



Elephant Times Magazine

Please circulate to
start a conversation

Seeking an education-driven agenda
to respond to the climate crisis

Issue 4.2 November 2023



Connecting Dialogues

Tide~

Welcome to Elephant Times [ET4.2]

This ET magazine follows on recent work exploring the **educational implications of climate change**.

The five sections bring together some of the key ideas - **as a stimulus for new conversations**.

Such conversations have the potential to influence positive change, potential to unlock our ideas and to value the stimulus of a diversity of responses to the challenges of the climate crisis.

Such conversations are vital.

- T** ~ **about Teachers** - and the need for opportunities - for mutual support, creativity, and enhancing our own understanding.
- I** ~ **about Initiative** - to respond to issues with education-driven agendas that enhance the quality of learning and avoid indoctrination.
- D** ~ **about Dialogue** - engaging with debates about global realities and enabling the development of learner dialogue skills.
- E** ~ **about Education** - meeting the needs of learners in the context of global change - and playing its part in building a better future.



Elephant Times magazine is a Tide~ initiative.

www.tidegloballearning.net

It is edited by Jeff Serf & Scott Sinclair
We have taken on this voluntary role as Tide~ Trustees.
Thank you to Dorit Braun for help with this edition.

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Published by Tide~ global learning.
[Available to download from website](http://www.tidegloballearning.net)

Thank you to Carl Mountain for cover photo

ET 4.2

1

Seeking dialogue about an education-driven agenda

- responding to the climate crisis

This ET follows up work over the last year that was synthesised by an AGM [see page 58]. We make use of quotes from that discussion to highlight the value of building an education-driven agenda to respond to the climate crisis.

This magazine aspires to stimulate wider conversations:

- **within the education community** about the implications and the challenges they raise for the core issues of - meeting the needs of learners, the role of teachers, and the culture of schools.
- **with those concerned about, or campaigning on climate issues,** to explore the potential added value, and challenges, of an education-driven agenda and the need for teacher entitlement, as part of a strategic response to the climate crisis.

Please let us have your feedback
[- click here](#)

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Hi Jeff & Scott

I enjoyed our conversation – & write now with a few thoughts about what you need to be thinking about for the next ET magazine.

I saw a photo with “Start a Conversation about Climate Change” projected on to the cliffs at Dover. This is what you want – but it would need a bigger cliff to include:

“Start a conversation about an education-driven agenda responding to the climate crisis”
Can you come up with a shorter slogan?

There is potential in the idea that ‘Ripples’ might be a “theory of change”. We have, over the last 33 years, since all those projects* focusing on making the most of the National Curriculum, drifted into accepting what could be described as a central control model. Policy [permission and prescription] comes first.

Frankly – if we witnessed such goings on somewhere else in the world, we would be calling it an abuse of power. This ‘climate’ leads to the notion that teachers need to be told what to do ... and that some official resources can relieve them from having to think too much about it. De-professionalising or what?

You don’t half take on some big issues, perhaps you should stick with simple matters like global poverty! ~ but you are right, teacher professionalism is a pivotal aspect. If you are about young people developing responsible agency, then you must raise questions about teacher agency relating to curriculum. Talking about teacher entitlement is a sound strategy but make sure that you do not succeed in making it policy – in the current situation that could become something else to beat teachers with!

Are you going round in a circle? I recall the work of a Tide~ teacher group; it must be 15 years ago. After a lot of discussion, they drafted nine propositions about responding to climate change. This, I suggest, is worth revisiting. It sounds like the discussions this last year are arriving back at similar propositions. [See page 26]

OK – it’s a spiral rather than a circle ~ a lot has happened since then. You are right there is much to be optimistic about, but still there is a long way to go to awaken main-stream thinking, to even discuss the deeper implications of climate change.

Finally – back to the image on the cliffs. I suggest that you need to bring together the work you have been doing – make it visual – raise the key debates – and use the opportunity of COP28 to start new conversations.

As ever – Stevie S

* see for example [Developing Geography](#)



Thanks to the work of Prof Ed Hawkins [Reading University] and his team who developed the ‘warming stripes’ as a communication strategy.

The proposition is:

- ☐ that **an education-driven agenda responding to the climate crisis** would help build our confidence as education practitioners to be creative about the role of teachers and schools to ‘be part of the solution’;
- ☐ that this work would complement, and be stimulated by, other climate change responses but would go beyond knowing about climate change to a positive engagement with the consequences relating to the core functions of education;
- ☐ that dialogue about the notion of a teacher entitlement could enhance such work.

1. Confusion in the room - yet much to be optimistic about?

We started the project trumpeting the news that climate change was no longer **the elephant in the room** [see box]. Confusion seems to have taken the elephant's place. In this first section, we consider that, and suggest it would be useful to focus on ripples of change that could contribute to a "change eco-system".

We have come to realise that an education-driven response to the climate crisis is not just learning about climate change, it is about the development of education opportunities that equip students, and society, for a future that will be impacted by climate change and consequences of those changes.

Also, with the help of other observers, that the ripples idea is significant, the changes we seek will have to be 'bottom up' - they will involve us all throwing stones ... very constructively!

Climate change is no longer "the elephant in the room".

It is widely recognised that we need to engage.

The challenge for schools and for teachers is no longer just about the need for an awareness of climate change and sustainable development concepts.

It is also about the implications for an education that meets the needs of learners growing up in a complex and dynamic, yet uncertain global context. Decisions - individually - locally - at work - as a nation - and internationally - **will have to respond creatively to a global climate crisis.**



CHANGE evolving to ANGER?

How do we see the context?

What happens if we do not change?

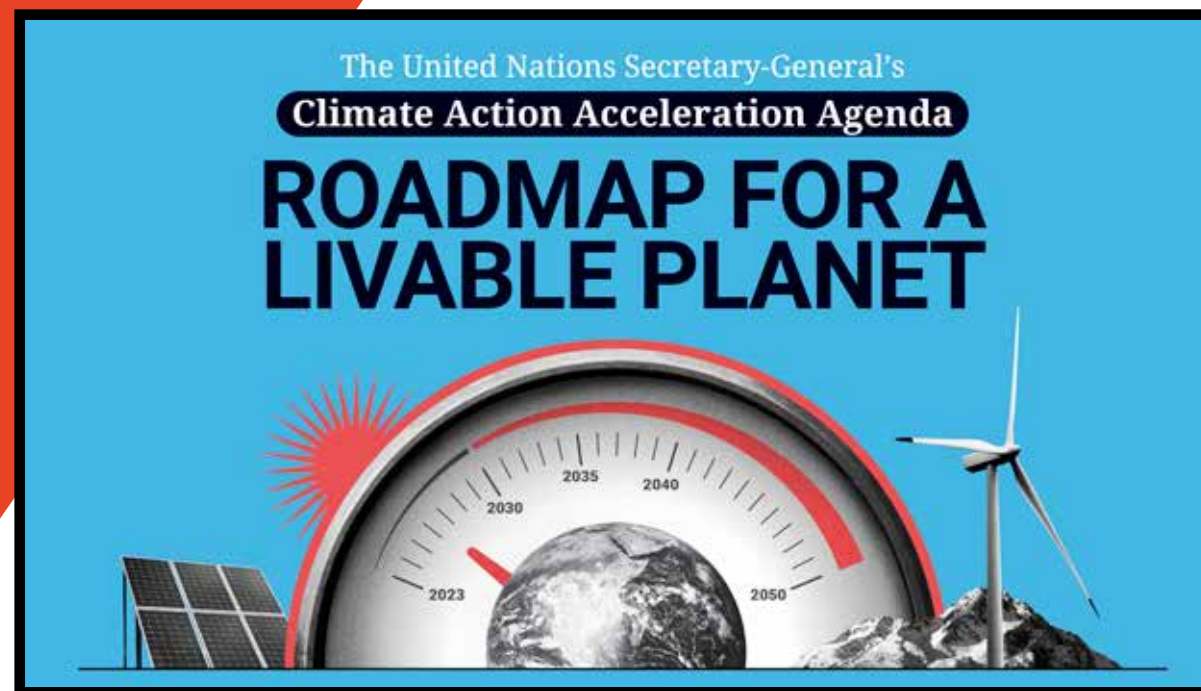
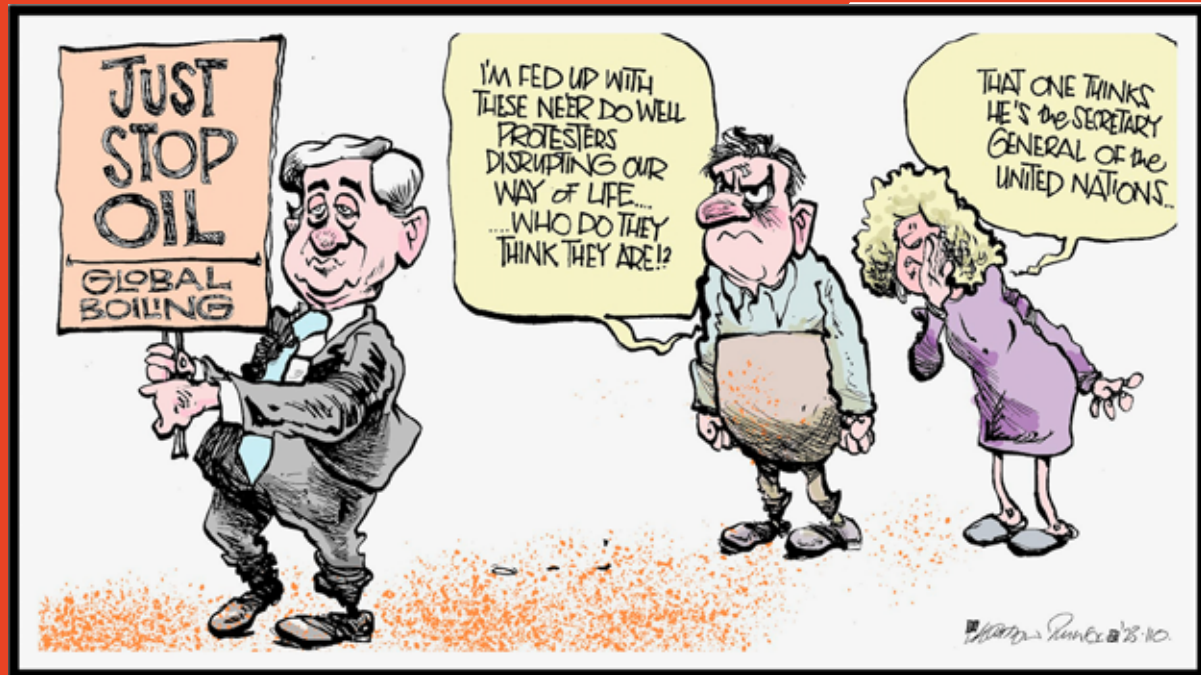
How do we see the dynamic of change?

The danger of the climate crisis leading to global conflict, social division and political ineptitude must be considered.

This powerful image by Ben Jennings [The Guardian] could provide a focus for open debate about the potential consequences of 'no change'.

Why confusion?

Is there anything we can do?



Concern about the implications of climate change is often dismissed as ‘woke’, as Martyn’s cartoon puts it - a bunch of “ne’er do well protesters”. So when António Guterres, the UN Secretary General highlights concern, he too is dismissed. The UK PM talks about meeting targets, as if all that matters is ticking the box - losing site of the purpose. The [‘UN Roadmap for a Liveable Planet’](#) presents a very different picture. No wonder there is confusion.

The project asked: *One year on from COP26 – How goes it?* There was a real **sense of possibility radiating from Glasgow’s COP26**. As we head for COP28 that confidence has been eroded. Nevertheless we hope that new debates will be enlivened by the media coverage of COP28, which is due to take place in Dubai – [30th November to 12th December 2023]. This event may also provide the opportunity to find common ground with teacher networks in other places.

The context we might have imagined in Glasgow was of a country coming together, building a consensus, working to make the most of the challenges and opportunities that the climate crisis presents. A collective will to face the situation – and its contradictions. We, as a country, could take a lead in the international co-operation needed, we have the imagination and the resources. There is also recognition that we are in this position because of our history: it generated a core wealth; it involved much environmental disregard; it is also a root cause of the global climate crisis we have today.

It is argued that this history also brings responsibilities. But do we, as a country, have the will to even ask the questions needed? The answer seems to be NO. Far from being a focus for collective creativity, climate change has been manipulated so that it has become a divisive political game.

Yet there is much to be optimistic about in the many initiatives that are evolving despite the lack of support. They can make the ripples we need.

Dilemmas ...

This situation presents **significant dilemmas for teachers** not least relating to matters such as the balance between optimistic and pessimistic dispositions - and the political dimension. Professionally we have choices.

- ❑ We need to consider **the need for optimism and a positive outlook** without just putting a simplistic “green wash” on the realities.
- ❑ The political dimension - **the question of “who decides?” is pivotal to understanding** - we need to have clear strategies to engage with this, without being partial ourselves.

Making ripples ...

- versus new tick boxes

Stones in the pond - a Theory of Change?

Tide~ has been facilitating dialogue about climate change education with an eye on system-level change - including consideration of learner needs, teacher entitlement, schools as organisations and wider educational matters.

Tide~ is open to creativity and recognises that there is a need for a long-term outlook. Preparing students for a greener economy and engaging with changes in local and global realities is valued.

There is an emphasis on targeting changes that would increase teacher agency, to allow teachers to respond nimbly and, in a context-specific way, to their learners' needs.

They now seek to widen the scope of that dialogue. But dialogue remains the focus.

Part of text - by Sarah Horley, [Learning Planet Inst.](#)

Your stone?

Please share your ideas

“We can all throw a pebble in the pond, they create ripples - you never know how far out they go, or even whether anyone notices them.

We're a small organisation, we only had a few grains of sand but we were pleasantly surprised by the reaction.”

Jeff

“Teachers - when they're given the right professional learning and the right sources of information and that big picture, they do go with it and they've got the capacity to go with it.”

Dom

“Tide~, small though it is, is disproportionately influential. And therefore trying to push toward working on teacher and student entitlement is something that Tide~ could stimulate to happen.”

Tim

Sarah's observation about a **theory of change** is challenging. But yes, that is the proposition. Much effective change in education has evolved from teacher initiative - sometimes policy catches up - sometimes it is slow to do so!

Change - like an eco-system rich with initiative ...

The project's conversations, interviews and articles highlighted many examples of sound practice and enthusiasm for engaging with the issues. **There is much that inspires.**

Yet many concerns were also expressed ranging from the schools that are not addressing the basics of sustainability awareness, to the confusion of government messages.

We need more conversations!

"True sustainability can only be achieved through greater collaboration and human connection. Just as climate justice requires us to dismantle the structures of inequality, we also need to challenge the normalisation of competition."

Paul Turner [Ministry of Eco- Education] wrote an article [ET 3.4] **calling for more collaboration.**

Creating 'space' for teachers to work together creatively is vital to an entitlement.

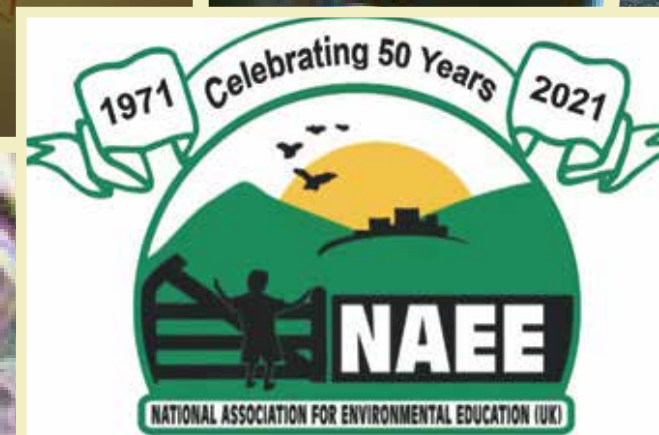
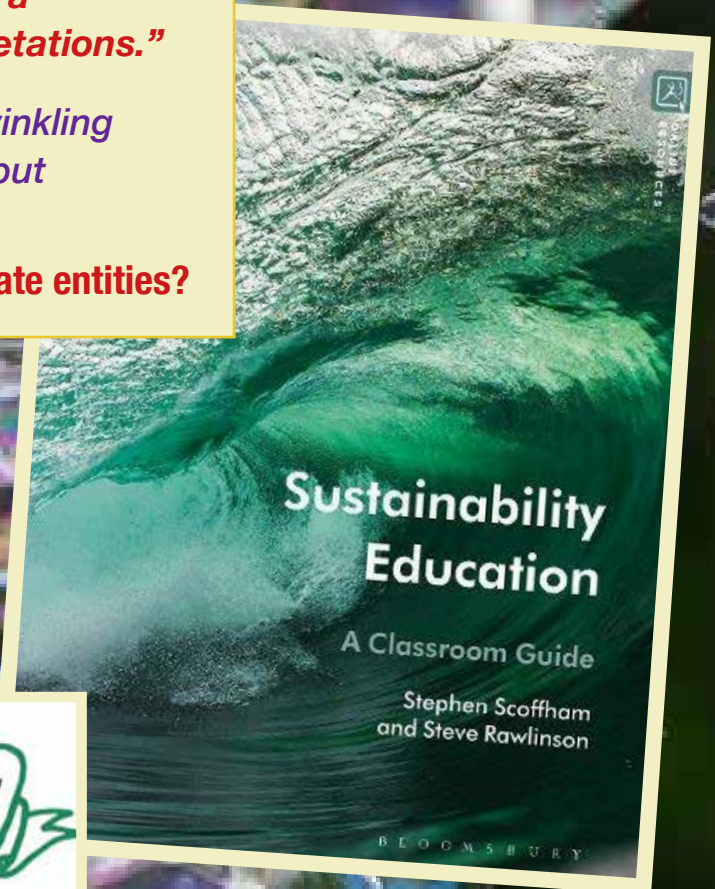
Stephen Scoffham & Steve Rawlinson reflected on the scope for innovation in an ET article about their book - **'Sustainability Education: A Classroom Guide'...**

"Just as in the natural world diversity helps to ensure the resilience of a habitat, so the educational eco-system benefits from a multiplicity of approaches and interpretations."

They talked about **"a world populated by twinkling diamonds of good practice and innovation but separated by dark voids of inertia"**.

Can we link the 'bubbles' and value their separate entities?

In ET 3.4 **Diane Swift** discusses a range of issues - highlighting that **"teachers need support to design the curriculum - and not simply to design lessons"**. She discusses the effectiveness of P4C [Philosophy for Children] and offers a list of key organisations.



The **Weekly News Update** from NAEE offers you a picture of much initiative.

Videos to inspire ...

There are many examples of inspiration. We have chosen four

1. Chelsie Naylor from [Todd College](#). Green futures - **practical hands-on learning**. Practical skills for food, growing veg, construction, energy and sustainability awareness.

2. Kate Raworth's TED talk offers a stimulating insight and raises questions about models of change. **"A healthy economy should be designed to thrive, not grow."**

3. Paul Carvin from [Cheviot Learning Trust](#) - It is not just learning about climate change, it is about the development of education opportunities that equip students, and society, for **a future that will be impacted by climate change and the consequences of that change**.

4. Tom Bullough on **starling murmurations and the climate crisis** - at the Hay Festival 2023. Tom, author of [Sarn Helen](#) also spoke at the Teens & Teachers conference. See interview 'Sarn Helen - an Inspiring Walk' in ET 4.1 p36.



2. Teacher Entitlement - professional implications?

We would like to advocate a **teacher entitlement process**. Clearly it is not our place to define such an entitlement, indeed if it became officially defined it could become something to demand of teachers, another measure to fail us on, rather than the support for **space for creativity, innovation and leadership from teachers**, that we feel is essential.

It would be great, but very unlikely, to have such a policy. The focus therefore is on school leaders to enable such approaches within existing capacity.

Conversations with Union groups, leadership organisations and subject associations could help build a disposition to such an entitlement.

This ET magazine has this focus - this section highlights key aspects.

“I’d want to encourage a focus on pedagogy, that is about enabling and empowering teachers.

Thinking about the scale and complexity of what we’re talking about,
... the term pedagogy doesn’t appear at all in the teachers’ standards
... we’ve talked about connecting teachers and students
... when you’re trained as a clinician you’re trained in your clinical reasoning.

So what about teachers?

What’s the reasoning behind the pedagogic choices that we are making?

What’s our intention? What’s our purpose?”

Diane

**The implications go deep and wide.
And they start early.**

Thanks to Nina Hatch [NAEE] for the photo.



The notion of teacher entitlement could include opportunities for:

Δ personal learning and confidence to engage with new information ...

Climate change is a dynamic and complex reality. It is a global issue, global co-operation is needed to respond. Most solutions also raise other questions, not least, about global justice and political priorities. We deserve time and support for our own learning.

Δ developing our professional standards, and the long-term interests of learners ...

Engaging with real world concerns is not, as some seem to assume, about getting a particular message across. There is challenge to develop skills, knowledge and dispositions to enquiry, rather than default to what could be seen as indoctrination.

Δ building skills to explore connections, dilemmas and debates ...

Our skills and those of learners. Connections, for example, with nature and natural systems, with issues of justice and inequality.

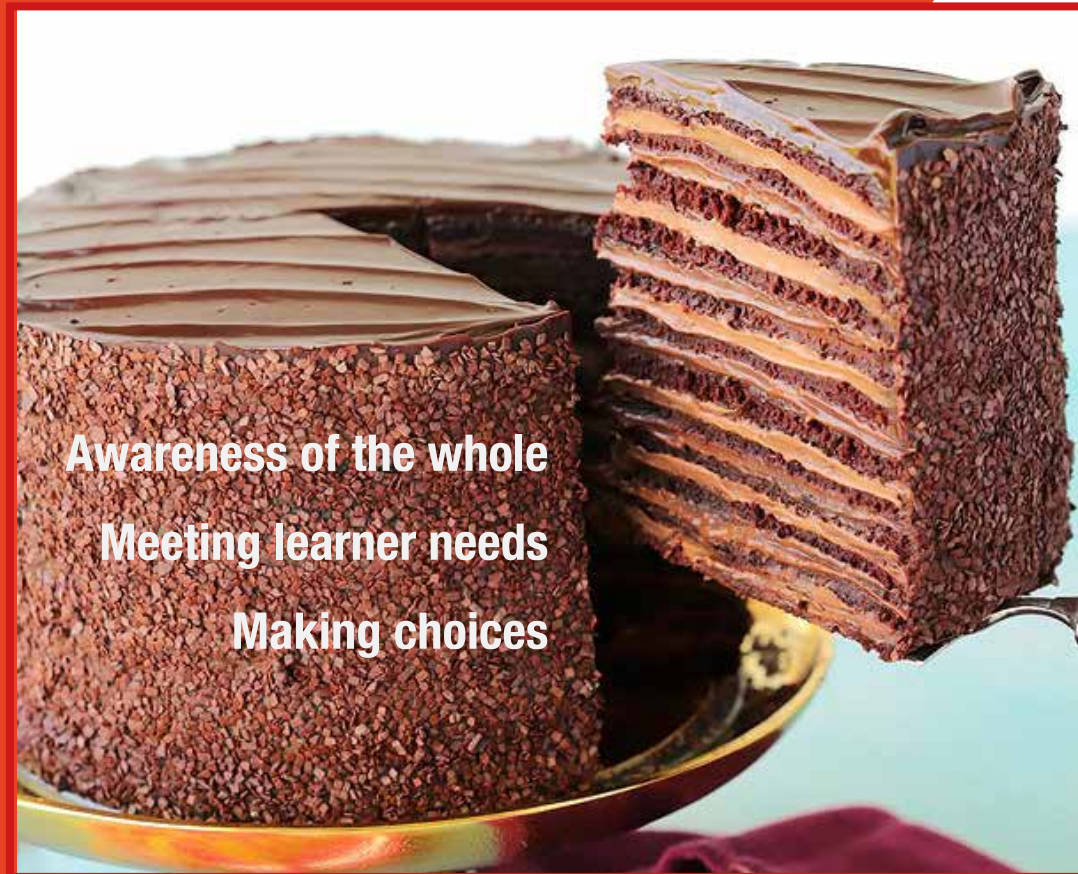
Δ creative work with other teachers ...

Working on curriculum development: across the school; with subject associations; and engaging with the dynamic of learner entitlement.

“How sensible is it to talk about teacher entitlement without talking about student entitlement at the same time?”

Bill

Dialogue Skills & Values ...



Dialogue skills - through the key stages.

In this, an age of division, learners need the opportunity to explore complexity: to engage with different ideas and perspectives; to experience constructive dialogue, even when they disagree; and to develop skills to access their own dispositions - **to work out things for themselves.**

There are choices to be made - based on the needs of particular learners. We should not try to cover everything about climate change [the 'whole cake'].

A focus on skills enables learners to develop their own 'Critical Reality Assessment' processes - to take stock of new information, to evaluate events and to review choices - their own - and those they influence socially or politically.

Eco-anxiety ...

It is clear from the conversations we held that lack of awareness and inaction over the climate crisis is fuelling eco-anxiety.

It is important to work on well-being and anxiety alongside curriculum.

Many involved, including students at the Cardiff conference, [See page 34] have described how taking action on climate related matters is effective in reducing such anxiety.

We have selected two articles that illustrate the case ...

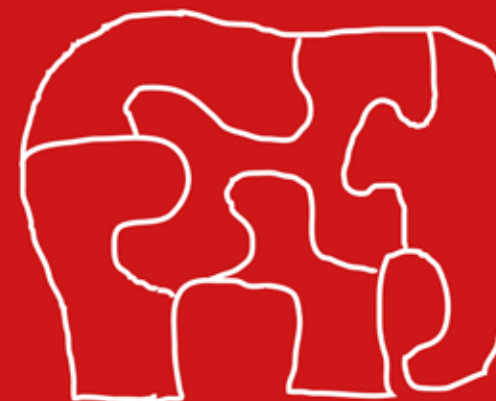
- ❑ ['Climate change is harming my mental health'](#) introduces some personal stories in a BBC article.
- ❑ ['Children at 'existential risk' from climate crisis'](#) features the work of Dr Camilla Kingdon. [President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health].

Values and dispositions ...

Exploring collective dispositions and values plays a vital role in building teams. Tide~ has made good use of the concept of Ubuntu to stimulate an evaluation of priorities.

See: [ET article reflecting on the Ubuntu influence.](#)

Ubuntu - 10 Fundamental Values:

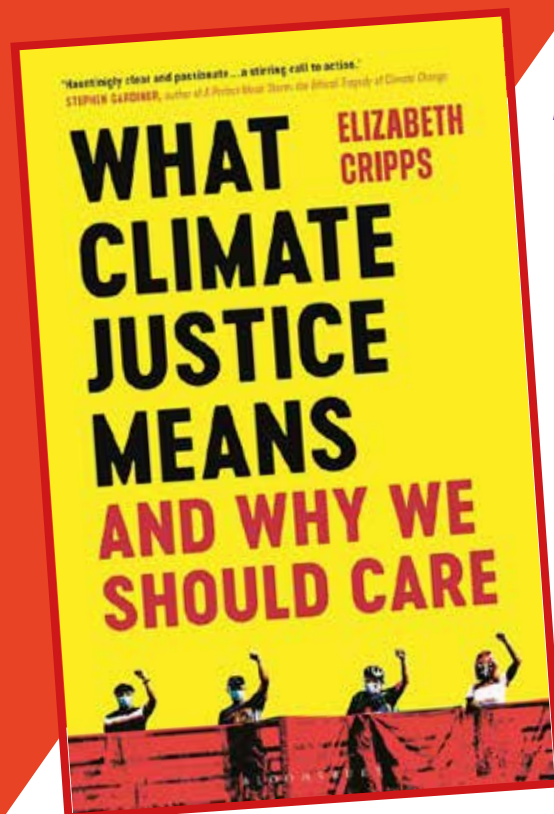


Democracy
Social Justice & Equity
Equality
Non-Sexism & Non-Racism
Human Dignity
Open Society
Accountability
Rule of Law
Respect
Reconciliation

Making the connections? ...

“Environmental and social justice
are inextricably linked;
it is as simple and complex as that.”

Sophie Price - A Teach the Future student



from review by Darius Jackson

However, Cripps' argument is even more profound than that, she argues that environment needs to be protected for itself as we are part of the same ecosystem. If nature cannot flourish, then humans can't either simply because of our 'dependence on the world'.

She concludes her first chapter with the deceptively simple comment '...climate justice is about having institutions fit for purpose: institutions to fulfil the shared obligations that we all have, as humans, to protect one another's most vital interests'.

Elephant Times 3.3 took a justice theme. Liz Cripps, who led one of the conversations, wrote about empowering children, Darius Jackson offers a lively review recommending her book.



Lina Yassin writes in ET 4.1 about Loss and Damage

“To drive this point home, I shared personal anecdotes from my homeland, Sudan. There, the question is no longer if we will experience floods each year, but rather, “How severe will the floods be this year?” In countries like Sudan, a single extreme weather event can significantly hinder economic development, displacing millions and creating a vicious cycle that proves challenging to break.”

This recurring and detrimental impact is captured in the term - Loss & Damage. This has become a central topic in international climate discussions.

“Loss and damage refers to the negative consequences of climate change on human societies and the natural environment. Climate change is affecting the frequency, intensity and geographical distribution of extreme weather events such as storms, floods and heat-waves, and slow-onset events such as sea level rise, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity and desertification.”

From an [LSE article](#) -- [read more](#)

We are part of ecology ...



With thanks to Hans van Boven

“Any entitlement has to include giving teachers confidence

The ecological crisis – what can we do to help teachers engage with students and bring the perspective that we are all part of the ecology and destroying something is destroying ourselves? ”

Glenn



Are we open to the possibility of butterflies?

What can we learn about systems from nature?

The Circular Economy idea is a good example.
This podcast offers a range of stimulus.

CHANGE?

“There is nothing about a caterpillar that suggests it will change into a butterfly”



Zafroon Bibi & Maria Ferrante write about a project using ‘The Viewer’- written by Gary Crew and beautifully illustrated by Shaun Tan - to initiate discussions.

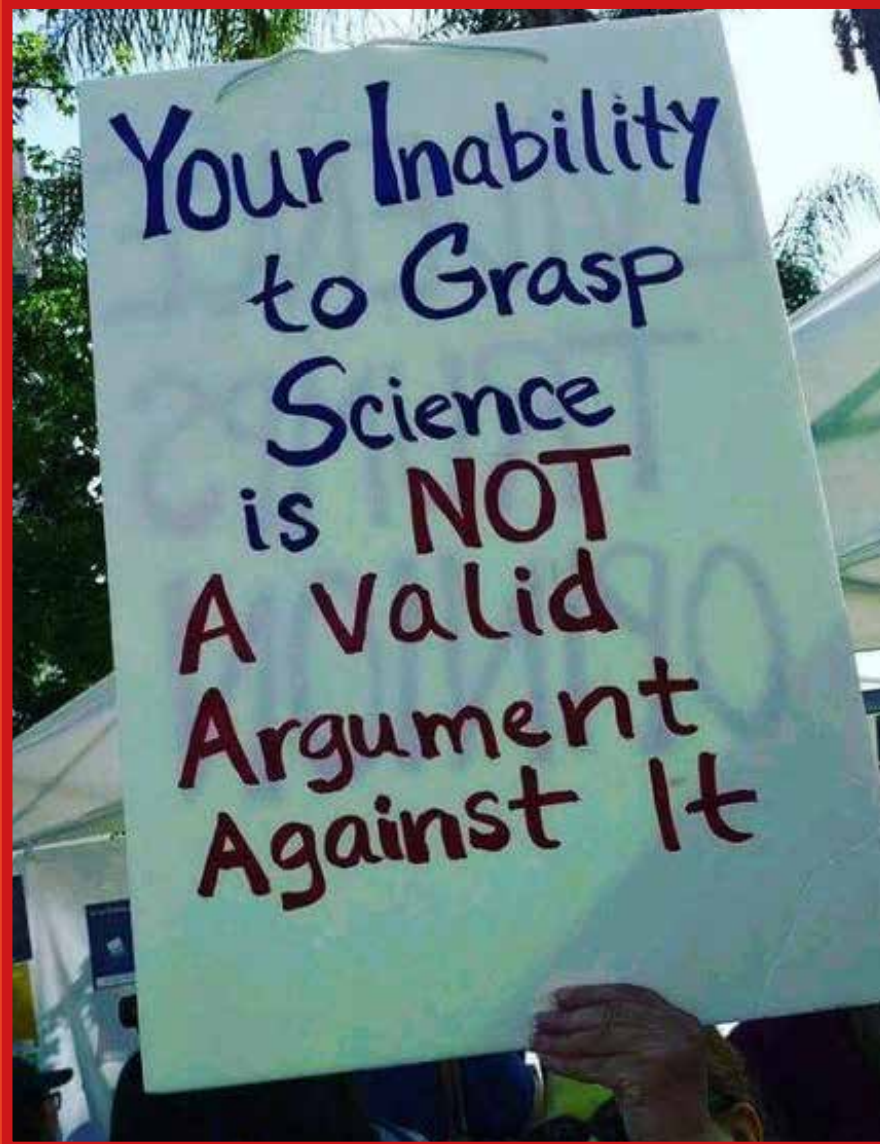
“In order to encourage our children to become critical thinkers and to think ‘outside of the box’, we decided to focus on one aspect - the negative impact plastic has on our environment.”

“A buzz was created throughout the Year 6 pupils. The classrooms filled with their questions.”

‘Freedom with connections’ - An ET article by James Boddey explores work in the Early Years making connections - with Nature, - with Self & Others, - with Community.

Early exploration of the outdoors and of nature is important and needs to progress as children develop. The work of Forest Schools featured in several discussions. Learning Through Landscapes’ Outdoor Learning frameworks were also highlighted.

Dialogue in school - and 9 propositions ...



“We have to recognise that we’re looking at issues that cannot be understood from within one discipline.

We have to engage in dialogue with other disciplines from the perspectives that we have in order to understand.

Part of what a teacher entitlement must do is to enable dialogue within a school.”

Darius

“I have daily conversations with the children in my class and it’s something that they are all really passionate about.”

Charlotte

“Primary children have huge enthusiasm .. given the right tools and information they will gain a great deal.”

Margaret

“We’re a primary school of a Trust. We got the children debating the UN sustainability goals and finding out what they wanted to look at.”

Dom



Anne Dolan who took a lead in one of the November conversations wrote in ET 3.1 reflecting on the development of her book which involves contributions from different disciplines.

In ET 3.4 Rachel Tomlinson who also took a lead in conversations considers ‘Guiding principles for school initiative’ as a Primary Head.

In ET 1.4 Margaret Barnfield reflected on primary science work that led to the Tide~ publication: Why on Earth? What should we learn from that?

Once we grasp the science, we realise that this is not just about science or geography, it has implications for all aspects of the school.

In ET 3.1 Mick Waters set the scene for the ‘popular dialogue’ we seek, exploring the idea of Compassionate Education.

Opportunities for dialogue in **both in Primary and Secondary** schools are an essential element of a Teacher Entitlement approach.

There are many questions to ask - We ask a few on page 26.

The propositions outlined on pages 28-29 are offered as a stimulus to school based conversation.

There are many questions to ask ...

We ask - *What could different curriculum areas offer?*

Amy-Jane Beer writes ...*"Spend a quiet hour on a riverbank watching water slide by and you might find yourself wondering You might even ask What is a river? The answer is simultaneously simple enough that it is taught to nursery age children, and vast enough that the mind struggles to hold it."*

We ask - *Can we bring the river into the classroom? What about a visit ?*

In [Art and the circular economy](#) Es Devlin suggests *"What we need art to do is to make a habitat for non human species within the human mind."*

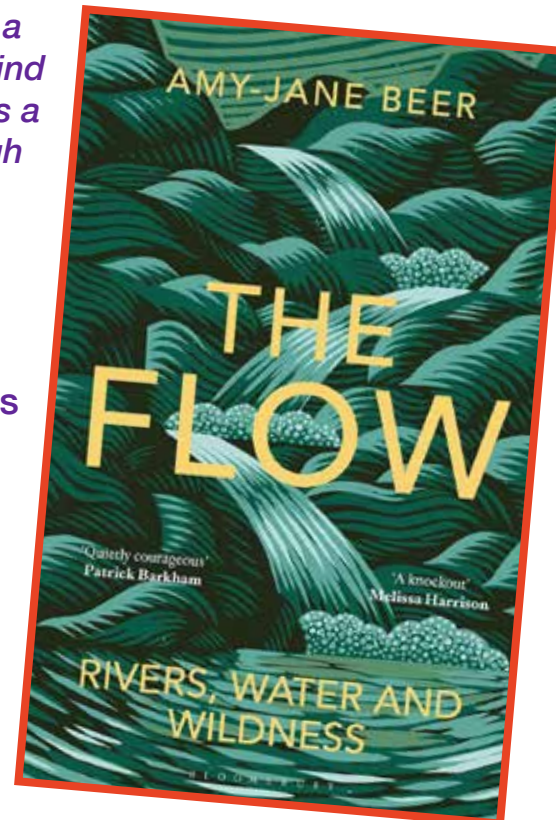
We ask - *What about music?*

[Kate Howen's](#) ET 1.6 article offers a good start.

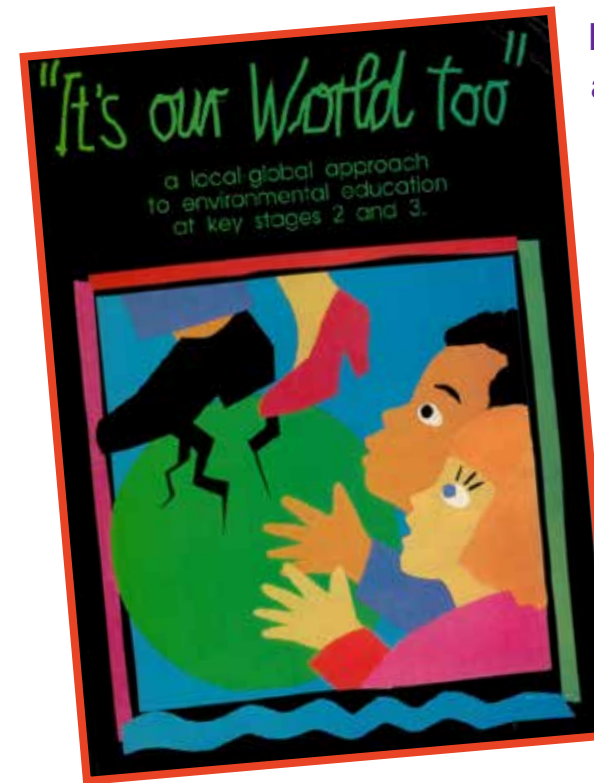
We ask - *What is the historical context?*

Kate Hawkey's new book adds much to our understating as well as pointers for climate change history in the classroom.

"The roots of the climate crisis take us back to a consideration of the age-old discourse around the impacts of the interactions between nature and culture."



Click image for info.



It may be worth revisiting earlier projects such as *"Its our world too"* - a **local-global approach to environmental education**. Published in 1992.

It resulted from creative work by teacher groups in Birmingham, Derbyshire and Sheffield who came together at residential workshops in Castleton.

Inspiration was taken from the UNICEF Report: *'Children and the Environment'* [1990] and the concept of inter-generational legal equity. **Future generations have rights.**

The project provided opportunities to **use local field-work as a stimulus to exploring environment and development issues in other parts of the world.**

Click image for info.

How do we review the full scope of learning opportunities from environmental experience? E.g. -

- ☐ in the school grounds - and its locality;
- ☐ by linking with other schools [e.g. urban - rural];
- ☐ by making good use of residential centres.



Glenn Strachan at [Denmark Farm](#) in Mid-Wales - one of many centres that offer significant experiences.

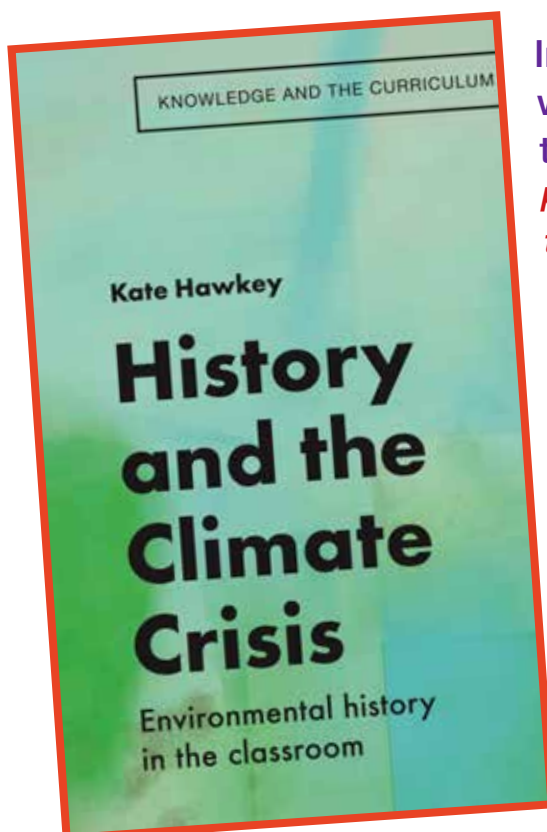
How do we see the impact of Covid and reduced budgets on such learning opportunities? Can we change that?

What local experiences could be offered to stimulate awareness of global issues?

In ET 2.4 [Dave Hunt](#) raises questions about whether the patterns of colonialism are repeating themselves. We ask - *"Will climate change accelerate positive change or deepen political division and widen the economic gap - locally and globally?"*

In ET 3.1 [Ben Ballin and Richard Dawson](#) featured a lively project - *'Change the Story'*. It involved young people's work [9-14] from Austria, Hungary, Italy, Turkey & the UK. But they also raise the question: *"is it too late for climate education?"*

Climate change is already happening, for many it is already devastating - we have to engage with that reality. We ask - *"How do we deal with our personal anxiety that this urgency involves and the optimism to design quality change?"*



Click image to download for free

How do we respond to the proposition:

❑ that climate change is a global phenomenon?

It will affect us all in many ways. It raises key principles of commonality and interdependence. It connects us with communities all over the world, who are also working on how to respond. There is a real sense that 'we are all in it together'. Perspectives from elsewhere in the world offer us particular insights.

❑ that it is complex?

Climate change is not a single issue. Understanding it calls for joined-up thinking involving different curriculum areas [eg Geography, Science, Citizenship, D&T].

We need to acknowledge that the issues are contested and there is uncertainty. It raises questions about the culture of science and the need for 'scientific literacy'.

❑ that responding to it requires learning?

The seriousness of the issues give us a great deal to think about and act on. Their complexity challenges us to do so in a dynamic way.

Young people should have an entitlement to understand what is happening and engage with the issues about how we respond.

The contribution of learning is often undervalued by those seeking to respond to climate change.

❑ that it raises challenges about what is learnt and how it is learnt?

Climate change is not simply a subject which can be 'covered'. There will always be new things to learn, or existing understandings to re-evaluate. This is challenging, but offers potential for exciting and meaningful learning.

Learners will require a range of perspectives to get a sense of what is going on. Sensationalist or simplistic approaches may encourage a sense of powerlessness or cynicism. Learners will need space to assess conflicting assertions.

❑ that it is a controversial issue?

Understanding climate change is work in progress, even at the most sophisticated and 'expert' levels.

The idea that the teacher doesn't know 'the answer' offers particular opportunities for student enquiry.

❑ that it needs fresh thinking about curriculum?

Climate change engages with the agenda of 'developing a curriculum for the 21st century' in a real way. Understanding such a complex global issue requires new curriculum models.

Such a curriculum needs to emphasise critical thinking, co-operation and learning to learn.

❑ that young people's dialogue is vital?

We know that climate change is likely to affect young people throughout their lives. They have a stake in its implications for the future, and this goes beyond knowledge. What are their aspirations?

There is a need for mutual learning between teachers and learners, and great potential for young people to learn from each other.

The young people Tide~ consulted challenged the tendency to get them doing things rather than thinking about them.

They also raised the well-intentioned desire to protect young learners from a potentially alarming or depressing vision of the future.

❑ that young people need to learn to choose?

Current received wisdom is unlikely to be adequate when dealing with the needs of the future. We need to be thinking about learning for empowerment rather than compliance.

It is healthy for learners to feel they are making a difference, but not to be unquestioning about what that means. Activity itself can also be a stimulus to learning.

❑ that schools need to develop a disposition?

There is potential to engage learners in school decisions about climate change, where at a minimum they are informed about what is happening, and preferably they are able to offer leadership.

Issues like climate change call for whole school coherence, for dialogue across roles, subjects, phases, and specialisations ... and for this to centre on the learner's experience.

As Stevie pointed out in her letter [page 4] these propositions were draw up by a Tide~ teacher group, facilitated by Ben Ballin, some 15 years ago.

They remain challenging.

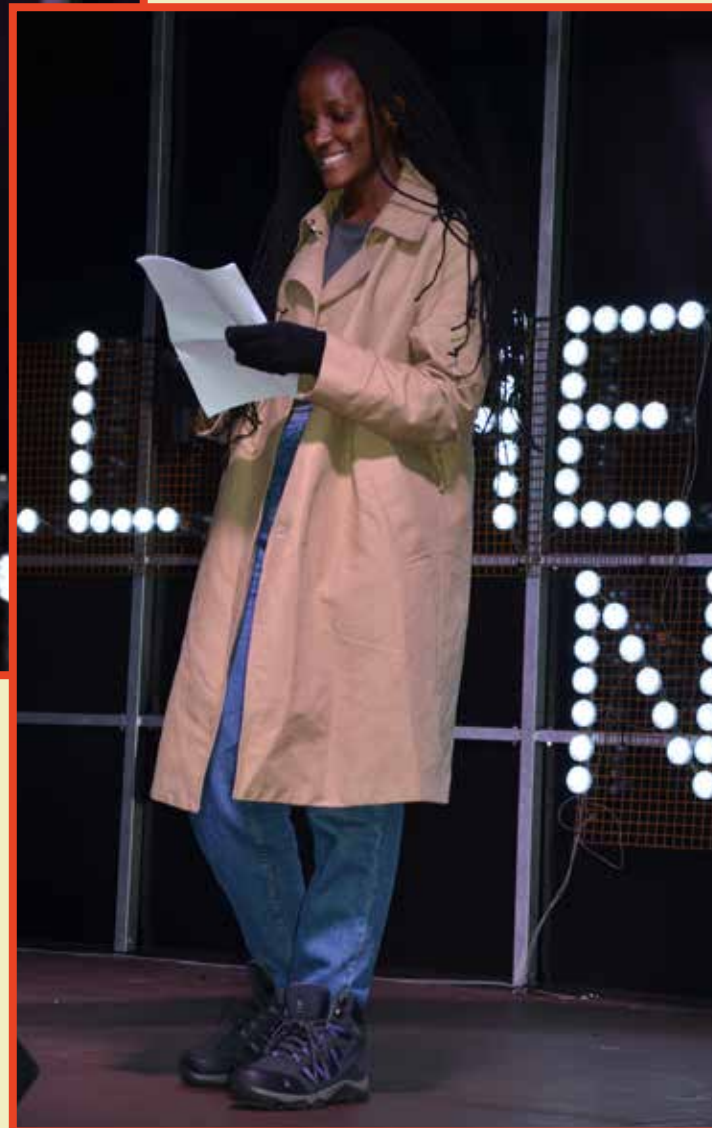
3. Young people in the lead - responding to their challenges?

Many young people are leading the way on the need to address the climate crisis and the importance of climate justice. In this section we feature: a student led initiative- 'Teach the Future'; a conference that brought teachers and students together to work on climate education; and the learning potential of setting up your own COP. We conclude with - asking questions.



"Real leadership
- the inspiration of
Greta Thunberg and
Vanessa Nakate"

from ET article by
[Anne Dolan](#)



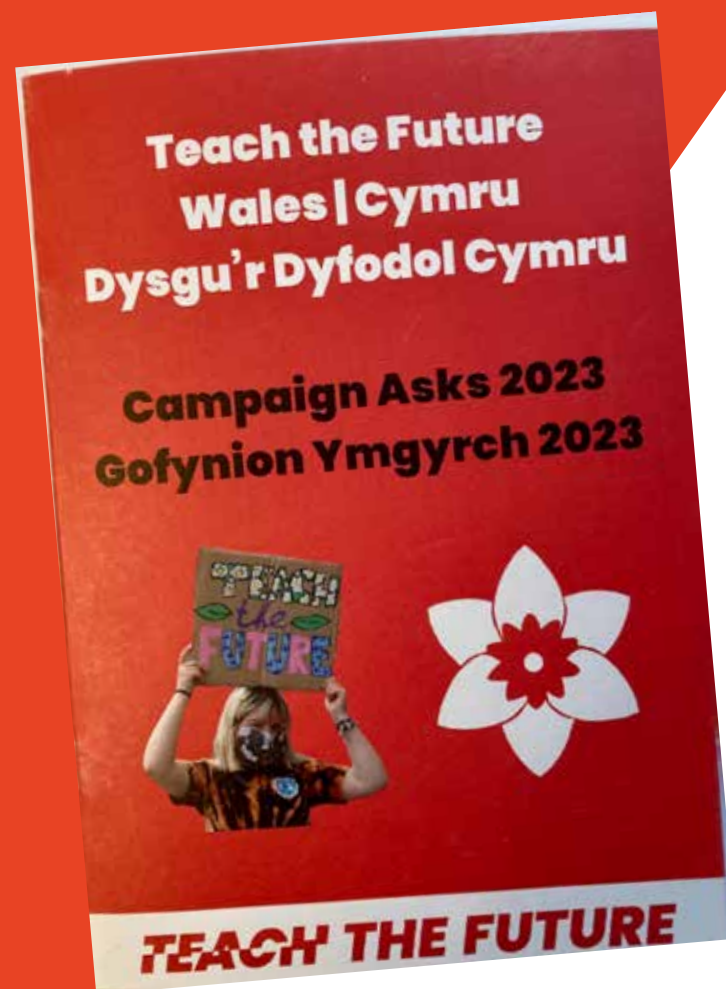
Katie Riley was the opening speaker at the *Teens and Teachers* conference. [She wrote an ET article](#), in one of the first editions of the magazine, about her experiences at 16 as one of the organisers of the 2019 Birmingham school strikes.

Students feel they are not being listened to in responding to the climate emergency...as a teacher who has been teaching about climate change for a long time, I started to care a lot more about it after listening to young people.

Lucy

Teach the Future ...

'Asks' - from a student led movement



Click on image
to see the document

How can climate education be effectively integrated
into educational policy within the specific
context of Welsh education?

"I found myself reflecting continuously on this question
during the 'Teens and Teachers' conference and over the past
few months in my role with [Teach the Future \(Wales\)](#)"

So writes [Yasmine Ghorayeb](#) in an article in Elephant Times [4.1]



Simon Gough Photographs
The Pier Head Parliamentary Reception

"As I simultaneously reflect
on the 'Teens and Teachers'
Conference and the TTF (Wales)
Parliamentary Reception, **my
conviction that students' demands
can be implemented within the
framework of Welsh educational
policy is reaffirmed.**

All we need now is resolute action
to make these essential reforms a
reality."

Yasmine

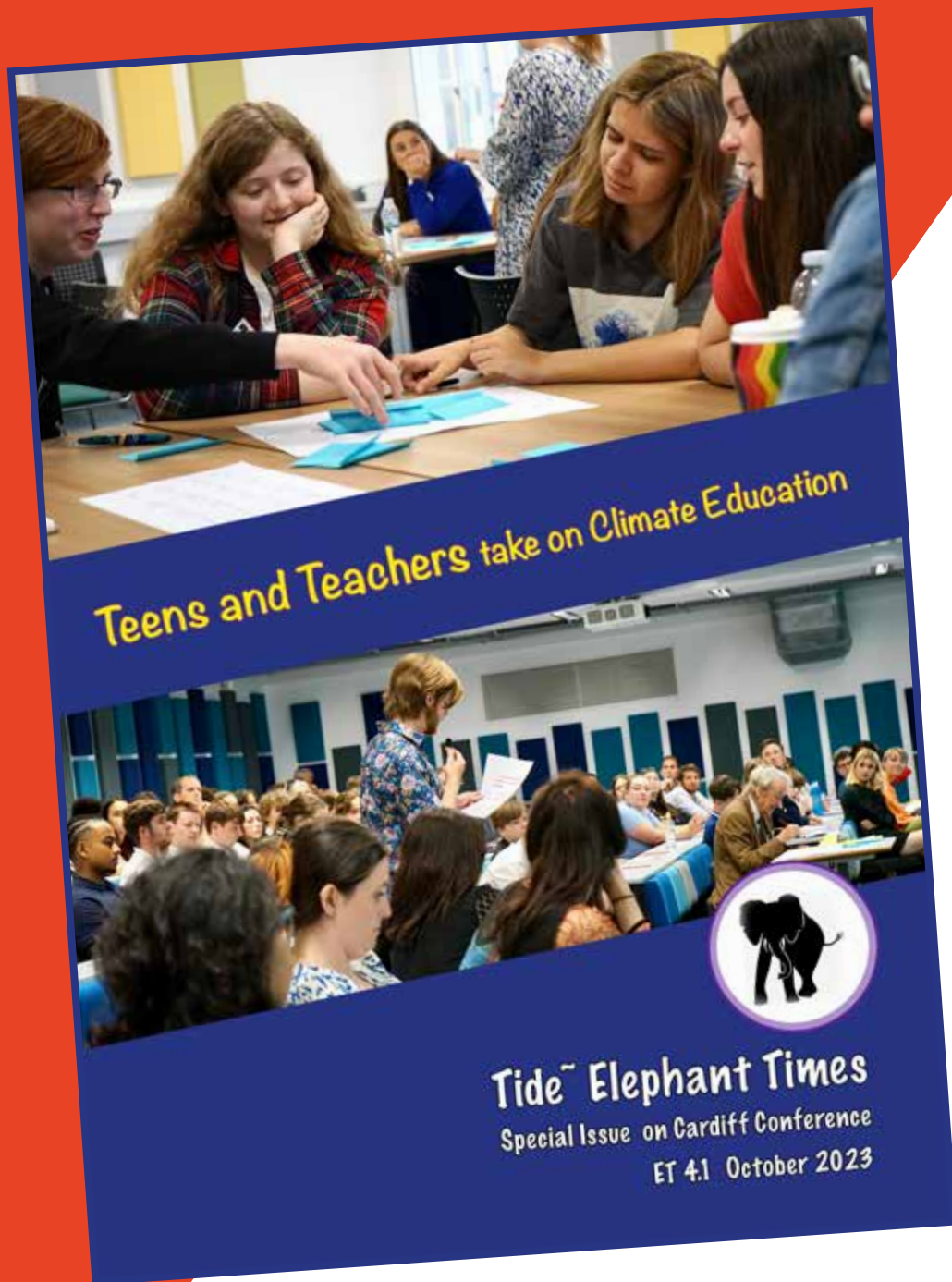
By a happy accident we [ET
editors] went to the event
launching this report in Cardiff.

It was inspiring - and more
pragmatic than we are - but for
another day there are questions
worth exploring about how far
you can go with building on 'a
school machine that is not fit for
purpose'.

Teach the Future has produced a
document making ['asks' in England.](#)

They have also done a [Report on the
costs of achieving Net Zero in Primary
and Secondary Schools in the UK.](#)

Teens & Teachers take on Climate Education



The 'Teens and Teachers' conference, held in Cardiff in June 2023, built on the energy and motivation of young people to engage with their concerns about climate change. It confirmed the value of students and teachers working together. A special of issue of the Elephant Times was produced. [Link from image]



Discussing Learner Entitlement was a major feature of the conference. Afterwards the conference team of Bassaleg students took on the task of **analysing all 250 climate education entitlement statements** that were written by the delegates in the final workshop. [See article in special ET]

The collaborative working and level of discussion involved in this task was impressive and reminded us of the value of activities such as card games as a strategy for engaging with complex issues.

The draft entitlement statement [See page 38] will be important to follow up work **but the process could be used to motivate and engage any group of students.** In many ways the process is more important than the outcome.

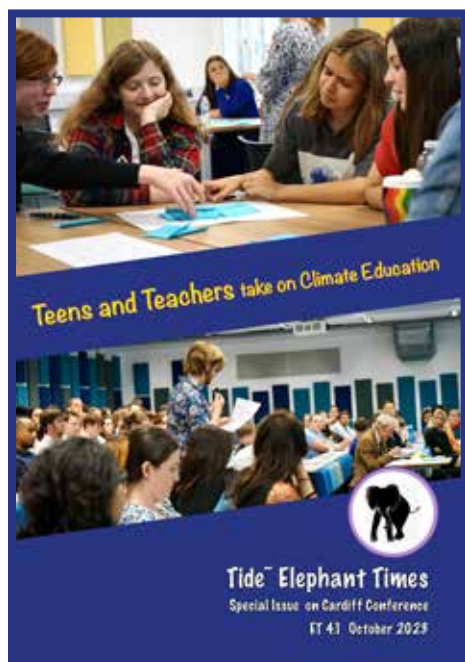
Lucy Kirkham [Bassaleg School, Newport] the key organiser of the event is a member of the Tide~ Core Group. She concludes her article reflecting on the Cardiff Conference ...

“Ultimately the impetus for this work will be young people's passion, wisdom and concern.

A significant number of students in our schools feel that not enough is being done and they are right. In our efforts to address this, we should consider ...

how we can embolden our students, rather than burden them”.

To view Teens & Teachers Elephant Times click on image



CONTENTS

- Girija Deshmukh - The conference - an overview
- Lucy Kirkham - Reflects on successes and challenges
- Drafting an Entitlement
- Lina Yassin - Inspiring Justice Advocates
- Peter Mackie & Sasha Eykyn - University hosts reflect
- Yasmine Ghorayeb - Teach the Future - Wales - ASKS
- Aled Hopkin - Wales' best classroom - the outdoors

Students from:

- Ysgol Plasmawr, Cardiff interview Jacqui Murray
- Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed interview Rhiannon Hawkins
- Morriston Comprehensive interview Tom Bullough
- Bishop of Llandaff High School interview Katie Riley
- Ysgol Bro Preseli interview Tim Brighthouse



I'm in Year 12, almost finished education yet this was the first climate conference I've attended.

It's made me extremely optimistic about the future because this conference has shown me student voice counts and young people want to make a difference.

Lewys Roberts [Ysgol Bro Preseli] - speaking at the end of the event.

A DRAFT ~ Learner Entitlement

In order to learn to navigate the climate emergency, students should be entitled to:

- ❑ Structures and spaces to constructively **express and explore ideas, opinions and feelings** about the climate crisis
- ❑ Meaningful and relevant **well-being provision** specifically aimed at eco-grief
- ❑ Involvement with actions to tackle the climate crisis including opportunities for **engagement with decision-makers**
- ❑ Some **choice on how and what** they learn around the climate crisis
- ❑ **Learning experiences** across, between and beyond subjects that involve some outdoor and non-school settings
- ❑ **Confident, informed educators** on climate change causes, impacts and actions, including but not exclusively teachers

- ❑ Education on how the climate crisis will influence **personal futures**, including career opportunities
- ❑ **Up-to-date and reliable** resources about the climate crisis
- ❑ Developing the **skills to independently learn** about and navigate the climate crisis, now and in the future
- ❑ A range of contexts for learning about and responding to the climate crisis: **individual, local, community, national, global**
- ❑ A continuum of **age-appropriate experiences** and actions, beginning with climate education in the early years

These are based on the cards drafted at the **Teens & Teachers** conference.

~ Choose three that you feel are a priority.

~ What would you add?

Simulating COP28



An event held in Solihull



Michila Critchley from InterClimate Network shares ideas about events linked to COP28 - and plans for an event in Birmingham

Birmingham Schools' Climate Conference will take place in the Council Chambers on 6th December timed to coincide with the real-life COP28.

We plan to share something of the experience in a future ET magazine.

The event is organised by [InterClimate Network](#) [ICN] with Birmingham City Council support. It will be opened by Councillor Majid Mahmood, cabinet member for Environment and Waste.

Skills and benefits for students:

- ❑ Comprehension of global climate issues, new knowledge and awareness;
- ❑ Research, analysis and interpretation;
- ❑ Debating, conflict resolution and teamwork;
- ❑ Public speaking, articulacy, oracy, and critical thinking;
- ❑ Understanding alternative viewpoints in a complex environment.

❑ **Enhance critical climate thinking** - bringing 'real world' global climate negotiations to life

❑ **Investigate local climate action** – talking about what more can be done in our schools and communities

❑ **Engage with local decision-makers** – questioning and having a voice in Birmingham's climate action.

Such events bring students into places significant to local decisions. They also engage with local decision-makers, questioning and having a voice in Birmingham's climate action.

As Councillor Majid Mahmood put it

“Young people in this city have a passion for the environment, so we're keen to help stimulate their thinking on a topic that effects everyone. Whenever I've visited schools to discuss climate change, the ideas put forward have always been impressive – this event will provide a great platform for everyone involved to have their say.”



Climate Voice

“They will remember this”

“Knowledge about climate change & the softer skills”



Click on image to view video

We are part of the global

Local and global

Listening

“I will tell my friends”

“This gives context to what they
have been learning”

This video demonstrates
the considerable
learning opportunities
in the approach.

The students form teams and use ICN's [free COP28 Conference Resource](#) to research and represent the views of some of the world's most climate vulnerable countries, [BRICS](#) alliance members, and industrialised nations as well as UAE. Country delegations negotiate towards what has proved elusive in reality: massive reduction of greenhouse gas emissions attempting to limit ever more dangerous global warming.

Students can draw on information like the [COP28 UAE official website](#). It states that the world must reduce CO2 emissions by 43% by 2030. COP28 is a stock-take but the [IPCC 6th Synthesis Report](#) already shows beyond doubt just how far off track we are. UN Secretary-General António Guterres is giving stronger messages about the need to 'accelerate efforts' and clear guidance in the [road-map for a liveable planet](#).

Even as a role-play, these are intense negotiations as young people fully take on their countries' perspectives on pressing issues: - the need for speed; commitments from other nations to phase out fossil fuels; agreement to fund 'loss and damage'; making sure finance is not just promised.

An ICN conference evaluation [2022] highlighted that students valued the opportunity ... in particular:

“Debating how different countries could improve their climate actions whilst still growing and developing their economies – working on sustainable development.”

Part 2 of the conference turns to local climate action: how we as individuals and part of our school and communities are stepping up. Although those under 18 have the most to lose from the legacy of today's decisions, youth voices are often absent in decision-making forums.

A 'Climate Question Time' is a direct way for young people to put their often-challenging questions to a panel comprising Birmingham decision-makers and relevant organisations and council teams.

We know from previous feedback that the vast majority leave with a better understanding, an awareness of the actions needed, and more confidence about presenting information to others.

Website: [Climate Conferences - InterClimate Network](#).

Asking questions ...

- engaging with complex realities



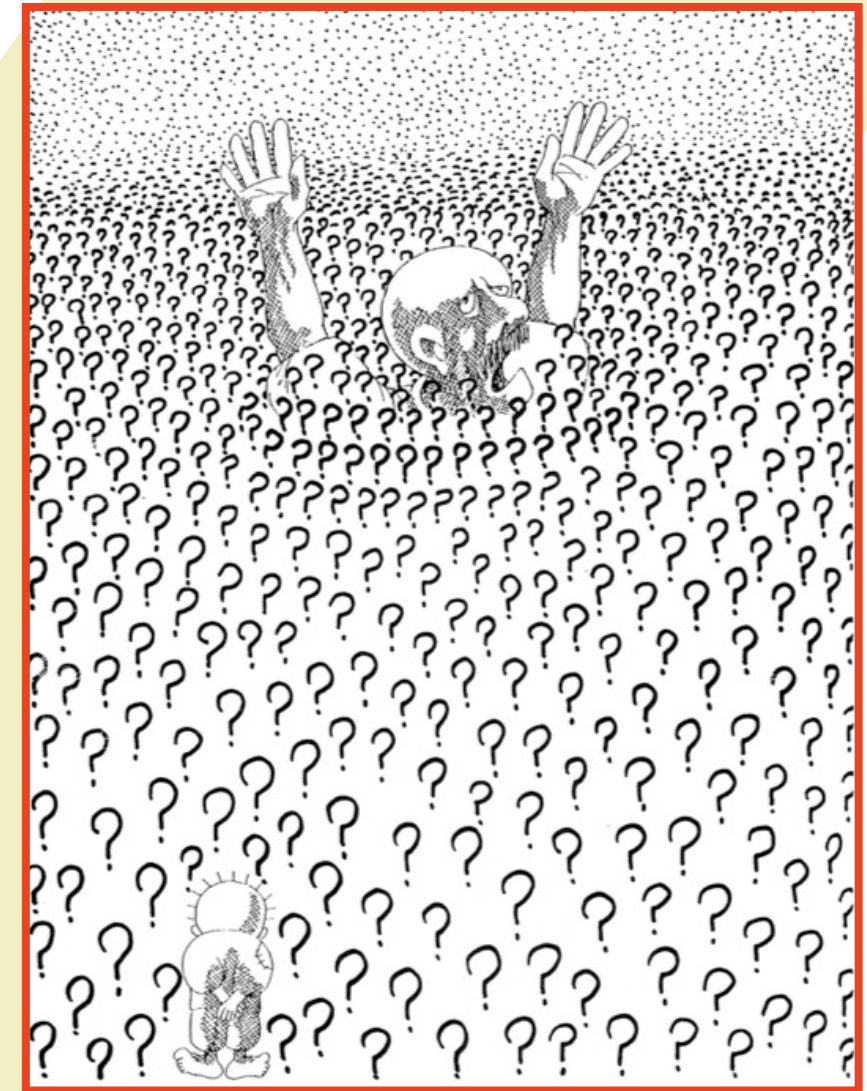
The **ability to form appropriate questions is an important skill.** It is built up over time. It has both individual and group significance. It is key to engaging with more nuanced debate relating to different views, contradictions, and dilemmas.

Asking questions is fundamental to the processes of democracy.

This cartoon is by Palestinian cartoonist Naji al Ali. Hanzala, who features in many of his cartoons, is looking on. **The questions drown out corruption and autocratic tendencies.**

Or another view might be ... better not to ask too many questions for fear of drowning in them! How do you see it?

It is 36 years since Naji al Ali was shot in London for the questions he asked through his cartoons.



Naji al Ali features in the Tide~ book: [Thin Black Lines](#)

Who is listened to? ...

Young people are asking questions, about climate change, about war, about inequality, about justice for different groups in society.

Could schools make more of this as motivation for learning and creativity?

~ ~ ~

Who decides?

Who gains? - Who loses?



Cartoon; Martyn Turner

The Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] are grouped into Social, Environmental and Economic themes. It is clear that understanding sustainable development involves making connections between **Natural** [environmental] systems and **Social** and **Economic** activity.

But the important question is **Who decides?**
Is this sometimes neglected?



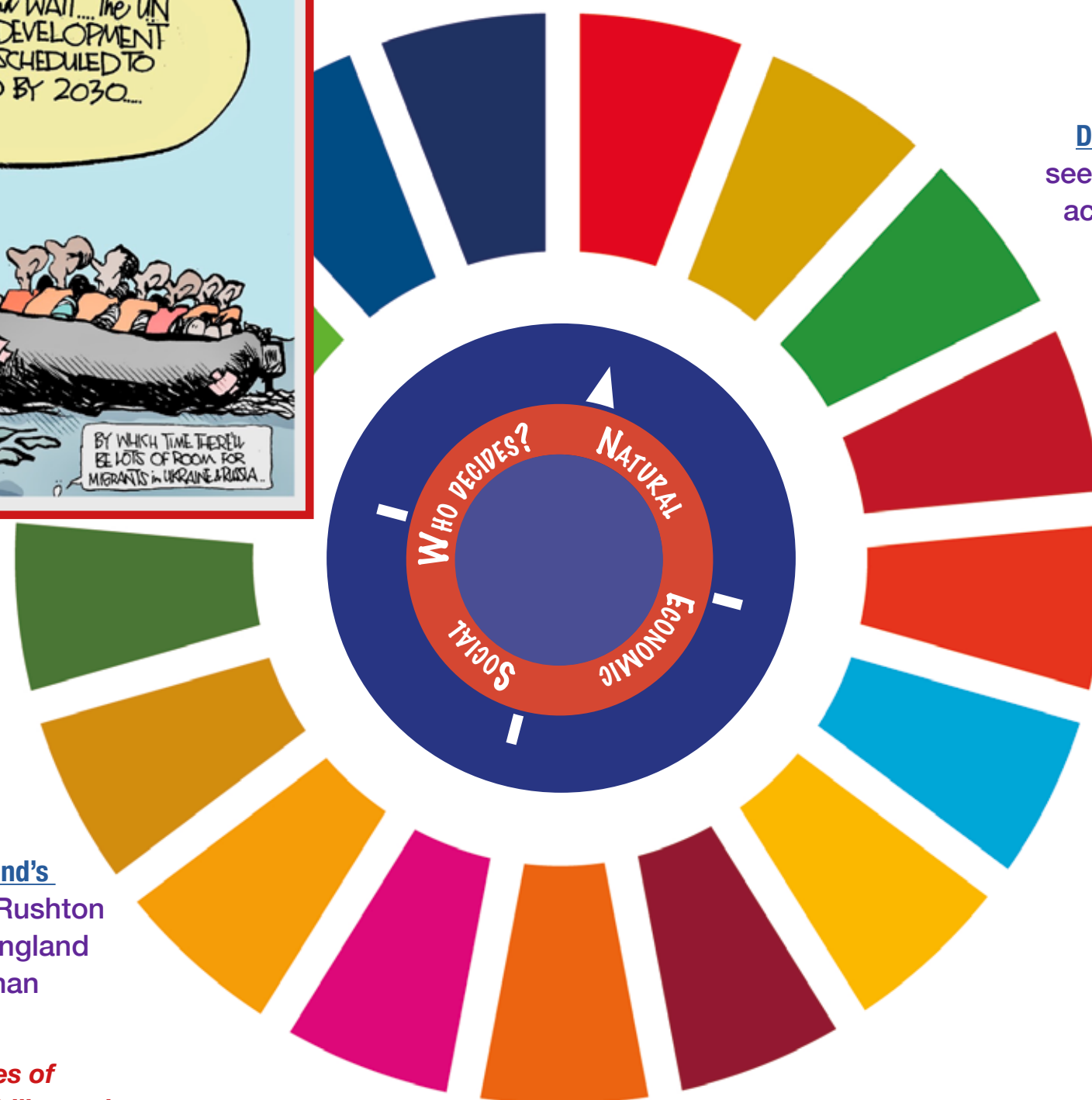
Development Compass Rose activities seek to make such complexity more accessible. These activities enable students to generate questions, then develop their own enquiry routes and make connections between different aspects.

The decisions to explore in the [west] **W - Who decides?** are wide ranging.

The decisions we take individually and those taken by governments, companies and international organisations are all significant. They are key to asking appropriate questions about the potential for change.

In Putting climate change at the heart of education: Is England's strategy a placebo for policy? Lynda Dunlop and Lizzy Rushton raise the debate more sharply asking - is policy in England more about "the appearance of doing something" than engaging with the real challenges?

"We find that there are clear differences in the priorities of government concerning climate change and sustainability and those of teachers and young people. These differences include the focus on economic concerns, the place of science-focused knowledge and skills, and the de-politicization of climate change and sustainability."



That brings us back to the question:
- who decides about education?

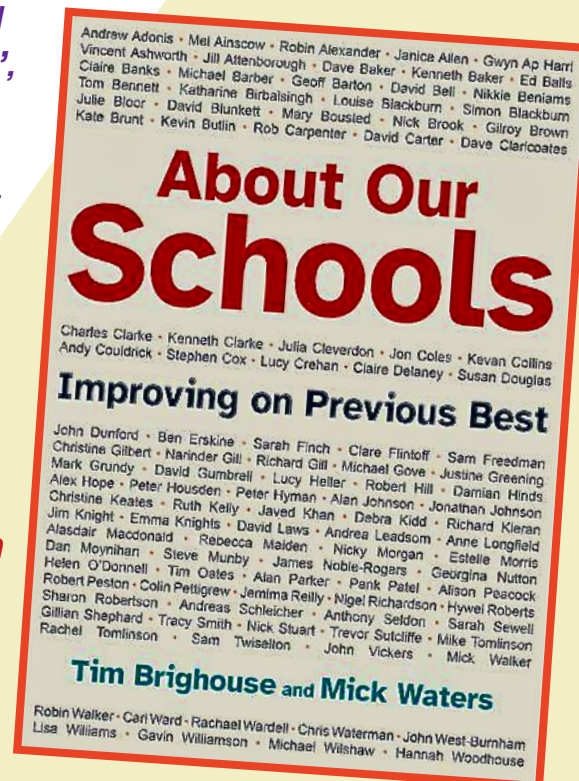
4. A crisis of imagination? - thinking afresh about schools

In this section we invite some major conversations between those looking to the future of education policy.

In ET 3.2 [Tim Brighouse](#) reflects “When Mick Waters and I wrote ‘*About our Schools: improving on previous best*’, we didn’t give climate change the emphasis we might have done partly because we thought it would emerge if the whole schooling system could have an agreed set of specific purposes. With something like that agreed, we could have a much more balanced accountability system for schools rather than the punitive academic outcome orientated existing one based on exams, tests and Ofsted.”

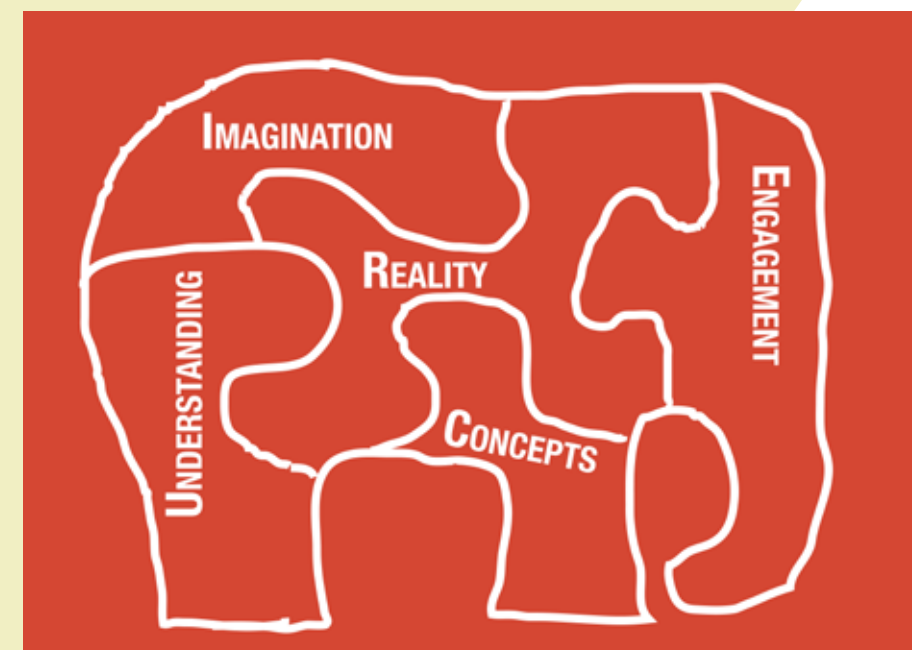
He then asks “*What should we expect schools to be achieving, and what are the values that underpin those purposes?*” - and shares some proposals.

‘*About our Schools*’, was one of the starting points for the project. Tim and Mick joined a Tide~ group to facilitate the process.



“The real crisis is not the climate crisis but a crisis of imagination”

Rob



The Elephant - about making connections. This version is by Darius Jackson.

Imagination

Reality

Concepts - Understanding

Engagement

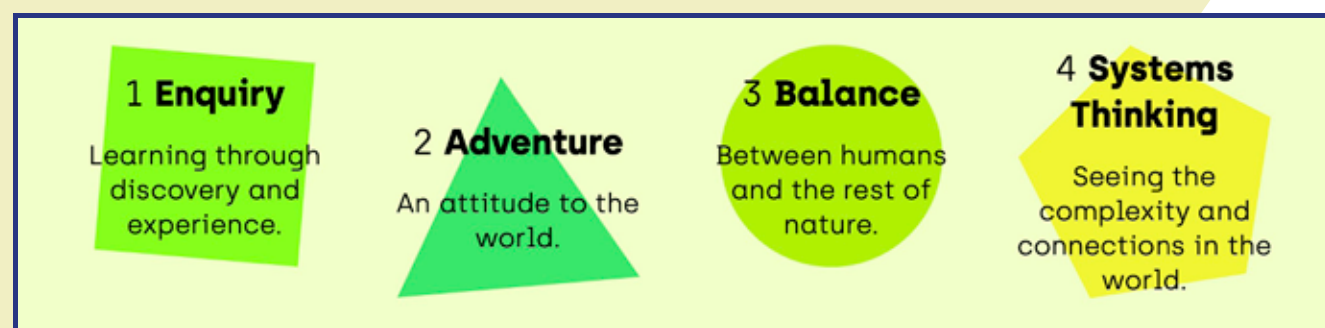
What would you choose for your Elephant jigsaw?

[Dominic Simpson](#) writes in ET 3.4

“How do we make sustainability part of the curriculum and purposeful, not so that it’s a “bolt-on” or just addressing a current issue, but something deeply rooted in the moral purpose that we have as educators to ensure that we provide children with the skills and knowledge they need?

This was the question that we found ourselves asking often over the last few years as we look at how the curriculum can provide opportunities for teaching about sustainability.”

He explores this in the context of Windsor Academy Trust and the supportive work of [Ministry of Eco- Education](#).



“There is a huge issue at the moment with capacity ... and with the type of CPD which is limiting teacher agency and their joy with the profession.

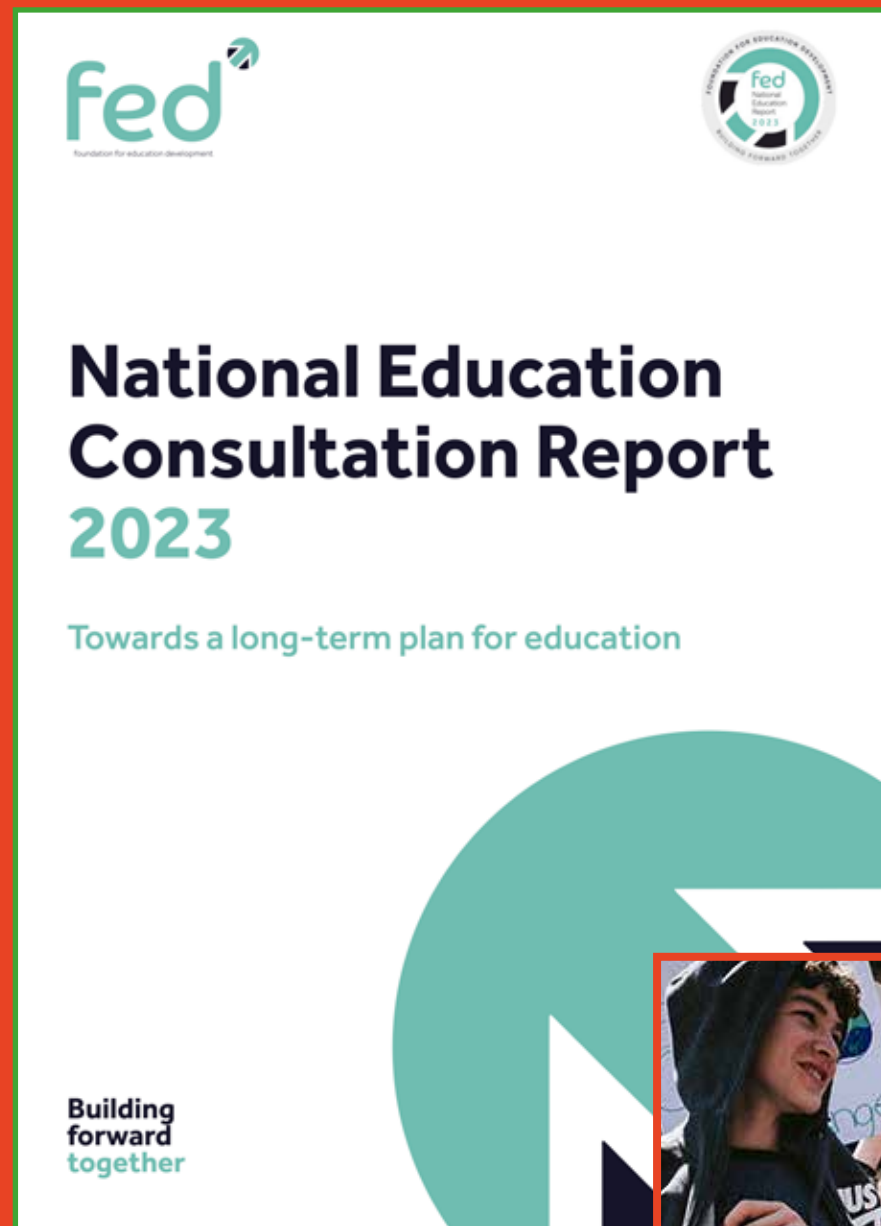
... it’s about opening up to teachers to network, to hear other people’s stories, but then to make that contextually relevant to their own circumstance.”

Diane

ET 4.2

49

Should we be FED UP? - the need for debate



Click on image
to see the report



For ET the “WE” is the education community and the systems and professionals that shape practice.

“Climate change being presented as if it is fixable, a sort of techno-fix, that feeds straight into the business as usual philosophy -- it supports the continued exploitation of the environment.”

Stephen

A few days before our AGM meeting the Federation for Educational Development [FED] held an event, in the House of Lords, to launch its report visioning the future of education.

There was some disappointment that it did not offer the stimulus to some of our debates that we had expected. The phrase FED UP was coined. Bill Scott admired the report and reflected on this frustration in an NAEF blog: [FED UP](#)

As what we had seen as a potential opportunity to open-up debate faded, we were left wondering ...

What hope for thinking afresh, if a group like FED, with many distinguished people who are passionate about education, are not engaging with a bit of a rethink about:

- ☐ the world that young people are growing up in?
- ☐ the effect of curriculum control & inspection culture?
- ☐ the implications of climate change for teacher professionalism?
- ☐ the wider dilemmas for education's role in society?

[Bill Scott](#) wrote in ET 1.4 [2020] about such difficulties. He also pointed out that “*many external organisations which say they want to help still focus too much on their own interests rather than the bigger picture.*”

We suggest that there is scope for new debate.

The Chair of FED wrote this two months later

“Our education system could be more stable and consistent, if it wasn’t so stuck in the political cycle and defined by inevitable short-termism.

We need a system which is developed to serve the long-term interests of the country and its young people.

It is possible to have a more innovative and responsive education system if it is built around a long-term strategic vision; focused on delivering an education which responds to the needs of learners who are growing up in an increasingly fast-paced world.”

Carl Ward [Chair of FED]

Jonathan Cooper writes in ET 3.4

“Our education system is failing children. In the Inter-climate Network – ‘Climate Action Survey 2021’, 3800 young people, aged 11-18 expressed strong views that schools and other adults are not doing enough; 50% are unsure of how they can personally help, whilst 80% feel insufficient time is devoted in school to positive environmental, sustainability and climate change education/action.

As a result, they feel dis-empowered, believing their individual actions have little impact without wider structural change, and that their views don’t carry much weight in society, school or even their social group.”

Can we generate a more **nuanced awareness?** E.g. - a TV programme convinces us about reducing the use of plastic - how do we enable learners to engage with the complexity of this?

We need to recognise that, without appropriate local and global actions, a series of **climate tipping points** may be reached before many finish their school education.

How do we minimise learners being left with **feelings of helplessness** in the face of the climate crisis?

Subsidiarity is key – enabling decisions to be made as close as possible to the learners if they are to take their learning practice into their everyday ... and their adult life.



Are we [society] locked in a narrow view - a bit like the guy in the cartoon OR can we make it an opportunity as Daniela suggests? **There are limited resources**
There is no quick fix. But let's talk about it!

Pedagogy of mind, hands and heart

“More positively, this implies that the climate crisis is a wonderful opportunity to understand how to bring the curriculum to life as something that matters to children.

Start from what children think and what they need to develop and need to know”

[Daniela Conti - Italy]

From ET 3.3 article ‘Different Angles & Common Ground’ where Ben Ballin writes up a Zoom conversation involving educators from Austria, The Gambia, Hungary, Italy, Kenya, Turkey, Uganda and UK.

Sustainability - think whole school ...

It is also important that schools, like other organisations, develop policies and practice that address their environmental impact.

This is also an opportunity to **stimulate learning and student engagement**.

See for example ET article by [Chris Berry](#)



[Güliz Karaarslan Semiz](#) writes in ET 3.2 'In order to incorporate a whole school approach to sustainability, schools need to reconsider their curriculum, their learning and pedagogy, creating a holistic vision, developing authentic participation opportunities for students and create a shared, distributed leadership as teachers and students participate in designing, planning and taking action for sustainability at school'.

She shares her experiences in Turkey and Stockholm.

School sustainability policies are also significant learning opportunities.

In this BBC programme the children are enthusiastic and enjoyed the choices.

We recommend a listen.

"This goes hand in hand with learning about sustainability.

It is about offering experiences, not forcing a vegetarian diet."

See ET 3.3

[Rachel Tomlinson](#) - *What's for lunch?*



Green-washing In ET 3.3 [Colm Regan](#) highlights the need to question the environmental claims made in adverts - and explores the dilemmas schools need to engage with when sponsorship is on offer.

" ... in the last year we've saved over 300 tons of Carbon Dioxide going into the atmosphere. We've told all our students we've done that, cos these are things we can control. We control where our energy comes from, how we transport things, what we eat, what we do with the school grounds and we have made a difference.

We've stopped a bit of warming. By telling our staff and students about that... that has 'lit fires' under them ...we've got little fires going all over the place with people who now feel empowered, enabled, allowed to do things.

That's a good place to start...Do something. Actually make a difference and that then inspires other actions."

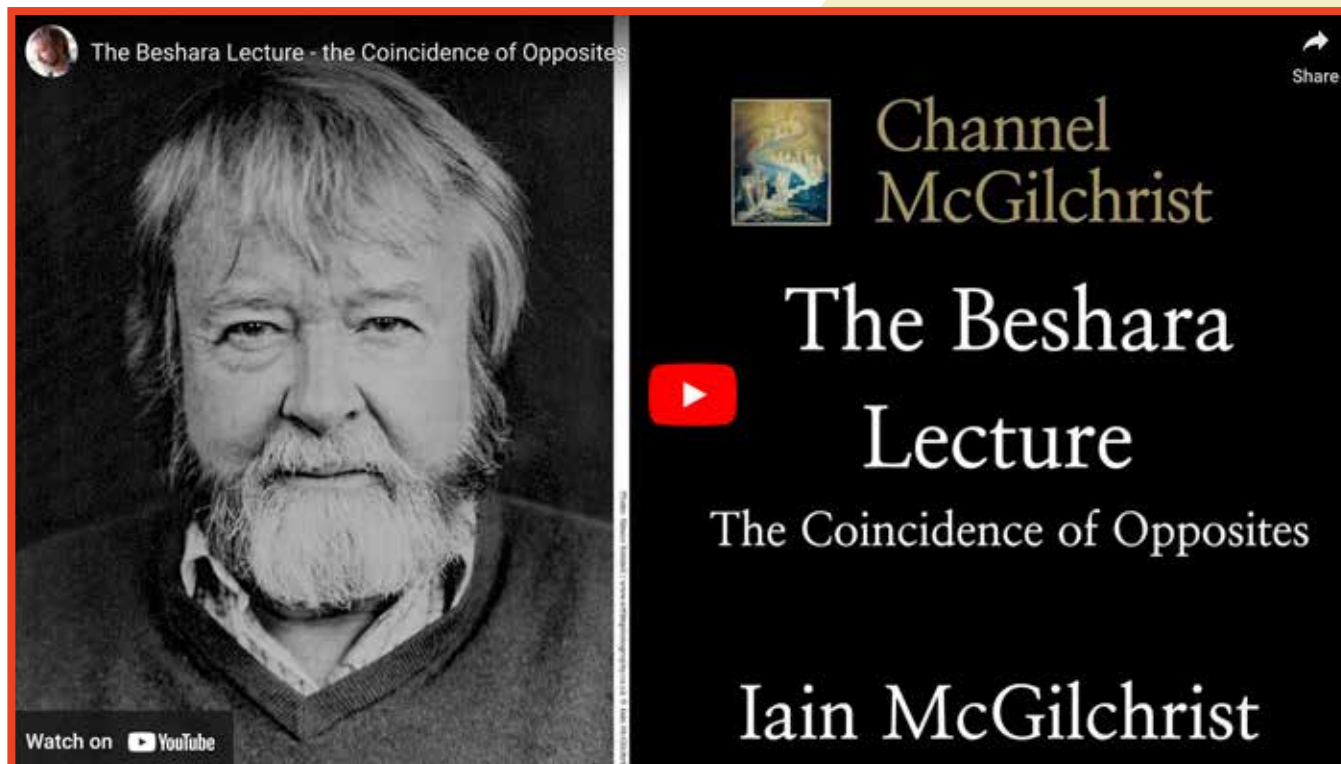
Paul

Please see [Cheviot Learning Trust](#) website.

5. A rethink - We need to move to the right!

Finally we are reminded that there is much more thinking to do.

In relation to Tide~ and Elephant Times, Robin highlighted “the value of considering the whole elephant, not just one part of it, for example climate change. Climate change is extremely important, and extremely relevant to Tide’s historic concerns.” This helps us consider ‘the whole’.



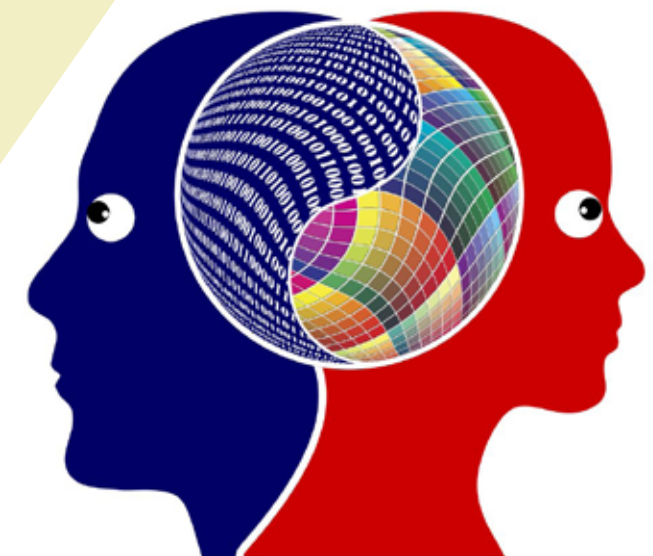
The Coincidence of Opposites

“In our universities, many students are ... so frightened that the truth might not ... conform to their theoretical model that they demand to be protected from discussions that threaten to examine the model critically, and their teachers, who should know better, in a serious dereliction of duty, collude.”

“The philosopher, Ian McGilchrist ... part of his philosophy suggests that we see the world ... in two ways – the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere... his thesis is that the climate crisis has been created by human beings using the left hemisphere of their brains for many centuries – but not always... the left hemisphere has been in the driving seat ...

We’ve [individually and collectively] got to go back to, or forward to, the right hemisphere and that has huge implications for the curriculum of schools and for this network assembled here this evening.”

Robin

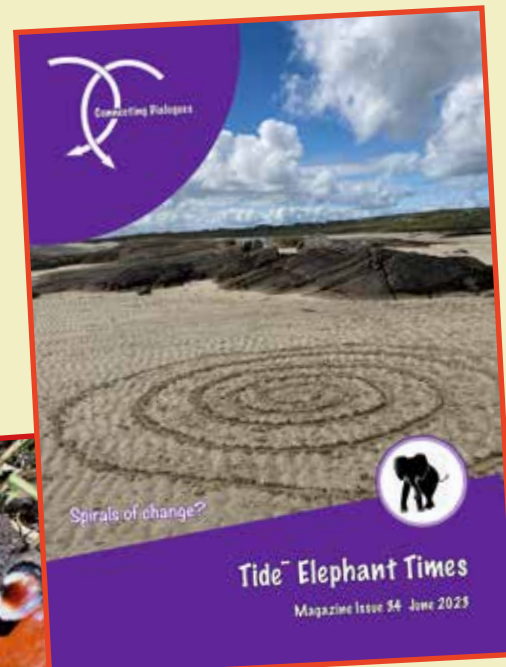


“We improve education by directing curricula and focusing on exam results to the point where free-thinking is discouraged.”

Acknowledgements ...

Thank you to all those that have contributed to the process - the Zoom conversations, the interviews and in particular those that brought the ideas together at the the AGM, and wrote Elephant Times articles.

[Overview of ET magazines and links to particular articles](#)



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Dorit Braun
Tim Brighouse
Lucy Kirkham
Jeff Serf
Scott Sinclair
Mick Waters

The AGM Group ...

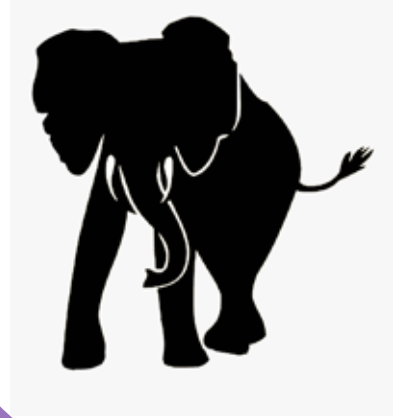
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Elephant Times



Connecting Dialogues

Tide~ global learning

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