



Geography Network of Expertise Newsletter #1

He waka eke noa

We're all in this together: Building capacity in the geography teaching community

Kia ora!

A very warm welcome – literally and metaphorically - to the beginning of the 2019 school year. This is the first of what we hope will be monthly updates on the Geography Network of Expertise [NEX] that has been established as the result of Ministry of Education funding 2019-2020.

As our logo at the top of this newsletter indicates, the NEX is a peer-to-peer approach to subject specialist collaboration. The overarching principles of the collaboration is **equity** and **excellence** for teachers of Year 11-13 geography. What might we mean by these two terms?

For geography teachers across Aotearoa/New Zealand, we hope that a greater level of equity in PLD provision can be achieved by providing opportunities for teachers who have found it difficult to access subject specific support based on their needs and requirements. This does not signify that an equal amount of PLD should be distributed to each and every individual. On the contrary, it highlights that support should be distributed based on the needs. For example, some individuals will not have a great need for PLD in some aspects, because they are pretty good at it already. Indeed, we hope that these folk put their hand up to be providers of PLD support themselves!

Some geography teachers, however, may not have had the subject specific support they are craving, because of, well...geography. Thus the principle of equity is very much looking to target those teachers who do not have easy access to the main centres, where much PLD activities take place. Now that web-based lines of communication such as Skype and Zoom are so common place, we hope that the 'tyranny of distance' can be overcome.

Does this mean that geography teachers in the urban centres will miss out if there is a pressing need for PLD support? Of course not. We hope to have at least something for everyone over the duration of the funding.

The second principle, excellence, speaks to the type of outcomes we want for teachers. We hope that this platform is an opportunity for geography teachers to share excellent pedagogical practice, excellent units of work, excellent assessment resources...you get the picture. If such goals are to be met, we have to come together and work as a collective: we

are all in this together to support quality teaching and learning in our geography classrooms.

So here's two key announcements to kick off the NEX year with:

1. **Jane Evans**, has been appointed Geography [kaiarāhi](#), 2019. Starting in March, Jane has been contracted to take national oversight of bringing together regional and local clusters of geography teachers. If you think you've heard Jane's name before you'd probably be right. Jane has been a longstanding BOGT member, and has had similar national subject advisor responsibilities in previous roles. If you recall fondly the NCEA Top Tip sheets on the web, well now you know who to thank. Some of you may also have used Jane's textbooks to support your teaching.

In next month's newsletter Jane will outline her intended approach to her role, including details of how to contact her for any pressing geography PLD you may require or be able to offer.

2. A dozen **G.I.S. Champions** from around the country will be converging on AUT's campus in early March to discuss their approaches to supporting teachers to implement GIS applications in their geography programmes. We have been bowled over by the awesomeness of experience that these people have had teaching GIS and/or supporting their colleagues in the recent past. We are confident that the workshops and support that they present later in the year will be of huge benefit. Year 11 take-up of GIS has been a growth point of school geography in the last decade, but we hope that this will flow into Year 12 and 13 programmes over the next few years as well.

What's worth reading?

On the theme of G.I.S, click below or chuck this into your search bar:

[WebGIS for Geography Education: Towards a GeoCapabilities Approach.](#)

The 2018 paper (written accessibly, with quality GIS screengrabs!) is open source from a geography education researcher from the IOE, London. It brings together GIS with the idea of 'powerful disciplinary knowledge' [PDK]. Debate about PDK has been recently described as one of the most significant debates in recent times for geography education.

Ka kite ano,

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