

Annual Conference 2007: The Association at Work

The combined presentation of all the groups that go to make up the Education Committee was such an impressive demonstration of the breadth and depth of work done by the Education Committee over the last 12 months that we'd like to share it. And we hope it will be an annual update. Nearly all groups managed to attend, with one or two unavoidable absences/late arrivals because of transport problems. David Lambert introduced the session, referring to the Education Committee as the 'think tank' of the GA; the following selection from the presentations indicates that is also the engine room!



GA Post 16 & HE Phase Committee

The purpose and functions of our Committee are to support GA members and to promote and safeguard the study and teaching of Post 16 & HE Geography.

Our work involves monitoring current developments; initiating discussion/publishing papers/writing reports; disseminating information, innovations and good practice and assisting with enquiries; and representing views/liasing with other organisations.

Current work

- HE/FE interface
- Progression from FE to HE
- New specifications
- Conferences
- Fieldwork
- Our *Geography Matters* newsletter



Interests

We try to ensure our membership covers the following specialisms:

- Sixth form teaching (three members)
- Teaching in FE colleges (four members)
- Teaching in HE institutions (three members)
- PGCE/NQT years (one member)
- Teaching in Adult Education (one member)

Our current concerns are:

- The need to identify marketable publications for the post-16 phase
- Lack of provision for AGMs at the GA Annual Conference
- PGCE/NQT student representation
- Continued need to make sure that Post 16 & HE needs are represented

Secondary Phase Committee

Our main role is to represent the interests and concerns of secondary geography teachers at the highest levels of the GA, ensuring we are representative of secondary teachers across the UK. Following a recruitment drive, we have 14 members plus a number of corresponding members. We meet formally three times a year.

What has SPC done over the last year?

- Written articles for *Teaching Geography* on self evaluation and leading a department, and for *GA Magazine* on geography department self evaluation
- Piloted the Secondary Geography Quality Mark in schools
- Gone virtual – we've created a VLE for all committee members and have updated SPC's domain on the GA's website
- Presented workshops at the annual SfE/GA Heads of Geography Conference
- Represented the GA at QCA, TTA and Secondary Umbrella Group meetings
- Contributed to the QCA consultation on many levels.

What are SPC's plans for 2007-2008?

- To publish articles in *Teaching Geography* (forthcoming)
- To continue to build up web-based information derived from conference workshops
- To support teachers in responding to the revised curriculum at key stages 3 and 4
- To develop new resources for key stage 3 teachers, for publication by the GA.

Early Years & Primary Phase Committee

We are an interesting mix of active primary teachers, from NQT to senior manager, and both new and long-established teacher trainers. Within the GA, we maintain strong links with the ICT Working Group, Primary Geography Quality Mark (PGQM) Steering Committee, Citizenship Working Group, Field Studies Working Group and the *Primary Geographer* Editorial Board. Externally, we are linked with the IGU-CGE, Primary Umbrella Group, QCA, RGS-IBG and the Earth Science Teachers' Association.

Our members have, through their schools, piloted and been awarded the PGQM, and will act as future moderators. We have also helped develop CPD and INSET on ICT, the Wider World and 'Green' issues, for both the GA and other institutions. We have made a major contribution to the Primary Review. Our members are also contributing to the Primary Project Box, a cross-curricular resource being developed by ten subject associations and due to be published under the Curriculum Partnership imprint this autumn.

Our action research has covered key stage 2/3 transition as well as ways of teaching and learning, and is disseminated via the Charney Manor Conference and the Register of Research in Primary Geography.

Three of our members are Chartered Geographers and will help mentor applicants for the Chartered Geographer (Teacher) award which, with the PGQM, forms a significant element of the Action Plan for Geography. New members are always welcome.

Independent Schools Working Group

During the past year we have concentrated on promoting dialogue with the maintained sector. We don't want to be seen as an exclusive group, and we work with all schools to improve the teaching of geography, so good practice has been a focus. Local schools were invited to our Oxford Conference. The theme was 'Using Europe in our Studies, and we managed to attract 82 delegates. Details of this year's Conference are available at <http://www.geography.org.uk/aboutus/committeesworkinggroups/independentschoolswg/>

One key issue this year has been membership recruitment. Each week we trawl the TES jobs section and write to schools that are advertising for new teachers, encouraging them to join the GA. We are also recruiting new ISWG committee members – some of us are feeling a bit long in the tooth, and a few younger members would help take the ISWG forward in the future.

ICT Working Group

We have members and corresponding members from all phases, maintained and independent sectors, LEA, FE and HE; there is currently a vacancy for a primary member. We have links with the Primary and Secondary Phase Committees and external bodies including the RGS. All communications between members are done electronically!

Our remit is to keep a watching brief on ICT developments and to share our knowledge and experience with members. Our current focus is on GIS, as reflected in:

- Articles for GA journals
- Workshops and display stands at the Annual Conference
- Contributions to external events, e.g. the DfES primary geography ICT conferences.

At our termly meetings we set aside time for practical ICT work, sharing our expertise with the group. Speakers at recent meetings have included David Hassell (BECTa, and a former member), David Mitchell (GA ICT Projects Manager) and David Gardner (QCA, and also a former member).

Over the last year we have developed our area of the GA website and our VLE and have trialled the use of a web chatroom to exchange ideas and views – many thanks to Anne Greaves for setting these up for us!



Teacher Education Working Group

An important focus was keeping up the pressure on the TDA about the reduction of geography PGCE places, culminating in a meeting with the TDA. Our concerns met with a sympathetic hearing, and we hope that TDA will fund a small research project to highlight our concerns in a proper context. We also wrote to our MPs; the (very few) responses reiterated the DfES line that there is no problem as there aren't many geography jobs advertised in the TES, their measure of the demand for teacher supply.

One very pleasing achievement during the year was agreement with the OS that secondary geography PGCE students should receive free maps. A follow-up survey of their use was carried out at the January 2007 GTE Conference and will be forwarded to Vanessa Lawrence.

We have also responded to the following consultations:

- The new standards for QTS
- The new entry Requirements for ITE
- Coursework at AS/A2
- The KS3 review

There was no opportunity for consultation about GCSE.

TEWG members are involved with the Geographer Teachers Induction Programme (GTIP) and sit on the editorial board of the new e-journal, to be launched later this year.

Environmental & Sustainable Development Education Working Group

Over the last twelve months, our group has been very busy:

- Exploring and looking for teaching opportunities in the government's Sustainable Schools materials
- Networking and sharing expertise with a variety of organisations

- Holding a 6th form sustainability conference in Norfolk
- Working on joint ventures with the Alternative Technology Centre in Hebden Bridge, and with the YHA on the Green Shoots project: we are anxious to get the resulting resources published as soon as possible

Currently our main activity is organising a regional conference on sustainability, in Leeds, in association with Education Leeds (Leeds City Council) and NAEE (National Association for Environmental Education), to take place on 29 June in Leeds Music School.

We are very keen to attract new members into the working group, particularly from the primary sector.

Physical Geography Working Group

We are pleased to announce that there is now an enthusiastic group of physical geographers – still very much in its infancy – who aim to support the teaching and learning of physical geography in schools. So far we have had one informal meeting, with the first formal meeting to be held early in June, to set our terms of reference and to plan our first project/task.

For Conference we had prepared a questionnaire to investigate what level of physical geography background teachers had, what types of physical geography was being taught in schools, and importantly, what type of support teachers felt we needed to give. The responses to this questionnaire will determine our first project or task.

Despite being very new, we have already looked into various links with external bodies – the Science Lab at IoE, British Hydrological Society and the Met Office.

Hopefully next year we will have a full and varied report to give to members about our first full year of activity!

Publications Board

Our main purpose is to support GA members by providing a range of published resources, ensuring coverage for all phases, from Early Years to Post-16. We normally meet three times a year and have representation from primary and secondary sectors and GA staff at all meetings.

Our publications programme is in three parts: new titles, reprints and partnership projects. Part of the 'new titles' remit is to consider unsolicited proposals, but increasingly the Board commissions new projects. We hope to be able to provide more material for Post-16 in the near future.

Individual publications may be considered for reprinting – usually if they are good earners!

For interest, GA 'best sellers' include all the Barnaby big books, but particularly *Barnaby Bear at the Seaside*, *Barnaby's local area album*, and his new *World Map*; the *Primary Geography Handbook*; the *SuperSchemes* series and the *Tocuaro key stage 1 picture pack*.

Primary Geographer Editorial Board

Primary Geographer has received many positive responses to the last 12 months' issues. Teachers have expressed their appreciation of helpful articles which inform their teaching and inspire innovative ideas. Upcoming issues will focus on:

- Every Child Matters
- Sustainable Development
- China

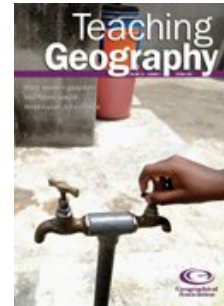


Teaching Geography Editorial Board

Teaching Geography focuses on classroom practice at key stage 3, key stage 4 and post-16.

Regular features include:

- Teaching file
- Geography curriculum
- Research file
- Forum
- Information and communications technology
- Assessment Matters
- Reviews.



From Summer 2007, there will be a new section: My Places.

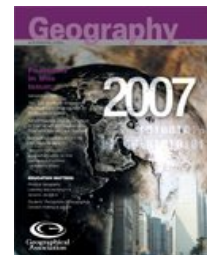
Teaching Geography will support curriculum making in schools through:

- Articles underpinned by the key concepts and the key processes of the revised KS3 Programme
- Articles on the Geographical Association's Curriculum Making Projects, including examples of classroom practice

Teaching Geography will help readers use topical events in their teaching through informed and practical articles on, for example, Liverpool, Capital of Culture, Defra: Year of Food and Farming.

Geography Editorial Board

The Editor, Kenny Lynch, was unable to attend the Association at Work, but David Lambert announced the new 'Editorial Collective' and plans for the future of the journal, which are spelt out in detail in *GA Magazine* Summer 2007 issue: www.geography.org.uk/Journals/ganews.asp



GA Magazine Editorial Board

Nicole Lyons also was unable to attend, but asked for thanks to be conveyed to everyone for their contributions to the Magazine over the last twelve months, and if anyone has something to contribute to the 'place' focus of the Autumn 2007 issue, please get in touch!