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# Ethical Global Issues Pedagogy Impact Survey: Summary of results

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## Introduction

[Teaching for sustainable development through ethical global issues pedagogy](#) is a resource that can support teachers to bring complexity and multiple perspectives to the teaching of global ethical issues in today's classrooms. It was developed collaboratively by researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University and Mälardalen and Örebro Universities in Sweden with teachers of secondary education (students ages 14-18) in England, Finland and Sweden. Adapting Andreotti's (2012) HEADSUP tool (hegemony, ethnocentrism, ahistoricism, de-politicization, salvationism, uncomplicated solutions, and paternalism), the resource presents guiding principles for bridging global citizenship education and education for sustainable development to support teachers in how they facilitate global learning in the classroom. It also provides a series of different activities and question sets that educators can adapt to their existing practice or to promote new practice.

This document reports the results of a survey that was developed to investigate the impacts of the resource. The survey was completed by sixteen respondents between September and November 2020. Eight had used the resource and eight were planning to use it.

### What attracted respondents to the resource?

Respondents were asked what attracted them to the resource. A key theme in the responses was that the resource is able to facilitate expansive and critical discussions on global issues. Comments suggested that the resource does this in a way that is age-appropriate, avoids the oversimplification of issues and helps to develop critical thinking skills.

'I think that the resource provides a helpful critical lens for opening up complex topics in a nuanced way.'

More generally, respondents see the resource as flexible and practical. It contains a variety of activities, can be adapted to different contexts, and is valued for its clear presentation of complex ideas. Respondents particularly valued it as a way to apply the HEADSUP framework, for example:

'I had done the Transformative Learning Journey 2 with Bridge 47 and had used the HEADSUP and other tools from the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures movement and was delighted to see such tools adapted for teachers.'

As well as supporting classroom practice, some valued the ability of the resource to support teachers' professional development, for example in developing critical, relevant and collaborative practice.

### What do respondents think is unique about the resource?

All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 'the resource fills a gap in what is currently available to support the teaching of global ethical issues' and 'the resource is different to other resources that support the teaching of global ethical issues'. Respondents explained the uniqueness of the resource in terms of, first, its clarity and conciseness, and, more specifically, its practicality as a resource that can be applied in classrooms without adaptation:

'It provides the opportunity for practical reflection on curriculum development and implementation. It speaks to both policy makers and educators in a very practical way which resources often lack because they are usually designed for one or the other. It moves the theory of HEADSUP into practice.'

Respondents also valued the flexibility of the resource: it provides the pedagogical tools to explore any social issue and can be adapted to practitioners' specific contexts. A third key theme related to the content of the resource, which respondents said encourages deep, critical, imaginative and interconnected thinking. Respondents felt that it is quite unique for a resource to support deep critical thinking on systemic issues:

‘It embraces the complexity of global issues which is rare in such resources.’

‘Quite often the root causes of the problems are not present in global education materials. With this tool it’s possible to analyse what are the causes behind the problems that we see around us, and what kind of solutions we can come up with without losing a connection to root causes.’

## How widely is the resource being shared by those that have accessed it?

Twelve of the sixteen respondents had shared the resource, both inside and outside their organisations. The respondents had shared it with:

- Teaching colleagues within their own subject/department/organisation.
- Teaching colleagues in other departments.
- Professional colleagues. For example, within the learning and teaching division of an international education organisation, the resource is being shared with 40 curriculum managers across their full range of programmes, with 6 members of the team that works on the education programme for 3-12 year olds for more in depth curriculum development work, and with 150 of their educators.
- Professional networks, e.g. the advisors and trustees of an education consultancy organisation, and an organisation that supports the teaching of global education.
- The wider public, e.g. one respondent is a trustee of an international charity and added the resource to the educational resources on their website.

Responses suggest that the resource is mainly being shared as a way of supporting educators to reflect on and inform the development of their curriculum and materials.

‘I shared this with my departmental colleague as I felt it would benefit both of our work to read and discuss it.’

## What types of groups are respondents applying (or considering applying) the resource with?

- Respondents had applied the resource with over 200 students across all stages of secondary school as well as 180 secondary teachers and student teachers and 6 primary teachers. The resource has informed the development of a resource that supports learning on global issues and is now in 5000 classrooms across the UK.
- Additionally, those that haven’t used the resource yet plan to apply it with: 1800 schools that deliver a programme for 3-12 year olds as part of an international education organisation; 160 students across age groups; trainee teachers; graduate level educators; applied education researchers.
- Subjects in which the resource is being used or potentially used include: Geography, Philosophy, Art and Design, Citizenship, Computing, Political Science, International Relations, Maths, Religious Studies, History, Social Studies, Education.
- Particular topics studied through the resource include: climate change, migration, sweatshop issues and squatter settlements.
- The locations that respondents are applying (or considering applying) the resource in include England, Scotland, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Holland, Canada and the US.

## What types of activities are respondents using (or planning to use) the resource in?

Respondents shared ideas for applying the resource in classroom activities. One respondent for example plans to show an image of injustice and use the resource to help the class engage in critical questioning of the issues that it raises. Many of the activities mentioned centred on supporting

critical discussion on particular topics: one charity for example used it to support their programme of online discussion groups. Another respondent described a project ‘in which young people enquire into and address issues in their communities by coproducing solutions’, with the resource used to help young people understand ‘how their local problems connect, mirror and refract larger problems’.

In addition to supporting classroom practice, the resource is being used to support educators’ own professional development. This includes, for example, reflective practice (particularly with a view to adopting a more critical approach), reviewing and developing a curriculum, and choosing and adapting teaching materials. It is also being used in teacher training; one respondent had ‘developed a series of 8 training sessions around the resource’ for secondary school teachers, and another used the resource with primary teachers at the end of a training course to facilitate critical discussion of possible responses to climate change. Another respondent used it ‘as a source of inspiration for how to effectively dig deep into global issues in a way suitable for young people’ when developing a resource that supports the teaching and learning of global issues in classrooms.

‘I think it works with adults (teachers, educators, facilitators) too and helps to identify their responsibilities and choices that they make while teaching.’

More broadly, the resource is being used for capacity building within organisations, for example ‘to strengthen our research team’s ability to apply critical theories and self-reflexive competencies to their research projects, and be better able to address issues like systemic racism, colonialism, etc., from a more critical lens.’

All of those that had used it were likely or very likely to continue using it. Some respondents shared ideas that they had for further use of the resource, including applying it with different topics and using it with arts based and body based activities to encourage educators’ reflection on their own experiences around privilege. Some intended to share it further with colleagues and other educators, including for example as part of an organisational induction process for new employees.

## What do respondents say are the benefits of the resource?

We asked a series of closed questions about the benefits of the resource. The results indicate that it is fulfilling its key objectives and highlight the positive impacts of the resource on practice:

- Fifteen out of sixteen respondents thought that the resource has been extremely helpful or very helpful in supporting new practice.
- Fifteen out of sixteen respondents thought that the resource has been extremely helpful or very helpful in deepening existing practice.
- All respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the resource ‘has centred/will centre discussions on issues of power, oppression and privilege’.
- Fifteen out of sixteen strongly agreed or agreed that the resource ‘has supported/will support deep conversations about global issues’.
- Fifteen out of sixteen strongly agreed or agreed that the resource ‘has helped/will help to identify and challenge mainstream perspectives’.

Respondents’ explanations of the benefits of the resource for educators centred on two key themes. First, that it enables educators to refine their practice in the field of global citizenship education. It provides a framework for lesson planning, and it both focuses learning on the root causes of social problems and supports with teaching transversal competencies. Secondly, comments focused on the ability of the resource to support professional development; educators have used it to support a process of reflection on their curriculum and the teaching materials that they use in terms of critical global citizenship education. One respondent said for example that the resource is supporting the development of the approach to critical global citizenship education in an

international education organisation, including having an influence on curriculum development, their wider policies and processes, and practice in their schools. One educator who hasn't yet used the resource said:

'We have been struggling for some time [...] about how to translate some of our ideas around uncertainty, complexity and the need for deeper levels of imagination to usher in a more connected, kinder world. This resource could provide a framework we have been looking for. Even planting the seed of this resource in teachers' heads will hopefully trigger a ripple effect into the way they teach.'

Respondents were also asked about the benefits of the resource for students. Educators had observed the benefits for students' learning, particularly in terms of critical thinking: one said that they had 'seen development in the richness of class discussions [*and*] students have deeper understanding of issues & their complexity' including in written work. A teacher reported that: 'It has helped lower performing students to understand step by step different aspects of big issues as climate change' and 'it has motivated the students to study well and search information from different perspectives'. Educators who had not yet applied the resource anticipated that the benefits for students would include enriching their educational experience as well as long-term citizenship benefits:

'I think some students find school is another planet where the real issues of their lives are ignored. They will find this focus empowering.'

'Students would have a life-long learning tool which would hopefully live in the underbelly of their thinking/sensing/inhabiting the world towards a deeper understanding of root causes before jumping to find easy solutions.'

## What challenges have been encountered by those applying or planning to apply the resource?

One particular challenge centred on the need to support teachers to apply the resource, particularly those that are less familiar with critical perspectives. Some respondents reported that some colleagues were initially hesitant and needed clarification and reassurance of how the resource could be used in their particular context. One said for example that 'the audience is not opposed but not receptive either given it's far afield from the way they think about what they are doing.' There were also more specific challenges reported. Using the resource with younger students was a recurrent theme; some saw a need to adapt parts of it for a primary setting, specifically to engage primary teachers effectively and to support students with the language. Finally, one respondent said that the lack of opportunities to teach applied mathematics in their national curriculum was a challenge to using it in maths classrooms.

Respondents were asked to suggest amendments to future iterations of the resource. Suggestions included:

- the inclusion of vignettes about how the resource has been applied;
- increasing its relevance to young children;
- the inclusion of further specific topics e.g. anti-racist/oppressive capacity building and theoretically informed praxis;
- the inclusion of further specific activities e.g. sample stimulus for the Digging Deeper exercise;
- specific iterations with content tailored to particular contexts e.g. particular countries, non-formal education.

These comments will inform the future development of the resource.

## Final comments and next steps

There are a number of cross-cutting themes in the data above. The results suggest enthusiastic uptake of the resource, and in particular its uniqueness in supporting the development of nuanced critical thinking, flexibility in where and how it can be applied, practicality in classroom teaching, and usefulness in supporting the development of curriculum and materials.

In addition to a pilot project with primary teachers which directly responds to a key concern raised in the survey findings, further work is being developed to create longer and more sustained support for teachers in using the tool and to create more activities and adaptations across contexts.



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