

Additional practice - Secondary

By Ashley Philipson

Plate tectonics and their associated hazards can be a very tricky concept for pupils to learn and understand. Because of this, I plan to teach the concept spaced throughout the curriculum, each time revisiting and building on what was previously covered. Sometimes re-teaching is required when assessment indicates a lack of understanding of foundational knowledge.

In the case of plate tectonics; the concept is revisited and practiced using different examples, situations and contexts. This interleaving and spacing of threshold concepts is planned into the medium-term plan to ensure pupils get the opportunity to revisit and practice material they have previously covered.

In this case the pupils had already studied plate tectonics twice, looking at plate movement and the formation of the Himalayas and then at a later date looking at the destructive plate margin of Monserrat. This time the plate boundaries are covered again looking at the similarities and differences of each boundary and their resultant features; this allows additional practice of the concepts already learnt but in a different context. However, key language is kept the same to support recall of key information and to help pupils attach new information to their existing mental model or schema.

I find that retrieval practice of threshold geographical concepts helps pupils remember fundamental information. It also allows pupils to see the wider picture of how different topics in geography are connected and relevant to one another. Knowing which topics will require additional practice before a lesson is taught is vital in ensuring additional practice opportunities are planned in. As a result, good subject knowledge is paramount.

I also find that question level analysis after key assessments is a fundamental tool when planning for additional practice as it helps to identify areas where there is a lack of understanding or misconceptions. This information is then used to plan future lessons. This could be to reteach a concept or interleave a key skill in future lessons.

The impact of this reflective system of practice is that no pupils are 'left behind' and therefore can continue to deepen their understanding of the key concepts.