

GEOWORLD (GW) NSW 7 – 10 / ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Many textbooks written for Geography have limited opportunity for student and teacher choice. They are written in the expectation that all students will do the same work and all teachers teach the same content and use the same examples - irrespective of the interests and abilities of students and the interests and expertise of teachers. There are limited real world examples of real places to investigate key ideas, processes and issues.

GeoWorld is different. Every chapter provides **opportunities for choice**, collaborative **groupwork**, **inquiry or project-based activities** and **differentiation** to suit the needs of students within a class. For example

- Full double page spreads elaborate on ideas often summarised in a sentence or paragraph in other texts. Students with different abilities can study options that match their abilities.
- The use of visuals on every spread– photographs, maps, graphs, tables of statistics and infographics. Online weblinks to relevant photographs, diagrams, graphs, infographics and video clips such as AirPano and ABC Splash make for exciting and engaging introductions, discussions / brainstorming and inquiry based activities. The hard work in finding these resources has been done for you.
- Skills and tools are integrated into each spread and linked to content.
- Teaching programs encourage the use of groupwork (collaborative inquiry) to study different aspects of a topic (through choice) – and activities in which groups contribute their ideas or findings to class discussions. Templates are provided help students organise their ideas for reporting to their class or contribute to class discussions.
- Teaching Programs integrate a range of teaching strategies including teacher instruction, collaborative activities, ICT and inquiry based activities such as fieldwork and the use of spatial technologies, interactive websites and other ICT applications.
- Online skills worksheets, diagnostic tests, crosswords, extension and enrichment activities provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning and for teachers to provide differentiated activities.
- Weblinks for students and teachers assist students investigate topics and teachers to extend their understanding.

Engagement	Examples from GeoWorld NSW 7 – 10 student books and online support materials.
Working with peers (Groupwork / collaborative activities)	In Place and Liveability (GW7) different student groups might investigate a range of different studies in Chapter 1 to determine why people live where they do. Each group can report to the class, which could then collectively create a concept map summarising a variety of influences on liveability. The studies of influences on and perceptions of liveability range from easy (eg. living in the arctic) to complicated (living in war zones) - allowing differentiation according to student ability
Student choice	Each GeoWorld student book has a range of studies that can be <i>chosen by the teacher</i> to reflect their area of interest or student abilities OR alternatively <i>individual students or groups can choose</i> examples to study.
Teacher passion and expertise	In Landscapes and Landforms (GW7) individual students or groups of students could choose different landscapes and distinctive landforms as a focus area of study from multiple options provided eg Karst, coastal, riverine, glaciated, volcanic and arid. This choice could follow a teacher explanation on the processes responsible for the creation of landforms and landscapes. Students apply their understanding (and demonstrate learning) by explaining a particular landscape and its landforms.
Differentiated activities and content	Focusing on conceptual understanding means different studies can be used to suit individuals or groups of students with a range of abilities.
Real world connections/ project-based learning	Studies are contemporary and real world – based on current trends, ideas, concepts and issues eg students own connections to other places in Interconnections and the impact of food waste in Australia on world food production and food security or on global water supplies and water scarcity The Knowledge and Understanding / Skills and Inquiry Geoactivities in each chapter can be used to create Project based learning activities based on real world issues.
Use or create visuals	The books are rich in visuals on every page and have online weblinks to other photographs, diagrams, infographics and video clips. Student Geoactivities suggest visual ways of presenting research findings eg using web tools, diagrams or photographs. Students are encouraged to communicate their findings using a variety of written and / or visual tools.
Working with ICT	ICT is incorporated into the Inquiry and Skills Geoactivities in each student book. Skills pages for explaining and developing skills using ICT are integrated into each topic area and summarised at the end of each book. Example include: Web 2 tools for presenting the findings of Geographical research in GeoWorld 7; Spatial technologies to study Landscapes and Landforms and Changing Environments and the use of interactive websites to study Human Well being and Development

KIDS SPEAK OUT ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (Selected quotes)

Read the full article at...

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/student-engagement-stories-heather-wolpert-gawron>

A while back, I was asked, "What engages students?" Sure, I could respond, sharing anecdotes about what I believed to be engaging, but I thought it would be so much better to lob that question to my own eighth graders. The responses I received from all 220 of them seemed to fall under 10 categories, representing reoccurring themes that appeared again and again.

1. Working with their peers (**Collaborative / groupwork activities**)

- "Middle-school students are growing learners who require and want interaction with other people to fully attain their potential."
- "Teens find it most interesting and exciting when there is a little bit of talking involved. Discussions help clear the tense atmosphere in a classroom and allow students to participate in their own learning."

2. Working with technology (**Interactive websites / spatial technologies / web based research and presentations**)

- "When we use tech, it engages me more and lets me understand the concept more clearly."

3. Connecting the real world to the work we do/project-based learning (**Real and contemporary issues**)

- "If you relate the topic to the students' lives, then it makes the concept easier to grasp."
- "Students are most interested when the curriculum applies to more than just the textbook. The book is there -- we can read a book. If we're given projects that expand into other subjects and make us think, it'll help us understand the information."
- "I like to explore beyond the range of what normal textbooks allow us to do through hands-on techniques such as project-based learning. Whenever I do a project, I always seem to remember the material better than if I just read the information straight out of a textbook."

4. Clearly love what you do (**Teacher motivation /teacher choice of content top reflect their interests and expertise**)

- "Enthusiasm in the classroom really makes a student engaged in classroom discussions. Because even if you have wonderful information, if you don't sound interested, you are not going to get your students' attention. I also believe that excitement and enthusiasm is contagious."

5. Get me out of my seat! (**Groupwork based around workstations / fieldwork – inside and outside school grounds**)

- "When a student is active they learn in a deeper way than sitting."

6. Bring in visuals (**photos, diagrams, infographics, video clips – use or create**)

- "I like to see pictures because it makes my understanding on a topic clearer. It gives me an image in my head to visualize."

7. Student choice (**students do not need to study the same content – concepts are more important**)

- "I think having freedom in assignments, project directions, and more choices would engage students...More variety = more space for creativity."
- "Giving students choices helps us use our strengths and gives us freedom to make a project the way we want it to. When we do something we like, we're more focused and enjoy school more."
- "Another way is to make the curriculum flexible for students who are more/less advanced. There could be a list of project choices and student can pick from that according to their level."

8. Understand your clients -- the kids (**Differentiate the content and studies within a topic**)

- "Encourage students to voice their opinions...."
- Most importantly, teachers need to ask themselves, "How would I feel if I were this student?" See from our point of view and embrace it."
- "Teachers should know that within every class they teach, the students are all different."

9. Mix it up! (**Provide a variety of different activities in each content area**)

- "I don't like doing only one constant activity...a variety will keep me engaged in the topic."
- "Fun experiments in science class...acting out little skits in history...if students are going to remember something, they need visuals, some auditory lessons, and some emotions."

10. Be human (**Differentiate and provide choice**)

"Every student is engaged differently.... ask them. Get their input on how they learn".