



## President's Report

**Dr Susan Caldis**

Welcome to the second *Geography Bulletin* for 2022, the focus of this edition identifies one of the distinctive aspects of geography and effective geography teaching – one of our ways of doing geography: how to use, apply and incorporate geographical tools and skills into our classroom practice in a meaningful and seamless way.

Thank you to Lorraine for conceptualising this Bulletin around such an important part of our teaching and thank you to all the authors who have shared practice and ideas from their own classrooms and experiences. I know there is much to reflect on from each article and to absorb into our practice to ensure we are delivering 'geographical geography lessons'.

The question about 'what makes your geography lesson geographical?' was an important recurring question for theory-practice reflection in my doctoral thesis. Participants were regularly asked to reflect on this question in connection with the *Professional Standards for the Accomplished Teaching of Geography* or GEOGStandards (Hutchinson & Kriewaldt, 2010) <https://agta.asn.au/files/Professional%20Standards/geogstandards.pdf> and consider not only what the distinctiveness of geography is but also how it becomes evident in their practice. Sometimes teaching contexts present a range of constraints and it is not always

possible to teach geography in the planned for or desired way. However, having a simple, familiar question with an accessible evidence base to guide thinking was shown to be helpful for shaping practice and being able to justify decisions about why various approaches are taken for teaching geography. Whilst the GEOGStandards were derived from the practice of experienced geography teachers across the country, part of my thesis was testing out the GEOGStandards in the context of pre-service and early-career teachers.

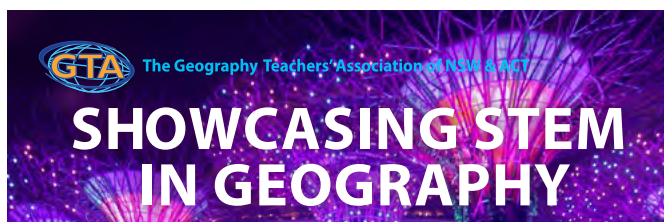
In the NSW K–10 syllabus, geographical tools and skills are identified in 'Inquiry skills' where acquiring, processing, communicating provide a structure for investigating; also 'Geographical tools' identify broad categories: maps, fieldwork, graphs and statistics, spatial technologies, and visual representations. As you can see from Table 1, an understanding, use and application of geographical inquiry, tools and skills fits most neatly into GEOG Standards 1, 2, 3 and 6.

Table 1: *Professional Standards for the Accomplished Teaching of School Geography* (Hutchinson & Kriewaldt, 2010; Kriewaldt & Mulcahy, 2010)

STANDARD	OVERVIEW
<b>Knowing geography and the geography curriculum</b>	As the teacher: understand the discipline, including concepts and skills; understand the curriculum; understand that geography draws from the social sciences, physical sciences, and humanities; and make connections with other curricula and learning areas.
<b>Fostering geographical inquiry and fieldwork</b>	Allow students to carry out: a range of structured and open-ended inquiries; and undertake inquiry in the field, selecting and using geographical tools.
<b>Developing geographical thinking and communication</b>	Encourage and support students' understanding of spatial reasoning; conceptual interdependencies, interconnections, and assemblages; real-world contexts at a range of scales; and lived experience as a personal geography.
<b>Understanding students and their communities</b>	Use local community contexts and personal geographies to connect, enhance, and enrich conceptual and perspective-focused learning.

# GTA NSW & ACT NEWS: PRESIDENT'S REPORT

STANDARD	OVERVIEW
<b>Establishing a safe, supportive, and intellectually challenging learning environment</b>	Facilitate students becoming active participants in their learning by creating a need to know and creating conditions for students to question complex geographical ideas.
<b>Understanding geography teaching — pedagogical practices</b>	Teachers: have extensive understanding of pedagogical content knowledge; encourage students to gather information from a variety of sources; use fieldwork; and introduce a range of tools to students.
<b>Planning, assessing, and reporting</b>	Plan, monitor, and assess geographical learning through a range of formal and informal methods; recognise achievement and provide direction for improvement; and use diagnostic assessment to inform teaching practice.
<b>Progressing professional growth and development</b>	Engage with professional learning communities and recognise that geography is an evolving subject that requires regular updating of content knowledge.
<b>Learning and working collegially</b>	Actively engage with the professional community; share expertise; build a culture of professional improvement; and promote geographical education.



In May and June, GTA NSW & ACT hosted an online symposium 'Showcasing STEM in geography', designed to help geography thrive in various teaching contexts. The purpose of the symposium sessions are to prompt and challenge thinking about how to emphasise and incorporate elements of STEM into classroom practice for geography. Again, the connection into the GEOGStandards is clear, especially items 1, 2 and 3.

This year, GTA NSW & ACT will not be hosting an Annual Conference due to ongoing Covid uncertainties. We will be continuing to strengthen our online offerings

through webinars, short anytime courses through the open learning portal, and events such as the STEM symposium. Towards the end of 2022, we investigate the viability of holding in-person events. If you are wanting to attend an in-person conference, allow me to recommend the AGTA Conference in Hobart held between 28 – 30 September <https://agta.asn.au/conf2022/program.php>. Shortly GTANSW & ACT will be offering a range of merit-based scholarships to attend the AGTA Conference.

I wish you every success for the remainder of Term 2 and hope this edition of the Geography Bulletin inspires thinking and either confirms your practice in the geography classroom or gives you a range of ideas to incorporate into your teaching of geography.

Best wishes, Susan  
Dr Susan Caldis, President GTA NSW & ACT | Chair AGTA

