

Some innovative local links teaching ideas have been supplied for teachers by teachers. These include further ideas about the types of links that could be formed, how the links can benefit the geography department of a school, what opportunities there are in the curriculum for developing links and how these add value to teaching and learning.

What types of institutions could local links be made with?

The list could be endless:

- Local authorities, particularly Planning, Technical Services, Architects, Heritage, Leisure and Tourism, Refuse and Waste management Depts, Town Twinning (Borough and District Councils); Strategic Planning, Transport (roads and public transport), Records and Archives, Local Studies, Libraries, Recycling (County and Unitary Authorities)
- Estate Agents, developers and private architects firms
- Farms, large and small, agribusiness
- Agricultural colleges
- Forestry operations
- Gravel extraction and other extractive industries as appropriate locally
- Manufacturing industry as appropriate locally
- Retail outlets large and small down to market stall holders
- Public/private utilities – gas, electricity, water
- Private/public transport companies – rail, public transport, bus services
- Local newspapers and media generally
- HEd links – research in education and geography; curric development, INSET, CPD, mentoring
- LEA links – local networking, disseminating good practice, curric development, INSET, CPD, mentoring
- Religious groups – cultural diversity, world wide links
- NGOs e.g. Oxfam, Christian Aid, Cafod, Action Aid – teaching resources, third world links, finance for projects, advisory support, visiting speakers
- Environmental organisations, national and local, e.g. WWF and local Civic Societies, CPRE, pressure groups
- Tow path regeneration
- Ceramic suppliers
- PGCE students, mentoring, ITT
- Work experience and work shadowing for pupils, industry visits for teachers

How are these curriculum based links embedded in schemes of work?

- Farms: Images, interviews with farmer, pupils write to farm on suggestions for diversification
- National Parks: Some Area Rangers visit schools for one day to teach through Role-Play on conflict in National Parks and the CROW Act (Citizens Right of Way). Help with map work interpretation.
- International Links can involve some geographical fieldwork and exchange of pupils.
- Pupils use a local water company to investigate two river valleys with a view to making a decision as to which of the two is best for locating a reservoir. Activities could include visiting a reservoir, inviting an expert to talk to pupils during fieldwork, having a visitor to school to pump-prime the project with pupils and covers/slide binders for the completed project.
- Working with a local travel agency on a joint Geography/English GCSE project. Pupils research a tourist destination of choice using brochures provided and write an extended, illustrated essay, in the style of a quality newspaper article. Travel Agents provide brochures, school visitors to support geography lessons and in some cases industry placements.

How can these links benefit the geography department of a school?

- data, e.g. on local geographical and environmental issues; raw materials for teaching resources
- expert/visiting speakers
- interviewees for fieldwork and individual studies
- advisory input on a range of educational and environmental topics
- NGOs can give an interdependence dimension to local and global issues
- increase awareness of key concepts and issues, updates knowledge and understanding.
- Meets the Departmental and School Development Plan.
- Motivates teachers into creating new and up to date resources.

- Enables teachers to be up to date with geographical thinking and emphasises the importance of Geography to the world of work.
- Raising public profile of the school and geography department, with the potential to win awards.
- Work with local companies could be turned into a corporate video showing how schools and the company could work well together.
- Bringing visitors into school helps to raise the profile in the local community at a time of increased competition between local schools.

What opportunities are there for developing links within the various phases of the secondary curriculum?

- There are obvious links with Geography KS3/4/5 N.C., GCSE, AS, A2 programmes of study and syllabi – topics, themes, strands drawn from these and core geography curriculum (see embedding links into schemes section)
- Also opportunities to develop skills of recording, thinking, analysis, research, etc, plus empathy through problem solving, decision making, and other simulations based on local issues
- More interesting perhaps are the links that can be developed to support the new Citizenship, PSHE (including careers, work placements), and ESD frameworks particularly where these relate closely with geographical themes and key questions. However there is a danger, reported by Ofsted among others, that the links-type of Citizenship is often not very effective in Citizenship terms.

How can these add value to the learning and teaching of geography?

- Enhances teaching by increasing realism stimulating greater engagement by pupils because the material used is local. They can relate to these activities more or should do particularly when active methods are used
- Should enhance pupils' sense of (local) place
- Pupils motivated with new enthusiastic adults to work with.
- Learning enhanced when a teacher can work from first hand experience.
- Motivation for these projects seems to be greater and can produce better results at GCSE and A Level.

What can be done to maximise the development of links?

- The Head Teacher needs to fully support the project.
- The school and company need a link person.
- The school needs to take the lead role in creating the pupil activities.
- Celebration of pupil's projects.
- Certification and recognition of pupil projects. In house on accredited certificates.
- Celebrate projects in the media.
- The appointment of a Business and Enterprise Manger may make some links easier.
- Have a School-Industry co-ordinator
- Keep up a dialogue with key personnel throughout the year.
- Have clear aims and ensure that the business will benefit, even if in a small way – ie a two –way process
- Build in review sessions to the school/business calendar
- Delegate tasks within the department to keep all on board
- Build industry links into the departmental plan/do/review cycle.
- Be able to adapt positively to changes in key personnel in industry
- Use your local Education Business Partnership for advice
- Don't ask for money

How do links benefit the businesses and organisations involved?

- Publicity.
- Good public image.
- Displays of pupil's work with industrial partners in the school, which parents on open evenings can see.
- Pupils could give presentations at conferences to representatives from the City council, local industry, School Partners, International Partners, and other pupils.
- Visitors to schools gain an insight into what actually happens in the classroom and are therefore better informed as to the requirements of GCSE an A level projects.

Other comments:

- Clearly links with organisations need cultivation and fostering. There are obviously dangers in overuse, short time scales, poor liaison, exploitation, lack of empathy about pressures on the organisation, etc
- Often we under-use the school-industry links already developed by careers/work placement staff.