Learning for Sustainability: Making the UN SDGs real through Connecting Classrooms

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Plan

1. Scottish and international context
2. Learning for Sustainability: Connecting Classrooms
3. Research method, analysis and findings
4. Preliminary conclusions and next steps
1. Context

Global and national call for a response to the global sustainability crisis

- specifically the UN Sustainable Development Goals (to which the Scottish Government have expressed their commitment)

‘These SDGs form a vision for the world that I believe people of Scotland share …’
Nicola Sturgeon 2015
1. Context

British Council Connecting Classrooms 2015-18
Based on 6 core skills:
UNESCO transversal skills, 6Cs framework
developed by Fullan and Langworthy

• Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
• Collaboration and Communication
• Creativity and Imagination
• Citizenship
• Digital Literacy
• Student Leadership and Personal Development

‘Young people better positioned to live in a globalised economy and contribute responsibly to society both locally and globally.’
1. Context

Addresses the Scottish Government’s educational policy priorities

- specifically that: every learner has an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability; every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice

[https://education.gov.scot/improvement/lfs1vision](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/lfs1vision)
2. LfS: Connecting Classrooms

• Focus on the British Council Core Skills, ‘Critical thinking and problem solving and citizenship

• Critically considering teaching and learning within a Learning for Sustainability context

• Practitioner enquiry involving practical application, reflection and evaluation of impact
2. LfS: Connecting Classrooms

Ten week course
- Delivered in fortnightly blocks
- Practitioner enquiry in school/classroom context
- Two face to face sessions
- On-line sessions in between
- Tutor contact throughout/set fortnightly tasks/activities

Approx. ten months active reflection
- Developing action/reflecting within professional context
- Continued online contact with tutors, course participants

Continuous reflective discussions and series of ‘check ins’ throughout
- peer and tutor feedback
2. LfS: Connecting Classrooms

10 week course

Blocks of content

1  2  3  4  5

Contact points

Face to face session  Discussion forums  Face to face session

Practitioner Enquiry

Course long – application, evaluation of impact, reflection
2. LfS: Connecting Classrooms

Weeks
1/2 Introduction to Learning for Sustainability and Critical thinking and problem solving
3/4 Exploring values and perspectives
5/6 Curriculum areas and interdisciplinary learning
7/8 Learner voice and engagement
9/10 Developing strategies for future support and action
2. LfS: Connecting Classrooms

234 teachers from 27 of the 33 local authorities in Scotland have completed the course (to June 2017)
3. Research, analysis and findings

One cohort sample - 25 teachers from X local authorities
April – June 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Support Needs</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Practitioner Enquiry

Teachers engaging in Practitioner Enquiry are:

- Knowing why, knowing what, knowing how
- Legitimate knowledge creators
- Knowing and evidencing impact
- Questioning
- Thinking
- Being and becoming an enquiring professional

Developing professional knowledge and understanding
Developing an enquiring position
Having a voice
Being critical
Leading and developing
Investigating
Exposing beliefs, assumptions, values and practices
Developing understanding
Jack in the box

Enquiry in professional context to bring reflection into practice and exemplify how this translates into professional action

Evidence of outcomes and impact - the impact of this learning on self, learners and colleagues
**3. Research, analysis and findings**

**Practitioner Enquiry**

**Focus of Enquiry**
What do you want to change?

What did you do?

**Outcomes and Impact**
Examples of impact on learners, self and colleagues-

**Learning for others**
## 3. Enquiry Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDG</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Enquiry focus (no. teachers)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No Poverty</td>
<td>2 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Zero Hunger</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good Health and wellbeing</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gender Equality</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reduced inequalities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sustainable cities and communities</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Responsible consumption and production</td>
<td>1 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Climate Action</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Life below Water</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Life on Land</td>
<td>3 *</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Peace, justice and strong institutions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Partnerships for action</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
Reflection Framework encourages learners to consider their self-evaluation against the GTCS Professional Standards.

‘Learning for Sustainability has been embedded within the Standards to support teachers in actively embracing and promoting principles and practices of sustainability in all aspects of their work’.

(GTCS 2012, The Standards for Registration p.3; The Standard for Career-Long Professional learning p.3; The Standards for Leadership and Management p.3)
Children's voice led to questions and enquiry about Spring, pollen, bees.

Led to videos, reading, discussion, visit of a local beekeeper and his hive.

Led to understanding of the diminishing bee population - took action to address this by creating a bee garden.

committed to helping colleagues in developing skills to explore sustainability through child led inquiry.

‘children have deeper knowledge and understanding of helping to sustain bees.’

‘Parents influenced to buy plants to attract bees.’

‘the child led interest and inquiry made it successful’

‘enabled me to develop my skills in consultative planning with children’
Reframing Learning: Children and Young People’s Engagement with Real-World Issues

**Primary**

**Child Poverty**

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Thinking, feel, do’ discussion to find ways to make school fairer for all

Creative ideas e.g., non-themed discos, uniform swap shop, school time for homework that needs IT, longer time to pay for school trips

The children were very keen to problem-solve ways to poverty-proof the school day. They could see the direct impact of their actions on a fairer system for all.

‘I am committed to engaging learners in real world issues’

‘There have been considerable changes in our school community and we all need to respond’
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Discussion and questioning learners’ values, what fairness means.

Investigated consumer, business, raw materials and workforce perspectives on phone production.

Led to alternative design suggestions based on the learners’ values and knowledge.

‘Self directed research was a powerful way to create positivity.’

‘It introduced a level of mindfulness not usually explored in the Department.’

‘I have approached the Science Dept. with the idea of teaching across subject areas.’

‘I can raise awareness in a holistic and seamless way rather than as an add on.’
3. Learning Points

• Work with the **needs and interests of learners**
• Plan for **high levels of pupil engagement**, discussion and decision making.
• Learners are able to tackle controversial issues from an early age and it is **motivating** to explore real-life situations of the SDGs
• Discussions need to be well structured and progression planned.
• Learning associated with SDGs is well suited to **interdisciplinary learning**
• Maintaining momentum involves planning, monitoring and maintenance of appropriate
4. Preliminary Conclusions

**Blended learning courses**

- Encouragement to develop professional enquiry within their school or local authority context has led to sharing with colleagues.
- Value of including LfS in Improvement Planning and as part of Professional Review and Development discussions.
4. Next steps

1. Full evaluation of blended learning courses 2015-2018
   • British Council M&E process (project-wide)
     Baseline and end of course surveys
   • Face to face sessions

2. Fully Online 10 week course - pilot Sept- Dec 2017

What do you hope to gain?

‘Heart, hand, head, bin’
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