

## Geography PD Learning Online

A bit over a year ago the GTA launched its first online PD course. Since then, around 100 teachers have contributed to something that has become a superb community resource, full of interesting discussion and lesson ideas.

Here's a link to the course: <https://www.openlearning.com/ptc-nsw/courses/geography-101/>

Geography 101 - Concepts Part 1 is a 5-hour NESA accredited course on the Open Learning platform. For \$90 participants are guided through 3 of the 7 core Geography concepts: Place, Space and Environment.

A key part of the course is that participants contribute posts. These range from quick photos of places they love, to an idea for a "jigsaw" classroom activity about an environment of their choice.

Here are a couple of examples of participant posts:

### A special place to you

Share your image and an explanation of it.



"This is a cattle property I lived on. It's near Deepwater on the New England Plateau. We didn't work this land, but it was available to us to raise chickens and vegetables. We kept our horses here and rode these hills, helping with cattle. We watched the boom and bust of high seasonal rainfall and drought. It was scarred with the mistakes of previous generations but rehabilitated in parts with tree plantings and changes in fertilisation techniques and water treatment. Wide open land. A continuing resource and responsibility for the people who love this place."

Deborah Gisela Burkhardt

### A jigsaw activity on an environment

Create a setup, and instructions for two sub-groups



**Setup:** The mountains in the background of this image are part of folklore, an important cultural connection to the environment. The Chilean indigenous cultures have a perception that Atacameño folklore reflects the environment in which it is told.

**Sub-group 1:** Culture: "Arid, barren and inhospitable", this is a description of the Atacama desert. It seems an unlikely place for early human habitation. Surprisingly, human settlements in the Atacama can be traced back to over 6,000 years ago. Evidence of human activity goes back to more than 10,000 years ago. Known as the Atacameños, or the Licanantay, the descendants of these early settlers can still be found in the region, and form one of the nine recognised Indigenous peoples of Chile.

*Students should explore cultural connections to this environment. What are some key features?*

**Sub-group 2:** Economy: The rise of tourism in Atacama has created a new economic opportunity for the people living there. One of the benefits of tourism is that it stops the disintegration of traditional communities. Young people see that they don't need to migrate to the cities to find work because cultural tourism provides a viable means of economic support back in the villages where they came from.

*Students should investigate ways that traditional communities support their economies in Chile. How have they achieved this?*

*After completing their research, individuals from each of the sub-groups would come together to share their findings with each other.*

Tamara Cameron

The philosophy behind the course is a “pay-it-forward” approach to sharing. New participants are able to access and comment on all of the wonderful ideas shared by others previously. And their ideas may be commented on by future participants. A neat thing about registration is that it’s perpetual - when you get an email notification saying someone has commented on your post, you can hop back into the course and continue the conversation.

The vibe in the course is very positive and welcoming. And that allows teachers to extend themselves in consolidating their understanding of place, space and environment, and how these key concepts can be included in teaching programs.

Here are some comments from participants that demonstrate this vibe:

- “Excellent format & structure. And thanks to all the other participants, your ideas were wide-ranging and inspiring and I’ll be using quite a lot of them in my classes.”
- “Throughout this course I have reflected on how I incorporate different concepts into my classroom practice. On the whole, it is something I feel more equipped to teach now from a different perspective. I am excited to use some of the activities from this course and get students to think more in depth about what these concepts really mean in geographical settings. It will be a great addition to the first lesson back of the new school year!”
- “As an existing Geography teacher, I feel that I have learnt to better understand the layout of the new

syllabus. When you are on a full teaching load, it’s easy not to refer back to the syllabus when you have a program in front of you. I think that I better understand the link between the learning outcomes and concepts studied across KLA’s and applying learning activities to syllabus concepts.”

- “Doing this course has made me realise that I have to make activities relevant to the students I teach so they have more value; the skills become relatable to the environment we live in and the students develop knowledge of issues that they may hear discussed in the community. Because that is what teaching Geography is about - developing (in our students) an interest and concern for the environment they live in.”
- “I find programming a creative and technical task, and have struggled with confidently knowing I have developed an effective and engaging geography course. I now feel more technically confident to develop material using this concept based approach.”
- “This course has really informed my programming and practice. Looking forward to a course addressing the rest of the concepts.”

On that last point, the GTA are very pleased to announce that *Geography 102: Concepts Part 2* is now running. This course continues on from *Geo 101*, covering the remaining 4 core Geography concepts: Interconnection, Scale, Change and Sustainability.

*Geo 102* is also 5 hours of NESA accredited PD, and is \$90. We look forward to seeing you in the learning community at <https://www.openlearning.com/ptc-nsw/courses/geography102/>



**GTA NSW & ACT Facebook Page is used for major events and the general promotion of Geography at**  
<https://www.facebook.com/GTA.NSW/>

GTA NSW & ACT has two specific support groups\*:

- **Teachers of Senior Geography Group**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/841307156040600/>
- **Primary Geography Teachers Group**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/194177714663053/?ref=share>



\* Admission to these groups is on request and requires questions to be answered before approval is given.



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The Geography Teachers' Association of NSW & ACT

NEW

## GEOGRAPHY 102: CONCEPTS, PART 2

*A flexible, any where, any time online learning opportunity through Open Learning*

**Geographical concepts are a foundation for teaching Geography in NSW.**

**This professional development course, created by Dr. Paul Batten on behalf of the GTA NSW & ACT, examines four the seven key concepts from the Australian Curriculum Geography and NESA Geography Syllabus K–10.**

Skills developed in this course include:

- applying knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of Geography to develop engaging teaching activities (NESA Standard 2.1.2),
- participating in learning to update knowledge and practice targeted to professional needs and system priorities (NESA Standard 6.2.2) and,
- contributing to collegial discussions... to improve professional knowledge and practice (NESA Standard 6.3.2).

The course is designed for flexible delivery. Participants can start, progress and finish at times convenient to them. The focus of the course are text and image posts. Participants collaborate in a 'pay it forward' style with other teachers, engaging with previous contributions and creating their own posts, adding to the galleries of exemplars and case studies for future

**Cost: \$90 – Register at <https://www.openlearning.com/ptc-nsw/courses/geography102/>  
For further information about this course contact – [gta.elearning@gmail.com](mailto:gta.elearning@gmail.com)**

### **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK:**

*"This is an accessible and easy way to learn and to improve classroom practices."*

*"Geo 101 is relevant and practical and will definitely add value to student learning."*

*"The course covers key geographical concepts, incorporates interesting activities that you could easily use in your own classroom, and has the added bonus of learning from your colleagues."*



Geography Teachers Association of NSW & ACT, through the Professional Teachers' Council NSW – is endorsed to provide the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered Professional Development for teachers accredited at Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead levels.

Completing the **Geography 102: Concepts, Part 2**, on **29 October 2019 – 29 October 2020** will contribute **5 Hours** of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered PD addressing 2.1.2; 6.2.2; 6.3.2 from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers towards maintaining Proficient Teacher Accreditation in NSW.

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