

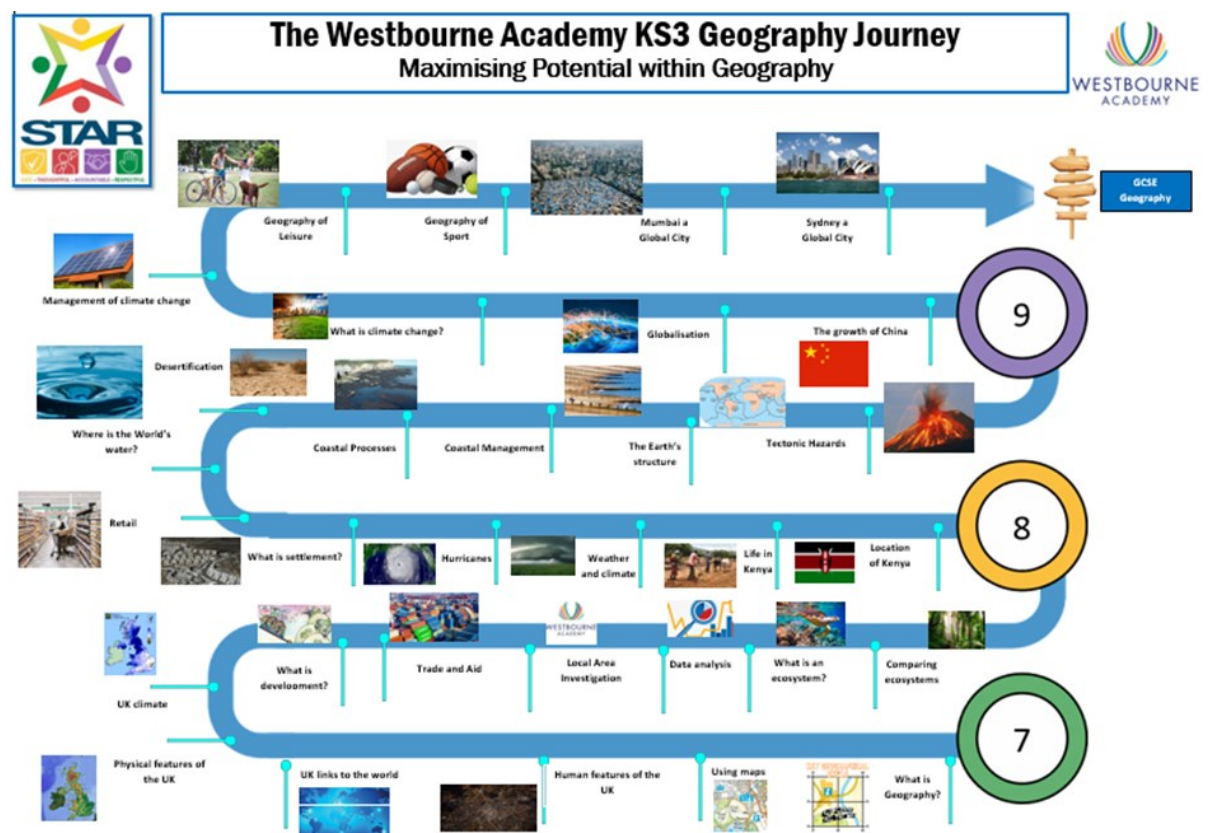
TEACHING & LEARNING JOURNAL - EDITION 5

Geography Curriculum

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The focus of the working party that I was involved in was curriculum. Under the new Ofsted framework, inspectors will evaluate whether the curriculum builds towards clear “end points”. This prompted me to consider whether our Geography students had any clear understanding of where these “end points” actually were. Further to this, through working in the curriculum working party, it was discussed whether the students that I taught had any idea of how their new knowledge and understanding built towards their “end goal” in Geography. After discussions with my Head of Department, I have constructed a student friendly KS3 Geography learning journey. The aim of this being that students can clearly see what they will cover and the key skills and concepts they need to understand to be successful were they to choose GCSE Geography.

Further to this, I have also been working on adding in additional “checkpoints” into our schemes of work. These have taken the form of at least two Show My HomeWork self-assessing quizzes for each unit of work. In Geography, we chose to do this because, although we had formal written assessments throughout the KS3 curriculum, after reading Curriculum Design by Matt Bromley (SecEd magazine), he identifies that “Checkpoints have several advantages: first they provide manageable and achievable stepping stones for pupils to aim for along the way, rather than setting goals they cannot hope to hit. Second they provide a useful pit stop- a means of assessing, recognising and celebrating pupils’ success to date.” The idea behind adding these quizzes into our schemes of work is that pupils will themselves have a checkpoint that they can aim towards, without the pressure of a formal assessment, as well as this they will also be able to identify gaps in their knowledge and hopefully rectify and build on these in time for the formal assessment.



Finally as part of my independent study time, I have been reading around the subject of questioning. Making my questioning too simple in the hope of getting an “easy response” is something that I have been guilty of in my lessons. Too often, in the past, I have used closed questions, which have perhaps not enabled students to clearly articulate a clear understanding of a concept or topic. Ben-Peretz (2002) considers that “effective questioning can initiate cognitive conflict, provoking the learner to find new insights by rocking the ‘cognitive boat’.” To this end, I have, alongside my Head of Department been adapting and building a year 8 unit of work on tectonics. Within this, I have planned for questioning that is more open. I have also added in more opportunities for think, pair, share time alongside these open questions to allow students time to develop their responses, whilst giving them the confidence of having already previously discussed their responses with a peer. Whilst this is still a work in progress and there are many other questioning techniques to consider, prior to lockdown, both pre-planning the questions and the use of think, pair, share time seemed to be having a positive impact on the length of students’ verbal responses to questions.



1/10 Question

Geog Year 7 Development Quiz 1

Quiz Timer

1. What does HIC stand for?

1 High Income Country

2 Highly Industrialised Country

3 Higher Importance Country

4 High Identity Country

Continue →

Exit

A host of differences

At university, I took a class about the foundations on which education was built. It was here that we were informed of the systemic racism that is involved in the space. Pure and simple: education was created for white people, with middle to upper class backgrounds, to succeed. Although this is what education once was, it is not like that anymore; or at least, it should not be like that anymore. The UK is a multicultural place. Ipswich is a multicultural place. Westbourne is a multicultural place. We need to adapt our teaching practices to ensure that all of our students can succeed. Hooks believes that dialogue is the best way to build a teaching community that does this. She writes, 'to engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences' (pg. 130).

Teaching to transgress

Hooks wrote this book after having taught for twenty years. She has questioned her love for it, but come to the conclusion that it is the best place for her. I believe the same. The front of a classroom is the place I feel I can make a difference in the world.

'...I have sought teachers in all areas of my life who would challenge me beyond what I might select for myself, and in and through that challenge allow me a space of radical openness where I am truly free to choose- able to learn and grow without limits... this is education as the practice of freedom.'
Bell Hooks, 1994, p. 207.

