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This is an excellent opportunity to share your ideas and experiences! We are looking for teachers to write up ideas about teaching and learning in primary geography. You would be able to write to varying lengths, and your local member of the Editorial Board (see below) can help you draft your article. Articles can be 500, 750, 1000 or 1500 words, and can include photographs, pupils’ work, planning, explanation of activities. They don’t have to be earth-shattering – we are interested in what doesn’t work, and how you dealt with that, as well as what you were really pleased with, or the pupils got excited about!

Articles will appear both in the journal and online. Material appropriate for A4 downloads (e.g. activity and information sheets), additional photos and other material will appear online. The following checklist may help you structure your article:

1. A short biography: who you are, where you work and your interest in primary geography.
2. Your teaching and learning idea. What is it? When did you teach it? What went well? What would you change if you did it again? How does your idea illustrate the value of geography?
3. What did the pupils think/feel? Include pupil evaluations/pupil voices.
4. Offer advice for other teachers/schools who might be considering similar work.
5. Please include illustrations – photographs, and examples of pupils’ work. Please make sure you have permission for us to reproduce the photographs. We have permission letters if you need them; e-mail Anna Grandfield (anna@geography.org.uk). If you are sending photos, we need jpeg files of at least 300dpi. If you are sending pupils’ work, we need the originals, which we will of course return.
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As I write this editorial Spring is in the air, prompting me to look at the world a little differently and notice the subtle changes in my local surroundings. On a global scale, far more dramatic changes such as the political upheavals in Egypt and Libya and the earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan – the latter accompanied by the devastating tsunami that took so many lives – have reached my personal space through a wide array of media and communications.

In my virtual world of Twitter my co-tweeters and I have been sharing images, maps and video clips as we try to make sense of what has been happening in the world and where. At my local pub I have seen people using their hands (and beer mats!) to explain how tectonic plates produce earthquake-inducing stresses, while closer to home a five-year-old calmly explained his drawing of a tsunami to me. It seems appropriate, as this issue is focused on ‘ways of looking at the world’, to take time to reflect on the importance of visual literacy to geographical understanding and the great desire felt by so many of us to communicate visually about our changing world.

Maps, images, diagrams, films, graphs, sketches – they are all part of our geographical palette of tools and the articles in this issue give a range of examples and ideas for use in the classroom. Margaret Mackintosh sets the scene by explaining exactly what visual literacy and graphicacy mean and why these are important skills for life. Ruth Potts demonstrates how a relevant book can provide a springboard for animated sequences which catalyste children’s thinking about environmental issues; Jonathan Kersey discusses how to bring the local fieldwork to life through movie-making; Simon Catling and Paul Baker explain how the humble postcard can be an exciting resource for stimulating thinking about location and spatial representation; Karen Hopkins shares her school’s involvement with interactive geography through the use of learning platforms; and Simon Collis shows how his class learnt to enhance their personal mapping capability by deconstructing aboriginal maps.

There are many ways to imagine and re-represent the world, yet often our geographical imaginations are not underpinned by sound knowledge. Helen Griffiths and Gill Alibutt remind us how a single image can lead us to develop negative perceptions of others and this theme is taken up by Richard Borowski who warns how some media messages and charity campaigns promote negative, stereotypical views of Africa that need to be challenged. Wendy North reminds us that geography images might be telling a story from the past as she brings us up-to-date with the real Island of Coll and Octavia Chave discusses the relevance of emotions in children’s cognitive map-making.

Our interviewee in this issue is Stephen Scoffham, whose name is synonymous with primary geography – not least because of the vast wealth of articles, books and atlases he has written or edited. In the interview he advocates that: ‘If we want to understand the future then geography provides a key perspective. In my view it ought to be part of the core curriculum’.

A timely plea, given that we are in a period of curriculum review in which there is talk of ‘core knowledge’ as though it is a touchstone for success. In the first of a series of articles thinking about aspects of curriculum change, Fran Martin and I discuss what geographical ‘knowledge’ is and why it matters. While visual literacy and graphicacy are essential skills in geography, it is plain that they are no use unless they are grounded in a meaningful context and impart or communicate a way of looking at the world that is informed by geographical knowledge. Similarly, what use is geographical knowledge if we lack the tools to share, debate and understand it?

Finally, we could not let this issue go without mentioning the tragic loss of Rex Walford in January 2011. He was one of the giants of the geographical world, loved and respected by everyone who met him or knew his work. I only knew him well enough to pass the time of day with and return his beaming smile, but I was hugely influenced by his thinking. He certainly changed the way I look at my world and for that, like many others, I am eternally grateful.
Pictures and maps can always be relied on as a means to get pupils looking, talking and thinking geographically. Here is one simple idea you can use to produce a quick and easy resource that has lots of permutations.

**Picture places**

Choose some internet images from around the world and copy and paste them into a grid to be cut into individual cards and laminated. Select images to provoke thinking about places that are ‘geographically significant’, identifying your own theme or purpose. Why not use some of the amazing images that are free to download from A Different View (www.geography.org.uk/resources/adifferentview)?

For each picture then create an accompanying card with information about the image. Again, you can use the internet to source useful text or information.

Give each group of pupils a set each of the images and text cards and ask them to first look at the images. Where do they think these places are? What do they see in the image? What clues are there? Can they describe the features in the images? Which images show mostly human features and which physical? What do they think the characteristics of the places shown are?

Next, ask them to look at the text cards and match them to the images. How easy did they find this? Were they correct in their guesses? Which images surprised them?

Introduce the idea of geographical significance and discuss this with the pupils before asking them to rank their picture cards in order of the importance they feel they represent. Pupils can then walk around the room to see what other groups have decided and in a plenary discuss how similar or different their views were and what conclusions they can draw from this about geographical significance.

**Extension ideas and questions**

- Ask each group to identify different ways they could sort and group their images and say how and why they have done this.
- What different scales are shown in the images?
- What captions would you write for the images?
- Ask pupils to research and make their own pack of picture cards to show geographically significant places – what would their criteria be?
- Discuss whether the images used were representative of that place or landscape. What do the images not show? Is it useful to get all the images and information from the same source or not?

As well as developing collaborative work and literacy skills – especially talk – this activity helps pupils to develop geographical language, ask questions, use secondary sources and identify the key characteristics of a place. It also provides an opportunity to apply higher order thinking skills such as analysing and evaluating.
This introductory article explains why graphicacy is such an important life skill and offers some practical advice for resourcing the classroom to support pupils’ learning in this area.

Visual literacy, visual-spatial thinking and graphicacy

Growing up with the initials ‘M.A.P.S.’, until Mackintosh replaced Smith, perhaps explains my life-long fascination with maps. This was joined by a deep interest in both creating and appreciating art. In the classroom this map and art combination manifests itself as a strong commitment to visual literacy, to visual-spatial thinking and, in a geographical context, to the subset referred to as graphicacy. Visual-spatial thinking – which children start to develop from birth alongside oracy and before literacy and numeracy – and graphicacy are much neglected in the primary curriculum, to the detriment of children’s learning. The Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) assert that:

‘There are students that can learn effectively by listening and such students do very well in traditional classrooms where most of the information is processed orally. On the other hand, students with a visual style constitute about 40% of the population. It is important for them to have illustrations, charts and diagrams along with words and numbers’ (INTO, 2009).

Visual-spatial thinking

Albert Einstein was a visual-spatial thinker. This, because he was a late reader in his childhood, reportedly led to him being considered a slow learner. In 1954 he wrote that he always thought about anything in terms of mental pictures and that he used words in a secondary capacity.

Visual-spatial thinking is a life skill needed in many occupations, professions and hobbies where three-dimensional structures or arrangements are represented in two-dimensional diagrams or illustrations. For example:

- anyone doing DIY such as fitting a kitchen, using a dress-making pattern or following instructions from a car maintenance manual, to name but a few examples, require visual-spatial abilities
- when making choices from holiday brochures, catalogues or even cookery books many of us interpret the illustrations before we refer to the words.

Where does a child start?

Children make sense of their world initially from first-hand visual experience as they crawl around the floor or see their local environment from a pushchair. They become visual-spatial learners and thinkers as they play with jigsaws, building bricks and construction toys like Lego and Meccano. Although they add vocabulary, oracy, literacy and numeracy to their skills, possibly as many as 40 percent of children remain primarily visual learners.
In the classroom, pupils should be encouraged to use, or work from, the diagrams that come with construction toys, or be provided with pictures of structures they could make or build from appropriate toys.

This will help them develop the skill of reading a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional structure. The following example from a maths lesson illustrates the need for pupils to be taught to read, interpret and understand diagrams:

In a lesson on fractions a group of year 4-5 pupils each had a diagram of a model (Figure 1a) and a pile of cubes. They were asked to make the model using cubes of just two colours, and then say what fraction was made up of each colour. One pupil was really struggling, so the teacher asked how many cubes he needed. He eventually replied ‘14’, counting as shown in Figure 1b. He just could not see this as a diagram representing a 3D form, even with the cubes as a clue.

**Graphiacy**

Graphiacy can be thought of as the sub-set of visual-spatial thinking that applies particularly to geography. It refers to the essentially pictorial ways, from photographs to diagrams and maps, in which we communicate spatial information about places, spaces and environments. Its most refined form is, perhaps, the OS map with its distinctive style and conventions, e.g. plan view, symbols and contours.

Talking to B.Ed undergraduates I discovered that in the primary school and later, many were put off maps, and geography itself, by being confronted with OS maps and their conventions too soon. They found them difficult to understand and easily gave up on them.

Graphiacy is, however, an important life skill. Even if they don’t use OS maps, most adults interpret road signs when visiting unfamiliar places, use road atlases, follow pictorial maps to find their way around tourist attractions or theme parks and look at the weather maps on television. Many homes have a world atlas and/or globe. Adults also use SatNav and ‘play’ with Google Earth, maybe finding it compulsive as they explore their holiday destinations, superimpose features including roads on the satellite images and use Street View to ‘see’ their own home and those of friends around the world.

The importance of graphiacy to the developing child cannot be overstated. While going from the horizontal to vertical, from picture to map, children will observe landscapes and townscape from their home and local area to further afield. They will learn the associated name labels/words and develop their geographical vocabulary as they describe, compare, give reasons for and explain what they are noticing. The visual images and words are intimately associated and both are essential to learning and understanding. But a child cannot attach meaning to a word, say ‘river’ or ‘mountain’ without seeing the feature, through first-hand experience or photographic images. Children need to be helped to contextualise what they are seeing, especially to help them understand the scale of features, by asking questions:

![Diagram of map views](image)

**Figure 2.**

**Where does a child start?**

Developing an understanding of OS maps may be the ultimate aim, but the conceptual leap from a young child’s experience of crawling round the floor or riding in a pushchair is huge. To help a child move from a horizontal view of their world to an understanding of a pictorial vertical view and then to a conventional map view needs many intermediate stages (Figure 2). Fortunately there are easily available resources to help with this transition. These include oblique aerial view photographs (often found on postcards, calendars, in ‘Earth from the Air’ publications and similar books – try discount book shops), vertical aerial photographs (such as on Google Earth), pictorial maps (old town maps, parish maps, tourist maps and leaflets), street maps (town maps, road atlases), world atlases and physical and political globes.

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Becoming ‘graphicate’ – being able to understand spatial information communicated to them through pictures of all sorts and being able to communicate spatial information themselves essentially through their own pictures, diagrams and maps – is more neglected. Geography and history (with its use of evidence and artefacts), are visual subjects and are both well placed to help children develop graphicacy skills for life.

Bibliography

Lessons for geography
The curriculum caters for pupils to become literate, numerate and orate. Being visually literate, being able to decipher meaning and communicate information and ideas through reading, understanding, drawing, making all sorts of pictures, is less well addressed with the prominence of literacy and numeracy. Visual learners, like Einstein, work things out or solve problems with sketches and try to understand new ideas with non-sequential diagrams: they are three-dimensional rather than sequential two-dimensional thinkers.

Understanding diagrams
An example of a child’s difficulty reading a spatial diagram is shown in Figures 1a and 1b, but the use of two-dimensional diagrams to communicate threedimensional spatial information is integral to geography, especially at key stages 3 and 4, and ways of helping pupils develop this important skill at primary level through play with toys has been mentioned above.

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In this article, Ruth discusses how images from a storybook prompted the making of animated films and story maps and enabled pupils to deepen their geographical thinking.

Getting inspired
I attended Jane Whittle’s workshop on the big picture at the GA Annual Conference in 2010 and decided that the book *Varmints* by Helen Ward would fit perfectly into our year 5 literacy strand of film narrative. The book is a picture book with a strong message described as follows:

‘In the face of overwhelming urbanisation, indifference and recklessness, a small creature struggles to preserve a remnant of the peace he once knew. His world is taken over by “Varmints” who cause the urbanisation and pollution. His selfless acts of love plant the seeds of change that will ultimately prove the salvation of his world’.

I started the topic by giving pupils six pictures from the book. This instigated much geographical discussion as to what the story might be about through questions such as: what can you see? Where are you? What is the place like for the characters?

Storyboards and animations
Working in groups, pupils then had to put the characters into a storyboard order as if they were making a film. They described orally to the other groups what they thought was actually happening and in which order the pictures might be found. This was very interesting as the pupils were totally absorbed with this activity and came up with some interesting ideas as to how the place develops and what may happen next.

I read the story to them and the pupils were really taken with the layout of the book. It is a fascinating book with extraordinary illustrations. We then watched the trailer from the film version and discussed the differences between the film and the book.

The main purpose of the week was to prepare a short animation of the book. Each group chose a small snippet from the book and created backdrops for their animations using charcoals and pastels. Some groups also created a front scene to use in their animations. This made them focus very closely on a snippet of the book and think about the tiniest of movements and how they would depict this through animation.

We then visited our local e-learning centre where we made use of the Apple Macs and made a short animation of the book, taking photos and moving either a model or paper character a small amount. The class had great fun creating their animations and were very proud of the finished results. A lower-ability group benefited particularly from this motivating activity and it was fantastic to see their confidence boosted when they watched their results.

Story maps
The next activity was to draw story maps of where they thought the dog was going throughout the book and film. This generated much discussion as to how to set the maps out and the pupils all decided they wanted to do story maps rather than birdseye views so they could draw the characters. It was interesting to see how the dog’s journey was portrayed across the page.

Where is the geography?
The small dog in the story tried his best to overcome the pollution around him; a struggle to survive in a hostile world. The narrative brings an awareness of the fragility of the world and began discussions between pupils as to how they can personally improve the situation.

Obviously the mapping activity is geographical, but as their maps evolved, the pupils’ language reflected not just an increased geographical vocabulary but a greater understanding of the complexities of scale and of the issues involved with comments such as ‘The varmints need to be in the distance, let’s draw them smaller’ and ‘How can we show the pollution?’.

This visual geographical context provided lots of great opportunities for speaking and listening ideas that not only engaged the pupils but provoked some deep thinking.

I will definitely do this topic again next year as the pupils’ imaginations were really taken with the ideas and I think they got so much from it.

References

Ruth Potts did this work with her year 5 class at Sacred Heart RC School, Blackburn. Ruth is a Geography Co-ordinator, Geography Champion and a member of the GA’s Early Years and Primary Committee and the Worldwise Group.
A new topic on Australia offered our year 6 pupils an opportunity to get excited by a unique, yet somewhat familiar, country. The geography strand of the topic focussed on Australian Aborigines, and our challenge was to make them accessible without treating them as an exotic culture with little relevance to the experiences of our pupils.

Being a self-confessed map enthusiast (or map nerd!), we decided to create a map of the pupils’ local area, in the style of Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime maps. This was to create some fluidity between senses of the global and local (Massey, 2008), giving the class an opportunity to see an area they know well, from another perspective. It was hoped that this unit would also help to address the emphasis that Bénéker et al. (2010) place on geography education helping pupils to understand their local environment and draw on existing experiences.

Moving maps beyond the scientific

We started by presenting the class with a satellite photo centred on our school and together identified landmarks. Then, using Ordnance Survey maps, we showed how symbols are used to represent landmarks. The pupils enjoyed discussing why certain symbols had developed (why is a bus station a red circle with a line through it?).

This conversation was a springboard to examine the use of symbols in a range of Aboriginal maps, which focus on personal importance rather than scientific exactness. Like an artwork, an Aboriginal map is also open to interpretation as the meanings of symbols fluctuate and are dependant upon which Aboriginal group the artist belongs to. The class found this quite difficult to comprehend: that there was a story to be extracted from a seemingly-random collection of symbols. When we took the time to talk about the differences between the scientific and personal maps, the pupils became more engaged in uncovering the narrative within the artworks.
Deconstruct–Reconstruct

Deconstruct–Reconstruct is a popular method of teaching literacy in upper key stage 2, where features of different texts are highlighted using examples. The pupils then have opportunities to use and adapt these examples before writing independently (National Strategies, 2009). This framework can also be used in lessons that focus on visual literacy.

In this unit of work, we used a range of examples to introduce the topic and to emphasise that map-making is a series of choices as much as it is a scientific exercise. By creating a key, the pupils then had the chance to adapt and experiment with what they had learnt before concentrating on size and placement when creating their own map.

What is important to us?

The (best laid) plan was for pupils to decide on a handful of local landmarks and then, as a year group, go on a walking tour and photograph them to create a photo album. However, bad weather meant that this wasn’t to be! When it came to planning their maps, it didn’t matter because I had underestimated the depth of my class’s knowledge of their area. The tables were turned as the pupils took the lead in explaining the highlights of Wincobank to me!

The pupils used their expert knowledge to create the key for their map. Here, we distinguished between a picture and a symbol. The shopping centre, Meadowhall, dominates the local area and together we created a series of different symbols. One of our most popular ones used the Aboriginal symbol for a meeting place, accompanied by an M; some shopping bags or the distinctive twin-domes. For many, this also dominated a large part of their map: obviously an important place to shop and meet friends!

Map making

When it came to sketching out and then painting their maps, the plan had been for the pupils to go out and collect a variety of sticks to use as paintbrushes, in much the same way that many Australian Aboriginal groups have done for generations. Unfortunately, a blanket of snow and ice made the playground impassable for everyone except for yours truly, who duly traipsed around collecting sticks of a variety of thicknesses.

We used this as an opportunity to re-examine the maps we looked at right at the beginning of the unit, to see how the artists chose to present their maps; how they created borders and used colour to catch their reader’s attention. From an artistic viewpoint, it was also important to spend some time experimenting with using paint-sticks, so the pupils could see how best to use the paint and sticks to create different effects.

Most of the pupils enjoyed using the different sticks and twigs, honing an ‘authentic’ skill and linking the two localities in the process. Some found the lack of uniformity that using a stick brought difficult, and though they would have preferred to have used conventional brushes, they understood why we had chosen to work in that way. Others found that it actually enhanced their work, as the thinner twigs allowed for a greater accuracy.

Learning through mapping

In creating the maps, the pupils could then compare their personal geographies of the surrounding area; they enjoyed finding shared landmarks and discussing their relative importance. Completing this unit has also increased my knowledge of the school’s local area, creating meaningful spaces as I walk to and from work. It also made Australian Aborigines relevant to my class, without compromising their complexity or exoticising their culture. This unit would perhaps be ideally placed as preparation for going into more depth about how modern-day Australian Aborigines fit into Australian society. It could also be used to focus on a local study, using personal mapping to focus on different viewpoints or to discuss a contentious issue.

References and further information


Simon Collis is in his second year of teaching year 6 at Concord Junior School in Sheffield after studying geography at the University of Leeds, where he discovered an enthusiasm for maps and map-making.
Postcard maps are very accessible, cheap to buy and informative. This makes them a very useful resource to use with primary pupils of all ages. Whether we buy them on holiday or find them in a postcard box in a charity shop, we can make use of them to find out about places and about maps.

Postcard maps can be found almost anywhere there are tourists, anywhere in the world! Hunting through postcard displays, you may come across just one or several postcard maps for a particular area you are visiting. As with picture postcards of places, they are a memento we can easily afford to take home or post to friends to show where we have been. We might buy one because it tells us about the features and sights of the place or because we might buy one because it fascinates us in the way it depicts the area in pictures and colour.

The variety of postcard maps
There is an incredible range of styles of postcard maps. They come in scales ranging from the local to the global and depict many different geographical features. Examples include:

- city and town centre street maps (e.g. Oxford)
- county maps (e.g. Wiltshire)
- regional maps (e.g. the Thames Valley)
- imaginary places (e.g. 100-Acre Wood)
- tourist areas (e.g. the Yorkshire Dales)
- states (e.g. Arizona)
- national maps (e.g. Switzerland)
- island maps (e.g. Isle of Wight)
- continental maps (e.g. North America)
- comic maps (e.g. Finding the way)
- world maps (e.g. Australia on Top Down Under)
- the globe (e.g. You are Here!)
- vertical aerial/space photographs (e.g. British Isles)
- panoramic maps (e.g. the Alps).

Using postcard maps in the classroom
There are many ways to use postcard maps. Here are three ideas to get you started:

**Town map postcards**
This type of postcard map shows a local area with key streets and features and is produced for the tourist trade. Using a postcard map of your local area, or a place nearby, you could:

- discuss which places and features are shown on the map and how they are shown. Are they the same places that pupils would select if they made their own local postcard map? If there is no local postcard map, look at examples from elsewhere and then create your own!
- compare the postcard map of a place with other local maps, such as a street map, tourist map and an Ordnance Survey map. What similarities and differences are there? Consider reasons for these. How are the same features and places shown on the different maps? Explain why.

**Mountain map postcards**
Using a postcard map of a mountainous area in the UK, such as Snowdonia, the Cairngorms or the Pennines, you could:

- identify where the places shown on the postcard map are in relation to your locality. Use a British Isles map or an atlas to work out the direction and distance
- work out how large the area shown on the postcard map is. Using an atlas, street map or other relevant maps, work out the scale of the postcard map. Calculate the distances between places on the map: as the ‘crow flies’, by road and by rail.

**Coastal map postcards**
Using a postcard map of a coastal area in the UK, you could:

- look at the towns shown on the postcard map. Use a road atlas to select the best route to travel between towns
- select three features or places from the map you would want to visit. Use the internet to find out about these places and explain why you want to visit them. Plan and map a journey from your school to visit the three places you have chosen.

The purpose of these activities is to encourage pupils to:
- become aware of postcard maps
- see how places are shown on maps
- consider what features are included on maps
- discuss the purpose of postcard maps
- compare postcard maps with other maps of the same places.

There are many other activities that you can undertake using postcard maps. Here are six more ideas.

1. Find out where the countries shown on postcard maps are in the world. Display the map postcards around a poster of a world map.
2. Use postcard maps of different countries. Are the countries similar or different in size? Use an atlas to see how they compare. How is each country shown on the postcard? Why do you think what is included has been put on the map?
3. Use several postcard world maps. Which places and features are shown? Why are they included? Make your own world postcard map, including features that you think are important.
4. Give pupils a series of postcard maps. Ask them to sort them into two, three or four sets and say why they put them in these sets.
5. Use Google Maps (www.maps.google.com) or an atlas to locate the place(s) shown on the postcard map and describe where they are, e.g. UK cities, counties, regions, other countries and continents.
6. Using a postcard map of your local area, or of another place you know well, decide what you would take off the map or what you would add to it. Explain your decisions. How would you want other people to use the postcard map?

**Conclusion**
Postcard maps provide fascinating insights into places: what might be seen locally as important, valued or worth visiting; how
such features and places are depicted, and how we create images of places for other people. They tell us a lot about maps as representations of the townscape or landscape, of regions, nations and the world. They can help pupils to see that maps are ‘everywhere’ and are informative, colourful and used to sell or market places to visitors and non-locals.

Postcard maps can be a starting point for an investigation. They generate ideas about how we would show our own places and give us insight into some aspects of other places. We find them all over the UK. We can collect them and create a display of ‘where we have been’ as well as use them to learn the skills to read maps. In short, they are a fun teaching resource for primary geography!

Acknowledgement
This article stems from ideas given at a meeting of GA Oxford Primary Champions and at a Cluster Group meeting organised by the Oxford GA Branch in June 2010.
At first glance, pupils’ maps may appear to teachers to be distorted, inconsistent and incomplete, falling far short of conventional cartographic maps in their representation of space. Of the thirty pupils’ maps that I gathered, only two-thirds attempted to represent the British Isles as a whole, with just half of those accurately representing England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The most common error was to significantly misrepresent Wales or omit it entirely, which coincides with recent research findings (Wiegand, 2006).

However, a closer look at the maps, combined with careful attention to the comments made by pupils during the activity, led me towards an alternative interpretation. Although each map was influenced by both direct and indirect experiences, it seemed to be the direct experiences which dominated, particularly as a trainee teacher at the University of Winchester, Octavia spent a week collecting pupils’ free recall sketch maps of the British Isles to support an assignment on the relationship between children’s emotional response to place and their ability to map space. This showed the potential for teaching critical graphicacy through learning activities that approach mapping with both heart and head.

Working with pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 at a rural junior school in Hampshire, I was struck by the extent to which their maps of the British Isles appeared to be shaped by their emotional responses to the places they drew. This left me wondering what role children’s emotions might play in learning “to draw plans and maps at a range of scales” (DfEE/QCA, 1999).

**Children’s maps**

It has been argued that it is secure attachment to place in infancy that provides the basis for our early understanding of spatial relationships and subsequent environmental cognition (Tanner, 2009). Further, findings in neuroscience suggest that emotional engagement is a necessary part of learning (Scoffham, 2002). Together, these ideas support teaching mapping skills via activities which encourage pupils to approach mapping with both their hearts and their heads.

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their emotional content. Most pupils began by drawing where they lived, often centring its position and enlarging its scale within the context of their map. I felt that this was, at least in part, a response to their deep attachment to the place where they lived. Holiday destinations and visits to grandparents also had a big impact on the pupils’ decisions about which places to include on their maps. Their feelings appeared to shape their representation, resulting in variations in scale and an absence of the metric properties associated with purely spatial relationships.

It is difficult to isolate the influence of children’s emotions on their maps, given the many factors that shape their experiences and the complex nature of the task of representing their mental ‘maps’ in graphical form. But perhaps, rather than viewing children’s maps as flawed copies of their cartographic counterparts, it is more helpful to view them as the best graphical representation we have of their personal geographies (Catling, 2003). Certainly, the success with which pupils move through space without bumping into things or constantly getting lost suggests that, rather than being flawed, their mental ‘maps’ are at least fit for purpose. However, construed as personal geographies, children’s maps represent mental ‘maps’ that are more than merely fit for purpose, they are a guide to personal spaces and the emotions they evoke.

Teaching graphacy using children’s maps

This view of children’s maps provides teachers with an opportunity to use them to elicit pupils’ emotional responses to place and to make the pupils consciously aware of these responses. This enables them to begin to recognise and separate both the affective and cognitive aspects of mapping as a basis for gradually adopting the cartographic conventions that give them access to an internationally recognised language of maps. Further, by recognising the subjectivity of their own maps, pupils can be invited to infer the subjectivity of the maps of others and begin to develop a critical graphacy, an essential life skill in a world saturated with images, dominated by computers and the visual media.

If learning with maps is both dependent on and influenced by children’s emotions, two guiding principles for teaching with maps emerge: successful learning activities are likely to be those first where the pupils are emotionally engaged in the task and second where this emotional response to place, and its impact on their communication with maps, is made explicit. It has been suggested that the use of multi-modal teaching approaches and thinking skills, within the context of geographical enquiry, can achieve this, particularly during fieldwork (Martin, 2006).

Accompanying year 6 on their river walk provided me with an ideal opportunity to test out my ideas. The day was planned around learning intentions for geography, art, English and science. However, the activities designed to support learning in other curriculum areas in fact created a level of emotional engagement which had a very positive impact on the geographical learning that took place.

The pupils identified geographical features on the river’s journey, investigated the rate of flow of the river through a game of ‘Pooh Sticks’, used pond dipping to answer their questions about the inhabitants of the river, wrote poetry to capture their feelings about the river’s movement and recorded their artistic impressions of hidden patterns in the water. Pupils were at times relaxed, taking time to observe closely and develop a sense of place, and at times excited and animated, most noticeably during ‘Pooh Sticks’, but always emotionally engaged. Their sketch maps of the journey they had shared with the river showed detailed knowledge of the route taken and a deep understanding of the geographical features encountered, illustrating the influence of emotional engagement with place and the value of cross-curricular learning outside the classroom as a means of achieving it. However, multi-modal teaching approaches are not exclusive to fieldwork; they can also be brought into the classroom. Examples have included messy maps or think maps, affective maps and journey sticks, maps from memory, blank maps and even edible maps!

Eliciting unanticipated emotions

While I am advocating incorporation of children’s emotions into lessons on mapping, it is perhaps important to remember that emotional engagement in a task is only possible if the emotions are not engaged elsewhere. I was reminded of this truth by a boy in year 5 who, when asked to make a map of the British Isles, divided his page in half in order to draw his ‘two houses’: Mum’s house and Dad’s house. I found myself wondering about the feelings of the boy in the car shown driving away from one house towards the dividing line; at the last minute he decided not to draw the second house, but drew an enlargement of the first house. This was a salutary reminder of the complex emotions pupils may bring into the classroom and how this affects their ability to engage in learning activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current focus on children’s emotions in primary geography has the potential to have a significant positive impact on the teaching of mapping skills. Rather than thinking of children’s maps as distorted, inconsistent and incomplete versions of their cartographic counterparts, we can think of them as a teaching opportunity to elicit and make explicit the emotional responses to place that influence them as a basis for the gradual adoption of socially negotiated cartographic conventions in map making and a critical graphacy which underpins effective map use.

References


Further Information

The article itself is based on research carried out at St Mary’s CE Junior School, Old Basing, Basingstoke. This was adapted from a geography assignment which is available, with a full bibliography, via the Geography Champions Networking Site. For more information on the maps collated, please contact octavia@chave.biz

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My thanks to the pupils I have worked with for sharing their maps with me and to their teachers for supporting this project. My thanks also to members of the Hampshire Geography Champions Network, in particular Sharon Witt, for their invaluable feedback and support during the drafting of this article.

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Octavia’s Summary of Action Research and a Mind Map to illustrate the key ideas discussed are available to download free from the Primary Geography page of the GA website at www.geography.org.uk/pg

Octavia Chave is now working as an NQT, teaching a year 3 class at Bramley Primary School in Hampshire.

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THE DANGER OF THE SINGLE IMAGE

HELEN GRIFFITHS AND GILL ALLBUT

This is a story about different ways of seeing, imagining and representing the world inspired by a trip to a garden centre!

Representing people and places

In April 2010 I paid a visit to my local garden centre (part of a local chain). As I walked out I noticed a poster entitled ‘Gambia Relief’ (Figure 1) that asked customers for donations so that the garden centre could send their old uniforms to people in The Gambia:

‘We are trying to raise enough money to send our old uniforms to Gambia. Many Gambians are very poor, often dressed in little more than rags. Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.’

Those poor people over there needed our generous help. Previously, I may have walked straight past the sign, or perhaps have donated some money if I had a bit of loose change in my pocket.

However, only two months earlier I had returned from a Tide– Global Learning study trip to The Gambia, so instead my initial reaction was one of shock. Shock at how the poster was representing the country and its people; a representation that jarred with my own experiences.

During the week I was there in February 2010 I had been struck by the clothes that the ladies, in particular, wore; beautiful co-ordinating tunics, skirts and headscarves. Then there were the football-obsessed young boys sporting their favourite football shirts (mostly Arsenal and Manchester United!). Not exactly the rags the poster made out. My husband, who first spotted the poster, asked me why Gambians would want to wear old garden centre uniforms. I told him I had no idea.

Those poor people over there needed our generous help. Previously, I may have walked straight past the sign, or perhaps have donated some money if I had a bit of loose change in my pocket.

In the single image of this poster, who is represented, by whom and for what purpose(s)? And what world views and assumptions are these based on?

Sparking the debate

I decided to share the photo of the poster with my colleague Fran Martin who then posted it onto her Facebook profile alongside photos of the ‘rags’ we had seen people wearing on our recent visit (Figure 2). This sparked an insightful debate and some of the responses are woven into the rest of this article.

The danger of the single story

‘Typical derogatory viewpoint... these people probably live in straw huts too and deserve to be called savages’ (Bob Digby, Facebook debate).

If you had never been to The Gambia what does the poster tell you about what life is like in that country? Does it add to other popular representations of Africa portrayed in the media during events such as Live Aid (or Live 8) and Comic Relief? The stereotypical image such as the bloated belly of a young child with flies around their mouth. They need our help. Please donate some of your money to this worthy cause.

Such media portrayals add to our imagined geographies of people and places; not least how we view developing countries. It is easy to forget, however, that such stories say nothing about the reasons behind famine or poverty nor about the West’s role in inequality.

During the preparatory sessions of The Gambia study course we had been shown a YouTube video (see web panel below) where Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie talks about the dominant narrative that pervades the West about African countries, what she terms the ‘danger of the single story’:

‘Show a people as one thing and only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become... Where does the story start – with failure of African states after independence? With colonization? Depending on which it becomes a different story’.

What does the poster’s single story say about my relationship to people in The Gambia? Well, it most definitely reinforces a dependency culture that locates ‘them’ (Gambians) as reliant on us (Westerners)

Figure 1: The poster itself. Photo: Antony Noble.
Visual presentations of the world surround our everyday life; from holiday photographs to newspaper articles to maps showing the distribution of resources around the world. Each tells a different story and is open to multiple interpretations. While it may be easy to think that each somehow has a ‘true’ meaning, we need to recognise that all are social constructions produced for particular purposes in specific social contexts. As teachers it is important to recognise how our own perceptions impact on what we might do in our classrooms.

The importance of getting children to understand how what they say can be interpreted in so many different ways and possibly cause such damage…” (Tessa Willy, Facebook debate).

Unintended consequences

‘Don’t forget we have the benefit of having the real story, we can’t punish ignorance without trying to enlighten. They think they are helping, that’s all!’ (Sally Wood, Facebook debate).

Originally I wanted to take my photographs into the garden centre as if to say ‘look, the Gambians I met do not dress in rags and here are some photos to prove it’. I felt like I needed to do something, but the more I thought about it the more I became confused. Who was I to go marching in as though I was the voice of authority? Was it wrong of the garden centre to want to help people? Of course not. It is easy to criticise people, but they can only go from the information they have available to them at that particular time.

‘Not everyone would see this message and have the same reaction. Some schools fundraise to save “others” from “raggedness” without questioning how (or even if) a message might be distorted’ (Paula Owens, Facebook debate).

What might the unintended consequences of donating money to the garden centre campaign be? How can we support others to see beyond the single story? An openness to have our existing assumptions and perceptions challenged is a start. Critical thinking does not mean that we need to ignore the social injustice and inequality that exists in the world, however in doing so we should not forget:

‘The importance of getting children to understand how what they say can be interpreted in so many different ways and possibly cause such damage…” (Tessa Willy, Facebook debate).

Providing an alternative?

If you ask people to stop something you need to be able to offer an alternative. If not, then there is a danger that people are left with a feeling of hopelessness.

‘Had a further thought about this; that as well as criticising, we should suggest alternatives… I don’t think it would be hard to get the garden centre to drop their fundraising campaign, but I do think it would be good to offer a constructive alternative…” (Ben Ballin, Facebook debate).

Ben’s suggestions included raising funds for a joint horticultural/agricultural initiative between the garden centre and a Gambian horticultural project, or asking for donations to a UK-Gambian schools project. However, Fran warned that even a joint project could lead to unintended consequences if the relationship developed from a purely economic one that would:

‘…position The Gambia as not being able to get by without ‘our’ help and so paternalistic in nature. If such a thing was borne out of a true partnership with agency on both sides that would be different’ (Fran Martin, Facebook debate).

Such a partnership would be based on the principles of mutuality, reciprocity and equality, with each partner giving and taking according to their needs.

Conclusion

Visual presentations of the world surround our everyday life; from holiday photographs to newspaper articles to maps showing the distribution of resources around the world. Each tells a different story and is open to multiple interpretations. While it may be easy to think that each somehow has a ‘true’ meaning, we need to recognise that all are social constructions produced for particular purposes in specific social contexts. As teachers it is important to recognise how our own perceptions impact on what we might do in our classrooms.

View Chimamanda Adichie’s ‘The Danger of a Single Story’ at www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg

The British Red Cross’s Charity Photos resource is an ideal starting point for exploring the images that charities use to raise money. The activity encourages young people to apply a set of guidelines and to critique the images that charities use. Visit www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Teaching-resources/Quick-activities/Charity-photos

Helen Griffiths is Associate Research Fellow, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter. Gill Allbut is the Development Officer for the British Red Cross Humanitarian Education Programme. Both Helen and Gill were participants on the 2009-10 Tide– Global Learning Gambia study visit course.
THE HIDDEN COST OF A RED NOSE

RICHARD BOROWSKI

For the past three years Richard has been employed by the Leeds University Centre for African Studies (LUCAS) on a schools project aimed at challenging negative stereotypes by providing young people with a more balanced understanding of contemporary Africa. This article discusses how some media messages perpetuate negative thinking and also shows how graphicacy was used as part of the project to reveal children’s changing views of this diverse continent.

Charities, fundraising and primary schools

Every two years the British nation puts its reserve to one side for a day and engages in activities that one would normally see performed by entertainers at a children’s birthday party. In aid of good causes people dress up like street performers, willingly get involved in bizarre sponsorship activities and wear red noses to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves.

People in British society buy into these fundraising events for a variety of reasons. Faith groups believe that they have a moral responsibility; corporate business believe it enhances their public image; and schools believe it contributes to the promotion of good citizenship. Millions of pounds are raised to relieve suffering and protect the most vulnerable, but this is peanuts compared to the billions spent on propping up a creaking global financial system. I remember the first time the British public was engaged in an international fundraising campaign around a specific event – Live Aid 1985. I was watching the live transmission as the amount raised crept towards one million pounds and Bob Geldof was pleading with viewers to give more money. The interview was interrupted by a telephone call from an anonymous donor from the Middle East who pledged one million pounds from their personal fortune.

So, if the amount of money raised only represents a sticking plaster for the problems then what drives these events and why do they have such a high profile? Engaging millions of people in acts of collective financial support also raises greater public awareness of global inequalities and places poverty on the global political agenda. However, the way these events generate support also has a hidden cost on how we perceive people in distant countries. The British public are motivated to respond to the need for help through a sense of compassion for those less fortunate. The event organisers are aware of this and so they make sure there are images of suffering included in their broadcasts. Stories that focus on hunger or orphaned children as a result of conflict or HIV are common. The settings are usually rural, depicting traditional ‘straw huts’ and women carrying water on their heads. These images have a significant influence on our perceptions. To anyone who has not visited these distant places, or has not critically analysed the broadcast, they contribute to a distorted and negative stereotype.

As teachers we need to be aware of the hidden costs of a red nose. Engaging young people in fundraising activities around national events may engender good moral values but what effects do the images and messages used by these events have on their perceptions of people in distant places? As the pace of globalisation increases, the movement of people and information around the world presents young people with new challenges. How they relate to people from different cultures, interpret images and messages and challenge inequalities depends upon how they perceive the wider world. To promote community cohesion, and avoid racial prejudice and discrimination in the future, young people need a more balanced and objective perspective.

Young people’s perceptions of Africa and African people

The LUCAS project seeks to help young people in Leeds schools understand that they are part of a global community; that African societies have many interests similar to their own and that they do not see Africa as an exotic ‘other’ but as a functioning continent with historical, cultural and economic links to their own lives.

Our approach utilises a resource on our own doorstep – post-graduate students from Africa studying at Leeds University. We recruit African students...
from a wide range of courses and provide them with a course of training to deliver activity days in primary schools. Over the past three years the project has recruited and trained 45 African post-graduate students from 14 different countries and delivered African Voices Days to over 2600 year 5 and 6 pupils in 49 primary schools around Leeds.

At the start of the project we wanted to assess young people’s perceptions of Africa so we provided year 5 pupils with blank maps of the continent and asked them to draw or write anything they knew about Africa (Figure 1).

Africa maps, like the ones above, provided us with a way of looking at Africa through the eyes of young people in Leeds. For example, many pupils placed Egypt and Madagascar on the map because Egypt is a topic covered in the primary curriculum and Madagascar is the location of the Disney film of the same name. Images of animals, music and dancing probably come from wildlife documentaries and travel programmes and references to exotic fruits and cash crops such as cocoa are a result of greater awareness of fair trade. It was the perception of African people as poor, helpless farmers living in straw huts and lacking clean drinking water that was the most disturbing, as this is the image most commonly propagated by the media and fundraising campaigns. The coverage of the World Cup from South Africa may have gone some way to challenge this perception but in all of the Africa maps we viewed there was no recognition of the urban, industrial and technological aspects of the continent or the accomplishments of African people.

To explore these perceptions further we asked year 6 pupils to complete a questionnaire. Provided with a selection of adjectives to describe what they thought about Africa, the words scorching, arid, thirsty, starving, deprived and primitive accounted for 76% of all pupil choices.

Over 75% of pupils thought there was little food in Africa:

‘When you see Red Nose Day you see loads of pictures of people starving.’ (year 6 pupil)

Over 70% of pupils thought that people in Africa did not use mobile phones:

‘I thought all people were poor and they didn’t have any technology.’ (year 5 pupil)

Over 50% of pupils thought there were no skyscrapers in Africa:

‘I thought it was like what you see on the news – straw huts and fighting.’ (year 6 pupil)

Over 75% of pupils thought there was little food in Africa: From a selection of images to show what they thought Africa was like, 75% of pupils chose pictures of hungry children, tea pickers, rural housing and traditional dancers.

When pupils were asked to rate various characteristics of African people they indicated that they perceived them to be poor and sick, neither sad nor happy, but harder working, interesting. From a range of agree/disagree statements about Africa, pupils generally thought of Africa as a place with little food, having no TVs, being a dangerous place to live, having no tall buildings and being a place where people do not use mobile phones (Figure 2). When asked about their level of support for Africa and African people, pupils thought buying fairly traded goods and supporting charities to be very important but placed less importance on volunteering, going on holiday to Africa and finding out more about Africa.

We followed up the year 6 questionnaires with a focus group discussion. The pupil responses confirmed our earlier observations that the main external influences on young people’s perceptions were television programmes and charity appeals and the main school influences were the inclusion of fair trade issues in the curriculum and multi-cultural activities such as the Zulu dancers (Figure 3).

Analysis of the results between schools indicated that pupil perceptions of Africa varied across the city. The most significant
questionnaire was repeated. While 'sorching' and 'arid' were still popular words to describe Africa, 'deprived' and 'primitive' were replaced by 'welcoming', 'friendly' and 'lively'. The images of tea pickers and cultural dancers were still popular among pupils, but the images of hungry children and rural housing were replaced by wildlife and city landscapes.

Pupil perceptions of African people had also changed; they thought them to be richer, happier and healthier than they had at first thought, while their perceptions of Africans as being hard working and interesting were maintained. Pupils realised that Africa was not as food-deprived, as rural, as dangerous or as technologically deficient as they first thought (Figure 4). Buying fairly traded goods and going on holiday to Africa maintained their importance but the importance placed on supporting charities that work in Africa and volunteering to help African people decreased slightly.

Analysis of the results between schools indicated that, regardless of their starting point, the African post-graduate students were successful in raising pupil awareness of Africa and African people to roughly the same level. Focus group discussions with pupils and teacher questionnaires indicated that several factors contributed to this change in perception.

Firstly, the presence of the African post-graduate students in the classroom presented a different perspective of Africa – highly educated, relatively wealthy and articulate. Secondly, they established a personal bond with the pupils which added credibility to what they taught. And thirdly, by structuring their lessons around activities, to engage the pupils in discussion, the students were able to present an alternative perspective to their home country and the continent of Africa (Figure 5).

Who ‘nose’ best?

My intention in writing this article is not to discredit charities that seek funding through high-profile media events. The work that these charities undertake in Africa makes a significant difference to the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable across the continent. But their influence on how we perceive Africa is disproportionate as they focus on a small percentage of the population that is in greatest need of support. As economically active adults we can make ‘informed’ decisions about whether to respond to media appeals for donations made by charities. As teachers we have a responsibility to ensure that the pupils in our care are not misguided by these high-profile events. Young people need a more balanced perspective of Africa so that they can put what they see and hear into an informed context.

The African post-graduate students recruited by the LUCAS Schools Project are immensely proud of where they come from and of their cultural heritage. They were dismayed by the lack of knowledge and understanding young people in the UK had about the African continent. Through African Voices they had an opportunity to influence how the young people in Leeds perceive Africa. They were able to share with them some of the richness and diversity of a vibrant continent from an African perspective.

Figure 4: Quotes from year 5 pupils.

Figure 5: Quotes from year 6 pupils.
The idea of learning platforms has been met with mixed opinions: on the one hand the idea of large numbers of ‘ICT-phobic teachers’ being let loose on the internet has filled many with dread, but on the other hand there is a sense of opportunity as it is realised this will improve skills and deepen understanding. Burwash CE Primary School have taken the opportunity to use learning platforms to enhance both their teaching and their pupils’ understanding of geography.

Background

At Burwash we have a new whole-school topic each half term (six per year), which works very well since it allows pupils from across the school to have something in common and the ability to converse with one another about what they have been learning. Our last term’s topic was ‘Islands’ – comparing the distant islands of the Caribbean with the Channel Islands on our doorstep.

Putting it into practice

Burwash CE Primary School is a small village primary school with six classes. When tackling the ‘Islands’ theme we decided that the youngest and oldest class would share an island and all other classes would have a Channel Island each to research. These islands included Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Herm and Sark. Depending on the pupils’ age and ability, classes looked at the location of the Channel Islands and created their own maps (Figure 1) and compared similarities and differences between their own locality and their chosen Island. They also investigated and described the land use and wildlife found on the island, explored the island’s history and how and why it had changed over time. There was also the opportunity to find information about weather and climate on the Channel Islands and to compare the data to our own area in Burwash.

The learning platform enabled us to create a database of information from the work the pupils had completed about the Channel Islands. The pupils could then share what they had learnt with others in the school. This could then be used as a research tool for those finding out about an aspect of the islands. It also created the opportunity for pupils to share and celebrate examples of their work with the wider school community.

Once completed, pupils could access the work of the other classes on the Channel Islands, leave comments, and ask or answer questions; this made their geography work interactive and exciting. The resource worked like a blog or a wiki, which (in this age of very computer-literate pupils) many of them had either used or viewed before. They consequently picked up the skills needed to use the learning platform quickly and could access it confidently.

Of course all of these things take time to set up and we were not without technical difficulties or issues of e-safety. However, once up and running, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed creating the pages, accessing them and contributing to or commenting on their own or other classes’ work.

Pupil feedback

Once the project was complete I visited each class and asked a selection of the pupils what they had thought of the project. A selection of their responses are given below.

‘I liked being able to talk about my work with other pupils in the school’

‘It meant we could share ideas with everyone’

‘Asking other pupils questions and answering them on the computer made it really fun!’

‘We found out that the Channel Islands are close together but they can be quite different!’

Next steps

Using the Learning Platform to promote geography has been so successful at our school that we are now in the process of developing ideas in order that the Learning Platform can continue to do this. We hope to develop this project by using it as a tool to develop community cohesion with our UK link school through geography. We also are investing in digital weather monitoring equipment with the aim of pupils being able to access this data on the Learning Platform both at school and at home.

The next project for our school is to link up with a school in another country that is culturally and geographically different from ours with the hope that the pupils will be able to communicate safely using the Learning Platform. This will then help them gain an interactive insight into a contrasting locality within the UK.

Keeping our lessons fresh and exciting has always been a challenge, especially when technology progresses so quickly. However, it seems that the Learning Platform may help to develop the pupils’ passion, knowledge and understanding of geography, which can only benefit everybody!

Karen Hopkins is Geography Co-ordinator at Burwash CE Primary School.

Figure 1: The investigation began with a mapping exercise.
Some of the well-known stories, maps and images we use to help us imagine and talk about places are so loved that we keep using them – despite the onset of time. Thinking about current realities and contexts is an extremely pertinent part of quality geography teaching, as discussed in this article.

I’ve always had a soft spot for Mairi Hedderwick’s Katie Morag stories and have shared them with teachers in the past as a very useful route into geography for younger pupils. My fascination prompted me to request a holiday on the island of Coll (on which the fictitious island of Struay is based) as a birthday treat. I didn’t set out to spend a holiday doing geography, but inevitably I took my geography hat with me.

If a new Katie Morag story was being written today then Katie would be using the internet and ordering her shopping from Tesco in Oban for delivery to the island on the next morning’s Calmac ferry (Katie Morag is pretty much a grown-up now!). She wouldn’t however have a mobile phone, because the signal on the island is virtually non-existent, though she would very likely be growing some of her own vegetables and salad and then swapping some of her produce for eggs with her neighbour. She might be running the village pottery or even driving the island taxi (yes, there are roads on the real island) and possibly running a Pilates class for a small number of interested Collachs (the name that the islanders use to describe themselves).

What is this place like?
I didn’t just know the village from the Katie Morag stories; over the years I have collected photographs of the real island of Coll, although I have to confess that many of these were acquired some considerable time ago, so I knew that there would be changes. As we approached the village on the Caledonian MacBrayne (Calmac) ferry from Oban, I was looking to spot the features of the village that I had come to expect from photographs. Where were the long rows of white fishermen’s cottages? Would the church be visible on the hillside? (Mairi Hedderwick doesn’t include the church in her Isle of Struay.) Where exactly was the ferry going to dock and would we have a long way to drag our wheelie suitcases into the village?

I hadn’t expected a low-lying, long, grey whale-like island, although I knew it was fairly flat. The island we saw from the approaching ferry presented such a barren face to those of us watching that I wondered what kind of week we were letting ourselves in for. I was soon to discover that there are many different ‘faces’ to this very small island – some of them absolutely stunning! As we sailed closer, the fishermen’s cottages were certainly visible, as was the church. And, yes, we did have a fair way to drag our cases, but a very nice man in a white delivery van stopped to ask how far we were going and to check if we needed a lift. Now would that happen in your neck of the woods?
Viewing the map of Struay, created by Mairi Hedderwick (see web panel below), I’m struck by how many of the actual geographical features of Coll, both physical and human, are present on the imaginary map. Mairi Hedderwick has drawn on a ‘real place’ and one she knows well, in order to create her fictional island. I think, as teachers, we have much to learn from this approach. For example, when we ask pupils to draw an imaginary island, how often do we help them to do this by providing them with a real place as the basis for their map? Doing so is much more likely to give the place authenticity.

There really is a heronry in the group of tall trees on the outskirts of the village (see Heron Wood on the Struay map). It is the only significant area of woodland on the island, so where else would the herons nest? There is a golf course on the island of Coll, a Crannog in the middle of the loch, a deserted village (or almost deserted), protected Corncrake habitats and two very impressive looking castles at Breachacha Bay and much, much more. The place names on the map of Struay provide ample evidence of the physical features on the real island, for example: ‘rabbit heaven dunes’, of which there are many fine examples on the Atlantic side of the island. Why not find others and see if you can match them up to photographs taken on Coll?

Village Bay is a fairly accurate representation of the real ‘Arinagour’ bay, which is called Loch Earthana on the OS map and opens up into the sea by way of a south-facing entrance, unlike in Struay where Village Bay faces east. This is, however, where the similarity ends and the real village of Arinagour contains far more houses than exist in Struay and, what is more (and somewhat disappointingly from my point of view as I thought about Katie Morag delivering her mail), there is only one dwelling on the far side of Loch Earthana, which is far more accessible by boat than by land. Even more surprising for me is that so many Collachs live in small hamlets or isolated houses outside the main village, while many of the village houses have become the preserve of second-home owners or holiday lets. Definitely something I hadn’t quite anticipated, but how clever from a storyteller’s point of view to have the whole community centrally located around the ‘village bay’ where all of the events can take place in a specific location.

What do people do here?
From a geography point of view this is an important question and there were lots of things that helped us gain a better sense of the island. The physical landscape, climate and remoteness of the island have an influence on which people choose to live on Coll and which choose to visit. You certainly wouldn’t go there if your idea of holiday heaven is the sun, sea and sangria of the Costa Brava. There are few islanders on Coll that can trace their ancestors back through several generations and most residents are ‘incomers’ who have chosen to live on the island because of its remoteness and lack of commercialisation.

Visitors come to Coll to enjoy peace and quiet, to walk, fish, observe wildlife, beach comb and ride their bikes. When we arrived on the ferry on Saturday morning there were quite a few families who got off the ferry with their bikes and whom we saw pedalling about the island during the weekend. Perhaps they camped overnight at the campsite and then went back to Oban on the Sunday or Monday morning ferry.

Four fishermen who had come over from Oban for a few days were kind enough to give us three mackerel which they had caught that day. Another had dived for clams (which he sold to the Coll Hotel). While they were fishing, a 20-foot Basking shark swam near them, but disappeared quite quickly when one of them decided he would like to swim alongside.

How is Coll Changing?
Life in the village has changed greatly since the Katie Morag books were written. Mairi Hedderwick gives the population of Struay as, ‘Population approximately 25, Ferry 3 times a week – weather permitting, (weather variable, precipitation always in sight)’. The population was 228 in May 2010 (The Scotsman, 2010) and the ferry calls at the island every day during the summer months ‘weather permitting’; although it is still three times a week in the winter.

I do wonder if delivering the mail was ever quite so straightforward as is implied in Katie Morag Delivers the Mail. The real island of Coll is far too large to walk around and a bike would have been essential in the past. Today a red post office van meets the ferry to collect the mail before it is sorted and delivered to the islanders in the village and outlying settlements.

Photos: Wendy North.
'Change' is an important concept in both history and geography and these stories provide us with an opportunity to reflect on how places change over longer periods of time.

References
Mairi Hedderwick (1994) Katie Morag Delivers the Mail. London: Red Fox
The Scotsman (2010) http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/latestnews/No-Coll-of-island39s-population.5252519.jp

Is Katie Morag history?
To return to my original question and the title of this article I think the answer has to be a resounding YES. This doesn’t mean that we should stop using these stories with our pupils; they offer us such a delightful insight into another world, but it does mean that we need to think a little more carefully about how we use them.

‘Change’ is an important concept in both history and geography and these stories provide us with an opportunity to reflect on how places change over longer periods of time.

References
Mairi Hedderwick (1994) Katie Morag Delivers the Mail. London: Red Fox
The Scotsman (2010) http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/latestnews/No-Coll-of-island39s-population.5252519.jp

For details of all the Katie Morag books, visit www.randomhouse.co.uk/childrens/katiemorag/home.htm

As you read this article why not have a look at Mairi Hedderwick’s map of Struay which can be downloaded from: http://www.randomhouse.co.uk/childrens/katiemorag/pdf/仁ad83BD7.pdf

A list of resources for your study of Coll is available to download at www.geography.org.uk/pg

Wendy North is Curriculum Development Leader (Primary) for the Geographical Association. She leads the Primary Geography Quality Mark.
Selection of content: Our school has been developing film work for a few years and we are beginning to embed opportunities for film making across the curriculum. My latest film project involved a group of six reluctant boy writers from my year 1 class. The boys have been receiving Early Literacy Support to develop their reading and spelling skills and I wanted to give them a project that would motivate them and give their writing skills a real purpose.

The location
We decided to create a film about some of the places in our town of Southborough. The title of the film was to be Inside Southborough since we wanted to show people a little bit more about these locations than they would ordinarily find out by visiting them. We decided to allow Barnaby Bear to accompany us on our filmmaking expedition and the film became centred around his tour of the town.

We planned to visit three contrasting places: Southborough Butchers, a local business; Southborough Fire Station and St Peter’s Church. The visits were set up in advance and we were allowed to access behind-the-scenes locations in each of the places. The butcher allowed us to visit the deep freeze and meat preparation areas. The fire brigade let us tour a fire engine and try out the hoses. At St Peter’s Church we climbed up inside the steeple and rang the church bells.

Altogether we went out on three occasions to shoot footage for the film. The pupils then came back to school and worked with me on editing the film together and selecting music, transitions and titles to give the film a professional feel. Then it was time to write. Each of the boys took part of the movie to write a commentary for. They worked on drafting and editing their commentary with me. The vocabulary they began to use was suddenly of a far more ambitious level than any of them had ever used in their writing.

Although some of them still struggled with spelling and presentation, they were all keen to work hard and were very proud of their achievements. Once they had completed this writing task, we recorded their commentaries and added them to the film.

The results can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6G9MfdrmE

The geography
Although the project was designed with a literacy focus in mind, there were many important aspects of geographical learning that took place. The boys were familiar with the locations we visited but only at a basic level. The project taught them to appreciate how places differ depending on the users who go there and what they do.

A visit to a butcher’s shop may be a usual occurrence for the pupils, but making the film showed them how complex the workings of that location can be. Such activities take a bit of extra planning, but they do help pupils to understand place and identity at a deeper level. As well as understanding place, the pupils began to understand processes and the link between place and process.

Being out of school was, of course, a bonus to them but the experience greatly enriched their learning. They were both enthused and motivated through this hands on approach to technology: knowing that they would have a visual end-product to share with their classmates and parents back in school was a huge incentive.

Evaluation
This project was a very successful way of engaging pupils in a cross-curricular activity that had a focus on geography but also met many other learning targets. It allowed pupils to focus on a range of geographical skills as well as developing important basic literacy skills. The project also involved a wide range of ICT skills which were developed during film production and editing.

Although the project took a lot of time we were able to deliver the activities within our usual timetable structure. The pupils have been fascinated by the project and the motivation of producing a film has been wonderful to see. It has allowed the pupils to consider aspects of their local community and find out how people work within it.

Further development
Recently I have taken my camera to Our Lady’s Catholic Primary School in Dartford to create a movie as part of their Geography Week. During one morning we shot and edited a film entitled The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. This project involved a group of about fifteen gifted and talented pupils from key stage 2 classes. The pupils took me on a guided tour of their locality and we expressed opinions about the positive and negative aspects of their environment. Despite the pressure of having only three hours to complete our work, we managed to create a movie and the pupils were highly engaged with both their learning and their locality.

Further information
The following equipment was used for these film projects:
- Sony hand held video camera with tripod
- Apple Macbook Pro
- iMovie film editing software
- Audio Network music library which provides free download music for school users (http://audio.lgfl.org.uk/)

If anyone would like advice on film-making projects within primary schools I am happy to be contacted by email at jkersey@southborough.kent.sch.uk

Jonathan Kersey is Deputy Head at Southborough C of E primary School, Tunbridge Wells.
What does geography mean to you?

Geography means three main things to me: challenge, fun and identity. One of the aspects of geography that has fascinated me throughout my career is the intellectual challenge of organising ideas about the world and trying to apply concepts to the confusion that surrounds us. My degree is in philosophy (with a minor in history) and it is only gradually that I have come to see myself as a geographer. Teaching has helped my ideas develop: I quickly discovered in my post in a junior school, for example, that taking pupils outdoors and exploring the local environment was a winner from an educational point of view. As I began to talk with others I found that this was called ‘geography’! I didn’t join the Geographical Association for many years but when I did I found I made many wonderful friends through the GA. These links have done a great deal to sustain my identity and sense of professional worth as a teacher educator.

What is your most memorable experience of school geography?

I can only remember odd fragments of primary school geography. My earliest memory is of a project which we did on Australia that somehow captured my imagination. I was intrigued by the animals – the koala bears and the kangaroos were particularly appealing but it was the duck-billed platypus which stole the show by having such an extraordinary name. And I suppose there was something familiar but exotic about Australian life. The eucalyptus trees and the billabongs meld together in my memory along with the flying doctor in his whirling aeroplane. I think my memories may have been overlaid by a radio programme which went out a few years later on the ‘home service’ (now Radio 4) which dramatised incidents in the flying doctor’s life. But then that’s what happens with memories – they become blurred. Later, in junior school, it was the project on tea and clipper ships which I did with an inspiring teacher (Mr Hart) prior to visiting the ‘Cutty Sark’ at Greenwich that stands out particularly clearly. Topics seem to be the key.
How important do you think geography is today?
I think geography is a great deal more important today than it was when I was a child. This is because issues to do with the environment are becoming more and more pressing. Also, modern communications, trade and travel mean that we live in an increasingly globalised world. We are now linked together on a planetary level in a way that we never were in the past. If we want to understand the future then geography provides a key perspective. In my view it ought to be part of the core curriculum.

What is your favourite geographical activity?
Oh dear, now that’s a hard one. I do enjoy fieldwork and exploring the surroundings – walking is one of my favourite hobbies. So, too, is photography. But then I am also interested in finding out what is happening in other places. Maps and diagrams (graphical modes of communication) often convey information about the wider world particularly well and I’ve always enjoyed looking at them. As a consultant and author of school atlases I suppose you would expect me to say this. But ultimately what I particularly enjoy about geography is swapping and developing ideas with others. This can happen both socially and in the work place. The boundaries are not clear and the scope is endless.

What has geography taught you?
Learning about geography has given me a way of thinking about the world and a life-long interest. I don’t think I am any closer to finding out the answers. Indeed the more I learn the more I am aware of my ignorance. But I have a passion for sharing ideas with others which burns just as brightly now (perhaps even brighter) as it did when I was younger. And the whole process of engaging deeply with geography – as in any endeavour worthy of the name – has been a journey of self discovery. That takes me back to the first question where I talked about identity. Feeling that you are an expert about something, whatever it is, can be immensely satisfying. This is something that we can share with children too.

One of Stephen’s most recent ventures has been to write, with co-author Terry Whyte, the GA’s new Geography Plus title: The UK: Investigating who we are. The book’s lesson plans enable you to help pupils in years 4–6 to explore what it is like to live in the UK in the first part of the 21st century. Pupils start by developing their locational knowledge of the UK with maps, atlases and photographs before proceeding to consider issues of identity and the UK’s changing population. These lessons provide varied starting points which will help to equip pupils with a better understanding of the contemporary world, and their role as citizens. For more details please visit www.geography.org.uk/shop
This is the first in a series of articles for Primary Geography to help you think through curriculum changes being proposed by the government. Each of the articles in this series will discuss a different aspect of these proposals and the implications for teaching, learning and professional development. This article considers some key questions about knowledge, core knowledge and geography education.

The announcement that a new curriculum would have a greater focus on ‘knowledge’ and in particular, be underpinned by the idea of ‘core knowledge’ (DfE, 2010) has caused a divided camp. While some welcome a renewed focus on knowledge, others are less impressed and think that this detracts from a necessary focus on skills. In recent times, many schools have chosen a skills-led curriculum arguing that in an information-accessible world, learning how to learn is more important. However, as Alexander (2009) has pointed out, any debate between knowledge and skills highlights a false dichotomy:

“A muddled discourse about subjects, knowledge and skills which infects the entire debate about curriculum, needlessly polarises discussion of how it might be organised, parodies knowledge and under-values its place in education and inflates the undeniably important notion of a skill to a point where it too becomes meaningless” (Alexander, 2009).

The GA welcomes the focus on knowledge but not at the expense of skills because both are essential, connected aspects of learning.

What is knowledge?

Ever since Michael Gove started to talk about the curriculum review and the desirability of a focus on ‘core’ knowledge, members of the GA’s Early Years and Primary Phase Committee and the Primary Geography Editorial Board have been discussing what knowledge, and thus geographical knowledge, is. It might seem obvious, but the more one thinks about it the more complex it becomes. For example, the popular view of geography is that it is a body of information and facts such as the names and locations of the highest mountain, longest river, largest city – the type of knowledge favoured by pub quizzes. However, information does not equal knowledge in the deeper sense.

In terms of thinking about knowledge for teaching Simon Catling and Fran Martin (forthcoming) make the following observations:

“When teachers make decisions about what to teach (curriculum content), important distinctions between information, knowledge, understanding and wisdom are required (Hart, 2001). For Hart, information involves discrete facts and basic skills, knowledge involves the development of systems of information instead of discrete pieces, and understanding involves moving beyond the rational and feeling a sense of connection to, which literally means to “stand among” as opposed to “apart from” (Hart, 2001), and appreciation of what is known. In other words, the knower becomes connected to what is known and takes it within to become a part of the self. Hart (2001) argues that this connection to self is essential for achieving wisdom which: “…does not come from amassing bits of information, it is not a thing that’s accumulated, not an entity. Instead it is an activity of knowing. We don’t possess wisdom as if it were an object, instead we act wisely”.”

Other types of knowledge include:

**Powerful knowledge**

This is knowledge that is powerful not because it is defined by those in power, but because it gives the knower the power that knowledge brings. Michael Young (2008) describes powerful knowledge as the knowledge across the sciences, social sciences and humanities that offers young people the best opportunities there are for making sense of the world they have been born into and for participating in debates about its future.

**Everyday knowledge**

This is knowledge that everyone builds from their everyday experiences and that contributes to, and is extended by, powerful knowledge. Children’s everyday knowledge is an important starting point for any curriculum.

**Cultural knowledge**

This is the sort of knowledge that is developed within a specific cultural and/or environmental context. For example, the number of words used to describe the same phenomenon, e.g. snow, may vary according to environmental context. Equally, how a phenomenon such as rain is perceived may vary from one cultural group to another.

**Biased knowledge**

This recognises that knowledge can be biased in the sense that it might be incomplete, seen only from a single perspective, or based on a misconception. It should be stressed that these types of knowledge are not mutually exclusive, and if taken together they suggest that we need to ask not only ‘what knowledge should be part of the curriculum?’ but ‘whose knowledge should be part of the curriculum?’ If the only knowledge in the curriculum is knowledge of the powerful, dominant groups in society, then many pupils (with their diverse ethnicities, abilities, communities and, therefore, personal geographies) will feel disenfranchised.

**What is geographical knowledge?**

If geography is not just a body of information and facts, what is it? Some would say that it is a perspective on the world and how it functions; knowledge of and about the world. It is knowledge about where things are located, but also knowledge of the inter-relationship between human and physical environments and human-human environments. Inherent in this knowledge is an appreciation of the big ideas of geography – place, space, scale, interdependence – and the big ideas to which geography makes a significant contribution, e.g. sustainability – the complex interplay between the needs
the important issues of the day (geography ‘in the news’; world knowledge relevant to climate change, intercultural understanding etc).

How might knowledge be structured and sequenced in a curriculum?

On the basis that it is never sensible to completely reinvent the wheel, it is worth looking at the current National Curriculum for Geography. An analysis of the maps for each key stage reveals that knowledge progresses from the general and global (continents, oceans) to the particular and regional (individual countries with their features) and/or the specialised (introducing human and physical dimensions). However, we might want to add that young pupils should also develop particular local knowledge, while older pupils should continue to develop global world knowledge and not remain solely at the regional scale. As pupils progress through primary school this world knowledge becomes more detailed – the mental map gets ‘filled in’ and more complex, inter-relationship between areas of the mental map becomes increasingly understood, and pupils become increasingly aware of the relevance and significance of their knowledge and understanding as a basis for informed (and wise) action.

Final thought

With the likelihood of a core curriculum being established, if that core curriculum focuses on factual information then it will be up to us as professionals to build on it to ensure that knowledge and understanding is also developed. Here is where our expertise as primary geography teachers is needed. Core, factual knowledge may be decided by others, but geography as a perspective on the world and how it works is our contribution. For us this is not a question of either/or. Both types of knowledge are needed.

References


Fran Martin is Senior Lecturer in Education at Exeter University and former Editor of Primary Geography. Paula Owens is Curriculum Development Leader (Primary) for the Geographical Association.
PGQM UPDATE: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012

WENDY NORTH

2012 will probably be a very special date in many people’s minds for the London Olympics, rather than the Quality Mark, but it will also prove to be a significant date for the metamorphosis of the Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM) into a self-sustaining award.

The Geographical Association regards the PGQM as a tool for underpinning subject development and is committed to supporting the award in the longer term. A revised self-assessment framework and application form have now been produced for Round 10. Though many of the guidance statements have not changed, the number of key indicators produced for Round 10. Though many of the guidance statements have not changed, the number of key indicators has been reduced from fifteen to eight (Figure 1). We see this leading to a slimmer application and reduced time spent in moderating applications, without any loss of value or rigour.

This year we celebrated five years of the PGQM with pupils and teachers from around the country. Not only was it a day for the Lord Mayor of Sheffield to award certificates, but it was also a day where primary pupils from different schools met and worked with one another in mixed school groups. I think this event was a milestone for the GA, in so far as it was the first conference to bring primary aged pupils, some as young as six, to a single event.

Anthony Barlow, who is vice chair of the GA’s Early Years and Primary Phase Committee, left his own class at St Peter’s Smithills Dean Primary School in Bolton to lead one of the workshop sessions at our celebration. Anthony had a wealth of exciting ideas for exploring geography which culminated in pupils and adults working together to create a map of their journey on the back of a t-shirt. An idea that was new to me was what Anthony called ‘My Private Geography Talk Strings’ (Figure 2). Anthony shared his thoughts about what things he liked, which things excited him and what he disliked about living in the world today. He gave each group a short length of string and some sticky labels and invited the participants to write their thoughts on the labels and attach them to the string. After pairing with another group, the pupils were able to use their talk strings to share their ‘Private Geography’ with each other. Figure 3 shows pupils from Two Rivers Special School working with their Head teacher to construct their talk strings.

1. The Characteristics of Geography in your School
   1a Achievement is high and pupils make good progress when considered in relation to age, ability and prior experience.
   1b Assessment is seen as an essential tool in planning learning and monitoring pupil progress.
   1c Fieldwork, active inquiry learning and the use of ICT has a clear impact on the way children learn and enjoy geography.
   1d Geography is seen as a key subject to engage creative and critical thinking about ‘people & place’, local and global change and possible futures.
   1e The teaching of core geographical knowledge underpins children’s learning about the world (this will include world knowledge understood in effective learning contexts and knowledge of geographical features).
   1f Geography supports other curriculum areas, contributes to the enjoyment and achievement.

2. Leadership and Management
   2a There is a ‘vision’ for geography that is helping to shape the way that the subject is taught. This vision informs the geography policy and guides the writing of schemes of work based on the NC. It has the clear support of the HT and SLT.
   2b Clear and relevant development targets guide teaching in the school and subject monitoring is focused on ensuring that the provision has a clear impact on the progress pupils make, identifies the professional development needs of staff, supports transition within and beyond the school and ensures adequate resources are available for geography.

Tell us your secrets!

My Private Geography

- I love hills and mountains
- I don’t like watching animals much!
- I love snowy days
- I don’t like hot beaches!
- I really like cities and new buildings
- I don’t like shopping centres!

Make a ‘My Private Geography’ talk string between two/three so you can talk about it!

Figure 1: Revised criteria for Round 10 (2011-2012).

Figure 2: My Private Geography.

Figure 3: During the celebrations of the PGQM’s 5th birthday, pupils from Two Rivers Special School made a talk string of their private geographies.

Funding

We are grateful to the following companies who kindly donated resources for the celebration: TTS, Wildgoose, Scholastic and the Royal Meteorological Society.

Also to The Yorkshire and Clydesdale Bank foundation who donated funding that covered the cost of food, drink and celebratory birthday cake for the occasion. All other funding was via the APG.

Many thanks to Anthony Barlow for this excellent idea and to the other workshop presenters: Arthur Kelly, Laura and Matthew from Liverpool Hope University and Ann Hambleton, writer and P4C practitioner. Read more about our exciting day in the Summer issue of GA Magazine.

To find out more about the Primary Geography Quality Mark please visit website: http://www.geography.org.uk/epprimaryprimaryqualitymark/ or contact Julie Beattie jbeattie@geography.org.uk or Wendy North wnorth@geography.org.uk.

Wendy North is Curriculum Development Leader (Primary) for the Geographical Association. She leads the Primary Geography Quality Mark.
In this issue, these links to resources and techniques will help you access and develop visual literacy and graphicacy in your classroom.

**A Different View**
The Geographical Association’s Manifesto has a wide range of stimulating images that you can download along with practical ideas for lessons http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/adifferentview/

**Satellite Eye on Earth**
A stunning round-up of images from the European Space Agency and NASA http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/gallery/2011/feb/02/satellite-eye-on-earth

**NASA**
Trawl for satellite images of our world that will inspire and amaze pupils and browse specialised map collections http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/

**Mashed World**
Create several representations of the same place in aerial, street-view and map imagery http://www.mashedworld.com/ DualMaps.aspx

**TripGeo**
Create an animated route that will simultaneously show you a map and street-view in a split screen http://www.tripgeo.com/ DirectionsMap.aspx

**Cycling The Alps**
Spectacular combinations of routes, views and maps in a series of short animation sequences that really ‘take you there’ as well as showing the possibilities of how photographs, data and maps can successfully merge http://www.cyclingthealps.com/

**London Profiler**
Choose different data that is then overlaid on a base map of London http://www.londonprofiler.org/

**EarthCam**
Webcams offer an exciting way to glimpse other landscapes and lives and to discuss what the chosen view tells us – and doesn’t! At EarthCam you can search for places with live cams such as Times Square, New York, or show two or more webcam views together to compare places in terms of landscape, weather and times of day http://www.earthcam.com/

**Champions Ning**
Links to many more mapping sites and book resources on the Forum Post ‘favourite mapping resources’ – please add your recommendations as well! http://geographychampions.ning.com/forum/topics/sharing-map-sites-and

**Online CPD**
CPD units include Young Geographers go Local, which looks at techniques and outcomes of using digital maps http://www.geography.org.uk/cpdevents/onlinecpd/ younggeographersgolocal/

**My Place, Your Place, Our Place**
A focus on ‘messy mapping’ on one of the short courses http://www.geography.org.uk/cpdevents/onlinecpd/myplaceyourplaceourplace/mywalksandmessymaps/

**Through Other Eyes**
Online CPD for teachers interested in challenging their worldviews. It is not for pupils but could be useful as part of staff INSET around global learning http://www.throughothereyes.org.uk/

**Information is Beautiful**
Amazing information, graphics and more besides. For example, why not have a look at the ‘true size of Africa’, which has several representations to get lots of classroom discussion going www.informationisbeautiful.net

**Wordle**
A site where you can create word ‘clouds’. Why not have a look at some pupils’ work using this to represent their ideas on sealife http://www.wordle.net/create http://class5jd.posterous.com/sealife-wordles

**Class1jd’s Posterous**
This Reception class tried their hand at some ‘messy mapping’ after teacher, Marc Faulder, became inspired after reading Primary Geography! http://class1jd.posterous.com/
Mission Explore
The Geography Collective
Can of Worms Kids Press, 2010
Pb., 110x160mm, 200pp., £7.99
ISBN 978-1-904872-33-7

A handy, exciting, pocket-sized book that is portable while fit-to-burst at approximately 200 pages, Mission Explore has an engaging layout and fun graphic design with Quentin Blake-style illustrations which will certainly appeal. This book seems to be aimed at upper KS2/lower KS3 and this is ideal given the outgoing nature and implied independence of the 100+ ‘Missions’.

The book starts with a thorough introduction of what Guerrilla Geography is all about; a handy section on basic training; plenty of safety tips and Do’s and Don’ts; whilst maintaining plenty of fun and intrigue so as not to disengage the young reader. The book contains succinct mission details; information on how to do the missions individually or in teams; sections to record successfully completed missions; humorous but useful first aid tips; sensible advice on staying safe while having fun outside; caring for the environment and plenty of useful links to other organisations (e.g. DoE, Woodcraft, etc.) for readers to continue their adventures.

All-in-all, there are plenty of excellent ideas and activities in this book and it represents a lot of creative work that children will enjoy and be able to use throughout the year. Not so much for the classroom but more for children to use at home and in their free time. As such, expensive for a class, but one that teachers can recommend to their pupils – through a display copy. Fantastic value for the individual.

Definitely a book that will inspire (and even create) many a young explorer and geographer.

Reviewed by Mark Preston, Leighton Primary School, Crewe.

Philip’s Infant School Atlas
Philip’s Early Years’ Atlas
David Wright and Rachel Noonan
Philip’s, 2009
Hb., 295 x 241 mm, 48pp., £6.99
ISBN 978-0540091218 (Infant)
ISBN 978-0540091201 (Early Years)

These children’s atlases have been devised very thoughtfully. It is clear that the authors are fully aware of the needs and expectations of Early Years and infant children. The pages are extremely colourful and inviting with age appropriate explanations and information. They are designed for the child or children to share with an adult (teacher or parent) and clear ideas for grown-ups are cited throughout, enabling the children’s learning to be extended and challenged.

The opening pages give general information about Space, Planet Earth, climatic regions and map reading, including very general information about the different continents and their positions on the world map. What is extremely appealing is the way the pages are co-ordinated with a different colour for each region. Information about the regions is very simple but relevant to the children’s experiences. The format of each page is identical with a map in the centre and attractive photographs and illustrations around the edges. Arrows linking to other pages enable a clearer understanding of the geography of the different countries. The captions accompanying the illustrations are numbered and the reading material is appropriate to the emergent reader.

I have shared these books in my class and they were greeted with much enthusiasm, were a source of much interest and enabled the children to begin using research skills without knowing it!

I would recommend these atlases to any KS1 class teacher as they enable independent research skills to be introduced and developed in an exciting way.

Review by Louise Roach, KS1 Teacher at Seer Green CE School, Bucks.

If you would like to review resources for Primary Geography please contact Anna Grandfield at anna@geography.org.uk
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GOLD

Digimap for Schools
Ordnance Survey and EDINA
University of Edinburgh, 2010

Digimap for Schools, a subscription service from the Ordnance Survey (OS), has been given this award because it represents a major development in the way schools can access OS mapping. A subscription, which will vary according to the type and size of school, gives unlimited access to mapping across Great Britain at both 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 scales. The maps may be used on PCs, laptops and interactive whiteboards or can be printed off at either A4 or A3 size. The maps are automatically updated online so teachers can be sure they are using the most up-to-date information.

Subscribing schools also have access to OS MasterMap, the largest scale of OS mapping, as well as to a 250,000 place name gazetteer. Digimap for Schools represents a superb opportunity for schools to make more detailed and flexible use of OS mapping and should have a real impact on the extent to which students of all ages may engage with high-quality mapping resources.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Amazing China
Kate Russell, Bob Jones, Chris and Sue Warn, Caroline Johnstone, Lynne Barber, Martin Holmes and Nola Wade
Wildgoose Education Ltd, 2010

Within the next 30 years it is predicted that China will become the world’s major economic super power. If only for this reason, students in this country will need to gain knowledge of this rapidly developing country. Amazing China provides a package that will enable pupils to gain a geographical, social and cultural awareness of China. It includes an extensive photopack with 24 high-quality images and information on the reverse; a CD with electronic versions of all the resources; and a teachers’ booklet with basic information about the history and geography of China (although a teacher using this package may find it appropriate to research further).

This teaching resource provides a noteworthy contribution to the understanding of a nation that is destined to have a significant influence over the direction and development of the world. Amazing China is a valuable aid for teachers wishing to give pupils a greater understanding about the geography of China.
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