

TITLE:

Global Skills Project – Embedding the Global Dimension into Skills for Life Classes

DATE:

January 2009



ORGANISATION PROFILE

LGEC is a Development Education Centre with 10 employees

SUMMARY

Lancashire Global Education Centre developed a range of innovative materials for delivering global education messages in further education.

It developed partnerships and relationships which spread the messages into not only English and Maths classes at colleges, but also in prisons, in special and in adult education centres and during English for Speakers of Other Languages and Entry to Employment (e2e) classes.

EAUC COMMENT

This case study provides a useful example of how different education providers can work together to spread sustainable development and global skills across their curriculums

PROJECT PARTNERS

Preston College Skills for Life community team
HMP Lancaster Castle
Liverpool Community College

Lancaster and Morecambe College
HMP Garth

THE PROBLEM

Lancashire Global Education Centre (LGEC) is a Development Education Centre – a voluntary sector organisation which works with pupils, young people, teachers, adult education tutors, youth workers and those in the wider community to tackle diversity, human rights, fair trade and sustainable development.

It had previously focused on the inclusion of the global dimension in to primary and secondary education and community development, but in 2003 took the opportunity to apply for a grant from DEA, an organisation dedicated to promoting sustainable education, to set up a Further Education project in partnership with Preston College.

A Skills for Life lecturer from Preston College chaired LGEC's management committee and had previous experience of delivering global education in schools, so Preston College was the obvious choice for LGEC to work with on the project.

THE APPROACH

DEA invited further education colleges to apply for up to £1,500 to develop one-year pilot projects to incorporate global perspectives into their course planning, curriculum or staff development and/or their policy procedures.

Following this successful pilot in one tutor's English classes at Preston College, LGEC applied for further funding from the Department of International Development.

This grant was used to develop English, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Maths resources covering a wide variety of themes to illustrate how people's lives in the UK are connected to, and have an impact on, people around the world.

Topics covered included:

Globalisation

Global sports

Refugees and asylum seekers

Where in the world does the English language come from?

The Millennium Development Goals

Fairtrade

The global drugs trade

The project was called Global Skills and materials – made up of comprehension exercises, crosswords, ideas for debates and exercises such as table reading - were produced.

By approaching a selection of colleges in the area, LGEC recruited other tutors from Lancaster and Morecambe College and Liverpool College as partners, as well as continuing their work with Preston. Tutors from two local prisons also joined after hearing about the project via word of mouth. Most of the tutors were from the Skills for Life (SfL) departments but at Lancaster and Morecambe College, it was an Entry to Employment (e2e) tutor who was interested. In total eight tutors were recruited to trial the materials.

The tutors were supported with e-mails and visits from LGEC. LGEC visited the colleges to introduce the project, provided all of the materials and answered specific questions from the students. The steering group, made up of tutors from Preston College, was used to get feedback on the materials and on what other subjects should be covered.

LGEC also developed a Global Skills training session which was promoted and offered to SfL practitioners outside of the project. This has proved popular mainly with local authority Adult Learning Departments.

OUR GOALS

- Support Skills for Life tutors in embedding a global dimension into their curriculum.
- Increase awareness and understanding of a number of global issues, including sustainable development, with SfL learners and tutors.
- Provide materials that would engage SfL learners and so better support their learning.
- Increase awareness of how interconnected the world is and the impact we have on the planet and the lives of people overseas.
- Empower participants to identify where their individual actions can make a positive difference.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Obstacle

- Despite the LSC's Education for Sustainable Development strategy there is no obligation on colleges to embed these issues into their curriculum
- Varied levels of participation by individual tutors – some trialling all material and providing detailed feedback, others only using one or two modules
- Identifying SfL maths tutors who wanted to get involved - maths tutors were harder to recruit and it was more difficult to present global challenges, which naturally contain big numbers, as SfL maths courses have to deal with smaller numbers due to the differing abilities of the learners on these courses
- Supporting the delivery of the materials in the long term with large numbers of tutors after the funding ended in March 2008

Solution

- Tap into the enthusiasm of individual tutors and colleges to develop a project which proves its effectiveness. Spread this message as much as possible – through case studies – to encourage others to follow suit
- Seek as many partners as possible to increase the amount of people delivering the modules and able to give feedback
- Only two tutors were recruited, but both gave detailed and effective feedback which has helped in the development of additional maths resources
- Create a website with resources such as a book and CD Rom for schools and colleges to buy
- Updates on the project and its progress are also posted on the website

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Despite the project's initial focus on embedding the global dimension into SfL English and Maths, the appeal of the materials is much wider with ESOL, prison, adult learners, special needs and e2e tutors using them.

80 people are now signed up to the website and approximately 50 resource packs have been sold via the project's website and at events. One local authority has even bought a licence to upload the material to its Moodle (intranet) system.

More than 210 students have studied the modules the project produced. After studying Global Skills materials, one prison student has since gone on to study an Open University module on globalisation.

Feedback from everyone who has used the resources has been overwhelmingly positive, with one tutor saying they were, "inspired and enthused," and another saying that none of their students had refused to do the LGEC work despite refusing to do other work.

LESSONS LEARNT

- Just because the management of a further education college is on board, doesn't mean the classroom tutors who actually deliver the work will be. Involving educational institutions requires a two-pronged approach that achieves 'buy-in' from those in the classroom as well as management.
- Comprehensive background material needs supplying so tutors feel confident in delivering the information.
- Some tutors were concerned that some of the topics were controversial and they would find it difficult to deal with the reactions that were provoked. Some good resources are available to download to help tutors feel confident dealing with this situation if it arises.
- The vast majority of the learners trialling the materials in their classes were interested in finding out more about global issues and often the topics covered increased their motivation.
- The focus needs to stay on the primary topic – SfL English and Maths or ESOL – with the Global Skills materials supporting this learning, not taking over.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the Global Skills materials contact Vicky Hutchinson Global Skills Project Worker –

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For a practitioner's perspective contact Debra Hill, ESOL Curriculum Manager at Preston College at dhill1@preston.ac.uk

- Global Skills website www.lgec.org.uk/globalskills/
- Global Skills materials can be found at http://www.lgec.org.uk/main/publications_for_sale/
- Agree to disagree: Citizenship and controversial issues – Author Julia Fiehn available to download free from <http://www.post16citizenship.org/publications/>
- Teaching Controversial Issues – Oxfam (Designed for use in schools but has some good tips that can also be used in adult education) available to download free from http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/teachersupport/cpd/controversial/files/teaching_controversial_issues.pdf
- The Global Skills project was funded by the Department for International Development through the Development Awareness Fund (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/daf.asp>)
- DEA <http://www.dea.org.uk/>



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