

Planning an enquiry-based unit of work

Things to consider in planning an enquiry-based unit of work

The creative process of curriculum making does not necessarily follow the logical steps often set out in curriculum planning advice. The inspiration for a unit of work might come from specific geographical

source material, a television programme, from discussion with colleagues in other subjects, from conferences or from one's own particular interests and wider reading. The list below is not presented as a sequence for planning but simply as things that need to be considered when planning an enquiry-based unit of work.

Things to consider	Questions to consider in relation to the theme/place/issue being investigated
Geographical content of unit of work	What aspects of geography might be included? Are there specific requirements, e.g. from national curriculum or examinations, which have to be included? What key concepts and ideas might be introduced? What case studies might be used?
Students	What relevant knowledge will students bring to this unit of work (from everyday experience or from prior learning in school)? What skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy, graphical, ICT) will they already have? What are their likely needs e.g. do they need to learn new skills/techniques or will they need support when using challenging source materials? In what ways will their geographical thinking be extended beyond their prior knowledge and understanding?
Focus of enquiry	What key question might frame this unit of work? Is the key question intriguing and challenging? How will the key question and subsidiary questions be established (by teacher or through discussion)?
Role of teacher	Is the unit of work to be tightly or loosely structured? To what extent will students have opportunities to choose content, questions to investigate, activities, choice of techniques to use? If controversial issues are being investigated, what will the teacher's stance be? How will support be provided to students throughout the unit of work?
Sources of information	Will students be presented with specific sources of information? Will students have opportunities to search for information themselves? Will students be provided with guidance on sources of information, e.g. websites, references? How will students be encouraged to examine information critically?
How will students work?	Will students work individually, in pairs or in groups for all or part of the unit of work? What guidance will they be given on working collaboratively? Will there be presentation of information/ideas/explanations to the whole class? What opportunities will students have to discuss their work with each other (in whole-class, paired and group discussion)?

Things to consider	Questions to consider in relation to the theme/place/issue being investigated
Classroom processes and activities	<p>What initial stimulus will be provided to engage students?</p> <p>What activities might be incorporated into the unit of work to encourage students to make sense of it for themselves and to think geographically?</p> <p>Will there be a final outcome activity to provide a focus for the investigation?</p>
Learning	<p>What part will students play in negotiating learning outcomes?</p> <p>Which of the following will be important: acquiring specific knowledge of places; developing conceptual understanding; applying ideas to new case studies; investigating different viewpoints; learning new skills/techniques?</p> <p>How will the unit of work be debriefed, so that students reflect on what and how they have learnt?</p>
Assessment	<p>What will be assessed e.g. students' work during the unit of work, written work, oral work, final product?</p> <p>What will the assessment criteria be? Will students play a part in determining criteria?</p> <p>How will students' progress be assessed formatively?</p> <p>Will they become aware of what they need to do to improve?</p> <p>Will there be self or peer group assessment?</p>
Dissemination	<p>Will students' work be shared with others in the class through discussion or presentations?</p> <p>Will there be wider dissemination of students' work, e.g. through displays or through information presented on computers, to other classes or to parents?</p>