

TITLE

Think global, achieve local

KEY CONCEPTS

Critical thinking, student voice, global/local, metacognition, real-world science, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Natalie is a science teacher concerned with how global issues in education may impact on classroom realities. She wants her students to gain a critical insight into the principles which underpin the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) surveys so they can explore how these results are linked to science teaching.

The project starts with a classroom discussion about a few newspaper headlines which draw on PISA results to make “sensational” claims (eg “our education is the worst”). After the discussion, Natalie asks her students to find out how PISA became so relevant across the world. To achieve this goal they use a simple research framework and the web to gather materials and evidence about the assumptions underpinning PISA science questions (eg “real-world applications of science”). Sample questions are also examined.

Students make use of the “people bank” network to get in touch with education and policy experts and others with an understanding of real-world science. This is crucial in helping students “unpack”, and critically question, the values which underpin science as a school subject in PISA and in other settings. At the project end, students present individual and collective accounts of how such surveys impact on them as individuals or as a whole school.

TREND/S

Increasing importance of global comparisons

Education in Europe is increasingly influenced by global comparisons. This trend is shaped mainly by International league tables like PISA and TIMSS, which attract headlines on newspapers and are having a great influence on current education policies across the continent.

21st century skills in practice

Teachers are increasingly expected to incorporate the so called 21st skills in daily teaching. These include media and ICT literacy, communication, problem solving and collaboration.

VISION (ASPIRATIONS & AIMS)

- to develop critical awareness of how global issues in education impact on real teaching and learning

ENVIRONMENT

- the traditional classroom, technology-enhanced and connected to online environments
- the distributed network of the “people bank”, an international network of experts, schools and parents (see Resources).

PEOPLE & ROLES

- peers and parents as a resource
- teacher as a subject specialist and a facilitator of debates and peer-based learning
- external experts (from businesses and R&D labs) in the “people bank”

INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- dialogic interactions
- guided classroom discussions
- project-based and enquiry-based learning

ACTIVITIES

- teacher preparation and research
- classroom discussion
- guided enquiry and research using a framework (WWWH)
- communication with peers and experts
- development of individual and collective accounts (writing + using digital media)

RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- the “people bank”, an international network of experts, schools and parents categorised by interests, topics, school subjects, industries etc.
- online material around PISA
- digital media creation and editing