



Meeting the Cross-Curricular Challenge – Two Years On

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It has been two years since the incredible experience that was offered to us through the small-scale research initiative of the 5 Nations group. Although not in the way I had initially envisaged, I continue to reap the rewards of this project. I have outlined below the continued benefits to my teaching, as well as the challenges that we were unable to overcome in this instance. I fully believe that the challenges presented can be addressed and this project served to highlight some of the issues that need to be considered in any cross-nation collaboration.

Benefits

- *A more truly multi-cultural approach to my planning and delivery in Citizenship lessons.* This comes from having had the opportunity of working closely with colleagues from different schools and countries and having my ideas and assumptions challenged through the necessity of finding methods of teaching and learning that worked both in our individual setting and made sense cross-culturally.
- *An appreciation for the learning offered through team teaching.* The experience of team teaching is always beneficial. However, team teaching with colleagues from different countries adds a valuable perspective on the sameness and difference of young people and the ways they learn. This has been an important learning point in itself.
- *A more focused understanding of England vs Britain and the multitude of identities and opinions and experiences within this.* This has meant that I have been able to continue to challenge student assumptions and avoid gross generalisations about 'Britain' within my Citizenship teaching.

Challenges

- *Keeping in Touch.* This has easily been the most difficult thing to do, despite our good intentions and the ubiquitous internet. The busy lives of teachers require particular ways of ensuring that this connection is not lost. At a local level we have network meetings for example, and perhaps this kind of thing needs to be replicated at a cross-national level.
- *Sharing the experience with others.* Although we created a blog to document and share our experience (<http://5nations.tumblr.com/>) we were unable to secure the support of others we presented to. One person posted a comment on our wallwisher (attached to the blog) but there was no other traffic. Getting people to sign up needs some kind of incentive and some very clear 'off-the-shelf' resources that they can use.
- *Technology.* This relates to the above point. Just using the technology isn't enough. We would have to do more to ensure that people have a reason for following or taking part in the project. I love the idea of this as a project in itself. How could you have some kind of online, cross-national training that then gets tested in different places and evaluated? People sign up and then commit to taking part? Interesting stuff.

Although the outcome was not as I had envisaged, there were still lasting effects for me and a range of interesting future research questions that have evolved. And that is always good.