



## **Empowering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners to Engage the World Using Google Earth**

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### **Abstract**

This project aims to use ICT to develop competencies necessary for the globalised world our students live in, in particular, global competence, a term that entails global awareness, empathy and responsibility. Google Earth was chosen because it is not only free and appealing to the young but also has features that lend themselves very well to developing these competencies. Can online engagement be translated into real emotional and intellectual engagement with issues? This was the challenge the team wanted to explore. As content has already been created in Google Earth, it is harnessed to expand students' knowledge about real world issues, for example through Google Earth Outreach, a platform where non-profit organisations use Google Earth to visualise their cause, which ranges from genocide in Darfur to global poverty. Students question, reflect, synthesise and evaluate this content, and apply it to the task set. They then tell their story and share it with the rest of the world using Google Earth's placemark feature. In this sense, the approach is two-pronged: to harness existing content and create new content. As such, Google Earth empowers the student, to have a voice and connect with the world through this voice. A qualitative and quantitative survey was implemented to see if the intended outcomes have been met, especially whether the Google Earth lesson has succeeded in engaging them, not only at the interest level, but also the cognitive, social and affective domains. While the whole tone of the project was experimental in nature, the team that undertook it found that because Google Earth is a rich multi-media platform (videos, eye-witnesses' testimonials, real-time data), our students were able to make the leap from virtual to the real; hence, the Google Earth lesson was able to help students engage the world, with their heart and mind.