



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

After exam marking for AQA and reviewing the GCSE results from 2018/19, I found that a lot of the higher tariff questions had not been answered to a particularly high standard, with many students dropping several marks. I have also been monitoring closely the ability of my current GCSE group and have been concerned with some students' lack of progress in this area. Most students in this group are LPAG, with a few MPAG students. As a group, they all lacked confidence when answering high tariff questions, which was often displayed as a refusal to attempt answers, along with challenging behaviour. Before adopting strategies to improve this area I read a number of GA articles from *Teaching Geography* to gather evidence.

### **Using empathy to encourage extended writing at Key Stages 3 and 4. Charlie Jenkinson, 2010**

This article was very interesting as the author has used empathy within storytelling to enable students to complete an extended writing task. They have identified the importance of extended writing as a way for students to justify their geographical thinking and develop a more complex understanding. It has also been noted that there are few other strategies that provide such a detailed indicator of student progress than extended writing, so it should be taught as a technique as early as possible. Students were asked to research a topic and create a poster in mixed ability groups. They were then asked to individually write a story based around access to clean water. On completion a range of marking techniques were used including Teacher Assessment, Peer Assessment, and Interviews. The students responded well to the peer marking activities and a set of collective criteria was made before marking commenced.

I found this article interesting and liked the idea of using creativity to get students used to extended writing and that younger students would really enjoy this kind of activity. I felt that this might be one method that I could use to enable students to develop their extended answers by understanding the story, this I could see would motivate them more and help them develop deep knowledge rather than just the 'facts'. I therefore planned a series of lessons based around resource management and food sustainability. The lesson introduces a small scale, sustainable method for producing food in an LIC. Rather than giving students the basic facts that they need, the lesson tells the story of a farmer and the methods he has adopted to be able to provide food and money for his family. After telling this story, students were expected to use their understanding to complete an exam style question.

### **Extended writing in Geography. Ian Selmes 2016**

The main points that I took from this article are:

1. That student's learning improves when they understand the strengths and weaknesses of their current work and can grasp the qualities that they are aiming for within their work.
2. Scaffolding is an important way in supporting students to improve their understanding of language and to develop their geographical skills.



3. The ability to create a strong piece of extended writing helps students to become accomplished geographers and is ultimately the key to exam success.

I agree with all these points, especially the importance of scaffolding to increase students' confidence. This led me to start to investigate methods of providing this structure at a time when the department had introduced the 'G' codes. I wanted to look at how this could be made more specific to my LPAG group. Working with an English teacher I was able to devise a template where I could share 'success criteria linked to 'G' Codes. The codes feed forward to provide a structure for students to use when writing answers, and provide a marking code so students are able to identify their strengths and areas for improvements.

The article also places an emphasis on student responsibility to know what they don't know and links to the idea of peer and self-assessment.

#### **Extended writing in Geography. Mike Simmons, 2016.**

This article has been written by a teacher and examiner and echoes many of the issues that I have with my current Year 11 class. Simmons suggests that many marks are lost due to the over use of 'bold statement' or statements that are over-simplified and contain no detail or evidence to back them up. He states that marking should be used as a tool to support students to develop their answers e.g. *Why is this piece of evidence important to the question* and that students should be given the opportunity to rewrite their answers in a different colour so that it is easy to determine the original text from the additions.

This had an impact as it was clear that students needed to use more specific examples, using the G codes to give structure, the storytelling concept to build understanding and flow and the scaffolding idea I thought that students could attain a higher level of detail in their answers to questions. This in turn would make them better geographers as they had a deeper knowledge base on which to construct their answers.

#### **Mark my words. Rachel Kay, Beth Harries and Paul Hunt, 2016.**

Again this article suggests that students use an alternate colour pen to show their improvements when improving their work and also introduced the idea of using coded phrases or statements to tell students what they need to do to make these improvements. Hunt suggests the idea of Feeding Forwards which allows students to think about what criteria they need to hit before they start work. These are all ideas that I would like to use with my geography classes.

At the start of the year I compared their current English grades with their level of achievement in Geography. For those students that were performing better in English, I contacted their teacher, expressed my concerns, and asked what techniques they used to support extended writing. Some of the techniques that were highlighted were the use of model answers and examples, giving students a clear structure to follow and increasing the amount of extended writing activities that students were expected to complete.

The first activity trialled with my class was the use of structure strips. These consist of a



question broken down into smaller chunks and aim to provide an appropriate structure, encourage deeper thinking, and allow students to link ideas together. These were most successful with MPAG and HPAG students and improved the quality of some answers. However, many of the LPAG students still struggled to use them as they did not provide enough support. Also, some students became reliant on them and reluctant to attempt a high mark answer without one.

The second technique used to support extended writing was the use of G'codes. These are a set of statements that, if followed in the correct order, provide an appropriate structure for 4, 6- and 9-mark questions. These codes are link to the strategies that I have previously read about in 'Mark my Words' by Kay, Harries and Hunt 2016.

The G'codes were the result of a collaboration between English and Geography teachers and introduced to the geography department in the Autumn term. Once they had been properly adapted to geography, students were shown these codes and asked to annotate a model answer using them. Once familiar with the codes, students were required to follow them when answering a high mark question. The statements are displayed along with the question that they students are answering and are used in living marking e.g. *You have used G1 well but need to focus more on G5 and G6*. Students have become familiar enough with these codes and know which statement they refer to and are able to use them effectively in both peer and self-assessment. As well as being displayed with the question being answered, the G'codes are also displayed on the wall of each geography classroom and a copy has been placed into each student's book.

Throughout the year I have also been working closely with an English teacher who is acting as my coach. She comes to observe GCSE lessons once a week, after which we discussed what is going well, any areas for improvement and address any questions or concerns that I have. The main technique that we have been collaborating on is the use of model answers. This involved using a specially formatted PowerPoint slide to enable edited whilst in viewing mode. This is an example of feeding forward and allowing students to think about what criteria they need to be meeting before they start work.

#### Attachments

<G codes PowerPoint>

<Model answer template>

<Sustainability lesson>

<Almeira writing frame>

The moderators felt that this teacher responded to this criteria very strongly. They identified an area of concern, considered the causation and then read widely to develop strategies to address this. Together, the experiences of CPD which they engaged in built up a strong base of expertise which they could draw on. In particular, the moderators felt that their wide range of demonstrable learning, application to their own practice and subsequent questioning and critical reflection in their own context really got to the heart of what the GA Professional Passport and Awards are endeavouring to achieve.



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

Throughout this process I have learnt just how important it is to set clear expectations within extended writing, and that the effective use of modelling can massively increase student performance. I have also been able to use model answers effectively, to guide students in their own thinking, rather than giving away answers to them. I have been surprised at just how effective implementing the G'codes has been at empowering LPAG students to work individually. Students got to grips with them very quickly and they are now used and referred to in most lessons by the students and me. However, combining these two techniques has had the most impact on the quality of extended writing within this group. By using a model answer that has been annotated with the G'codes, students are able to break down a 6- or 9-mark question into much smaller chunks. Not only does this make the high tariff questions more manageable, but it also makes them less intimidating. Previously, when showing students model answers to high tariff questions, many LPAG students would feel incapable of working to a similar standard. However, with the introduction of the G'codes, students have been able to use the correct statements step-by-step, to create their own model answer. This has had a massive impact on their confidence.

The techniques that I have adopted during this process have had a positive impact on members of the geography department and a few other departments around the school. For example, when I introduced the use of the live modelling template within a geography department meeting, we discussed how to use it and why it is a good technique. The other geography teachers then came to observe me using this with a GCSE class. We reflected on that observation as a team and the template is now used commonly within the department. I have also had geography teachers from other schools in the area come to observe some of these techniques and feedback has been extremely positive. An example of this impact outside of the geography department involves another observation with the Head of Science. She came to observe as we have very similar year 11 groups and share many of the same students. After seeing some of the techniques that I have been using, she has started using them with her groups and commented to a class '*I know you are familiar with this and can do it, I observed you doing it in Mrs Fryett's class this morning*'. This has had a positive impact on my year 11 group as there is more consistency around the school and they are becoming more and more confident with live modelling and the use of G'codes. I have also been working very closely with my coach, who is an English teacher. She completes short observations on a weekly basis, and we reflect after each observation. Since we have been looking at extended writing, and based on our discussion and reflections, she has adapted her use of the live modelling template to include specific steps, similar to the G'codes that I have been using.

This year, I teach across two departments, with the other being Citizenship which has included working with NQTs. I have introduced this department to the techniques that I have been using, again in a department meeting and they are being trialled. Again, I introduced



them in a department meeting and observations took place after. Colleagues across the department have been given the template that I have been using and are starting to use them when completing extended writing tasks. The increased use of this template across the school will have a very positive impact as students become more and more confident with the consistent use of techniques.

The most valuable part of this experience for me personally has been the coaching observations and discussions with an English teacher. We have been able to video lessons and watch them back to select strengths and areas to improve. Also, because this coaching occurred on a weekly basis, I have been able to track my own progress and that of the students. It has given me the ability to view lessons from the perspective of a student, allowing me to reflect on my practice and adapt my teaching to individual groups more effectively and swiftly. This weekly coaching has also allowed me to trial, review and adapt how I use the G'codes, live modelling and model answers to ensure they have the best possible impact. I have undertaken several learning walks across the department and wider school, particularly Science, English and Maths, and found them to be of great benefit. I have enjoyed being able to observe different teachers and discuss with them their rationale for using certain methods and activities. This has given me new ideas to trial within my own classroom. I have also read the Mark Enser book 'Making every Geography Lesson Count' which has been a great guide ensuring that I am using my time wisely. I have found the use of storytelling very useful with LPAG students as they are able to empathise with people from different locations. Their retention of the information learnt this way was much better because students had attached emotion to their understanding. Students have also responded remarkably well to the scaffolding techniques used. Students quickly got to grips with the G'codes and the template slide, which included the relevant G'codes, extremely quickly and were soon able to self-regulate their work and effectively mark their own and others' responses. They were also able to identify the area that they needed to improve on and had the tools to be able to do this.

When I decided to become a geography teacher, it was because I want to share the fascination and curiosity I have about the planet we live on. I also wanted to enable students to gain the skills they need to find out information, understand concepts and to be able to link ideas together. I actively encourage students to ask questions of themselves and me, as their teacher. The extended writing tasks, at both GCSE and KS3, require students to ask themselves questions, form an opinion and to link ideas together. I want students to be able to explain why certain events or processes occur and to effectively make a decision using evidence. The extended writing task in Geography lends itself perfectly to these ideas, allowing students to explore topics or themes. I would also like the students that I teach to achieve the high grade possible, so it is important that they are able to complete the high tariff questions effectively. By doing this, they will have more options open to them in the future, and even if they do not continue to study geography, they will still have a much better understanding of the complex world around them.

#### Attachments

<Book scrutiny>

The coaching model appears very strong in this teacher's context and their engagement with discussions, lesson videos and trial and review processes alongside their coach mean that their self-reflection is explicit and thorough. It is also clear that the collegiate way in which they work has meant that their expertise has been shared, both within the geography department and in other areas of the school.





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

This process has been an extremely positive experience. It has been great to see how much progress the students have made and how much their confidence has grown. Many students are now confident enough to answer a 6-mark question with minimal support and the quality of their answers is much improved. Students are also more likely to answer every question, whereas previously many students would not attempt high mark questions, question related to topics they were not sure about, or questions that required them to use resources. The most valuable part of the experience for me has been seeing their students love of geography grow along with their curiosity about the subject. Behaviour had vastly improved and the students respect, and enjoyment of the subject has been apparent, not only to me, but to other members of staff who have observed the group.

Unfortunately, the students that I have been working with this year are unable to sit their GCSE exams, so will be unable to see the results of their hard work or to truly test their abilities. However, there has been a vast improvement in the quality of their extended writing and in their engagement, enjoyment, and curiosity. One problem that did occur with several students was the crossover of techniques used in English. Students were required to use a vast range of techniques across the two subjects and on occasion, the wrong technique was found in a geography answer. Whilst this may have made the answer very pleasing to read, it would not have gained the student any marks and would have wasted valuable time.

Over this process, I have become a much more confident teacher and achieved a positive and productive relationship with a very challenging class. I found the coaching particularly useful and enabled me to settle back into teaching after returning from maternity leave. I have developed new methods and have properly embedded the strategies that have been discussed in this report. I have also really enjoyed getting the opportunity to watch other teachers, and to an extent, being able to view recordings of myself teaching. I have developed knowledge in the importance of extended writing and in the ways to support students during these tasks. I found it particularly useful to be able to discuss strategies with an English teacher before implementing them, and then to be able to review and adapt them with the same member of staff. These refined techniques have been embedded into my everyday teaching.

The moderators were encouraged to see a wide range of impacts, both for students and for this teacher, which were described in the submission. Not only has confidence grown on both sides, but relationships have become more positive and enjoyment of the subject has increased.



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

### September 2018 – July 2019

In school coaching and reviewing consisting of 6 observations and feedback sessions a year. This coaching allowed me to work with a colleague from the Maths department. I found it a very positive experience that enabled me to reflect on my own teaching and to get ideas from other departments.

### May - July 2019

Examiner training and marking of Paper 1: Living World for AQA. This experience was invaluable in enabling me to experience exam marking and to be able to identify the criteria that examiners are looking for in the questions that require extended writing. This had a massive impact on my teaching as I was able to direct students towards these skills. It also taught me to decode questions more efficiently, which is another skill that was passed onto my class. It was interesting to see the results of teaching methods from other schools and gave me a variety of answer structures to analyse.

### September 2019 – Current

Weekly in-house coaching and review sessions. Along with exam marking, this CPD has had the most impact on my teaching. Being able to review, reflect on, adapt and analyse my teaching on a weekly bases was extremely helpful in supporting my efforts to improve not only the students understanding, but their ability to complete long answer questions. My coach this year has been an English teacher and we have worked closely together on extended writing.

### September – October 2019

A number of GA journals read and reviewed relating to Extended Writing and Marking. These journals started my interest in improving extended writing and formed the basis of the techniques that I wanted to trial and adapt.

### March 2020

Completed the 'Come Rain or Shine' online course run by the University of Reading and Future Learn. Teaching about weather and climate has never been one of my strengths, but this course has allowed me to improve my knowledge and understanding. It has given me new ideas to try and simple practical tasks to use in the classroom.

The moderators were delighted to see that this teacher had engaged with a wide range of professional development activities, including articles in GA journals and peer coaching, which had such a clear and demonstrable impact on their geographical knowledge and professional practice. The variety of experiences which described were commendable and it was interesting to see how each had contributed to addressing the concern which you identified at the outset of their submission.