

Section 2

PLANNING A TOPIC

The notes in this section are not meant to provide you with the content for a topic, but to suggest a participatory process for how you can agree what this might look like, and how it will be taught. It is an attempt to put into practice the Learning for Sustainability approach described in Section 1.

PREPARATION

To come to a shared understanding of Learning for Sustainability in the context of your school, you might like to refer to Activity 2 in WWF's *Pathways: A Development Framework for School Sustainability* (visit www.wwflearning.co.uk and click on 'Resource bank' then 'Treasure chest'). It might also be useful to adapt this process to share views and understanding of 'consumption' and 'ecological footprint', particularly if team teaching is planned, so that pupils can benefit from different understandings and approaches.

An attempt to list some aspects of consumption and how these connect to other aspects of sustainability is shown in the 'Core issues' diagram on p6 of Section 1. This might be a starting point for connecting the issues to the curriculum subjects/topics currently taught in your school.

Only one earth

What we consume and how we dispose of waste products, has become a key focus for WWF's work. The *Living Planet Report 2004* (visit <http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/lpr2004.pdf>) illustrates that as humanity's ecological footprint increases, more and more of the earth's natural wealth such as wildlife, forests, rivers and seas are destroyed.

Much of this destruction is a by-product of economic growth, and results from human consumption and waste. The problems are made more complex by the huge disparities between the affluent western life style and those who still exist at subsistence level. If everyone in the world had our current western life style, we would need three planets to sustain us. How can we move to a 'one planet' life style that is acceptable and equitable?

THE PROCESS

The generic framework for planning a topic or a whole scheme of work (see diagram) is structured around three sets of key questions, and has been adapted from an environmental education based model in the States, to make it relevant to Learning for Sustainability and the UK school context.

In order to demonstrate how the framework could be used to think through a specific topic on communities, beneath the diagram we have listed some suggestions and tools which link to the key questions.

Notes to diagram

Outputs are the products or services delivered to the pupils. These might include the number of lessons or time needed for the topic and the quality of the topic, usually gained through formal and informal feedback.

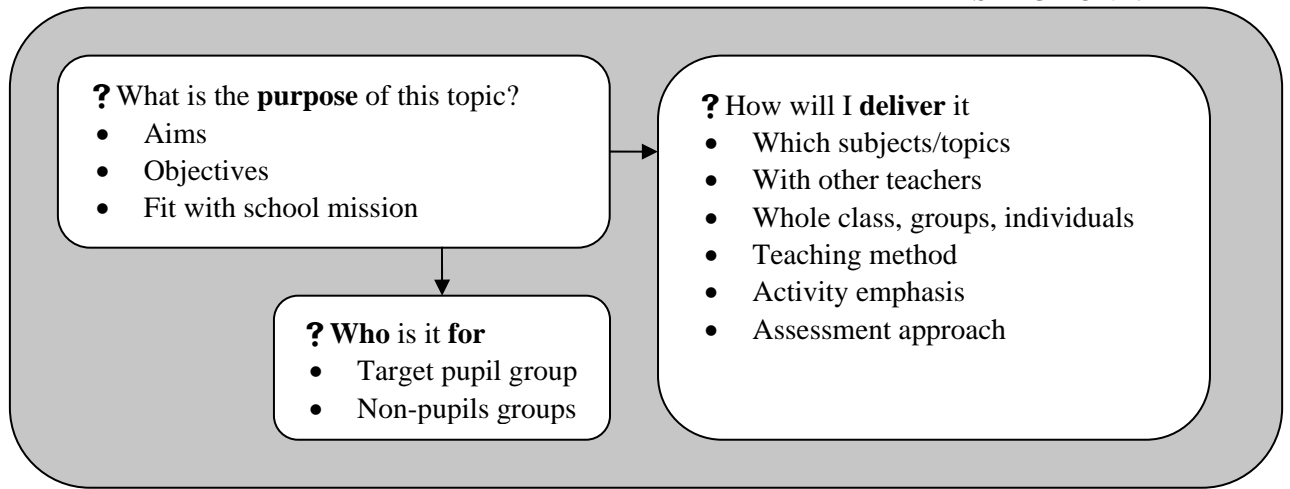
Outcomes can be described as the more immediate effects that the topic has upon the pupils and other participants. These might include immediate learning outcomes in terms of what children learn, how they feel and how they behave.

Impacts can be defined as longer-term effects or benefits that result from activities in a topic or programme of work. In particular, this refers to how learning translates into long-term changes in behaviour.

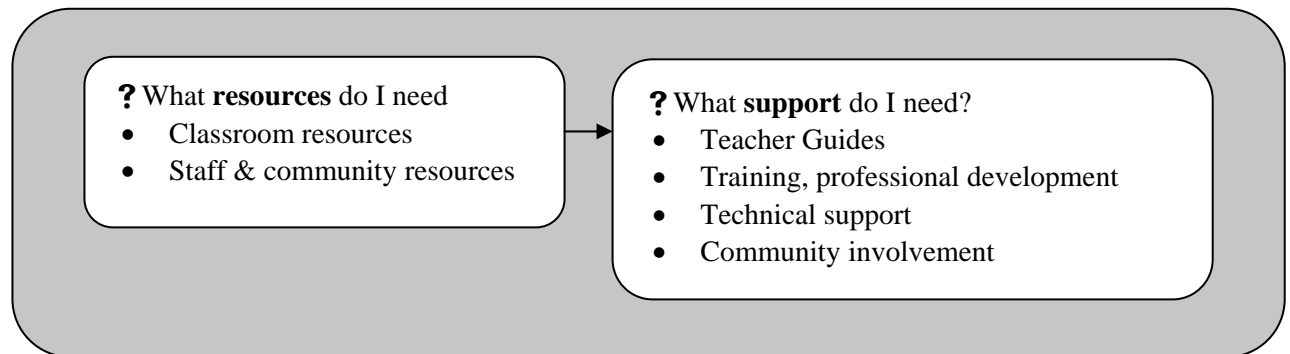
Source: Based on Tom Marcinkowski, *An Overview of a Issues and Action Instruction Program for Stewardship Education in An Issue and Action Instruction Program*

Generic framework for planning a topic

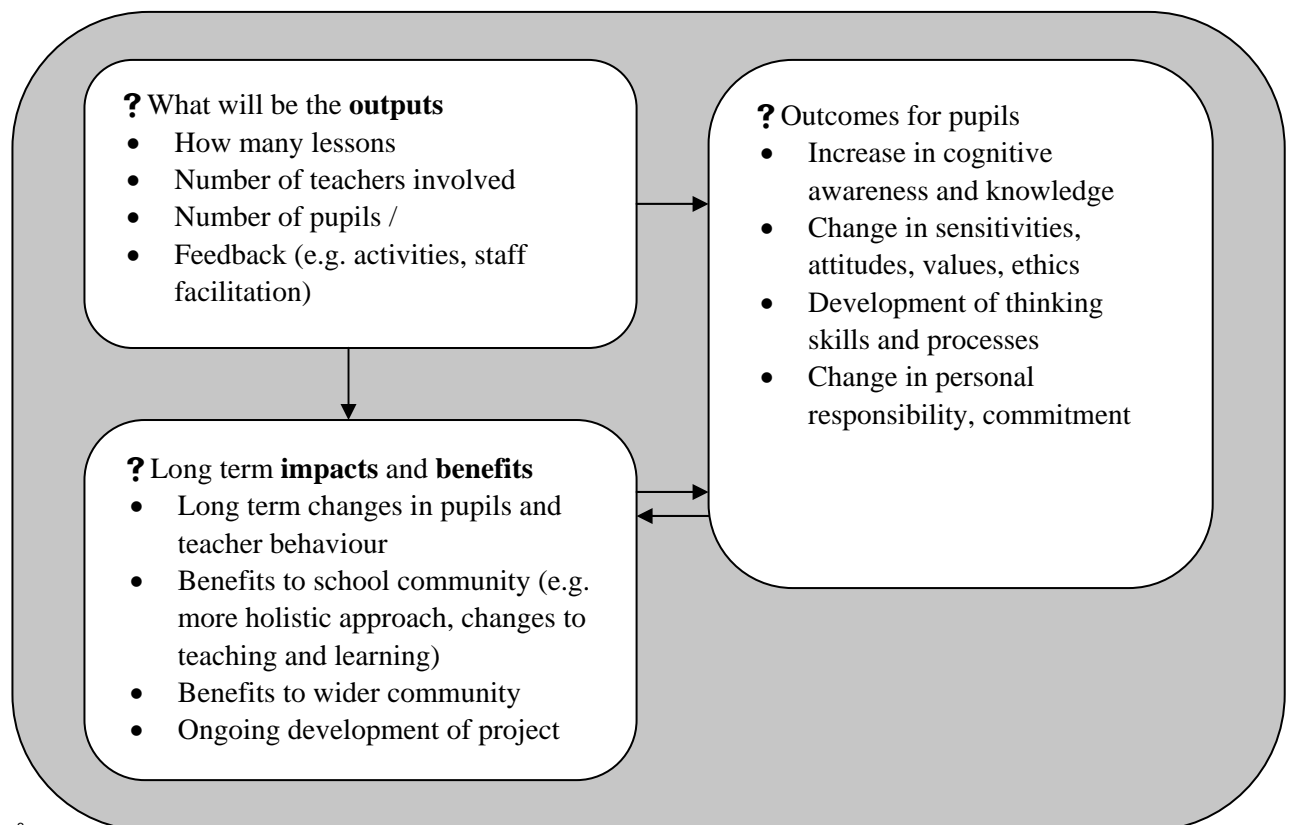
STAGE ONE:



STAGE TWO:



STAGE THREE:



SUGGESTIONS AND TOOLS TO HELP THE PLANNING PROCESS

The following can be used to help you consider the points listed under the framework diagram's key questions. The suggestions will need to be adapted to meet your school needs and practices.

Stage 1

What is the purpose of this topic?

Preparation

As part of your preparation, consider using the 'Work Plan' activity and Resource Sheet 7.1 from *Pathways*. This activity aims to develop a work plan in order to take proposed actions forward. It will also help you with thinking through the questions '**Who is it for?**', '**What will be the outputs?**' and '**How will I deliver it?**'. You can adapt the activity and Resource Sheet 7.1 to meet your needs and practices.

Setting objectives

Your objectives for the topic need to relate to your overall teaching and learning objectives and the pupil group for whom they are designed. You might agree to have learning objectives for pupils and yourselves, for example:

Pupils

- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of:
 - how the things we consume impact on long-term sustainability;
 - how sustainable consumption would conserve and increase biodiversity;
 - how consuming in sustainable ways (local to global) might improve quality of life;
 - how we might measure our ecological footprint.

Staff

- To improve standards of teaching and learning, and pupil motivation, through relevant content and participatory approaches.

Consider involving pupils in drawing up objectives for their learning (see the rubrics on pages 21-22 of Section 1). Give some thought to how achievement of your agreed objectives will be measured and recorded. Consider using a tool that will help you track levels of pupil engagement before and after work on a topic/project. See the example in Appendix 4.

The activities include in-built evaluation opportunities for pupils and teachers which can help in the tracking process and feed into the bigger evaluation pieces. (See 'Learning during' and 'Learning after' below.)

Stage 2

What do I need?

Selecting resources

The 'Eight questions' document in Appendix 2 may help you to select resources and initiatives that will best meet your Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) teaching and learning goals and objectives, the needs of your learners and the school community.

Sources of information, local to global

Local community resources

There will be relevant skills and expertise within the local community – some within the school itself, while others from the wider community will be happy to visit the school to respond to pupil's questions, or to host visits. These could include:

- the pupils themselves, who will know about the impacts (positive and negative) of consumption in their families and locally;
- school staff who have lived in the area for a long time (often support staff) can provide information about changing patterns of consumption and waste collection;
- local councillors might be glad to talk to young people about such issues as keeping the locality free from waste pollution;
- council officers, e.g. planners, environmental health officers, Local Agenda 21 officers can provide information about initiatives and strategies for reducing the negatives aspects of consumption in the locality. They will also know if there are plans to calculate the local ecological footprint, and how such a project will be communicated to local people;
- local community, faith or pressure groups will have views on the equity aspects of consumption such as fair-trade;
- local shops, industry and businesses can also be invited to listen to pupil concerns and explain their environmental strategies.

For other ideas and specific names and addresses go to the website of your local village, town, district. Local papers and Community Information bulletins are also a good source.

Global resources

Websites relevant to a project about consumption, sustainability and ecological footprint include:

www.walesfootprint.org

www.scotlandfootprint.org

www.wwf.org.uk/footprint

A fun, child-friendly ecological footprint calculator that takes you through the concept in bite-size stages:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/fun/370863>

The following websites contain a lot of useful information about consumption issues with pages suitable for pupils:

www.ibuydifferent.com

http://www.panda.org/how_you_can_help/at_home/index.cfm

www.labourbehindthelabel.org

www.maketradefair.com
www.buynothingday.co.uk/home.html
www.adbusters.org/home
<http://www.weeeman.org/>

This website relates to a sculpture about white goods and electrical waste which is currently on show in London.

Useful books include:

Living in Balance – Population, Consumption, and the Planet, WWF US

Dinosaurs and all that rubbish by Michael Foreman, Puffin (ISBN 014055260X)

Stuff – The Secret Lives of Everyday Things by John C Ryan and Alan Thein Durning, Northwest Environment Watch (ISBN 1886093040)

Natural Capitalism – The Next Industrial Revolution by Paul Hawken, Amory B Lovins and L Hunter Lovins, Earthscan (ISBN 1853837636)

Schools Global Footprint, WWF Scotland

Stage 3

Outcomes for pupils

In thinking about outcomes for pupils, you might find it useful to discuss the ‘Characteristics of effective learners’, Resource sheet 1.1 in *Pathways*.

It is important to ensure that all those involved in the teaching and learning of a topic have a shared understanding of the differences between outcomes and impacts. Discuss the ‘Notes to the diagram’ and agree your own definitions.

Long term impacts and benefits

As part of the planning process, hold a session to give all involved an opportunity to ‘vision’ what these might be. This might well relate to, or feed into, your school mission and the overall ethos of your school. See the ‘School’s self-assessment chart’, Resource sheet 5.1 in *Pathways* to see how your visioning could fit with your school’s Learning for Sustainability journey. For teachers in England, the elements described here reflect those on the Ofsted’s school self evaluation form.

REVIEWING THE PLANNING PROCESS

To be really effective, the planning process should be reviewed to identify what has and hasn’t worked well for all those involved in the teaching and learning. You might find Tools 2 and 3 in *Pathways* useful:

Tool 2 – the ‘Learning during’ activity aims to quickly monitor work plan progress, using four key questions. This might be useful at some mid-way point in the development of the planning process.

Tool 3 – the ‘Learning after’ activity aims to conduct an evaluation following the completion of a work plan, using five key questions

For other ideas and tools, see ‘Monitoring and evaluation’, pages 20-22 in Section 1.