

International Geographical Union Commission on Geographical Education 2008-2012

Newsletter #2, July 2009

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1. Introduction from the Honorary Secretary

First, my thanks to all those of you who sent me good wishes in taking up the role of Honorary Secretary. As Lex Chalmers explains below work has been done on a number of developments behind the scenes, for which I wish also to thank those involved.

Welcome to the second Newsletter of the 2008-12 Commission on Geographical Education. Thank you to all those who have provided information for this issue. We want to hear from our membership and to be able to:

- share conference plans and information;
- know about geography education policy and curriculum developments in the countries around the world;
- be aware of new publications, in English, French and other languages, articles as well as books, and material for teachers, pre-service teachers and pupils;
- keep aware of the work of our colleagues in sister organisations, and of international developments;
- know about research activities;
- keep up with events and activities in the geography education world.

We want to use the Newsletter to circulate information on all matters related to geographical education of international interest, just as we will be developing the Commission's website for this purpose.

In this issue, Lex Chalmers, Chair of the Commission, outlines a number of Commission developments of interest to us all. Conference information is provided for the coming year. We have had several reports on national geography curriculum developments, and have included information received about recent and new book publications. News from EUROGEO and HERODOT and about the recently launched Geocube project is included, as are two items of research activity, one concerning the effectiveness of the UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The Geography Olympiad Taskforce continues its work. We have made very good progress with the translation of the Lucerne Declaration, which has also been referred to at the recent UNESCO Conference.

I shall be aiming to circulate a further Newsletter at the end of 2009 or start of 2010. Please do provide me with information as you can send it. Do not wait for a request from me. I can then build up the next Newsletter with items as you send them, so please do!

I look forward to hearing from you. Have an enjoyable second half of 2009.

Professor Simon Catling (Honorary Secretary)
[email: sjcatling@brookes.ac.uk]

2. From the Chair of the Commission: Lex Chalmers

Greetings to colleagues in Geographical Education.

There are always things going on in the Commission, and we are always keen to hear from you. If you need to contact us, the most direct way of doing this either through the Chair [lex@waikato.ac.nz] or the Honorary Secretary, Simon Catling [sjcatling@brookes.ac.uk]. We have migrated our website, and will be updating this in the next month (see below). The notes below cover some of our key activities planned for the next year.

2.1 Meetings of the Commission

Tsukuba, Japan, 6-8 August 2009. A number of members of the Commission will be at the Conference *Introducing "Spatial Thinking" to Geography Education* in Tsukuba. Yoshiyasu Ida of the Commission chairs the Organising Committee. The Commission will request a meeting time at Tsukuba, and we will request some time to talk to colleagues and conference delegates. The home site of the conference and the programme can be found at the following URL:
<http://igucge2009.hp2.jp/index.html>

Hamilton, New Zealand, 19-22 January 2010. The Waikato Branch of the NZ Geographical Society hosts a Commission conference called **Positioning Geography: Strategic Issues in Geographical Education**. One day (20 Jan.) of the conference is given to Commission matters and we will hold a Commission meeting on that day. There are field trips and opportunities to present papers on geographical education . See
<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/PositioningGeography/index.shtml>

The Commission considered holding a meeting in association with the AAG in Washington for those who could not travel to the IGU Regional Conference in Tel Aviv. There was some interest, but European delegates expressed concerns about travelling in April. If there is to be an alternative European site for a Commission conference in 2010-11, the successful Heredot meeting in Turkey in 2009 led to a number of Commission members suggesting a Turkish host for such a meeting.

The International Network for Teaching and Learning Geography is offering a meeting in Washington, with the website:
<http://www.geog.canterbury.ac.nz/intl/washington.html>

Tel Aviv, Israel, July 12-16, 2010. This is the regional conference of the IGU. The title of the meeting is **Bridging Diversity in a Globalizing World**. The deadline for the

submission of Conference abstracts is 1 February 2010, and details are posted on the Conference website at <http://www.igu2010.com>. The Commission programme will be organised through our assigned host Prof. Arnon Medzini. Arnon's contact details are Dean of Social Sciences Oranim College, Kiryat Tivon, Israel. His email address is aronon@oranim.ac.il.

2.2 Website

The early part of 2009 has been given over to the migration of the Commission website from Texas to the Netherlands. The Commission is very grateful to Professor Sarah Bednarz who developed the initial Commission website outside the IGU site. The site established by Joop van der Schee retains many of the structures and the purpose of this now familiar site. The URL for the site is: <http://www.igu-cge.org/>. The webmaster is Henk Trimp at henktrimp@anaximander.nl. The 'look' of the website has been maintained, and we will be progressively updating the site in the next month. The website will be the portal through which our connection for the UNDESD links to the Lucerne Declaration.

2.3 Projects

The Commission is always prepared to be involved in projects, and the Newsletter is an important place to disseminate ideas for discussion at Commission meetings.

Wikipedia proposal. It has been suggested we should launch a page on Wikipedia under the reference point Geographical Education. We would link our Charters and declaration and have entries that cited out publications and projects. This matter can be discussed in Tsukuba.

Cartography and Geography. In our conversations with the Cartographic Society in the last few years we have often addressed the matter of the role of cartography in geography, and the recognition of cartography in curriculum and syllabus statements in geography. We have carried out international surveys in the past, and we could explore whether it is time for an international benchmarking of cartography in geographical education. This matter can be discussed in Tsukuba.

Communities of Practice. Most people will have heard this term and know that it involves establishing contacts between those who share a common interest or practice. High-speed broadband has allowed us to move from asynchronous community building (using webCT and Moodle) to synchronous tools (Skype, EVO and Access Grid). There is an opportunity to discuss such a proposal for the Commission at Tsukuba.

The Lucerne Declaration. Our intention is to link the multiple language versions of the Lucerne Declaration to the UN DESD. We also need to make sure that the website is the point of reference for national delegates of the IGU.

2.4 Publications

The website has the capacity to promote publications that the Commission has supported. The Commission would be happy to consider entries to the publication list. Please send publication details to either myself, Lex Chalmers [lex@waikato.ac.nz], or to the Honorary Secretary, Simon Catling [sicatling@brookes.ac.uk]

International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education has been the flagship journal of the Commission for a long time (now published by Taylor & Francis journals: Routledge). It carries important papers in Geographical Education and we are grateful for the work of John Lidstone and Joseph Stoltman in maintaining the quality of our journal. See: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/1038-2046>

Research in Geographical Education is published through Grosvenor Centre for Geographic Education under the editorship of Joseph Stoltman. It carries a range of papers of interest to those in geographical education.

2.5 Membership

The Commission is always looking to find new members who might benefit from inclusion in our activities. We recommend that current members consider their peers locally, regional and nationally, and make sure that they know what the Commission can offer. We have had several new members join our membership list this year. Membership is free, the contact with the Commission is managed through the Honorary Secretary, Simon Catling at: sjcatling@brookes.ac.uk. He is planning to update the list, since there seem to be many email addresses that are rejected as 'not known' or as no longer existing. Do please ensure that you inform Simon of any change to your email address.

Naku noa,
Lex Chalmers
for the IGU Commission on Geographical Education

3. Conferences

3.1 IGU CGE Japanese regional conference, Tsukuba, August 6th to 8th, 2009

New Conference website opened

This important regional conference is now almost upon us. The organisers have opened a new website for the IGU CGE Tsukuba Conference 2009, *Introducing 'Spatial thinking' to Geography Education*, which outlines the conference programme. You can access it at: <http://igucge2009.hp2.jp/index.html>

Pre-Conference Fieldtrip information

For those going on the pre-Conference fieldtrip on August 3rd to 5th, please note the following information:

The 3-day tour of CGE in Tsukuba will be held as originally planned. The bus will depart at 8:00am on August 3rd from EPOCHAL Tsukuba (Tsukuba International Conference Center), not from Tsukuba University. Use this website to see where to meet: <http://www.epochal.or.jp/eng/index.html>. Please arrive no later than 7:50am. As space is limited, you are asked to bring only essentials and leave your main luggage in your hotel. If you had any problems on the day of the tour departure, please call Takashi SHIMURA's cellular phone 090-4750-1088.

We hope you have a wonderful time during the tour and are looking forward to meeting you soon.

Dr. Takashi Shimura,

Associate Professor in Social Studies Education (Geography),
Joetsu University of Education, 1,Yamayashiki , Joetsu, Niigata 943-8512 , JAPAN
email shimura@juen.ac.jp

**3.2 National Conference of German Geographers, September 19th-26th, 2009,
Vienna, Austria**

The National Conference of the German Geographers is to take place in Vienna from September 19th to 26th, 2009. Information can be found on the following website: www.geographentag-wien.at/

Prof. Dr. Sibylle Reinfried

**3.3 5th Iberian Symposia on Didactics of Geography, November 26th-28th,
2009, University of Lisbon**

For those who might have the opportunity, or the will, to come to Lisbon in November, there will be a chance to attend the 5th Iberian Symposia on Didactics of Geography, which is being organized by the geography teachers' associations of Portugal and Spain.

Fernando Alexandre

3.4 IGU CGE Conference, Hamilton, New Zealand, January 19th-22nd, 2010

The New Zealand Geographical Society's Waikato Branch is hosting a Commission conference entitled: *Positioning Geography: Strategic Issues in Geographical Education* in January 2010. There will be field trips and opportunities to present papers on geographical education. See the following website for further information: <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/PositioningGeography/index.shtml>

**3.5 Announcing the 2010 INLT Workshop: *Changing Geography in Higher Education: Towards a Scholarship of Academic Practice*, April 12th-13th, 2010,
Washington DC, USA**

The International Network for Learning and Teaching Geography in Higher Education (INLT) invites your participation in a workshop exploring strategies for securing geography's long-term growth and vitality in higher education systems worldwide. Participants will engage in forward-looking dialogue on topics such as:

- Bringing about change in undergraduate and graduate curricula
- Strengthening the leadership capacity of departments
- Promoting synergistic activities with other disciplines
- Engaging geographers in public policymaking
- Developing students for geographical careers in business, government, and non-profit organizations, and much more.

In the months preceding the workshop, participants will be organized into working groups of 4-6 members and begin preparing a collaborative manuscript addressing one of the workshop's featured topics. Early drafts of the manuscripts will be posted in an online community forum for review and discussion prior to and during the workshop. Manuscripts will ultimately be submitted for possible publication in a special issue of the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. The 2010 INLT workshop is being sponsored by the U.K. Higher Education Academy Subject Centre

for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES), the AAG's Enhancing Departments and Graduate Education (EDGE) project, Taylor & Francis, and the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*.

Dates: April 12-13, 2010

Location: Washington, D.C., USA

Venue: Marriott Wardman Park Hotel

Fee: US \$150 (waived for graduate student participants)

Audience: Geographers in academic and administrative positions; graduate students

Important Dates:

Registration deadline: August 1, 2009

Notification of acceptance: September 15, 2009

Payment due: December 31, 2009

Draft manuscripts due: January 15, 2010

Online community discussion: February-March 2010

Opening night reception/dinner: Sunday, April 11, 2010

Final manuscripts due: August 1, 2010

Organizers: Michael Solem (AAG and INLT co-chair) is serving as the principal organizer for the 2010 INLT workshop with Mick Healey (University of Gloucestershire and INLT Co-Chair) and Eric Pawson (University of Canterbury and INLT Co-Chair) as co-organizers.

For more information, visit the INLT website at: www.geog.canterbury.ac.nz/inlt/.

3.6 IGU Regional Conference, Tel Aviv, Israel, July 12th-16th, 2010

The Regional Conference title is: *Bridging Diversity in a Globalizing World*. The deadline for the submission of Conference abstracts is 1 February 2010, and details are posted on the Conference website at: www.igu2010.com. The Commission programme will be organised through our assigned host Professor Arnon Medzini.

His contact details are Dean of Social Sciences, Oranim College, Kiryat Tivon, Israel. His email address is: aronon@oranim.ac.il

3.7 Report on the recent Conference of Nordic Geographers held in Finland, July 2009

In July the Geographical Society of Finland organised the Nordic Geographers' Meeting, in Turku, Finland. The meeting was the third of its kind. The two previous ones were organised in Lund (Sweden) in 2005 and Bergen (Norway) in 2007. About 220 people attended the Turku meeting. I was organising parallel sessions on geography education and children's geographies/geographies of young people. We had seven presentations on geography education and eight on children's/young people's geographies. I was pleased with that. I have also launched e-mail lists for the people interested in these issues. Most of the participants were from Nordic countries, but contributors also came from other European countries and elsewhere. I hope that this could have been a start of a Nordic network on geography educators. If you want to know more about this meeting, please see the website: <http://congress.utu.fi/ngm09/index.php>

Professor Sirpa Tani

4. Curriculum Developments internationally

4.1 Geography and Environmental Education in Pakistan

Geography has become the most popular discipline now in our part of the world, understanding both physical and cultural environmental education.

Evidently natural hazards, such as the devastating earthquake of October 2005, floods in Indus Plains, the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan with heavy influx of forced population migration, and now our country's participation in the war against terrorism have contributed heavily to bringing geography right to the top in earth sciences and social sciences clusters at school, college and university levels.

The need for understanding the interactions between indigenous and other societies is only possible with a sound knowledge of Geography. At the micro level research on the currency of the events, i.e. Tribal Co-existence, have been initiated already. Thanks to Geography in life scenario.

Professor Dr. Gul Muhammad
Advisor, COMSATS, Islamabad, Pakistan

4.2 The New Senior High School Geography Curriculum in Israel

Last year a new Senior High School Curriculum was offered to high school students in Israel. The curriculum is entitled: *Geography and Environmental Development*.

The curriculum was developed by the Geography Curriculum Committee appointed by the Department for Curriculum Planning and Development, at The Ministry of Education. The Committee was composed of staff members in the geography departments at the universities and at teacher colleges, and of officials in the Ministry of Education and from high school teachers.

The curriculum is based on five units, three of which are compulsory and are 90 hours long, and three are double units, 180 hours each. A student can take a maximum of 450 hours, over three years of schooling (years 10-12). The Units are:

A. Compulsory units (90 hours each)

1. Geography of the State of Israel;
2. Geography of the Middle East;
3. Analysis of Basic Spatial Phenomena (including a GIS option).

B. Area of specialization (one unit to be selected – 180 hours each)

4. The Planet Earth and the Environment;
5. Spatial Development and Planning;
6. Man in Socio-cultural Space.

The didactic-professional considerations that guided the authors of this curriculum were derived from the essence and uniqueness of the geography discipline, and they are based on present trends in the teaching of geography as well as current pedagogical research:

- Stressing relevancy and actuality;
- Combining the local and the global;
- Emphasis on the dynamism: transformations and processes of change;
- Integration of Physical and Human Aspects;
- Fostering the learners' obligation toward preserving the environment;

- Organizing the teaching-learning process around actual issues;
- Integrating GIS into the teaching-learning process;
- Integration of field trips during the course of study;
- Nurturing and enrichment of geographic language.

The overall aims were centred on the learner and for him:

- Learning through an investigative approach;
- Constructing knowledge infrastructures;
- Developing high level cognitive abilities and meta-cognitive qualifications;
- Fostering curiosity and interest;
- Fostering personal and social responsibility, concern, and active involvement; education toward tolerance and respect;
- Reinforcing the link and sense of belonging to the land and the statee

The curriculum's English version is being revised at present and will soon be posted on the Ministry of Education's website. The Hebrew version can be found on the website of the Department for Curriculum Planning and Development:

www.edu.gov.il/tal/portal

Additional information:

Mrs. Drora Vaadia, Department for Curriculum Planning and Development, Ministry of Education, drorava@education.gov.il

Michael Sofer, Department of Geography and Environment, Bar-Ilan University, soferm1@mail.biu.ac.il

Associate Professor Michael Sofer
 Department of Geography and Environment, Bar-Ilan University, Israel.
 Chairman, Geography Curriculum Committee for Senior High School Geography.

4.3 Review of *Geography for Life: National Geographic Standards*, in the USA

Since late 2007, the Geography Education National Implementation Project (GENIP) Standards Content Committee has been reviewing and preparing the second edition of *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards*. The second edition work is focused on reviewing the Six Essential Elements and 18 Standards with special emphasis on updating the knowledge statements, student performance statements, and exemplars that accompany each of the 18 Standards to clarify both their content and pedagogy. The updated draft document has been reviewed by both academic geographers and cognition and learning science experts. A second round of review will be done by people such as grade level experts including classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and pre-service higher education faculty.

The current draft version of *Geography for Life* (2nd Edition) is now available for public review and comment. The draft contains the updated Standards including brief introductory essays, a section for parents, and a glossary for review. The draft has been available for public comment between June 15th and July 15th, 2009. Comments received by July 15, 2009 will be reviewed by the GENIP Standards Content Committee. The draft PDF document can be downloaded from the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) web site:

<http://www.ncge.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3403>.

For more information, please contact Susan Gallagher at: sgallagher@aag.org.

Thank you for your interest in the *Geography for Life* (2nd Edition) Project.

On behalf of The GENIP Standards Content Committee
Sarah Witham Bednarz,
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,
Professor of Geography,
College of Geosciences,
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4.4 Review of geography in the primary curriculum in England, UK

During the past few months there has been a consultation on the proposals that affect geography education in the primary schools (for 5 to 11 year old children) in England. In April 2009 the government published the report, *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Final Report* (<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications>). The Report proposed that geography be linked with history and citizenship/social education in an area of learning entitled 'Historical, geographical and social understanding'. The consultation on the proposals concluded in late July. The final version of the revised primary national curriculum is due to be published in September 2009. The intention is that the revised curriculum will be implemented from September 2011. Information on the proposals for the primary curriculum, including geography, can be found at:
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/primarycurriculumreview>.

Professor Simon Catling

4.5 Developments in the Swiss elementary and lower secondary school curriculum

The Swiss government wants to "harmonize" the curricula for the elementary and lower secondary level of all Swiss German cantons. A curriculum framework was developed according to the "PISA" subject structure (the OECDs "Program for International Student Assessment"): The subjects first language (German), second language (French), mathematics and the sciences (biology, chemistry, physics) are core subjects that will be evaluated on a regular basis. Geography and history form a newly created subject area (social sciences) and will not be evaluated. The physical geography/geosciences will be left out or will be taught by unqualified staff. The Swiss Association for Geography Education filed an objection against the new curriculum framework because it will further weaken the position of geography in education.

Prof. Dr. Sibylle Reinfried

5. Publications

5.1 Recently published

John Chi Kin Lee and Michael Williams (eds.) (2009), *Schooling for Sustainable Development in Chinese Communities: Experience with Younger Children*, Dordrecht: Springer.

Lyle, S. & Roberts, M. (2009), *Arctic Stories: Teaching as Storytelling*, Imaginative Minds. This publication is aimed at 8-14 year olds as a cross-curricula project to promote children's communication, thinking and ICT skills, with a strong emphasis on geography, literacy, science and the environment, history and global citizenship.

HERODOT-EUROGEO have recently published the following five books, copies of which can be purchased from: www.eurogeography.eu/publications.htm, or contact eurogeomail@yahoo.co.uk:

Donert, K., & Wall, G. (eds.) (2008), *Future Perspectives in Geography*, Proceedings of the HERODOT-EUROGEO Conference, Liverpool Hope University Press, UK

Charnzynski, P, Donert, K & Podgorski Z (eds.) (2009), *Geography Bilingual Teaching: Practical Issues*, Association of Polish Adult Educators with HERODOT

Jekel T., Koller A. & Donert, K. (eds.) (2009), *Learning with GeoInformation IV* (also available from Wichman Verlag)

Schmeinck, D. (ed.) (2009), *Teaching in and for Europe* (also available from Mench und Buch)

Donert, K., Ari, Y., Attard, M., O'Reilly, G. & Schmeinck, D. (eds.) (2009), *Geographical Diversity*, Proceedings of the EUROGEO-HERODOT Conference, 29-31 May, 2009, Ayvalik, Turkey,

Two new atlas publications for 3-5 and 5-7 year olds, from David Wright, who argues that very young children can be 'switched on' to world Geography..... do other geog-ed people agree? At age 4 many kids are already experts on dinosaurs, sharks, engines, diggers, etc – they would like to know about our big real world too! We have attempted to help them, in PHILIP'S EARLY YEARS ATLAS for 3-5 years and PHILIP'S INFANT SCHOOL ATLAS for 5-7 years, by David Wright and Rachel Noonan [Philip's 2009]. Comments from other geography educators people would be welcome. Please contact David Wright at: dandjwright@hotmail.com.

5.2 Other recent publications

Chalkley, B., Haigh, M. & Huggitt, D (eds.) (2007), *Education for Sustainable Development: Papers in Honour of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)*, London: Routledge

Rex Walford (2008), *Using Games in School Geography*, London: Chris Kington Publishing [ISBN 978-1-899857-53-1]. More details on the CKP website: www.teachingexpertise.com. This is a new book on creating, building and using games in geography teaching, with updated versions of well established and new games.

5.3 Due to be published later in 2009

Catling, S. & Willy, T. (2009), *Teaching Primary Geography*, Exeter: Learning Matters

Brooks, C. (ed.) (2009), *Studying PGCE Geography at M Level*, London: Routledge

Balderstone, D & Lambert, D. (2009), *Learning to Teach Geography in the Secondary School*, London: Routledge (2nd edition)

5.4 Due out in 2010

Lambert, D. & Morgan, J. (2010), *Teaching Geography 11-18*, Maidenhead: Open University Press

Do please send information on new publications, whichever language they are published in. You never know which colleagues elsewhere in the world may be grateful to know of an article or book on or relevant to geographical education.

6. News from link organisations

6.1 Manifesto for geography launched by the Geographical Association, UK

In April 2009 the Geographical Association launched its new Manifesto to promote discussion about geographical education, entitled *A different view*. The Manifesto is available on the Association's website at: www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview. Do visit the site and look through the stunning images in the Manifesto. It 'reaffirms geography's place in the curriculum' and is intended for use 'in any context where geography needs to be explained, encouraged or promoted'. While produced in the UK, its message is of global interest and value. It is a freely available and accessible resource, an important document not just for the UK but internationally.

6.2 EUROGEO (the European Association for Geographers)

EUROGEO is the European Association for Geographers. Membership of this association is open to individuals and organisations. Information can be obtained through <http://www.eurogeography.eu>

New members will be able to select one publication for FREE. EUROGEO will launch its new journal, the European Journal of Geography in the coming year. We are seeking contributions to the first issue. All previously unpublished articles relating to aspects of European Geography and Geography in Europe will be considered. Information will appear soon on the Web site and sent to members.

For further information contact eurogeomail@yahoo.co.uk

PLEASE NOTE EUROGEO's change of URL: www.eurogeography.eu

6.3 The Geocube

The HERODOT Network with EUROGEO has recently launched the **Geocube**. The Geocube has been created as a toolkit to help promote Geography and the work of geographers. The target audiences are the general public and decision makers. Multimedioa materials available on the Geocube (1000 photos and 100 video clips) can be freely used for education purposes. Go to: <http://www.geo-cube.eu>

GEOcube.....for you to explore!

The world of geography at your fingertips and just one mouseclick away!

GEOcube is an attractive online resource on geography covering almost every discipline of geography. GEOcube is based on the principle of Rubik's cube with 6 faces and 54 entrees to fields of geography. The GEOcube is a virtual and easy accessible feature and free online available. You can move GEOcube around with your mouse which enables you to choose one of the six subject-areas. After clicking on one side nine windows will unfold which enable you to go in deeper levels of the subject of your choice. Photos, texts, clips and links into deeper level enable you to explore geography the fullest.

This European initiative by HERODOT, the network for European Geographers in Higher Education (www.herodot.net), is available to anyone who is interested in Geography. In order to have this project available in all European languages we invite translators, preferably with a geography background to join our project to translate in the mother tongue. The webmaster will take care of the follow up after the deliverance of translation. If you are keen to help with this please contact Karl Donert (kdonert@yahoo.com). All contributions to elaborate Geocube are welcome. GEOcube.....for you to explore! www.geo-cube.eu

6.4 Benchmark statements for Geography in higher education

The HERODOT Network invited groups of experts to produce benchmark statements for Geography in higher education. These documents are open for consultation, debate and further dissemination. They are mainly being used to advise course and curriculum developers and also to influence policy makers. Topics are: Citizenship, Fieldwork, GIS: schools, GIS: higher education and Interdisciplinarity.

You can find these documents at: <http://www.herodot.net/geography-benchmark.html>

Members can join the debate on the HERODOT community, non-members should visit HERODOT on Google Groups at: <http://groups.google.com/group/herodot-net>

Karl Donert

7. Research developments

We have received two items of information on research, one of which asks for your participation. Please consider responding.

If you are engaged in a research project or have plans to develop a particular research activity in geographical education, please let me have information, so that colleagues can be aware of work that is underway or planned. It may be that you receive support or help for your research.

7.1 Competence Research Project

The German HGD (German Academic Association for Geography and its Didactics) has initiated a national research initiative concerning "Competence Research". The research aims at the development of competence models based on the German educational standards. 8-10 different projects examine the structure of fundamental geographical competencies such as system competence, map reading competence, action competence, and others.

Prof. Dr. Sibylle Reinfried

Geographie und ihre Didaktik
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7.2 The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) – A Lost Decade or an International Success?

The Action Goals of the UNESCO Declaration for the Second Part of the Decade, adopted by the World Conference in Bonn, should be evaluated. Will they be realized by 2014 in Japan?

The Declaration has been praised by the community because it is focussed on a detailed 'Call for Actions' (policy and practice level) in order to respond to the current and future challenges caused by unsustainable societies. However the policy stakeholders seem still to be aloof what is concerning the consequences of the Declaration.

The Declaration can be downloaded from: http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/fileadmin/download/ESD2009_BonnDeclaration080409.pdf

Despite the positive reception of the Declaration there is some inadequacy in its specification. The listing of Action Goals (a-r) includes no prioritised ranking. The necessary activities cannot be focussed, e.g.

1. Which are the Goals that will successfully be realized until by 2014? Those demand appropriate efforts and support.
2. Which of the Goals do not have the slightest chance of being realized?
3. But which Goals, having the least chance of being realized, still require assistance because they are systemic for the Decade?

Therefore, how do experts evaluate the envisaged prospects of the numerous goals of the Bonn Declaration? This is the reason for undertaking this research and doing an E-Survey – to learn which goals will be realized and which may/will not be realized.

The feedback may reveal the real weaknesses and hopeful outcomes within this 'Call for Action' and provide hints whether it will be 'A Lost Decade' or 'An International Success'.

Please see the results of an earlier study, also an E-Survey, on the *Deficits and Barriers with Implementing ESD* at:
http://www.desd.sustain-future.org/int_jap_compilation_survey%20results_dg.pdf

The questions of the following survey follow the list of goals in the Declaration. You are kindly asked to evaluate the goals by doing 'clicks' to indicate to what degree you consider the goals might be realized by 2014.

The link and survey pages will be SSL encrypted during transmission. This is the link to the E-Survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=JofS40VBeHF_2faCoMztbmNA_3d_3d

Thanks for your cooperation!

Dieter Gross
VDSG e.V.

Shuichi Nakayama
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8. Geography Olympiad 2010

Olympiad Taskforce. Most colleagues will be aware that the 2010 Olympiad will be held in Taipei, and the Asia Pacific Regional Olympiad will be run in association with the Tsukuba conference. The Task Force has been working on the formats and conditions under which the Olympiad operates. Joop van der Schee and Henk Ankone are leading this work..

9. Commission Declaration and Charters

The Lucerne Declaration on Geography Education for Sustainable Development

The Lucerne Declaration has been translated in 15 languages to date. These can be found on the Commission's website at: <http://www.igu-cge.org/>

The German HDG (German Academic Association for Geography and its Didactics) represented geography education at the UN World Conference on ESD in Bonn in spring 2009 (www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html). Geography was treated as an example of a school subject in which ESD can be implemented and taught. The Lucerne Declaration and the English version of the German educational standards were presented there.

Prof. Dr. Sibylle Reinfried