

**Friday 17 April**

**09.00-09.20 - Balancing What Teachers Want With What Academics Think They Need**

**Research Paper - KS3-P16**

*Max Hope, Lecturer in Geography, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Ulster and Gill Miller, Department of Geography and Development Studies, University of Chester*

This paper describes the experience of teaching Top-Up 4 Teaching: Geography, an online CPD programme for A level / GCSE geography teachers, led by the University of Chester in conjunction with WJEC.

The advantages that a 'community-of-practice' model of teacher education has over an 'instruction' model are well documented within the academic literature (Chalmers & Keown 2006). Top-Up 4 Teaching: Geography initially utilised a 'community-of-practice' model of learning when it was delivered and evaluated for the first time in 2007. The feedback suggested that what teachers really wanted was an online version of the 'instruction' model of learning. This posed something of a dilemma: how was our programme to embody best practice and at the same time meet the expectations of participants?

A modified version of the programme ran in 2008, this time combining aspects of the 'community-of-practice' and 'instruction' models of CPD. This paper describes how participants evaluated the modified programme and concludes by reflecting on the implications of this experience for the concept of a 'community-of-practice', wider debates on CPD for Geography Teachers, and the 'gap' between geography in secondary and higher education.

**09.00-09.20 - Identifying Some Formative Experiences of Primary Geography Educators**

**Research Paper - KS1-2**

*Professor Simon Catling, Acting Associate Dean, Oxford Brookes University and Richard Greenwood, Senior Lecturer, Initial Teacher Education (Primary) Geography, Stranmillis University College*

What stimulated the interest in geography of teachers and teacher educators in the UK who promote geography education in primary schooling? Following research by Buttimer, Chawla, McPartland, Palmer and others, this study investigates connections between early formative life experiences and adult involvement in geographical studies and education. Respondents were asked to record the 'autobiographical memories' they felt had 'turned them on' to geography. Using grounded theory, initial analysis of 37 responses identifies informal/personal experiences and formal educational experiences as two key categories. These encompass several significant features, including the 'freedom to roam' locally, family holidays, outings and trips abroad, access to and using maps, fieldwork activities at primary or secondary school and with other organizations, and the influence of a good teacher. While the outdoor findings echo Chawla's studies of environmental educators, the love of maps is a new finding. Traffic concerns and other factors inhibit children's outdoor experience; school fieldwork has declined. This study emphasizes the impact of early outdoor experience in stimulating people's geographical engagement and encourages the need for out-of-classroom learning for all children.

## **09.30-09.50 - 'Joined-Up Geography': Connecting School-level and University-level Geographies**

### **Research Paper - KS3-P16**

*Jenny Hill, Department of Geography and Environmental Management, UWE Bristol*

This paper examines the nature of the 'divide' between university-level and school-level geographies as perceived by university academics and school teachers. Research methods comprise a literature review and primary data collection via questionnaires and focus groups, undertaken with geography lecturers from the University of the West of England and geography school teachers from across the Bristol region. Divisions are identified in relation to the 'who', 'what', 'how' and 'where' of teaching and learning and three key principles are highlighted in terms of strengthening links. These are i) demystifying the university experience for prospective students through knowledge exchange and increased university-school contact; ii) maintaining continuity of taught themes from schools into higher education by transferring research from higher education to schools (and vice versa); and iii) highlighting the relevance of the discipline through its focus on pertinent global issues and its development of hard and soft skills. The presentation concludes by offering an agenda on how the schools/higher education interface can be strengthened, by uniting local self-help with national organisations and resources. There exists an important role for geography educators in preparing a national workforce that is able to play an active role in adapting to changing circumstances and in organising considered and appropriate responses.

## **09.30-09.50 - Interpretations of Enquiry in Primary Geography**

### **Research Paper - KS1-2**

*Wendy Garner, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Chester*

This paper will explore interpretations of enquiry within the context of primary geography and aims to justify it as a pedagogical approach. The study aims to:

- Analyse archival and policy documentation relating to geographical enquiry
- Relate 'geographical enquiry' to key philosophical and pedagogical movements and theory
- Explore Primary School Teachers' (PS Teachers) ideas about geographical enquiry at Key Stages 1 and 2
- Explore Initial Teacher Training Tutors' (ITT Tutors) ideas about geographical enquiry at Key Stages 1 and 2
- Consider implications in relation to policy formulation and classroom practice at Key Stages 1 and 2

Archival searches dating back to 1900 and a review of the literature revealed considerable evidence of enquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning in school geography. From the late 1960s, the notion of 'geographical enquiry' became more widely recognised and accepted as a pedagogical term. Despite 'geographical enquiry' featuring within government documentation since the advent of the National Curriculum, the literature suggests varying interpretations and constructs of enquiry at classroom level. It was found that references to 'geographical enquiry' within government documentation were not always clear or consistent. It was also found that the enquiry approach can be justified in relation to theories of learning such as constructivism and socio-constructivism.

The composite view of an Ideal Enquiry-based Learning Task (IELT), based on the responses of both ITT Tutors and PS Teachers, presents a definition of enquiry which can be justified in relation to the literature and which relates to the findings outlined above. The significant difference between the two user groups, relates to the PS Teachers' lower response rates and confidence levels when asked about 'geographical enquiry' compared with the ITT Tutors. This study has important implications for policy documentation and classroom practice. There is a need for clarity with respect to the meaning and justification of enquiry as a pedagogical approach, in addition to more detailed guidance on how it can be effectively constructed and managed at classroom level.

## **13.50-14.10 - School Linking: A Southern Perspective**

### **Research Paper - KS3-4**

*Alison Leonard, Geography Teacher, Westminster School, London*

In recent years, especially since the 'Global Dimension' and 'Global Citizenship' have been a part of our curricula in UK schools and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) have been promoted globally, Geography teachers have joined those promoting Development Education in taking part in Global school relationships. Pupils, teachers and others associated with UK schools and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) have participated in links and partnerships with their counterparts in schools and ITE in developing countries. My research seeks to understand how these affect school communities at the Southern end of such relationships. How are Southern teachers using these global links in teaching and learning? How are MDGs explored in such links and partnerships? How are pupils' knowledge and understanding affected when their schools participate in links? Do Southern local communities benefit when local schools are linked with Northern partners? Are potentially damaging assertions made about the value of indigenous knowledge, when such relationships are forged? Are Southern voices heard when learning outcomes are evaluated? As a work in progress the paper will: outline my research methodology, report on the pilot study; identify lessons for fellow aspiring teacher-researchers and initial lessons from conducting research into education overseas.

## **14.20-14.40 - Using Student Preconceptions to Inform Pedagogy in Middle School Geography**

### **Research Paper - KS3-4**

*Rod Lane, Lecturer in Education, Macquarie University, Australia*

Within learning and teaching contexts across a variety of subject domains there has been extensive research indicating that students often bring to class a range of 'alternative frameworks' and 'naive theories' (constructed from prior experiences) that are inconsistent with currently accepted 'expert views'. It is now generally accepted that students construct their own understandings of 'how the world works' prior to receiving formal instruction (Henriques, 2000) and generate 'naïve theories' or views of phenomena in an attempt to make sense of their every day experiences (Bransford et al., 2006; Greca & Moreira, 2000). Despite the existence of a significant body of literature on students' conceptions in some subject domains (namely Physics), there has been little research undertaken to investigate the link between student preconceptions, curriculum and pedagogy in Geography. This presentation reports on the preliminary findings of a research project designed to determine the level of awareness that middle school Geography teachers in NSW (Australia) have of their student's conceptions and the way in which this knowledge is used to inform pedagogy.

## **16.15-16.35 - Exploring Students' Personal Geographies Through Fieldwork**

### **Research Paper - KS3-4**

*Victoria Cook, PhD Student, University of Leeds*

This paper reports on doctoral research undertaken with three state secondary schools in urban northern England into Year 9 students' experiences and opinions of geography fieldwork. Exploring students' differential experiences in the same physical and social setting of the 'field' was found to provide a valuable insight into the embodied, contingent and fluid nature of students' personal geographies. Some students' personal geographies were found to extend far beyond the field itself, spanning multiple localities and social and cultural spaces with their own imaginaries. These personal geographies were found to have an important influence on the students' affective fieldwork experiences, including their experiences of dirt and spirituality in the field. Given the focus on the personal scale in the revised programme of study for key stage 3 it is argued that it is important to recognise and build on this diversity. Without an awareness of the intricacies of such differences, students' diverse experiences in the field will continue to be ignored.

## **16.45-17.05 - Exploring Alternative Approaches to Key Stage 3 - a Small Scale Action Research Project**

### **Research Paper - KS3**

*Dr Phil Wood, Member, GA Assessment and Education Working Group and Simon Renshaw, Member, GA Secondary Phase Committee*

The radical changes which have occurred in the focus and approach to the new Key Stage 3 programme of study in Geography offer new opportunities to develop and innovate within the curriculum. This action research project is focused on developing two focused and related approaches to the subject. A distinct, holistic approach has been fostered which develops different content strands in concert thereby making the links between different areas of the subject more explicit, extending the understanding of concepts within students. This has been allied with a more visual approach to the subject, using a large amount of imagery, including the use of remote sensed imagery and GIS outputs as well as photos and movies.

By consciously planning for the learning of connections between areas of the subject, together with the concepts which underlie them, initial evidence suggests a greater level of student motivation and enthusiasm for the subject. There is also evidence of greater levels of active participation and creative/critical thinking than previously was the case.

## **17.20-17.40 - Health, Happiness and the Global Dimension**

### **Research Paper - KS1-2**

*Dr Stephen Scoffham, Principal Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Canterbury Christ Church University*

How can we help children to develop their thinking about the wider world? What can we learn from psychologists about the role of optimism and hope? And does the new science of education provide any clues about how we might modify or extend our classroom practice? This paper draws together findings from a range of disciplines to argue that pupils are most likely to be interested in learning about distant places when they are in a positive affective state. One of the key references is Fredrickson's 'broaden and build' theory which makes explicit links between states of well-being, increasing interest and curiosity about our surroundings and enhanced physiological and psychological health. The notion of 'flow' and creative engagement is another major idea which underpins the discussion. The conclusion seems surprisingly simple: when children enjoy geography they are likely to learn best. However, the implications in terms of both classroom practice and curriculum design are far-reaching.

## **17.50-18.10 - The Role of Play in the Field for A-level Pupils**

### **Research Paper - P16**

*Dr Glenys Owen-Jones, Outsight Learning*

Experiencing geography in the field for A-level pupils involves developing a fieldwork acumen, but it also involves complicated adjustments to new environments. In some cases, but not all, pupils will have childhood experiences of outdoor play to guide this adjustment. When pupils play, are they are learning to find triggers and associations to fit into their cognitive structure to ease cognitive dissonance? The new external experiences - the valley, the concept of water moving in different ways, the ability to describe this in words, numbers or through images - what ever it is that the learner wants to assimilate; all need to be accommodated with previous cognitive and affective experiences into a new cognitive structure. Play, then, may be a stage in this learning process, but it is often thought inappropriate for A-level pupils on the verge of adulthood, partly because play can cause teachers headaches by its very unpredictability.