



Key Stage 3 – Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)

On 28th November 2006, the government launched the **Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto** which set out the vision of enabling every young person to experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of their learning and personal development. The Manifesto declared that:

“Learning Outside The Classroom aims to get children and young people out and about. These experiences can take place in the school grounds, in the local environment or further afield on day trips or residential visits.”

Yet in early 2008, OFSTED issued a report into Geography which stated:

“The majority of the primary and secondary schools in the survey did not recognise the value of fieldwork sufficiently and did not fulfil the requirement to provide it. Concerns about health and safety, curriculum time, expertise and budgets reduced the amount and effectiveness of fieldwork. Yet schools with a good programme of fieldwork find that this motivates pupils and enhances their interest in geography, as reflected in the better take-up of geography at Key Stage 4.” [**Geography in schools - changing practice**, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted).]

Whilst as geographers, almost all of us recognises the value of LotC, you will also recognise many of the constraints highlighted in the OFSTED Report. Where individual schools and local authorities are supportive of the efforts of teachers to develop opportunities to work in the school grounds, in the local community and further afield, fieldwork continues to thrive but the reality is that fieldwork has declined in many schools, particularly in relation to work at KS3. The aim of this Guide is to highlight opportunities to develop and reinvigorate learning outside the classroom, particularly in relation to the Teaching Units already provided on the GTT website.

Alongside the work of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) and the Geographical Association, there is growing support for teachers to promote LOtC and in April 2009 the new **Council for Learning Outside the Classroom** takes over responsibility for the LOtC Manifesto and will exist to drive forward its aims.

The **Geography Teaching Today** website already has a comprehensive section giving advice and ideas on fieldwork practice. If you haven't already seen it and are looking for details of procedures for planning fieldwork, for dealing with health and safety issues and for fieldwork techniques, then check it out at:

<http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/fieldwork/>

Like all the sections on the GTT website, materials are constantly being added and it is worthwhile making repeat visits to see the latest additions e.g. March 2008 a section on 'Fieldwork Around Water' was being highlighted.

The sixteen teaching modules currently hosted on the GTT website provide a wide range of opportunities to link the classroom teaching and learning with learning outside the classroom – some of the ideas relate to students carrying out short pieces of individual work perhaps as a homework activity, whilst others are suitable for group and class work requiring anything from a lesson to a full day in the local community. If fieldwork visits are possible at KS3 to more distant locations, then the opportunities are even greater to link in with a wider variety of the teaching modules. Inevitably, what you are able to plan and do will depend on the community and settlement where the school is located.

As with the other User Guides in this series, the aim is to give a range of examples and provide ideas – details will still need to be worked out in order to implement these ideas. The GTT Fieldwork Section may well provide some of the further detail needed on techniques, equipment, etc.



The Geography of My Stuff

Exploring food miles, child labour and online purchasing

This teaching module looks at the relationship between the retail habits of teenagers and the wider world. It also looks at the benefits and challenges provided by the recycling of retail waste. Both aspects of this unit provide the chance to get students to make use of their local community and the settlement they live in to collect data, make observations and carry out both individual and group fieldwork activities.

Although a well established fieldwork procedure, retail land use mapping is increasingly taking on a new importance as the urban high street landscape is rapidly changing due to the current economic recession that is likely to be a feature of 2009-2010 at least. There has been a steady evolution of town centre retail land use patterns as a relatively small sub-set of well known commercial names has taken over from the smaller individual and family firms that used to dominate town centres. The development of the ‘clone town’ concept has become more and more relevant to almost every medium and large settlement in the country. Details of the fieldwork are given here:

<http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/fieldwork/info/local-learning/local-area-studies/clone-towns-a-fieldwork-investigation/>

Students could now adapt these well-tried ideas to incorporate the impact of the demise of a whole range of formerly well known names including the iconic ‘Woolworths’.



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Which other stores may ‘disappear’?

What will be the impact on consumers of the loss of these well-known high street names?

Who will occupy the spaces left by the demise of these stores?

Could these retail premises be used for new purposes?

The debate about recycling retail and consumer waste has become more pertinent as companies continue to ‘over-package’ products and costs of recycling waste are reduced by shipping the waste overseas. There are many opportunities for students to survey the packaging used on a wide range of products preferably comparing different companies selling the same or similar products. Waste can be categorised, weighed and analysed for the potential to be recycled. There is also scope to look at the recycling habits of individual companies as well as the facilities provided for consumers. Questions about the ease and cost to consumers of recycling retail waste can be related to the issue of ‘food miles’ and the source of many of the products that we use in everyday life.



Who wants to live forever?

Looking into life expectancy and our ageing population

One of the activities that is carried out only rarely during fieldwork is localised provision for particular community groups – in this case provision for the elderly. This is a topic that could be looked at in various ways and at various scales. Land use planning either through local paper maps, online maps or primary fieldwork investigation could be used to highlight the location of sheltered housing and care homes for the elderly – is there any kind of pattern or obvious rationale for the locations of these properties? At a more general level, census data can be used to map areas of a settlement with high percentages of 65+ population and students can then relate these maps to their own personal knowledge of the areas highlighted. Trying to get the students to empathise with a group of people radically different to the teenagers themselves is always an interesting exercise and encourages the students to think a little more sympathetically about the needs and fears of this group of people.

At a different level, there is plenty of scope for students to analyse local street scenes in terms of accessibility for older people and particularly those who are disabled in some way. This sort of exercise encourages students to look much more closely at areas they may superficially feel very familiar with but in reality we all take most of our local territory very much for granted – certainly we don’t think about familiar areas in terms of how other people might see and use them. Reports can be produced mapping features, highlighting good points and problems and offering solutions. Using a GPS unit to determine precise locations can add a degree of quality to the data collection process and allow students to plot data on Google Maps, etc.



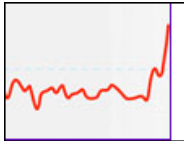
London 2012

Using the Games to look at environmental and urban change at a range of scales.

The 2012 Olympics teaching module is an obvious example of a unit with plenty of potential for fieldwork of various kinds. It can also serve as an example of the doing work based on the impact of a wide variety of other kinds of human activity from redeveloping a shopping centre to building a waste incinerator. The basis of all this work is for students to take a baseline view of a community prior to change, looking at the impact of the development on the community prior to completion and then analysing any long-term benefits and problems. Many schools in and around London as well as in and around the other centres where events will take place e.g. sailing facilities around Weymouth in Dorset, mountain biking around Hadleigh Farm in Essex will be able to look at this specific issue. The **London 2012** website provides a good general overview of venues and the benefits these will potentially bring to each area:

<http://www.london2012.com/sports-and-venues.php>

If students are looking at alternative local redevelopment issues, they will need to access local authority websites in order to build an understanding of plans and proposed impacts. These can then be used as the baseline for local fieldwork studies looking at the impact on people, environment, housing, transport, etc.



Changing Climates

Discussing the facts about climate change and the predictions for the future

Although the concept underpinning this teaching module is a global issue – global climate change- there is good reason to incorporate some local and national data collection and analysis into the work in order to develop a better understanding of the complexity of the issue. Students of all ages often struggle to understand the fundamental difference between weather and climate and even the newspapers all too readily fall into the trap of dismissing the process of global warming after a short sharp spell of cold weather. There is no better way for students to understand the difference between our short-term weather patterns and our long term climate patterns than by collecting weather data and if continued over enough time, then analysing the pattern that emerges.



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The background to doing this successfully is excellently explained in this GTT document:

http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk/images/text/FW_weather_station_article.doc

Once students have access to local weather data and some understanding of how it is collected, they can then begin to compare their data with that collected by schools in other parts of the country. The **London Grid for Learning** provides an excellent facility for making this comparison:

<http://weather.lgfl.org.uk/>

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Useful General References:

LOtC website:

<http://www.lotc.org.uk/>

Government Manifesto for **LOtC**:

<http://www.lotc.org.uk/getdoc/f8891c8f-eec5-454c-b3d3-92f1aa36ae25/Manifesto>

Code of Practice (Geographical Association and Field Studies Council):

<http://www.geography.org.uk/download/REFieldworkposter.pdf>