It is not uncommon for a pre-service geography teacher, or in fact an experienced teacher, to ask the question: what makes an outstanding geography teacher?

In 2006, an earnest attempt was made by the University of Melbourne, Geography Teachers Association of Victoria and Australian Geography Teachers Association via the Geogstandards project to identify ‘exemplary geography teaching through the development of Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of School Geography’ (www.geogstandards.edu.au/).

In his book, Mark Harris also explores the ingredients involved to be an outstanding geography teacher. Whilst it can be argued that there should not be a formula for the accomplished geography teacher, the Geogstandards project and now Harris’s book, does go some way towards identifying strategies, approaches and techniques that are generally agreed on as good practice for the geography teacher aspiring to be outstanding. There are commonalities between the pedagogical content knowledge of geography, advocated by Harris and Geogstandards, that make for some interesting reading and affirmation of what many geography teachers aspire to – to motivate and enthuse their students about geography, whilst being rigorous and authentic with the learning.

Although the book often refers to the General Certificate of Secondary Education course in England, it is highly applicable to the approaches advocated in the Australian Curriculum: Geography. This is particularly true in the frequent references in the book to geographical thinking, skills, questioning and creating curiosity through inquiry.

The book is very practical in its approach, providing numerous classroom ideas for lesson starters, using current events, and lesson planning in general. The chapters on literacy and numeracy are particularly useful as they articulate the nature and importance of these areas in the teaching of geography.

In the current education scene with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy in schools, such articulation is incredibly useful for the geography teacher to argue the value of their subject in these areas – that geography is much more than just about maps!

I suggest the focus on the English curriculum in the chapters on Marking for progress and Teaching A Level does not distract from the usefulness of this book for the aspiring geography teacher in Australia.

The final chapter on promoting geography is particularly useful because I have found one of the most common identifiers of the outstanding geography teacher is a geographer who goes out of his or her way to promote the subject in the school and broader community, and most importantly with students. It is clear from this book that such promotion is an imperative for any geography teacher – without such marketing of our subject, the outstanding geography teacher will not have the opportunity to practise his or her skills!

This is a useful and thought-provoking book on an important topic to support outstanding geography teaching.

Malcolm McInerney
University of South Australia.

Exploring soils: A hidden world underground.

Exploring soils: A hidden world underground is an illustrated reminder of how many geographers begin – as young children exploring the world around them. Written by Dr Samantha Grover, a soil scientist and parent, this well-informed picture book is intended for primary school-aged children, their parents, and teachers.

The author and illustrator have done very well to take a complex and at times overlooked scientific field and convert it into a comprehensive picture book. Information is written
draw attention to what can only be described as a patchy and inconsistent use of the concept, both in the classroom and in curriculum documents, and the way inquiry varies significantly from one discipline to the other, a valuable research finding that needs to be emphasised. Inquiry in Science is different from inquiry in History, and Geography sits somewhere in between.

Their comparison of classroom goals in inquiry, focusing on students learning how to think for themselves, with classroom practice is a most useful discussion of the possibilities and difficulties of this area. For all sorts of good reasons, teachers feel they need to be in control and yet inquiry learning, with its focus on students controlling what happens, challenges such thinking. As one teacher said to me, ‘How can I make sure the students know what they need to know for the exam?’

The authors’ analysis of the Australian Curriculum documents is an intriguing comparison of the differences between the three disciplines, and the difficulties curriculum writers have in producing documents that will be useful to schools and teachers while satisfying other social/political imperatives.

However, it is the last chapter on fieldwork that is probably the most valuable for the geography teacher. The chapter’s focus on ‘intelligence in the wild’, a lovely encapsulation of the importance of fieldwork to geography learning, and the issues, both practical and theoretical, that teachers and schools need to face up to in ensuring that fieldwork is part of all students’ learning, is an important conclusion to the book. This book is a valuable addition to the literature on inquiry learning and geography education while probably being too technical for most teachers.

Bill Stringer
Balwyn North, Victoria.
such as fish and turtle species, indigenous significance, mining, beef production, and government policy.

The publication is bookended by contributions from its editor, Richard Kingsford. These two are the real gems for those less familiar with this river basin. As the cover states, this book is most valuable as a reference for ‘environment and government agencies, industries and policy-makers’. That said, the opening piece, *The Lake Eyre Basin – one of the world’s great desert river systems*, is a fascinating and accessible examination of the geomorphology of the basin and its boom and bust flows which could be used to examine the complexity of Australia’s inland water systems with students in Years 11 or 12.

Anna Hind
Vice President
Geography and History Teachers’ Association Northern Territory.

*Modern India: A very short introduction.*

By Craig Jeffrey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018


India is the seventh largest country by area (3,287,263 km²) in the world but with 1,354,051,854 people it is second by population behind China’s 1,415,045,928.

The complexity and contradictions that make up current day India are succinctly and clearly outlined in this short book by Craig Jeffrey, Director and CEO of the Australia India Institute and a Professor of Human Geography at the University of Melbourne.

*Modern India* outlines in seven chapters the energy of the people to overcome the economic, environmental and social destruction caused by British rule through crippling taxes, land degradation and solidification of the differences between religions and castes. It outlines the political changes since independence from Nehru’s strong leadership and the autocratic rule of his daughter, Indira, and grandson Rajiv, to the rise of Hindu nationalism. It describes how economic reform has not benefitted all and how social inequity continues to impact on women, lower classes and castes as well as Muslims and Christians. Many groups are active in campaigning to improve education, health and employment and address corruption.

Readers gain insight into the various cultures through quotes, sayings and Hindi words throughout the text. Unfortunately, there is only one, difficult to read, map, The British Territories in 1856. The 14 photographs appear to break up the text where statistics supporting the text would have added depth of understanding. Annotated maps could have been useful to gain greater insight into the diversity throughout the country.

There is a short useful list of references but each chapter refers to significant people so a glossary would have been helpful. Overall this concise introduction to current day India would inform any teachers engaging students with incredible India.

Catherine McNicol
Hampton, Victoria.

*Oceans.*


*Oceans* contains a collection of short chapters, each presenting different scientific research covering the characteristics, management challenges and future prospects for Australia’s oceans. The research links closely with Geography curricula from Years 7 to 12 using studies from a variety of places. The introductory chapter discusses the interconnection between oceans and liveability, food production, tourism and climate. The rest of the book is divided into three sections: Australia’s Marine Estate, Science and Ocean Use, and Future Oceans Science.

The first section contains a detailed look at Australia’s oceanography including ocean currents and seasonal circulation patterns. A variety of maps shows the location and direction of these features while schematic diagrams demonstrate their related processes. The bioregions of Australia’s marine estate are explored in detail, highlighting the broad range of habitat types from coast to deep ocean. Additional chapters cover the geology of the Australasian tectonic plate and Australia’s continental shelf, the links between the ocean and climate change, and the uses and management of the ocean by people.

Topics covered throughout the second section of the book include the management of fisheries and aquaculture, oil and gas exploration, the impacts of development within the coastal zone and the costs and consequences of ocean pollution. The final section explores methods used to observe and model changes to oceans including biological and climate systems and conservation outcomes.

One of the strengths of this book is the use of a variety of photographs, maps, graphs and diagrams from a wide range of case studies. The language used is at an appropriate level for teachers and senior students, even if they do not have any background knowledge in this area. Given the wide range of relevant topics covered throughout this book, I highly recommend it as an asset to a school library as a resource for both teachers and senior students.

Adrian De Fanti
Ringwood North, Victoria.
This handbook is a collection of 30 chapters dealing with significant environmental issues. It is structured into four main parts, providing a comprehensive overview of the environments of South East Asia, the problems experienced within these environments, and the challenges faced overall within this region.

The term environment is a significant issue today in geographical studies and students at all levels are familiar with dilemmas regarding economic development. South East Asia has been selected because it is an economically diverse region with many environmental issues.

The study of Geography, in Victoria, involves an understanding of the characteristics of the places that make up our world, using concepts such as place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. The handbook, through its chapters, refers to these concepts, allowing students to question their world, reflect on their relationships with their environment, take responsibility and propose action to enable a socially just and sustainable future.

The handbook discusses a variety of environmental issues, how these have changed over time and how these vary through regions in South East Asia. The issues are taken from a global perspective but discussed at a local level, focusing on peoples’ interaction with their surroundings.

South East Asia is an appropriate region for environmental debate as it is an economically, demographically and ecologically dynamic region. The issues have arisen due to human induced biophysical changes, largely due to economic development and population growth and movement. Studying this region, students will be aware of the pristine landscapes, but also congestion, pollution, resource depletion and conflict. Whilst many environments within this region have been protected and managed, many have been used by people for their livelihoods.

The term environment, therefore, means different things to people here. For example, many environmental concerns have opposed dams, protected forests and wildlife and improved the quality of life for people. There have, however, also been conflicts over sustainable development, such as conflicts over water resources in the Mekong and haze impacts from fires in Indonesia affecting Singapore.

This is not a book for school students. The book is an academic study from which teachers could extract interesting case study material. The data are topical and relevant; however, teachers will need to be prepared for some heavy reading. Its outstanding features are the detailed aspects on a wide range of environmental issues within the South East Asian region, past, present and thinking of the future.

Specific examples include the following. The concept of change is included in Chapter 11, which deals with the conversion of forested lands to cultivated and urbanised landscapes, that is, forest use and management as a commercial resource and biodiversity exploitation, and the agricultural expansion due to population growth, linked with environmental degradation and deforestation in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 suggests that population growth and economic change (trade) are the prime drivers of environmental change.

Chapter 2 states that development is not necessarily in conflict with the environment and that economic development will occur with improved environmental management if environmental degradation is kept low.

Shifting cultivation and human interaction with forests is a focus in Chapter 12. Interaction with the hill forest in the past 50 to 100 years is emphasised as this practice is central to debates about the environment and development in the South East Asian region.

The importance of water, rivers and dams is tied to ecosystems, societies, economies and cultures in this region. Chapter 13 discusses the rapid economic and societal change which is transforming the relationships between rivers and people. Chapter 14 describes how coastal ecosystems are under pressure from, for example, overfishing, offshore oil and gas, coastal tourist resorts and sand mining, which all impact on, and contribute to, the region’s economic transition.

The book also includes regional and country studies, good if a specific locational focus is needed. For example, the Mekong and hydropower, environmental management in Cambodia and the evolving environmental governance in Myanmar.

Overall, if a teacher wants to focus on specific environmental issues in South East Asia, and is willing to undertake some reading, then the case studies and detailed information will be of use. Maps, diagrams and statistics are used by some authors. This is a handbook which could provide some interesting and valuable data for teachers developing investigations into the Victorian Certificate of Education Unit 3: Changing the land, focusing on geographical change, especially land cover and land use, with an emphasis on deforestation.

Marilyn Wiber
Melbourne, Victoria.
Despite the ubiquity and ease of use of GoogleMaps, OpenStreetMap, GPS, and GIS software, good map design is surprisingly rare. This book presents a selection of about 100 maps-as-art, and artworks involving maps (as either raw material or thematic inspiration), in two- to four-page spreads, all divided into two highly-overlapping (so rather pointless) chapters: the physical environment, and human activity.

Each work is given a brief paragraph of textual description, but is otherwise left to visually explain itself. The works included range from real maps produced as posters, or for tourist brochures or bus-stop billboards, to infographics for magazine articles and corporate presentations, online geographic data-mashup apps, and ephemeral 3D art installations.

They utilise a variety of media from the digital to the arboreal (a subway map of Moscow made from painted birch sticks)\(^1\), the oleous (a map of oil spills made with ink blots)\(^2\), and even the lithic (a world map ‘created’ by smashing the plaster off a gallery wall with a sledgehammer!)\(^3\).

This is not a book about how to design a map, but rather an ideas book for the designer, artist or cartographer seeking inspiration for his or her next publication or commission. Each spread identifies the designer/artist by name and nationality, and a two-page index (annoyingly sorted by Christian name not surname!) lists a website for each, which is particularly necessary for the works intended for online interaction (for example, a colour-coded dot-map of New York City’s municipally-managed trees, filterable by species)\(^4\).

With only two works by Australians, and only one work of Australia\(^5\), the geographies depicted will likely be of little interest to most students (the pretty Middle Earth maps excepted)\(^6\). Nevertheless, it does constitute an interesting catalogue of examples of both good and bad design (cartographic or otherwise): students could be asked to identify and comment on the positive and negative design features of the featured maps (colours, fonts, layout). After all, maps are a combination of visual and textual communication, and a map that fails to communicate its message clearly and quickly is next to useless. While all the included works are visually interesting, some certainly trade off legibility and informativeness for a purely trendy use of colours or styles (San Francisco rent prices versus private shuttlebus stops)\(^7\); while others elegantly transcend even language barriers (an Italian-language map of the Beatles’ foreign tours)\(^8\).

More a coffee-table book suitable for a design studio’s lobby, it appears of little relevance to the school geography curricula, but may be of interest for art/design teachers.

Dr Brendan Whyte
Assistant Curator of Maps
National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT.

Websites:
1. www.behance.net/gallery/13358921/muravejnik-(shema-moskovskogo-metro)
2. www.ceciliadellalonga.com/projects/drops.html
3. http://jeandenant.fr/site/Mes_operation_tonnerre/Pages/operation_tonnerre.html
5. www.saradrake.com/
8. https://www.behance.net/gallery/10984881/IL-Gran-Tour

The handbook of secondary geography.
Edited by Mark Jones. Sheffield: Geographical Association, 2017

What is geography?
This is certainly the right place to start with a comprehensive textbook resource for teachers of the subject. The first chapter helps to focus in on the purpose of geographical education and is a launching point for the rest of the resource.

As the title suggests, this is a resource for secondary geography teachers. It is divided into three sections with 24 chapters in total. Each chapter has a list of recommended key readings and a short description of each of these.

Section 1 explores the big picture topics around thinking geographically, planning for enquiry, progression, and curriculum.

Section 2 forms the bulk of this resource and provides practical advice on many aspects of geographical education around the wide range of styles and strategies we can use in teaching geography. There are chapters in this section that look at what makes a good geography lesson, the range of resources available for a geography classroom, strategies to differentiate work tasks, assessment, approaches to incorporating literacy and numeracy into your geographical teaching, approaches to...
fieldwork, and the benefits and challenges of using a range of spatial technologies.

Section 3 looks to the future of a teacher’s career and encompasses professional development, researching geographical education, mentoring, leading the geography department and the importance of belonging to a subject community.

Whilst the text is targeted at teachers of Geography in the United Kingdom, and there are regular references to the UK curriculum and political situation, with some chapters and sub-parts focusing on these, the resource is universal in its underpinning principles and practical advice.

Due to the range of content covered by this resource, it is certainly suitable for beginning teachers with little or no experience teaching geography, right through to experienced and aspiring leaders in the field. I highly recommend this for teachers at any stage of their career, as there is something for all of us in here.

Rowan Harris
Hobart College, Tasmania.

The power of geographical thinking.

Every once and a while you get a textbook and go Wow! That really is valuable to me and my students! Well, it is ‘double wow!’ for The power of geographical thinking.

It became one of those rare books that I did not want to put down as it led me through those various areas of contemporary geographical education that really matter in both practice and research. It begins with a solid look at ‘Theorising Geographical Thinking’, thus setting a rigorous theoretical underpinning for what is to follow. It then goes on to what I regard as the heart of good geographical education with a section on ‘Pedagogy and Geographical Thinking’. Early on in my career I maintained to my high school students studying Geography that a key outcome by Year 12 was to be able to think like a Geographer. As an example, to see the actual terrain in detail on a topographic map – rather than just brown and green lines.

The various authors who contributed chapters to the book provide, amongst other things, useful case studies from around the world about thinking and teaching in geographical education. This provides a rich international perspective that gives the reader a range of insights into the teaching and learning of Geography in a wide variety of settings. This is a very valuable approach that makes the book particularly interesting as all address that key concept of ‘The power of Geographical thinking’.

The book covers key topics and concepts in geographical education as well as a number of contemporary issues. With my keen interest in educational neuroscience, I found the various ideas, shared by the authors, contributing to developing significant expertise in teaching and learning of Geography. Indeed, I would see this book as not only a very valuable contemporary contribution to the field of geographical education – particularly in practice and research – but as one that will continue to be on the ‘must have and use extensively’ book list at universities. This is a terrific text for both university students and teachers of Geography.

In their Conclusion (p. 235) the Editors cite Jackson (2006) who so eloquently noted:

Thinking geographically does provide a language – a set of concepts and ideas – that can help us see the connections between places and scales that others frequently miss. That is why we should focus on geography’s grammar as well as on its endless vocabulary. That is the power of thinking geographically (page 9).1

So, recommendation overall?

The currency of this book alone makes it a valuable resource for all involved in geographical education. It is not only a most valuable addition to the library of in service and preservice teachers, and academics, but a book really worth the investment of time to engage with as a valuable resource and use to further enhance our practices – both in teaching and researching in geographical education.

If you have the chance, have a read of Chapter 16 ‘Reflecting on what makes geographical thinking powerful’ – the final chapter of the book written by the Editors. That succinct summary, provided by the Editors at the conclusion of the work, will very likely motivate you to have access to your own copy of the book!

Professor Ken Purnell
CQUniversity Australia.

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Lawrie Zion has produced a very readable and accessible account of his life as a self-confessed weather tragic. This fascination, he claims, is shared by most Australians as the weather is a shared common experience and ‘weather remains a part of our social lubrication, our identity, and it is central to how we live’ (page 2). Information about the weather is pervasive in our everyday lives through digital technology in our cars, mobile phones, weather apps and shared images on social media. There are also many fascinating statistics and historical asides.

The book traces the gradual development of Australians’ understanding of the climate and weather after 1788 as more data is collected, analysed and distributed, and the relatively new science of meteorology develops. This distribution of weather information has been enabled by technological developments from the telegraph to the internet. A particular focus is how the presentation and distribution of weather information through the press, radio, TV and the internet has changed over time and improved our understanding.

The author states that his earliest interest in the weather as a young man was sparked by forecasts, statistics and maps contained in daily newspapers. Unfortunately, these features do not appear in the book. As a result, it is very text heavy and I think that this detracts from its overall appeal. The gradual development of weather maps in the press and their importance are covered in some detail. An inclusion of one or more would have been useful.

This book is a teacher resource. The most useful chapters for geographers would be Chapter 4 Catastrophic, which examines developments in the way in which the Bureau of Meteorology and other agencies deal with preparing Australians for extreme weather events and contrasts the 1999 hailstorm in Sydney with the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and the preceding heat wave. Chapter 9 examines the issue of climate change in some detail.

John Ramsdale
Montmorency, Victoria.

Who are refugees and migrants? What makes people leave their homes? And other big questions.


http://hachette.com.au

This book is aimed at young people, probably upper primary to lower secondary, to help them understand migration and all forms of people movement. The opening pages are entitled Why we need this book and state the aim of this book is to get you to think for yourself about the questions we raise. Questions like, ‘What makes people leave their homes?’ and ‘What happens to them/how are they treated when they arrive in a new country?’

The layout of the book is clear and easy to read with limited text, good use of colour and images. The book begins with some key definitions and links to the United Nations. It then moves through topics dealing with themes such as the reasons for migration, migration over time, the rights that migrants and refugees have, prejudicial vocabulary and sharing of cultures.

None of these topics is covered in detail as is appropriate for the target audience. Each section is either a double-page spread or across four pages. There are questions to challenge students on each spread which are clearly identified with a Think about sign. These would form an excellent basis for class discussions.

Interspersed between these topic pages are six double-page spreads covering personal migration stories of individuals, including those of the two authors. There are also quotes from a wide range of other migrants which link to the issues raised. These first-person narratives help the reader make connections on an individual level and are excellent primary sources.

The book concludes with two sections: What would you do? which asks the readers to imagine they are forced to flee; and What do you think? which asks the readers to write their own list of human rights that everyone should share.

There is also a glossary covering a good range of key terminology, some suggested additional reading, and a list of websites and organisations for gathering further information.

This book is not a Geography text as such although it addresses a vital geographic issue: population movement. It would make a valuable addition to a school library or as a teacher resource for units such as Year 8: Changing Nations.

Trish Douglas
Eltham College, Victoria.