Teaching Global Perspectives is not quite like teaching other subjects in a traditional curriculum. To start with, it isn’t really a “subject” with an agreed, traditional body of knowledge in which the teacher has a degree and already knows what they are talking about.

The subject matter of Global Perspectives is our world. Global Perspectives aims to help students to make this vast topic manageable by teaching them to:

- find information about our world and about key issues in our world
- think and reflect critically and carefully about our world and the key issues in our world
- negotiate and understand their own place in our world
- act thoughtfully, realistically and purposefully to improve our world
- communicate information, ideas and reasoning to others in our world.

What does this mean for my teaching?

The nature of Global Perspectives has a number of consequences for teachers.

- Teachers will need to discuss the world, our place in it and key global issues with students.
- Teachers will be concentrating on developing skills, not delivering content.
- Teachers can follow the Global Perspectives learning process.
- Teachers will mentor, guide and motivate students and manage the environment rather than control students.
- Teachers will develop strategies to respond to individual needs.
- Resources will change frequently.

Discussing the world, our place in it and key global issues with students

You do not need to become an expert on world issues or learn all about all the details of global warming, climate change and the chemistry of fuel.

You will, however, find the following strategies helpful.

- Read the newspapers regularly. It may look like you are idling over the paper with a cup of coffee but you can tell your head teacher or spouse that you are working hard.
Read newspapers from different countries and cultures – try www.world-newspapers.com. This is a website which lists English-language newspapers around the world. Although in some of them you can see the same press releases recycled, there are genuinely different perspectives on global issues to be found, especially in opinion pieces and blogs.

Encourage students to read both local and international newspapers. Start with fun, accessible items and move on to articles requiring more weighty analysis.

Encourage students to find out about an issue and to explain it to you or to their peers. This is especially good for recent or current events where you actually don’t know the details or understand all the issues. Students gain hugely from telling you things.

Have a weekly quiz, and then discuss ideas, issues and perspectives that arise from the quiz. Some examples of the type of quiz you could use appear below.

- Put fun articles from the papers around the classroom and ask questions for students to find the answers to. Try to include some explanation or opinion questions as well as facts and information. Once students are familiar with the format, they can develop questions, you can move on to more conceptually difficult questions, or you can broaden the area where the answers can be found (to the internet rather than a selection of papers).

- Have a cross-checking and verification quiz, where you or your students present information that includes mistakes and hoaxes, and the task is to identify correct information, mistakes and hoaxes using internet searches. In some cases you could include a “find the original source of this” question.

- If possible, show students excerpts from comical news programmes. In the United Kingdom there are many of these, including Have I Got News For You and Mock the Week. Try to mix up local and international variants so that students get a different perspective on current affairs. Students might like to produce one of these shows themselves.

- Remember that you only have to be able to guide your students to IGCSE level – it’s not a PhD.

- Develop your questioning techniques to encourage students to want to research, discuss, debate, reflect, and reason about world issues.
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<td>What is infrastructure?</td>
<td>These questions are asking for information. This will not prompt debate, but will put the emphasis on collecting facts. Encourage students to ask these questions, and to answer them through research. Your questions should be more along the lines of: “What do you need to know to answer this question?”; “How can you find out what infrastructure is?”; “Who can find out fastest (most accurately) when the UN was formed?”</td>
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<td>When was the UN formed?</td>
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<td>Do you understand?</td>
<td>We all ask this, but it is problematic. Firstly, you can’t trust the answer. “Yes, I understand” could mean “Nope, not a clue, but I’m not admitting it,” or “Yes, it’s obvious (but I’m missing three layers of deeper meaning)” or many other things. “No, I don’t understand” might mean “Nope, I haven’t a clue,” “No I haven’t even thought about it,” or “I have a deep conceptual question which is bothering me (but which is way beyond IGCSE level)”. Secondly, this question creates a mental construct in which you either do understand or you don’t understand, and this limits the possibility for increasing understanding or making the effort to move from not understanding to understanding. Try saying “Tell me how much you understand,” or “Explain what you are having trouble with,” or “Anna /Bashir, can you just explain what I’ve asked you all to do?”</td>
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<td>How will you find out?</td>
<td>This question will aid research skills and independence, although it might not stimulate immediate debate. This assumes that the student can find out and that they will, so it creates an expectation in students' minds that they can and will find out. This is an important transition from waiting to be told.</td>
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<td>What do you think of/about …?</td>
<td>This question is open ended, so the student can develop their own thinking, and not try to guess what the teacher is thinking. This is important, because we want students to know that their own opinions and actions are important, and that their relationship to the world is important.</td>
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<td>Why?</td>
<td>“Why” is one of the most important questions you can ask. It requires students to think to the next level, and to justify their opinions, assertions and values, making it an excellent question for encouraging debate and discussion. It can elicit evidence, explanation and argument. It is also really useful when you aren’t an expert in an area that interests a student or group of students.</td>
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<td>You’re thinking very much from your personal perspective. What you say is interesting. Do you think the national perspective is the same as your personal perspective? Why might it be different?</td>
<td>This question recognises the value of the student’s personal perspective, but encourages them to think beyond it and to take the debate further.</td>
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Developing skills, not delivering content

The most important consequence of the difference between traditional subjects and Global Perspectives is that you don’t need to concentrate on transmitting content or knowledge. This does not mean that the course is content free or meaningless. Students will learn about important issues, but they will not all learn the same information about the same issues. This is a surprisingly major shift in attitude to our teaching.

It is more important that a student can find out about and think about an important issue than that they know a lot of detail about any specific issue. It is more important that students find their own place in the world than that they find a specific place.

Freedom!

As a result teachers and students have a wonderful freedom to explore interesting world issues and to respond to student interests. It is possible (and sometimes even desirable) to have different students researching and debating different issues.

- Kalia and Sabiha can research traditional animistic religious practices in African tribes and their consequences in the modern state of Liberia. You could say this relates to Topic 17, Belief systems or Topic 20, Tradition, culture and identity.

- Anna and Tom could start researching chocolate. They could look at its environmental impact; its human impact – child slavery, poverty, health issues; the various belief systems and traditions around chocolate. This could fit into a number of different topics.

- Nkosi and Fran could investigate fashion. They might start by considering fashion as an aspect of Topic 20, Tradition, culture and identity, with a focus on the male and female aspects of fashion, but might move on to the environmental and human impact of fashion.

- Miguel and Katrina might look at football. The obvious starting point would be Topic 4, Sport and recreation, but they might look at the traditional and cultural roles of football, the belief systems that people build up around the game, the teams and the players. They might consider technological and employment aspects, or consider the consequences for a city in terms of transport and infrastructure if it were to host a major international football tournament.

For assessment purposes, they will all need to put their ideas into an appropriate context and format, considering and analysing issues, causes, consequences, perspectives and possible solutions. But Global Perspectives allows students to follow an interest that the rest of the class might not share. And it is possible to take almost any area of interest and find aspects that fit into the 20 Global Perspectives topics, so it should be possible to find something to excite and motivate every student. Note that the textbook is organised with more standard issues at its heart, but there are opportunities for students and teachers to look beyond what is in the textbook.
How to develop skills

You can develop students’ skills in a number of ways.

- Keep your focus and that of your students on the skills rather than the content.
  - How can you find out?
  - What else do you need to know?
  - Is that a reliable source?
  - Do you agree with that opinion? Is it well supported?
  - Does that author predict realistic consequences?
  - You’ve read four different articles – what do you think are the main causes of the problem? Can you think of a solution?
  - What about the global perspective?

- Plan for students to find, question and use information rather than for you to find information for them.
  - Spend time that you used to spend talking to the whole class discussing progress with individuals.
  - Kalia, if you make a map of the personal, national and global perspectives, do you think you’ll see where the gaps in your thinking are?
  - Miguel, I can see that you’ve researched lots of causes, and thought about them carefully. What do you think the consequences might be? How can you find out?

- Plan for students to tell you what they are doing within a framework set by you, rather than plan that you will tell students what to do.
  - I’ll be walking round talking to you all about your plans while you carry on. Is there anyone who needs to ask me questions sooner rather than later?

- Use questions, comments and feedback to encourage skills development.

### Example questions and instructions

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<td>Anna, today you need to find out about child slaves in chocolate farms. Look on the UN website.</td>
<td>✌ This puts the emphasis on the teacher to decide what needs to be researched and where to find the information. It takes the power away from Anna, and means that she doesn’t need to develop her own skills.</td>
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<td>Anna, what have you planned for today? You made a note at the end of last lesson on what you were planning for today, didn’t you? Did you think any more about your sources from last week?</td>
<td>✌ This puts the emphasis on Anna to plan her own work, to decide what needs to be researched, and to keep a log of her progress. The question at the end reminds Anna to question information as well as finding it, shows an interest to motivate Anna and allows either for an interesting discussion about Anna’s sources, her progress and her thinking.</td>
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Anna, that’s very good. Well done.  

Anna has her reward – she doesn’t need to do anything else. This kind of praise puts an end to thinking, effort and skills development. It also puts the power of decision about Anna’s place (in the class, in the world) in the teacher’s hands, rather than in Anna’s hands.

Of course we need to praise our students, but we have to be careful about how we do it if we want them to develop skills and independence. This one is really hard to avoid, but it’s worth making the effort.

Anna, you’ve been working really hard on this research. Are you pleased with your progress? Can you explain to me why you think that issues of child labour in Fairtrade chocolate still need to be addressed?

This rewards the effort rather than the product, so Anna will feel it is worthwhile to keep working. The emphasis in put on Anna to evaluate her progress (progress not product), so she is using her thinking skills, and still thinking about how she can improve her work. The question about the issues shows an interest, and engages Anna in real discussion which uses her skills. This might be a way of opening a discussion about an unreliable source, or the unintended consequences of the Fairtrade intervention, or a discussion about how to improve on the Fairtrade system.

The Global Perspectives learning process

The teacher will need to ensure that each group is following the Global Perspectives learning process:

- research information
- question information
- reflect and plan
- present and act.

There are various ways to do this:

- regular, focused skills activities – these can be taken from skills sections, from the skills exercises in each chapter, or from other sources
- regular, short routes through the learning process – perhaps a short research activity, followed by questioning, reflecting and a short, one or two sentence talk
- regular reminders to use the skills during longer research and project work
  - reminders to the class
  - specific questions to individuals and groups focused on particular skills
  - visuals in the classroom, produced by students to remind themselves of the learning process and the specific skills
model the steps in the learning process yourself

emphasise the skills from the learning process rather than the knowledge and information acquired during the process

encourage open discussions about the value of the knowledge, the issues and the skills gained during the Global Perspectives learning process.

**Mentor, guide and motivate students; manage the environment**

The course is set up to allow for a gradual transition from students who are dependent on the teacher to students who are independent in many ways, and relate to their teacher as a mentor and guide.

This requires a different relationship with the students than a traditional classroom. Students will gradually start to decide for themselves what they are doing, and will look to the teacher to make sure that:

- the necessary facilities and equipment are available
- there is a productive working atmosphere in the classroom
  - not too noisy
  - other students not messing around (consistent expectations and behaviour management)
  - students are interested and motivated
  - feedback is regular and constructive
- the teacher is present, available and interested. The teacher’s attention should be evenly shared – this is actually easier if students’ attention is on their own projects than if it is supposed to be on you.

Think about all the things you would want from a good boss, head of department, or tutor on a research project. Provide these for your students.

- Take an interest in the student and their work
- Provide suggestions and ask questions aimed at helping each student to develop one step further.
- Show a willingness to negotiate with the student to meet their interests and to help them move beyond their initial perspective.
- Give support, deadline reminders and constructive feedback.

The best bosses (teachers and mentors) I have personally had have given clear guidelines, been consistent in their expectations, have demanded as much of themselves as of others, been fair and reasonable in their dealings with people, have had a sense of humour and have been professional – they might have mentioned that there are some personal issues bothering them, but they have never taken them out on their colleagues. Their work has been done efficiently – computers on, ready and working for meetings, paperwork ready … They have reminded people about deadlines, and said thank you for work done. They have also explained why things have to be done, have been interested and have had time to listen. I think a mentor should be like this.
The worst bosses (and teachers) I have had have been inconsistent, arbitrary, nasty, personal, bullying, chivvying, demeaning, derogatory, insecure, unstable and likely to blame their co-workers for things that they themselves have not done. They also have tended to try to do too much and not let co-workers or students get on with things. These would be characteristics for the mentor to avoid. This sounds really obvious, but I have also observed a few teachers in skills-related subjects who have been thrown so far out of their comfort zone by having to teach skills rather than familiar content that they become consumed by their anxiety and forget the obvious.

**Developing strategies to respond to individual needs**

Some of the strategies you can use include:

- walking round checking on progress (through observation and questioning) as groups and individuals work – this allows you to notice individual needs
- keeping a professional log or journal with space for a note about individual needs
- encouraging students to identify their own needs and to come to you when they need your help (but not without trying to find their own solution)
- during longer term research activities and project planning, scheduling meetings with individuals or groups to discuss progress
  - discuss and set research questions
  - discuss sources
  - discuss issues, causes and consequences, different perspectives, possible solutions
  - discuss what else is needed – help with research, focused skills activities, how to use the research to answer a question, how well assessment requirements are being addressed
  - discuss and set active outcomes for projects
  - discuss planning of activities
  - discuss evidence of active project
  - discuss material or practical needs – budgeting for materials, help with motivating a team member, organising technical support for a concert, organising cross-cultural collaboration.

**Resources will change frequently**

Global Perspectives is about the world, issues and current affairs. Resources will have to change so don’t try to build up a library of definitive resources. It is better to do the following.

- Teach students how to find their own resources – this is the aim of the course! They will get more out of searching for and finding resources than from reading material that you have put together. Each student
will be able to meet their own needs and interests if they can search for and find information.

- Use local, national and international newspapers, magazines, TV and radio to cover current events.
- Use www.world-newspapers.com to build up a collection of online newspapers and magazines which you know you can rely on to provide particular perspectives. China Daily, for example, is an English-language paper with a very Chinese perspective. It's also quite good at explaining that perspective in a way that makes it seem reasonable, and not just government propaganda. This can help students to really engage with the different perspective (or for Chinese students it can help to articulate their perspectives in English, and to bridge the gap to other materials in English).
- Encourage students to find and bring in interesting resources.
- Be flexible. Respond to the memes that students are aware of on the internet and encourage students to develop them to respond to Global Perspectives issues.

Language

If your students speak English as a second (third or fourth) language, encourage them to keep lists of key vocabulary and linguistic structures that they come across. If you do this for them and create a Global Perspectives glossary, you will get the benefit instead of them. The real learning comes in categorising and using new language.

Key linguistic structures

- Most of the Global Perspectives course can be accessed with fairly simple English structures.
- Simple statements in the present, past or future
  - The main issue is habitat loss.
  - The cause was habitat loss.
  - A new airport will solve the problem.
- Questions
  - How can we solve this problem?
  - What do other people think?

Clearly, students who master more complex language can express more nuances, but fundamentally simple linguistic structures will work. The use of simple language can actually help students to summarise issues and to analyse causes, effects and perspectives to their essentials.

However, there are structures relating to predicting consequences which students really need to master:

- “if” + present ➔ (“then”) + future: If we build an airport, (then) we will cause habitat loss.
- “if” + past ➔ (“then”) + conditional: If we built an airport, (then) we would cause habitat loss.