



Reflection on how CPD has developed your teaching in geography

September 2019: In the beginning of this school year my head teacher introduced a new focus for our whole school improvement: cultural capital. I had heard of this term when I was doing my Masters degree, but had never really thought about my role in improving students' cultural capital. I thought parents/families were the ones responsible for it. We had a couple of sessions about what it meant, which made me start reflecting about it. One of the facts that was discussed during the PD is the fact that our school has a large number of underprivileged students, and I learned that the lack of cultural capital is, in many cases, what creates a learning gap.

After extensive reflection and discussions with my colleagues I decided that increasing cultural capital is, in fact, part of my role as a teacher. I found that our young people have low cultural capital due to the fact that their families as a whole have a low cultural capital. A lot of the parents are migrants and illiterate (sometimes even in their own language) and speak very low levels of English. It would be impossible, therefore, for the families themselves to enhance pupils' cultural capital as I had previously believed. If we as teachers are not doing more for our students in this area, then they stand no chance. I decided it was my role after all and saw it as a challenge: to go beyond the prescribed curriculum in geography, and to use my passion for my subject as a means to address the cultural capital gap.

Geography is such a holistic subject as it provides a wide perspective and understanding of the world around us. I have always seen the subject as such, and have always worked on my subject knowledge using a large number of different tools: TV, books, news, travelling etc. So why not share that with my students? I realised that I was personally experiencing one type of geography (the holistic) but teaching another type (the prescribed). The PDs and discussions in September led me to realise I could combine both, which would mean students would increase their cultural capital and hopefully also start developing a passion for the subject.

October 2019: As a result of the PD/reflections above, I started creating lists of books, documentaries, YouTube channels, websites and games. I started giving these lists to students as "homework". They were told they had to choose at least one item from the list to read/watch and that we would discuss it in class. Unlike any other pieces of homework I told them they didn't need to present any "proof" that they completed it, which surprised them at first. I didn't want them to see this as "another piece of homework" but as something enjoyable. I'm sure some of them didn't do it, but a large number were very excited! I had students that immediately borrowed three of the books from the list and read them in the same day! In the next two weeks I had many of them discussing the books/videos informally, and finally, when we had our discussion lesson they seemed happy and excited (unlike any other pieces of homework before).

November 2019: I read two chapters of GA's "The handbook of Secondary Geography" that I found quite useful.

- Chapter 2 - Thinking geographically - I believe this type of work I am introducing is another opportunity to further encourage pupils to think geographically, in less structured ways

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- Chapter 3 - What do we mean by curriculum - I have further understanding of what curriculum is and how to create different approaches in order to broaden students' received curriculum

December 2019: During my MA I read and use Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital, but that was quite some time ago, so I decided to refresh my memory by reading the blog post "Cultural Capital and Educational Achievement" posted a blog called "Revise Sociology". The examples of activities that create cultural capital made me realise I am on the right track with this project (see quote in evidence).

This teacher had selected an area of focus – improving student cultural capital – and identified and planned their engagement with CPD to develop this aspect of their geography teaching. The moderators were pleased to see evidence of detailed reflection; the journey that they had been on to develop their practice was clearly transformative. It was also good to see how they were intending on developing their practice in the future. The blog in particular was a useful vehicle for sharing some of their thinking and resources with a wider audience but it was also useful to see the wide range of curriculum evidence which they submitted as illustration.



Evidence of development of your geographical knowledge or professional practice

April/May 2020: I always avoid trying new things as a "one of" just for the sake of change. I think the first time you try something new is usually not that idea at its best. So I intend to keep working on this idea to perfect it. Of course I still have my traditional homework, but I am trying to mix it with these more relaxed and interesting aspects of geography so that it becomes a long term and holistic approach. All of this has become even more relevant during lockdown because I feel that the students can connect with the subject on a deeper level. The only part of the lists that cannot be accessed now are the books as they are in the school library. All other resources can be accessed from home.

So apart from trying to make it consistent and long term and I improving these areas:

1. (ongoing) I am working with our librarian to improve and update the selection of geography related books in our library. I found that most of books we have are a little old...

2. (when school is back) I will try to build my own classroom bookshelf, with geography books and magazines that students can use and read while in the classroom.

3. (May 20) I am working on the layout of the lists so that they seem more organised and appealing.

4. (May 20 onwards) I am creating a website to share these resources and ideas with the wider community of teachers/school <https://jgxvianna.wixsite.com/geography>

5. (May 20 onwards) As the lists have a wide range of resources with different levels of complexity, I am trying to differentiate them, in order to make it easier for students to find material for different levels.

Below is the evidence of development of my geographical knowledge and professional practice:

1. Example of the first list of resources:

This was the first list I created. As mentioned before, I believe that this idea worked really well since the first time, but of course there is always room for improvement. This initial list is very simple and not very visually pleasing... Also, this is a mixture of topics, whereas I later decided to split them into topics.

2. Example of the list of recommended books

When I decided to work on cultural capital the first thing I did was a trip to the library to have a good look at what books were available for students. I can't believe that in two years in the school I had never done it before! I was surprised by the amount of books related to geography and immediately started compiling these lists. There is one list for each year group and I am now working with the librarian to expand our selection.

3. Examples of current list of resources

I am now working on these lists so that they are more visually appealing to students, clearer and I am starting to offer differentiation - at the moment I have a symbol for more challenging options, but intend to provide further differentiation still.

4. Website - <https://igxvianna.wixsite.com/geography>

This is the website I am creating to share my ideas and resources with other geography teachers. I have only started this a few days ago, so it is early stages! The idea is that the lists and other resources will be available to download. This way I can also get feedback and ideas from other schools/teachers.

5. Example of classroom display and quotes from students

Once I created lists of books/documentaries/videos etc. students were told to choose at least one as a homework. After a week we had lessons where we discussed what we learned from them, and how they changed their understanding of geography. The discussion was structured with four questions and students wrote their answers in post it notes. This document shows the display and some quoted from students.

Attachments

<Tectonics useful links>

<Resource management useful links>

<Holiday homework>

<Y8 geography recommended reading>

<Cultural capital in geography – evidence>

<Map skills useful links>

Because this teacher had chosen to submit their GA Professional Passport in its entirety rather than selecting some of these reflections to demonstrate how they had met the criteria in the GA Professional Award workbook it was not always easy to see how this criteria had been met squarely. However, the moderators were satisfied that they had met this criteria through their thoughtful and honest comments which described how they had developed their professional practice by shining a light on aspects of cultural capital within geography.

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

October 19 to March 20: The excitement with geography was visible after this activity. I was also happy to see them talking about the books/videos informally, not just when prompted by me. During the discussion lessons I gave them four questions to discuss and four post it notes to write down their thoughts. Once they were ready they had to stick the note on posters on displays according to the question. A lot of them had interesting comments such as "I didn't know the ocean was part of geography" or "I want to do more to reduce climate change". I could, therefore, tell that the idea was working, and that I should continue to work on it in order to perfect it.

From the work and discussions around this task, I could see that the students were learning new things in terms of the content in the books/videos and they were broadening their view of geography, which is what I expected. I have also noted, however, that they were acquiring indirect cultural capital such as:

- They learned how to use BBC iPlayer, National Geographic and other similar platforms. A lot of them were unaware of the existence of these websites (keeping in mind that most of our students are EAL and families that speak very low levels of English)
- They started to become familiar and talk about key geographers such as David Attenborough
- They started to become familiar with the non-fiction section of the library. English teachers tend to focus on fiction books when doing library lessons, and the librarian stated many times that teachers and students tend to not use the non-fiction books. As mentioned before we are now working together to increase the range of these books
- Students started to be more familiar with the news and current affairs. Younger pupils (year 7s and 8s) using Newsround especially as it is more targeted at your people.



Perhaps the most powerful piece of evidence which was included here was the photograph of the post-it notes which showed student responses to four stimulus questions. It was clear that they were engaged, able to reflect and had developed their geographical knowledge and understanding but also that they had acquired indirect cultural capital through this teacher's teaching.