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From Concept to Classroom  
**Trainee teacher confidence in  
the 8 global learning concepts**



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Development

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**Sara Bennett, GLEAN ITE/ NQT Network Manager, worked with over 500 PGCE and BEd students during 2009-10, from a range of ITE providers in the south-west, to better understand levels of confidence around embedding global learning in classroom practice, using the eight global learning concepts from the DfES document 'Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum' (2005) as the starting point.**

These eight key concepts require that teachers foster knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes in their pupils in order to secure a more just, sustainable and economically viable world.

#### **Why GLEAN?**

*Global Learning Network South West* is a membership network to support, share and inspire more and better global learning across the south-west of England.

#### **What do we mean by 'global learning'?**

Learning that gets to the heart of education: creative and inspiring, fair and just, respectful of difference and optimistic about the future.

It places learning firmly in a global context and equips learners to participate confidently in our changing world as active global citizens who can change things for the better.

GLEAN can provide support for 'student voice', NQTs, ITE practitioners and trainees, Heads, teachers and other school staff.

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## From Concept to Classroom

# Trainee teacher confidence in the 8 global learning concepts

**Trainees from a range of south-west ITE providers who were already participating in GLEAN training events as a core part of their ITE experience were asked if they would participate in the survey and two follow up semi-structured interviews as follows:**

- 1. Survey - identify their two 'most confident' and 'least confident' concepts**
- 2. First semi-structured interview to explore**
  - whether or not they felt that their ITE experience had prepared them for embedding the eight concepts in their teaching**
  - what was missing from their ITE experience to achieve this**
- 3. Second semi-structured interview to explore**
  - the concept that trainees expressed least confidence in (*conflict resolution*)**
  - what it was about conflict resolution that made them feel unconfident as classroom practitioners**

507 trainees across primary (238) and secondary (269) took part in the survey and first semi-structured interview across eleven different training events. The response rate was 89%, high because trainees were already present at a training event and were able to participate as part of something that they had already signed up to.

483 (Primary – 222/ Secondary – 261) went on to participate in the second semi-structured interviews about conflict resolution.

The events were used to hear trainees' experiences, to think about what those experiences tell us, and to capture trainees' words for later reflection and use.

The findings of the second stage discussions about conflict resolution are written up in a separate GLEAN paper: 'Stand Against Violence: an impact on my life that will stay with me for life (In memory of Lloyd Fouracre 1987 – 2005)', available to download via the GLEAN website – [www.glean.org.uk](http://www.glean.org.uk)

This paper focuses on the first stage survey and semi-structured small group interviews with trainees.

In accordance with assurances of anonymity made to trainees, individuals are not identified at any point in this paper.

## The Survey

### *Eight Global Learning Concepts – Most and Least Confident*

Global Learning Concept	Confidence %					
	Overall		Primary		Secondary	
	Most	Least	Most	Least	Most	Least
<i>Conflict Resolution</i>	0	63	0	58	0	68
<i>Interdependence</i>	1	20	0	22	0	18
<i>Human rights</i>	3	11	1	14	5	8
<i>Values &amp; perceptions</i>	10	3	7	3	13	3
<i>Social justice</i>	9	2	10	3	8	1
<i>Global citizenship</i>	11	1	13	0	9	2
<i>Sustainable development</i>	14	0	15	0	13	0
<i>Diversity</i>	52	0	54	0	50	0

The findings were markedly similar across primary and secondary, with some minor differences which are worth noting:

1. *Both Primary and Secondary trainees stated that conflict resolution was their 'least confident' concept, albeit with a 10 point difference*
2. *Secondary trainees were more confident in human rights and values and perceptions*
3. *Primary were more confident in global citizenship*

## What the trainees had to say – from most to least confident

### Diversity

**understanding and respecting differences and relating those to common humanity**

I think that diversity has been a legal and a moral issue for teachers for many years now and it's just part of the job to encourage positive attitudes to diversity

*Primary trainee*

I agree that the diversity agenda has been with us for some time, but I also feel that it morphs and that we have to stay alert to changes in the national mindset. At the moment I feel that's schools are making a poor job of challenging Islamophobia

*Secondary trainee*

Many points were raised by trainees in the discourse about placing diversity at the heart of teaching and in the centre of the global classroom. In essence trainees felt that this was a core part of their job as teachers, that it covered all age ranges and that there were many different ways of supporting the building of positive attitudes to difference.

In summary trainees said

1. *Most schools have signed up in some way to promoting diversity and respect for difference*
2. *There are lots of different resources available to support teachers to do this – eg Multiverse website [www.multiverse.ac.uk](http://www.multiverse.ac.uk)*
3. *To a large extent this 'duty of care' is enshrined in law*
4. *In some instances schools are 'stuck' in certain ways of doing this that don't stay live to changes and new issues*

*and challenges, eg Islamophobia*

### Sustainable development

**understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now, without further damaging the planet for future generations**

THIS IS NOT A DIFFICULT AGENDA TO EMBRACE BECAUSE OF ALL THE EMPHASIS ON RECYCLING AND ENERGY SAVING. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOW VERY FAMILIAR WITH THIS

*Primary trainee*

Schools are required to address the sustainable schools agenda and this creates a good framework for working with young people on issues of sustainability

*Secondary trainee*

The majority of trainees felt committed to and comfortable with supporting pupils to think in more sustainable terms. Many of them were familiar with the Sustainable Schools agenda and had done teaching practice in schools that were positively engaged in working towards better sustainability. What was interesting was the perceived mismatch that some trainees reported in pupil's knowledge and behaviour - between knowing how to do it and actually doing it – seeing that their actions mattered. Trainees also spoke of the contested nature of sustainability:

What is 'sustainability' for one person hasn't even touched the sides for another  
(Secondary trainee)

In summary trainees said

1. *The sustainable schools agenda provides a clear framework to 'hold'*

*this work*

2. *Pupils are exposed to sustainability issues through a number of different medium*
3. *Some things are starting to be 'commonplace' for young people – eg recycling. Trainees reported pupils who were surprised to hear that recycling is still relatively new*
4. *There are complexities to matching rhetoric to action, reporting that lots of pupils talk positively about sustainability until it impacted on their lifestyles and in their eyes limited their choices*

### **Global citizenship**

**gaining the knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts and values necessary to become informed, active, responsible global citizens**

Overall I feel pretty confident about supporting the pupils to act as responsible global citizens. I think that they are more ready to see themselves in this way than I was as a younger person. They are so connected to the worldwide web and to easy access to communication through social networking and so on

*Primary trainee*

I believe that young people naturally want to be global in their thinking and acting. They are very exposed to this through television and the media generally. As a teacher it's my role to make sure that they always have a global mindset, but this can become stereotyped very easily. The challenge is to make it more than just fundraising for poor Africans

*Secondary trainee*

Again trainees placed global citizenship at the core of their duties as teachers. Interestingly much of the discourse focused on local as well as global, in other words the need to support young people to become active citizens in their own schools and communities, and active actors in their own lives. Trainees talked about transferrable skills and about supporting young people to feel comfortable in their own skin and in their own identity in order to become confident global citizens.

In summary trainees said

1. *Now more than ever young people are exposed to a range of media and social networking opportunities that make them more aware of their global world*
2. *Trainees linked active global citizenship very strongly to local citizenship, and spoke of their role in supporting young people's self-esteem. Essentially, young people feel negative towards others if they feel negative about themselves*
3. *Some trainees noted the need for more complex global mindsets – getting away from stereotypes of the west as being superior*

### **Social justice**

**understanding the importance of social justice as an element in both sustainable development and the improved welfare of all people**

Yes I'm pretty confident about social justice issues and I think young people are predisposed to talk about these issues and find them interesting

*Primary trainee*

I try to weave the concept of social justice into all of my teaching, I think the mistake is to 'do' social justice in some lessons and not think about it in others. For me – just the way I manage my classroom and the behaviour I model has resonance for social justice

*Secondary trainee*

Trainees talked about social justice as a mindset that should permeate all teaching. All school-centred discourse should have the concept of social justice and social justice implications as its backdrop. Trainees talked about the importance of this in terms of supporting young people to develop global competencies and to see themselves as being part of a global family.

In summary trainees said

1. *Young people are on the whole familiar and comfortable with thinking about the implications of social issues and global justice*
2. *Key movements such as Fair Trade have helped young people to frame their purchasing choices in a fairer context – but trainees felt that there was much still to be done to raise awareness, particularly in the fashion industry*
3. *Trainees noted that social justice is an easy concept for young people to sign up to when it doesn't limit their own actions and choices, and less so when it does*
4. *Trainees spoke of their anxiety about social justice being seen only in terms of fundraising appeals to help those less well off, and the stereotypes that come with this*

## Values & perceptions

**developing a critical evaluation of images of the world and an appreciation of the effect these can have on people's attitudes and values**

It took me a while to realise that as much as anything this was about me and my attitudes and values. Once I'd got my head around this I took on board the importance of role modelling as a teacher. If I am fair, respectful, tolerant and empathic then that can have a profound effect on the children in my care

*Primary trainee*

I try to develop empathy amongst young learners, and my approach has been to try to get them to not just read about or look at things, but to try to 'experience' them. I really think that it is through experiential learning that we can best build empathy and understanding

*Secondary trainee*

Trainees found the debate around values and perceptions challenging and stimulating. They spoke of the contested and changing nature of the world, and the fact that young people need to be supported to constantly question and adapt their values and perceptions and to update their own models of the world. Many trainees felt that it was the values and attitudes that they modelled which had the most direct influence on this, as well as their confidence levels to encourage debate about controversial issues.

In summary trainees said

1. *There is not one set of values and attitudes that teachers should aim to foster*
2. *Teachers should be aiming to support young people to confidently engage*

*with complexity and change and to debate those issues*

- 3. In the same way that teachers are encouraged to become self-reflective practitioners, they too should be encouraging this in their pupils*
- 4. Modelling is crucial – the teacher's own behaviour and well-defined values; believing in sustainable development, the need to challenge prejudice, respect for difference, can have a profound influence on young people*

### Human rights

knowing about human rights issues and legislation including the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

THIS IS TRICKY BECAUSE I DIDN'T FEEL THAT I HAD THE KNOWLEDGE MYSELF

*Primary trainee*

Talking about human rights is trickiest I think when the human rights abuse has a direct link to consumer choices, so talking about an ethical fashion industry is challenging with teenagers!

*Secondary trainee*

The majority of trainees across all subject specialisms acknowledged their role in supporting young people to understand that human rights issues were important and that human rights abuses should be of concern to us all. Many trainees felt that the best way to go about this was to look to current issues in the news, and in particular to focus on issues that affected young people of a similar age to those that they were teaching. Many trainees expressed concern that their own knowledge

was limited and that this made them feel less confident to tackle human rights issues. Other trainees expressed anxiety at possible negative responses from parents to certain issues such as the rights of gay people.

In summary trainees said

- 1. Human rights should sit at the centre of a global 21st century education*
- 2. Using topical issues in the news helps to bring this to life, but historical perspectives are also important (many trainees talked about using the British Red Cross resource – News Think! – [www.redcross.org.uk/education](http://www.redcross.org.uk/education))*
- 3. Anxiety was expressed about human rights issues potentially coming in to conflict with parents and pupils views, and many trainees said that they would have liked more support to develop their thinking around teaching controversial issues*

### Interdependence

understanding how people, places, economies and environments are all inextricably interrelated

I THINK THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SUPPORT YOUNG LEARNERS TO SEE THAT THEIR ACTIONS AND CHOICES HAVE A GLOBAL IMPACT

*Primary trainee*

I have found that it is only through sustained interventions that pupils begin to acknowledge the impact that they can have on global issues. One off interventions don't do the trick – you have to return to this again and again

*Secondary trainee*

There was overwhelming agreement that the notion of interdependence and the fact that our actions have global consequences are crucial concepts for us all to embrace. The dangers of not supporting young people to understand their global connectedness were acknowledged as profound. Trainees expressed great anxiety about how to do this, and the key focus of debate was on how to keep connectedness positive and not negative, in other words how to make our global interdependency work for us all. Many trainees spoke about their difficulties in keeping this debate positive and optimistic and reflected that young people very quickly feel that their choices are being limited and that they can't have an impact on the world for the better as individuals.

In summary trainees said:

1. *Our interdependence is a profound and undeniable truth*
2. *Young people need to be supported to view this interdependence in a positive way*
3. *Young people need to be supported to understand that they can have a positive individual impact on our global world, it is their agenda and their actions do count*
4. *It's difficult to talk about connectedness without talking about what we have to give up, and how we have to be 'inconvenienced', and this can easily become a negative discourse*

### Conflict resolution

**understanding how conflicts are a barrier to development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of harmony**

I STRUGGLE WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION. THE OTHER CONCEPTS FEEL LESS SCARY, BUT WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION I STRUGGLE TO GET THE BALANCE BETWEEN DAY TO DAY LIFE AND GLOBAL CONFLICTS

*Primary trainee*

No doubt about it – conflict resolution is the toughest. How can I share my feelings about global conflict when I feel so overwhelmed by them and unable to understand them myself

*Primary trainee*

I need much more support to tackle conflict resolution in my classroom. I'm not ready to go global. I want to focus on active citizenship here and now – in the school – and seek resolutions to the conflicts that my pupils engage in on a day to day basis

*Secondary trainee*

What was striking in the survey was the overwhelming agreement that conflict resolution was the concept that trainees felt least confident about (63%), and least well equipped to translate into classroom practice. Trainees talked about wanting more time in their ITE experience to debate this further and to explore conflict resolution as a 'teaching topic'. They wanted more support from their ITE tutors to explore ways in which they could translate this into the reality of their classroom.

In summary trainees said

1. *Solely punitive responses to conflict in schools gets in the way of resolution*
2. *Commitment to including conflict resolution in classroom teaching*
3. *The need to support young people to better manage local conflict, conflict*

*within their own peer groups, within their own school and community*

4. *Strong emphasis on conflict resolution an issue for all teachers across all specialisms, not the responsibility of certain subject areas*
5. *The trainees saw conflict as an inevitable part of their young learner's lives; what mattered was not so much that it happened, but what skills, attitudes and ways of being young people took to conflict situations*
6. *Trainees were most engaged in talking about how they as classroom practitioners might have a positive impact on young people's behaviour in terms of conflict management and resolution, and much of the discourse centred on this*

As the least confident of the eight global learning concepts, trainee's thoughts on conflict resolution has been written up in a separate GLEAN paper - *Stand Against Violence: an impact on my life that will stay with me for life (In memory of Lloyd Fouracre 1987-2005)*, available to download via the GLEAN website – [www.glean.org.uk](http://www.glean.org.uk)



## From Concept to Classroom

### Conclusions

**There was overwhelming agreement that the eight global learning concepts provided a useful framework in which to locate global learning.**

Trainees made lots of suggestions for ways in which their ITE experience could be improved to better equip them to embed global learning in their classroom practice. Much of this discourse has been captured in the GLEAN paper *Re-orientating ITE to address global learning* (available to download from [www.glean.org.uk](http://www.glean.org.uk)).

Key findings from this paper include

- 1. Trainees felt strongly that global learning is not a topic, or a subject specialism or even a particular scheme of work. Global learning is everything I say and everything I do and is quite simply 'good teaching'**
- 2. Trainees recognised the need for their own behaviour to model global citizenship and to reflect attitudes and values that marked them as respectful and empathic individuals**
- 3. Trainees felt that much of their teaching had to challenge and not collude with stereotypes of people and stereotypical views of the world. They recognised the dangers of a simplistic approach to global learning, which in their view underpinned rather than challenged colonial thinking and practice**
- 4. Trainees acknowledge that young people quickly get negative when their learning leads them to conclude that they need to make changes in their own lives, eg where they buy their clothes, what electronic gadgets they have etc**

- 5. Trainees expressed the view very strongly that global learning has to be sustained. There have to be specific global learning interventions, but also each school has to adopt a global learning mindset that gives constant messages to young people about our interconnectedness and our global future**

### References

The eight global learning concepts found on pages 12-13 of the DfES document *Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum* (2005) (download at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/0/1723](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/0/1723))



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