



The YPG Approach

The defining features of the YPG approach are that:

- Students have responsibility for defining the purpose, focus, content and methods of learning
- They interact with disciplinary knowledge through the support of their teachers
- Curriculum development is a process that allows this to happen.

It is at this point that students have **epistemic agency**, knowledge is **democratised** and students and teachers are **knowledge builders** and co-producers of knowledge.

The bottom line is that the YPG approach involves teachers breaking down the barriers that prevent students taking responsibility for defining the content and methods of learning. The YPG approach supports teachers in moving beyond existing curriculum frameworks. The YPG approach is underpinned by nine key principles/characteristics:

Principles/characteristics

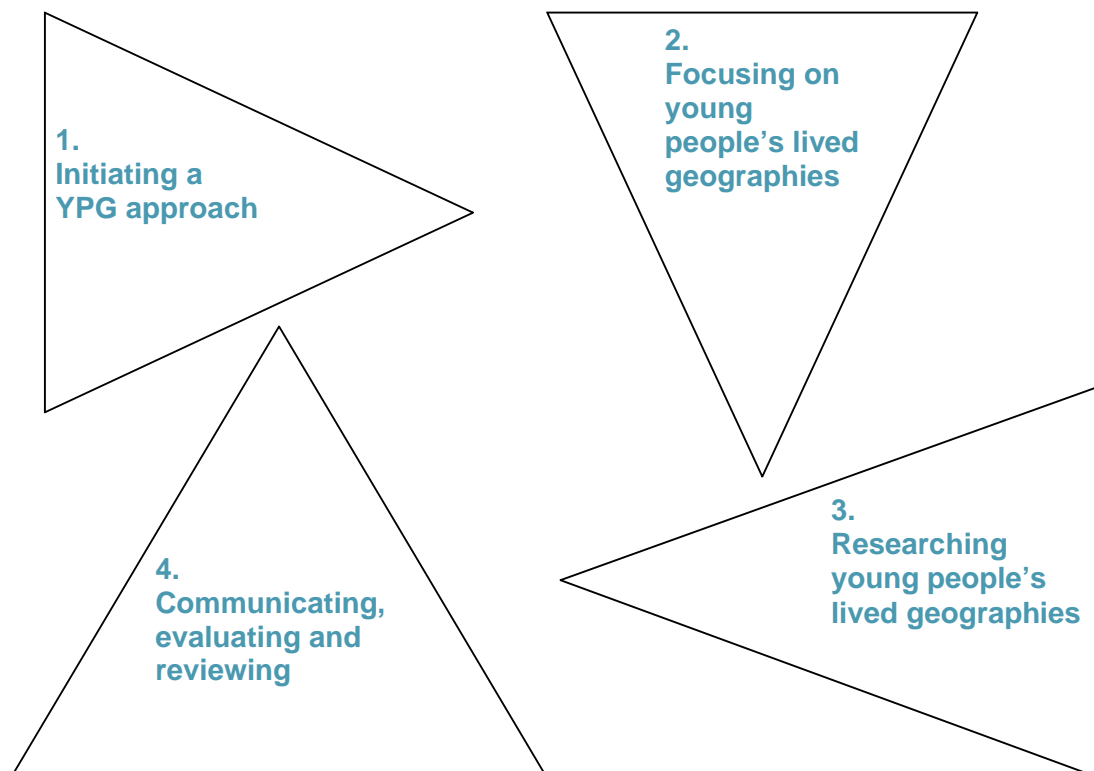
- 1. Students' lived geographies:** using their own geographies and the ability of students to turn their own ideas/issues/problems into a focus for the curriculum
- 2. Discourse (conversations):** between teacher-student, student-student and teacher-teacher as a basis for curricula possibilities and knowledge building
- 3. Ideas diversity:** recognising the variety of ideas that can be contributed by all group members (teachers and students) to curricula and knowledge building
- 4. Improvable ideas:** students discuss and critique other members' contributions and look for further improvement between their ideas and those of others. The recognition of theory/knowledge refinement, revision and continual improvement
- 5. Constructive use of disciplinary sources:** use of existing disciplinary knowledge - taking a critical stance towards it and using it to develop students understanding of their own lives and beyond
- 6. Epistemic agency (taking responsibility for the advancement of knowledge and enquiry):** students have epistemic agency and share responsibility for contributing regularly to advance the work of the group/the advancement of knowledge. The approach emphasises knowledge building rather than constructivist learning

7. Democratising knowledge: all members contribute to discussion and development of knowledge without over-dominating and valuing others' contribution

8. Knowledge building communities and collective responsibility: ideas provided by group members should contribute to the collective goal and are of value to others. Emphasis on theory/knowledge refinement/improvement

9. Embedded and transformative assessment: the ability of members to assess, evaluate and review progress being made within the investigation/enquiry

The planning model below will help teachers and students to develop and carry out any sort of open YPG investigation/enquiry. Further information about each element is given below. Some of the principles/characteristics of a YPG approach have a stronger emphasis at particular stages.



Further information

1.

In this stage **teachers** engage with **students** and their **lived geographies** through **conversation**. Through conversation the knowledge, ideas, authentic issues and motivation of students are elicited. Principles/characteristics 1, 2 and 3 are particularly important here.

2.

This stage is concerned with defining and focusing **students' ideas** and/or **questions** about aspects of their **lived geographies** and **making plans to research them**. Teachers use **disciplinary knowledge** to support the process. Principles/characteristics 1, 2, 3 and 4 are particularly important here.

3.

This is the **research** stage, where students research the **ideas/questions/issues of concern** to them in order to make a contribution to their chosen **investigation/enquiry** and **engage** with **disciplinary ideas**. The principles/characteristics 4 and 5 are particularly important here.

4.

During this stage, **students** communicate, share and evaluate their **new knowledge** and **understanding** with others. The principle/characteristic 9 is particularly important here.

The success of this approach will depend on the extent to which the nine principles are put into use and the nine characteristics established, and if students are allowed to engage with their own lived geographies and disciplinary knowledge and to be creators of knowledge which is relevant to them.