

# School library links with the year 9 geography curriculum

By Dr Robin Zeidler

## Snapshot

Robin Zeidler explores the excellent opportunities provided to showcase library initiatives, skills and curation when teaching year 9 geography.

## Introduction

Each of the three teacher-librarians in the secondary school at Melbourne Grammar school, teaches a timetabled subject, resulting in an excellent opportunity for collaboration with teaching staff in a specific subject area. This paper explores the Year 9 Geography curriculum which I have taught for many years and the strong relationship between the library and the Geography department. Library staff have designed two LibGuides in Term 2, 2020 to support the two units in Year 9 Geography which is taught as a semester core subject each year. These two LibGuides will be outlined in this paper to illustrate the collaborative nature of the library and teaching.

I have been Director of Library Services at MGS for 11 years and have taught Year 11, Year 12 and Year 9 Geography during these years. Since I am transitioning to retirement this year, I have the role of teacher-librarian while Di Ruffles, President of SLAV, is now the Director of Library Services.

The teaching component of our roles is essential and includes participating in department and faculty meetings, attending subject professional development as well as PD related to libraries, preparation and marking of student work, maintaining the subject LMS, attending parent-teacher-student evenings, exam setting and marking as well as writing subject and tutor group reports.

## Geography as a subject discipline

The rationale of the Geography curriculum presents

a structured way of exploring, analysing and understanding the characteristics of the places that make up our world, using the concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. (VCAA. *Victorian Curriculum Foundation – 10 Geography*).

Geography as a discipline integrates the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. Aspects of Geography, including spatial thinking and increasingly, the use of geospatial technologies, encourage student learning and application of distinctive STEM skills. Students develop a sense of wonder, curiosity and respect for places, cultures and environments at various scales: global, national, regional and local. Importantly, students are encouraged to think geographically by using the geographic concepts listed above (VCAA. *Victorian Curriculum Foundation - 10 Geography*).

# The school library making a difference to geography teaching

How can the school library valuably make a difference to the teaching of the Victorian Geography curriculum and student learning?

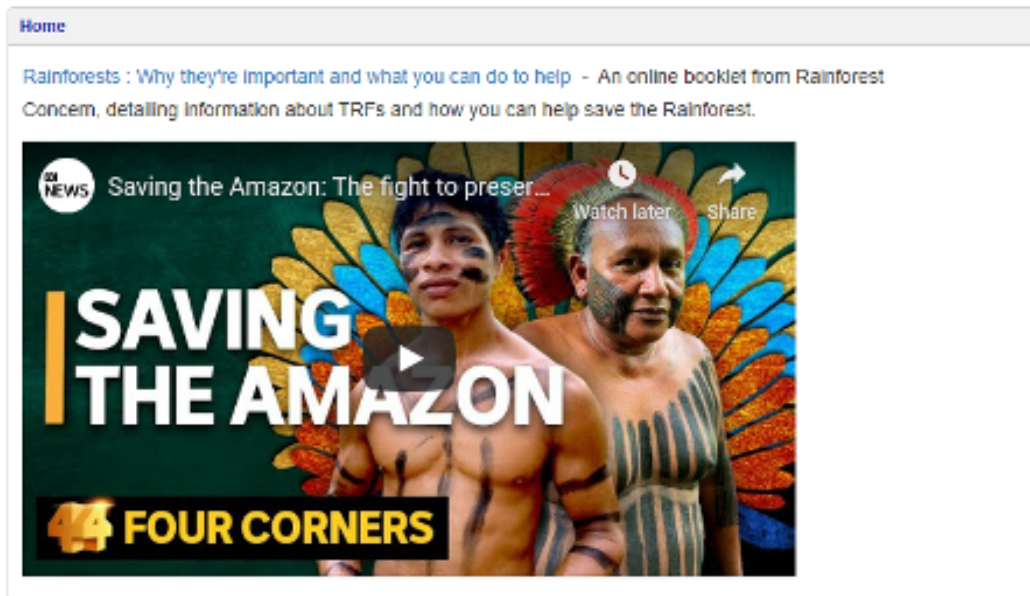
As a teacher of Geography and teacher-librarian the synchronicity between the subject and the library is obvious as well as both creative and fulfilling. Inquiry learning and evidence-based pedagogy form the basis of Geography as a subject and dovetail with the research method

**Inquiry learning and evidence-based pedagogy form the basis of Geography as a subject and dovetail with the research method adopted by teacher-librarians...**

adopted by teacher-librarians, the information process (define, locate, select, organise, present, assess) and information literacy skills. The library-technician, Megan Nasir, in consultation with me as the Geography teacher/teacher-librarian, devised two LibGuides in Term 2, 2020 for the two units of study at Year 9 Geography. Screen shots of sections of the LibGuides will be included, for example this one on 'What is Geography?'



Geography at Year 9 level, which I have been teaching for the past five years, has two units of study: *Biomes and food security* and *Geographies of interconnections*, both of which focus on investigation and key inquiry questions. Biomes and food security focuses on investigating the role of the biotic environment and its role in food and fibre production (VCAA. *Victorian Curriculum Foundation - 10 Geography*). Students explore the biomes of the world, with an in-depth study of tropical rainforests, their characteristics and the changes that often occur as a result of human impacts.



What is the importance of biomes as a source of food? What are the environmental challenges and constraints for expanding food production in the future? Biomes, food production and food security/food insecurity are investigated at various scales, using case studies from Australia and around the world. Land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve food security are studied. How can a global population of 9 billion obtain food security for the year 2030?

## Inquiry learning and skill progression

Student work centres on these questions with inquiry learning and the information process at the forefront, a tight fit with teacher-librarian skills. Students of Geography observe, question and plan by identifying and applying appropriate geographical methodologies and concepts. They collect, record, evaluate and represent geographical data and information using ethical protocols in tandem with primary and secondary sources. Moreover, students interpret and analyse qualitative and quantitative data to explain patterns, trends, relationships and anomalies. They then present their findings, reflect and respond by evaluating the results of the inquiry and propose action or a response to a geographical challenge. This is followed by predicting the outcomes and consequences of any proposal (Easton, pp.14-34).

**Student work centres on these questions with inquiry learning and the information process at the forefront, a tight fit with teacher-librarian skills.**

There is a definite progression in geographical concepts and skills from F – 2 (describe and explain where places and activities are located) continuing to Years 9 – 10 with higher order thinking. Some more advanced thinking skills include identifying, analysing and explaining significant spatial distributions and patterns and identifying and evaluating their implications, over time and at different scales. Students evaluate alternative views on a geographical challenge and strategies to address this challenge, such as ensuring global food security (VCAA. *Victorian Curriculum Foundation – 10 Geography*).

Home

**Food Security**, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

The International Food Policy Research Institute has a Food Security Portal which provides up-to-date data and information about dynamic developments in the world food system.

821 million people - more than 1 in 9 of the world population - do not get enough to eat

Percentage of undernourished in the total population (based on 2018-19)

Image Attribution: World Food Program Hunger Map 2019

## Further investigation

Year 9 Unit 2 Geography studies the Geographies of interconnections. It focuses on investigating how people are connected to the world, the relationships between both natural and human aspects together with the concept of change as a result of interconnections. The two strands of *Geographical knowledge and understanding* and *Geographical inquiry and skills* are interrelated and integrated throughout the unit of study. Some key inquiry questions in the *Australian Curriculum, Geography F – 10* include:

- What are the causes and consequences of change of places and environments and how can this change be managed?
- What are the future implications of changes to places and environments?
- Why are interconnections and interdependencies important for the future of places and environments?
- What environmental, economic and social measures have on trade and the movement of goods and services at all scales?
- What are the strategies used to enhance the liveability of places, especially for young people, including examples from Australia and Europe?

In this unit again, the geographical inquiry and skills relate to library information literacy skills and the research process encouraged in school libraries. Such geographical inquiry and skills include observing, questioning and planning; collecting, recording, evaluating and representing in a geographical format; interpreting, analysing and concluding; communicating; and, reflecting and responding (*Australian Curriculum, Geography F – 10*).

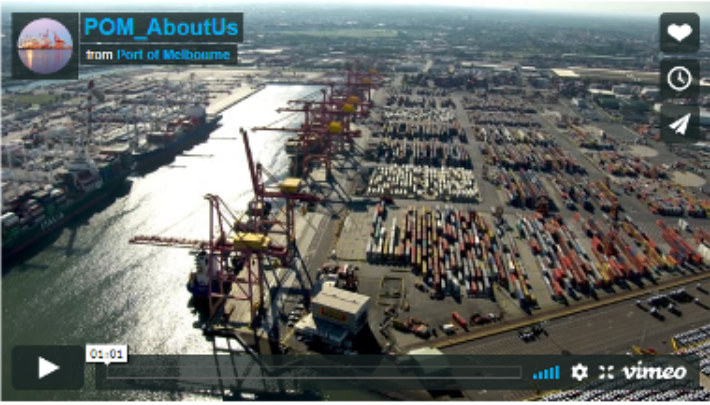


# Fieldwork

Melbourne Grammar School Geography teachers take Year 9 students to the Port of Melbourne as part of the *Geographies of interconnections* unit. The excursion is conducted over two half days to cater for the entire year level cohort to study the research question, 'What is the importance of the Port of Melbourne?' Students collect primary and secondary data and write a fieldwork report in order to answer the hypothesis, 'The Port of Melbourne is important to individuals, companies and other countries at different scales.' Fieldwork occurs at all year levels as a compulsory requirement of the Geography curriculum.

**About the Port of Melbourne (PoM)**

The **Port of Melbourne** is Australasia's largest maritime hub for containerised, automotive and general cargo. It is a key economic asset for businesses and people across Victoria and south-eastern Australia. Watch the short video below to understand more about PoM and its connection to the national economy.




POM\_AboutUs from Port of Melbourne on Vimeo.


A study of interconnections in globalisation, tourism and migration, all of which are included in the LibGuide, complete Unit 2 the *Geographies of interconnections*.

**Global Trading**

Think like a Global Citizen  
**Trade**



Geographies of Interconnections  
**Global Connections through Trade**



The World Trade Organization (WTO). The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. Find out more about the **WTO in brief**.

The World Trade Organization by David Collins  
Call Number: 362.92 OOL  
ISBN: 9781780145787

**Australian Tourism and Statistics**

Tourism Australia Website - Statistics. Find interactive graphs about Market Performance, Aviation and Accommodation statistics. View an Infograph on The Value of Tourism 2019 and read about the Economic Importance of Tourism. Download and view maps: Australian Visitor map and Travel Safety in Australia map.

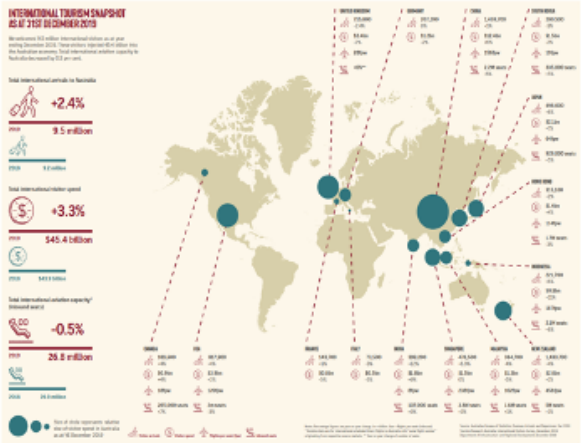


Image Attribution: International Tourism Snapshot 2019

Tourism Research Australia provides statistics and research on both international and domestic tourism within Australia. They also provide research and analysis on the economic value of tourism to the economy. Their data assists the government, tourism industry and other Australian businesses to make informed planning, marketing and investment decisions.

## Conclusion

At Melbourne Grammar School there is strong collaboration amongst Geography teachers and teacher-librarians, especially as one teacher-librarian has a Geography class and teaching allotment. Library staff follow the MGS curriculum handbooks and documentation on our LMS Canvas and Rubicon Atlas, to create research guides and LibGuides (which include in a one-stop resource of print, eBooks, journals and newspapers, ClickView and YouTube). This occurs for other subjects, such as English and History as Di Ruffles teaches Year 9 History. As subject teachers, we both attend subject department meetings, weekly meetings for Year 9 Geography teachers and respective subjects, and Humanities faculty meetings.

As stated earlier, there is well developed collaboration and interdependency between the Library and Geography department for writing, producing and resourcing units of study over many years.

## References

ACARA. The Australian Curriculum, Geography F – 10.

Easton, Mark. (2016). *Oxford Big Ideas. Geography 9 Victorian Curriculum*. South Melbourne, Vic: OUP.

VCAA. Victorian Curriculum Foundation – 10 Geography.

***Dr Robin Zeidler*** is a Teacher-Librarian at The Nigel Peck Centre for Learning and Leadership At Melbourne Grammar School. She is also a member of the Synergy Board.

***Megan Nasir*** is a Library Technician at The Nigel Peck Centre for Learning and Leadership At Melbourne Grammar School.