and organising the project has proven to be beneficial to students and staff, and we are hoping that the community will similarly benefit when we get the Primary School ICT scheme properly running. It has helped expand our teamwork, leadership and organisational skills, taught us more about our own learning styles, and helped us to better understand how a school works and what a team has to do in order to achieve. Students can also take advantage of the radio and diary room, and become more knowledgeable about internet safety. Also because staff receive feedback from the diary room, they know which lessons their students like best and issues can be targeted accordingly. To know that we have been successful, we are looking for good feedback in the diary room, positive comments from teachers and a wide network of students targeting issues quickly and efficiently.

In the future we are looking to redecorate the diary room and get as many different departments involved as we can. We would also like to get Primary School ICT up and running, and will have to coordinate with our ICT teachers to organise dates. Hopefully we can keep distributing the e-safety videos and perhaps show them to the primary school students when they come to the school for the ICT club. We are also hoping to establish a permanent radio team who can do a broadcast every day, with guest student speakers. Although we know that it will be hard work, we are very much looking forward to running everything and doing our part to improve learning and communication for all of our learners.

# Creating a global village college

Emily Cowling, Lauren Hill, Hannah Ritchie and Hannah Long, Sawston Village Community College

Our initial proposal was split into two sections:

1. To develop the role of pupil subject leaders in all curriculum areas.
2. To embed a global ethos within our school community through international partnerships and enriched curriculum opportunities.

While we have enabled the employment of pupil leaders in the majority of subject areas, we decided to focus this project on the creation of international links as we feel this would be more beneficial in developing global awareness and understanding within the college. We felt that it was important for our school to create meaningful and long-term relationships with other schools (both pupils and staff) in Britain, Europe and the rest of the world – in particular schools in countries such as India and China, and hopefully one in an African country, whose culture and customs are so different from our own.

We believe that such relationships will help to prepare Sawston pupils and staff for the challenges and changes that are already taking place in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Such relationships will enable us to engage with different cultures from around the world and minimise communicative and social barriers, helping us to become empathetic and well-rounded citizens.

We aim to create opportunities for pupils and staff to share knowledge in a variety of areas: teaching and learning as well as culture and traditions. In addition to extra-curricular opportunities, we also hope to involve a majority of curriculum areas where video conferencing, pupil portal communication, pen pals, language-twinning, culture trips, webcam-run lessons, virtual exchanges and real-life exchanges can be real possibilities.

We have already started emailing the team in Russia and Year 9 have experienced some language-twinning through the website Rafi.ki in French, German and Spanish lessons. We are in the process of working out the logistics involved in using Skype and the webcam. We would also love to pursue learning about music from other cultures via pupils from those cultures. As a science and language college we also appreciate the need to explore the role of emerging global economies, such as China and India, and harness their skills and expertise in these key curriculum areas.

Our key questions are:

- How can we form a more globalised community within our school?
- How can we develop the skills of pupil leaders?
- How has the curriculum been impacted upon as a result of pupil voice?

- What can we do to improve communication and cohesion across the whole school?

We chose these questions as they mirrored the underlying queries we explored while we were at the NESTA and SSAT Student Leadership and Innovation Conference 2009. The conference was attended by the four members of the Sawston VC pupil forum who had displayed particular interest and commitment – us.

In our pupil voice system, we currently have three pupil forums titled learning and teaching, ethos, and environment. These forums are pupil voice platforms where pupils from across the school come together to discuss issues and produce action plans that are now beginning to impact on school life; there are over 100 pupils involved. Within these three groups we have now created an international coordinators sub-group with members from each forum to take forward this project. There are representatives from all year groups in this team: three Year 7s, three Year 8s, three Year 9s and four in Years 10 and 11. It is actually a rather interesting set-up as we don't normally get to work so intensely with members of any other year groups. We felt we needed to be able to answer the question 'how has the curriculum been impacted by pupil voice?' to see how effective the pupil voice model is and to assess the progress of this project.

Communication and cohesion have been a problem within the forums from the start: pupils are from all year groups and can be difficult to locate, and so to properly implement our global vision we would need to formulate a reliable system of contact. We are currently establishing a pupil and staff interactive learning environment (ILE) which all members of the college can access and through which we are able to communicate easily. Called Frog, it is set to go live on 1 February 2010.

Once this site has been fully set up, the problem of communication between the forums should be greatly decreased, allowing the project to move forward with everybody involved able to contribute regularly. We are planning on setting up a special international homepage to increase awareness within the school and provide links to important areas. As students we designed our homepage where other pupils can post their ideas and thoughts on our projects, and the page will have updates on our work.

The general forum homepage will have a link to the international page that will include information on the project we are undertaking and its aims. There will be a section for important notices or links to interesting and relevant news articles and websites. We also will include information on our partner schools. The website will provide the opportunity for pupils to contribute to an online forum to discuss ideas with not only the international team but also other pupils in the school.

We four pupils are leading the project and now have a team of 12 other keen and enthusiastic pupils to spread our international tentacles throughout the school. This was done in two stages, the first through finding volunteers already within the forum, then through selection from those wanting to join. Anyone who had not made our first team is on a waiting list (phase 2) for when we have established more links and need more people to help run these projects. Many people were interested in our work and were keen to join as this was an exciting new change for the school.

We currently have language leaders, sports leaders and, most recently, science leaders but we decided that all curriculum areas will benefit greatly from having pupil representatives who will be able to work closely with heads of departments and link governors. We have recently appointed these subject leaders and they were briefed by the department staff, who decided which tasks would be good for students to become involved in. Every leader has been involved in different ways and they are beginning to have a positive impact on the curriculum.

The teachers have all reported back to us on how much help it has been to have some pupil insight into their subject and the work these pupils have done. The leaders' responsibilities include:

- Creating and publicising extra-curricular clubs.
- Organising trips and other enrichment opportunities.
- Co-constructing units of work including developing more personalised learning (where pupils have an input into the types of activities and topics covered in certain subjects).
- Peer subject mentoring.
- Involvement in quality assurance and self-evaluative departmental processes (where pupils are consulted by teachers about the successes and potential improvements in their departments).
- Primary school liaison.
- Preparation for transition to post-16 education.

As well as providing pupils with the opportunity to develop personal responsibility and individual commitments, this should also help to build stronger pupil/staff relationships and, as the scheme progresses, hopefully contribute towards a school magazine, radio, blog or pupil website. We will decide which is the best for the school community and find out which of them pupils want to see.

It is ideas such as these that will enable the members of Sawston Village College to update the rest of the school on current events and issues, including the progress of this particular project. They will also hopefully contribute to one of our main aims of cohesion and unity both within the school and with other schools internationally.

Since these subject leaders will be affiliated members of the existing pupil forum, we believe it will have direct impact upon whole-school learning, ethos and environment. After years of the traditional school council set-up we decided we could achieve better and faster results by having three forums, each focused on one aspect. The work of the three forums is fed back through the senate. Although this system is only in its second year, so far it has been efficient and had a positive effect on school life.

Since the start of September we have managed to form a relationship with a school in Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation. We found this school through the website Global Gateways, an affiliation of the British Council. At first, our teacher liaised with a teacher from Gymnasium #16 to establish a partnership before we began an email exchange with her and her pupils. Through this, we have now planned a year-long twinning project that involves a culture exchange and co-constructed curriculum activities such as letter writing (with the English department), global warming (with science) and an ICT game-maker project.

We have shared our progress through year group assemblies and have shown the presentation which Gymnasium #16 sent to us. It was great to see not only the team of pupils who were leading the International work in their school but also pictures of their local town and area, showing us how different it is from Sawston as well as the activities and concerts taking place in their school. We learned that as well as differences there were many similarities, and that children are children wherever they are in the world. We sent a similar presentation to

them including pictures and information of Sawston, Cambridge and traditional Britain as well as our school and international team.

In the lead up to Christmas we prepared a package for them to show what the traditional festive celebration is like in Britain. We based it on our own experiences, but it was interesting to see how diverse the celebrations are in our school alone! We sent them lots of magazines and books to help with their learning of English and to gain an idea of popular British culture, including a Waitrose Food magazine displaying the traditional Christmas treats available to buy at this time of year. We also sent some videos and a collection of CDs as well as some tourist gifts from Cambridge such as fridge magnets, pencils and a calendar. This was more of a keep-sake for the pupils than an educational gift.

We have already learnt that in Russia they do not generally celebrate Christmas and if people do then they tend to celebrate on 7 January; our partner school does not break up for a holiday until then. They concentrate their celebrations on New Year's Day and Eve.

As previously mentioned, language teachers have started using Rafi.ki to enable pupils to email or instant message other pupils in German, French and Spanish. This improves our language skills but also allows us to connect with real people from the countries we are trying to understand. Pupils have reported what a fun and engaging learning experience it has been, although teachers did find it quite difficult to organise as each school runs on a completely different timetable and coordinating the two is a potential barrier for long-lasting work in this way.

In addition, we have found a partner in Rwanda, but this is still in its very early stages. This link was found through a personal contact of our teacher. A school in Hertfordshire has had a partnership with a school in Rwanda for many years and on a recent visit they were looking for a British school to make friends with for their 'brother' school in the town of Gisenyi. Our teacher has been in contact with their lead coordinator. We cannot email pupils from this school as they have not got access to the internet, but we are going to write letters through the VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) scheme once our teacher has established a secure relationship with them. This will be a completely different experience from the partnership with Russia, where it is so easy to email the pupils and they are not in a disadvantaged position. The Rwandan pupils' first language is French but they learn English, so it will hopefully be easy for us to communicate as we also learn French. It will be so exciting to find out about their day-to-day lives and about their rich culture.

We recognise that for our project to have a long-lasting impression and effect on the school ethos, we need to involve all pupils. We have planned activities for the national World Book Day in March and also plan to organise an international week in the summer that will give all lessons a global focus throughout the week as well as lunchtime talks and activities. We are in the process of organising for each year group to be 'attached' to a continent and each half-term there will be a focus on a different country – its food, traditions, film, music, landscape and monuments – that will be presented by pupils in form time.

Skills we wish to develop and be trained on include:

- Respect and fuller understanding of other cultures.
- Empathetic skills.
- Commitment and responsibility.
- Sensitivity and wider viewpoints.

- Leadership training (to include communication skills, evaluative and analytical skills, mentoring and coaching skills, and administrative skills).

In terms of our budget, we have a key member of the team in charge on this. We have spent money so far on sending the Christmas package to Russia. Once our partnership with the school in Rwanda is set up we plan to purchase some computers and webcams to allow us to personally speak to students and possibly share lessons.

Our methods of research, in terms of finding partner schools, are through websites and personal contacts. Global Gateways, Rafi.ki and BBC World Class have been very supportive and useful. We will also use these methods for investigating various curricular and cross-curricular projects. To enable us to evaluate the success of this project and the impact that our global links have made on the ethos of our school and curriculum, we aim to use questionnaires, verbal feedback and learning walks. We will also seek additional opinions and feedback from key stakeholders: governors, parents and the local community.

We are meeting regularly to assess what we have done each month, the impact we think it has made and what we need to do next to improve. A working party of staff has also been established to contribute towards this. Throughout the coming academic year we will need to review our key questions, in particular how we can create global relationships and improve communication, and base our evaluations on these.

We have been meeting as an international team regularly, meeting up every week or two on a Friday, and we also keep in contact through email. As we come towards the international week we shall need to secure fixed jobs and roles for different people within the team so that they can then manage their own team of pupils. For example, different pupils will need to be in charge of lunchtime events, catering, assemblies, outside speakers and liaising with staff about globally focused lessons. We wish for this event to be as pupil-led as possible, with the help of teachers.

One of the problems that we might encounter could be communication, but hopefully our new Frog system will be able to help with this. We also hope to have an exchange with pupils from another school. This would be a great way for us to see how they lead their daily lives, and for the other students to practise language skills. However, pupils from both schools are likely to experience problems with funding. Fundraising events getting the whole school involved would be a fun way to solve this, while emphasising the importance of our global links and highlighting how some people across the world live. We want to maintain relationships that can be built upon in the future, preparing us both economically and politically.

Even from the short time we have been corresponding with Gymnasium #16, we have learnt a lot about the individual students we have emailed. For example, the way their school system works and how important education is to them – from just the first few emails we could tell that education is valued a lot more highly in Russia, and that the pupils are more respectful and motivated. School work to them is not a chore, but a part of daily life. Furthermore, one of the students who Emily has been emailing reckons that she spends more time at school and studying in her free time than her parents spend working. Yet she says this without complaint.

They also see a great significance of learning a language. While many people in our classes complain about having to do a language, the Russian students value the opportunity. It seems rude to speak to them in our mother-tongue, when they write almost fluently in their second language. Even if we did learn Russian at school, we would not be at the level at which we could do this. This also shows us how much we take advantage of being able to use English everywhere. Our emails were initially quite formal, but are now more of a friendly chat than an exchange of ideas. Different people have had different experiences:

some people are discussing the weather and favourite TV shows whereas some pupils have been talking about global warming and learning, for example, about maths.

We aim to make our relationships ones of friendship and not ones set as homework. It would also be incredibly beneficial, both to our friendships and to our understanding of the country, to be able to go on an exchange. Throughout this year, we hope to open these kinds of opportunities up to the whole school population through events and lessons. The difference this will make to our appreciation and knowledge of other cultures, and our wider learning, is boundless.

To administer this project the most useful resource has been time and commitment from the international team to get our partnership and ideas off the ground. As time progresses the Frog learning platform will be invaluable as a communication aid throughout the school and to our partners. We are building an international board in the school foyer to raise awareness and to pinpoint places on the globe, so resources will be needed to set that up including a world map, pins, cards and information. We hope to purchase some webcams that we can use to talk to partners online, possibly assisting partner schools to do the same. We are also thinking of setting up a school radio station and will be visiting other schools in the UK which have international partners, to gain other ideas for our partnerships.

By the end of this academic year we hope to have gained another two partner schools in addition to Gymnasium #16 where we (and as many other pupils as possible) will be conversing with pupils, engaging in cross-curricular projects and sharing our cultures and learning. We will have organised and administered an international week and World Book Day, as well as encouraging a number of curriculum areas to include a globally-themed project into the year's work. We also hope to have planned an exchange with an international school. We understand that it will take a few years to properly embed global understanding within the school but we wish to at least make a start and link it to the three main areas of our school life: ethos, environment and learning.

# Closing the gap

Evie Hirst, Josh Stanley, Alice Michelmore Brown and Oliver Dakin,  
Settle College

## What is culture?

The dictionary says it is the behaviours and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic or age group. But is culture actually something more personal, something different for every different person in the world? Is it something we begin to form at birth with our ways of life, types of thinking, religion, traditions and choices?

We believe culture cannot be defined as one single thing. It is a mix of things that defines who a person is. We do believe, however, that it is important to know about different people's own cultures. It is important not to be so single-minded as to think of your own culture being the most important one. All cultures are important and hopefully our project will help students to explore the mystery of a different culture from their own.

## Background to the project

In 2007 a partnership was established between Settle College and Theraputta National School in Sri Lanka. Various visits have already taken place between the two schools and more are planned for the future to involve more students and staff. The link is extremely important for both schools as there is much we can learn from each other about culture, education and lifestyle.

The problem we face in our college is that we are a geographically isolated and there is very little cultural diversity in the area. This is reflected by our student population which consists of 99 per cent white British students. We hope that by developing our link, we can open students' eyes to alternative cultures and ways of life.

Theraputta National School is in Hambantota on the south coast of Sri Lanka. The school has 2,000 students from ages 5 to 19 and over 80 teaching staff. The school had just finished its re-build to replace inadequate facilities, following funding from the British Council. The school day starts at 8:00am and finishes at 1:30pm, with one break at 10:30am for 30 minutes. Lessons vary in length between one and two hours. Students are taught some subjects in English such as history, geography and citizenship.

At Theraputta National School being proficient in the English language is considered to be a requirement for progressing in education and careers. As a result the students are very eager to communicate with our school and use English as much as possible.

## **Why did we choose to do the project?**

We saw the student voice initiative as an opportunity to explore a world outside Settle, where students are brought up in a very closed community. We felt strongly that it is important for both young and old people in Settle to experience and understand a different culture from their own.

At the beginning of the project we hoped to achieve a close link between our two schools, and form long-lasting friendships between students from Sri Lanka and our college. We hope to educate students about the bigger world out there that is not just Settle and North Yorkshire. Most of all we want students to enjoy the opportunity to speak to other people who lead different lives from themselves.

## **Initial steps**

We researched ways in which we could develop and ensure that the partnership is a long-lasting one. Nowadays using letters to communicate is time-consuming and sometimes unreliable so we felt we should research ways in which we could communicate over the internet. We specifically looked at the ways we could use our virtual learning environment (VLE) as a means of communicating with the staff and students of our link school. Communication can sometimes be problematic in long-distance links especially in Sri Lanka due to power failures, so we had to focus on this area to strengthen the link and make it last.

We investigated message boards for students to post messages and photos and to discuss current affairs. We explored live web chats involving groups of students and teachers from both schools. Our aim was to create a site or space that would enable the sharing of resources, teaching ideas and philosophies of education between different cultures. We also wanted to create a specific area for the green action groups in both schools to compare work and methods of being sustainable in our environment today.

With the help of our school computer technician we set up a forum for our students and those in Sri Lanka to use to communicate, swap ideas and stories and learn more about our two countries and cultures. Our only problem now was raising students' awareness and interest in the forum, so they could go on it and participate in discussions.

## **Raising awareness**

We felt the best way to make our project happen was by choosing just one year group at the start and evaluating their progress before we revised our methods and introduced it to the whole school. We chose to introduce Year 10 to the forum as they had previously written letters to students in Sri Lanka in their English lessons. We planned an enrichment day in which the whole of Year 10 could take part in several workshops educating them about Sri Lanka.

We had an art workshop, in which students could make and design their own art based on Sri Lankan techniques. The geography workshop taught students about the tsunami that hit Sri Lanka on Boxing Day in 2005. For religion we focused on Buddhism, one of the main religions practised in Sri Lanka – the students participated in meditation and made bracelets called shakras. In the history workshop students learnt about Sri Lanka's involvement in the civil war. The catering department also held a workshop for students to cook some Sri Lankan dishes such as green apple curry.

Before the enrichment day almost 20 per cent of the students said they didn't know about our link and almost 40 per cent of the students thought our link with another school and culture was unimportant. In the final workshop we showed them why our link is important in a globalising world for learning about other cultures and ways of life. We explained to them our ideas for developing the link and introduced them to the forum. From this workshop 38 students signed up to be a part of the project.

### **Establishing the link**

After the enrichment day we held a meeting with the Year 10 students who had signed up and we got them to register on our forum. Once they had registered they were free to log in when they wanted, post comments and have discussions. We are registered as administrators so we can check and keep track of who is going on the forum and what is being posted.

Our next step is to introduce the forum to the students at Theraputta National School so they can get registered and communicate with the students at our school. This will take more time and effort than introducing our students to the forum, so we have proposed to take a trip to Sri Lanka so we can introduce them face-to-face. So far communication with the school in Sri Lanka has been very slow as it seems to take a while for them to reply to our emails. This is why we believe the most effective way of communication is face-to-face. Flights to Sri Lanka are expensive and we are trying to raise enough funds for the four of us to go out to Hambantota and spend some time with students over there.

When we go to Sri Lanka we will not only introduce the students to our forum but it will also be an opportunity to experience another culture, including lifestyles and education. We particularly want an insight into the completely different way the school routine is structured. From what we have been told by teachers who have travelled over there it is very unlike our own.

### **Hurdles we've encountered and those yet to come**

The biggest problem we face is raising enough money for us to travel and stay in Sri Lanka. To overcome this we are doing many fundraising activities around school to raise the money, including an all-staff Mr and Mrs competition which students could pay to come watch, cake stalls around school, bag packing at local supermarkets and a sponsored Three Peaks walk.

Once this problem has been overcome and we travel to Sri Lanka, another difficulty we face will be – as we mentioned before – the trouble with power cuts in Sri Lanka. The school is often prone to several power failures at different times in the day, and with computers being our main resource for communication this could prove complicated at times. Once we have been over to the country we hope to assess this dilemma and come up with a solution. We have made the forum easily accessible at all times so hopefully the students can log in and use it whenever they want and work around the power cuts.

Another dilemma we face is the time difference between the two schools. Sri Lanka is six hours ahead of us, but again by making the forum accessible at all times we hope that this problem can be overcome.

Finally, there is a big difference between the size of the two schools. Our school is extremely small with a student body of just over 460 whereas Theraputta National School has just

over 2,000 students, each and every one of them eager to speak and communicate with our students. We hope that our students will be just as eager to communicate with all the Sri Lankan students and by having a forum in which discussions can take place, everyone can be involved and take part in conversations.

### **Next steps**

This forum is just the beginning. Our school is using a new computer program called Fronter for our VLE. As it is only recent, only the new Year 9s are registered on it and the older years are still using our old VLE, Moodle. We hope in the future to set up a new discussion board on Fronter, which is more user-friendly and easier for the students to access.

### **What the project has given us so far**

This project has given us an insight into a different lifestyle, with fascinating and new ideas which have expanded our perceptions of life on the other side of the world. Through being a part of this project we have met new people and developed our communication skills. Overall we have gained a great range of personal and social skills and have enjoyed the experience.

There is still a lot to be done to develop our project and we are nowhere near finished with it. The world is changing and so our perceptions of other countries and cultures need to also. We hope that by introducing this link we can widen students' horizons and develop their understanding of the bigger picture. We can learn about the lifestyles and beliefs of people who are just like us on the other side of the world.

# Developing the use of new technology in a specialist technology college

Sam West and Harry Griffiths, Stoke Park School and Community Technology College

Stoke Park School has held specialist technology college status for as long as we have been at the school. When we started in Year 7 we had access to computers and engineering technology that we had no experience of at primary school. As the years have gone by our use of technology in our learning has increased, not only for the production of coursework but for greater research and investigation, for programming and design, for out-of-school learning and for social networking and sharing ideas.

Technology and global communication has developed so fast that we felt that the school was not making the most of either the technology it possessed or the technology that we, the students, possessed. We have become very adept at using technology outside of school – handheld games consoles, laptops, home computers and mobile phones – but we wanted to find a way of integrating our home and school experiences of learning. This is where the ideas came from when we agreed to investigate the use of portable technology in the school.

## **Our group**

Four of us attended the SSAT and NESTA student conference at Warwick University. Soon after we'd started the plan for our main project, however, we all moved up a year and Travis and Elizabeth had to back out so that they could place their full attention on their A Levels. Sam and I continued onwards by ourselves with the start of the project.

Our teacher soon found three more students who wanted to be involved with the project. The three Year 9s who we recruited have been involved with doing a pupil observation when we held the surveys about technology, and helping us by viewing a class after our experiment using video games before class.

## **The survey**

After the conference we had many ideas about conducting a questionnaire into the technology in school and the opinions of students and staff. We were taken off-timetable for a day so that we could discuss what to do with all of our ideas. We spent a few hours in a room around a table discussing different methods and plans, and what we wanted to do next; this included coming up with questions that should be included in the questionnaire. We came up with the idea of using Survey Monkey ([surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com)) to create a series of surveys, to be given to students and staff.

## Our initial investigation

To find out if our ideas were possible we first had to identify what portable technology students use in and out of school. We used Survey Monkey to design and draw up questionnaires for students at the school, choosing the service because it was easy to use and efficient for gathering results. Since it was also online, it was easy to access and show to the students who needed to fill it in.

We needed to inform students about these surveys so we designed a presentation for use in assemblies. We went into assemblies for a week to let everyone know about our project. From these assemblies we also attracted more students to join our research team. The staff supporting this project organised the use of the ICT suites for a selection of form groups in each year to complete the online surveys. We chose three groups from each year group to complete the questionnaire and had 345 students complete the survey.

**Table 2:** Response by year group

Which year group are you in?		
Answer options	Response per cent	Response count
Year 7	7.8 per cent	27
Year 8	18.6 per cent	64
Year 9	18.3 per cent	63
Year 10	15.1 per cent	52
Year 11	18.3 per cent	63
Year 12	15.4 per cent	53
Year 13	6.4 per cent	22

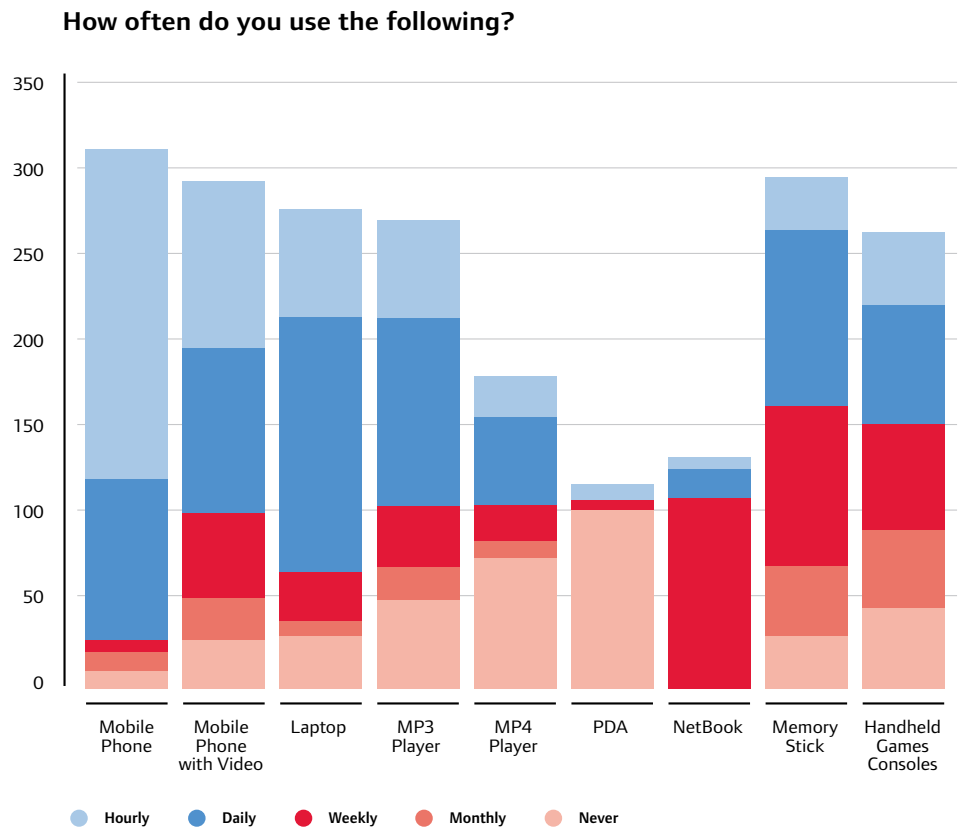
We found that the majority of students at Stoke Park School had access to many types of portable technology, with mobile phones, laptops, MP3 players, memory sticks and games consoles being the most popular. We were surprised to see that most mobile phones owned by our students had a video function.

**Table 3:** Portable technologies accessed by students

Do you already have any of the following?		
Answer options	Response per cent	Response count
Mobile phone	82.6%	285
Mobile phone with video	82.3%	284
Laptop	70.7%	244
MP3 player	70.1%	242
MP4 player	32.5%	112
PDA	3.8%	13
Netbook	9.9%	34
Memory stick	80.9%	279
Handheld games console (e.g. PSP)	69.3%	239

We questioned the students on how often they used these technologies to try and work out which ones the students were most adept at using, as we felt that we could then base the research project and experiments around these items.

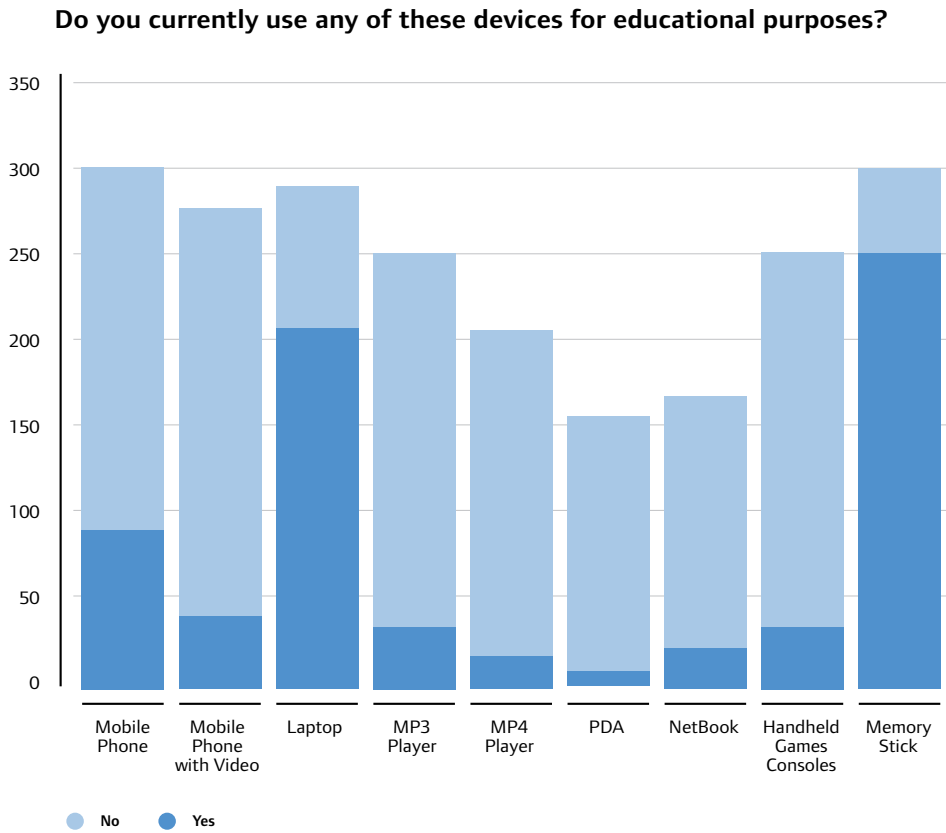
**Figure 8:** Frequency of use of portable technologies by students



We then questioned them on whether they used these devices for educational purposes.

It was overwhelmingly clear that the students did not use their mobile phones, MP3 players or games consoles for educational purposes, despite the functions that these technologies possess. We then asked them whether they felt they could use these devices in their learning. Their responses show that they would be willing to use them in classwork and homework and could potentially see the benefits of using them. They would be willing to bring laptops into school if the school could set up a system for safety and security and they would be willing to use mobile phones for completing presentations.

**Figure 9:** Portable technologies used by students for educational purposes



**Table 4:** How students might use mobile phones in class activities

Would you be happy to use your mobile phone in class for the following activities?			
Answer options	Yes	No	Response count
Taking photos	291	41	332
Videoring lessons	236	79	315
Recording sound	247	64	311
Using calendar to record homework and deadlines	277	40	317
Receiving homework instructions by text	239	73	312
Calculator	309	18	327
Timer/stopwatch	283	33	316
Internet access	231	80	311

The key question is whether the students felt that increasing the use of portable technology in school would have a positive impact on their learning.

**Table 5:** Students’ views on whether use of portable technologies would improve their learning

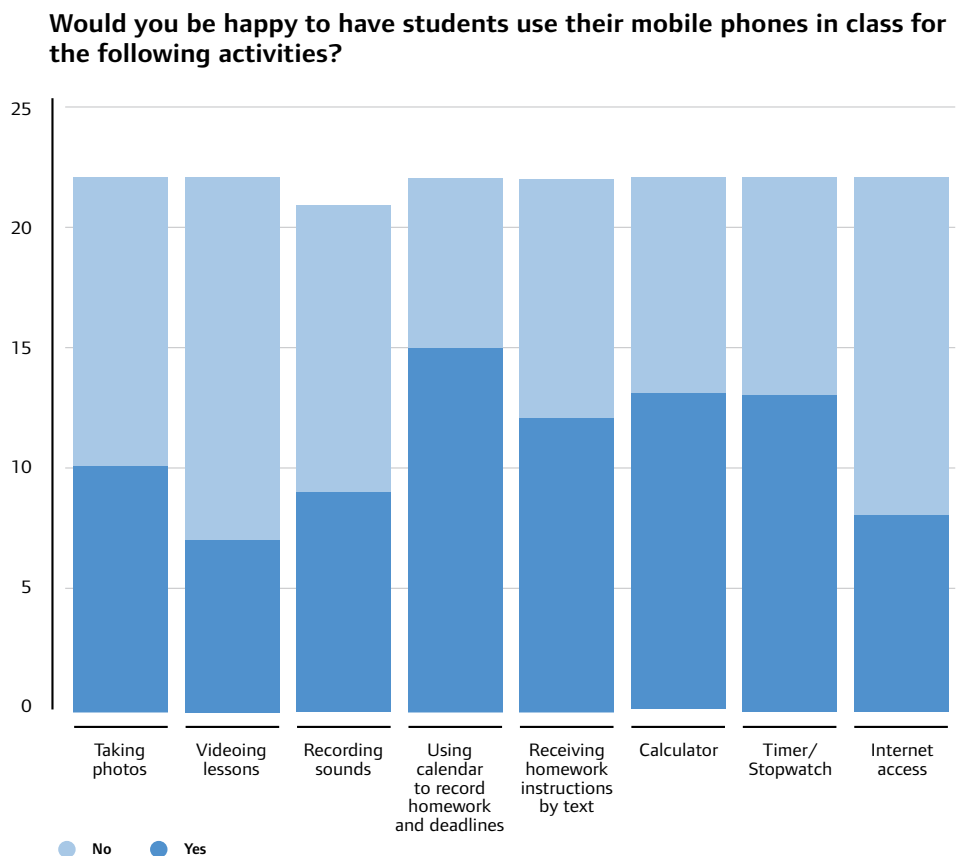
Do you think that this use of technology in school would improve your learning?		
Answer options	Response per cent	Response count
Yes	73.9%	255
No	7.2%	25
Don't know	18.8%	65

From these results we decided to take the project further.

### Staff involvement

We had to be sure that staff would be willing to adopt these technologies in lessons and develop activities around them if this project was to be successful. We conducted a similar questionnaire with staff, asking them for their views on the use of technology. Surprisingly we found that staff do have access to many forms of portable technology and that laptops, memory sticks and even mobile phones to some degree are used for educational purposes by them.

**Figure 10:** Staff views on use of mobile phones for class activities



We were disappointed to find that they were not convinced about using mobile phones in lessons for recording or taking photographs, but when we read the reasoning behind their thoughts it was clear that their concerns were about privacy – photos being put on the internet or YouTube – and concerns about whether the students would follow instructions and only use them when they were encouraged to.

Responses included: “I have concerns regarding policing the use of mobiles and using equipment that has not been checked by school regarding firewalls” and “I’m not sure if it would create too many issues with students taking advantage”.

We were delighted by the positive overall response to developing the use of portable technology in the school.

**Figure 11:** Staff views on the use of laptops, net books and PDAs in lessons

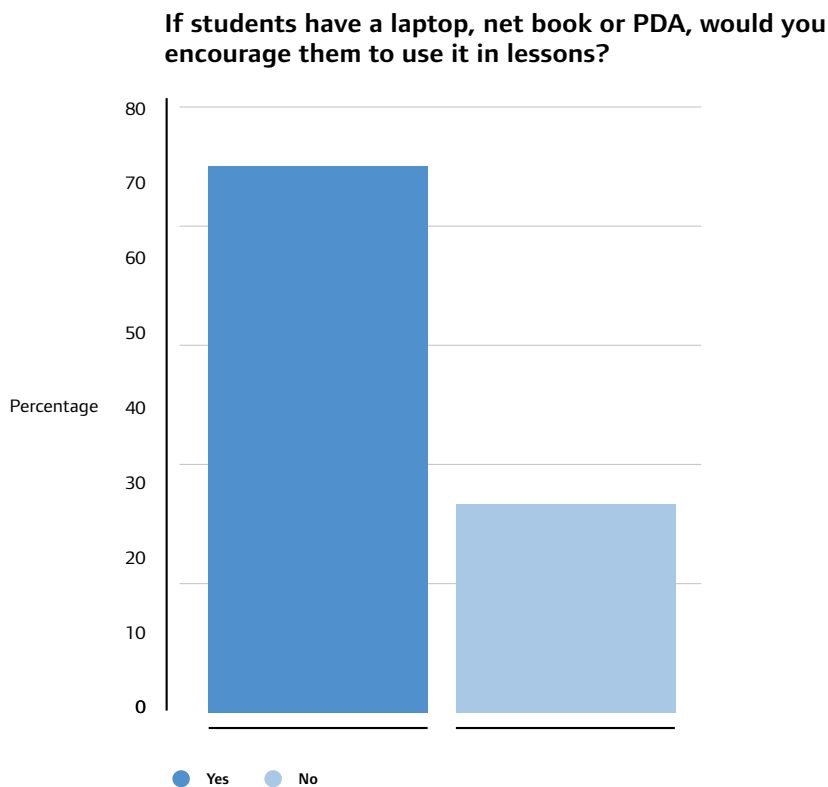


Figure 12: Staff views on the use of podcasts for selected learning activities

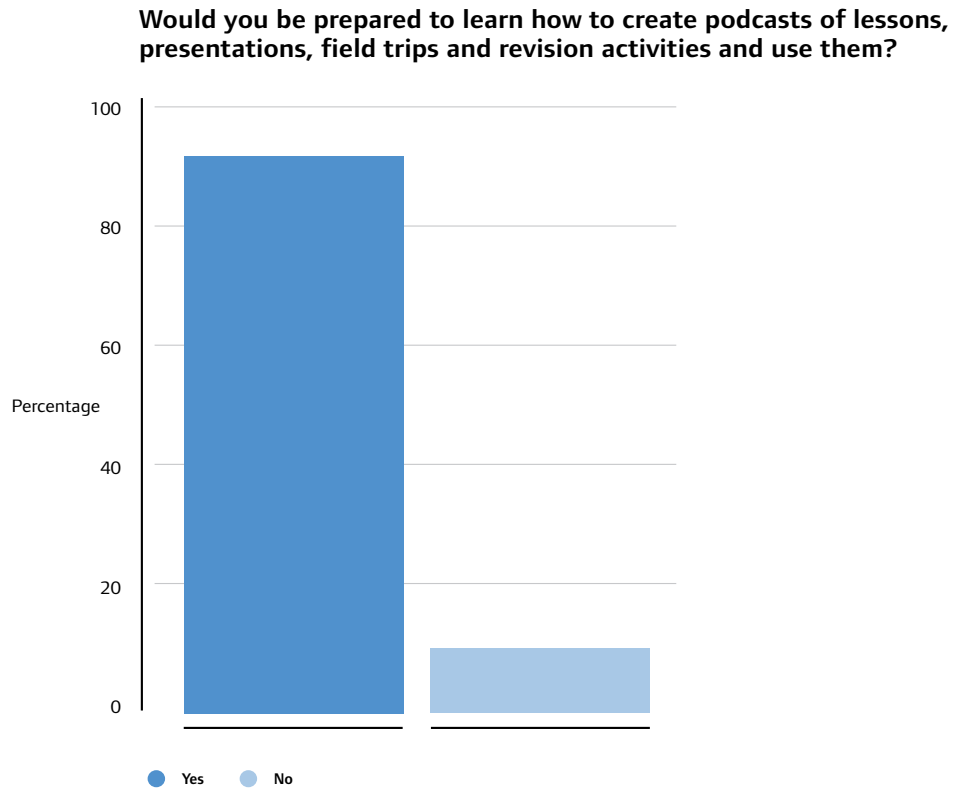
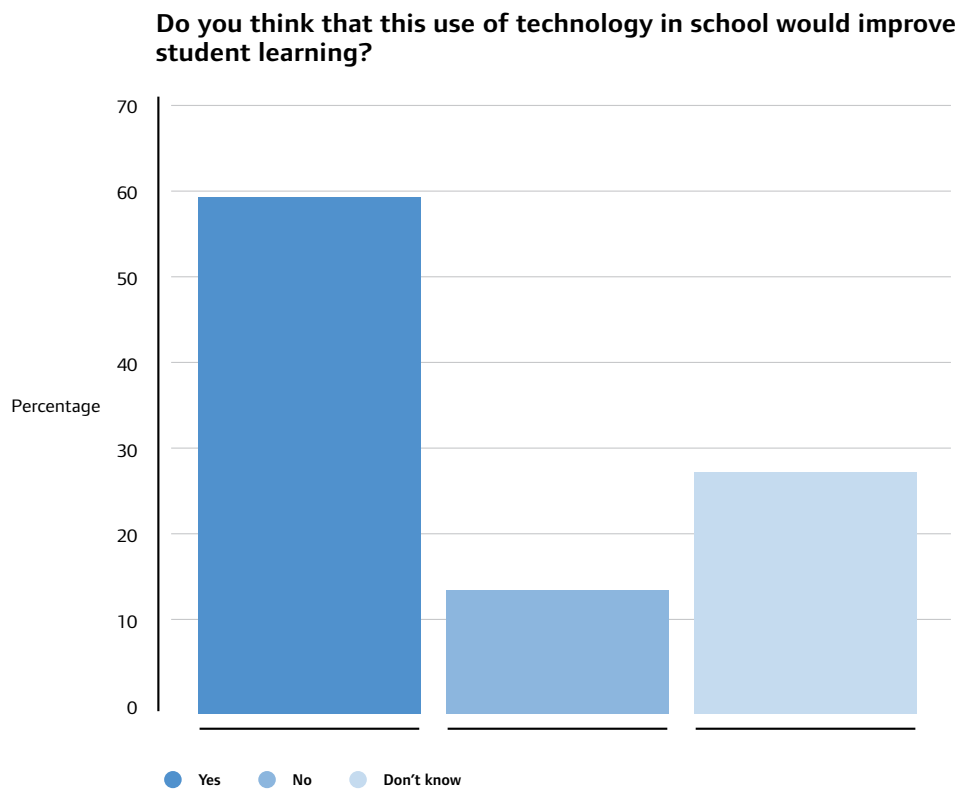


Figure 13: Staff views on whether the use of new technologies would improve learning



## **Our experiments using portable technology in the classroom**

From these findings we decided that we wanted to set up some controlled experiments to see whether the use of portable technology would enhance the learning for students in Stoke Park School. We decided to tackle the issues of the use of mobile phones and wanted to experiment with them without the potential for the sharing of photos and videos on the internet. We spoke to our ICT technicians who had a number of ideas about disabling students' phones, but we decided as a group that we could spend some of our budget on pay-as-you-go phones without credit, so we could use the functions but not the phone.

We have investigated the cost of using these phones in lessons as part of the experiment and have purchased 15 smart phones for our use. We have agreed with two tutors that the phones will be used in personal, social and health education lessons to record video and sound and to take photos for paired presentations on citizenship issues. The presentation material will be imported into a media file and then shared with the group. We will then ask the students and staff questions about the use and potential use of the mobile phones in lessons and discuss with staff and students the hazards of changing the culture of the school from having a no-phones policy to having one which embraces these devices.

We are currently investigating the use of laptops in lessons. We have convinced our geography teachers to set up some learning activities that can be completed by hand or using ICT. These activities are a series of four lessons in which some students have access to the laptops for their work and others do not. The students are all of mixed ability but alike in group ability. We are observing the lessons and identifying by observation how much time is spent on tasks by students. We want to know if laptops encourage students to complete more activities without distractions and whether their work is a higher standard as a result of accessing the ICT. We will be conducting interviews with staff to get their views.

One of the most exciting ideas is to see whether using handheld games consoles in registration time increases the alertness and the level of contributions made by students in classes. We have set up a series of lessons with the staff of the humanities and drama departments that focus on discussion and will be observed by us. In these lessons the students will be monitored for contributions to the discussion after half the group have had access to their games consoles for the 20 minutes of registration time. We hope to find that once this experiment is completed and results analysed that the alertness of the students is positively correlated with their use of gaming devices. We have had to set up a games console drop-in security system with the heads of year.

We want to complete as many experiments as possible between now and the end of February 2010 as we know that the more information we have the more accurate our results will be. We have already had some teachers request to join the programme of experiments so hopefully more curriculum areas will be on board by the end of the year. It has been important for us to liaise with senior staff and to get the Head's approval for these experiments.

## **Our success**

A sign of success for us would be when the use of portable technologies in our school is no longer prohibited but encouraged, to increase the learning capabilities of all students. Also we want to use our funding to purchase mobile phones, specially designed for use in school, for everyone.

# Globalisation: a shared teaching resource

David Eadsforth and students Chloe Higgins, Annabelle Croft, Kristina Rudge, Holly Gomersall and Stephen Mount, Werneth School

The project was simple: a group of interested students wanted to secure funding to develop an interactive website providing teachers, students and lecturers with free quality lessons on global issues. It was to build on work done by another focus group that set up the community cohesion Key Stage 3 scheme of work, which was put on the internet for all schools to use at [www.stockportcohesion.co.uk](http://www.stockportcohesion.co.uk).

On global issues our key questions were:

1. Would it be possible to produce an interactive website within the budget?
2. Would teachers be prepared to share good lessons with other teachers?
3. Could this website:
  - a. be designed to be safe and secure?
  - b. allow lessons to be uploaded easily?
  - c. avoid copyright issues?
  - d. be modern and interesting, containing a blog and links to other sites?
  - e. be publicised so that others would use it?

The team thinking up the ideas for the project consisted of four Year 8 students, who volunteered to get involved after a lesson in religious education on fair trade. The other member of the team was a Year 11 student, who was approached by the project team because of his skills as a website designer.

The research and development was split between the group and each student was responsible for different areas. As website designer, Stephen looked into the various formats for the website Kristina did a detailed survey of other websites, looking for ideas and suggestions to give to Stephen. Chloe and Holly looked into publicity and contacted local teacher training colleges, looking for support and even writing a letter to the Times Educational Supplement (TES). Annabelle conducted a survey of staff at Werneth School, to identify how much they used the web daily for lessons and materials and whether they would be prepared to share materials with other staff.

We learnt a lot very quickly:

- Staff at Werneth School spent a lot of time on the internet searching for materials for teaching.

- Humanities and personal, social and health education (PSHE) staff felt there was a shortage of exciting lessons on global issues.
- Staff would be happy to share good lessons with other teachers in other schools.
- Modern lesson plans are very complex with lots of information, containing links to DVDs, music and PowerPoint presentations.
- The site could be moderated safely, using systems that would allow an easy transition when GCSE pressures forced the team to pass it on to other groups to run.

### **Problems encountered on the way**

We were disappointed that the article sent to the TES was not published and we had no replies from colleges we contacted, despite phone calls and emails.

However the team were always confident that this website could be a success. They felt that if one lesson could have made such an impact on students as the one they had done on fair trade, then a website containing lots of good quality lessons could make a big difference to the way students saw the world they lived in. This would be especially true if the site was attractive, easy to use and – most importantly – free!

The website was up and running and launched by the team at the SSAT National Conference at the Birmingham NCC in 2009. The team got very good feedback from interested delegates who attended the showcase. Since then, hundreds of people have visited the site but very few lessons have been uploaded.

The group have contacted staff who they had hoped would put lessons on the site. Staff are keen to share, but it seems a lot of them are nervous about putting lessons on the site in case they are not of a high enough standard. Another disappointment is that a potential link with a local teacher training college, which had promised to upload lots of lessons on global issues, seems to have fallen through. The team, however, still believe in the product and are confident that it will take off given time and more publicity and support.

Please visit the site, use the lessons and encourage staff to upload lessons onto it for others to use. It can be found at [www.globalissueslessonplans.org.uk](http://www.globalissueslessonplans.org.uk) – feel free to contact us with ideas and suggestions using the blog.

Next steps:

- Send an email to all the schools in the country.
- Make phone calls to lecturers at teacher trainer colleges.
- Send articles to PHSE and humanities publications.

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1 Plough Place  
London EC4A 1DE  
[research@nesta.org.uk](mailto:research@nesta.org.uk)  
[www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)

## Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

16th floor, Millbank Tower  
21-24 Millbank  
London SW1P 4QP  
[www.ssatrust.org.uk/studentvoicenetworks](http://www.ssatrust.org.uk/studentvoicenetworks)

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