

Building Independent Learning Skills Through Extended Projects – the Biz/ed approach to learning about the EU

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What is Biz/ed?

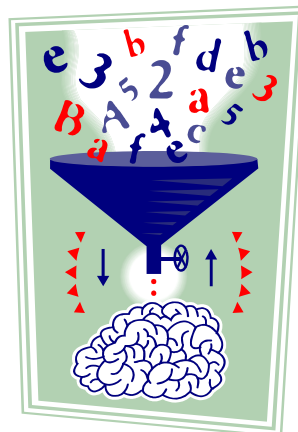
- A free public service
- Funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)
- Based at the University of Bristol
- Team of 5 people
- Resources available for everyone '24-7'!

Aims:

- Quality, relevant and up to date resources
- Exploit new technology
- Meet students (and teacher's) style differences
- Foster deep learning
- Encourage an interest and enthusiasm for business and economics

Learning Principles

- Learning is a constructive rather than receptive process
- Knowing about knowing
- Social and contextual factors in learning



Independent Learning

- **Our view of 'learning'**

- Acquiring knowledge AND skills – 'know why' and 'know how'
- Changed behaviour – changed realities
- Have meaning to the individual
- Making connections
- Coping with change
- Creativity and problem solving
- Independence and collaboration

What is an Independent Learner?

- "Process, method and philosophy whereby a learner acquires knowledge by his/her own efforts and develops the ability for enquiry and critical ability".

Candy (1991)



What is an Independent Learner?

- Understands how to learn
- Wants to learn
- Identify, analyse and solve problems
- Question their own methods
- Self-confident and secure in their approach
- Comfortable with questioning and probing



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Independent learning

Tasks

Option 1: The following are written tasks

1. Use aggregate demand (AD) and aggregate supply (AS) analysis to show the following:
 - a. How demand management could reduce unemployment in an economy
 - b. The Thatcherite impact of demand management on long run equilibrium
 - c. The benefits of a successful supply side policy
2. 'Mrs Thatcher's economic legacy is that she changed the way we think about economic policy and policy making.' How far would you agree with such a view?

Option 2: The following is a task to be completed in groups

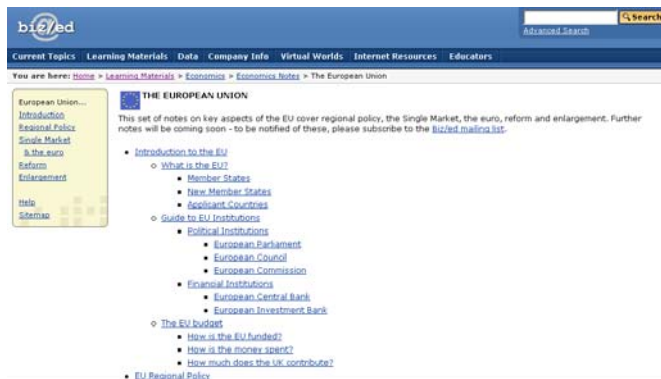
1. It has been said that 'we are all Thatcherites now'. Each group should take one of the following two arguments and do some research to present their side of the argument to the remainder of the class. When each group has completed its presentation, discuss how much the economic policies of the Blair government owe to Thatcherism.
 - a. Argues in favour of the case
 - b. Argues against the case

- Biz/ed approach:
 - Support and guidance
 - Freedom to explore
 - Take responsibility
 - Challenge
 - Focus on higher order skills

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Using the EU to develop skills

• Overview:



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Using the EU to develop skills

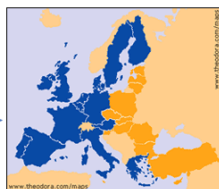
What is the EU?

The European Union (EU) is the organisation which integrates the countries listed below, both politically and economically. It is a **customs union**, which is an agreement amongst a group of countries to eliminate trade barriers between them on the movement of goods, services, labour and capital, and also to establish a common external tariff on goods and services coming into the union. The EU evolved from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was formed in 1951 as a response to the First and Second World Wars to try to ensure future peace in Europe. This became the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1965, which in turn became the European Union in 1992 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.



1950 - Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands agree to form the ECSC.

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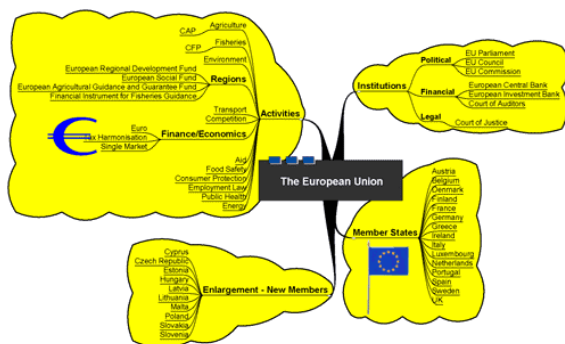
2004 - The EU consists of 25 Member States, as 10 New Member States joined in May.

Member States

The EU has 25 Member States. These are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the 'New Member States' which joined in May 2004.

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Using the EU to develop skills



- Lesson plans, activities and presentations:
Aim – a package of resources based around the 3 principles of learning

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Using the EU to develop skills

The European Union - better out than in?

You've heard it before, those 'crazy' bureaucrats in Brussels with nothing better to do than interfere with the British way of life, passing directive after directive, eroding the very heart of what it means to be 'British'. Straight cucumbers, straight bananas, banning yoghurt and the traditional 'English breakfast' for lorry drivers are amongst a number of stories that can be read in Britain's press about the work of the EU and how it impacts on those in the UK.



The aim of this activity is to do some research about the work of the EU and to assess the working of the EU.

You will be required to take part in a debate on the following:

- Start with what students already know.
- Challenge that knowledge
- New set of assumptions

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Using the EU to develop skills

- **Develop the process:**

- Mind your Business – analysis of economic issues
- How economists work
- Confidence to challenge the research (constructive process)
- Key issues in enlargement from a different perspective – Poland
 - Then.....

Using the EU to develop skills

- **Pull material together – let them loose!**

- Mini Research Project
- Use as a summative assessment piece
- Provides guidance and structure
- Allows students to be independent

The experience:

- Access to technology
- Approach of the teacher
- Degree of trust
- Philosophy of the institution
- A belief in the principles of independent learning

The European Union

A summary

- Need for flexibility
- Need for high quality resources
- A belief in the process
- Letting go

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