

Teaching and learning History and Geography in the South African classroom

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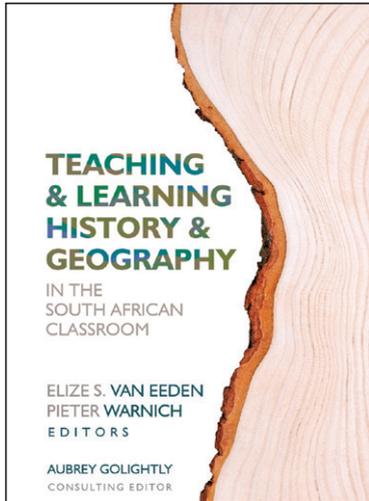
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When I started my academic career in 1983, I was also involved in the training of potential History teachers. This book, a first of its kind, is unfortunately 35 years too late for me, but it currently addresses in a scholarly way a much-needed and long overdue need for the training of History and Geography teachers in the South African context. It covers both the pre-1990 and post-1990 era and brings together a most valuable body of knowledge which is necessary for the training of Social Science, History and Geography teachers.

In the present era of decolonisation, this book is very opportune for the South African context. The value of this multi-authored book also lies in the fact that it was compiled and edited by experts in their respective fields. This book is not a practical tool or a manual on how to train History and Geography teachers, as it provides a sound theoretical underpinning in each chapter on what the teaching and learning of Social Sciences (as well as History and Geography in the FET phase) is all about. The scholarly approach as well as the in-depth research that was done makes this a most valuable resource in the training of Social Science, History and Geography teachers. The book is based on relevant research and makes a rich contribution to the body of knowledge on the teaching and learning in these disciplines. The practical aspect and the theory complement each other and are finely balanced. This useful aspect will certainly help potential teachers to engage in a critical way with the curriculum they need to teach.

A strong point of the book is the emphasis on teaching and learning as an integrated process. The focus is not just on the teacher, but also on the learner and how both these role players can collaboratively engage with the Social Science, History and Geography curriculums.

NEW PUBLICATION



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This book guides readers through developments in the History and Geography fields, new focus areas and some teaching and learning possibilities unlocked by technology. Drawing on prodigious research, experts in these fields impart recommendations for teaching, understanding, learning and assessing these subjects purposefully.

Teaching and learning History and Geography in the South African classroom is aimed at scholars, educators and prospective educators in Social Sciences, History and Geography programmes.

Table of contents

Chapter 1 Unpacking the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Social Sciences

Part A: History

Section 1: Remembering (one's own) History

Chapter 2 Reflections on writing and teaching History in South Africa

Chapter 3 Textbooks, History and teaching

Chapter 4 Practicalising local and regional histories in History curricula

Chapter 5 Feeling like a historian

Section 2: Facing controversial history

Chapter 6 Teaching controversial issues in History

Chapter 7 Miracle Rising® as source for teaching and learning controversial issues in History

Chapter 8 Facing emotions and controversies of the past and present in South African Social Sciences and History classrooms

Section 3: Teaching, doing and assessing History

Chapter 9 Thinking historically: Beyond names and dates towards historical understanding

Chapter 10 Cognitive development strategies within the History classroom

Chapter 11 Enhancing History teaching through the integration of technological devices and online teaching

Chapter 12 Assessment and the History teacher: Classroom-based performance assessment in action with role-play and debating as examples

Part B: Geography

Section 4: Space, place and maps

Chapter 13 Space and place for Geography teaching and learning in the 21st century

Chapter 14 Mapping and maps in Social Sciences' Geography Education

Section 5: Facing Geography

Chapter 15 Issues-based teaching and learning in Geography

Chapter 16 The Social Sciences and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): An interdisciplinary reflection

Chapter 17 Indigenous knowledge systems and Africanisation in relation to Geography teaching and learning

Section 6: Teaching, doing and assessing Geography

Chapter 18 Field work excursions in the Social Sciences

Chapter 19 GIS, Google Earth, Google Maps and GPS as resources and their application in Geography Education

Chapter 20 Teaching and learning styles and strategies in Geography Education

Chapter 21 Assessment in school Geography

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The structure of the book is very logical and coherent. The book starts off by giving a theoretical underpinning and then provides contextualisation by giving a very sound foundation of the current school curriculum field (CAPS). A positive aspect of the publication is the logical structure. The different sections and chapters provide a strong coherence and there is a golden thread throughout, from Chapter 1 up to the final chapter. The extensive and impressive reference lists at the end of each chapter contribute to the strong theoretical underpinning.

The book is divided into two sections, namely Section A (p. 25) for History and Section B (p. 263) for Geography. Both Sections A and B are then divided into thematic sub-sections, with appropriate chapters under each section. This structure provides a clear roadmap for the reader. The List of Figures and the List of Tables could perhaps have been placed directly after the List of Contents, instead of after the section with the biographical information of all the authors. Each chapter starts with a description of the intended outcomes and the key terms and ends off with reflective exercises. In some cases, these exercises could perhaps have been more extensive. What is also very helpful is the name of the section at the top of the left-hand page and the chapter title at the top of the right-hand page. This helps when navigating through the book. The technical aspects of the book are thus of a high standard.

This book contributes to the debate on how to teach Social Sciences as an independent curriculum field and discipline. Teachers often claim that they teach Social Sciences, but in reality, they teach History and Geography as completely separate school subjects. This book helps to increase one's understanding of this subject discipline, without forfeiting the identity and uniqueness of each specific subject field.

The topics included in this book, as per section, address current thinking and new developments regarding the teaching and learning of Social Sciences, History and Geography and how to deal with these disciplines in the classroom. Some of the intermediate, senior and FET themes in Section A (History) include remembering one's own history and how to teach it (which includes a most valuable section on the writing and teaching History in South Africa), the teaching of local and regional history, facing and teaching controversial issues, and the teaching and "doing" of History. In Section B (Geography) a similar approach is followed in addressing relevant issues such as space, places and maps (with appropriate chapters), facing Geography, and the teaching, "doing" and assessment of Geography.

The comment made in the Acknowledgements that “History and Geography are dynamic and diverse disciplines ... have always displayed integrative abilities and combined potential in teaching and learning because human actions in spaces and places matter equally”, is evidence of the scholarly approach of this publication.

This book, a first of its kind in South Africa, will be of value to specialists in Social Sciences, History as well as Geography and contribute to the empowerment of future and potential specialists. This publication brings together and disseminates research and new developments in the teaching and learning of the above-mentioned subjects which will enhance the quality of teacher training and prepare teachers for the classroom.

I recommend very strongly *Teaching & learning History and Geography in the South African classroom* for every teacher involved in the teaching and learning of Social Sciences, History and Geography.