

What does fieldwork contribute to geography education?

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***'My ideal school would
be an entire planet'***

Cara, 14, Winchester

(Burke and Grosvenor, 2003)



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'Geography is the study of the earth as the home of human beings. Home. How varied and resonant are the meanings of that word. Home is the envelope of air; it is the continents and oceans, the deserts and the forests. Home is the humanly modified worlds of farms and gardens, towns and cities. Home is parish, province, nation state, Asia and Africa, the North Atlantic Alliance and the Third World. Home is sociality - it is types of human connectedness at all scales. These range from intimate exchanges in family and neighborhood to communication across thousands of miles via electronic media, those myriads of invisible lines that encircle the earth, creating an extra sheath of shared thought and feeling. Last, but certainly not least, home is the mutual dependence and sociality of all living things - plants, animals and people'

Tuan (1993,page ix)

'Fieldwork can be defined simply as the medium that enables formal education outside of the classroom'

(Hammond, 2017)

Fieldwork contributes to geography education in the following ways:

- Students are provided with first-hand opportunities of creating and testing geographical knowledge
- Provides one of the (potentially few) opportunities for students to engage in geographical enquiries from start to finish
- Students have an opportunity to create and test primary data (Roberts, 2013)
- It stimulates students' awe and wonder about place(s)
- It can take students beyond their 'everyday knowledge' of a place
- Social benefits including, developing students' identities as a geographer

Summarised from Hammond (2017)

'How many times have we all 'strolled' through the French countryside without knowing how to decipher the human landscape before our own eyes!... We do not know how to see this reality, so near and so vast, these forms creative labour has produced. City dwellers getting away from it all, intellectuals at a loose end, we wander through the French countryside simply for something to do, we look but we are unable to see'

Lefebvre (1991, page 132)

What would our children and young people not be able to see if it wasn't for Geography and fieldwork?

Thank you for listening!
Questions, comments and suggestions welcome

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