Introduction to Thematic Unit

Clothing has got cheaper and cheaper over the last thirty years. Where once, children may have received clothes twice a year and/or at special occasions, some pupils now may buy fashion items every week – and throw them away after they've been worn a couple of times. This thematic unit looks at the phenomenon of 'fast fashion' and its cost in terms of the environment and people's lives. It makes pupils think about where their clothes come from and consider their responsibility as consumers.

There is a strong emphasis on Learning for Life and Work in this thematic unit. The Local and Global Citizenship unit looks at working conditions that many of our high street clothes are made in. In Personal Development, pupils look at the fashion advertising and imagery and investigate how it influences young people's self-image. The Employability unit asks pupils to research the roles and jobs within the fashion industry and create their own ethical fashion project.

Other subjects also contribute to the theme with a Geography unit in which pupils investigate the environmental impact of the cotton industry. The History unit explores the linen industry in Northern Ireland during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Finally, the Art and Design unit encourages pupils to think of new ways to lengthen the lives of their clothes by recycling and reusing.

Whole-School Ethical Fashion Event

All the units contribute towards a whole-school event. At this event, there will be a fashion show of the Art and Design unit's recycled fashion creations. The Local and Global Citizenship team will hold a clothes-swapping event. The Employability team will use the opportunity to sell their ethically produced products. The other units will display and present their findings on ethical fashion. External agencies and charities that promote fair trade and ethical fashion, such as Oxfam and Trocaíre, could be invited to the event to provide more information for pupils on the subject.

Details of each unit's contribution to the whole-school event are noted at the end of each unit.

For Teachers

Art & Design Unit - New Clothes From Old

Introduction

Developing Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- learn from and value other people's ideas;

- make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions, and outcomes;

- challenge the routine method;

- value the unexpected or surprising;

- see opportunities in mistakes and failures. *(Being Creative)*

- organise and plan how to go about a task;

- review learning and some aspect that might be improved;

- seek advice when necessary;

- compare their own approach with others' and in different contexts. (Self-Management)

Developing Pupils' Knowledge, Understanding and Skills

- Make an informed and critical response to a social/environmental issue.

- Explore some social and moral issues relevant to Art and Design.

- Explore ways of reusing waste materials in a creative context.

In this unit, pupils will explore ways to extend the life of their old unwanted clothes – by customising and recycling them. The unit will culminate in a fashion show of the pupils' most innovative designs.

As many of the pupils will not have sewing skills it is important for pupils to investigate other ways to customise clothes – by using magic hem, glue, stapling, dying and using fabric pens and paints.

You can find simple tips on how to customise and recycle old clothes here:

- BBC News: From Oxfam Shop to catwalk 22/09/2008
  http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/7630281.stm [*flash video*]

- BBC Thread: Remake Videos [*flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/twiggysfrockexchange/videos/

What do we do with our old clothes?

Ask pupils where do they get their clothes – from high-street shops, second-hand shops, friends or do they make them? Find out what they do with their clothes when they don't like them any more. Do they give them away, recycle, give to charity shops or throw them in the bin?

Ask pupils to watch the following videos:

- BBC Thread Junky Styling [*Flash Video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/video/index.shtml?video=junkystyling

- BBC Thread Konnie's Posh Frocks [*Flash Video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/video/index.shtml?video=konniesposhfrocks

Ask the class to discuss why is it important to recycle clothing?

How can we customise clothes?

Ask pupils to brainstorm ways of changing and customising clothes and the methods they could use to achieve this. Encourage them to visit art and clothing materials shops to find out what sort of products are available for clothes customisation. They may find it useful to talk to older relatives or friends, who can tell them about ways they customised clothes in the past.

Ask pupils to research the ways that clothing has been recycled in the past to come up with something new, for example, punks in the 1970s and the work of Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren, and the deconstruction fashion movement of the 1990s and designers such as Martin Margiela.

- BBC British Style Genius: McLaren on anti-fashion [*flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/britishstylegenius/content/21847.shtml

- Martin Margiela Slideshow [*website: external link*]
  http://fashionindie.com/ghosts-of-fashion-past-deconstruction/

For Teachers

What methods of customisation work?

In pairs, pupils undertake a few of the methods of customisation that have been identified in the previous investigation. Using scraps of fabric, the pupils experiment with the customisation methods, making notes on what works well, what doesn't work so well and tips and advice for others who may want to use this method. Give pupils time to further explore any discoveries they make along the way. Make sure that pupils follow safety guidelines when using glues or dyes.

On A3 paper or card, each pair writes a brief description of the method they used, the pros and cons of the method and also attach the result of their experiment.

At the end of this activity you should have a library of customisation techniques created by the pupils which can be displayed around the classroom.

Can I create something unique by customising?

The brief for this part of the unit is that each pupil must take a piece of clothing and customise in order to create a unique design – either an item of clothing, an accessory or a piece of jewellery. Pupils can use any of the methods the class explored earlier and can use a number of pieces of clothing in their design. You may wish to further refine this brief, by setting a theme for the designs. This may be 'green' or 'reduce, reuse, recycle' or the theme may be inspired by their research, for example, 'punk', 'deconstruction' or the wartime call to 'make do and mend'. They should aim to create as innovative a design as possible, so that the finished piece is very different to the source material.

In preparation for this part of the unit, ask pupils to make a collection of old unwanted clothes from home. They could ask friends and neighbours to help them with this collection.

Each pupil can pick two pieces of clothing from the class collection. This will form the main part of the piece of clothing which they are going to customise. The rest of the clothes collected can be used throughout the project by pupils if they need more materials, buttons or zips. Make sure that pupils don't hoard pieces of clothing! Also make available any customisation materials they may need – magic web, dyes, glue, fabric paints and transfers.

Ask pupils to make some notes and a sketch of what they are going to create and what methods they are going to use. Take a photograph of the pieces of clothing before the work begins. These 'before' notes and photos will be used in the final fashion show.

Throughout the process, allow pupils the opportunity to talk to others in the class to discuss the different methods they are using to create their piece of clothing.

Spread the word about recycling fashion

The class's work will be displayed in a fashion show for the rest of the school. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Give one of the groups the responsibility of creating a presentation or film to open the show, which tells the school about the importance of recycling. One of the groups will create a display for around the assembly hall on the day of the show. The display should include the pupils' notes and photos on the original pieces of work and their research on the different methods of customisation. The rest of the groups will take responsibility for the show itself – either organising the 'models', co-ordinating the pieces of clothing, or organising the music or backdrop for the show.

What have we learned in this unit?

Ask each pupil to talk to the class about their creation and discuss what they like about their design and what things they would like to change. As a class, discuss what they have learned about recycling and customising clothes; is it something that they will try in the future, would they feel confident about wearing a piece of customised clothing, what are the pros and cons of recycling and customisation.

Display all the pieces of clothing around the room and give each pupil a small red, blue, green and yellow sticker. Ask the pupils to place the red sticker beside the piece of clothing that they think is the most innovative. Pupils should place the blue sticker beside the piece of clothing that has changed the most from its original state. They then place the green sticker beside the piece of clothing they think is most wearable and finally place the yellow sticker beside the piece of clothing they would like to own themselves. Discuss the results of the vote as a class and ask them to give reasons for the results.

Contribution to Whole-School Ethical Fashion Event

The Art & Design unit will hold a fashion show of all their customised and recycled designs on the ethical fashion day. They will also give a presentation to open the show and decide on suitable music and a backdrop.

Local and Global Citizenship Unit - What is the cost of cheap fashion?

Introduction

Developing Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities:

- make predictions, examine evidence, and distinguish fact from opinion;

- make links between cause and effect;

- justify methods, opinions and conclusions;

- generate possible solutions, try out alternative approaches, and evaluate outcomes; *(Thinking, Problem-Solving, Decision Making)*

- learn from and value other people's ideas;

- make ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions, and outcomes;

- challenge the routine method; *(Being Creative)*

Developing the Key Concept of Democracy and Active Participation:

- Investigate an issue from a range of viewpoints and suggest actions that might be taken to improve or resolve the situation.

This unit looks at the working conditions of the people who make the clothes that we buy on the high street. It investigates what constitutes 'ethical' fashion and our responsibilities as consumers. It encourages pupils to think about how they can influence the fashion industry to adopt more ethical practices. The unit culminates in the production of a film, leaflet or presentation that can be shown at the whole-school ethical fashion event. They can also organise a clothes-swapping event, to encourage their peers to recycle and reuse clothes rather than just throwing away old clothes.

For Teachers

Where do my clothes come from?

As a homework activity, ask children to look at the labels in five of their favourite pieces of clothing to find out where their clothes were made and from what shops they were bought.

Back in class, compile the results and ask the pupils to think of a suitable way to display the statistics, for example, display the information on a map of the world or represent the statistics of the most popular shops as a pictograph of a high street.

Who makes my clothes?

From a magazine, cut out a piece of clothing from a budget fashion store and make a note of its price. Ask pupils to brainstorm all the people that would be involved in the making and selling of this piece of clothing, remind them of the farmers who grow the cotton, the people involved in the transport of the piece of clothing and the shop assistants. When a list has been created, ask children to figure out how much money from the piece of clothing would go to each person. Discuss whether they think it would be possible to live on the amounts involved.

What is ethical fashion?

Ask children to look at the following clips and websites and come up with a definition of 'ethical fashion'.

- BBC Breakfast: Growth of Ethical Fashion
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/citizenship/what_is_ethical_fashion.shtml

- BBC Newsnight: Blood, Sweat and T-Shirts
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/citizenship/what_is_ethical_fashion.shtml

- BBC Citizenship: The Price of Fashion: Multinational Companies using labour in developing world
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/citizenship/what_is_ethical_fashion.shtml

- BBC Bristish Style Genius: Mary Portas on Ethical Fashion *[flash video]*
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/britishstylegenius/content/21774.shtml

- BBC Thread: Save the Future [*Flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/video/index.shtml?video=save-the-future

- BBC Thread: Green is the new black [*flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/video/

Ask the class to agree on their own definition of ethical fashion.

What is the cost of cheap fashion?

Split the class into groups and ask each group to look at the cost of cheap fashion on a particular area – the cotton farmers, the environment, the factory workers and the consumer. Each group writes their findings on a piece of A3 paper. When all the groups have finished, circulate the pieces of A3 around the groups so they can look at the other areas and add their own comments if necessary.

Remind children of the articles within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ask them to discuss whether they think the fashion industry has infringed on any of these rights.

What is my responsibility as a consumer?

Look back at the results of the children's investigation into where most of their clothes were bought. The pupils then research the most popular high street shops on the Internet. Can they find any statements about the companies' attitude to ethical fashion? Ask them to research the work of the Ethical Trading Initiative.

Play the following programme clips:

- BBC 'Blood, Sweat and T-shirts' [*flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/blood-sweat-tshirts/

- BBC News: Primark Investigate Supplier [Flash Video]
  http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/7833777.stm

- BBC Panorama: Primark: On the Rack [Real Media Video]
  http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_7490000/newsid_7495300/7495324.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&news=1&bbcws=1#

Discuss the young people's attitude to fast fashion before they went to India. Did they feel they had any responsibility towards the working conditions of people in the fashion industry? Do you agree?

What can I do as a consumer?

Brainstorm ways that consumers can help to improve conditions in the fashion industry.

View the following clips to see if there are any additional ways of helping.

For Teachers

- BBC Citizenship: The Price of Fashion: Consumer Power
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/citizenship/what_can_i_do_as_a_consumer.shtml

- BBC Thread: Ethical Pests [*flash video]*
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/video/index.shtml?video=ethical_pests

Can any of these ideas be undertaken as a class (for example, letter writing, clothes-swapping events)? If so, organise the pupils into groups to target a particular company (in the case of writing letters) or organise the clothes-swapping event.

Contribution to Whole-School Ethical Fashion Project

The aim is to provide a film, leaflet or presentation that can be given or shown on the whole-school ethical fashion day. The work should show the real cost of cheap fashion (on all the areas covered earlier), our responsibilities as a consumer and some hints and tips on how to be a more ethical consumer. They can also present this to other classes who are taking part in this fashion thematic unit to help inform their own activities. (Pupils may also wish to distribute their leaflet or film with their letters, if they have decided to engage in a letter writing campaign on ethical fashion.)

In addition, the pupils may wish to organise a clothes-swapping event for the whole-school ethical fashion day. They will need to publicise the event to the rest of the school and set rules for the event itself. The website below provides useful information for this part of the project:

- BBC Thread: Twiggy's Frock Exchange [*article]*
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/twiggysfrockexchange/

Employability Unit - Working in Fashion

Introduction

Developing Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- plan and set goals and break a task into sub-tasks;

- use their own and others' ideas to locate sources of information;

- select the most appropriate method for a task; *(Managing Information)*

- take personal responsibility for work with others and evaluate their own contribution to the group;

- be fair;

- respect the views and opinions of others and reach agreements using negotiation and compromise;

- suggest ways of improving their approach to working collaboratively. *(Working with Others)*

Developing the Key Concept of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

- Find out what makes an entrepreneur and develop an awareness of the challenges and benefits of building your own business.

In this short unit, the class will look at some of the roles within fashion and the skills needed to work in the industry. The second part of the unit is an enterprise project, where the class will form their own ethical fashion company and source and sell a T-shirt or sweatshirt. The project will require a budget, and some research should be carried out beforehand to ensure that the budget for the project is appropriate. The art and design department may be able to help facilitate the printing of the T-shirts, therefore reducing some of the cost.

Who works in the fashion industry?

Brainstorm all the jobs that people can think of associated with the fashion industry. Challenge the pupils to think of all the associated jobs with the most obvious roles they think of. For example, if they say 'fashion designer' ask them who makes the clothes that the fashion designer creates, or if they say 'sales assistant', ask them who creates the displays in fashion retail stores.

Ask children to research on the Internet to find out more about jobs related to the fashion industry. They could also conduct interviews with people who work in fashion stores or in clothing factories to find out about other jobs in fashion.

Ask them to come up with a way to categorise the list – for example, some jobs may be to do with creating or making fashion, others with selling fashion and others with the advertising or merchandising of fashion.

What skills do you need to work in the fashion industry?

Divide the class into groups and ask them to look at one of the categories of fashion-related jobs. They must research the job, find out what it entails and what skills or qualifications are needed. The following website will be useful for this activity:

- BBC Blast – Fashion People [*flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/blast/fashion/people/

The groups can also interview older pupils who may work in fashion stores, or others they know who work in the fashion industry to find out more about what their job involves.

Each group will produce a small fact-file on the roles they have researched. This can be worked into a website or a class display.

How do we create an ethical fashion company?

The class should research ethical fashion by talking to pupils who have taken part in the geography and citizenship part of this unit and by looking at the following clips and articles:

- BBC Newsnight: Blood, Sweat and T-Shirts
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/employability/how_do_we_create_an_ethical_fashion_company.shtml

- BBC Breakfast: Growth of Ethical Fashion
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/employability/how_do_we_create_an_ethical_fashion_company.shtml

- BBC British Style Genius: Mary Portas on Ethical Fashion [*flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/britishstylegenius/content/21774.shtml

- BBC Thread: From factory to High Street [*article*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/features/clocking-on/

- BBC Thread Ecofashion on the High Street [*article*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/features/people-tree/

- BBC Thread: Green is the new black [*flash video]*
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/video/

Enterprise Project

The class are going to source, create and sell a line of ethically produced T-shirts or sweatshirts to sell at the whole-school ethical fashion event. Let them know their budget and give them their brief:

- Sell ethically produced T-shirts or sweatshirts and create a profit.

- The T-shirt or sweatshirt will feature a design that promotes ethical fashion.

- The T-shirt or sweatshirt is aimed at teenagers from 13 – 19.

Divide the class in to groups to tackle different aspects of the enterprise project.

Group 1: Finance/Pricing

- The finance group has overall responsibility for the budget.

- They also must conduct research with the target audience to find out what people would be willing to pay for an ethically produced T-shirt or sweatshirt. They share this with the rest of the class to inform how much they can spend on materials and advertising.

- This group must ensure that for each thing the class needs to buy, they are getting the best price without compromising the ethical principles of the enterprise.

- The group will retain all receipts and invoices and maintain an accounts book.

- The group will create a finance report at the end of the enterprise project, detailing total spend and sales and if a profit has been made.

For Teachers

Group 2: Sourcing/Buying

- This group will need to research what is ethical fashion and find out about wholesalers who supply ethically produced T-shirts or sweatshirts. They can liaise with pupils who took part in the citizenship and geography parts of this thematic unit to find out more about what is and isn't ethical.

- The group must liaise with the design team to discuss requirements such as colour, size and style for the T-shirts/sweatshirts.

- They must provide evidence of three to five wholesale companies that they have approached regarding the supply of ethical clothing and retain quotes from each company on price and their ethical policies. These must be supplied to the finance group.

- Once the finance group has approved the supplier, this group must organise the buying and delivery of the products.

Group 3: Design

- This group will liaise with the sourcing group to discuss what type of T-shirt or sweatshirt they want to sell.

- The design group must come up with a logo or design which promotes ethical fashion and conduct market research with the target audience on the logo.

- The group then sources companies who will be able to print the T-shirts or sweatshirts (it may be possible to facilitate the printing within the school depending on the art department's availability).

- The group must provide the finance team with evidence of quotes from three to five printing companies (if external printing is required).

- When the finance team has approved a company, the design team will organise the printing and delivery of the T-shirts/sweatshirts.

Group 4: Sales/Advertising

- This group will work with the finance team on coming up with a good price for the product.

- The group will plan how they will sell the product to their target audience – will they take orders individually from customers or will they approach local fashion shops to stock their product?

For Teachers

- The group has responsibility for advertising – this should alert customers to the ethical credentials of the product. They should negotiate with the finance team to find out if there is any budget for advertising.

- This group will create a 'sales pitch' to give to the rest of the school at the whole-school ethical fashion event.

- They must retain records for every sale and return these to the finance team.

Throughout the course of the project, hold regular progress meetings as a class where each group feeds back what they have achieved and what they still need to do. This ensures that all groups are aware of what's going on in the other parts of the enterprise.

What have we learned in this unit?

At the end of the enterprise project, ask each group to note down what they did well, what they would like to improve and interesting things they learned. They then present their findings to the rest of the class.

Ask them if they found it difficult to source ethical fashion wholesalers? Did they find that their customers knew anything about ethical fashion? Were customers more interested in the product because it was ethically produced – or not particularly bothered?

Contribution to Whole-School Ethical Fashion Project

The class will present a sales pitch of their T-shirts or sweatshirts at the whole-school fashion event. They should also show their jobs in fashion website or display for other pupils.

Geography Unit - Fashion and the Environment

Introduction

Developing Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- use their own and others' ideas to locate sources of information;

- select, classify, compare and evaluate information;

- use a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information;

- communicate with a sense of audience and purpose. *(Managing Information)*

- make links between cause and effect;

- justify methods, opinions and conclusions;

- generate possible solutions, try out alternative approaches, and evaluate outcomes;

- examine options and weigh up pros and cons. *(Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making)*

Developing Pupils' Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

- Research and debate ethical issues in geography.

- Investigate the causes and consequences of an environmental event.

- Explore how we can exercise environmental stewardship and help promote a better quality of life for present and future generations, both locally and globally.

This short unit looks at the growth and production of cotton and its cost on the environment and health of its workers. You may also wish to bring in topics such as genetically modified cotton and the effect of cotton subsidies in developed countries to deepen the pupils' investigation.

How is cotton grown?

Watch the following clips and view the pictures of the cotton crop. Ask pupils to create a diagram of the stages in the growth of cotton and note the resources it needs to grow.

- You tube video : Cotton irrigation [*video: external link*]
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdlpXksf68o&feature=related

- You tube video: Sahaja and the cotton plant [*video: external link*]
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAIbZcY19Zs&feature=related

- Cotton's journey: Watch Cotton Grow [*article:external link*]
  http://www.cottonsjourney.com/watchcotton/upland.asp

What is the impact of cotton on the environment?

Ask pupils to work in groups and research the following sites to find out how cotton impacts on the environment and cotton workers.

- BBC News: GM Cotton in India
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/geography/what_is_the_impact_of_cotton_on_the_environment.shtml

- World Wildlife Fund – Cotton Farming [*article: external link*]
  http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/agriculture/commodities/cotton/

- You tube: Pesticide Action Network – Moral Fibre: Organic Cotton [*video:external* link]
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHZR5SyA-CQ&feature=channel_page

As a class discuss the impact of cotton farming on the environment. List the major impacts on the environment and health. For more information, show pupils the following clips about the impact of the cotton industry on the Aral Sea area in the 1990s.

- BBC News: Report on Ecological Disaster in the Aral Sea Region
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/geography/what_is_the_impact_of_cotton_on_the_environment.shtml

- BBC News: Aral Sea – A Toxic Disaster [*Real Media video*]
  http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6570000/newsid_6572900/6572969.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&news=1&nol_storyid=6572969&bbcws=1

- BBC News article: The Aral Sea Tragedy [*article*]
  http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/678898.stm

Ask the class to create a fishbone diagram showing the causes and effects of the Aral Sea ecological disaster.

What can consumers do to reduce the harmful effects of cotton farming?

Ask pupils to research ways that they, as consumers, can reduce the harmful effects of cotton farming. They may find the following clip and articles useful:

- BBC News: Fashion Designer talks about Consumer Power
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/geography/what_can_consumers_do_to_reduce_the_harmful_effects_of_cotton_farming.shtml

- BBC Thread - Ecofashion on the Hight Street [*article*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/features/people-tree/

- Guardian.co.uk – Ethical Fashion [*article: external link*]
  http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/ethicalfashion

On the Internet, research fashion companies that sell eco-friendly clothes. Investigate some of the class's most popular fashion stores to see if they have any policies regarding eco-friendly fashion (check corporate responsibility pages on the companies' websites).

Contribution to Whole-School Ethical Fashion Event

The pupils must prepare a fact-file to be distributed to the rest of the school on the whole-school ethical fashion day. Divide the class into different groups to produce the different sections of the fact-file. One group should look at the growth of cotton, how it happens and where it takes place, another group should look at the impact of cotton farming on the environment, while another looks at the Aral Sea disaster as a case study. The remaining groups should look at the various ways that we can reduce the harmful effects of cotton farming, from reducing and recycling what we buy to buying organic cotton and influencing companies to use more eco-friendly methods.

History Unit - The Linen Industry in Northern Ireland

Introduction

Developing Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- sequence, order, classify, and make comparisons;

- make predictions, examine evidence, and distinguish fact from opinion;

- make links between cause and effect;

- make connections between learning in different contexts;

- use different types of questions. *(Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making)*

- seek out questions to explore and problems to solve;

- experiment with ideas and questions;

- make new connections between ideas/information. *(Being Creative)*

This short unit provides an ideal opportunity for a local study. It may be in extension to a unit of work on the industrial revolution. It looks at the effects of the linen industry on Northern Ireland and Belfast in particular. It also looks at the conditions for people working in the textile mills and compares them to the conditions faced by people working in the fashion industry in developing countries today.

What is linen?

Bring in a piece of linen clothing to the class. Explain that it is a natural fibre which has been used since ancient times. Ask if anyone in the class owns any pieces of linen clothing.

Ask children to research the following sites to find out more about linen and how it is made:

- Powerhouse Museum Collection linen samples: [*article: external link*]
  http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/search_tags.php?tag=linen&images=on

- Thomas Ferguson Irish Linen [*article: external link*]
  http://www.fergusonsirishlinen.com/aboutlinen/

- Visit the Irish Linen centre and Lisburn Museum to learn about the history of linen from the Eygyptian times through to working conditions in the mills. [*website: external link*] http://www.lisburncity.gov.uk/irish-linen-centre-and-lisburn-museum/education-services/

- Egyptology Online [*article: external link*]
  http://www.egyptologyonline.com/dress.htm

Look at the following clips

- BBC Primay Focus: How linen is made
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/history/what_is_linen.shtml

- BBC Primay Focus: Bleaching & dyeing
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/history/what_is_linen.shtml

Ask children to identify the stages that linen went through before it could be made into material.

Why was the linen industry so important in Northern Ireland?

The climate of Ireland was ideal for growing flax and as early as the sixteenth century, most homes had spinning wheels to create linen yarn. In the seventeenth century, Huguenot refugees settled in north of Ireland and brought with them their skills in linen manufacture. They set about modernising the production of linen. This resulted in a massive increase in the amount of linen produced in Northern Ireland throughout the eighteenth century and established Belfast as an important port for the export of the material.

Ask pupils to read the following articles and look at the clips to consider what were the factors in the importance of the linen industry in Northern Ireland.

- BBC Primary Focus: The History of Linen in Northern Ireland
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/history/why_was_the_linen_industry_so_important_in_northern_ireland.shtml

- BBC Primary Focus: Herdman's mill, Sion Mills
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/history/why_was_the_linen_industry_so_important_in_northern_ireland.shtml

- BBC Legacies: Millies and Doffers
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/

- BBC Legacies: The Linen process and the doffer's routine [*Real Media audio*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/audio_2.shtml

- Irish Linen Mills - History of Linen [*article: external link*]
  http://www.irishlinenmills.com/History/history.htm

Is there any evidence of the linen industry in my local area?

Provide children with a set of maps of their local area. Are there any reminders of the linen industry in any of the place names? For example, is there a Mill Lane, Flax Street or a Linen Hall? Are there any old mills in the area? What were they used for?

Ask pupils to interview older relatives or friends to find out if they know anything about the production of linen locally. If it is a rural area, ask them to find out if flax was grown there, if they live in a town – were there any linen mills?

Conduct a class visit to find out more about the linen industry, for example to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum or Wellbrook Beetling Mill.

The pupils create a display of the evidence of the linen industry on a map of their locality. They should include the evidence they have gathered from their research, from interviews with older relatives or friends and from their class visit.

For Teachers

What were the working conditions in the linen mills?

In the nineteenth century, production of linen moved from people's homes to large linen mills, where much more material could be produced. Pupils investigate the working conditions by playing the following video and audio clips:

- BBC Primary Focus: Herdman's mill, Sion Mills
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/history/what_were_the_working_conditions_in_the_linen_mills.shtml

- BBC Legacies: A reconstruction of a linen mill worker's lifestyle [*Real Media video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/video_1.shtml

- BBC Legacies: The damp and the dust: [*Real Media audio*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/audio_1.shtml

- BBC Legacies: The Linen process and the doffer's routine [*Real Media audio*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/audio_2.shtml

- BBC Legacies: The Spinning Conditions [*Real Media audio*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/audio_3.shtml

- BBC Legacies: St Patrick's Day Fun [*Real Media audio*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/audio_4.shtml

- BBC Legacies: Drinking Vinegar [*Real Media audio*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/northern_ireland/ni_8/audio_5.shtml

In groups, ask the pupils to come up with a list of words that would describe the conditions in the linen mills. Why did people not complain about the conditions? Why did children have to work in the mills?

Each group creates a podcast or role-play, where they imagine an investigative reporter conducting research into conditions in the linen mills. Each report must describe the conditions they see and interview a number of mill workers, supervisors and mill owners. Pupils should discuss and write their scripts together and leave time to rehearse before recording or performing.

Have conditions in the textile industry improved?

Ask the pupils to view the following clip:

- BBC *Newsnight: Blood, Sweat and T-Shirts*
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/history/have_conditions_in_the_textile_industry_improved.shtml

As a class, discuss the differences and similarities in the conditions faced by textile workers in the clip and mill workers in nineteenth and twentieth century Belfast.

- BBC Blood sweat and T-shirts [*Flash video*]
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/thread/blood-sweat-tshirts/

Contribution to Whole-School Ethical Fashion Event

On Ethical Fashion day, the pupils will display the map they created earlier in the unit showing the evidence of the linen industry in their local area. They can also play their podcast or perform their role-play about the conditions in the linen mills.

For **Teachers**

Personal Development Unit - Does fashion set a bad example?

Introduction

Developing Pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- make predictions, examine evidence, and distinguish fact from opinion;

- make links between cause and effect;

- justify methods, opinions and conclusions. *(Managing Information)*

Developing the Key Concept of Self-Awareness

- Investigate the influences on a young person.

- Explore the different ways to develop self-esteem.

This unit looks at the types of images that appear in fashion advertising and asks if it reflects the real world. It also explores the extent of the influence this imagery has on our self-esteem and self-image.

For Teachers

What does the fashion world look like?

Ask pupils to collect as many examples as possible of advertisements for fashion and beauty products, from magazines, newspapers and the Internet. Create a collage of these images and display in the classroom. Discuss the type of people that are shown in these images (male and female). Do they reflect the type of people in your school, or in the world? If not, how are they different? Why do you think the advertisements use these types of images?

Create a collage of images of people in the school and local community and display alongside the fashion world collage.

Does the fashion industry influence the way we feel about ourselves?

Discuss whether the images pupils see in magazines and television from fashion influence the way they feel about themselves. Does it make them feel they should be slimmer or taller? Does it make boys want to be more muscular?

Brainstorm the other things that influence our self-esteem and self-image (friends, family, TV, fashion, our mood, etc.). Write the list of influences on separate pieces of paper and place around the room. Give the pupils five post-it notes and ask them to label them from 1 to 5.

Ask them to think about what influences how they feel about themselves and their bodies the most. They then place the post-it note with '5' on this piece of paper. They then have to think about the next most important influence, and place the post-it note with '4' on the corresponding piece of paper. Continue this exercise until all the post-it notes have been used.

Add up the scores against each influence and create a table of the influences on our self-image. Ask the class to discuss ways of improving our self-image – display these ideas in the classroom.

Is the fashion world's 'ideal' body achievable or healthy?

Look at the following clips about 'size zero':

- BBC Sunday Am: Kate Winslet discusses how young girls need healthy role models.
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/personal_development/the_ideal_body.shtml

- BBC News: Kate Winslet's figure is airbrushed for magazine cover
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/forteachers/ethical_fashion/personal_development/the_ideal_body.shtml

- BBC News: Size zero diets criticised [*Real Media Video*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6420000/newsid_6428600/6428681.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&news=1&nol_storyid=6428681&bbcws=1

- BBC News: Countdown to zero [*article*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/6335077.stm

Discuss as a class some of the effects that striving for a 'size zero' body has on people who are not naturally that slim.

Invite a doctor or health professional into the class to talk about the effects of severely restricting calorie intake on growing bodies and to talk about the benefits of healthy eating. In preparation for the visit, the pupils come up with a list of questions to ask the health professional on the effects of size zero.

Should the fashion industry enforce laws about using underweight models?

Watch the following clips and read the news items about the debate on using 'underweight' models in fashion shows and magazines.

- BBC Radio 4 Today programme: Karl Lagerfeld (8.03 – 9.07) [*flash audio*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_7807000/7807677.stm

- BBC Women's Hour: Size zero, Who's to blame – Tessa Jowell [*Real Media Audio*] http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/01/2007_06_wed.shtml

- BBC News: Preparations for fashion week [*Real Media Video*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6350000/newsid_6353500/6353507.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&news=1&nol_storyid=6353507&bbcws=1

- BBC News: Fashion show faces size debate [*Real Media Video*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6330000/newsid_6337600/6337635.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&news=1&bbcws=1

- BBC News: Brazil weighs in on skinny models [*article*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/6305657.stm

- BBC News: Madrid bans waifs from catwalks [*article*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5341202.stm

- Thin model row an 'overreaction' [*article*]
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/6351533.stm

For Teachers

In groups, the pupils research the topic and come up with reasons for and against a ban on 'size zero' models. When all the groups have compiled their research, one member will go to the next group and sit with them for five minutes to hear about their findings and feedback with their own research. They then move on to the next group. When they have visited all the other groups in the class, they can feed back to their original team.

Hold a class debate on the motion 'Size zero models should be banned'. Ask for two speakers on each side of the debate, after their speeches, throw the debate open to the rest of the class.

Contribution to Whole-School Ethical Fashion Event

The pupils will create a film or podcast on whether the fashion industry should ban the use of underweight models in shows and advertising. The piece will be played at the whole-school ethical fashion day.

Pupils should brainstorm some of the questions that should be addressed in the film, for example:

- Does the fashion industry have a responsibility for the health of its models, particularly those under 18?

- Does it have a responsibility for how it influences young peoples' body image?

- Does it have a right to weigh models?

- Should designers have creative freedom to show their clothes on whomever they choose?

- If the industry bans underweight models, is it discriminating against naturally 'skinny' women?

- Is it only women who feel under pressure because of the images they see in fashion advertising?

- How do other people in our school feel about the issue?

Divide the class into groups and give them responsibility for different aspects of the project. For example, one group could look at the health effects of size zero, another could look at the influence on our self-image, one group could have responsibility for the filming or recording and another would have responsibility for the editing.

The pupils can use clips from the films they looked at throughout their research and should be encouraged to interview the healthcare professional who visited the class about the issue and other pupils around the school for their opinions.