New Geography Standards Published
GEOGRAPHY FOR LIFE: 2012 AND BEYOND ► By Tim Hill, Perspective Editor

After five years of careful work involving dozens of content experts, editors, and reviewers, the updated National Geography Standards have been published.


According to Roger Downs, professor of geography at The Pennsylvania State University and chair of the Standards Content Committee, the updated Geography for Life reflects many of the changes in geography since publication of the original document in 1994.

Topics such as globalization and human dimensions of global change are more fully integrated, he said, and the skills have been revised to incorporate the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and geospatial technology.

Short essays, designed to guide teachers but also allow them to find their own creative ways to encourage students to learn geography, introduce each of the Standards.

“The Standards are better thought of as guidelines for what teachers might do, not a template for what they should do,” said Downs.

The new document’s layout and organization received attention during the revision process.

“The major difference from the first edition, apart from the substantive updating, is in the structure of the Standards,” said Downs. “For each Standard, by use of careful scaffolding, there is an explicit attempt to build understanding from grade level to grade level.”

This scaffolding illustrates how the geography content could be presented at each grade level.

“The redesign of the document enables a teacher or curriculum developer to see simultaneously (continued on page 5)
The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) is a nonprofit organization chartered in 1915 to enhance the status and quality of geography teaching and learning. Its activities include conducting and gathering research on geographic teaching and learning (including publication of *Journal of Geography*, a peer-reviewed journal published six times a year, and *The Geography Teacher*, published twice a year), curriculum and instruction activities at the university and K–12 levels, annual conferences, and a wide variety of electronic and print resources. *Perspective*, the member newsletter, is published six times per year.

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PERSPECTIVE
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What’s new with you?
Do you have news or announcements for your member newsletter? Send them to ncge.perspective@gmail.com.

PERSPECTIVE, the newsletter for members and friends of the National Council for Geographic Education, is published in February, April, June, August, October, and December. It contains news about NCGE and its members, geographic education, upcoming events, new educational resources, and professional development opportunities. Please send news, announcements, story ideas, geography events, educational opportunities, and advertising inquiries to ncge.perspective@gmail.com.
At the end of my ninth-grade year a guidance counselor informed my classmates and me that in the coming year we would have the opportunity to choose between two electives—European History and World Geography. This was the first time I had heard the word “elective” and the first time I had ever been given a choice in the classes I would take. Prior to this, in 10 years of schooling, classes were just classes, but now I had a choice. And, for me, the choice was easy.

At home we had a well-thumbed world atlas and a groaning shelf filled with gold-bordered National Geographic magazines, and my mother had an endearing (or annoying) habit of quizzing me on state and world capitals in front of her friends. So it had to be geography.

The teacher, Miss Romansky, introduced me, and the rest of the class, to the formal study of geography. She told us about exotic-sounding places like Skagerrak and Kattegat and explained that places where land pinched seas into narrow passages were called “choke points.” She pulled down the world map and asked us to find similar places around the world. There were lots of them—Gibraltar, Malacca, Hormuz, Bosporus—and she later explained how those places were crucial to understanding patterns of history and commerce in the world.

That lesson helped me understand that knowing exotic place names and locations, which might allow me to show off for mom’s friends, was only the beginning of geographic understanding. It was the underlying concepts that really made the subject come alive.

Three years later, when I was a freshman at Syracuse University, a college guidance counselor explained that after three “core” classes I had room for an elective. I signed up for Cultural Geography, and on the first day of class made my way up the steep hill from my dorm to the Hall of Languages, where I joined 120 other undergrads in the lecture hall. From the moment the professor strode into the class—and he did indeed stride—he had command of the class. He looked and sounded exactly like a professor was supposed to: tall and dignified, unruly white hair, tweed suit, and a deep resonant voice.

He proceeded to deliver the first of many spell-binding lectures. Over the course of the semester he introduced us to more of the underlying concepts in geography—core and periphery, diffusion, perceptual regions, transition zones, and more.

It turned out I did not have just any professor. He was Donald Meinig, one of the preeminent historical geographers of the 20th century and author of a magisterial four-volume series called The Shaping of America. The care and attention he gave to this introductory geography class made it clear that he considered teaching a very important part of his job. Too often we hear about the trade-off between teaching and scholarship and how success in one must come at the expense of the other. But taking teaching seriously, especially elective classes, should be considered an obligation of every geography educator.

So what is the point in dredging up these memories? Don’t underestimate the power of elective classes to change a student’s life. For high school teachers, a geography class might be one of five or six other

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European Group to Examine Idea of “Spatial Citizenship”

By Diana Stuart Sinton

A new three-year project called SPACIT is bringing ideas about spatial citizenship to secondary school teachers across Europe.

What is spatial citizenship, you ask? Geo-media, such as location-enabled mobile devices, online mapping tools, and volunteered geographic information, have become easily accessible in everyday life. We therefore need to be aware of their opportunities as well as their impacts and challenges.

Our emerging geo-information society warrants the development of new capabilities if people are to participate as responsible spatial citizens who are able to interpret and critically reflect on spatial representations, communicate with the aid of maps, and share location-specific opinions and ideas with geo-media.

SPACIT will describe the competencies that students will require to be spatially literate and to use geo-media and geospatial technologies to participate in society in an active and informed manner.

The project, funded by the European Commission, involves partner organizations from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Romania, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

NCGE is honored to be involved in the project, representing the United States as one of two non-European partners. The Center for Spatial Information Science at the University of Tokyo is the other non-European partner.

Project partners are developing teacher training materials and organizing courses for teachers on the theme of spatial citizenship. These online modules for teacher education and in-service training will be used across a variety of subjects and distributed to European institutions involved in teacher training.

I am serving as a project consultant with SPACIT on behalf of NCGE, and I will be leading a session on the project at the 2012 National Conference on Geographic Education in San Marcos (Friday, October 5, 1:00 to 1:45 p.m.).

For more information on the project, please visit its website at www.spatialcitizenship.org.

Diana Stuart Sinton is Director of Spatial Curriculum and Research at the University of Redlands in California.

Registration for 25th National Geographic Bee Now Open to Schools

Since the National Geographic Bee made its debut in 1989, millions of American school children have competed in the annual geography contest. School registration for the 25th annual Bee is now open.

Schools with any of the grades four through eight are eligible to participate. Principals must register the school. The fee is $100 before the deadline of October 15, 2012, and $120 from that date until December 14, 2012. Schools receive the questions and other materials needed to conduct their Bee.

The national champion will receive a $25,000 college scholarship, lifetime membership in the National Geographic Society, and a trip to the Galápagos Islands.

For detailed information and registration instructions, visit www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee.

President’s Page
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classes in your daily schedule, and for college professors it might be one more prep that is getting in the way of your latest research project. But these elective classes have the power to open our subject to a large audience of future decision-makers, voters, and citizens. In the process, we help build a more geographically literate society.

Take these “electives” seriously, and remember that someone in the class—like me—might be paying attention.
how ideas are structured within a grade level and across the three grade levels,” Downs said.

“If you want to look ahead to see where students are going, or if you’re at the 12th grade level and want to look back to see what students may or may not have had...it’s all on one page for you as you look at a Standard,” said Susan Gallagher Heffron, Senior Project Manager for Geography Education at the Association of American Geographers and a member of the Standards Content Committee.

Gallagher Heffron served as project manager for the updated Geography for Life. She and Downs were co-editors of the document.

The second edition also has new photographs and maps and an expanded glossary of geography terms, which Gallagher Heffron said should be a useful instructional tool for teachers using the Standards, especially those who are new to geography.

She also cited new emphasis on “doing geography”—helping students learn to ask and answer geographic questions—as another important update.

Other modifications should make the document itself easier to use. The book’s spiral binding allows it to lay open on a desk.

Geography for Life was developed under the auspices of the Geography Education National Implementation Project (GENIP), a consortium involving the Association of American Geographers, the American Geographical Society, the National Council for Geographic Education, and the National Geographic Society.

NCGE will manage sales and distribution of the document. The National Geographic Society is developing a companion website focused on the updated Standards.

Gallagher Heffron said she hopes curriculum developers, educators, textbook publishers, and others embrace the updated Standards and create products that aid teachers.

“The overall goal remains the same,” Downs said. “This is geography for life, an indispensable way of understanding the world and functioning in it.”
Michael Robinson, pictured above in his Germantown, Tennessee, classroom, has been named recipient of the 2012 NCGE and Herff Jones Nystrom Award, which honors an outstanding geography lesson used in the classroom.

Robinson’s series of lessons, “My America... Exploring the Ethnic / Racial Geography of American Urban Areas”, uses maps and census data to help students identify and analyze settlement patterns, often divided along racial or ethnic lines, found in many American cities.

“The purpose of the lessons is for students to discover the diversity found around the United States, around their particular city, and around their school,” Robinson wrote in an introduction to his materials.

At the beginning of the unit, Robinson asks his students to analyze seating patterns in the school cafeteria by selecting several tables and identify characteristics of the “population” of each group. Not surprisingly, most groups have distinguishing characteristics.

The cafeteria activity leads into the examination of population and settlement patterns in cities. Like the cafeteria, the students discover neighborhoods often have distinguishing characteristics and are separated by roads, physical features, or other boundaries.

The lessons conclude with a photography project in which students take photographs illustrating the theme “My America...” which showcases the diversity in his classroom.

Robinson is chair of the Social Studies Department at Houston High School, where he teaches AP Human Geography, World Geography, and other classes.

The award brings a $1,500 cash prize and recognition at NCGE’s conference in San Marcos.

Herff Jones Nystrom, which produces maps, globes, atlases, and a variety of other educational classroom materials, has sponsored this NCGE award for many years.

To access Robinson’s “My America...” lesson materials, visit http://tinyurl.com/myamerica. —Tim Hill
NATURE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

American Meteorological Society (AMS). 2012. Climate Change: An Information Statement of the American Meteorological Society. Boston: AMS, http://www.amet soc.org/policy/2012climatechange.html. As clarification of a previous statement by the American Meteorological Society, this document updates the organization’s position on the relationship between weather events and climate change. Stating that warming of the climate system is “unequivocal,” it presents the results of climate-model simulations: Heavy precipitation events will continue to become more intense and frequent, increased likelihood of longer dry spells between precipitation events in the subtropics and lower-middle latitudes, a reduced spring snow pack with reduced dry-season flows for glacier-fed rivers, and a poleward shift of midlatitude storm tracks. All have important implications for water-resource management and flood control. – LDS

Bloudoff-Indelicato, M., and ClimateWire. 2012. Africa grows too hot to grow chocolate. Scientific American, http://www.scientificamerican.com/article. cfm?id=africa-grows-too-hot-to-grow-chocolate. Some of the world’s poorest countries (already with considerable political instability) and poorest farmers (who have difficulty planning long term) face the prospect of climate change rendering their regions too hot to grow cacao, thus disrupting international, domestic, and personal economies. According to the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, by 2050 the optimum elevation for cacao will move from 300 to 800 feet above sea level to 1,475 to 1,640 feet. – LDS

Dittrich, M., S. Bringezu, and H. Schatz. 2012. The physical dimension of international trade, part 2: Indirect global resource flows between 1962 and 2005. Ecological Economics 79: 32–43. This study documents “burden shifting” of environmental problems, the extent to which polluting industries and activities are transferred to other countries. It finds that such burden shifting increased dramatically from 1962 to 2005. It specifies the “burden balance” among world regions and finds that Europe has shifted the most environmental problems out of the region, and Australia and Latin America have been the largest “takers” of environmental problems. – DJR

Klinkenborg, V. 2012. Linking twin extinctions of species and languages. Yale Environment 360, July 17, http://e360.yale.edu/feature/linking_twin_extinctions_of_species_and_languages/2552/. This short article, which might be useful for teaching AP Human Geography and demonstrating human-environment interaction, discusses the correlation between biological and linguistic diversity. The author contends that language itself is rooted in the natural world and that a universal language such as English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French is a “bulldozer with measles.” The author compares this to the decline of cultural and biological complexity and the loss of farms and decline of rural human populations in rural Iowa resulting from the monocropping of corn and soybeans. – LDS

CURRENT CONCERNS

Jelly-Schapiro, J. 2012. All over the map: A revolution in cartography. Harper’s Magazine, September: 75–80. Recent cartographic history has brought us global positioning systems, geocaching, and geographic information systems. In a couple of decades, Google Earth’s goal might be to render images of a virtual planet at a scale of one pixel per square centimeter of Earth’s surface. As primary tools for navigation, computers have altered how people imagine their environs and have led to a surge of interest in cartography. The outsourcing of human spatial intelligence to machines may lead to a diminution of cognitive maps and to other problems of cognition. – LDS


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UPCOMING WEBINARS
Mark your calendar!

October 10 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
Using Gapminder in Education
Presenter: Bob Lang, King Edward VI Five Ways School, Birmingham, England

October 17 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
Tips for Teaching Geography to 9th Graders and At-Risk Students
Presenters: Sharon Shelerud and Brad Pearl

October 24 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
Gearing Up for Geography Awareness Week
Presenters: Justine Kendall and Kim Hulse, National Geographic Society
*FREE* Partnership Webinar with National Geographic

November 7 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
Integrating Geospatial Technologies & the Legos NXT Robot
Presenter: Megan Patent-Nygren, Nebraska 4-H, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

November 14 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
Mapping History: Using GIS in the History Classroom
Presenter: Chris Bunin, Charlottesville, Virginia

December 5 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
Teaching Perspectives on World Political Geography
Presenter: Dr. Don Zeigler, Old Dominion University

December 12 ★ 8:00 p.m. Eastern
A Deeper Dive into ArcGIS Online
Presenter: Dr. Joseph Kerski, Esri
*FREE* Partnership Webinar with Esri

The NCGE Webinar Program is a live series that features geography educators from around the world. You can learn new skills, interact with other geography educators, and see new tools and resources.

Participation is simple! All you need is an Internet connection and a web browser. Webinars are free for NCGE Members and $20 for non-members. “Partnership Webinars” are free for everyone!

Register today! www.ncge.org/webinar.

Earth Science Week to Emphasize Careers

The 15th annual Earth Science Week, October 14–20, will focus on the theme “Discovering Careers in the Earth Sciences.”

The annual celebration is an outreach initiative of the American Geosciences Institute.

The 2012 theme encourages students to learn about the work of geoscientists who “enhance our understanding of earth processes and improve the quality of human life,” said Geoff Camphire, Earth Science Week Program Manager, in a webcast.

More than 150 thousand jobs in the geosciences are expected to open up in the next decade, he added.

The website www.earthsciweek.org includes resources for students and educators, activities linked to the National Science Education Standards, and links to earth science organizations around the country.

Even after almost 30 years of restoration efforts, the Chesapeake Bay still is degraded. Most of the bay’s problems stem from excess nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment that run off the land into the water.

Chesapeake Bay is a submerged river mouth, called an estuary. Three large rivers, the Susquehanna, Potomac, and the James, plus 150 smaller streams, drain into the estuary. The total watershed is 64,000 square miles, draining parts of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New York, and Washington, D.C.

The bay is 195 miles long and cuts Maryland nearly in half. The northern half of the bay lies within Maryland and the southern half is located in Virginia.

Capt. John Smith explored Chesapeake Bay in 1608 and immediately recognized the value of its abundant fish and waterfowl. Native Americans had recognized its bounty centuries before and had settled there.

Today, more than 17 million people live within the watersheds of the streams draining into Chesapeake Bay. Baltimore, with a population of more than 620,000 and the country’s 21st-largest city, is situated near the head of the bay. Washington, D.C., the 24th-largest U.S. city, with about 600,000 people, is located on the Potomac arm of the Chesapeake.

Along the southern end of the bay lies Hampton Roads, the United States’ largest coal-exporting port, located at the mouth of the James River in Virginia. Norfolk, Portsmouth, Hampton, and Newport News surround Hampton Roads. The Hampton Roads region itself has a population of more than 1.7 million people.

According to Peter Claggett, a research geographer with the U.S. Geological Survey working at the Chesapeake Bay, the population of the bay watershed has more than doubled since 1950. Since restoration efforts began on Chesapeake Bay in the mid-1980s, the watershed has gained an additional four million people. This incredible growth is impacting the bay.

Development around the bay’s margins and within its drainage area has radically affected water quality. Urban and industrial discharges and agricultural runoff bring nutrients, silt, and toxic chemicals to the bay. These nutrients and sediments mostly come from fertilizers applied to farmland and residential lawns. Other sources are particle pollution from car exhaust and power plants in the Ohio Valley, Claggett said.

Impervious surfaces cover many of the urban areas surrounding Chesapeake Bay, contributing to the ease with which pollutants enter the bay’s waters. Roads, parking lots, driveways, and rooftops allow nutrients and sediments to run off the land into the bay unabated.

When these pollutants reach the bay, they cause degradation, some slowly and some immediately. Nutrients slowly create algae blooms in some parts of the bay, while sediments immediately cloud the water. Both of these actions decrease sunlight to the bay’s

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bottom, killing aquatic grasses and interrupting the food chain. The result has been a continuous decline in certain species, particularly famous Chesapeake oysters and blue crabs.

Nevertheless, Clagget firmly believes that conditions in the Chesapeake Bay can be improved. He is using NASA’s Earth Observing Satellite Landsat to gather data that may help inform important management decisions for the bay.

With Landsat data available globally, other places such as the Gulf of Mexico, Puget Sound, or the Great Lakes, where activities on land also greatly affect water quality, could apply Clagget’s concepts.

As with the Chesapeake Bay, tools that allow humans to better manage activities on land may help save some of our most valuable water resources.


Geography in the News

Discussion Questions

- Do you think it is worth saving estuaries like Chesapeake Bay? Why or why not? What value do they have besides providing fisheries?
- Think of some things that the people of the Chesapeake Bay watershed can personally do to limit fertilizers and other pollutants from entering the bay.
- Look at a U.S. map and trace the coastlines. Are there other estuaries (“drowned” river mouths)? Name the major estuaries on the East and West Coasts. What important shipping functions do they have?

NCGE’s Administrative Committee is seeking applications from members in good standing for the position of Recording Secretary.

The Recording Secretary, a non-voting member of the Executive Planning Board and the Administrative Committee, is responsible for recording and distributing minutes of all meetings and updating NCGE’s bylaws when necessary.

The position will be filled by a vote of the Administrative Committee, and the individual selected will complete the term of Ellen Foster, which runs until December 31, 2014. Foster has been elected to the position of Vice President for Curriculum and Instruction.

Expressions of interest should be sent to NCGE President Eric Fournier at efournier@ncge.org by October 1, 2012.

NEW Giant Floor Map Kits

Now Available in the NCGE Store

Learn more about the map kit at www.ncge.org/giant-floor-map-kit.

Price: $639 (plus shipping & handling)
Thinking About Water

By Joseph Kerski and Amanda Weaver

With the recent severe droughts around the United States, it is worth taking a moment to think about the country’s water infrastructure. When we think about water, drinking water is often the first use that comes to mind, but fresh water is used in many more aspects of our daily lives, including bathing, cleaning, cooking, and watering plants and yards.

Outside of our homes, we also use water in manufacturing, growing and processing food, mining, and other industrial uses. Globally, only 10 percent of fresh water is used for home use while 90 percent is used for agriculture and industry.

Of all of the water in the world, only about 2.5 percent is fresh, not salty. About 60 percent of the fresh water is held in polar ice caps and glaciers, 10 percent is found in rivers and lakes, and 30 percent is groundwater below the surface.

The High Plains Aquifer, which includes the famous Ogallala Aquifer, one of the world’s largest, supplies the central United States with much of its drinking and agricultural water. Though long considered an infinite resource, increased population and development pressure have led to over-pumping that is draining million-year-old water formations faster than their rate of recharge.

In the arid western United States, much of the domestic water comes from complex systems of mountain water drainage from rain and melting snow. This water is highly regulated by a system of water “rights” in which cities, businesses, and farmers buy the rights to use this water.

In this picture of an alpine glacier in Chile, a massive amount of clean, fresh, glacial runoff is melting into the ocean. While this would be hard to capture for daily use, consider how much clean tap water already flowing into our homes is doing the same thing.

Despite the limited amount of fresh water, as well as the expensive infrastructure required to clean and distribute it, we largely perceive water to be free or nearly free when we turn on the tap.

In developed countries the true cost of clean water infrastructure, people are forced to rely on clean water from vendors, which can be up to a hundred times more expensive. Imagine if you had to buy bottled water for all of your household needs, including drinking.

Because it is so inexpensive in the United States, we often take fresh, clean water for granted. Up to 30 percent of our daily domestic water usage in the United States goes to outdoor uses such as watering lawns and gardens. Of that 30 percent, experts estimate that more than half is wasted due to evaporation and overwatering.

Take a closer look at your own water consumption and that of your community. Where does your community obtain its water supply? How much water do you use for things other than drinking? Have there been outdoor watering restrictions in your area during periods of drought? Are there certain times of the day that are suggested for watering? What is the true cost for water?

Joseph Kerski is an education manager with Esri in Colorado. Amanda Weaver is an educator, GIS consultant, and doctoral student.
Outside Reading
(continued from page 7)

ideas, and ideologies, and by accidental occurrences. Importantly, the realities of geography inevitably play a role as well. Moreover, Kaplan says, this role has been undervalued by many policymakers, intellectuals, and other elites more enamored by globalization and electronic communication than “physical facts-on-the-ground and the cultural differences that emanate from them.” The article is a good read that hints at the examples of geography in action that promise to be present in the book. – DJR

Miller, J., and K. Sciacchitano. 2012. Why the United States is not Greece. Dollars & Sense. January/February, http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2012/0112 millersciacchitano.html. This comparison of the U.S. and Greek fiscal situations provides an explanation that is accessible to students, useful for teaching, and a good stimulus for discussion. In many important respects the American economic history and current situation are nothing like those of Greece. Moreover, the U.S. debt as a percentage of gross domestic product is less than one-half that of Greece. The article emphasizes the need to manage debt and spending, and its proposals for doing so offer an opportunity for classroom discussion. – DJR

Long-Forgotten Geography Texts
More Accessible than Ever

NCGE members spend a lot of time thinking about the best methods and resources to teach geography. Have you ever wondered what students were learning about the subject in previous centuries? What kinds of books and atlases did 18th-century teachers use to teach geography?

If you have access to a university library or a good public library, you may have encountered old textbooks or atlases used by previous generations of students. On other occasions, century-old geography texts, long forgotten and left to molder in attics or basements, are surprise finds at yard sales or used book stores.

The digitization of books in the public domain—those whose copyright protection has expired—has made many of these old geography titles accessible to anyone with an Internet connection.

Two of the most popular website portals to find these books are Project Gutenberg and Google Books.

Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org), the oldest producer of electronic books, began in 1971 at the University of Illinois. It is named for Johannes Gutenberg, whose invention of movable type and use of the printing press in the 15th century revolutionized printing.

Google Books (books.google.com) works with major libraries around the world—many major research university libraries are partners—to digitize books in their collections. The tech giant’s book search returns not only free electronic books but also books covered under copyright protection that are available for sale and those with only a short free preview. Limiting a search to “Free Google eBooks” returns only volumes that have been fully digitized.

For geography educators, old texts provide a fascinating glimpse into the discipline’s past. Boundaries and country names have changed; population has increased; and practices in agriculture, manufacturing, and other economic activities would seem alien to 21st-century students.

Attitudes toward other cultures and the environment have also undergone dramatic change. It is instructive to recognize and analyze biases reflected in old geography texts.

It makes me wonder. What will future educators think about our atlases and textbooks? —Tim Hill
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or visit www.maps101.com/ncge