The Curriculum Story Project:
1. Curriculum Co-design

Discussion Activities

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

How to use this download pack

The discussion and practical activities in this pack connect to the case studies and ideas around interdisciplinary learning of

The Curriculum Story Project 1: Curriculum Co-design.

While there is value in using them as standalone resources, we encourage teams to read the case studies, together, as part of their own reflective practice.

From 2020-22, **The Curriculum Story Project** from Education Scotland brought together nearly 200 practitioners to understand the components, processes, and thinking behind successful interdisciplinary learning and the development of broader learner pathways.

The case studies and activities are designed by NoTosh, a firm specialised in helping people think differently and choose the way they learn and work.

Discussion activities

First read the case studies for The Curriculum Story Project - Curriculum Co-design.
Then use one of these discussion points for a learning session or team meeting.

Discussion 1. How do you approach Curriculum Design in your school or setting?

For example, what is unique about the context of your school or setting that you could amplify when considering the Curriculum Design of IDL projects?

Discussion 2. What challenges do you face in your school to be able to co-design and prototype the curriculum?

For example, how do you ensure there is adequate time and space to plan collaboratively?

Discussion 3: What aspects of the Curriculum Design approaches from the Curriculum Stories could you apply in your school or setting?

For example, would you consider experimenting with a design cycle approach?

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Practical Activities

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Find the root cause behind the barriers to co-design

Find the root cause getting in the way of curriculum co-design

What are the key hurdles to more co-design of the curriculum? Use the ‘Five Whys’ to find the root causes.

Pick a key problem you’re facing and probe it at least four or five times to see if there are other issues that need to be tackled to end up at the result you want.

On the next slide is one worked example.

The fifth ‘why’ is maybe the question that leads to a creative idea on using time more effectively (in this case, senior leadership might want to look at investing in the time of someone else to take on administrative work so that educators are freed up for an hour a week to do more creative curriculum co-design work).

Answering the fifth ‘why’ question might help you overcome the hurdle to co-design of the curriculum. Sometimes you will hit a brick wall with this method. In that case, go back up to the first or second ‘why’ and try reframing those questions around another aspect of the previous answer to see what different results transpire.

Find the root cause behind the barriers to co-design: a worked example

We can never get time together, at the same time, to plan together.

Why can you not get time at the same time?

Because in our secondary school, I'm teaching when the people I would plan with are free, and vice versa.

Why are you always teaching when your colleagues are not, and vice versa?

Because the timetable has every teacher working up to capacity most of the time.

Why do you have to plan together during the teaching time you have?

Because the only time we're in school and not teaching is taken up by departmental meetings.

Why do you not use your departmental meetings for curriculum co-design?

Because there's administrative work we have to do for our subject, and it always gets done there.

Why do you use departmental meetings to do administrative work, instead of seeking some additional administrative help to do it, and clear the time for curriculum development?

Hexagonal Curriculum Planning

Prepare your materials

Print out and cut up around 30-40 hexagons, about 5cm wide (big enough to write curriculum concepts, expectations or outcomes on).

Brainstorm curricular concepts

With colleagues from another discipline, map out the curricular concepts, expectations, outcomes, thinking skills or content you'd normally be tackling in a given term.

Hexagonal Curriculum Planning: a worked example, step one

When thinking about an authentic project suitable for Broad General Education in Secondary School, an overarching concept for a social sciences specialist or Geography teacher might be “Environment”.

On separate hexagons they would write down all the elements of “Environment” that they would like to explore.

They would also write down the key thinking or discipline-specific skills needed to access the content, or show understanding. (See the example on the next slide)

WATER CYCLE AND THE PROBLEMS OF POLLUTION

GREENWASHING

CROSS-BORDER POLLUTION

GLOBAL WARMING: WHY IS 1.5% SO IMPORTANT?

DATA ANALYSIS SKILLS

GAP MINDER TOOL: GRAPH-READING ON POLLUTION, HEALTH, ECONOMY

POVERTY AND POLLUTION

SEPA FLOODING WEBSITE: WILL WE FLOOD?

Hexagonal Curriculum Planning: a worked example, step two

Meanwhile, an English teacher could also tackle this theme - what are the texts and language skills he could map out that relate to the Environment?

An example of the hexagons chosen are on the next slide.

SPEECH WRITING

DISCURSIVE ESSAY WRITING

VIDEO: GRETA THUNBERG IN GLASGOW

ALLITERATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

TEXT: ANIMAL'S PEOPLE BY INDRA SINHA

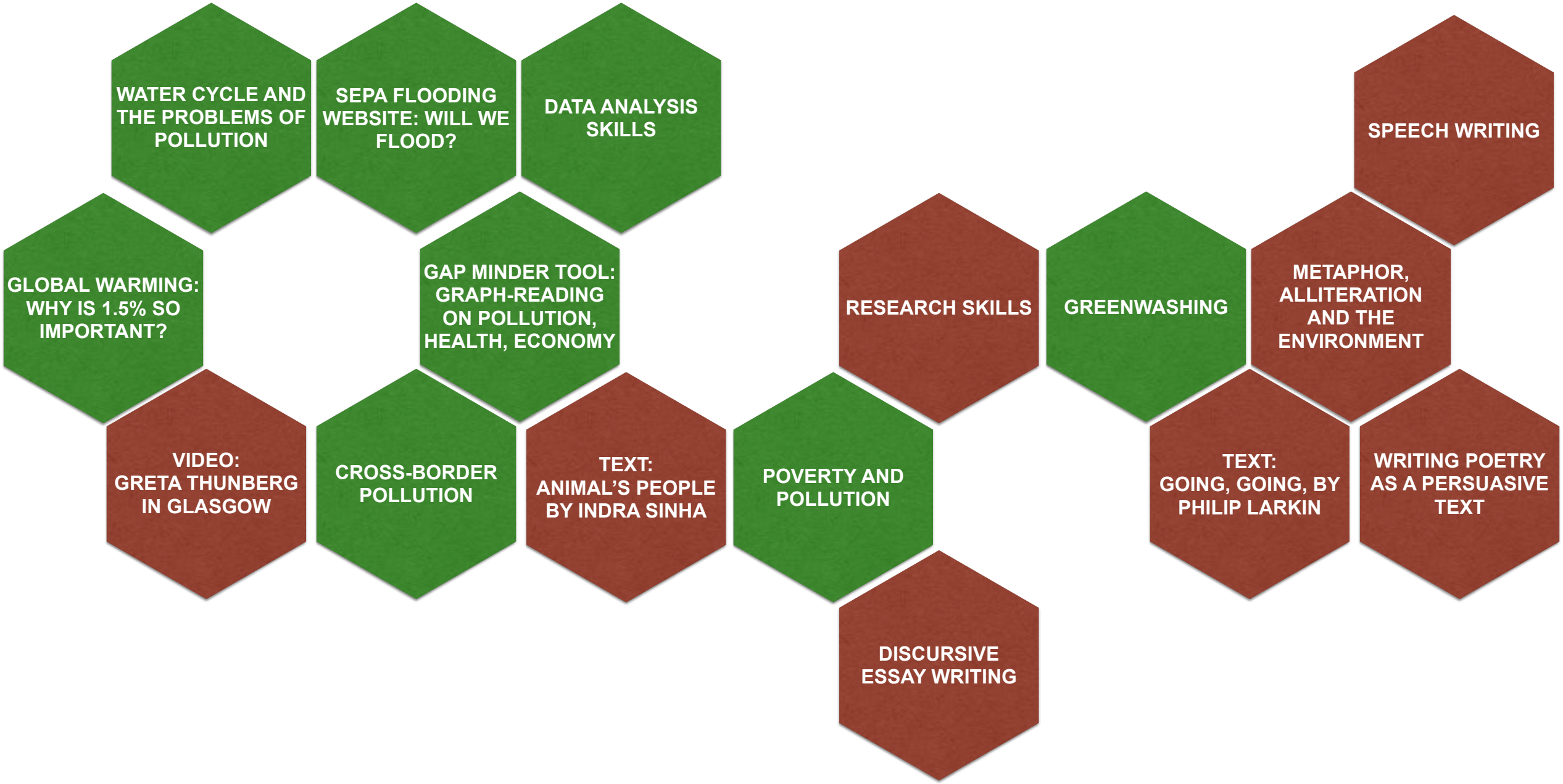
RESEARCH SKILLS

TEXT: GOING, GOING, BY PHILIP LARKIN

WRITING POETRY AS A PERSUASIVE TEXT

Hexagonal Curriculum Planning: a worked example, step three

When both practitioners put their thinking together, an interdisciplinary project plan starts to emerge, with clear connections between concepts that might otherwise have been unconnected by each practitioner.


WATER CYCLE AND THE PROBLEMS OF POLLUTION
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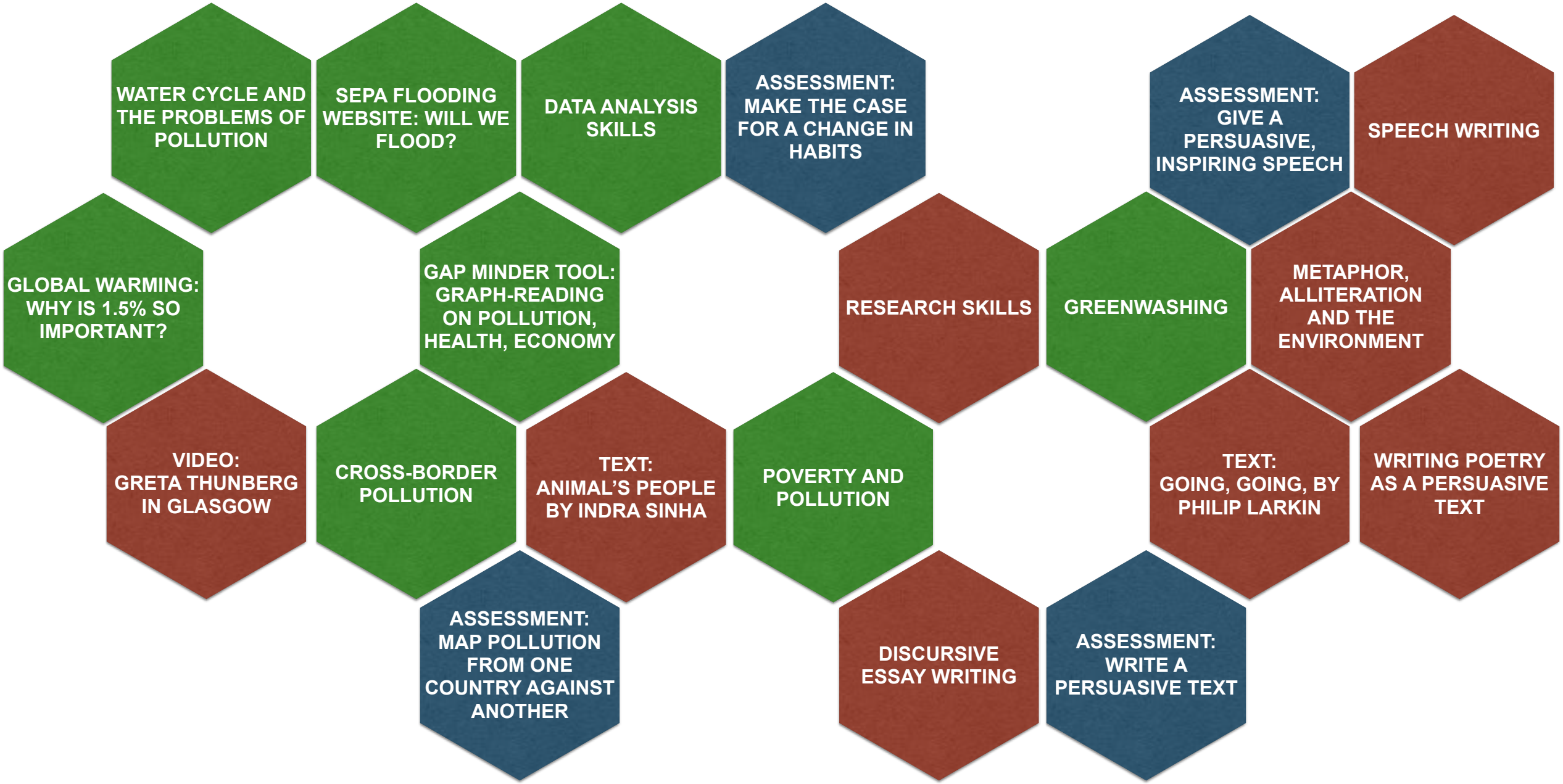
DISCURSIVE ESSAY WRITING

Hexagonal Curriculum Planning: a worked example, step three

And to share the planning, teaching *and* assessment, both educators can now spot the opportunities for sharing assessment throughout the project:


WATER CYCLE AND THE PROBLEMS OF POLLUTION
SEPA FLOODING WEBSITE: WILL WE FLOOD?
DATA ANALYSIS SKILLS
ASSESSMENT: MAKE THE CASE FOR A CHANGE IN HABITS
ASSESSMENT: GIVE A PERSUASIVE, INSPIRING SPEECH
SPEECH WRITING
GLOBAL WARMING: WHY IS 1.5% SO IMPORTANT?
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TEXT: GOING, GOING, BY PHILIP LARKIN
WRITING POETRY AS A PERSUASIVE TEXT
ASSESSMENT: MAP POLLUTION FROM ONE COUNTRY AGAINST ANOTHER
DISCURSIVE ESSAY WRITING
ASSESSMENT: WRITE A PERSUASIVE TEXT

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