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Dr Pow is a young teacher who has already taught and succeeded in a range of contexts. He has, for instance, contributed towards the large introductory geography module, as well as to modules in his own area of specialization, urban geography. Students comment on his enthusiasm, passion, clarity, care and humour, but also on his demand for critical thinking. "His lectures don't just give information," one writes. "He actively encourages you to think further and decide for yourself."

This encouragement of thinking is the second objective (after "knowing the world we live in") Dr Pow gives himself as a teacher. He sets out to encourage students to "question how we know the world." One of the examples he himself gives is the invitation to students to interrogate the different categories of city found in geography textbooks. In other words, they are prompted to enquire how adequate different categories are, and to consider the ways in which knowledge is constructed.

Further examples can be found in the module folders. Students of the module "Cities in Transition," consider different rankings of cities and the criteria they are based on. In other sessions they look at the images of cities in movies, and different varieties of the "urban." In the final examination they are required to "critically evaluate" or "critically examine" approaches or propositions. The level 4000 module "Urban Space" is necessarily more challenging and continues the emphasis on the student's thinking. Students must weigh up different conceptions of the "good life" in the city, and (again) in the examination, they must evaluate, assess, and examine limitations. There is also a creative element in, for instance, the group projects of either photo essay or multimedia project, both of which have to be grounded in theoretical readings, issues and understanding.

As a geographer of cities, Dr Pow moves beyond critical understanding with his students to the imagination of "a better world for people to live in." He has them think about urban planning in "Cities in Transition," and the final seminar topic of his section of "Urban Space" addresses "what it means to talk about the morally and ethically 'good' city or urban development." Many areas of the social sciences lend themselves to the shaping of policy, and such disciplined attention to issues of this kind is productive and worthwhile.

Dr Pow's success has not come without effort. He regularly evaluates his teaching and makes adjustments in accordance with that. His module folders include reflection on the difficulties encountered in particular modules, such as the challenges of teaching a large class with diverse backgrounds.