

Queensland response to the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Geography*

September 2010

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Introduction

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), in partnership with Education Queensland (EQ), Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Geography* (the draft shape paper).¹ Queensland is positive and supportive of the notion of an Australian Curriculum that will provide consistent and explicit curriculum expectations across the nation.

This response provides a summary of the collated Queensland feedback from:

- representative committees of the QSA
- district and state review panels for geography
- QSA and Department of Education and Training (DET) nominees to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) national forum for the K–10 geography initial advice paper
- geography teachers
- the three school sectors, representing and advocating for 1400 EQ schools, 288 Catholic schools and 188 Independent schools.

Queensland's consultation identified a range of strengths, as well as issues and concerns, for ACARA's consideration when revising the draft shape paper.

The Queensland response is structured in the following way:

- a section identifying key strengths, issues and concerns
- a section-by-section analysis of the draft shape paper, based on the ACARA survey tool and including a "way forward" for each section.

¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2010, *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Geography*, ACARA, <www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Draft__Shape__AC_Geography21062010.pdf>.

1. Key strengths, issues and concerns

1.1 Strengths

The QSA, EQ, QCEC and ISQ agree that the draft shape paper shows the following strengths:

- the emphasis on inquiry-based learning as a means to integrate the organisation of learning in geography
- the explanation of geography as the “why of where”
- the use of “place”, “space” and “environment” to give coherence to geography as a school subject
- reference to comparison through a range of scales of study as an important part of geographical thinking and working
- clear aims written in language that is suitable for the audience and purpose of the shape paper
- the potential to establish common understandings of geographical concepts and terminology across Australia
- the use of the term “perspective” to describe geographical thinking and working — this provides strong coherence and definition to the discipline
- proposed local flexibility of curriculum design.

1.2 Issues and concerns

The following key issues and concerns have been identified for consideration in the revision of the draft shape paper:

- lack of cohesion between definitions of the concepts, the rationale, the organisation of learning and the scope and sequence
- lack of clarity in definitions of place, space and environment and the consequent lack of direction and shape for geography as a school subject
- lack of consistency in the application of the definition of geography
- definition of geography does not capture the active nature and intent of school geography.

Other issues are discussed in the following sections.

1.2.1 Cohesion

There is a lack of clarity in the described relationship between the definition, the analytical perspectives, the strands and the concepts and skills outlined in the proposed scope and sequence.

Way forward

Revise the draft so that there are consistency and clear relationships between the definition of geography, the rationale, the strands and the proposed scope and sequence. For example, use such phrases as:

Geography is ...

Therefore, the benefit of studying geography is ...

Consequently, geographical knowledge is ... and then

Geographical understanding describes ...

Geographical skills work, or working geographically, includes ...

A geographical inquiry includes ...

1.2.2 Audience and purpose

The shape paper serves two purposes. First, it provides the educational community and the wider community with an answer to the questions:

- What is geography?
- What is geography's contribution to the education of young people?

Second, it is a brief for writers.

For both of these purposes, the document should be expressed in plain English so that it provides:

- clarity for non-specialist teachers
- clear direction on the shape of the geography curriculum
- reinforcement of the active, future-focused, practical nature of the subject.

The most powerful description of geography as a subject is often the concluding sentence in the paragraphs. The framing of paragraphs in an argumentative style hinders readability and thus clarity of message.

In general, the length of sentences and the over-reliance on academic or abstract language disconnects this draft shape paper from both of its intended audiences.

Way forward

The revision of the draft shape paper should:

- use language suitable for the broad audience of the shape paper
- feature a structure in which each paragraph starts with a strong expository sentence that provides a vision for geography as a school subject.

1.2.3 Integrated conceptual framework

In Queensland, geography has been delivered and assessed through the integrated framework of the key learning area Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE). This framework has provided teachers and students with opportunities to explore topics and issues through the conceptual lenses of:

- place and space
- time, continuity and change
- political and economic systems
- culture and identity.

This integration allows flexibility, which is particularly important in the primary years of schooling.

Way forward

- Provide clarity about how the concepts and approaches of geography could be integrated in a framework with the primary years of schooling.
- State how geography is linked to other learning areas.
- Align geography content with content in other subjects.

1.2.4 Implementation issues

The approaches outlined in the *geographical inquiry and skills* strand will require a degree of specialist knowledge of the discipline that is not currently available in K–10 context in Queensland.

Way forward

- Clarify the approaches and their links to inquiry and skills.
- Restate approaches as the “big ideas” of geography or geographical understandings.

2. Section-by-section analysis

2.1 Rationale

2.1.1 *Strengths*

- The “why of where” is a powerful way of describing geographical studies in school.
- “Place” is explained very clearly.
- The rationale is coherent and clearly identifies priorities for student learning. The case for geography is well argued. The aims for the study of geography are comprehensive and supportive of the rationale.

2.1.2 *Issues and concerns*

Definition

The definition of geography is narrow in focus. The focus on the term “places” limits the contribution of geography to the education of young people to a series of case studies. This reflects an antiquated notion of “capes and bays” geography. To understand a sense of place, first the geographical concept of space must be defined. The primacy of space as a concept is what distinguishes geography. Space is fundamental to the “why of where”. It is how students of geography work. The transformation of space into place is the “how” of geography as a school subject. In summary, students arrive at a sense of place through the analysis and evaluation of space and the observation and discovery of the characteristics and processes of the social, natural and built environment.

Explanation of space and environment

A detailed explanation of how space and systems/environment work as concepts would be beneficial and provide cohesion with the strand *geographical knowledge and understanding*.

Links between mapping, space and working geographically

Mapping and cartography are key elements of working geographically; children work with simple maps from K onwards in representing their three-dimensional worlds in a two-dimensional way. Space as a major concept captures the ideas of the “here and there” and the “near and far”, which are central to the immediate and vicarious experiences of young children. Space is about the relationships and connections between places and between the elements within places.

Active nature of the subject

A vital element of geography is the currency of the subject matter and the future focus of geographical thinking. While this currency of subject matter is referred to, it is not highlighted in the rationale. The emphasis and detailed explanation of places in the rationale builds a picture of geography as a descriptive subject and does not capture the active, future focus of the subject.

Geography is the study of phenomena across the surface of the earth; the word “phenomena” captures the sense of awe and wonder that geography can engender in students.

Dictionary definitions of “phenomenon” include:

- any state or process that we know through the senses rather than by intuition or reasoning
- a perceptible aspect of something that is mutable
- a fact or event considered very unusual, curious or astonishing by those who witness it
- a wonderful or very remarkable person or thing.

Language

The language of the definition of geography is quite general and in some places is quite abstract. For example, paragraph 6 (page 5) refers to general processes and order and diversity being equally important concepts in the discipline. This statement moves the shape document away from clearly articulating what geography is to a much less definitive position. The concepts of order and diversity, while part of geographical analysis, are not distinct to the discipline. The explanation of place dependency is very general and does not provide clear shape for geography as a subject. Place dependency is not common terminology in the early years and primary phases.

Way forward

- Define both space and environment with the same level of detail and understanding as provided for places. Define and distinguish between the concepts of place, space and environment.
- Explain space and environment to align with the operational sense in which they are used in the organisation of learning (proposed strands) and the scope and sequence.
- Outline what the scales of study are in the “What is geography?” section and explain how they are used in geography.
- Expand the scale of places (paragraph 2, page 4) to encompass local, regional, national and global, and explain how multi-scalar comparison is used in geography.
- Retain paragraphs 1, 2, and 5.
- Delete paragraphs 3, 4, 6 and 7 — they do not add anything to the definition of geography as a school subject.
- Provide a broader, more contemporary definition of place with inclusive examples.
- Identify the higher-order thinking skills students acquire in geographical inquiry.
- Refer to spatial technologies in the aims of the K (P)–12 geography curriculum.

The use of the term environment

The term “environment” is confined to the biophysical. This limits the scope of this term. The footnoted explanation (page 4) further confuses what is meant by environment. To distinguish between built, natural and biophysical environments in some places and not in others is not helpful for the reader. In general, geographical knowledge and understanding does not privilege the elements of the biophysical environment. The footnote highlights that environment has a range of meanings. As a school subject, there needs to be consistent use of the terms “built”, “social”, “natural” and “physical” so that it is clear which specific environment is being referred to. National and international syllabuses use the term “environment” in a general sense to mean surroundings. It is the characteristics of those surroundings that students of geography focus on.

Way forward

- Use the terms “built”, “social” and “natural” to clarify which features of the environment are being referred to.

Integration of physical geography and human geography

Geography has traditionally provided opportunities for students to explore the physical aspects and interactions of landscape and the amenity and the aesthetic of landscape. This is crucial to the development of “why care” values in students, as well as being an engaging aspect of geographical study. This is an important element of stewardship. The Queensland SOSE Essential Learnings have instilled in students an understanding of sustainability and a capacity for stewardship in their interactions with the environment. The draft shape paper’s emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between humans and environments is inconsistent.

Way forward

- Balance and integrate human and physical geography across the learning area, particularly in K (P)–10.
- Revise the draft shape paper to ensure there is a balance in the emphasis between:
 - how humans shape the land
 - the impact of the landscape or environment on human activity.

Contribution of comparisons through different scales of study

The focus on the importance of comparisons through a range of scales of study is important.

Places are more than local and global (page 4); they are examined through a range of scales of study (local, regional, national and global). It is this international, outward-looking focus that makes geography a subject for the 21st century. It is the interaction of place, space and environment (systems thinking) through a range of scales that makes geography unique and most clearly makes the case for geography’s contribution to the education of young people.

Way forward

- Reorder the paragraphs to emphasise space: 8, 11, 12, 9, 10 then 13.
- Emphasise the world, global and international views that studying geography brings.

2.2 What does geography contribute to the development of the cross-curricular dimensions and the general capabilities?

2.2.1 Strengths

- The contribution of geography to the general capabilities, as outlined, conveys the strength of the subject in terms of a 21st century curriculum.
- The ways in which geography contributes to enhancing students’ capacity to use spatial technologies and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are effectively outlined.

2.2.2 Issues and concerns

Indigenous history and culture

In this section there is a broad claim that “Indigenous knowledge traditions have enriched geography as a discipline within the Western knowledge tradition”.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems enrich geography through connections to country, through language and kinship, and through descriptions of land,

sea, stars and songlines. These connections add another lens through which to look at the world and the environment that goes beyond place. It is important in the decision-making element of geography that students have the opportunity to learn that there are many ways of understanding the “why of where” that are not predetermined by Western ideas of ownership and interaction with land.

The use of the term “tradition” does not capture the ongoing and dynamic nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.

Field work provides opportunities to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities’ protocols and to acknowledge traditional owners of the land.

Way forward

- Change “Indigenous knowledge traditions have enriched geography as a discipline within the Western knowledge tradition” to “Indigenous knowledge systems **can enrich** students’ study of geography”.
- Refer to the practical engagement of geography students with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when on field work (i.e. following protocols such as acknowledgment of custodians and traditional owners of land, welcome to country and acknowledgment of country).

Sustainability

Geography’s contribution to sustainability is an important one. It would be captured with more substance if the focus in the definition of “environment” was on the reciprocity of human–environment relations. It is not only the human–environment relations in particular places that geographers are interested in studying, but the connections between places and our connections and relationships to places. Paragraph 19 (page 7) would benefit from a discussion of geography’s contribution to the active notion of living well in a place and decision making. UNESCO’s “four pillars” of sustainability have strong links to decision making in geography. Systems thinking, particularly with its relationship with sustainability, is valuable in active decision making and active citizenship — a key contribution of geography as a school subject. Systems thinking should be explained in plain English for the general audience of the shape paper. Sustainability could be more explicitly captured in the strands or proposed organisation of learning. The final sentence in paragraph 19 (page 8) refers to issues and policies — this is a passive approach to sustainability. A central tenet of school geography is students taking action and making decisions.

Way forward

- Refer to behaviours and actions as well as policies.
- Restructure the paragraph to begin:
A geographical perspective leads to conclusions about how and why sustainability issues vary from place to place, and enables students to appreciate why different policies, behaviours and actions may be needed in different places.
- Thread sustainability throughout the whole shape paper.

Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia

The draft shape paper does provide direction in terms of the contribution of geography to Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia. The emphasis on developing students’ capacity to take action is positive. In terms of Australia’s engagement with Asia, the opportunities to focus study on connections and relationships and the concept of interdependence are underemphasised.

Way forward

- Restructure the paragraph to begin:

Geography helps students to think about whether Australia is a part of Asia, or a separate world region with connections to both Asia and the Pacific.
- Include a reference to how a geographical perspective enables students to think of the world in spatial terms that are not European or Western in origin.
- Change references from Oceania to Pacific — this is a more common frame of reference for teachers.
- Explain how a geographical perspective can deepen students' understanding of Asia and Australia's relationship with Asia.

Literacy, numeracy and ICT

The contribution of geography to these general capabilities is significant, but the explanations do not always capture the potential of school geography to maximise active and participatory approaches and ICT learning experiences.

For literacy, there is no mention of reading and viewing or of comprehending, interpreting, inferring and evaluating a range of texts, including field notes, diagrams and visual images. The contribution of geography to the education of young people is not outlined.

The numeracy paragraphs are supported.

The ICT paragraph provides a strong direction, but a reference to the particular applications of spatial and locational technologies as a link to the concepts and perspectives of space, environment and place would be beneficial when describing the direction of geography in the 21st century.

Way forward

- Focus on vocabulary and terminology specific to geography, in particular words and terms used to describe place and landscape, to build spatial awareness and to develop spatial analysis.
- Delete reference to the study of poetry, novels, etc. (paragraph 22, page 8). They might be used as examples of how landscape can be described, but the study of poetry and novels is not a requirement for the study of geography. Change to "Resources such as novels and poetry can be useful in stimulating students ...". This is a stronger way of expressing it.
- Emphasise geography's link to visual and spatial literacies. Outline the benefits of visual and spatial literacy.
- Expand the explanation of graphicacy, given that part of geography's distinct contribution to the education of young people is visual literacy and the ability to read, interpret, analyse, evaluate and represent spatial data from observations and measurement. For example:

Graphicacy is the ability to understand and present information in the form of sketches, photographs, diagrams, maps, plans, charts, graphs and other non-textual, two-dimensional formats. The information conveyed can be directly representative of what we see (as in photographs or drawings) or more abstract — for example, information which is spatial (as in maps, plans and diagrams) or numerical (as in tables and graphs). A certain level of graphicacy is assumed of the adult population nowadays, as demonstrated by the widespread use of graphics in newspapers, television programmes, instruction manuals and government information leaflets aimed at the general public.

Graphics offer three major advantages in comparison to text. Firstly, they are concise: a photograph can set a scene immediately (e.g. the Empire State building towering above the Manhattan skyline). Secondly, they are memorable: when Londoners are asked what line Oxford Circus is on, they generally visualise the tube map. Thirdly, they make relationships within the information readily apparent, not only spatial relationships (as with a map showing major cities in a country, or a diagram showing how to measure stream flow) but also non-spatial relationships (as in a table showing population figures). (Source: Aldrich, F & Sheppard, L 2000, "Graphicacy: the fourth 'R'?" *Primary Science Review*, 64, pp. 8–11.)
- Refer to geography's contribution to empower students through their ability to communicate in visual, written and spoken forms about events and phenomena that impact on lifestyle choices.

- Expand on the types of written texts — as field work is an important component of geography, the relevant forms of written texts would be observation (recorded using diagrams, sketches and texts), commentary on observation, and field work and diary notes. This would be a helpful direction for writers and the broader educational community.
- Focus on text types, e.g. narratives, explanations, reports, procedures, expositions and recounts, and a range of forms, including multimedia, visual and print.

Creativity

The draft shape paper presents a narrow view of creativity.

Way forward

Examine a variety of sources, e.g. how geography helps students:

- think laterally, see new relationships and identify new connections and combinations
- be playful with ideas, materials and language
- feel comfortable and confident to take risks that result in new discoveries or ways of knowing
- imagine and envision possibilities, options and new questions or challenges.

Thinking skills

The reference to the contestability of knowledge (paragraph 29, page 10) is a powerful expression of how students of geography focus on current events. It captures the subject's emphasis on future-focused thinking. There is a very general description of how reflection works, but no real insight into how reflection might work in geography.

Way forward

- Remove reference to the *Thinking Through Geography* program (paragraph 29, page 9) and state what the contribution of geography is.
- Expand on the exact nature of geographical reflection.

Other general capabilities

The following general capabilities are well handled:

- ethical behaviour
- intercultural understanding
- social competence
- self-management and teamwork.

There is room for an increased emphasis on the active nature and intent of geographical studies. Students should be encouraged to act ethically when caring for, and investigating, places and people.

Way forward

- Recognise that social competence and teamwork are developed through field work, planning, decision making and action — key elements of working and thinking geographically.
- Outline how field work operates in geography.
- Add working with people and places to the final sentence of this paragraph.

2.3 How is the geography curriculum organised?

2.3.1 Strengths

- There is strong support for the integration of the strands through inquiry-based learning.
- The strands as proposed are practical and consistent with the first-phase subjects.
- Geographical skills and methods communicate clear expectations of students.

2.3.2 Issues and concerns

Geographical knowledge and understanding

The draft shape paper describes four key elements of geographical knowledge and understanding: facts, generalisations, principles and explanatory frameworks. It is not clear how these four key elements work together to provide a structure for geographical knowledge and understanding. The draft shape paper makes reference to the approaches in paragraph 47 (page 13). These seem to be the explanatory frameworks referred to in the strand *geographical knowledge and understanding*. The concepts do not stand alone as the “big ideas” in geography or provide a way to geographical understanding.

The reference in paragraph 43 (page 12) to the vertical structure does not provide a sense of direction or clarity about the proposed organisation of the curriculum.

The notion of multi-scalar comparison captures geographical thinking, but is not emphasised or mentioned until paragraph 52 (page 14). Comparison across and through a scale of study is a vital part of how to think geographically.

The discussion around the three analytical perspectives is useful, and links can be made to the Essential Learnings in Queensland. However, the description of how these analytical perspectives work is really a description of geographical inquiry.

The phrase “individual characteristics of places” in paragraph 42 (page 12) is limiting. This flows from the restrictions of the original definition.

Way forward

- Provide order to the geographical concepts, explaining their links to the approaches and how they work in curriculum development.
- Incorporate the approaches in the strand *geographical knowledge and understanding*. These capture how students of school geography understand and organise information.
- Link the concepts with the approaches and include in the strand *geographical knowledge and understanding*.
- Explain how the key concepts are distinguished and link to the analytical perspectives (place, space and environment)
- Explain and foreground the spatial perspective: outline what a spatial perspective and spatial analysis enable students to do.
- Use terminology consistently. For example, place, space and environment are referred to as “concepts”, “themes” and “perspectives”.
- Rephrase spatial perspectives to:
Geographers using this perspective study how the phenomena or the social, built and natural characteristics of environments vary across the surface of the earth.

Geographical inquiry and skills

Geographical inquiry and skills are structured around three components. The first is identifying the questions arising from students’ observation, discovery and explanation of

their world. The second is the methodology and skills of geographical inquiry, and the third is the approaches used to understand a study.

Geographical inquiry is described as central to school geography; however, it is explained in very general terms. The emphasis is on the collection of information rather than on analysis, synthesis, evaluation and decision making. The way in which students of geography communicate their findings and represent information is an important part of the contribution of geography. The description of methods and skills as “starting with a collection of information ... variety of classroom resources” is a passive statement and does not capture the active nature of geographical inquiry.

There is insufficient detail in the outline of skills and methodologies. Field work is an important component, yet it is not defined or described.

Representation of geographical information and communication are particular aspects of geography as a school subject. They are currently subsumed and therefore undervalued in the skills paragraph.

Way forward

- Clearly describe geographical inquiry.
- Define each phase or component of *geographical inquiry and skills* in a way that provides unity to the discipline.
- Develop a diagram that describes specific elements of geographical inquiry, such as:
 - identify the phenomena or characteristics of the environment
 - analyse through the perspectives proposed
 - identify the impacts or consequences of human activity on landscape and vice versa
 - synthesise by identifying patterns and processes
 - evaluate the impacts of human activity on landscape
 - evaluate the impacts of landscape on human activity
 - make decisions
 - reflect on learning.
- Delete the sentence “These start with the collection ...” (paragraph 45, page 12).
- Restructure *geographical inquiry and skills* so the focus is on the three analytical perspectives. This provides a geographical integrity to an inquiry.
- Move the described approaches to *geographical knowledge and understanding*.
- Define and explain the role of the approaches.
- Remove the local interaction approach from the described approaches and combine the local interaction approach with the spatial interaction approach.
- Provide a clearer progression for geographical skills using geographical inquiry as the framework.
- Separate the representation and communication of information. These are important elements that provide the shape of geography as a school subject and should be covered in a separate paragraph.
- Link the analytical perspectives and the major concepts, in line with the integrated framework K–10 teachers are familiar with.

2.4 How is learning organised?/Suggested scope and sequence

2.4.1 Strengths

- The scope and sequence supports the idea of the development of a curriculum for geography across the years K–10.
- The organisation through the three analytical perspectives is effective.

- There is strong support for the view that no year in geography learning should be exclusively about Australia or focused outside Australia.
- The Bonnett quote (paragraph 48, page 13) articulates very well how geography works as a school subject. Paragraph 52 (page 14) is a useful description of how the geography curriculum is organised.
- The reference to avoiding prescribing case studies (paragraph 53, page 14) is beneficial; however, a proposed balance between local, Australian and global case studies would be a useful direction for curriculum writers.
- The reference to topical and current events (paragraph 56, p. 15) is important and should be foregrounded in the conversation about how a scope and sequence could be planned.

2.4.2 *Issues and concerns*

Spiral curriculum

Each phase of learning is confined to a single curriculum focus: K–2, geographical awareness; Years 3–4, conducting geographical investigations; and Years 5–6, becoming geographically involved. Geographical inquiry involves a spiralling approach to these elements across all phases of learning.

Abstract explanation of curriculum organisation

The explanation of how the curriculum might be organised is quite dense. It is currently a mix of a very broad description of geographical inquiry and confusing reference to vertical and horizontal organisation. It is not clear how paragraph 50 (page 14) explains the way a scope and sequence could be organised or how it relates to the suggested scope and sequence outlined in the draft shape paper.

Inconsistent approach to the ordering and integration of geographical concepts

There is an inconsistent approach in the order of major concepts outlined in the scope and sequence. Some concepts are introduced for the first time without there being a clear relationship to the three analytical perspectives or explanation provided in the rationale and aims.

The relationships between the concepts, the approaches and the inquiry skills are unclear in the scope and sequence. The logic of progression attached to year levels is not always evident.

Way forward

- Remove the reference to curriculum focus and maintain the description of students in the particular phases of learning.
- Provide a clear statement of how school geography is organised in the scope and sequence.
- Give direction to how content and case studies could be organised. For example, by the end of each phase of learning, studies should focus on local, national and global. This emphasis is shared through comparison of the scales of study.
- Provide advice about planning to avoid the repetition of case studies.
- Add a glossary to define and describe unfamiliar terms and concepts.

Differentiation of content

The suggested scope and sequence uses content descriptions that are very broad, and the identified overlaps with science are repetitive rather than being identifiably geographical.

Way forward

- Describe the distinctive contribution of geography to the study of phenomena in proposed or suggested content descriptions.

Years K–2

The statement “play is a central part of learning” (paragraph 60, page 16) is very important but is not developed. There needs to be more specific information to capture the spirit of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, what features are arranged in space, what is the landscape, what are the landforms (near and far, here and there)?

The examples of possible content are quite limited and it is unclear how decisions were made in selecting the major concepts. The concepts do not seem to align with the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding. For example, students will need to understand the concept of resources to investigate the resources of the environment. While children can begin to develop understandings about location, direction and distance, these are challenging concepts — particularly distance, except in a basic sense of near and far.

K–2 children also learn through investigation and real-life situations.

Way forward

- Expand how play works in geography. For example:
 - Play is an important context for building knowledge and understanding, inquiry skills and positive dispositions. It also develops creativity, complex thinking skills, self management, teamwork, intercultural understanding, ethical behaviour and social competence. For example, when engaging in constructive play, children use and develop understandings about the spatial aspects of their environments as they construct with sand, blocks, modelling and junk materials. Through physical play, children move in, through and within spaces as they develop an awareness of their environments. They can also engage in planning and representing ways to set up play environments (e.g. new indoor spaces or obstacle courses). Through imaginative play, children test out ideas about locations, features of environments, the weather, the influence of the environment on their behaviours and the influence of their behaviours on their environments.
- Include forms of supported field investigation in familiar environments, such as observation and documentation through digital photography, sketching, and constructing simple diagrams and maps.
- Define the aspects of location, direction and distance.
- Check alignment with mathematics and science and signal the emphasis that a geographer’s eye view brings to students’ knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Add:
 - Knowledge and understanding
 - Impact people have on their environment (e.g. clearing land for a shopping centre; building or changing aspects of their school environment; impact of rubbish on playground or local creek)
 - Impact the environment has on behaviour (e.g. weather conditions affect what clothes they wear or activities they do; rivers that flood or dry up; spaces to play particular games; places they can go to; types of landform that they can experience in their area)
 - Concepts
 - Natural and built environments
 - Sustainability
 - Investigating the resources and features of the biophysical environment
 - Investigating the resources and features of the built environment
 - Skills
 - Planning (e.g. where/how to investigate, represent learning)
 - Comparing (similarities and differences)
 - Representing (e.g. constructing digital images, sketches and simple diagrams, including making and using simple plans and maps)
 - Interpreting (e.g. simple maps, diagrams, images, oral and written text, and using images, maps and globes)

Years 3–6

The introduction of concepts needs to be carefully aligned with the progression and engagement of students in this phase of learning. The draft shape paper identifies the key concepts in geography as being: place, location, space, environment, interaction, systems, scale, time, landscape, nature, globalisation, development and risk (paragraph 38, page 11). Some new concepts are introduced in the scope and sequence with no explanation of how they work in geography. These new concepts are identified as major concepts in the scope and sequence, for example, order in K–2, centrality and remoteness, similarity and diversity in Years 3–4. Further, some of these new concepts are not necessarily identifiable as geographical. This does not make the case for geography as a school subject nor does it enlighten the generalist teacher about what possible content might look like. The rationale behind including these concepts at this phase of learning is not clear. An explanation of the relationship between the concepts listed in the scope and sequences with the major concepts outlined in *geographical knowledge and understanding* would be helpful.

In addition, the concepts are described as part of *geographical knowledge and understanding*. Separating the concepts does not build a cohesive picture of the subject.

Way forward

- Review the major concepts listed in the proposed scope and sequence.
- Build a glossary of terms and concepts in geography.
- Explain how the concepts listed relate to one another and the major concepts. This could be done in *geographical knowledge and understanding*.
- Incorporate the major concepts in the strand *geographical knowledge and understanding*.

Years 7–10

The proposed geographical knowledge and understanding in Years 7–10 is heavily weighted towards economic geography. Students in these years can become disengaged from schooling; it is likely that this proposed content will reinforce this disengagement.

Way forward

- Remove the multiple references to the economy.
- Expand how sport, tourism, surfing, retail and popular culture can be examined through the analytical perspectives of space, place and environment.

2.5 The senior secondary years

2.5.1 Strengths

- The continuation of the strands through to the senior phase of learning is a sound strategy.

2.5.2 Issues and concerns

- The analytical perspectives (place, space and environment) are described as themes in the senior secondary years. This presents an inconsistent view of how learning is organised from K–10.
- Geographical inquiry is described as a particular strand; therefore it is counterintuitive to have a separate unit on geographical inquiry.
- There is a lack of flexibility attached to the proposed unit structure. This will impact on composite classes in Queensland.

Way forward

- “Place”, “space” and “environment” should remain as the three core perspectives and not be described as themes.
- Use terminology consistently when describing how learning is organised.
- Review the lock-step approach of four units to incorporate some curriculum flexibility.
- Consider focusing senior courses on thematic geography, underpinned by the analytical perspectives (the how). Some suggestions for thematic choices in the senior phase of learning that would capture the contemporary nature of geography are:
 - urban design
 - connecting and sustaining communities
 - political and ethnic geography
 - population and environmental change
 - behavioural geography
 - geography of the global
 - cultural landscapes
 - architecture
 - neogeographies
 - remote sensing and geographic information systems (most first-year university courses have this as a unit because of the strong career skill component)
 - geographies of development
 - environmental change policy and law
 - geographies of cities; living in cities
 - the climate system
 - global climate change and biodiversity
 - social geography and planning
 - regional geography and planning
 - environmental planning, management and sustainability
 - marine and coastal planning and management
 - environmental geomorphology of coasts and rivers
 - climate dynamics and climate change policy
 - planning and mobility, place and identity
 - biogeography and environmental change.

These are suggestions only but are strongly linked to career pathways that students of geography may take.

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