

**Independent Prep School Geography and KS2/3 Geography
A summary report from Paul Baker MA, BSc, FRGS
Chair of the Independent School's Special Interest Group of the Geographical Association**

Information Gathered over 2011

Updating our KS2 and KS3 Teaching and Resources

It has been noted by visitors to a number of school's geography departments (inspectors and others) over the last year that there is still a trend of using outdated and older resources for the teaching of geography and the children not being stimulated by the study of geography to allow them to be enthusiastic geographers in the future.. With the review of the National Curriculum and the development of Prep School curriculum by Galore Park and others I thought that Independent School's Heads/ Co-ordinators of Geography would like to see some of the comments made to me and some of the ways you can be looking at taking your teaching and the learning of the subject forward.

Examples quoted included

- Schools still using examples of Volcanoes and Earthquakes outside the lifetime of the Children they teach - ie: St Helens and Kobe.
- Too much reliance on outdated resources and children being given out of date information.
- Brazil being used as an LEDC – and the failure to keep up to date with modern terminology. LIC's, HIC's BRIC etc
- Following a course on Japan for a whole term and little else in terms of 'place' study being taught. This seems a little outdated especially when 'Japan 2000' being used as support
- Whole KS 2/3 curriculum based around the Waugh series: year 6 'Basics', year 7 'Foundations', year 8 'Connections', year 9 'Interactions'
- 'Following textbooks like a bible' was one quote.
- Outdated maps and atlases being used and children not being challenged to interpret maps. One class had maps stuck in showing Yugoslavia!
- Too often misconceptions being discovered on the teaching of Economic Development and Globalisation issues.
- Teachers depending too much on text books (often outdated) and not using the variety of new resources and the internet to bring the subject alive for the children they teach.
- I know independent schools are not obliged to follow the National Curriculum but in some schools there has been no attempt to incorporate updated resources with little sign of new GA Primary and KS3 Toolkits being used or RGS-IBG/GA online resources.
- Little sign of fieldwork and 'Learning outside the Classroom'.
- Lack of map work skills and GIS. Google Earth not even considered.
- Children sent home with inadequate homework due to a map being poorly produced and exercise too simplistic.

This is just a flavour of some of the comments;

What schools should be considering to allow them to update their teaching and resources are:

1. Look at and read firstly the GA document 'The Geography National Curriculum; GA Curriculum Proposals and Rationale' www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_GIGCCCurriculumProposals.pdf
2. Read the GA Manifesto – 'a different view' – available online www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview
3. Look online at the websites of the GA and the RGS-IBG and the resources and information on teaching, CPD and teaching ideas they offer www.geography.org.uk www.rgs.org
4. Look at Galore Park website to see resources available. Contact Simon Lewis the ISEB Geography Editor geog@st-andrews.woking.sch.uk
5. Attend the GA Conference in Manchester in April 2012 to see the large Publishers Display and attend the appropriate Lectures and Workshops. Details at www.geography.org.uk/conference

6. Contact your local schools to form Cluster Groups and contact Paul Baker pabsbaker@yahoo.com who runs cluster groups around the country and would be prepared to consider organising cluster groups in your area for groups of schools. The Cluster Groups over the last year have seen John Widdowson, Gyles Morris, Alan Parkinson, Paula Owens, Simon Catling leading sessions.
7. Attend other CPD/INSET such as that run by the IAPS. Contact Nik Miller; the IAPS Geography Leader nmiller@brambletye.com
8. Read SATIPS Geography Broadsheet. Contact Andrew Lee – the Editor AKL@stpaulsschool.org.uk
9. Join the GA and subscribe to Primary Geography and Teaching Geography. Details available at www.geography.org.uk/join
10. Contact the Senior School Head of Geography at Schools you feed for any particular advice on what they expect when they come on to them from Prep Schools.
11. Some other useful websites:
 - Worldmapper www.worldmapper.org
 - Where's the path <http://wtp2.appsot.com/wheresthepath.htm>
 - RGS-IBG interactive resource 'Discovering the Arctic' <http://www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk>
 - Weather Club www.theweatherclub.org.uk
 - Geography Quizzes about Europe. Toporopa www.toporopa.eu/en/
 - Gap Minder www.gapminder.org
 - Will it rain today- Rain Radar for the UK www.raintoday.co.uk
 - Poodlewaddle World Clock www.poodlewaddle.com/clocks/worldclock
12. Finally keep in touch with me pabsbaker@yahoo.com for any advice. I am happy to visit your school and I have carried out a series of Geography Department audits for Schools over the last 3 years.

Paul Baker
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