
GENIP 1998

“A consortium of geographical associations committed to improving geographic education through the implementation of ...[best practices in curriculum and pedagogy as exemplified in *Geography for Life: The National Geography Standards 1994*.”]

The World Facing GENIP in 1999

Structural Changes in the World of Education

the decreasing likelihood of significant “leadership” in educational change from the Federal level
an increasing emphasis at all levels on assessment and accountability
an increasing number of alternative educational models (charter schools, home schooling, distance education)

The “Old” Challenges for Geography Education

breaking into the pre-service teacher training program
upgrading the knowledge and skills of in-service teachers
achieving a place in the curriculum at state and local school district levels
confronting the continual and draining turf battles with social studies and Earth science
failure on the part of educators and the general public to understand what geography is and isn't (the image battle)
convincing people of the power and value of geography
convincing professional geographers to take geography education as a significant responsibility and opportunity
building a constituency “for” geography education

New Challenges for Geography Education

implementation of the AP program and examination
adapting to new dissemination media (the WWW in particular)
generating support from new constituencies (e.g., the business community) for geography education
keeping geography as part of the NAEP program

Opportunities for Geography Education

the development of the Grosvenor Center at SWTSU

the increasing role of GIS (e.g., the forthcoming ESRI-GENIP link)
the partnership with NASA
cooperation with environmental education programs and professionals

Goals and Objectives for GENIP

1. GENIP as a Clearing House:

...between and among geographical organizations
...from the world of education to geographical organizations
...from the world of geography to agencies and institutions (public and private)

2. GENIP as a Facilitator of:

...research
...publications
...conferences
...scholarships and fellowships

3. GENIP as a Bridge Builder to:

...funding agencies (public and private)
...other educational organizations on behalf of geography as a whole and for the constituent organizations
...the worlds of geographers working in non-academic contexts (business, government, etc.)

4. GENIP as an Organization that does:

...write status and analysis reports that deal with geography education
...publishing
...research
...engage in advocacy and lobbying

What Are the Next Steps for GENIP?

Where Do We Stand Now?

If we look back over the history of GENIP, we can argue that:

1. The need for GENIP is no less today than it has ever been. Viewed over long term, GENIP has been a success. The infrastructure for geography education, if not unique in this country, remains one of the most successful.
2. GENIP's support of conferences and publications has been a key—and sometimes—vital component in advancing the cause of geography education.
3. GENIP has played a fundamental role in the development of the NASA initiative.
4. Despite a legitimate cause for concern, GENIP has neither pre-empted nor conflicted with the goals and operations of the four constituent organizations. Despite occasional difficulties, all four organizations have remained firm in their commitment to GENIP.
5. Through judicious management and the success of the *Geography for Life* publication, GENIP possesses a significant capital endowment.
6. GENIP has a well-developed and successful organizational structure.

Where Could/Should GENIP Go in the Future?

These ideas are based on some operating premises:

- (a) the capital endowment of GENIP should be expended wisely in the support of geography education. This is not an inheritance to be passed on to future generations. We will not have served the cause of geography education if we accumulate money.
- (b) there is plenty of room in which to work without worrying overly about duplication and conflict with the four constituent organizations. Be alert, for sure, but let's not be paralyzed into inaction.
- (c) much as we might wish otherwise, the world will not come to us. We have to be proactive, seeking out opportunities and partners. We cannot afford to sit around and to wait...
- (d) we must adapt to changing circumstances. Past success is no guarantee for the future. Each of the organizations is changing its way of operating. We must do the same.
- (e) we have become complacent! The reason is simple. We have been successful. We don't have any immediate worries, financial or organizational.

- (f) We need to re-energize ourselves, to return to the old ‘brainstorming’ style that was so successful in the past, to re-establish a commitment to “do” something. We need to take the initiative once again and therefore....

Initiatives for the Future:

1. “The State of Geography Education in...”

GENIP should produce an annual report highlighting what is happening in geography education every year. The report should be posted on the GENIP WWW site with links to the four constituent organizations. The report should mix the following things:

- data on enrollment patterns, K–22
- reports on curriculum change at state and school levels
- lists of achievements by students and geography educators
- assessments of successes, failures, needs
- analyses of the implementation of the National Geography Standards
- reports on successful initiatives (e.g., with NASA, ESRI (if it happens))
- focus on school successes

It should be honest in tone, accurate in content, and forward-looking in intent. We should release it each year in Washington DC at a GENIP meeting and endeavor to get press attention. We need to develop a distribution list for hard copy versions and to post it on our WWW site. This should be given the highest priority.

2. Commission studies and/or reports on topics that are central to the implementation of the National Geography Standards

Despite the good intentions of the current grant program, it is not working. We are not generating a wide range of generative proposals. Therefore, we will have to return to an earlier strategy. We should identify specific needs and then seek people to meet those needs, offering them financial support, organizational support, introductions, etc. as appropriate.

While this is a high priority item, we should develop a systematic plan before we attempt to publicize this program widely. We might want to follow the idea behind a university fund raising campaign: get about 30–40% of the people signed up before you go public. We need to commission a couple of important studies before we open the program more widely.

3. Coordinate the implementation aspect of the AP Geography Program

While AP is limited in one sense in its impact, its symbolic importance cannot be ignored. However, it is clear that the current organizational structure is not necessarily adequate to the

task. Funding for workshops may be limited or non-existent. There is little evidence that the development of supporting materials is going to occur. Given GENIP's central role (both inspirational and now financial) in the AP program, we cannot let this program drop. We need to work with the College Board to identify what a model supporting program looks like and then we need to make sure that one develops for geography. A failure of the AP program in geography would do significant damage to the public image of the discipline.

This is another high priority program that must be underway by the end of the calendar year if we are to coordinate with the expected 2000 or 2001 start dates.

4. Develop a set of goals and strategies for the meeting at ESRI next summer

We were fortunate that Osa and Pam Mountjoy had done so much of the essential groundwork that the NASA Initiative was doomed to succeed! We cannot make the same assumption with ESRI. There are already significant links between the geography education community and ESRI (e.g., the joint NGS-ESRI technology workshops, the current ESRI support for Geography Awareness Week program, etc.)

As GENIP, therefore, what do we want? What can we expect of ESRI? We need to establish a sub-committee to (a) work with Charlie Fitzpatrick and (b) with the four constituent organizations to develop a plan. We might wish to invite the Presidents of the four organizations to add weight to the visit but only if....

This is another high priority item, something that must be in place by early spring in order to take full advantage of the ESRI visit in early summer.

Cares and concerns for the Future

We should be careful to recognize that the current organizational structure was not necessarily designed to support alternative working models that might involve significant commitments of time. For example, it is clear that GENIP will have to invest some resources (financial and member's time) into the NASA Initiative in order to ensure that we follow through with the opportunities that are being made available to us.

We need to rethink our committee structure and meeting schedule. We need to take more advantage of alternative means of communication. We need to develop working committees but let's make sure that the committees do something, not exist simply in name. We might want to consider a three meeting per year schedule.