

# GLOBAL TEACHER NETWORK

Bulletin 6

14 February 2008

## Content

- A. Report on CLIMATE CHANGE meeting held at Millburn Academy on 30<sup>th</sup> January
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### A. CLIMATE CHANGE discussion

*Let's talk about climate change -  
one of the major global issues of our time*

#### Agenda

1. Jim Leslie lead discussion on 'An Inconvenient Truth (AIT)' :
  - A resource for Geography teachers?
  - A means to raise a moral issue for RMPS / PSD?
  - A stimulus for discursive essay writing?
2. *Resources* from other teachers to help deal with controversial issues.
3. Encouraging active citizenship – *AIT and peer education*
4. Making the *links* between Climate Change and Eco Schools, Sustainable Development Education, Citizenship, school partnerships, Fair Trade etc
  - Elanor Gordon and Janis Keast

#### 1. An Inconvenient Truth

Jim had consulted teachers who had used the film which LTS has distributed to every secondary school. The general feeling was that 'kids respond to it'.

Jim showed 2 extracts from the 32 sections the film is divided into to illustrate the diversity of the film:

- The first was a very visual way of showing the rise in CO<sup>2</sup> - for science or geography.
- The second was one of the several personal bits about Al Gore and his involvement with Climate Change. This was more a moral and political statement

Main points from the discussion this stimulus aroused were:

- Teachers use bits of the film not the whole, depending on their context. It is divided conveniently into sections which can be navigated through easily.
- *Science* teachers felt the film and issue is 'pushing at an open door'.
- *Modern Languages* commented that the environment is a theme used from S4 upwards and the film could be used in various ways - the graphs could be stimulating and captions could be made for other parts.

- It supports an *RE* module many schools offer.
- *Geography* teachers said it made the issue very relevant to individuals. It made the understanding of things like the ocean conveyor less abstract. It certainly brought citizenship into the classroom. One teacher commented that 5<sup>th</sup> years usually found 'Atmosphere' a dry and boring part of the syllabus but the film enhanced it making it their favourite part.
- One *English* teacher felt using the film and getting pupils to research counter arguments would make a fruitful discursive essay topic. Or it could be the contribution of the English department to Eco Schools to get a class involved in letter writing on the Climate Change issue.
- There was some concern that some vocal parents might perceive the film to be anti American. As long as the learning intentions at the start of a lesson were made clear to a class this was felt to be a surmountable problem. But there was a feeling that the whole film would not be used, just clips, as some of the Al Gore personal sections were a bit 'over the top' or a bit too geared to an American audience. One teacher reported that it really touched his class and they wouldn't hear criticism of it!
- It was pointed out that the film could be considered a campaigning tool but it was still a good context for learning making local and global connections.

## 2. Resources

The Taking Action sheet ([www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/](http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/)) was mentioned which was full of ideas for young people to start with small local actions which could contribute to change.

LTS Climate Change resources were seen as general, not specific to the film [www.ltscotland.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment/climatechange](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment/climatechange). There was some disappointment that these were only available on line. One of the strengths was that they teach youngsters to make Power Point presentations, thus encouraging them to be active citizens, passing on a message to others.

'My sustainable house', a Lighthouse production on the web was identified as a useful resource for P7 / S1.

'My sustainable town' is about to be launched for S2 / S3. Thea Pallut has details for those interested.

'Climate Change – the educational implications' (<http://www.tidegloballearning.net>) was distributed as a stimulus for an in service day to generate debate amongst a staff about the curriculum innovation needed to deal with issues like climate change.

'Circles for Change' again from TIDE was highlighted as a tool for moving from local to global, from what is happening to what we could do to make a difference on the issue of Climate Change. Iain Findlay said that this positive solutions approach to problem solving, starting with self and moving out to community and wider world, was already in use, based on a very similar diagram. It was a tool that could be used in many

situations.

[http://www.focuseducational.com/html/product\\_overview.php/pictures](http://www.focuseducational.com/html/product_overview.php/pictures) was available for all to see. Martyn Crawshaw described how photographs can be used to stimulate discussion and are a useful tool for AiFL, especially for formative assessment.

### 3. AIT and Peer Education

There was not much evidence to share yet on the peer education aspects of AIT but it was agreed that young people do listen to young people and that children have a great sense of responsibility when talking to their peers. Primary teachers cited examples of the Eco Schools committee taking assemblies very effectively.

### 4. Making the links

The discussion moved onto Climate Change being a cross curricular topic for secondary schools.

Under ACE it was felt that all subject areas should come together as all had something to feed into it.

One commented and many agreed that 'project centred activity is when learning really takes off, youngsters are involved and motivated.'

Primary teachers spelt out that they plan in a cross curricular way and that P7s often have a lot of knowledge and understanding of issues that secondary teachers are not aware of or do not take account of.

Grantown Grammar representatives spoke of their cross curricular work in response to ACE – not specifically on Climate Change – but on global themes which pull departments together, get teachers out of 'their boxes'. They said that they had started small with cooperation between Art and Modern Languages. But gradually more departments had come on board - Geography, Music and Science especially.

- There was some debate about how much grass roots activity could achieve without commitment from senior management. Should it be top down or bottom up?
- The time to coordinate staff was identified as a problem
- Time for planning another.
- Structural change was needed to allow flexibility for cross curricular work and change from SQA if such practice was ever to reach beyond S2.
- Eco Schools was seen as a great cross curricular opportunity but not so easy to implement in a large secondary school.

Eco Schools became the talking point. Primary schools saw Eco Schools as a challenge for secondary schools. Youngsters leave primary full of enthusiasm for it, having taken a lot of responsibility for it, being really active citizens and then they are at the bottom of

the heap in S1. No one is aware of what they have done about composting and questions they have raised with council about plastic recycling for example. They should be encouraged to carry on making a difference, although disappointment was expressed that renewables were not part of the new builds. Eco Schools was identified by the meeting as a possible focus for a P7 /S1 transition project - to develop progression and continuity so that secondaries pick up where primaries leave off and move the youngsters on to themes like Climate Change. Eco Schools could bring the Safer Routes to School group, the Health Promoting School group, the Fair Trade group etc all under one banner. Elanor pointed out that Eco Schools was producing resources for secondary schools and encouraged teachers to make contact with her if they wanted more information, especially on the possibility of renewable energy input to S1 and S2.

Norma Young, Quality Improvement Officer with the remit for Sustainable Development Officer, informally brought the meeting to an end saying that it was fantastic to hear so many ideas which she was going to take back to the secondary heads' meeting which was in progress. She sensed strong work was happening in primary schools but was aware that secondary schools faced the challenges of the constrictions of the timetable and of SQA. She felt the Local Authority could do something to encourage more involvement from SMT to support the ideas brought up although the feeling in the room was that real change could happen in the classroom, at the grass roots level. She hoped that there would be sharing of good practice, like the Grantown model, through vehicles such as the Virtual Library.

Thea and Dugal (Grantown Grammar) offered to put the profile of their ACE project 'Making Connections' on the HOWG website. This will be done shortly.

[www.globaldimension.highlandschools.org.uk](http://www.globaldimension.highlandschools.org.uk)

## **B. OTHER NEWS**

1. *Fairtrade Fortnight* 25<sup>th</sup> February – 9<sup>th</sup> March – lots of materials available.
2. *End of Slavery Dawn of Fairtrade* - learning day 4<sup>th</sup> March at Highland Council Headquarters – organised by the WEA, Cromarty Courthouse and Highland One World Group
3. *Global School Partnerships Reciprocal Visits seminar*- Stirling 26<sup>th</sup> February
4. *CETS* – Cooperative Education Trust Scotland has a local representative to support cooperative, social enterprise in schools

## **C. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

*Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008* at Millburn Academy – 6.45pm for 7pm – all welcome

The theme will be a global approach to ECO SCHOOLS

- building on what goes on in primary schools
- a preview of the new sustainability unit

*For more information about anything mentioned here please contact:*

*Janis.keast@highland.gov.uk*