

розвитком інформаційних технологій. Від перших описових курсів минулих століть до нинішніх компетентісно орієнтованих програм, побудованих навколо ідей сталого розвитку, геопросторового мислення та міждисциплінарної інтеграції, шлях географічної освіти засвідчує її здатність адаптуватися до мінливих потреб суспільства. Подальші перспективи пов'язані з поглибленням технологічної складової навчання, посиленням практичної спрямованості курсів, розширенням міжнародної співпраці у галузі дидактики географії та формуванням у молодого покоління відповідального ставлення до планети як спільного дому людства.

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THE STATE OF GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

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There are compelling reasons why all young people should be entitled to a comprehensive and robust geography education. Geography awakens the cognitive activity of youth and offers specific ways of thinking that help explain the natural and social worlds, aiming to understand the impact on the future of the planet and its inhabitants [21].

Since the early 2000s, the Australian scientific community has repeatedly conducted monitoring regarding the quality of geography education [7]. At the end of 2019, Kriewaldt and Lee [15] surveyed Australian geography teachers to obtain information on the number of specialists in their schools who had received university education and qualifications in geography and its teaching methodology. They also sought to assess the prevalence of out-of-field (OOF) teaching – a situation where a teacher is required to teach a discipline that does not align with their professional

training. The monitoring was conducted through branches of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association. Responses were received from 298 secondary schools, 270 of which contained the necessary data.

The results showed that out-of-field teaching is widespread in Australian educational institutions: almost every second respondent (45.9 %) was a teacher whose primary qualification differed from geography [15]. This situation is similar to the monitoring results of 2006 and 2016 [14]. Consequently, students may likely not be receiving a complete geographical education.

In addition to teacher qualifications and professional development opportunities, the survey gathered information on geography teaching methodologies, estimated teaching hours, and fieldwork for each grade (Years 7 to 10), as well as the provision of senior secondary geography in the respondents' schools.

These data are the subject of ongoing research examining:

1. How and to what extent is geography taught in Australian secondary schools, and how does this vary across jurisdictions (states and territories)?
2. What is the experience of students performing geographical fieldwork in Australian secondary schools in Years 7–10?
3. How is geography education offered at the senior level in Australian secondary schools?

Geography as a school subject is positioned and taught differently worldwide, reflecting various national priorities [3]. Geography is a standalone subject in countries such as England, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Singapore, where it is typically compulsory in lower secondary school and elective in senior years.

The picture is more complex in the United States (USA), where geography is classified under social studies. For example, in middle school (Grades 6–8), only 9 US states offer a separate geography course. In Germany, the role of geography varies significantly between federal states, but by the end of senior high school, it becomes part of a social science block.

In Australia, starting from the late 1980s, states promoted the integration of geography with history, civics, and economics within Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) programs, which led to the decline of geography as a separate subject. In 2013, the Australian Curriculum: Geography was approved, signaling the restoration of its status as a distinct discipline [5, 1, 2]. Although geography is officially compulsory until Years 8–10, in practice, schools often continue to include it in integrated disciplines under the name HASS (Humanities and Social Sciences).

Fieldwork is a key element of geography's disciplinary heritage and identity [10]. It is a signature pedagogy that strengthens the identity of students and teachers as geographers [17]. Researchers [10] identify three typical approaches to fieldwork:

1. Teacher-led excursions – the teacher acts as a guide;
2. Inquiry-based fieldwork – the teacher acts as a facilitator while students independently collect data [19];
3. Discovery-based fieldwork – involving independent, sensory, and play-based learning over an extended period.

However, the organization of fieldwork faces challenges: a lack of specialized

staff, curriculum overcrowding, complex risk management requirements, and insufficient funding [13].

At the national level, geography was mostly taught as a compulsory subject for students in Years 7, 8, and 9 (98 % of responses for Years 7–8, 86 % for Year 9). In Year 10, only 58 % of respondents indicated the subject was mandatory. In New South Wales, geography is more frequently offered as a separate subject, while in Western Australia, it is often part of an integrated HASS course.

There are significant differences in curriculum coverage both across Australia and within individual states. Nationally, Australian students studied geography for an average of 54 hours per year. The highest number of hours (up to 73 per year) is observed in schools where geography is a separate elective subject.

Students in New South Wales received 68 hours of geography study, significantly more than in all other states. For comparison, this figure is 57 hours in Queensland, 53 hours in Victoria, and only 41 hours in Western Australia. The average number of hours in Year 10 was 65, notably higher than in lower grades, where the subject is often taught for only one semester.

Nationwide, Australian secondary students performed an average of 5 hours of fieldwork per year. Students taking geography as an elective performed an average of 8 hours of fieldwork. Students in Victoria and South Australia devote significantly more time to fieldwork than in other jurisdictions. Considering the total study time, students spend only 11 % of their time on fieldwork activities.

Monitoring the state of senior secondary geography teaching revealed that 63% of respondents indicated their schools offer geography for Years 11 and 12. However, 21 % of schools do not provide the opportunity to study this subject at the senior level at all, limiting students' academic prospects.

Overall, a complex picture of geography education in Australian secondary schools has emerged. It is clear that the allocated number of hours is insufficient to ensure meaningful geography study. The prevalence of out-of-field teaching exacerbates the challenges of advanced geography instruction [4, 15]. The consequences of policies such as general social studies or combined humanities courses may reduce opportunities for young people to master specialized ways of acquiring geographical knowledge [20].

Given the importance of fieldwork, an average of 5 hours per year is insufficient for developing deep geographical knowledge and skills. Considering that 21 % of schools do not offer geography lessons in senior years, an inequitable situation arises. Such surveys allow for regular observation and strengthen the advocacy for geography both in schools and at the policy level [22].

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