

Editorial

Richard
Bustin,
Editor

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Spring 2020 issue of *Teaching Geography*.

In her GA Presidential year Gill Miller has urged us all think how and why (and to whom) 'geography really matters', a theme continued into 2020's GA Annual Conference. This can be neatly illustrated by the striking cover image of the Malvern Hills; the ever-changing landscape, both physical and metaphorical, provides the backdrop for geography teachers to consider our place in the lives of the young people we teach. The image is drawn from Duncan Hawley's article on harnessing the 'awe and wonder' of the natural world in our geography lessons. He suggests that we must ensure that the 'powerful knowledge' of geography is taught to pupils to help them develop the capabilities on which their future lives will depend. The GA was a key partner in the GeoCapabilities project which helped develop many of these ideas, and it is a theme I have recently written about too (Bustin 2019) and Duncan relates these ideas to studies of physical geography.

A couple of the articles in this edition follow up articles from last year. Last Autumn, Charles Rawding wrote a provocative 'Raising issues' article in which he argued we should not be teaching the Burgess model anymore as it is outdated and wrong. It certainly got a range of responses! In this edition we bring you a range of views from Twitter, as well as a more formal response from Steve Puttick, who argues the Burgess model still has a relevance in the classroom. Inspired by the debate, I delve into the archive to explore the teaching of another old idea, Christaller's central place theory, using the store of GA articles available on the website. Lauren Hammond, David Mitchell and Maria Polombo's article is a follow up to their Spring 2019 article in which they encouraged those who mentor trainee teachers to take part in a survey; this article reports on the findings from that survey on the status and role of mentoring to support beginning teachers.

I am pleased we have a few first-time writers publishing articles in this edition. Alice Matthews completed the research on which her article is based whilst on her PGCE course last year. Her article explores a creative use of freely available web resources to create virtual fieldwork in glacial landscapes.

Reference

Bustin, R. (2019) *Geography Education's Potential and the Capability Approach: GeoCapabilities and Schools*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

A number of established writers have also contributed this edition. Simon Oakes reviews the introduction of the 'places' topic which was made mandatory in the current A level specifications. His article outlines successes but also some challenges for teachers in the teaching of this topic, one of which is the perceived difficulty for teachers of teaching relevant and engaging content that goes beyond the textbook. In many ways Sophie Brand, another first-time writer, provides a response to some of these challenges in her article about developing a sense of place through fieldwork. Her ideas have obvious benefits to those of us who help prepare students for the non-examined assessment (NEA) at A level. Simon and I were teachers in the same school many years ago and Sophie was one of our shared A level students so it is great to be able to include her ideas in this edition now she is herself a geography teacher.

Mark Enser's article looks at curriculum design and the 'interweaving' of topics. He offers interesting examples of how a GCSE course might be organised to maximise linkages between otherwise disparate topics. Grace Healy's article on assessment picks up a similar theme; that students need to be assessed on work across the full range of their studies rather than simply the last few lessons and as such she argues assessment needs to be built into much broader curriculum thinking.

As we approach the run up to the public examination season for many of our students, Elizabeth Rynne, Luke Hinchliffe, John Hopkin, David Gardner and Erica Pilkinton discuss the feedback from the 2019 GCSE examination series, and summarise the main findings from the various Examiners' reports. This will be of use to those of us who teach GCSE classes to ensure we can prepare our students in the best possible way this summer.

This edition of *Teaching Geography* certainly outlines a range of ways that 'geography really matters' and how the subject remains relevant and engaging for our students; whether it is about the teaching of place, awe and wonder of the physical world, fieldwork both real and virtual, or discussions about what we choose to teach, how we teach and assess it and how we support those who are training to teach. Teaching geography really matters!

*Richard Bustin is
guest Editor for this
issue of Teaching
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