

Projecting Geography in the Public Domain in Canada

Geography and Schools

(FINAL edited version with additions)

A Position Paper

To be presented as a part of the Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, June 2-3, 2005 at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario Canada.

Presented by

T. Dickson Mansfield
Adjunct Professor
Faculty of Education
Queen's University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
(mansfied@educ.queensu.ca)

June, 2005

The author takes full responsibility for the perceptions, opinions, conclusions and recommendations presented herein. They do not in any way represent the official viewpoint of Queen's University, OAGEE or any other organization that the author has been or continues to be affiliated with over time.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1. The Mandate..... | page 3 |
| 2. Introduction..... | page 3 |
| 3. Part A. What is Geography? What is Social Studies? How do various people define it?..... | page 4 |
| 4. Part B. Should Geography be an essential part of every students elementary and secondary school education?..... | page 7 |
| 5. Part C. What visibility or presence does Geography have in the curriculum of our nations schools?..... | page 10 |
| 6. Part D. What is the "perceived" priority or importance of Geography in our nations schools?..... | page 12 |
| 7. Part E. Who is doing the teaching of Geography in our nations schools?..... | page 15 |
| 8. Part F. What opportunities/incentives are there for interested teachers to develop/enhance their skills in Geography?..... | page 17 |
| 9. Part G. What aspects of Geography are being taught by Who, When and Why?..... | page 20 |
| 10. Summary of "Where do we go from Here?" | page 23 |
| 11. Summary of Appendicies | page 27 |
| 12 Appendix # 1 | page 27 |
| Queen's University Faculty of Education I/S Geography student responses to the question "Why should students study geography as part of their elementary and secondary school education?" | |
| 13. Appendix #2 - NGS Centennial survey results from 1988 | page 26 |
| 14. Appendix # 3 Extract from Global Teacher, Global Learner by David Selby and Graham Pike. | page 29 |
| 15. Appendix # 4 Statistics Canada student survey re subjects they like in school | page 29 |
| 16. Appendix # 5 - Quake Angel Story | page 31 |
| 17. Appendix # 6 Ontario Geography Curriculum grades 1-12 plus secondary school graduation requirements | page 31 |
| 18. Appendix # 7 Article "Geography Teachers Urged to Inspire Pupils" from The Guardian | page 33 |

The Mandate

In January 2005, I was asked by Stuart Semple, one of the organizers of this symposium, to prepare a position paper on the theme “Geography and Schools”. The terms of reference provided are as follows:

The idea of globalization is increasingly used as a rationale in education for curriculum development, the production of textbooks, and even course selection. This often presents geographers with a paradox; namely, that while globalization has become an everyday word, our subject – the only one named explicitly for its study of the global surface – is often marginalized in school curricula that stress mathematics and science. It is also adversely affected by curriculum decisions that transfer its physical component to earth science or environmental systems.

Yet there remains a need for young Canadians to understand Canada as a place and their role in it. What part should geography play in developing this understanding of Canada, and indeed the world, and why? How can geography be projected more effectively in the public domain in order to do so? What contributions can school, academic, and professional geographers make to this end?

What follows is my response.

Geography and Schools

The purpose of this position paper is to examine the nature of Geography in Canadian schools specifically at the elementary and secondary school level, pose some questions and offer some suggestions regarding the future role of Geography in our schools. As a means of organizing my thoughts I have structured seven topics in the form of focus questions. These questions are not always mutually exclusive, however an effort has been made to maintain a logical flow and direction with a minimum of overlap. Within each question, the background and issues, as I see them, have been outlined being as “Pan-Canadian” as possible, however recognizing that more concrete data will be available from the ON context. The intent here is:

- to generate awareness of the issues,
- promote constructive dialogue arising from this paper
- plus serve as a catalyst in the development of constructive strategies as Geography educators collegially strive toward the goal of an enhanced, structured and enriched Geography Education program in Canadian Schools

The seven organizing questions include:

- A. What is Geography? What is Social Studies? How do various people define it?**
- B. Should Geography be an essential part of every students elementary and secondary school education?**
- C. What visibility or presence does Geography have in the curriculum of our nations schools?**
- D. What is the “perceived” priority or importance of Geography in our nations schools?**
- E. Who is doing the teaching of Geography in our nations schools?**
- F. What opportunities/incentives are there for interested teachers to develop/enhance their skills in Geography?**
- G. What aspects of Geography are being taught by Who, When and Why?**

At the end of each section I have endeavored to offer some direction for *action* “*Where do we go from here*” arising out of my comments. It is hoped that these ideas will form the basis of fruitful dialogue at the symposium and in the months ahead.

A. What is Geography? What is Social Studies? How do various people define it?

A reasonable place to start is to try and “define” what Geography is. For many of us this is a fundamental issue. Several definitions may serve to bring the discipline/subject of Geography more into focus for a larger audience.

“Geography is the study of the earth and the human use of it, particularly from a spatial point of view” (ON Ministry of Education, Intermediate/Senior Geography, Part A , 1988 page 5)

“Geography is an integrative discipline that brings together the physical and human dimensions of the world in the study of people, places, and environments.” (Geography for Life , National Geographic Society , 1994, page 18)

“Geography is an integrative subject that brings a variety of perspectives, both social and physical, to the study of people, places and environments around the world.” (ON Ministry of Education, Intermediate/Senior Canadian and World Studies , 2000, page 39)

Given that the Earth is essentially all we as humans have in terms of prospects for an enduring civilization, the study of Geography based on any of the definitions above would seem to be essential for educating people of all ages. Through such education we have the opportunity to position ourselves with better knowledge, skills and understandings of our planet’s physical and human interactions, such that wise decisions regarding our “sustainability” as a civilization can be assured.

It has been interesting, from the perspective of an instructor responsible for training future secondary school Geography teachers, to ask my teacher candidates in their very first class in my course, to respond to several questions related to Geography in general. Some “ponder” striving to find the “correct” answers based on their prior University and/or life experiences, however I encourage them to give me their immediate “gut” responses. The question I have extracted here is **“Why should students study geography as part of their elementary and secondary school education?”** Attached in **Appendix 1** is a sample of many similar responses over the past decade. Granted this is a “biased” audience in that they have all self-selected to teach Geography, nevertheless it is interesting to see how these people speak so eloquently about the importance of *Geography in Schools* – even before they start their B.Ed. year!!! One can wonder why is it that groups such as this can, based on their life experiences to date, speak so passionately from the heart about the role of *Geography in Schools* when this same vision does not seem to be shared by the population as a whole.....

In the world of Education there is often confusion regarding not only what Geography is, but also what Social Studies is and how the two are related. In many (most) parts of Canada, Geography is not a visible entity in the curriculum, with the exception of a hand full of optional courses at the senior high school level – more about that later. The norm is an integrated program under the heading of “Social Studies” which usually comprises , depending on the grade level, varying components of History, Civics/Government, Economics and Geography. There are many definitions for Social Studies. A typical one from a current Social Studies University methods text is as follows:

The Social Studies are:

Selected information and modes of investigation from the social sciences,

Selected information from any area that relates directly to an understanding of individuals, groups and societies,

Applications of the selected information to citizenship education

(from: Teaching Social Studies in Middle and Secondary Schools, by Peter H. Martorella, Candy M Beal, and Cheryl Mason Bolick, 4th edition, 2005, Pearson, Merrill, Prentice-Hall, page 19)

NB It is interesting to note in the definition above the lack of a specific mention of the “physical environment”. If one looks at the educational tradition in the USA, much of what Geography educators would consider to be part of Physical Geography or Environment and Resource Management, is in fact covered in the science curriculum.

As a result it is very easy for students and adults to develop a “murky” image, if at all, of what Geography is all about. It can easily be downplayed and over shadowed by the perceived higher priorities of civics and history – not that these are unimportant. As Geographers we should not be in the business of downplaying other disciplines, but rather seeking every opportunity to articulate and demonstrate the value of a clear and focused strand of geography in our nations schools.

It is interesting to reflect on how the “current” structure i.e. Social Studies and/or Geography has evolved across Canada. I have no “hard” data , however my observation is that parts of Canada in the 1950s’ and 60s’, particularly Ontario and Quebec were strongly influenced by the European school Geography tradition. As a result the subject “took off” in these parts of the country. Sadly the high profile and interest Geography enjoyed in these two provinces seems to have dissipated in recent years. In other parts of the country it is my impression, particularly in Western Canada, that there has been a greater influence in the curriculum from the USA. Clearly the US tradition is heavily weighted toward a social studies curricula with emphasis on history and civics. Again it is my perception that there has been a strong “ripple effect” from the US, which has impacted significantly in what is given the priority in the classroom.

An additional point needs to be made at the outset and that is the “perception” of what Geography is. Recognizing that no discipline should be static, it is important for us to reflect on the idea of “Old Geography vs New Geography”. It is my contention that far too many people consider Geography to be simply “Capes and Bays” i.e. place names and commodities on a map. As a result it was/is conveniently “packaged” as a sub-set of Social Studies with little attention to what the modern understanding of Geography is all about. Several examples will illustrate. When the Ontario Ministry of Education undertook it’s most recent curriculum renewal in 1999-2002, it was decided by Ministry officials that Geography, History, Politics, Economics and Law would no longer be stand alone disciplines, but rather would be grouped together under the broad heading of “Canadian and World Studies” In reality many of the courses offered in Geography relate more closely to Technology eg. Geomatics. Or indeed to Science eg. Physical Geography and Environment and Resource Management. This “Social Science” mindset or what I would call “old thinking” has done little to help anyone gain a clearer understanding of what Modern Geography is all about. A second point to illustrate is that, as a result of the Pan Canadian Science initiative in the 1990s’ ,the Ontario Ministry felt some need to bring traditional science courses into closer alignment to those in other parts of Canada. As a result, when the courses were revised in 1999-2002, there was no negotiation when traditional core parts of the Physical Geography course, particularly related to weather and climate were removed and added to the science curriculum. Many science teachers did not want these topics added to what they felt was an already overloaded curriculum. Further, many of them felt that they had little training or background to teach these additional topics and hence quickly came running to their geography colleagues for assistance and resources. In addition there had been a long standing Geology course offered in Ontario secondary schools. This course was co-branded as either a Geography or a Science credit, however almost ALL of it was taught under the umbrella of Geography. Again in the current curriculum renewal, there was no negotiation, the course was initially removed and then at the last minute reinserted as a Science credit only.

NB It is interesting to note that currently (May 2005) Ontario Science teachers are being surveyed by their professional teacher association (STAO) to determine science teachers views regarding the teaching of such topics as “weather”.

Based on this dominant national “Social Studies” pattern across Canada, it is not surprising that Geography is not generally understood and/or valued by students, parents and school administrators. Conversely, one quickly gains a perception by talking to parents that other areas of the “curriculum” are indeed important. Few people, if any will argue the value of reading/writing (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy). These “basics” have been ingrained for generations and continue to be reinforced in many ways – more on that later. On the other hand, one rarely hears parents and/or the press demanding basic literacy under the heading of “graphacy”. I view graphacy as being an essential skills set which helps the person to view relationships over time and space – be they elements of our physical and/or human world. Again, the world is all we have and global communications is linking us farther and faster every day. I feel it is incumbent on us as educators to equip our students with this set of basic skills as a way of helping them make sense of and cope in an ever increasingly complex world.

To put these skill sets into the practical reality of the school curriculum is a significant task. Numerous efforts have been undertaken to develop a sequential set of “Map and Globe Skills” to be developed as part of a spiral curriculum in elementary and secondary school. Interestingly, map and globe skills is often one of the few areas/topics of “Geography” that many elementary teachers, and I dare say the public, mention when asked about geography. This is a start, particularly if the teachers involved see “the big picture” and introduce, develop, reinforce, review, and expand these core concepts/skills as students move from grade to grade. Sadly, I am not convinced that there is any real sense of continuity and reinforcement in many curricula which would help consolidate the significance of this area of skills – certainly not compared to the highly visible sequential development in reading/writing and mathematics.

In the USA in the 1980s’, a set of basic “Geographical Ideas” began to emerge. The visibility of these themes was supported and nurtured by such national organizations as the National Geographic Society (NGS) as well as the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE). These ideas are known as the “*Five Themes of Geography*”. I feel that these five themes go along way in developing the sense of “graphacy” referred to above. The five themes include:

- **Location** – Where is it?
- **Place** – What is it like?
- **Human/Environment Interaction** – How is the Environment affected by humans? How does the Environment affect humans?
- **Movement** – How are places connected?
- **Region** – How and why is one area similar to another? How do areas differ?

Clearly, if we as educators could effectively equip our elementary and secondary school students with an understanding of and skill in applying these basic Five Themes, then they will begin to have “eyes” through which they can view the world as a Geographer does. Hopefully they will be in a much stronger position as citizens to ask questions and seek solutions to issues be it at the neighborhood or the international level. In my opinion this is a sound foundation upon which a truly “geographically literate” citizenry can be established. The question I have is whether there is a collective will out there to proceed with this? Sadly I feel that most people are not even aware of the value of this form of literacy let alone be in a position to support it. Hopefully this event is a step forward in generating awareness and subsequently creating such a collective will.

I am not here to argue that “Social Studies” is a bad thing. In fact maybe we as professional Geography educators have somewhat of an identity crisis i.e. if WE are not doing “it” under the banner of “Geography” it will not be done at all . It begs the question of what “it” is – presumably the elements alluded to above. One could argue that it is better to have students take more required Social Studies courses throughout their elementary and secondary school education, in the hope that there will be enough “Geography” built in to give students the basic knowledge and skill sets to make them literate in terms of graphacy. If stand alone

Geography courses are dominantly optional and not required, then educators do not have access to the vast majority of students to even make them aware of the scope and dimensions of this exciting discipline/subject.

Where do we go from here?

- A systematic study/survey of current (2005) elementary and secondary curriculum documents from all 13 national jurisdictions (Prov./Terr.) should be undertaken to determine the current focus/emphasis in the social studies programs. The number of compulsory and optional courses in social studies and Geography as well as how individual courses reflect the needs of a diverse population need to be identified.

NB I was very pleased to read in the most recent issue of the *Canadian Geographic* of the CCGE sponsored research by Stephen Jeans (see *Canadian Geographic*, May/June 2005, Vol. 125 #3, page 13, “getting physical”) who has recently completed an analysis of the geography curriculum in the four western provinces of Canada – this is a great first step and needs to be extended across the nation as well as be updated on a regular basis .

- As part of a) a clear national image of what elements of Geography are taught when and the amount of time in the curriculum devoted to these elements needs to be developed.

- Establish a data base of key contact people in each of the 13* Ministries/Departments of Education across Canada, specifically the people who have a direct responsibility for the parts of the elementary and secondary school curriculum related to Geography. Given that such positions are rarely long term, it is imperative to monitor this annually, with a view of developing and sustaining productive two way communications.

*To be accurate we should say 14 Ministries/Departments as the Province of New Brunswick/Nouveau Brunswick is officially bi-lingual and maintains separate English and French Departments of Education.

- As part of a national survey of Geography related curricula from K-12, look for evidence of any structured, sequential compulsory map and globe skills program. Based on such programs, generate a clear vision and rationale for such a program and illustrate how such a program can serve to benefit a child’s education plus how such a program can be integrated into other courses

B. Should Geography be an *essential* part of every students elementary and secondary school education – Perceptions vs Reality?

In the previous section I alluded to the perceived importance of Geography in a students education as expressed by my B.Ed. Geography teacher candidates (Appendix 1). It is interesting to put this up against student and young adult data collected in 1988 and 2002 by the National Geographic Society as well as the results of a current on line survey undertaken by Statistics Canada in 2005.

In the case of the NGS surveys, the 1988 survey sampled adults from age 18-24 in nine countries including Canada. In the results Canada was in the middle of the pack (ranked #5 out of 9) however that was not particularly meaningful as the results were generally low (see **Appendix 2**). Canadians are often quick to look down upon the level of “world awareness” of our southern neighbors, however Canadians did only marginally better than their US counterparts. A similar survey was undertaken by NGS in 2002, known as the Roper Poll, see the NGS web site at www.nationalgeographic.com/roperpol/. Here again the results were less than spectacular. Canadian scores were third from the bottom of the nine participating nations – only slightly ahead of the USA and Mexico and not approaching the results of countries such as Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan and Sweden. Should we compare? One can speculate as to the differences. Is it that the people sampled in higher ranked countries are that much smarter – I think not. Is it the curriculum? Do they have more heterogeneous populations resulting in greater awareness of peoples, cultures and events around the world?

One might argue that the nature and content of the questions posed was not directly linked to the specific curriculum expectations of any given Prov./Terr. in Canada let alone that of any of the other seven nations in the survey. One might also question the “relevancy/importance” of the questions posed. Is it really important that citizens know this stuff?? What is a geographically educated citizen?? How important is it for our citizens to be “globally connected”? I have heard some pundits say “ Why do students need to study that stuff, then can get it all off the Internet or TV anyway?” I would contend that having an underpinning of the knowledge and skill sets as referred to in part A above, would have gone along way in having the Canadian sample develop a broader “world view” and, as a result, do very well in surveys such as this.

Having said this I can’t help but reflect on the fact that the Ontario Ministry of Education devoted considerable resources in the 1980s’ and early 1990s’ to encouraging “Global Education” in this province. David Selby and Graham Pike were and continue to be driving forces in this initiative even though it does not seem to be a visible priority in Ontario education policy at the moment. In their book “*Global Teacher, Global Learner*” which was published in 1988, they articulated very clearly the essence of Global education. (see **Appendix 3 for some key elements**) From my perspective the need for a “world view” presented there resonates as much or more today as it did in 1988.

It is interesting, but not particularly surprising, to view the results of the current Statistics Canada Survey of students regarding subjects that they “like” in school. (see **Appendix 4**) or go to the Stats Can website at http://www19.statcan.ca/04/04_002_e.htm) From the student responses, Geography ranked lowest, for boys and girls, in **BOTH** Elementary and Secondary schools in Canada. No information is available regarding the national distribution of this survey. At the Elementary school level Social Studies ranked second lowest and at the Secondary school level Social Studies ranked third from the bottom. Not surprisingly students ranked Physical Education, in both Elementary and Secondary school, as their favorite subject. I am not suggesting that we engage in a “popularity contest” as education is far more than that and from my experience I know that students see through the shallowness of that. Most students do not shy away from courses which they perceive to be interesting, relevant, challenging and useful. It is up to us as educators to use the opportunities we have to “hook” students into the exciting, relevant and practical world of Geography!

Reflecting upon the student perceptions and survey results above, it is not particularly surprising that Geographers are not called upon to provide knowledgeable commentary to significant world events as they unfold. Rarely is a “Geographer” called upon when an “expert” is required to explain to a media audience the significance or the why of a particular event. The recent (Dec. 26/04) Tsunami in SE Asia is a case in point. There was well deserved media saturation for a number of weeks as the world reacted and then responded to this tragedy. I have no systematic data on the massive coverage, however I do not recall any Geographers being called upon to provide knowledgeable commentary on this event. I was always impressed by the US TV network ABC whose morning program “*Good Morning America*” featured for a number of years in the 1990s’ a “resident Geographer” Harm J. de Blij of Georgetown University. He went a long way in bridging the gap between professional Geography educators and the real world of people and events.

As a human interest sidebar I am reminded of the story “Quake Angel” carried in the US press about the little girl on holiday in Phuket Thailand who was able to warn family and friends about the approaching tsunami., thanks to her geography teacher, last December. (see **Appendix 5**) My friend and colleague Stuart Semple touched on this need for “positively visible” geographers in his address to CAGONT last October and I am pleased to see the topic is also being addressed in another session at this symposium.

A Geographer by definition tends to have a holistic view of our world and it’s interactions. In this day of specialization I suspect that media outlets search for the highly specialized expert in particular fields vs the generalist who might in fact be better positioned to provide a more integrated view of events. Hence we call upon the Seismologist and experts on Global Studies, who frequently have a strong background in Geography, but the name Geography never emerges. As a result the value of the discipline rarely registers on the radar of

the general public. At the local level we regularly hear of municipal govt. calling upon Urban Planners and Environmental Assessment Specialists for studies to assist them in making wise decisions. These professionals usually have a strong background in Geography as part of their training, however the word Geography is rarely heard. One might argue, Who cares what the title is? Is it that important that the name Geography is out there? After all Geography education should not be in the specific business of training individuals for specific careers in these fields, but rather in creating a more Geographically literate population who can see and understand the world from a Geographer's perspective.

As I am sure most interested Geography educators, at least in the English speaking world, know; there was a major initiative in the USA in the late 1980s' to rejuvenate geography education in that country; based in part on the results of the 1988 NGS survey noted above. An international team of educators were brought together and the result was the publication in 1994 of a blueprint for contemporary K-12 Geography education titled "***Geography for Life***". This document has served as a guide and catalyst to assist jurisdictions both in the USA and Internationally as the ongoing cycle of curriculum renewal takes place. The fact that this document chose not to use "exactly" the previously developed five themes of Geography as an organizing principal should not be seen as an issue. In fact the six themes used bear a high degree of correlation with the five themes. These six themes with their sub-sets include:

- **The World in Spatial Terms**
- **Places and Regions**
- **Physical Systems**
- **Human Systems**
- **Environment and Society**
- **The Uses of Geography**

In Canada, the CCGE led the way in developing a Canadian edition of "***Geography for Life***" in 2002. As good as these documents are, they are only documents and do not necessarily command attention from decision makers. We all know that education in Canada is a Prov./Terr. mandate and there is no Pan-Canadian curricula – even though many people that I speak with, teachers and non-teachers alike, feel that would not be such a bad idea. In fact tiny steps have been taken in this direction through the Council of Ministers of Education who funded the Pan Canadian Science Project in the 1990s' and subsequently supported, albeit unevenly it's ongoing implementation across Canada. It is my contention that part of the motivation for this cooperation was the perceived sense that science was/is a key to maintaining a prosperous Canadian society, plus the not so glamorous expectation that if the goals of the Pan Canadian Science initiative were effectively implemented, Canada might rank higher in the periodic international science testing – an international "status" thing!!!

It would seem to me that it is easier for Ministers of Education to tackle something like Science vs Geography and/or social studies. I feel that there is a greater acceptance and possibly consensus as to the importance of science vs geography and/or social studies. In the public's mind science seems to be grouped in with reading/writing and mathematics as being key basics. I do not feel that there is, at this point, any national consensus regarding the value of geography. Despite regional perspectives, one has to consider whether there are elements of Geography which merit consideration at the Pan-Canadian level. I would contend that there are. I wonder how much consensus we would get if Geography educators were asked to determine such a core? I would also hasten to add that there are MANY things which should be part of a student's core education, however there are only so many days and years of schooling in our country and every day more and more is being added onto the classroom teacher's plate. The frequent comment from the public is "the schools should be doing more on that, or that is the school's responsibility". The question we have to address is whether core elements of Geography as we understand them are relevant and important enough to be considered core throughout a significant portion of a student's elementary and secondary school education. How do we fit it all in, in an ever more crowded curriculum?

This quickly leads one to reflect upon what I would consider to be a significant “disconnect” between what students perceive they are learning in elementary and secondary school geography courses or indeed the geography components of social studies courses and what these students see as being relevant and important in their lives at the moment and in the future – again see the Stats Canada student survey results in **Appendix 4**. Recognizing that many adolescents live for the moment, it might be a bit of a stretch to assume that we can always make everything we do in the geography classroom immediately relevant, however it is incumbent upon us, in our teaching, to make clear connections to the real world as often as possible. This can involve interpreting events and decisions at the Local, Regional, National and International level. In addition we must help our students see the practical value of the knowledge and skill sets which we have the opportunity to develop in geography as they can be applied regardless to the career path they take. We need to work toward the goal of having students “connect” their “geography experiences” as a means of helping them understand the world around them plus give them the tools to succeed in many careers which do not carry the name of geography but daily apply the skill sets it provides. I still hear the old refrain “what can you do with a geography degree other than teach geography?” The bottom line is that despite the high quality of geography courses offered in Canadian schools, we as educators have not been successful in getting our message out and making that crucial “connect” with students, parents and the public at large.

Where do we go from here?

- The CCGE should consider requesting an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Council of Ministers of Education to explore the possibility of developing a vision of core skills and understandings in Geography; using the Cdn. edition of *Geography for Life* as a starting point. Recognizing that Prov./Terr. have control over education in their own jurisdictions, and that each jurisdiction would implement such a vision in varying degrees and time frames, nevertheless it would be a positive starting point.
- Work with the CAG to create and maintain a database of “key Geographers” who could be called upon by the media to respond to Global events and trends. Communicate this information to the media (print, audio/radio, visual/TV, and Internet) as well as to Govt. and Industry.

C. What visibility or presence does Geography have in the curriculum of our nations schools?

As alluded to previously, Geography is not always a highly visible/available option in our nations schools. It is useful to examine this more closely. **Appendix 6** is a starting point in trying to determine this visibility/availability. As one can see from the Ontario example, the core/compulsory “visibility/availability” of Geography as an identifiable stand alone subject is limited to grades 7-8-9 for a total of 220 hrs. over three years. Sadly it is my impression that this is the highest figure for all of Canada, however I would be pleased to be contradicted in this!! Despite the fact that Ontario has a wide variety of senior geography courses “on the books”, many of these do not see the light of day in terms of running. For a course to run there must be a base threshold of students who have selected this course. The base threshold will vary somewhat from school to school, however typically the base point would be about 25 students. If student option sheets do not reflect this demand then the course is usually cancelled and the students who had shown an interest in the course are directed to select a course, usually in another subject area. Going back one step, often courses which are listed in the Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines may never see the light of day in the course option sheets that students and parents (if asked) puruse as a basis for building their program toward graduation. Typically with a crowded curriculum schools will make decisions such as “if you are going to introduce this new course what are you going to drop? We have only so many kids in the school and we can only cut the pie so many

ways; if your new course runs it will draw students away from another course and will end up hurting other programs”.

Ontario Geography teachers sometimes feel that they are in a difficult position in terms of “marketing ‘ their subject given that they do not have direct easy access to students in grade 10 as that is the point students have to begin to make significant decisions regarding what they will take in grades 11&12. When courses are deemed to be optional, teachers interested in offering these courses have to find some means of connecting with students at this crucial time as they make course decisions. If there is no “captive audience” teachers must resort to any strategies they can to make students aware of the value of these courses and hope that will tip the scales in their favor when students make their option choices.

There is also what I call a “chicken and egg” effect in terms of what optional courses teachers/departments will elect to even offer. Recently in Ontario (2002) a number of new senior geography courses were approved for schools. As some of these courses had not been taught before there were no “standard texts” available to support these courses. On the one hand teachers/departments are sometimes reluctant to offer a course where there is no solid text support available. Conversely textbook companies are reluctant to invest in the production of a text if they feel that there will be a very limited market for the book. As a result if there is no text the course may not even be offered and if the course is not offered (and actually running) no text may be forthcoming from the publishers.

Where do we go from here?

- Clearly some mechanism to assist teachers/departments get the message across regarding the value of taking optional geography courses is in order. One has to be careful here as a “negative” approach is not what is needed i.e. take geography instead of. Rather a positive approach emphasizing the many values of geography for life, transferable skills as well as career options need to be the focus. The mechanisms to do this should be multi-faceted including such things as:

- a poster series,
- professionally developed power-point presentations available on CD for teachers,
- supports materials on geography targeted at school guidance councilors and careers teachers,
- information packages targeted at school parent councils as well as administrators.

In the case of the third item, the NCGE in the US initiated such a project in the 1990s’ and the CCGE developed a Canadian bilingual edition of the NCGE pamphlet series, however these should be reviewed, updated and presented in an attractive engaging format. A systematic distribution and implementation strategy would need to be developed to support such a project. In addition such packages would need to be flexible enough to allow them to be modified to reflect the current curricula in each of Canada’s 13 jurisdictions.

- The issue of text support is a tricky one in that there is no “national” curriculum in geography. Each jurisdiction approves courses as they see fit. Granted there are some social studies and geography texts which have been adopted in multiple jurisdictions, however Canada as a whole is a small market and textbook publishing seems to be a risky business given the number of companies which have gone under or gone out of business in the past several years. In the best of all possible worlds, the curriculum expectations of all geography courses in a given area of study eg. Physical geography, offered across the country could be close enough to support a national market. Naturally provision for regional differences would have to be accommodated.

- Support the creation of a regularly updated database of “Geography in the Curriculum (as per suggestion in A) as an important first step . This needs to be followed-up by awareness of the process and cycle of curriculum renewal eg.

- How often is the curriculum reviewed?
- What is the process for renewal?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What criteria is involved?
- Who has the opportunity for constructive input?

In the long term, this is the key point to be involved in the change process.

D. What is the "perceived" priority or importance of Geography in our nations schools?

A fundamental issue for senior geography in Ontario, and I dare say in other parts of the country is the actual structure of graduation requirements as well as post secondary school requirements. In Ontario, secondary school students are required to complete 30 credits @ 110 hrs./credit for graduation purposes (see **Appendix 6** for secondary school graduation requirements) . Of these credits 18 are locked in as compulsory and 12 are optional. Only one credit in Geography is required as part of the compulsory 18 and that is the grade 9 Geography of Canada course. In the past several years, the Ministry of Education announced that Ontario was moving from a five year high school program to a four year program. The actual number of courses required for graduation has remained the same, however the expectation is that students will graduate in four years instead of five. Typically Ontario high school students in the 1980s', 90s' and early years of this decade graduated with well over the 30 credit minimum – often 35+. As the pressure mounts for students to get out with only the required 30 credits (major cost saving in terms of Education dollars), more and more pressure is placed on all optional subjects. Despite the fact that the curriculum indicates that there are in fact 12 optional courses, students do not feel that such is the case – particularly if they have post secondary school education goals. Here the not so subtle influence of Universities and Colleges comes in. For many post secondary programs students require high school (university entrance level) courses in mathematics, sciences and English – “The Holy Trinity”. That is fine, however what it means is that students must take additional courses in grade 11 in these three areas to even get into the gr. 12 qualifying courses in these subjects. The net result is that ALL of the senior courses in optional subjects, including geography, tend to be marginalized. Even if students are interested in taking these courses, and many are, they frequently feel that they do not have room in their timetable. If sufficient numbers of students do not select a course, the course is deleted and the opportunity to expand their horizons in geography is lost as well.

Currently in Ontario the number of geography courses actually running in grade 11 and 12 is clearly declining. It is not that the courses are not interesting and challenging, it is simply a numbers game based on what students perceive they are required to have for post secondary pursuits. When you couple this with the fact that the average high school population in Ontario is approx. 750 students, this clearly limits the number of courses and sections that a school can offer. For the past several years I have done an “informal” survey of geography courses offered by the approx. 50 Ontario high schools that my B.Ed. teacher candidates are doing their extended 13 week practicum in. Clearly the variety of senior (gr. 11&12) geography courses and the number of sections is declining overall. There are even schools in this small sample where there are NO geography courses actually running anymore, beyond the compulsory grade nine Geography of Canada course which all students are required to take.

NB Longitudinal (2000-2005) Enrollment data for the optional gr. 11/12 Geography courses in Ontario was requested from the Ministry, with a view of being able to clearly illustrate trends. As of this date such data has not been made available.

Another less than subtle influence, in terms of the perceived importance of geography in relation to other parts of the curriculum, is that of **Provincial testing**. Currently students are tested in terms of competency in Language Arts/English in grades 3&6 as well as overall “literacy” at the beginning of grade 10. Interestingly there are a number of “elements” in the literacy test which Geography teachers in gr. 9 are asked to reinforce in preparation for the literacy test which is administered in October of the gr. 10 year. In the area of mathematics,

students have a provincial test in grades 3, 6 and 9. Currently there is no such Provincial testing program in the Social Studies or Geography areas. However it is interesting to note that provincial testing for Social Studies in gr. 5&8 (assume History in gr. 8 as there is no Social Studies) as well as gr. 10 History was proposed by the Ministry of Education in Ontario in 2001, but subsequently quietly dropped. The presence of these areas of “priority” serve to send a message to parents, students, teachers and administrators alike as to what is “really important” and should get the priority in the curriculum. One simply has to look at the Ontario report card to see the amount of actual space on the form devoted to Language Arts and Mathematics as compared to Social Studies to have this perception visibly reinforced. Not for a moment am I denigrating Language Arts and Mathematics –they are indeed core, however what I am saying is that both of these elements reinforce the relative down playing of other parts of a crowded curriculum, including geography.

For a discipline/subject to flourish there needs to be “advocates” at the grass roots level. Again using Ontario as a case study, it is worthwhile to report on several trends which have, in my view, played a significant role in how well geography has fared. First is the changing presence and role of support personnel at the Ministry of Education and Board of Education level. For at least a decade, there has not been a sustained commitment to having a full time permanent position at the **Ministry of Education** with a clear portfolio responsibility for Geography Education. Wonderfully talented individuals have been seconded for short term contracts, however there has not been a sustained commitment to this type of role, not just in Geography but in other disciplines as well. This lack of a “collective memory” is something we all pay a price for! Currently in Ontario, the person seconded to the Ministry to manage the recently completed review of the Elementary Social Studies and Secondary Canadian and World Studies courses will exit the scene at the end of June 2005. It has been suggested that it is not likely that there will be another “real person” with this kind of dedicated portfolio (Social Studies/History/Geography/Politics/Economics/Law) until the next review of these courses comes up again in the cycle – which could be in about nine (9) years!!

If we go back a decade, many **Boards of Education** across the Province had teams of consultants who had a dedicated portfolio related to supporting classroom teachers in particular disciplines – including geography. This leadership role served to provide both elementary and secondary school teachers with front line support, particularly where the teachers’ background in the discipline was minimal. In addition these consultants proved to be a significant catalyst in supporting local, regional and provincial (OAGEE) professional development programs. Even though these people were always busy, they did have some time and resources to provide overall leadership to the discipline eg. facilitating and supporting subject councils. Clearly OAGEE benefited over the years as people in these roles have contributed significantly to the success and sustainability of this organization which celebrated it’s 50th Anniversary in 2001. In the past decade, new priorities and financial constrictions have emerged at the Board of Education level across the province. Now there are very few curriculum consultants in general and almost none who have a dedicated portfolio focused on geography. This visible support is truly missed by the provinces geography teachers.

At the **school level** the pressure of economics has also had a significant impact on the visible leadership for subjects such as geography. Again if one went back a decade or more the pattern in most secondary schools in Ontario was to have department heads for all of the major curriculum areas – including geography. This person was the “front line” leadership person in the school who was the advocate for the discipline. The role involved, among other things, leadership and maintaining subject standards, professional development, and keeping the school administration informed regarding details of the discipline. In the past decade this role, particularly in geography has been gradually disappearing. These positions have been replaced by “super heads” who have the front line responsibility for several related, and in some instances not related disciplines. The person selected usually does not receive any “time” consideration, only a small stipend. As a result the amount of time devoted to overall curriculum leadership has declined. An example of this is the decline of “Subject councils at the Board of Education level. This forum of subject Department heads, including geographers, formally served as a significant catalyst in promoting ongoing local professional development. This decline of

visible leadership at the local level has made the need for a strong Provincial organization (OAGEE) all the more important.

Another issue that geography educators face in their efforts to have geography taken seriously by students, parents and administrators is a perceived lack of visible support by **the post secondary school community**. Few colleges or universities ask for or even suggest it would be an asset to have secondary school geography courses, of any number of type as a precursor for entering their geography related post secondary school programs. Clearly there are a few exceptions, however the norm is that colleges and universities ask for strong marks in English, mathematics and sciences coming out of secondary school. The message, real or implied is that whatever geography is studied in secondary school is not particularly important/relevant because the colleges and universities will teach them all they need to know about the discipline once they enter their programs. I would qualify this viewpoint by saying that I have not done a systematic analysis of current college and university entry requirements for students interested in geography. I am aware that some colleges do have limited “articulation” agreements with secondary schools. A case in point are colleges which offer an emphasis in travel and tourism. If students come out of secondary school with geography courses in travel and tourism they may qualify to move directly into more advanced college courses and bypass the introductory courses. This can prove to be a positive motivator for secondary school students to select such courses, if in fact they have some sense of their post secondary school career goals. Such is often not the case as the vast majority of students who have post secondary school aspirations, believe up until the reality of the marks hit them that they will be going to university not college. College in many cases ends up being the “fallback” position. Typically approx. 30% of secondary school graduates proceed directly to tertiary university based education. It is acknowledged that additional students do pursue university training at a later date. As teachers we all have enjoyed the experience of a university education and as a result tend to be biased in that direction. Overall, in my opinion, we, teachers and society as a whole, do not give enough recognition, support and understanding of the value and opportunities arising from a post secondary college education. Ironically there is a current trend where increasing numbers of students attend university to obtain a basic degree and then go to college to take a program which will get them a job. The net result of this is that space in college courses is being filled by university grads at the expense of students entering directly from high school.

Looking specifically at the **universities**, it is my perception that there is not a widespread awareness or acceptance of the high quality International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) geography programs offered in a relatively small, but growing number, of secondary schools and private schools across Canada. These geography courses are as rigorous as most introductory, first year, university courses in geography – recognizing the wide diversity in the colleges and universities across our nation. The fact that students taking these courses face a internationally accepted external examination does not seem to resonate with the university community.

Another dimension of the perceived priority or importance of Geography is to consider ***The Great Canadian Geography Challenge***. This CCGE program, initiated in Canada in 1994 for students in grades 6-7-8-9, evolved from the highly successful “Geography Bee” organized by the NGS. For the past 11 years the CCGE has worked very hard to raise the awareness of and interest in the Geography Challenge. CCGE has never been able to generate wide spread national media and TV coverage for this student competition. By way of comparison, The CanWest Can-Spell National Spelling Bee arrived on the scene in April of this year. The national finals were held on prime time TV (Global Network) and the results were carried on a FULL page two coverage in the National Post on April 18/05. Needless to say the people who are in the world of media and journalism have the pulse of the nation – spelling bees are something that people perceive as being a basic and important. We as Geographers have yet to make such a breakthrough!

Where do we go from here?

- A systematic survey needs to be initiated to determine, on an ongoing basis, college and university entry requirements for students interested in studying some area of geography at the post secondary school level. In addition, it should be noted if any of these institutions recommend, not even demand, particular secondary school geography courses as being an important background or recognized asset for students wishing to enter these programs.
- A systematic program needs to be developed, reflecting the secondary school geography course offerings in each Prov./Terr., to determine areas for possible articulation agreements with colleges. When completed an active in-school campaign needs to be initiated to create awareness, interest in and commitment to such an initiative.
- In terms of the IB and AP programs, universities need to become more aware of these programs and be proactive in encouraging secondary schools to consider offering them. Clearly some form of “carrot” needs to be out there eg. offering the equivalent of one university credit if the IB or AP mark is high enough or at the very least direct entry into second year courses. It is recognized that in parts of Canada, the lack of current secondary school geography courses, incl. IB and AP make some of this a stretch. Nevertheless this is a bit of a “chicken and egg” situation in that I would contend that if visible/tangible incentives, as suggested here, were offered by universities and colleges I feel it would generate a positive response from secondary schools – if not immediately at least in the mid term as the normal cycle of curriculum renewal comes into play.

E. Who is doing the teaching of Geography in our nations school?

Up to this point there has been a good deal of discussion about the nature of the geography and geography related curriculum itself as well as some of the real issues related to its role in the contemporary curriculum. An additional element to consider is who is actually teaching this subject in our schools. Beginning at the elementary level, it is usual that the classroom teacher throughout most of the primary, junior and intermediate years of elementary school (K-8) is the “core” teacher for most of the curriculum. In essence the teacher is required to be the true “renaissance person” being knowledgeable, informed, skilled and passionate regarding ALL facets of the curriculum. The reality is that teachers work to their strengths as well as emphasize parts of the curriculum where there are external pressures i.e. provincial and/or national testing. If geography does not happen to be a particular interest/passion of the teacher it is understandable that it will not be a high priority in terms of what happens in the classroom – once the door is closed! If a teacher, is not comfortable with geography, he/she will teach the minimum perceived to be acceptable and not use the discipline as an integrating vehicle around which numerous themes can be developed.

To be fair, many elementary school teachers have limited or no formal background in geography, particularly if their own elementary and secondary school experience involved little which could be identified as geography. Related to that is the formal training prospective elementary school teacher candidates are given in their B.Ed. year. At Queen’s University, which is probably typical of the pattern across Canada, teacher candidates receive only **18 hrs.** of curriculum instruction to cover the whole social studies curriculum K-6 as well as gr. 7-8 History and gr. 7-8 Geography. This may not seem significant until you put this up against the time allocated for elementary Language Arts, Mathematics and Science who EACH get **36 hrs.** of curriculum contact time. A teacher candidate does not have to be a “rocket scientist” to perceive where his/her priorities should be when they start teaching. As mentioned previously the report card, at least in Ontario certainly reinforces this set of priorities. In terms of comparison, teacher candidates at Queen’s seeking qualifications to

teacher intermediate/senior geography receive a minimum of 72 hrs. of curriculum instruction in the discipline. Approx. half of their 13 week school based practicum would also be in geography classrooms.

In terms of preparation of secondary school teachers, the B.Ed. training requirements vary significantly across the nation – reflecting the curriculum in the respective Prov./Terr.. That being said, it is my understanding that in many parts of the country secondary school teacher preparation is “generic” in nature, with a minimum of specialization in specific disciplines. In other words, on the Prov./Terr. certification the person is designated as a qualified teacher vs a qualified teacher in specific subject areas. As a result a teacher can be hired to “teach” and be placed wherever the school administration sees fit. Normally wise administrators will place teachers in their areas of strength and academic background. This is not necessarily always the case, even in Ontario where teachers receive basic teaching qualifications in two disciplines. School administrators will sometimes have other agendas when hiring eg. the need for support in a particular extra curricular activity.. As a result, the teacher may be placed to teach a subject, including geography with minimal or no background in the subject. Few new teachers will decline the opportunity to take this on if it means getting their foot into the door. The result, with some exceptions, is a person who may be “going through the motions”, not inspiring the students and staying one chapter ahead of the students in the textbook. Further, at least here in Ontario, parents generally have the perception that the teacher assigned to teach their son/daughter has at least minimal (hopefully more than one or two introductory courses) university background in the subject being taught - including geography. Unfortunately this is all too often not the case as Principals often classify geography as a “general subject” and feel that almost anyone can teach it. This can be particularly disastrous in the compulsory courses where if students leave feeling that geography was a bore and not particularly relevant then the chances of them considering future courses is minimal.

An additional issue relates to the building of a basic threshold level of school staff involvement in the discipline, in this case geography. Frequently a geography or social science department head will endeavor to recruit new teachers to strengthen the departments “depth” in specific areas of the discipline eg. Geomatics. As a result of contract agreements, it is not possible to simply look for the best person, a department may be required to take a person who is surplus/bumped from another school. This may or may not work out well in terms of building depth and strength in a department. Following this line of thought for a moment we see the next challenge for the department head is retaining good teachers who complement the strengths already in the department. Unless course section numbers are sustained these teachers are reassigned into other discipline areas or indeed declared surplus to the school or Board.

Where do we go from here?

- Undertake a national survey of teaching qualifications for teaching Social Science, particularly Geography. Elements in the survey might include:
 - at the Faculties of Education level- the amount of time required in the B.Ed. year for preparation of teachers at the Elementary (Social Studies) as well as Secondary (Geography)
 - at the Faculties of Education – the number of University credits required in the discipline of Geography required as a prerequisite to enter any program of teacher qualification with Geography as an identified “teachable” including. B.Ed. year or additional qualifications courses(ABQ) which are often done on-line
 - gather data from the various Ministries/Departments of Education re the number of practicing teachers who have “Honours Specialist” qualifications – look for patterns and trends over time

F. What opportunities/incentives are there for interested teachers to develop/enhance their skills in Geography?

In the previous section I discussed the academic and professional background of the elementary and secondary school teachers who deliver the social studies and geography courses in Canadian schools. As we all know the vast majority of teachers, both elementary and secondary, are true professionals dedicated to the students they are teaching and the disciplines they teach. Working from this base, we know that most teachers see themselves as “life long learners”, who are prepared to devote a good deal of their own time and financial resources to regularly enhance their knowledge and skills in their respective disciplines. When one looks beyond the local school and Board/District professional development supports, the differences in “opportunity” for ongoing professional development in geography education are significant across the country.

At the **Prov./Terr. Level** there are varying levels of organization and activity in the area of geography and social studies. In only two jurisdictions, Quebec and Ontario, are there broadly based recognized teacher led organizations with the name geography in them (QGTA and OAGEE). In many of the other jurisdictions there is a social studies organization. In some of the smaller jurisdictions no such formal organization exists. These organizations offer varying levels of professional development support including, a well developed web site, a periodical/journal, Prov./Terr. conferences, regional workshops, special publications as well as advocacy for the discipline with their respective provincial Ministry/Department of Education. It is not surprising that in Prov./Terr. where geography is not particularly visible, the emphasis on geography in the priorities of these organizations is relatively low – again a chicken and egg scenario. Even in Ontario where OAGEE has a long tradition of providing first class professional development support and advocacy for geography, it continues to be a constant struggle to get teachers involved. Less than 50% of the 800+ secondary schools in Ontario maintain a membership in this grassroots organization. Granted some of the other 50% of schools are represented by individual teacher memberships. Considering that this is the key organization in the Province which supports geography education one would hope that there would be enough interest in ALL secondary schools to maintain at least one membership in this organization but such is not the case.

The focus of the teacher led social studies and geography organizations varies considerably. In some jurisdictions there is an effort to offer professional development for teachers in BOTH elementary and secondary panels. In most, the emphasis is on the secondary school context. In the case of Ontario, OAGEE has worked for years to build bridges with colleagues in the elementary panel, especially those teaching the dedicated grade 7&8 geography courses and to a limited degree with social studies teachers working at the K-6 level. In reality most elementary school teachers see themselves, by necessity, as generalists and do not have the time or interest to join a number of specific subject based teacher organizations such as OAGEE. In addition there is no Ontario social studies organization focused on elementary schools where OAGEE and other interested geography educators could contribute support through conferences, regional workshops and the development of support materials.

At the **national level** there is no parallel organization, at least at this point, which has the visibility of the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) as is the case in the USA and the Geographical Association in the UK. NCGE also has the “cache” of having visible support from the post secondary education community – colleges and universities. This recognition, support, leadership and direct involvement by the tertiary education community has gone a long way in establishing a sense of credibility for geography at the school, community and district level. It is acknowledged that the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is also a strong organization which has nation wide programs and impacts in the USA.

In Canada the CCGE, established in 1993, has done stalwart work as our only “pan-Canadian” geography teacher organization. Unfortunately the funding base for this organization, not dissimilar to what Prov./Terr. Teacher led subject associations face, is minimal and the task of making an impact is great. The

CCGE is attempting to support elementary and secondary school teachers who have an interest in geography all across Canada. That means 13 different education systems, distributed over the world's second largest political entity, in terms of geography. In addition the CCGE's mandate is to provide such supports in both official languages. Given this monumental mandate, the CCGE has, and continues to do some great things, however the reality is that only a relatively small number of teachers see any direct ripple effect from the CCGE's committed efforts. Some of the CCGE initiatives include:

- the CCGE website,
- the Great Canadian Geography Challenge
- the national and regional summer institute program,
- the annual mail out of the resource package for teachers on the CCGE mailing list
- the establishment of informal regional "chapters" of the CCGE.

All of these are positive steps, however the reality is still a "gentle ripple" vs the major wave of impact that we would all like to see. One of the challenges coming out of this symposium is to seek additional strategies and resources such that the initial efforts of the CCGE over the past 12 years can be extended such that the name of the CCGE will become a valued "household" word in the vocabulary of geography educators across our nation.

At the **professional academic level** the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) provides leadership and opportunities for sharing research at the university level. Until recently there has been, in my opinion, little tangible effort on the part of the CAG to address the status of geography education at the elementary and secondary school level. In the past several years there has been an increasing recognition that this is an area that the CAG needs to get more actively involved with. The fact that we are all here at this conference is a positive step forward. In the recent past I feel that there has been a lack of understanding on the part of the university community regarding the scope and issues related to elementary and secondary school geography. The current decline in student enrollment patterns for university courses in geography has served to be a useful "wake up call" for the CAG. For years I have heard CAG members lamenting the fact that secondary school geography teachers were not joining the CAG or attending their conferences. This kind of comment illustrates in my mind a clear lack of understanding of the needs of the secondary school geography teacher. Hopefully we are at the threshold of making positive steps to construct more relevant partnerships between the elementary/secondary/tertiary levels of geography education based on knowledge, mutual respect and understanding.

At the **Prov./Terr. Government level**, the Ministries/Departments of Education do provide some elements of support for teachers ongoing professional development. Clearly some teachers are involved in the curriculum renewal and implementation process. This opportunity for the few selected is outstanding, however this process is impossible to participate in for the vast majority of teachers. Each government employs various strategies to provide support for the teachers in their jurisdiction. As an example, in Ontario the Ministry of Education has provided teachers and Boards of Education with:

- curriculum policy documents which outline the overall and specific expectations to be included in social studies and geography courses from K-12
- teacher developed "profiles" or sample units which illustrate to teachers how to construct an actual program based on the policy documents
- examples of student work called "exemplars", based on the expectations which has been assessed against Provincial standards (level 1-2-3-4) so teachers can actually see the kind and level of student achievement expected at each level.
- train the trainer regional curriculum implementation workshops

This is a solid foundation, however beyond this it is generally up to the individual teacher to modify the program elements to meet the nature of the students and community. In larger Boards there are still central supports in terms of curriculum support staff who coordinate the development of specific support materials and

provide after school and PD day workshops. Unfortunately these supports, as mentioned earlier, are in the minority and the vast majority of teachers are essentially “on their own” in terms of going beyond the elements provided by the Ministry of Education.

In some Prov./Terr. the **teacher federations/associations/unions** play a significant role in providing professional development support for teachers. Here in Ontario we have at least six (6) teacher organizations – three each at the elementary and secondary school level (Public, Catholic and French) . Each organization has it’s own interests and priorities. I do not have a current perspective of what all of these groups are currently doing, if anything, related specifically to geography education. As an example I do know, that in the recent past the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) has financially supported the development of publications designed to assist teachers implement the new grade nine geography program. In addition, teachers are able to apply to the local and provincial levels of this organization to seek PD funding to enable them to attend conferences. Further, the Federation worked in partnership with the Ministry of Education to staff and offer regional implementation workshops/institutes for teachers when the new geography curriculum was being implemented in 2000-2002.

Another area which offers opportunities for teachers to obtain ongoing professional development is through **Government agencies** as well as the private sector. The education division of many government agencies are anxious to work with teachers to fulfill their mandate of serving and educating the public. It is sometimes a “hit and miss” thing to find out who is offering what. An example of one Federal Govt. agency which has made a significant commitment to supporting geography teachers is Parks Canada (Ontario Division). Currently they have a broad range of initiatives designed to specifically support geography teachers and students. For example:

- a very informative and useful web site for both teachers and students
- a program whereby Parks Canada staff visit Faculties of Education to educate prospective teachers regarding the resources they offer
- a program of having Parks Canada offer workshops and resources, incl. fact sheets on all of the National Parks and theme posters, at provincial and regional teacher conferences, including. OAGEE
- running a poster contest for students tailored specifically to meet the course expectations of the grade nine geography program in ON
- provision of data sets to facilitate the implementation of high school GIS courses

This is only one illustration as there are MANY other Govt. agencies which have been undertaking outreach programs with both elementary and secondary school teachers all across the country. Similarly **the private sector** is frequently anxious to get it’s message across to teachers. Over the past decade, I have seen numerous examples of teacher resources, videos, PD workshops and summer institutes all underwritten by the private sector. The motivation for them to invest in this is, as I see it, to provide opportunities for students and teachers to get a “balanced” perspective on particular industries who sometimes feel that they get portrayed in a negative light by the media and educators. A case in point might be the Ontario Agra-Food Education Inc. (OAFE). There are counterparts of this organization across most of Canada. Funding to support their education initiatives comes from the various sectors of the agriculture industry. In this case, OAFE offers elementary and secondary school a wide range of professional development supports including:

- a useful web site for both students and teachers
- a wide range of print and non-print information and classroom strategy resources at a minimal or no cost
- teacher facilitators available to present workshops on their various resources at Faculties of Education, school board PD days and teacher conferences
- Summer institute programs which offer interested teachers an in-depth opportunity to understand more about the agriculture industry

Where do we go from here?

- The good offices of the CCGE/RCGS need to be used to continue to develop the concept of a “one shop” location to find out information regarding geography related professional development opportunities and resources all across Canada. Efforts need to be initiated to first of all identify as many of the various “service providers” interested in offering geography related professional development (in its many forms). On the one hand these organizations need to know that it is worth their while getting their message out via the CCGE. On the other hand the CCGE needs to be able to offer a quick turn around in getting relevant information up on to its web site and then there has to be developed some strategy for getting the word out at the grass roots school level that this is the site to check out regularly if you are looking for PD opportunities. Use of teacher publications and websites should be built in as an important cross referencing vehicle.
- A data base of Professional organizations, Govt. agencies as well as members of the private sector needs to be established and updated on a regular basis. In addition, Government agencies frequently have an “education or public outreach program”. Frequently Government personnel are anxious to find ways to get their message across to teachers and students. CCGE can serve a very useful role here in:
 - making Government agencies aware of the breadth and depth of the Geography curricula nationally
 - serving as broker, so to speak, in assisting these agencies “connect” with good geography educators across the country to assist them develop, field test and refine appropriate curriculum resources
- An effort to cross link the web sites of all of these organizations to the CCGE site should be considered, however this would not preclude the first suggestion which would be an “entry point” vs having to explore the site of each organization to see what PD opportunities exist.
- It would also be useful to build in links with other existing social studies, geography and federation/teacher union sites.

G. What aspects of Geography are being taught by Who, When and Why?

Tackling this aspect of *Schools and Geography* may be like opening up “Pandora’s Box”. To do the question any degree of justice one would have to not only do a detailed review of the geography and geography related (social studies and science) curriculum documents in all Canadian jurisdictions. In addition one would have to have some mechanism of assessing who is teaching what at the school level. In section A, the call for a clearer picture of what is expected to be taught has been suggested. In section E some attention was directed toward the issue of who is doing what. Here I wish to raise several related issues, albeit at a purely qualitative level without any quantitative data to support the perceptions I have developed over the past decade or two.

Unfortunately there seems to be a significant “disconnect” between the programs taught at the elementary and secondary school levels. Partly the lack of long term sequential planning at the Ministry of Education is, in my view, partly to blame. For example, in the current Ontario geography program in gr. 7&8 many of the examples cited for teachers use in meeting the course expectations are Canadian. At one level that is fine, however the result often is that the generalist teacher will focus heavily on Canada and Canadian examples – despite the fact that both of these courses are intended to have a more “global” focus. That might not seem to be an issue, however students move on to grade 9 and are required to take a full high school credit in Canadian Geography. Naturally good high school teachers will assess the background knowledge and skills of their students and use that as a base for moving forward. Nevertheless there can be the issue of students “perceiving” that this is just ANOTHER course on Canada. The student refrain of “been there, done that, seen that” in terms of the course content, strategies and resources is a danger – despite the fact that courses are significantly different. The last thing we want is for the students to think that they are being “Canadaed to death!”. There can be a danger that this is all that is needed to “turn them off” regarding the possibility of selecting a senior

“optional” geography course. The bottom line is that there is NO coordinated shared vision of what students are expected to learn in gr. 7-8-9 Geography – the only place in the Ontario curricula where it is compulsory. The separate components are there if one looks for them but not as a “package”. Given the busy life of the typical gr. 7/8 teacher, they are probably not about to seek out the secondary school component of the “package” and similarly the gr. 9 teacher is not likely to search back to review the gr. 7/8 foundations.

Given that Geography is frequently not taught in a continuous spiral curriculum, we can’t assume that students coming to us in senior courses will have had a shared common background in terms of knowledge and skill development in our discipline. The result is that the teacher must determine the students’ background in the area at the beginning of the course and then proceed, often on a broken front, to provide a rich and meaningful experience. This is indeed far different from the locked in sequential courses in Mathematics, Science and English where upper level teachers can “assume” that students will have a common background of skills and experience when they begin a course.

I sometimes hear of the “terror of the curriculum”, meaning that teachers, often those with a minimal background in the discipline or are new to teaching, are reluctant to move away from what might be perceived is a dry list of expectations which need to be “covered” – come hell or high water! The result may mean classes which are not particularly inspiring, yet legally covering the stated Ministry requirements. We all know what that means for future optional course selection! Sometimes this may be a convenient excuse for lack of effort and imagination. If one reads the various course expectations carefully there is tremendous scope for innovative teachers to develop exciting, challenging and relevant courses. In addition, the range of resources to enrich all of our courses is continuously expanding – if we make the time to search for them (see previous section on PD opportunities). What it usually comes down to, when a student is asked why she/he liked or disliked, in our case geography, is the impact of the actual TEACHER not the COURSE MATERIAL. The power of the individual is crucial for all educational experiences, but it is just that much more for disciplines such as geography where most of our courses are optional.

In some instances teachers, not just in geography classes, have put an inordinate amount of time into having students accumulate knowledge without making significant efforts to help student understand the value of acquiring this knowledge – past the final exam. Similarly some courses offer a minimum of opportunity for students to be exposed to, develop and extend a broad range of geography skill sets. Here again is an opportunity, sometimes not taken advantage of, for teachers to give students valuable “tools/skills” which can be applied in many facets of life – their personal lives, other courses in secondary and post secondary school, as well as career applications. This is particularly true when it comes to FIELD WORK. Here Geography teachers have the opportunity to reinforce the relevancy of their discipline. Unfortunately I hear of more and more teachers who are saying the doing field work is just too much hassle in the contemporary school context. This sense of “relevancy” is an area we ALL need to stress more. I recognize that there are many wonderful teachers “out there” who do this on a day to day basis, however, as geography is for the most part “optional” it is incumbent on all of us to demonstrate on a regular basis the relevance of what is being taught. To extend this thought further, it is my sense that we as geographers have not done a very good job of explaining to parents the nature and value of the geography courses their children are in. It of course begs the question of how do we get to communicate with parents if students do not elect to take geography courses – again the “chicken and egg” issue.

Clearly this perception is not mine alone. A recent article by Mathew Taylor in *The Guardian* (Nov. 25/04, page 13 – see **Appendix 7**) illustrates the situation in the UK. Inspectors are quoted as indicating that “facts” alone fail to convey the discipline’s (geography) relevance. I find this very interesting given the very strong tradition that School Geography has had in the UK. Ironically I believe that many geography educators in the USA look to Canada (often believing what goes on in Ontario represents all of Canada) as a “Mecca” of Geography education in North America. Similarly I feel that many Canadians regard the Geography tradition in

UK schools in the same light. I wonder at times if it is not all a “house of cards” which is in danger of falling down around us.

Where do we go from here?

- Encourage the Ministries/Departments of Education to develop Elementary/Secondary curricula in a more coordinated/complementary manner
- Encourage Prov./Terr. initiatives to help elementary and secondary school teachers gain a clearer “big picture” of the curriculum and their role in it. A good first place to start might be the Faculties of Education.
- Develop strategies to illustrate the practical relevancy/value of Geography skills for students, parents and education administrators (as per NCGE initiative)
- Encourage field work as a relevant process not just a “fun event”. Illustrate the integrative value of fieldwork where skills eg. the five themes of Geography, can be developed in the local community. In addition teachers need to see concrete examples of how to integrate and reinforce related skills in mathematics, language, the arts and science.
- the CCGE should work to support/facilitate the presence of a “Geographer” on the executive of all Prov./Terr. Social Studies subject associations – as per the example of OAGEE

I hope that in the preceding pages I have increased your awareness of the scope of ***Geography and Schools***. I have tried hard not to be too cynical or negative, however I have tried to not back away from identifying issues related to the health of our discipline which, in my view, we MUST address. I recognize that progress is a slow thing, especially in education. We are making progress and we should not lose sight of these successes, nevertheless the task ahead of us is indeed significant if we want geography to be alive and well in our nations schools in the decades ahead. The fact that this event is taking place, and is one piece in the jigsaw of initiatives being pursued by the CCGE, augers well for the future.

Summary of Where do we go from here?

A. What is Geography? What is Social Studies? How do various people define it?

- A systematic study/survey of current (2005) elementary and secondary curriculum documents from all 13 national jurisdictions (Prov./Terr.) should be undertaken to determine the current focus/emphasis in the social studies programs. The number of compulsory and optional courses in social studies and Geography as well as how individual courses reflect the needs of a diverse population need to be identified.

NB I was very pleased to read in the most recent issue of the *Canadian Geographic* of the CCGE sponsored research by Stephen Jeans (see Canadian Geographic, May/June 2005, Vol. 125 #3, page 13, “getting physical”) who has recently completed an analysis of the geography curriculum in the four western provinces of Canada – this is a great first step and needs to be extended across the nation as well as be updated on a regular basis .

- As part of a) a clear national image of what elements of Geography are taught when and the amount of time in the curriculum devoted to these elements needs to be developed.
- Establish a data base of key contact people in each of the 13* Ministries/Departments of Education across Canada, specifically the people who have a direct responsibility for the parts of the elementary and secondary school curriculum related to Geography. Given that such positions are rarely long term, it is imperative to monitor this annually, with a view of developing and sustaining productive two way communications.
- * To be accurate we should say 14 Ministries/Departments as the Province of New Brunswick/Nouveau Brunswick is officially bi-lingual and maintains separate English and French Departments of Education.
- As part of a national survey of Geography related curricula from K-12, look for evidence of any structured, sequential compulsory map and globe skills program. Based on such programs, generate a clear vision and rationale for such a program and illustrate how such a program can serve to benefit a child’s education plus how such a program can be integrated into other courses

B. Should Geography be an *essential* part of every students elementary and secondary school education – Perceptions vs Reality?

- The CCGE should consider requesting an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Council of Ministers of Education to explore the possibility of developing a vision of core skills and understandings in Geography; using the Cdn. edition of *Geography for Life* as a starting point. Recognizing that Prov./Terr. have control over education in their own jurisdictions, and that each jurisdiction would implement such a vision in varying degrees and time frames, nevertheless it would be a positive starting point.
- Work with the CAG to create and maintain a database of “key Geographers” who could be called upon by the media to respond to Global events and trends. Communicate this information to the media (print, audio/radio, visual/TV, and Internet) as well as to Govt. and Industry.

C. What visibility or presence does Geography have in the curriculum of our nations schools?

- Clearly some mechanism to assist teachers/departments get the message across regarding the value of taking optional geography courses is in order. One has to be careful here as a “negative” approach is not what is needed i.e. take geography instead of. Rather a positive approach emphasizing the many values of geography

for life, transferable skills as well as career options need to be the focus. The mechanisms to do this should be multi-faceted including such things as:

- a poster series,
- professionally developed power-point presentations available on CD for teachers,
- supports materials on geography targeted at school guidance councilors and careers teachers,
- information packages targeted at school parent councils as well as administrators.

In the case of the third item, the NCGE in the US initiated such a project in the 1990s' and the CCGE developed a Canadian bilingual edition of the NCGE pamphlet series, however these should be reviewed, updated and presented in an attractive engaging format. A systematic distribution and implementation strategy would need to be developed to support such a project. In addition such packages would need to be flexible enough to allow them to be modified to reflect the current curricula in each of Canada's 13 jurisdictions.

- The issue of text support is a tricky one in that there is no "national" curriculum in geography. Each jurisdiction approves courses as they see fit. Granted there are some social studies and geography texts which have been adopted in multiple jurisdictions, however Canada as a whole is a small market and textbook publishing seems to be a risky business given the number of companies which have gone under or gone out of business in the past several years. In the best of all possible worlds, the curriculum expectations of all geography courses in a given area of study eg. Physical geography, offered across the country could be close enough to support a national market. Naturally provision for regional differences would have to be accommodated.

- Support the creation of a regularly updated database of "Geography in the Curriculum (as per suggestion in A) as an important first step . This needs to be followed-up by awareness of the process and cycle of curriculum renewal eg.

- How often is the curriculum reviewed?
- What is the process for renewal?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What criteria is involved?
- Who has the opportunity for constructive input?

In the long term, this is the key point to be involved in the change process.

D. What is the "perceived" priority or importance of Geography in our nations schools?

- A systematic survey needs to be initiated to determine, on an ongoing basis, college and university entry requirements for students interested in studying some area of geography at the post secondary school level. In addition, it should be noted if any of these institutions recommend, not even demand, particular secondary school geography courses as being an important background or recognized asset for students wishing to enter these programs.

- A systematic program needs to be developed, reflecting the secondary school geography course offerings in each Prov./Terr., to determine areas for possible articulation agreements with colleges. When completed an

active in-school campaign needs to be initiated to create awareness, interest in and commitment to such an initiative.

- In terms of the IB and AP programs, universities need to become more aware of these programs and be proactive in encouraging secondary schools to consider offering them. Clearly some form of “carrot” needs to be out there eg. offering the equivalent of one university credit if the IB or AP mark is high enough or at the very least direct entry into second year courses. It is recognized that in parts of Canada, the lack of current secondary school geography courses, incl. IB and AP make some of this a stretch. Nevertheless this is a bit of a “chicken and egg” situation in that I would contend that if visible/tangible incentives, as suggested here, were offered by universities and colleges I feel it would generate a positive response from secondary schools – if not immediately at least in the mid term as the normal cycle of curriculum renewal comes into play.

E. Who is doing the teaching of Geography in our nations school?

- Undertake a national survey of teaching qualifications for teaching Social Science, particularly Geography. Elements in the survey might include:
 - at the Faculties of Education level- the amount of time required in the B.Ed. year for preparation of teachers at the Elementary (Social Studies) as well as Secondary (Geography)
 - at the Faculties of Education – the number of University credits required in the discipline of Geography required as a prerequisite to enter any program of teacher qualification with Geography as an identified “teachable” including. B.Ed. year or additional qualifications courses(ABQ) which are often done on-line
 - gather data from the various Ministries/Departments of Education re the number of practicing teachers who have “Honours Specialist” qualifications – look for patterns and trends over time

F. What opportunities/incentives are there for interested teachers to develop/enhance their skills in Geography?

- The good offices of the CCGE/RCGS need to be used to continue to develop the concept of a “one shop” location to find out information regarding geography related professional development opportunities and resources all across Canada. Efforts need to be initiated to first of all identify as many of the various “service providers” interested in offering geography related professional development (in it’s many forms). On the one hand these organizations need to know that it is worth their while getting their message out via the CCGE. On the other hand the CCGE needs to be able to offer a quick turn around in getting relevant information up on to it’s web site and then there has to be developed some strategy for getting the word out at the grass roots school level that this is the site to check out regularly if you are looking for PD opportunities. Use of teacher publications and websites should be built in as an important cross referencing vehicle.
- A data base of Professional organizations, Govt. agencies as well as members of the private sector needs to be established and updated on a regular basis. In addition, Government agencies frequently have an “education or public outreach programme”. Frequently Government personell are anxious to find ways to get their message across to teachers and students. CCGE can serve a very useful role here in:
 - making Government agencies aware of the breadth and depth of the Geography curricula nationally
 - serving as broker, so to speak, in assisting these agencies “connect” with good geography educators across the country to assist them develop, field test and refine appropriate curriculum resources

- An effort to cross link the web sites of all of these organizations to the CCGE site should be considered, however this would not preclude the first suggestion which would be an “entry point” vs having to explore the site of each organization to see what PD opportunities exist.
- It would also be useful to build in links with other existing social studies, geography and federation/teacher union sites.

G. What aspects of Geography are being taught by Who, When and Why?

- Encourage the Ministries/Departments of Education to develop Elementary/Secondary curricula in a more coordinated/complementary manner
- Encourage Prov./Terr. initiatives to help elementary and secondary school teachers gain a clearer “big picture” of the curriculum and their role in it. A good first place to start might be the Faculties of Education.
- Develop strategies to illustrate the practical relevancy/value of Geography skills for students, parents and education administrators (as per NCGE initiative)
- Encourage field work as a relevant process not just a “fun event”. Illustrate the integrative value of fieldwork where skills eg. the five themes of Geography, can be developed in the local community. In addition teachers need to see concrete examples of how to integrate and reinforce related skills in mathematics, language, the arts and science.
- the CCGE should work to support/facilitate the presence of a “Geographer” on the executive of all Prov./Terr. Social Studies subject associations – as per the example of OAGEE

Listing of Appendices

Appendix # 1 – Queen’s University Faculty of Education I/S Geography student responses to the question “Why should students study geography as part of their elementary and secondary school education?”

Appendix #2 – NGS Centennial survey results from 1988

Appendix # 3 – Extract from Global Teacher, Global Learner by David Selby and Graham Pike.

Appendix # 4 – Statistics Canada student survey re subjects they like in school

Appendix # 5 – Quake Angel Story

Appendix # 6 – Ontario Geography Curriculum grades 1-12 plus secondary school graduation requirements

Appendix 1.

Geog. 323 What YOU said in response to the question

Why should students study GEOGRAPHY as part of their elementary and secondary school education?

- we need to emphasize the fact that there are many different cultures, landscapes, etc. so that we do not risk becoming (even more) self absorbed as a culture
- it is important for people to realize how interconnected the natural world is and how a small matter can cause such great effects
- geog. is one of the only disciplines which examines so many parts of the human world. Considering many people will travel during their lifetime, geog. is an important subject to help navigate the world
- to gain an understanding about the place where they live
- to learn about the world and what it is out there not just about where you live. I also think it is important to learn how the earth functions environmentally and how fragile it really is and how everybody can have a part in ensuring it's survival
- to become informed about where they are from and where they fit into the global community
- to educate them about the impact of every region on the world at large
- need to be aware of the vast differences in geography from one cultural area to the next - for research purposes eg. farming, also for environmental purposes...
- understand their surroundings better and where they are going
- everyone needs to understand where they fit into the world around them - the study of geog. gives a sense of space and place - physical and otherwise
- because it is reflective of the society in which we live - it is created and altered by “us” as a society - it is an avenue for further exploration of our world in science, sociology, and history. Students should know the world around them!
- to gather an understanding and appreciation of their world
- because it covers such a wide variety of subject matters - it brings together history, physical science and society and helps students understand things in a global context
- geog. is part of every discipline !! - whether directly or indirectly. I think all students should learn about the people, and places from which they come from but also about the people, places, lands and cultures which are on this earth - they should learn about their environments, economy, and society - the best way to get an overall impression is through Geography!
- helps someone to learn about themselves and their surroundings - helps them identify with themselves and others - helps them to understand the world
- gives students the opportunity to use various disciplines i.e. biology, chemistry, mathematics, English, etc. in a context where they begin to better understand the concepts of space and time
- learn about the country and area they live in
- world (learn) knowledge of places they may never get a chance to go to
- geog. crosses over and links to almost all other subjects in some way
- to provide broad based learning not only of concrete understanding of physical elements but also the social influences and factors that change or alter them
- if students don't understand the world around them, they can't possibly hope to understand the reasons behind political decisions, the significance of historical events, etc.
- it is very imp. to know how the earth came to be as it is
- I feel it is also imp. to understand how change to one area affects the globe - global awareness
- to gain global awareness
- to better understand the environment and community they live in
- teaches many “life skills” and makes an individual aware of his/her surroundings, how things are made, why things happen, and what needs to be done to sustain our way of living
- although we are individuals we are also part of a society and for that society to thrive it is essential to understand our surroundings as well as those of other cultures
- people should be aware of their physical surroundings in order to respect them and be aware of other cultures for the same reason

- it is important to study the land as well as what we do with it
- geog. relates to so many things, it's common connections are endless. it gives individuals a greater understanding of the impact they/we have on the natural world. There is so much to see, learn about outside the classroom door or the home, geog. allows this to happen.
- geog. encompasses more than maps, it's about cycles and population.... things that affect society as a whole, so to appreciate humankind we must look at how geog. factors contribute to life.
- geog. is such a fundamental component to any students education. It provides a terrific grounding for which other subjects, such as history, politics, biology, can be based. It is incredibly important that students understand the ever-shrinking globe.
- to learn about the environment we live in as well as other countries.
- geog. is all encompassing subject that is often the undertone of numerous other subjects i.e. biology, psychology, cultural diversity, etc.
- to understand physical processes and templates within which we live and to better understand human societies through the physical and our relationship to it.
- geog. is everything, people, and place, and that it is through geog. that we make sense of our world and the role that we each play in it. If we start students of early, elementary level, we can provide them with the ability to observe and analyze the world around them and empower them to choose where it is that they fit in.
- because it is important that they have knowledge about how the world is changing and how other parts of the world live. It will become more imp. as our world continues to shrink! - global economies
- to gain an appreciation of the world around you and the people in it.
- it encompasses aspects of all subjects in one. Math, science, chemistry, biology, and lets students explore their physical and social environments from different perspectives.
- to familiarize themselves with the community, city, country, and the world in which they live.
- to see how our geographical world is shrinking on a daily basis
- need to gain a sense of the diversity in culture and bio-physical features across the world
- geog. is the original interdisciplinary subject. Students can be exposed to so many different areas and ideas in geog.
- it's necessary to know how the earth was formed, why there are mountains, various areas, etc. It will help to know why the people who live where they are live as they do.
- it's important to understand our world to assess and predict conditions or states. Plus I think it is really interesting and instills curiosity for youth, therefore creative dreams!
- because geog. covers such a wide range of subj. matter, alot of which is seen in our everyday life.
- knowing where you live and what makes up that area - physically, culturally, and economically crates aware students, who then can initiate or take part in community endeavors, in return creating community and environmentally awareness for life!
- it's very imp. to be aware of local, regional, national and global issues.
- to appreciate their surroundings and gain know. of areas other than the ones in which they live.
- I feel it is really important for students to learn how other people live in order to give them a better understanding of themselves and the world. Learning physical geog. helps give them a better understanding of the world outside their widows and across the oceans
- it might sound corny but students should learn about the world they live in (both local and global scales) perhaps a better geog/envir. education would produce people who value the planet
- important part of creating a unified national identity
- interesting subject and relevant outside of the classroom.

Appendix 2 :

NGS Survey Results – 1988

The National Geographic Geography Quiz conducted in it's Centennial year of 1988. Adults aged 18-24 were surveyed on their knowledge of the world map. The results were surprisingly poor, with 15% of Canadians not being able to find Canada!!! There were 16 items on the survey and these are the results from Countries around the world.

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 7. Sweden | 11.6 |
| 8. West German y | 11.0 |
| 9. Japan | 9.5 |
| 10. France | 9.5 |
| 11. CANADA | 9.2 |

| | |
|------------|-----|
| 12. USA | 8.6 |
| 13. UK | 8.6 |
| 14. Italy | 7.5 |
| 15. Mexico | 7.5 |

Appendix 3:

The following summary headings are from *Global Teacher, Global Learner*, by David Selby and Graham Pike, Hodder and Stoughton, 1988.

The Aims of Global Education: A Summary (page 34-35)

Systems Consciousness

Students should:

- acquire the ability to think in a systems mode
- acquire an understanding of the systematic nature of the world
- acquire an holistic conception of their capacities and potential
- recognize that they have a worldview that is not universally shared
- develop receptivity to other perspectives

Health of Planet Awareness

Students should:

- acquire an awareness and understanding of the global condition and of global developments and trends
- develop an informed understanding of the concepts of justice, human rights and responsibilities and be able to apply that understanding to the global condition and to global developments and trends
- develop a future orientation in their reflection upon the health of the planet

Involvement Consciousness and Preparedness

Students should:

- become aware that choices they make and the actions they take individually and collectively have repercussions for the global present and the global future
- develop the social and political action skills necessary for becoming effective participants in democratic decision-making at a variety of levels, grassroots to global

Process Minded

Students should:

- learn that learning and personal development are continuous journeys with no fixed or final destination
- learn that new ways of seeing the world are revitalizing but risky

The Global Teacher: A Profile (page 272-274)

- The Global Teacher is globalcentric rather than ethnocentric or nationcentric
- The Global Teacher is concerned about culture and perspective
- The Global Teacher is future-oriented
- The Global Teacher is a facilitator
- The Global Teacher has a profound belief in human potential
- The Global Teacher is concerned with the development of the whole person
- The Global Teacher employs a range of teaching/learning styles in the classroom
- The Global Teacher sees learning as a process that is lifelong
- The Global Teacher tries to be congruent
- The Global Teacher is rights-respectful and seeks to shift the focus and locus of power and decision-making in the classroom
- The Global Teacher seeks "functional interdependence" across the curriculum
- The Global Teacher is a community teacher

Appendix 4:

Statistics Canada Survey Results

What's your favorite subject?

| | Elementary | | Secondary | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Girls | Boys | Total number | Girls | Boys | Total |
| English | 218 | 48 | 266 | 154 | 69 | 223 |
| French | 87 | 33 | 120 | 50 | 7 | 57 |
| Art | 601 | 241 | 842 | 182 | 84 | 266 |
| Computers | 138 | 254 | 392 | 37 | 100 | 137 |
| Geography | 18 | 14 | 32 | 34 | 23 | 57 |
| History | 59 | 63 | 122 | 50 | 45 | 95 |
| Math | 284 | 360 | 644 | 139 | 146 | 285 |
| Music | 172 | 76 | 248 | 106 | 45 | 151 |
| Other | 131 | 129 | 260 | 138 | 188 | 326 |
| Phys. Ed. | 759 | 1,206 | 1,965 | 186 | 357 | 543 |
| Science | 122 | 170 | 292 | 113 | 64 | 177 |
| Social studies | 66 | 47 | 113 | 53 | 17 | 70 |

Source: Census at School, Canada, 2003/04.
 Date published: 2003-10-21 Important Notices
 Last modified: 2004-09-30

Appendix 5

From: <http://www.nypost.com/news/worldnews/37579.htm>

QUAKE ANGEL By DUNCAN LARCOMBE

/January 1, 2005/ -- PHUKET, Thailand - Quick-thinking 10-year-old Tilly Smith is being hailed as a hero after saving her parents and dozens of fellow vacationers from the deadly tsunami - thanks to a school geography lesson.

Tilly warned the doubting adults at a resort that a massive tidal wave was about to strike - just minutes before the deadly tide rushed in and turned the resort into rubble. Tilly's family, from Surrey, England, was enjoying a day at Maikhao Beach last Sunday when the sea rushed out and began to bubble.

The adults were curious, but Tilly froze in horror.

"Mummy, we must get off the beach /now!"/ she told her mother. "I think there's going to be a tsunami."

The adults didn't understand until Tilly added the magic words: "A /tidal//wave."/

Her warning spread like wildfire. Within seconds, the beach was deserted - and it turned out to be one of the only places along the shores of Phuket where no one was killed or seriously injured.

Last night, Tilly was being hailed as a savior.

"I think it's phenomenal that Tilly's parents and the others on the beach are alive because she studied hard at school," said Craig Smith, the American manager of the JW Marriott Hotel where Tilly's family was staying. He said a tsunami is not like you see in the movies, where a huge wave wells up on the horizon and can be seen for miles off shore.

"It is more like a sudden surge of water," he said. "There's very little warning. She's a hero."

Tilly shrugged off the attention and modestly said, "Last term, my geography teacher, Mr. Kearney, taught us about earthquakes and how they can cause tsunamis.

"I was on the beach, and the water started to go funny.

"I recognized what was happening and had a feeling there was going to be a tsunami."

Her mother, Penny Smith, 43, recalled how their family, including Tilly's father Colin, 46, and 7-year-old younger sister, Holly, were enjoying a Christmas vacation before tragedy struck.

"When the water went back, I was like most people on the beach. I wanted to walk down and look at what was going on," she recalled. "It was only when Tilly explained what she thought was going to happen that I had second thoughts.

"We ran off the beach as fast as we could and went to the first floor of the hotel where it would be safe. Minutes later the water surged right over the beach and demolished everything in its path.

"It was terrifying to watch but I'm very proud of her."

Appendix 6

Social Studies and Geography in Canadian Schools - A Sample illustration: Ontario

*Grade,1,2,3,4,5,6

- core/compulsory social studies program

- two core strands or themes throughout a) Heritage and Citizenship and b) Canada and World Connections

- in terms of b) the themes are: **grade 1** – The Local Community, **grade 2** – Features of Communities around the World, **grade 3** – Urban and Rural Communities, **grade 4** – The Provinces and Territories of Canada, **grade 5** – Aspects of Government in Canada, and **grade 6** – Canada and its Trading Partners.

– given that the typical school day is approx. **5 hrs.** the breakdown is typically **2 hrs.** for language arts, **1 hr.** for mathematics, and **2 hrs.** for the remainder of the curriculum which includes science, physical and health education, computers, French, the Arts and social studies. This generally translates into approx. 2 hrs. per week for social studies. It is recognized that many teachers manage to integrate elements of their program using the vehicle of a theme.

*Grade 7&8

- core/compulsory program in Geography

-Gr. 7 – World Patterns in Physical Geography @ 60 hrs. per school year – three core units: a) The Themes of Geographic Inquiry, b) Patterns in Physical Geography, and c) Natural Resources

- Gr. 8 – World Patterns in Human Geography @ 60 hrs. per school year – three core units: a) Patterns in Human Geography, b) Economic Systems, and c) Migration

*Grade 9

compulsory credit in Canadian Geography @ 110 hrs – required for secondary school graduation, offered at both an Academic, Applied, and Essential (locally developed modified) level .

courses built around overall and specific expectations under five strands which are: a) Geographic Foundations: Space and Systems, b) Human-Environment Interaction, c) Global Connections, d) Understanding and Managing Change, e) Methods of Geographic Inquiry.

*Grade 10

– no Geography courses offered

*Grade 11 and 12

all optional – 9 different courses offered @ 110 hrs. each.

Courses run only if a threshold number of students are enrolled.

Any of the gr. 11&12 Geography course can be used to fulfill secondary school graduation requirements, however such requirements can also be fulfilled by taking one additional course from a “grouping” which includes English, **or** a 3rd. language, **or** a course from the Social Sciences and Humanities grouping, **or** a course from Canadian and World Studies which includes courses in history, politics, economics, law, and GEOGRAPHY.

The Geography credits offered include:

Gr. 11 – The Americas: Geographic Patterns and Issues (College/University)

Gr. 11 – Physical Geography: Patterns, Processes and Interactions (College/University)

Gr. 11 – Regional Geography: Travel and Tourism (Open)

Gr. 11 – Geographics: The Geographer’s Toolkit (Workplace)

Gr. 12 – Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis (University)

Gr. 12 – World Geography: Urban Patterns and Interactions (College)

Gr. 12 – World Geography: Human Patterns and Interactions (University)

Gr. 12 – The Environment and Resource Management – (College/University) AND (Workplace)

Gr. 12 – Geomatics: Geotechnologies in Action (College/University)

All of these courses are built around the same overall and specific expectations as the grade 9 Geography course. The five strands are: a) Geographic Foundations: Space and Systems, b) Human-Environment Interaction, c) Global Connections, d) Understanding and Managing Change, e) Methods of Geographic Inquiry.

Summary of Secondary School Graduation Requirements (Ontario)

- **Compulsory credits (total of 18)**

4 credits in English

1 credit in French as a second language

3 credits in Mathematics (at least 1 credit in gr. 11&12)

2 credits in Science

1 credit in Canadian History

1 credit in Canadian Geography

1 credit in the Arts

1 credit in Health and Physical Education

.5 credit in Civics

.5 credit in Career Studies

plus.....

1 additional credit in English, **or** a third language, **or** Social Sciences and the Humanities, **or** Canadian and World Studies

1 additional credit in Health and Physical Education, **or** the Arts, **or** Business Studies

1 additional credit in Sciences (grade 11 or 12), **or** Technology Education (grades 9-12)

b) Optional Credits (total of 12)

Appendix 7

Geography Teachers Urged to Inspire Pupils

Unfortunately I was unable to insert the scanned article into this space. I will bring a copy of the article with me to the Symposium to share with interested participants. In the meantime if you are interested you might try retrieving it on-line by going to (www.EducationGuardian.co.uk) the date to look for in the archives is Thursday Nov. 25, 2004 – page 13