Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Geography. Helen Walkington, Jennifer Hill, and Sarah Dyer (Eds.). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019. xxii and 498 pp., diags., ills., bibliog., index. £195.00 hardback (ISBN 978-1-78811-648-0); £48.00 eBook. (eISBN 978-1-78811-649-7)

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Helen Walkington, Jennifer Hill and Sarah Dyer have put student engagement at the centre of their edited *Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Geography*. The book aims to offer an “original reference work designed to provide a broad overview of knowledge on the teaching of geography in higher education and its practical application” (p. 1). To meet this aim, the book follows a student’s journey through higher education, focusing on student experience at different stages of their undergraduate degree.

As I was reading the Handbook for this review, I was also working towards and completing a Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (a British professional membership scheme adopted by increasing numbers of higher education institutions globally). The Fellowship is recognition of professional development and commitment to pedagogic approaches around four key areas of practice: 'Design and plan learning activities and/or programs of study; Teach and/or support learning; Assess and give feedback to learners; Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance'. In researching and writing for the fellowship I found it useful referring to various texts on teaching in higher education (e.g. Anderson et al., 2001; Race, 2015) as well as journals focussed on education and pedagogy, particularly the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. However, I noticed that there did not seem to be a suitable reference book for higher education

despite useful equivalents for secondary education (e.g. Lambert and Morgan, 2010; Jones and Lambert, 2018). This book fills that gap in the pedagogic literature.

The *Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Geography* is usefully structured around a student's journey through a geography undergraduate degree. Part One (p. 15 onwards) focusses on the transition students experience going from secondary education level to a higher education university setting. The argument and theme of this section is that a holistic approach needs to be taken to designing geography teaching programs, mindful that students are not only making a transition of learning but they are also “experiencing social and identity, as well as academic, transitions” (p.3). This section includes chapters on: the challenge of both the social and academic transitions students may be confronted with (Tate and Hopkins, Chapter Two); different pedagogies and their uses for transitioning students into higher education, including lecturing (Finn and Mott, Chapter Four); assessment (Rink, Chapter Five); fieldwork (Ramdas, Chapter Seven); curriculum design more broadly (Fouberg, Chapter Six); different teaching contexts (Griffin, Chapter Nine); and team led courses (Dyer, Chapter Ten). The focus throughout Part One is on providing an effective grounding for students’ future studies within and beyond geography. For example, in Chapter 12, Healey and Ribchester make the case for ethics as an important concept to underpin critical thinking skills as students move into future years of study.

Part Two (p.168 onwards) considers the next stage of a student's journey through a geography degree, where, having made the step up to higher education, the expectation is that they now move to become autonomous learners. Here the chapters focus on what pedagogic strategies encourage students to become independent geographical, and I would argue 'critical', thinkers. Ten chapters take the reader through concepts from issue-based enquiry as a way to get students to engage with geographic concepts (Klein et al., Chapter 16), the responsibility of those teaching geography degrees to emphasize sustainability (Robinson, Chapter 19;

something that builds well on the importance of ethics mentioned in Part One above), to considering how fieldwork can help engender students to take ownership through learning-by-doing (Fuller and France, Chapter 22).

Part Three (p. 313 onwards) focusses on students' final honors years of study, capstone courses and the bridge from undergraduate degree to the students' futures. Here the challenge is balancing bringing the multitude of strands of student learning together, with the achievement of so-called 'graduate attributes'. The chapters thus consider exactly what geographical graduate attributes are (Spronken-Smith, Chapter 31), such as spatial thinking and an interdisciplinary perspective, while also presenting examples of how students can take ownership of their studies (Pawson and Poskitt, Chapter 24), develop graduate skills (Mol et al., Chapter 26), and develop skills for being lifelong learners (Hill and Worth, Chapter 27). These considerations of skills and attributes are balanced through complimentary chapters such as how to best to design 'capstone' courses (Hovorka and Wolf, Chapter 28), and how to educate students about the broad range of future career opportunities where the transferable skills from a geography degree would be applicable (Solem et al., Chapter 32). This latter issue is a tension that Kneale (Chapter 33) notes most obviously, where curriculums are having to at once balancing geographic content and student expectations with employers' needs and desires, a challenge undoubtedly experienced across other disciplines as well.

What I found useful throughout this well written compilation was the exemplification. Each chapter was well researched and articulated but, importantly for me, grounded in a writer's own experience, such as Hughes and McDuff (Chapter 13) drawing on their inclusion of rural geography as part of curriculum development at Kingston University. Indeed, this focus on a particular sub-discipline of geography was repeated in many chapters and will interest those seeking focused lessons on a particular topic, such as Glaciology (Chapter 15), Race (chapter 17), GIS (Chapter 21).

There is most definitely a need for this type of volume. Recent situations requiring working from home perhaps beg questions of new insights into how such ideas and approaches may be taken forward in 'blended learning' environments. Nonetheless, the challenge remains to develop holistic, inclusive and diverse programs of study based on rigorous academic work, both from the subject itself, as well as from wider pedagogic research, in order to create and foster the best learning environments for our students. These will invariably be place-based, just as chapters in this book advocate the engagement with local places, whilst appreciating that place within a social as well as educational context. I imagine for many this book will provide a much-needed reference in developing new geography courses or in undertaking curriculum re-design, but will also be helpful to academics fulfilling Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and those undertaking teaching qualifications. It will thus no doubt be a useful book for departments to have access to as their teaching staff get to grips with an evolving teaching landscape.

References

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