

Editorial

Melanie
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Editor

As is usual for my editorial for the summer issue of *Teaching Geography*, I reflect on the GA annual conference held in April of each year. However, there was nothing usual about the GA 2020 Conference. Due to the government-imposed lockdown in an attempt to control the spread of COVID-19, the 'live' conference was replaced with a virtual conference. The highly successful eConference generated the usual array of excellent presentations with people safely linking into sessions from their own homes. Access to sessions not 'attended' was made available via the GA website. Congratulations to everyone involved in putting together the eConference. Several presenters have been approached for articles based on their sessions which will appear in future issues of *Teaching Geography*.

Gill Miller's Presidential theme for her year of office, 2019-20, is 'Geography *really* matters!' In her article she says, 'It is geographical understanding of the environment, with its complex interconnected causes and stakeholders that enables us to tease out potential solutions'. A pertinent statement during this time of uncertainty. Gill urges everyone to 'ensure that recognition of the potential contribution of geography is spread more widely'.

In this time of lockdown Emma Rawlings Smith's comment that 'education is deeply social and cannot be isolated from the broader cultural influences of school and society' is apposite with teachers and students alike missing the daily engagement with school. When things return to normal, mentors supporting trainees and early career teachers will find Emma's article full of practical advice regarding reflective practice, based on a wealth of educational research.

Christine Holbrey's article links with an example of mentor support for a student teacher and also discusses the use of some of David Leat's excellent 'thinking skills activities' to develop student understanding of flood hydrographs.

If you are seeking good case study examples, Adam Corbridge and Duncan Hawley provide an up-to-date account of coastal management on the Fylde coast and Denise Freeman offers a case study on Malawi.

Kelly Peppin outlines her unit of work to engage year 7s with their new school environment through 'getting outside' and Lisa Conlan describes how her department's experience of gaining the Secondary Geography Quality Mark, led her to establish an extra curricular club that involves 'the great outdoors'.

Developing students' critical thinking is an important dimension of teaching geography. Alex Booth's article describes how he encourages his year 7s to

think critically about a number of factors that can influence settlement site and situation by including what he calls 'challenge moments' within lessons. Sarah Trolley engages in a deep and illuminating discussion regarding the use of non-geographical texts with year 13 students, who in this case were reading *Prisoners of geography* by Tim Marshall.

Gemma Mawdsley writes about the DRY (Drought Risk and You) research project which includes a series of six lessons available on the GA website. A book that was produced from this project specifically for key stage 2 pupils, won a silver award, 'presented' at the recent GA eConference. This book could also be used with year 7 students.

Our 'From the archive' feature in this edition reviews the discussions that took place at GA meeting in 1993 regarding 'Issues and challenges for ITE in geography' and asks, 'Where are we now in 2020?'

I'd like to return to Gill Miller's article and her comment that 'geography really does matter – it contributes to the wellbeing of people of all ages, helping them to understand the issues facing our world and feel able to influence decision-makers'. Readers will no doubt be aware of the number of people who have been asked to read their favourite poems which contribute to personal wellbeing during lockdown. Simon Armitage, the Poet Laureate, did a geography degree and his first collection of poems was called *Human Geography*. I know poetry is not everyone's cup of tea and indeed my PGCE students once undertook some fieldwork with students from a partnership school where the mentor said 'I don't mind what they do with them as long as it doesn't include poetry' (sic). Eleanor Rawling gave me permission to include her poem as part of my editorial:

Newly Heard Sounds

The earth will remember,
the earth will reclaim
All that silence and quietness,
we couldn't refrain
From filling with noise
and shouting in vain.

Will we look back and cherish
the newly heard sound
Of bird song, of wind race
of moments we found,
When our fast life had gone
and the world was all changed.

Eleanor Rawling, 25 March 2020

Stay safe everyone and enjoy the sights and sounds that the situation has unlocked. As we all know even in these unreal times, 'Geography *really* matters'.

The Editor introduces this issue of Teaching Geography.



Editor Dr Mel Norman on the South Downs near Beachy Head. **Photo:** Tony Norman.