Are you sitting comfortably?
I want to tell you a (geographical) story...
Alan Parkinson,
CGeog, FRGS, FRSGS
Head of Geography
@GeoBlogs   a.parkinson@gmail.com
“Don't wait for extraordinary opportunities. Seize common occasions and make them great.”

Head of Geography:
King’s Ely Junior
Geography at King’s Ely is all about exploration. We move from the local to the global, from the UK via Europe to the wider world, and from familiar to unfamiliar ideas. Geography is an academically robust subject, combining creative elements of the arts with the enquiry approach of the sciences, with people at its centre.

The department uses an enquiry approach based on the content of the national curriculum. This enquiry approach is central to what we do: asking those big questions and investigating, analysing, presenting and reviewing important issues in Geography.
How to draw an owl

1. Draw some circles

Research
How to draw an owl

1. Draw some circles

2. Draw the rest of the fucking owl

The reality of teaching
Daniel Willingham explains in Why Don’t Students Like School (pp66-75) in a sub-section entitled ‘The Power of Stories’:

“The human mind seems exquisitely tuned to understand and remember stories, so much so that psychologists sometimes refer to stories as “psychologically privileged”, meaning that they are treated differently in memory than other types of material.”
Narrative imagining — story — is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend upon it. It is our chief means of looking into the future, or predicting, of planning, and of explaining.”
Mark Turner, cognitive scientist, linguist, and author

We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn’t a stronger connection between people than storytelling.”
Jimmy Neil Smith, Director of the International Storytelling Center

There’s always room for a story that can transport people to another place.”
J.K. Rowling
Why are stories psychologically privileged?

Placing children as agents in stories is where memory really takes hold
Debra Kidd

“Stories are instruments for orienting human emotions to their contents”

“A fact may be the smallest unit of information, but a story is the smallest unit of meaning”

Kieran Egan (1986)
Kieran Egan

When planning teachers should ask themselves the same questions a newspaper editor asks a reporter: “what’s the story on this?”
That is, how can we make this particular knowledge something people will understand and connect with? The problem with most educational experiences is that the focus is too much on the dispassionate ‘cognitive’ aspects of learning and not enough on the emotional ‘affective’ dimensions. Good stories, with characters, tensions, and narrative events, have the effect of drawing us in and making meaning of complex ideas. They are more memorable, than disconnected facts taught in isolation.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228717328_Teaching_as_Story_Telling
Narrative

1 a : something that is narrated : story, account
b : a way of presenting or understanding a situation or series of events that reflects and promotes a particular point of view or set of values
2 : the art or practice of narration
3 : the representation in art of an event or story
When you let the content matter, it changes almost everything you do.

Moving away from the merely episodic to carefully sequenced, interlinked and interwoven schemata of knowledge and understanding.

Senior leaders need to be interested in the stories that our middle leaders want to teach. [The things] children…. encounter in the curriculum narrative they experience … will enrich their knowledge and understanding in later years.
Curriculum

The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.
“Narrative-led” - why not?
If you can be....

Project-led
Enquiry-led
Arts-led
Knowledge-led
A rich web of knowledge is what provides the capacity for pupils to learn even more and develop their understanding.
“Stories are the best vehicles for teaching young children - an idea that was ancient when Plato reasserted it in Republic.”

E.D. Hirsch
A reading school...

Teachers using books: set texts

“Mr. Parkinson is reading....”

Reading Week

Author visits: Julian Sedgwick, Chris Priestley

Simon Oakes: students learn how to interpret poetry, some of which is taught in English
Geography: the world discipline
A choice from the world’s stories?
#geogstories
What stories do you use?
“When we travel, we travel through an infinity of simultaneous stories.... and maps are a surface over which these stories are played out...”

Doreen Massey
GA Conference Lecture
The Living Mountain
Nan Shepherd
Robert MacFarlane

“An hour spent reading is an hour spent learning to write”
Danger of a single story

“The dangers of a one sided story”

Single Story
Chimamanda Adichie - TED talk
Planning the curriculum is a strange mixture of rational organisation and serendipity.

Eleanor Rawling
The stories of the things we own...

Matt Podbury
Story of Stuff
Fashion Revolution
Fanzine
Follow the Things
Claire Kyndt
Museum

Where is this boundary?

What are their stories? What do each of these items tell you about this border?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fieldwork</th>
<th>Mystery Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastics</td>
<td>What we know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What we think possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What the evidence is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What we need to find out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project 1: Stories of waste

- Trade
- Ocean currents
- Lifestyle/Development

Coca-Cola

Happy & Strong

Hydration Kit

Bottle Cap

Straw

Cigarette Packet

Postcard
GeoCapabilities
Definition of a curriculum artefact

Curriculum making is planning with purpose. In practice, we make the curriculum by creating excellent curriculum artefacts. The word ‘artefact’ derives from the Latin phrase *arte factum* meaning to ‘skilfully make’.

A curriculum artefact is a teaching and learning resource which has *special significance*. More precisely, it is a teaching and learning resource to which we give special significance.
Three steps here

The **choice of artefact** is important. First, the teacher must be able to see its potential. The teacher will also see how the students may use it.

The curriculum artefact is the ‘key’ to a series of lessons on a topic or theme. It provides the data that students can observe, interrogate, analyse and develop in some way.

The teacher applies a **geographical perspective** to the selected resource. The teacher thinks about how *the learner* will encounter the resource. The teacher also thinks about what to ‘do’ with the resource (*how to teach with it*). These are three pillars of curriculum making.
NIVEAU DU GLACIER
LEVEL OF THE GLACIER
1990
Unit based on this book
Paul Turner - Bedales School
My own unit...
Whose stories? Partial view...
External influences
Testimonies: Bishop Louis of Kigali: Rwanda
Trump’s Wall - Borders
Told through stories of objects

https://vimeo.com/189015526

Olson (2000)

When teachers see curriculum as prescribed by people outside classrooms, whether in curriculum documents or in stories created by others, they often see curriculum as irrelevant to the narrative experiences of teachers and students in classrooms. As more conversations occur among people in different positions on the landscape, teachers and researchers are transforming competing and conflicting stories into complementary stories.

The GeoLibrary - 400+ books

http://geolibrary2013.blogspot.com
A curriculum breathes life into a school’s or teacher’s philosophy of education; it is purpose enacted. Different philosophies of education — personal empowerment; cultural transmission; preparation for work or preparation for citizenship — place different emphasis on aspects of curriculum design. Curriculum design involves seven key principles which operate in tension with each other.

**Balanced**
Promotes intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, creative, emotional and physical development as equally important.

**Rigorous**
Seeks to develop intra-disciplinary habits of mind; the subject matter is taught in a way that is faithful to its discipline.

**Coherent**
Makes explicit connections and links between the different subjects/experiences encountered.

**Vertically Integrated**
Focuses on progression by carefully sequencing knowledge; provides clarity about what getting better at the subject means.

**Appropriate**
Looks to avoid making unreasonable demands by matching level of challenge to a pupil’s current level of maturity/knowledge.

**Focused**
Seeks to keep the curriculum manageable by teaching the most important knowledge; identifies the big ideas or key concepts within a subject.

**Relevant**
Seeks to connect the valued outcomes of a curriculum to the pupils being taught it; provides opportunities for pupils to make informed choices.
Conclusion

Stories matter, so choose to teach interesting ones.
Questions and thoughts?
Some further reading

Willingham, D: “Why don’t students like school”


Kieran Egan: “Teaching as Storytelling” (1986)

http://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/download/2781/2082 (Margaret Olson, 2000)

https://impact.chartered.college/article/firth-spacing-interleaving-classroom/

https://impact.chartered.college/article/taking-curriculum-seriously/


Dylan Wiiam: Curriculum Design Principles diagram

You can't be a real country unless you have a beer and an airline. It helps if you have some kind of a football team, or some nuclear weapons, but at the very least you need a beer.

— Frank Zappa