

Learning Geography in Challenging Times – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

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Abstract

Teaching geography has never been more challenging. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030, outline the aspirations of a better world “of the people, by the people and for the people” (UNESCO, 2015). Unfortunately the aspiration for these 17 goals also describe some of the key challenges to humanity today. Set against rapidly evolving and uncertain issues in environment, economy and society, geography educators have to understand the needs of our learners in order to teach them well. Geography is concerned with asking questions of “Where is it?”, “What is it like?”, “Why is it there?”, “How did it happen?”, “What impact does it have?” and “How should it be managed for the mutual benefit of humanity and the natural environment?” (Commission on Geographical Education, 1992 p. 5). Indeed, school geography curricula have been keeping abreast with these fast-changing issues that affect humankind. These include increased focus on topics such as environmental change and globalisation. But education is not just about teaching knowledge. The 'Delors Report' of 1996 to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century was premised on a holistic and integrated vision of education based on the four pillars of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. This vision resonates with the aspirations of geographical education for the 21st century as outlined in the 2016 International Charter on Geographical Education. Good teaching and learning of Geography should consider the dimensions of curriculum design, instructional design and resource provision, as well as assessment for such learning activities. The speaker will use various examples from his encounters as a teacher in the classroom, geography education researcher, editor of a geographical education journal and a leader in a geographical association to illustrate how geographical education should and can prepare children in learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together for challenging times ahead.

(328 words)

Reference

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About Chew-Hung Chang



Associate Professor Chang Chew Hung is the Chief Planning Officer at National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is also an elected Senator to the Academic Council of the University. He is also concurrently, an Adjunct Professor of East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. Prof Chang has published widely in the areas of geography, geographical education and environmental education. He is the President of the Southeast Asian Geography Association, in addition to being the Co-Chair of the International Geographical Union Commission on Geographical Education. He is the Co-Editor of the journal *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* (IRGEE) and is the International Editor of the journal *Review in Geographic Education online* (RIGEO) for the Asia and Oceania region. Prof Chang also serves as a member of the scientific committee of the journal *J-Reading - Journal of Research and Didactics in Geography*.

(147 words)