

Seeking the expertise of colleagues and existing resources - Primary and Secondary

By Emily Maule

When planning a scheme of work, it is important to do as much research as possible, making use of materials from subject specialists with more experience in the topic, so that we can be sure we are delivering material of the highest calibre to our pupils. Even though I studied geography at university and studied volcanology specifically in my final year, there were still elements that I researched again to make sure I really was teaching accurate information and providing the most helpful maps, diagrams and graphs. For example, for a long time teachers in secondary school have taught that convection currents in the mantle move the tectonic plates. But we now know that this is not entirely true and that actually gravity and the weight of the plates are fundamental to their movement. I wanted to make sure this information, which is taught in the A Level curriculum, was present in the Year 7 unit, because it makes it easier for pupils to understand, and also because I want my pupils to have geographically accurate knowledge.

And despite having taught Plate Tectonics at all levels, there were new illustrations that I came across from speaking to colleagues and observing colleagues teach, that I was able to incorporate to the scheme to support pupils in grasping some of these really complex ideas. So, to help teach the concept about gravity and the weight of the tectonic plate causing movement, I observed a colleague demonstrate to her class how a necklace with a heavy pendant on it, when hanging off of the table, slowly edges further towards the floor, which is great illustration to help the pupils understand how gravity acts on heavy materials.

We don't want to reinvent the wheel and there are lots of great materials about. I incorporated lots of materials I had successfully used previously to teach the scheme. However, I also added in new materials from well researched and reputable sources, to add rigour to the unit. And then having another subject specialist check over the unit and give their insight meant I was able to make revisions to the scheme which made it more robust. Time invested into the scheme's planning pays dividends later on.