

Geographic Learning

Designing National Programs for Local and Global Impacts

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Preamble:

Geographic analysis is an essential component in moving societies toward sustainability. In evaluating whether any process or product is sustainable it is essential to examine how materials consumption and resource use stretches across scales and over time.

To ensure a secure and sustainable future, all citizens need to understand sustainability and behave in a sustainable fashion. To facilitate the education about sustainability we have these recommendations.

(The Three Top Recommendations are marked with ***)

A. Programs should be designed so participants collect and use real data to address local issues.

B. Programs should include a range of spatial and temporal scales in their analysis.

***C. National programs should promote the incorporation of geographic learning into sustainability education because geographic learning is a place-based, real-world, local and global, and is a linking and integrative framework that encourages critical spatial thinking and that can be an effective means of linking goals of sustainability education to actually creating a more sustainable future.

D. Programs should build multi-sector learning communities.

E. Programs should be able to support a wide range of people.

F. Sustainable education should be integrated among other topics of public discourse. Ways to interject sustainability into on-going national issues.

***G. Need national effort for teacher professional development programs to assist teachers in learning how to teach sustainability using geographic analysis tools. Enable teachers to meet professional development on how to teach about it.

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H. Geographic learning fostered in informal teaching about sustainability and learning broadly and link to popular culture and mass media. (See F) Develop partner with cognitive scientists and learner center-ed design to develop geographic analysis tools customized for teachers in the classroom and access to

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***J. Integrate physical, social and economic geography as part of the core curriculum. Geographic has to component of problem solving that addresses sustainability. Need more focus on integrated approaches to learning such as science with geography.

US students need and deserve more integrated geography that includes the social, environmental, and economic as an entire subject-matter as part of a core curriculum. Geography as core subject-matter. Every student by the end of high school should take a geography course.

K. Encourage the direction that NSF is taking toward integrative sciences. Include a focus on environmental sustainability in every rfp.

L. University rewards system should promote interests and efforts to increase an interdisciplinary focus on sustainability.

M. Sustainability education should stress the importance and consequence of individual action and the interrelations of individuals, communities and global systems.

N. Develop a national clearing house so people can find mentors, practices, mentors, curriculum etc.

O. Encourage participants to consider all aspects of sustainability (environment and economics and social) simultaneously to work towards viable solution that will be adopted by society.

***P. US Students need and deserve to learn how to use state-of-the art technology and software to solve problems, think critically make decisions, and visualize solutions to address issues of sustainability.