

Cultural capital begins at home - then ripples outward
Local communities offer access to a wide range of cultural capital opportunities
on your door step

How much do you know about your home, village, town or city? What about the history of your school? Can you create something that helps foster a sense of pride in your area and can you involve your local council and community groups?

You are the story tellers, so animate and bring to life the past. Unlock the curiosity of young minds. What memories have people got to help embellish and illuminate histories of your local area?

Have you got a library? In school or in the town? Foster research as detective skills.

Research your local area, streets, town, buildings, school. How far back can you go? Find out about local stories, people, events and changes in community and local industries. The shops on the high street, the owners.

Research the terrain, geography, natural and built development of the land. Compare new and old maps.

Create a trail to walk with students, get them out to move around and see with fresh eyes. Tell them stories with facts, not just a list of facts. Does the council have a visual archive for you to use?

Architecture - Town Hall - Museum - Gallery - Theatre - Cinemas - (old cinemas long gone and converted) Old pubs, markets and corner shops. Think about creating this information visually. An exhibition that can be put on in school or in the town centre?

Can you involve residents and business owners who can talk about connections to the past and other towns?

Create a giant map with your school at the very centre. Illustrate it with images and time lines and histories and events. Let everyone be involved in something they know.

Let students pin point their school, home, friends, family, familiar places. - Get them into the map and into the story. Young people today are tomorrow's history. Can you make a time capsule/s ?

Open the discussion to debate connections and barriers. Tell the tales of the people who moved here hundreds of years ago as well as more recently.

Expand the map, to county wide and allow the curiosity to expand with it. Widen the trip and tell more stories of the industries.

Discuss the places where no one has been - This can be local, regional, national, worldwide. Identifying the unknown to take away the fear and alienation of 'otherness' Here be monsters? More tales to tell.

Find out about the places that no one knows and expand the map and the curiosity to want to discover more.

Cultural Capital should be experiential. It should not be a tick box on a lesson plan or a red dot on a scheme of work. All of the above are starting points that can be adapted and used in isolation, but how amazing if they could be covered as a whole school cross curricular Cultural Capital discovery project.

Celebrating Cultural capital - Every subject has its day

Religious and cultural festivals are often used in subjects such as Art, RE and Languages. Every day social media seems to tell us that it is another 'world something day.'

This can be initiated as a project, but the nature of the calendar allows you to access this project at any time of year as a starting point and dip in and out. Black history month, Women's day, World Aids day are some of the times when we all focus our attention and expanding on this can become a regular feature of the school year.

Think about how simply this can be applied just by highlighting what day it is and the importance for people around the world or at home.

Depending on space and time, students can be involved in a great world events project. The links to the festivals etc show you just how many there are to choose from and these are not exhaustive by any means.

Discussions can begin with the festivals we know and across religions we encounter. This project can expand perfectly into understanding heritage crafts, festivals and iconography and should be very practical.

The cultural capital of learning for example, The Day of The Dead or Carnival, begins to allow familiarity and interest in other cultures. Look at how other countries celebrate Christmas and Winter. Focussing on pagan rituals or giving thanks to the earth for harvest let us cover the world in similarities and small differences.

We do have a vast amount of local, regional and national events and festivals to research and these may be the priority to link into the previous cultural capital 'Local' project. Connect with people who could come in and talk and demonstrate. Let students have connections with people so that conversations become the norm.

Can you go out and visit celebrations and preparations?

Research the ancient festivals that may be long gone and those that still happen in smaller ways. What about the Green Man festival? Uphelliah in the Shetlands? That cheese rolling event? Where do they originate? Don't forget music festivals, rock, pop, classical, literary, comedy, food! - they all have a history. Where would Glastonbury be without Woodstock?

With guidance you should be able to create some great festival pieces of work. Why not create a giant calendar that includes as many festivals as possible? Link it to a giant map that references origins. Shrink the world so everywhere begins to be familiar - expand horizons.

Could you create an annual school festival? Could there be story telling, writing, mythology, fantasy, creations of icons? Is there scope for costumes? performances? Every department has a day it can celebrate, try to connect rather than isolate.

religious and cultural days

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_multinational_festivals_and_holidays

festival days

<https://www.ampersandtravel.com/blog/2018/the-ultimate-travel-calendar-every-festival-around-the-world-in-2019/>

Funny and random

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-day-calendar/>

Travel broadens the mind

Let's deal with the barriers: cost, location, time, physical mobility, health and safety and risk assessments. These are all restrictive and if trips are seen to be just an excuse to get out of school and away from the curriculum, then they are seen to have no value and those barriers become very handy to hide behind. Many schools have cut back completely. If done correctly, the enhancement and changing of a young person's life can happen in a single day. Trips are time consuming, may need exhaustive fund raising, but cultural capital should instil wanderlust and vice versa. It should develop the freedom of movement by desire and curiosity not restrict movement because of the fear of the unknown or be seen as irrelevant. If some children never get taken anywhere, then even the smallest trips are valuable, but so much more can be gained.

Let the map play a great part in this seed of curiosity. If you cannot take your students out then bring the world in, but if you have locations that can be awe inspiring then take them. Fresh air, open spaces, new views, smells, noises, buildings and people should be experienced. There's a reason we used to (still do?) have exchange trips - that word 'exchange.' Talk to your students about your own experiences.

Can you create a huge map of the world? What about the UK? What about your county? Show where the key 'wonders' of that world are located. Include animal, vegetable, mineral, natural and man-made environments. The TV series Blue Planet is amazing, but it is untouchable for practical purposes (unless you get a trip to an aquarium or nature reserve). What do you have close that is easy to travel to? Countryside, hills, coast, city?

Try to pick the interesting, impactful, unusual places. Which offer the chance to tell the best stories and who can you connect with to help tell them? Tell tales of the travellers, explorers, pioneers and scientists. Use that local nearest museum that is full of artefacts from everywhere.

Find out where the students want to go and what they want to see. Hunt those places down on the map, put flags in and locate them. Let the students do the research and tell the stories. Find places where no one has been so you can avoid bragging by those who have been lucky to travel.

Use every connection that the students already have to help them 'shrink' the world. What about films? Black Panther, Moana, Coco, Mulan etc. Many animations are set around the world, so give a great way into the discussion about fact and fiction and how real the scene setting is. Will students not even know these places really exist? You can link this to the festivals and other cultures already discussed.

Plot every country on the map. For students to see where they actually sit physically in the world is important. Their home and school will be the centre of their world, so broaden it and let the greater understanding of 'foreign' become familiar.

If you can take students out then know your location. Your confidence in a place without a map shows them that your world is bigger and that where you feel at home is bigger too. Make the journey part of the experience. We stare out of windows as the scenery moves past us. Bring this to life with plotting and mapping before and during the travelling.

There are great pieces of literature, art work and music that are about travel, don't miss the opportunity to use the visual, sound and word to enhance the travel experience. Absolutely every element of all the previous task opportunities can be enhanced with an accompanying art work and sound track. Don't forget smell and taste. The more sensory the experience, the quicker the triggers are for memory recall.

Creative cultural capital

There is good reason that the creative arts pack culture into every element of what they teach and what is experienced. Although the subjects themselves are often wrongly considered ‘soft’, they are also considered ‘high’ in cultural terms. Galleries, museums, concerts and the theatres are often considered the preserve of the upper classes, so why would you avoid filling and enhancing students lives with these experiences as much as possible to dispel the myth?

The creative arts help to contextualise every other subject and life! and should be used as much as possible. A performance brings the written word to life. Musical notation means nothing if not performed. There is no better way to see art than to stand in front of it. Seeing the ‘real’ thing then lets young people explore the crafts themselves. Creative culture enriches lives and the value for improving mental health and well being should be tapped into continuously throughout our lives and especially throughout school education. It must not just be for the wealthy.

School is still a brilliant environment for bringing things in to show, it has great worth, however, the gallery, museum and theatre are supremely atmospheric and the scale and content impress and echo in a person’s mind long after a visit.

If you want to connect everything on the previous pages, then hunt down the artwork, literature and music from around the world, or that covers the topics covered. What about your local artists and writers and musicians? Can they enrich the stories?

The arts enrich all our lives and young people need to learn that the creative wonders of our world are for them to walk inside and enjoy. Schools are often the only places that help students visit, see, experience and become involved in these venues and moments. It’s a duty of care to not say some young people are too poor, or won’t get, understand, enjoy high art. Bring it down to them and they can rise with it.

Select the greatest artworks that allow for the stories to come out. Can you create your own Nightwatch? Brueghel’s Children’s games? BUT it needs to be so personal for your students and their lives. Compare to Lubaina Himid, The Singh sisters, Kara Walker, The Guerilla girls, Chapman Family collection Basquiat etc. Get the white male dominance out in the open and into the conversation. Now let the students control their artistic narrative. Can you do the same with music?

The 8 new Gatsby benchmarks state that schools should provide quality career advice:

3. Addressing the needs of each pupil

Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school’s careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

4. Linking curriculum learning to careers (*Let’s put the A of Art in right there and say STEAM*)

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STE(A)M subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STE(A)M subjects for a wide range of future career paths.

5. Encounters with employers and employees

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

6. Experiences of workplaces

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences* of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.

Make connections with your galleries and museums and creative industries to go behind the scenes and find out how the people who work in these places got their jobs and what was their educational pathways. Pursuing an Arts career is not as limited as many would think, so broadening understanding of careers in these environments should open up new opportunities as well as the cultural capital front of house.