



## **Deep and critical reflection on how CPD has developed your teaching in geography**

I have regularly attended the annual GA conferences since entering the teaching profession. The conferences have been a great opportunity to gain various CPD updates or share knowledge and ideas with other like-minded professionals. I have attended the conferences whilst in varying levels of responsibility - from a PGCE student, to an NQT, to a head of department, to a SLT secondment post holder. These experiences have led me to attend a broad range of sessions when deciding what presentations, workshops or lectures to attend at the conferences.

The most memorable experience was from 3 years ago, when I attended a lecture by Margaret Roberts. Having previously read a range of her work and written essays on her findings, it was a fantastic experience to see her in action. Here, Margaret shared her work on enquiry led learning, and how this looked inside the geography classroom. This experience provided me with a far better insight into her work as it was more personable and interactive.

From this experience I found an article from Teaching Geography on enquiry led learning. This was shared and discussed in a departmental meeting to begin to introduce Margaret's work with the rest of my team. Following this, I put together a CPD snapshot PowerPoint with a range of ideas developed from other geography teachers on how to embed enquiry led learning into the classroom. These tangible teaching ideas were then able to be actioned from my department in an easier and quicker fashion.

A few months later my department and I began to plan our upcoming geographical fieldwork. During this time I shared my learning outside the classroom essay I completed years prior for my PGCE Masters bridging course at UCL IoE. This essay highlighted the need for enquiry led learning to support student enthusiasm, engagement and interest as well as geographical knowledge skills and values building. The uniqueness of this essay was that it was looking at enquiry led learning from a fieldwork perspective rather than everyday classroom lessons. As a department we were then able to appreciate and develop our fieldwork teaching in and outside the classroom.

Finally, another item attached is a resource I created following the GA Conference. Margaret Roberts shared ideas about how to support students essay writing skills through enquiry led questions. The template shows how students can write their own exam question at the top and to demonstrate their opinions, arguments, counter-arguments and conclusions. Margaret references the need for data and using evidence to support statements. Also included on the template is a prompt for students to do this. We have since used the template in class with students and it has proven to be highly successful.

My attendance at the GA conference was extremely useful. The findings and ideas learnt from the Margaret Roberts sessions were knowledgeable and inspiring, allowing me to further develop these in a range of different avenues from practical teaching ideas inside the classroom, to supporting students essay writing and opinion building skills, and to improve



our approaches to enquiry led learning outside of the classroom for fieldwork opportunities. My initial GA experience continued to have a greater impact on my department through sharing the ideas learnt, and through our whole schools geography cohort, through the embedding of the ideas learnt.

#### Attachments

<Roberts, M. (2010) *Geographical Enquiry, Teaching Geography, Vol. 35, No 1. 6 – 9*>

<Department meeting minutes>

<Learning outside the classroom: what is a necessary component for effective learning outside the classroom? – essay>

[<Exam question investigative sequence framework, adapted from Roberts \(2018\)>](#)

It was clear that Margaret Roberts' work on enquiry has had a significant influence on this teacher's geographical thinking and this has acted as a springboard for their own research and teaching. It has helped to shape their own beliefs but they also demonstrate an openness to discuss and adjust their thinking to move things forward for both themselves and their colleagues. The moderators felt that the journey here was evident and reflected in everything that this teacher has done from their PGCE through to how they are now working with their department. This section on enquiry was one of several reflections on different professional development experiences but the moderators felt that the reflections here were the strongest evidence that the criteria had been met. In other places the reflection was implicit rather than explicit and tended to focus on the process rather than on personal growth and impact.



### **Evidence of impact on your own and others' geographical knowledge or professional practice**

During my time as head of department, we have employed a geography teacher who had initially trained as a primary school teacher, and trained up a teacher who had previously had an American History undergraduate degree. Both teachers have developed into particularly strong teachers with regards to general lesson planning, behaviour management, following school and departmental policies etc. however, the initial geographical pedagogy and geographical knowledge, skills and values had been missing. There were no huge apparent gaps in knowledge, however, the understanding of time, space, place relationships, and/or wider geographical values had was often overlooked.

For the trainee teacher, I asked him to complete a subject knowledge audit. It was here we were able to identify the gaps in knowledge or the gaps in key stage areas. We then used these gaps to ensure they were a focus of the next series of mentor meetings and set out for him to observe lessons where these areas were taught - many of which occurred in a range of different partner schools at primary, secondary and post-16 college level. We then discussed his notes and reflections in our mentor meetings. In addition to this, I was able to identify that although this member of staff had experience teaching specific areas of the curriculum, they lacked the curriculum making behind it. We completed a joint planning process to support the rationale behind curriculum making decisions and provide a geographical curriculum making CPD opportunity.

The second member of staff also lacked curriculum making knowledge. I asked both members of staff to separately read an extract from the Rawding 2013 book 'Effective innovation in the secondary geography curriculum'. We then discussed together the findings from the extract in a joint mentor meeting, before discussing at a wider departmental level.

Both teachers built subject curriculum knowledge as we drew out the importance of time, space and place within geography lessons, and geographical values. The extract read had many diagrams and tables to showcase some of the findings. We then copied these tables onto our core curriculum making PowerPoints and documents to support staff when planning lessons as a healthy prompt. Both teachers improved with their confidence and ability of curriculum making. They both flourished and over a period of time began to create full schemes of work from scratch, rather than amending existing resources. The trainee teacher soon passed his course with flying colours, and for both the quality of lessons improved consistently.

#### Attachments

<Geography subject knowledge audit>

<Extract from 'Effective innovation in the secondary geography curriculum'>

The moderators felt that the mentoring of non-specialists within the department demonstrated that this teacher had met this criteria fully and effectively. However, having gone through the mentoring process it would also have been helpful to highlight those things that were successful. What worked well and why? What did they learn on a personal level?



### **Evidence of sustained impact on the quality of teaching, curriculum or outcomes for students**

I attended the 4th Annual Teaching forum for Inside Government on the 28th November 2019. The first session was led by Alex Standish from UCL Institute of Education. His session was based on curriculum planning, aptly named 'What does it mean to get better at geography? Planning for progress'.

Despite being a HOD for many years, the beginning of this presentation led me to reflections and healthy reminders on what exactly geographical knowledge, skills and values are. Having completed my PGCE at UCL and experienced sessions like this before, this CPD opportunity was observed at a different point in my career as a HOD, and also under the new educational landscape where OFSTED have stressed curriculum at the heart of education to our joy. Alex shared a Gardner, Weeden and Butt (2015) framework for geographical progression, based on contextual, conceptual and procedural knowledge, and how this progresses. He then progressed to a visualisation of systematic and regional geography learning across from his own findings, and showcased how this linked to the pedagogy and the didactic relation between content, teachers and students by Hudson 2016 'Mapping Pedagogical Content Knowledge onto the didactic triad'.

I felt these were significant pieces of information/CPD shared to exemplify how geographical teaching is unique compared to any other subject area or general teaching and learning strategies. For me, this in depth level of analysis and critical involvement in curriculum mapping and pedagogy can have the biggest impact in the classroom and amongst geography teachers. The CPD opportunity and resources were very clearly explained, and bettered my knowledge ready to share with my department and wider colleagues to create an impact in our department. Alex provided us with an opportunity to reflect on curriculum mapping and shared slides and templates how to do this as a suggestion.

Following the session I used the wider reading and references shared to continue my own independent study on geographical curriculum mapping and progress. It was particularly interesting to refresh on reading I initially came across in my PGCE year, and review these from a new perspective as a more experienced teacher and head of department. I purchased a copy of a particular book to share with each member of my department. We then used specific chapters to read and discuss in our departmental meetings over a period of 2 months. This was the initial stage of upskilling and updating my team, particularly the non-specialists or newer members of the team who have not completed a PGCE. This also helped create a buzz in our department around the high quality teaching and learning of geographical knowledge, skills and values within our school.

In a later meeting I shared my reflections and resources from the CPD session. We reflected on our current curriculum at KS3 and began to visually map where we were embedding geographical skills, values and career options into lessons. This was a shared opportunity



for our department to collaboratively put in place ideas for how to plan for progress across KS3, ready to build to KS4 and beyond. Following this, we also reviewed our schemes of work, content, topics and knowledge. We also reviewed what exactly we planned to assess and when. We then mapped this onto our own curriculum map documentation - which was later praised a model of best practice from our SLT and Headteacher.

#### Attachments

<Geography curriculum overview>

<Alex Standish presentation>

The moderators were impressed at the evidence in this section which demonstrated sustained impact on the quality of teaching, curriculum and outcomes that this teacher has had in their department. Throughout, the process of questioning, reasoning and challenging their current thinking was clear and to be commended. It wasn't always clear what CPD or professional experiences were informing these discussions but the impact that they were having both personally and for their department was.



## **Engagement with a range of professional development activities**

### *Attendance at the GA Annual Conference – 2012 – present*

I have regularly attended the annual GA conferences since entering the teaching profession. The conferences have been a great opportunity to gain various CPD updates or share knowledge and ideas with other like-minded professionals. I have attended the conferences whilst in varying levels of responsibility - from a PGCE student, to an NQT, to a head of department, to a SLT secondment post holder.

### *Use of the GA website [www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk) – 2019 - present*

This demonstrates how I regularly use a variety of online resources and information shared on the GA to better my geographical understanding and then implement these into schemes of work in our school. This also showcases my desire to constantly improve and seek professional information from such a key geographical organisation within the geography teaching world. I also encourage my department to do the same.

### *Articles on the Burgess model in Teaching Geography – 2020*

This highlighted the importance of what we put in our curriculum and why we do it. We had the opportunity to question if the Burgess model, or others, are truly worth embedding into our lessons. This also made us question why did we include it in the first place; because of the specification?...because of legacy lesson resources?...because other schools do it? It helped us strengthen our confidence and understanding of curriculum intent.

### *Online social media platforms – 2018 – present*

I am an active member of the Edexcel B GCSE Facebook group, regularly posting and asking questions about the GCSE exam needs or teaching ideas. I also have a twitter account with a growing number of followers, under the name @GeographiaUK, a TES page, where I can easily upload resources to help share on my twitter page for others to download and a Wordpress blog found at [geographiauk.wordpress.com](http://geographiauk.wordpress.com)

The range of social media platforms have been hugely beneficial. I have been able to learn so much from others, and ask many questions, or very easily become involved in geographical debates and discussions. I have instant gratification from others saying they like my resources or ideas, and likewise, I have instant gratitude to those who have generously shared theirs.

A huge range of CPD experiences and opportunities were identified here, some of which are provided by the GA. The development of this teacher's own pedagogy and the opportunity to have an impact on others both within their school and beyond through their CPD activity was evident.