European, global and intercultural dimension in curriculum development

There are global and intercultural dimensions integrated within the Northern Ireland Curriculum [2].

In primary education (which covers the Foundation Stage [3]and Key Stages [4] 1 and 2, ages 4-11), there are 7 broad areas of learning, 2 of which cover internationalisation and global citizenship.

- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)** [5] includes teaching about the need for mutual respect and understanding in the community and in the wider world.
- **The World Around Us** [6] contains a strand on interdependence, which includes learning about how people interact in the world, the global economy and how different countries rely on one another for goods, services and knowledge.

In secondary education, ‘**Learning for Life and Work**’ [7]’ is a compulsory area of learning for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages 11-16). It covers local and global citizenship and aims to enable pupils to examine the impact of globalisation on employment, and identify and exercise their rights and social responsibilities in relation to local, national and global issues. A **General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)** [8] qualification in ‘Learning for Life and Work’ was introduced in 2009, with the first awards made in 2011.

There is no statutory requirement for the teaching of **modern languages** at primary level (ages 4 to 11), but schools are encouraged to teach additional languages under the ‘language and literacy’ area of learning of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In secondary education, the teaching of modern languages is compulsory at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), and pupils in Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16) have an entitlement to a course in a modern language. At both Key Stage 3 and 4, pupils should be offered at least 1 course in an official language of the European Union (other than English or, in Irish-speaking schools, Irish).

A number of **resources** are available to support teachers to bring a global dimension to their teaching, including information about training opportunities and exchanges abroad. Information and resources are, for example, provided via **Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL)** [9], which was launched in September 2018 and is jointly funded by the **British Council** [10] and the UK Department for International Development (DFID [11]). The ‘Connecting Classrooms’ website provides access to a range of free resources to enable teachers of all subjects to add a global dimension to the
curriculum and encourage collaborative working. See the Connecting Classrooms NI website[12] for further information.

Two programmes managed by the British Council also aim to support the development of international elements within the curriculum:

- Commonwealth Class [13] comprises a series of resources aimed at exploring Commonwealth values
- the International School Award [14] is an accreditation which provides a framework for embedding international learning activities in the curriculum and school culture.

Examples of other resources supporting the global dimension in the curriculum include the Global Dimension resources [15] produced by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) [16] for Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11-14).

**Partnerships and networks**

The Connecting Classrooms [12] programme, which is jointly funded by the British Council and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), supports schools in Northern Ireland to engage in international school partnership projects. For further information on partnerships and networks with schools abroad, see the article ‘Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Early Childhood and School Education [17]’ for England.

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General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)


[10] https://www.britishcouncil.org/


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