

INLT Newsletter - Issue 1

October 1999

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INLT PROJECT UPDATE

INLT CONFERENCE - PLYMOUTH 2001

As you may recall, one of the decisions made in Honolulu was that the next INLT conference should be held in Plymouth in January 2001, where it will run alongside the annual RGS-IBG conference. This "in tandem" arrangement will maximise on

attendance and minimise on the organisational costs. It is envisaged that INLT delegates may wish to attend some of the RGS-IBG sessions and that some of the RGS-IBG delegates may be tempted to join in parts of our INTL programme.

At this stage the conference is still some 15 months away but I thought it might nonetheless be helpful to circulate some dates for your diary. It seems that the full schedule will be as follows, although, of course, some delegates may not be planning to stay for the entire programme.

DRAFT OUTLINE

Tuesday 2 January	Delegates assemble
Wednesday 3 January	Main RGS-IBG programme (to include sessions organised by the UK Higher Education Study Group)
Thursday 4 January	INLT sessions and main RGS-IBG programme
Friday 5 January	INLT sessions and main RGS-IBG programme
Saturday 6 January	Local field trips/delegates depart

I gather that the RGS-IBG dinner is scheduled for the Friday evening, which would leave open the possibility of an INLT social event perhaps on the Thursday evening if desired. Issues of accommodation and conference costs are yet to be fully resolved, but I gather that the RGS-IBG is intending to use local hotels rather than halls of residence. The campus is very close to the city centre and ten minutes walk from the sea, so there are several tourist and business hotels close at hand. The RGS-IBG convenor has kindly volunteered to arrange our booking and hotel accommodation too.

I would welcome any thoughts you may have on the draft schedule outlined above. More especially, I would welcome your thoughts on the kinds of sessions and themes you would like to be included in the programme. I have already received proposals for a session on Web-based instructional authoring and for perhaps a couple of sessions which would focus on learning and teaching issues in the main systematic areas (e.g. GIS, cultural geography, biogeography). In addition, it now seems likely (though not yet certain) that Plymouth will be the site for the UK's new Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Science: this may open up some possibilities. We shall also need some time for 'in-house' INLT matters (progress reviews, future plans etc.).

I envisage that the INLT programme will be scheduled each day into four 90 minute slots which will parallel the RGS-IBG timetable. Any suggestions on how you would like to use these slots would be gratefully received. For example, would you like one main theme for each day/half day or would you prefer something more varied.

Although January 2001 seems a long way off, we are already looking forward to welcoming as many INLT members as possible to Plymouth. We hope to provide an appetising programme plus, of course, a plentiful supply of Devon cream teas.

I hope to hear from you soon with your thoughts on the conference and its content.

Brian Chalkley

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LINKS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS

Creation of the project grew out of a concern that - having been created to transcend international borders - INLT did not work within artificial intellectual boundaries. In discussions at Hawaii, there was a determination to situate INLT's work in the context of wider endeavours to improve teaching and learning. The initial sketch of the project work plan focuses on developing links with three other groups of organizations and projects:

- Links within Geography (e.g. IGU CGE)
- Links with other educational bodies (e.g. UNESCO, International Council on Distance Education)
- Links with relevant technical groups and projects (e.g. the US-led international Instructional Management Systems project).

Underlying the broad aim of contributing to improvements in teaching and learning in Geography, the specific objectives of the project include:

- Publicising the work and achievements of INLT to relevant groups and in appropriate forums;
- Identifying relevant work being done by other groups and individuals, adding information to the proposed INLT database as appropriate;
- Learning from the focuses, priorities, experiences and achievements of other groups and projects, with a view to distilling lessons (whether educational, technical, legal or financial) relevant to INLT;
- Facilitating the cross-fertilisation of ideas and knowledge.

This is potentially a very large program of work! Initial steps are focusing on identifying appropriate organizations and projects with which to make contact.

David Rich

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FORMING AN INTERNATIONAL DATABASE AND CLEARINGHOUSE

Geoff Robinson (Leicester), Ken Foote (University of Texas), and Sarah Bednarz (Texas A&M) are shepherding the INLT project on forming an international database focussed on learning and teaching geography.

We will begin the project with three sub-tasks:

1. preparing four profiles of geography programs in different world regions,
 2. searching for external funding sources, and
 3. searching for additional published information comparing higher education internationally.
1. We will develop rich and detailed profiles of geography within different systems of higher education geography programs in four places we know well (Australia, UK, New Zealand, and US) and from that begin to derive categories of interest on which we will collect data from each country. We think, through time, we can compile database(s) from this information. This might include information about geography degrees offered, programs, organization of curriculum, bibliography, links to relevant Web sites, etc.

As a model we will use the Religious Movements Website at the University of Virginia (www.religiousmovements.org). These faculty and students are preparing factual profiles of basic information about American religious movements. The documentation they are assembling is really quite impressive.

Sarah and Ken will begin to draft a profile for the US with some help from others. Geoff Robinson will work on the UK. We seek volunteers for other profiles and hope to compare notes as we get the project going.

2. We are looking at the literature on international higher education to see what comparative data exists. Any and all sources of information and citations are requested.
3. We are exploring potential funding sources to fuel the project.

Sarah Witham Bednarz

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HAWAII SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

The papers which formed the basis of the Internet discussion prior to the INLT symposium at the AAG conference in Hawaii have been submitted to the Journal of Geography in Higher Education. They have now been sent to referees for review.

GENERAL ITEMS

STUDY GUIDE FOR NEW GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS

"Geography@University" is a study guide for new students at university which has been produced by Gordon Clark (a geographer) and Terry Wareham (a staff developer) who are both at Lancaster University (UK). The guide was produced under the auspices of the Geography Discipline Network (GDN) 'Key Skills in Geography in Higher Education' project led by Professor Mick Healey at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE and is which is funded by the Department for Education and Employment.

It is designed to help students make the most of their geography degrees by telling them:

- what geography is;
- how geography is learned, taught and assessed at university;
- how geography will give them new skills and help them develop as people;
- how it will help prepare them for a career and learning long after their geography degree.

The guide emphasises less the traditional skills agenda (numeracy, communication skills, team work) and more the personal attributes and intellectual maturing that are the true key skills available from a university education.

The guide costs 5.95 pounds sterling plus package and postage and is available from January 2000 from the Geography Discipline Network (GDN) at Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education.

(ISBN: 1 86174 084 0). Payment may be made by credit card (see details on the GDN Web pages at <http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn>).

Gordon Clark

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DEVELOPING VIRTUAL FIELDTRIPS: CONCEPTS, METHODS AND TESTING

We are in the process of developing a virtual fieldtrip for Stage One geography papers at the University of Auckland (Geography of the Natural Environment and Geography of the Human Environment) utilising a web based design as the delivery medium. Exploring the issue of sustainable cities the virtual fieldtrip will allow students to learn about current issues impacting the local physical and human geographies of Auckland and surrounding region.

The field trip will initially take a more technologically straight-forward approach with the incorporation of geo-referenced materials and 3D visualisations occurring at a later date. Text will be accompanied by photographs, video clips and exercises. Emphasising current themes and issues in geography the virtual field trip will permit students to view their local environment from a different perspective and visually expand concepts addressed in the first stage papers thereby increasing their understanding of otherwise unfamiliar concepts. Once the field trip model has been trialed and evaluated we hope it will be possible for students to design their own virtual field trip focussing on the themes of the course and using examples from their local area.

This interactive multimedia approach will foster increased interaction between students at the City campus and satellite campuses. Students on different campuses will be able to design and share information about their local area. It is our intention that the virtual fieldtrip will serve as a model for other geography courses. We welcome any comments from those who are working on developing virtual field trips.

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COURSE FOR NEW STAFF

A pioneering course to train newly appointed staff is under preparation in the UK. It covers new teaching staff in Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences and will be held for the first time in May 2000. The preparation and running of the course is partly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the course will be monitored by the new Institute for Learning and Teaching since the course will provide for the first time a disciplinary strand to the training of new teachers in higher education. It is hoped that the course will become an annual event under the auspices of the Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences which will start in January 2000.

The course planning team is led by Dr Gordon Clark (Lancaster University) and includes seven other highly experienced staff from all three disciplines who will together prepare materials which reflect the strengths of each subject. The course will focus on the planning and delivery of effective teaching in the three subjects in the context of the current quality and skills agendas in UK higher education. The aim is to ensure that by the end of the course all the participants will have had the chance to plan some significant improvement to their existing or envisaged teaching commitments.

The course is being managed by the Geography Discipline Network (GDN). Those seeking further details should contact Phil Gravestock (pgravestock@glos.ac.uk).

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LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS IN GEOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Dr Regina Scheyvens of Massey University in New Zealand is currently conducting research which aims to facilitate the learning experiences of postgraduate scholarship students in Geography and Development Studies at my university. These students come from the Pacific, Asia and Africa and are funded under the New Zealand government's aid programme.

She plans to run focus groups with the students and to interview support staff from around the university (supervisors, English Language Centre staff, Counselling Service Staff, International Student Office Staff) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade staff. Her questions will centre around what factors (social, financial, educational) impede and what factors facilitate students' learning experiences in New Zealand.

Dr Scheyvens is keen to find out if:

- anyone is aware of similar studies which have been conducted e.g. in Australia, Canada, Britain, the States?
- if anyone is involved in similar research?

If so, she would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact her at:

R.A.Scheyvens@massey.ac.nz

Iain Hay

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SYNERGISTIC ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONCEPTS

Comprehensive views of geography are commonly only taught at the introductory undergraduate level. Courses and textbook tend to specialise at higher stages and by fourth year, geography students usually show utter disrespect for most of the sub-disciplines that they chose to ignore. This is in striking contrast to the synergistic character of the discipline but by many university staff seen as a price necessary to pay in a world where students are encouraged to streamline their education. In addition to time constraints we identified the lack of synergistic teaching material as the main reason for this weakness. The goal of our project is to develop a base for a comprehensive web site that supports all courses in the geography department as well as some related papers in anthropology, computer science, environmental science, information science, planning, and statistics.

The Internet provides a plethora of web-based material on introductory geography including virtual fieldtrips and pedagogically well designed course materials. On the other side, students will be able to access a wealth of specialised information, often at the forefront of current research. What is missing, however, is a cross-referencing of the latter.

Dr. Albrecht started to develop such a teaching resource for his GIS and Modelling course, which to the best of his knowledge, is a world-wide unique attempt to accomplish for geography what has been shown to work very well for system science (<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/>).

Part of this course is an overview of conceptual models in geography and neighbouring spatially oriented disciplines. Originally intended as a refresher, it turned out that most of the students have never come across such an overview. The hypertext mode of web sites is ideally suited for the cross-referencing of concepts, proving to be much superior to voluminous compilations like the works of Spengler, Gebser, or the Propaedia of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The Synergistic Encyclopaedia of Geographical Concepts will allow teaching staff to build on material that did not exist effectively before. It is open in the sense that it can be accessed and employed by any student. It guides students intelligently through the "maze" of information provided on the Internet and as such supports student-centred flexible learning.

Technically, the project is extremely simple. In addition to the standard website creation tools, there are only two requirements: the knowledge of past and present concepts in geography that every teaching staff should have, plus the labour (time) to develop such a site. We are lucky with respect to the latter in that we received a teaching improvement grant, which should work as seed money for this project.

We currently have a stock of over more than 100 geographical theories, models, and concepts, which is likely to cover the majority of the immediate needs of the geography students in our department. In a first stage, we are developing illustrative figures, editing the base text, and setting up links within the local website as well as to outside URLs. The pilot will be tested in early 2000 by 2nd year and 4th year geography students. The litmus test for this pilot, however, is not so much the acceptance by a few graduate students but its reception by the colleagues in the geography and other departments of the University of Auckland (and outside?).

For further information on this project, please contact:

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Department of Geography, University of Auckland, New Zealand
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'STUDENT TRANSFERABLE SKILLS PORTFOLIOS' PROJECT

Iain Hay is leading a major 'Student Transferable Skills Portfolios' project at Flinders University. The project is intended to make a substantial and continuing contribution to heightening the profile of skills development within the Faculty of Social Sciences at Flinders University; tracking and acknowledging student skills achievements within discipline-based (cf. skills-specific) topics; and better preparing students for employment. The ultimate intention of the project is to produce an enduring mechanism that will facilitate and encourage students to produce a thoughtful, detailed and indexed personalised skills portfolio. For more information about this project, contact Iain at iain.hay@flinders.edu.au.

GEOGRAPHY DISCIPLINE NETWORK ACTIVITIES

The Geography Discipline Network (GDN) recently held a seminar on 'Strategic Issues in Developing Key Skills in Geography in Higher Education' at the headquarters of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, London. This seminar is one of three national events organised by the 'Key Skills in Geography in Higher Education' project, which is funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). A summary of the meeting can be found on the GDN Web pages at http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn/conf/rgs_ibg2.htm. A report by Jacky Birnie on 'Key Skills of Students on Entry to Geography in Higher Education' was distributed at this meeting. This report is also available on the Web at <http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn/confpubl/keystud.htm>, along with an earlier study by Tim Hall into 'Key Skills Teaching in Geography in Higher Education' (<http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn/confpubl/keyskill.htm>).

The ten GDN Guides to '*Good Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practices in Geography*', funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) have recently received favourable international reviews, which appeared in the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* (Volume 23, 2). Information about these Guides is available at <http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn/guides/index.htm>. The case studies from all the Guides have now been added to the GDN Web Resource Database, taking the total number of case study abstracts above 140. We are still looking for examples of interesting or effective teaching, learning and assessment practice in geography. If you have an example which would be relevant to the database please send the details to Phil Gravestock (pgravestock@glos.ac.uk).

The textbook '*Teaching Geography in Higher Education: a manual of good practice*' by J.R. Gold *et al.* (1991) has been converted to html and added to the GDN Web pages (<http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn/gold/index.htm>). We are grateful to Blackwell Publishers and the authors for giving us permission to reproduce this book.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

THE INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHERS CONFERENCE

The Institute of Australian Geographers 1999 conference was held at the University of Sydney over the period 27 September to Friday 1 October 1999. The WWW site for the conference can be found at

<http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/geography/conference/IAG.html>.

Iain Hay convened a special session on 'Geography in Higher Education' at this Conference to provide tertiary level geography-educators with an opportunity to discuss common educational interests, to present the results of educational research, and to advocate new ideas related to the improvement of geography learning-and-teaching. Several new members of INLT resulted from the conference.

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KEY SKILLS IN THE GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM

The Geography Discipline Network 'Key Skills in Geography in Higher Education' project, funded by the Department for Education and Employment, is holding its second national meeting at the next Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, to be held at the University of Sussex on 5 January 2000. Details about this workshop can be found at

<http://www.chelt.ac.uk/gdn/conf/sussex.htm>.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On 6 July 1999, Iain Hay presented a jointly authored paper (with Mick Healey and Ken Foote) entitled "Towards an international network for learning and teaching geography in higher education (INLT)", to the New Zealand Geographical Society Annual Conference, Geography and the Millennium held at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

A similar presentation is being made by Ken and Mick at the National Conference for Geographic Education in Boston in November.

Iain Hay

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CONGRATULATIONS!

ELEANOR RAWLING - LEVERHULME RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

I have been awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship for 1999-2000, in order to study curriculum change and school geography. Colleagues may be interested to read a brief statement about this work (below). I would be delighted to receive any comments, suggestions and/or useful references, especially with regard to the changing relationship between school geography and geography in higher education (both research and teaching) over the period 1970-2000. Although the research will focus on geography in England, I hope to be able to make some international comparisons where appropriate, so I would be interested to hear of key articles/publications/events relating to the experience of other countries.

SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY AS A CASE STUDY IN CURRICULUM POLITICS AND CURRICULUM CHANGE (working title)

Aims and Purpose of the Research:

- to use school geography as a case study of the process of development of a school subject over the past thirty years. The research will attempt to describe and analyse the educational, ideological and political events surrounding school geography in England during this period, in particular assessing the influence and significance of the National Curriculum developments compared with other curriculum agents and events. One key area of study will be the changing relationship of school geography with geography in higher education over the period. The study will seek to illuminate 'how things are and how they came to be that way' in relation to the status, content and character of school geography 1970-2000.

Eleanor M Rawling

Oxford University Department of Educational Studies, Oxford, UK

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MICHAEL SOLEM - COMPLETION OF DISSERTATION

Michael Solem recently (September 1999) completed his dissertation (The Diffusion, Adoption, and Effects of Instruction with the Internet in U.S. College Geography) at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is now a Visiting Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Many congratulations from the INLT.

Michael would be happy to discuss his dissertation research with any interested parties. Contact:

Michael Solem

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DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

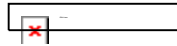
The deadline for the next INLT Newsletter is 15 MARCH 2000.

Please send comments and articles to Phil Gravestock (Email: pgravestock@glos.ac.uk).

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GDN pages maintained by [Phil Gravestock](#)



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