

Institution: Institute of Education
Unit of Assessment: 25
Title of case study: Conceptualising school geography: curriculum change and teachers' work
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The IOE has had a major impact on the field of geography education, under the leadership of David Lambert. His ideas on the subject's structure, content and significance, developed in part with John Morgan, have been put into practice, most powerfully through the £4m government-funded *Action Plan for Geography 2006-11* (APG), which boosted teacher knowledge and raised geography's profile. As a result of the APG, and his influence on the Geography Association's 2009 'manifesto', Lambert's work has benefited more than two-thirds of English secondary schools. His ideas have influenced national curriculum developments, GCSE course revisions, the thinking of Ofsted and have been carried around the world.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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IOE context: This research is set within the wider sphere of geography education at the IOE, which is instrumental in ensuring the subject's ongoing strength in schools. This includes the IOE's unique MA in Geography Education, the DFID-funded Development Education Research Centre (directed by Doug Bourn) and much the largest cohort of secondary geography trainees and post-graduate research students nationally.

Research context: Lambert's research is largely conceptual, being concerned with the manner in which the geography curriculum is constructed and communicated, and the role teachers play in its interpretation and implementation. It develops Norman Graves's innovative work at the IOE in the 1970s and 1980s on the theory and application of 'rational curriculum planning' in school geography. Since the 1990s and the onset of more centralised control, Lambert has adapted the principles of curriculum planning to the national curriculum era. He has also examined in great depth the relationship between the discipline of 'geography' and the idea of 'education' (sometimes with fellow IOE academic John Morgan, drawing on the latter's scholarship in cultural studies). His research has been closely associated with his teaching, supervision and programme leadership activity.

Main conclusions: '*Curriculum making*' is the key conceptual device to emerge from Lambert's work. It acknowledges the importance of teacher engagement with subject knowledge – rather than mere content delivery. He points out that teachers are required to move across the boundaries of various 'realms': between curriculum and pedagogy, between the discipline of geography and the everyday knowledge of students, between an emphasis on learning or on teaching (see reference **R1** chapters 3 and 4; **R5**). Lambert places special stress on the relationship between the school subject and the discipline of geography – the latter not as the source of content-to-be-delivered but as a dynamic, creative resource (**R3**). He also argues that excellent, innovative teaching of subjects, including geography, in the context of their wider disciplinary heritage, is vital in 21st century schools (**R3**). The national curriculum should not be a delivery template but a framework. Teachers should retrieve their responsibility to *make* the curriculum, he contends.

Joined-up thinking: Lambert has concluded that teachers' capacity to think synoptically about geography (i.e. to come to a broad, general view based on an understanding of how different aspects of physical and human geography interrelate) is essential for effective curriculum making.

Three forms of knowledge: Lambert encourages teachers to think of core knowledge as the extensive factual base that geography has: this he has termed 'Knowledge 1' (often referred to as 'locational' or even 'place' knowledge and similar to the idea of geographic context initially developed by Graves). 'Knowledge 2' refers to relational understandings of how the world works – people and the environment, local and global – and how society and the environment interact. 'Knowledge 3' is the procedural knowledge and skills required to do geography (**R2**). This type of knowledge may be developed through a process of enquiry and decision-making classroom activities.

Impact case study (REF3b)

Researchers: David Lambert first joined the IOE in 1986, leaving in 2002 to take up the full-time post of Chief Executive of the Geographical Association. He returned in 2007, as Professor of Geography Education, job-sharing with John Morgan until 2012. In 2012, Lambert became a full-time professor and Morgan left the IOE.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1: Lambert, D. & Morgan, J. (2010) *Teaching Geography 11-18: a conceptual approach*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

R2: Lambert, D. (2011) Reviewing the case for geography and the 'knowledge turn' in the English National Curriculum, in *The Curriculum Journal*, 22(2), 243-264.

R3: Lambert, D. (2013) Geography in school and a curriculum of survival, in *Theory and Research in Education*, 11(1), 85-98.

R4: Morgan, J. and Lambert, D. (2005) *Teaching School Subjects: Geography*. Abingdon: Routledge. Series editors: Lambert, D. and Hardcastle, J.

R5: Lambert, D. (2011) Reframing School Geography; a capability approach, in Butt, G. (ed) *Geography, Education and the Future*. London: Continuum.

Indicators of quality:

IQ1: Roger Firth of the University of Oxford writes in his review of **R1** (*The Curriculum Journal*, 22(3) 439-442): "This is [an] important book ... [its] strength is that it initiates a discussion within ourselves and within the geography education community about what it means to be a geography educator/teacher within the context of the discipline rather than in the context of the other policy, political, social and economic conditions that strongly influence education today. As a geography education text it is unlike others in foregrounding the discipline as a resource for education."

IQ2: From a review of (**R5**) by Professor Noel Castree of the University of Manchester in *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(2): 288: "Personally the two chapters I found most interesting were those by David Lambert ... who expands on the capabilities approach to individuals flagged in his book with John Morgan – and Roger Firth ... Together, Lambert and Morgan reminded me ... that many university geographers educate students on the basis of a thin and often implicit 'philosophy' of education".

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)
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Principal beneficiaries: Teachers, pupils, awarding bodies, curriculum designers and policy-makers.

Dates of impact: 2008-13, from the introduction of the 2008 KS3 curriculum to the development of the 2014 National Curriculum.

Reach and significance: Lambert has provided intellectual leadership in restoring geography's place in the school curriculum, through the reconceptualisation of its contents and purposes. Today, geography is increasing in popularity again at key stages 4 and 5¹. Lambert's work has helped to achieve this, not least by persuading government (and others) of geography's position in the post-14 curriculum (and what became the English Baccalaureate). Through the Action Plan for Geography (APG), his research with Morgan has reached some two-thirds of secondary schools and hundreds of primaries. His position as Chief Executive of the Geography Association (GA) has meant that his ideas have been heard not only in the highest policy circles of the UK but around the world. Despite being a UK-based organisation, the GA has members in more than 60 countries and has strong links with geographical organisations in the USA, Australia and Europe.

Instrumental impact²: Lambert has influenced policy-makers who construct official curricula and qualifications.

¹ Between 2011 and 2012, entry numbers rose by 2.5% at A level, 1.4% at AS and by 3.5% at GCSE.

² Using Evidence: How Research can Inform Public Services (Nutley, S., Walter, I., Davis, H., 2007)

Impact case study (REF3b)

2014 curriculum reforms: Lambert played a key role in shaping the Geography programmes of study. Tim Oates, chair of the Government's 2014 National Curriculum review Expert Panel, says that Lambert's contribution in "theoretical underpinning, empirical evidence, generation of critical dialogue and formation of professional consensus has been exemplary: a textbook study of managing the interface between policy, research, professional bodies and teaching professionals", adding "his work has had a huge impact" (see impact source **S1**). The influence of Lambert's research on the Coalition Government's curriculum plans began shortly after the 2010 election. He had meetings with Schools Minister Nick Gibb and served on the geography expert panel from 2011-13. The GA's 2012 consultative national curriculum proposals (**S2**), which are largely derived from Lambert's academic output, for example (**R2**), have proved influential with DfE officials. The revised national curriculum, published in 2013, shows the clear influence of the GA papers, particularly in the content sequence and the decision to specify specific regions of the world. Oates confirms Lambert's influence on complex judgments such as sequencing.

Primary curriculum: Lambert, as a member of the expert group of the Rose Review (2009), commissioned by the previous Labour Government, helped to ensure that its proposals recognised geography (and history) by name (replacing 'Human, social and environmental understanding' as an area of learning). The proposals also specified the subject's 'essential knowledge, skills and understanding'. The final report therefore bears his thumbprint (e.g. Rose Review, para.11, **S3**).

Secondary curriculum reforms: The 2009 GA Manifesto, *A Different View*, authored by Lambert and with 44,000 website downloads by early 2013, influenced both the subject guidance and government-funded CPD following the revised KS3 curriculum of 2008. For example, the GA led the national geography CPD provision, reaching more than 1,000 secondary schools between 2008 and 2010. David Gardner, former geography curriculum adviser at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, confirms Lambert's extensive involvement and "invaluable contributions, particularly with the drafting of the KS3 programme of study" (**S4**). In 2012, the DfE asked Lambert for "trusted advice" on GCSE reform. The following year, new GCSE national criteria were published which make explicit reference to 'thinking like a geographer', a phrase he coined (**S5**). Through his GA position Lambert campaigned at the highest levels to ensure geography's place in the post-14 curriculum, culminating in the English Baccalaureate, which was introduced as a performance measure in 2010. Starting with Lord Adonis, Lambert obtained meetings with every Schools Minister up to and including Nick Gibb, at which he explored the idea of a combined geography/history GCSE. This campaign helped establish a sense of parity between how geography and history were perceived in the post-14 curriculum policy arena.

Inspection: Ofsted's definition of geography core knowledge is derived directly from Lambert's own discussion of extensive, core geographic 'vocabulary' (**R2**, p. 251). Ofsted says: "*The subject matter of geography is constantly evolving so core knowledge is essential if students are to make sense of the world around them and place their studies in a wider national, international or global context*" (**S6**, p.4).

Champions and Quality Marks: The £3.8m government-funded APG (2006-11), which was praised by Ofsted, has raised the profile of geography in more than two-thirds of English secondary schools and established a national network of primary-teacher 'Geography Champions'. Negotiated and led by Lambert and Rita Gardner of the Royal Geographical Society (both co-advisors for geography to Secretary of State Charles Clarke in 2004, when it was conceived), the APG trained and supported 5,000 teachers between 2006 and 2011 and is estimated to have benefited 2.5m secondary students³. Through the APG (**S7**), Lambert and Morgan's research (e.g. **R4**) directly influenced the establishment of 'curriculum making' principles and the accrediting of good practice through the 'Geography Quality Marks' (GQM), now held by more than 600 schools. Between its launch in 2006 and July 2013, at least 370 schools gained the Primary GQM, benefiting some 100,000 5-11 year olds⁴. Through the Secondary GQM scheme, 35 schools have become 'Centres of Excellence'. GQMs have now become the cornerstone of the GA's expanding commercially-based professional development activity. Alan Parkinson, a quality mark assessor,

³Based on DfE statistics showing there are 4,000 secondaries averaging close to 950 pupils each.

⁴The average primary has 180-220 pupils, according to DfE statistics. In order to gain the Quality Mark, a school has to show that geography is part of every teacher's curriculum priorities. This calculation assumes an impact on each primary child who attended these schools between 2008 and 2013.

Impact case study (REF3b)

attests that engaging with the idea of curriculum making has ‘invariably’ led to a culture change in schools, affecting the quality of students’ work and teacher development (**S8**). Ofsted’s 2011 report says: “The best geography seen was usually in schools which were participating in the professional development programme offered through the Action Plan for Geography, in specialist humanities schools where geography was one of the lead subjects or where the school shared good practice with local partner schools” (**S6**, p7).

Conceptual impact:

Subject specialists: Lambert’s research has helped to guide geography teachers to a deeper understanding of their subject. He has contested the trend for cross-curricular project work, as undermining subject knowledge and the unique importance of geography to children’s development. His thinking on ‘curriculum making’ has helped to square the circle in the debate over which is more important – curriculum content (what is learned) or the way it is taught and learned (process). Lambert’s *Learning to Teach Geography* (Routledge) is the UK’s leading geography ITE text, having sold 9,413 copies since 2000, including 2,290 abroad (“very strong international sales”, according to the publisher, particularly for a textbook designed for beginning teachers in England. The impact of a Chinese translation, undertaken by Chongqing University Press, cannot yet be quantified.

Wider professional engagement: Invitations to address national education organisations have extended the reach of Lambert’s research beyond subject specialists. The Prince’s Teaching Institute now includes geography in its summer schools programme following representation by Lambert in 2008. He is regularly invited to speak at these events. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust also invited Lambert to address 1,500 school leaders at its 2010 conference. Throughout the REF period Lambert has also led the national debate on geography through journalism (e.g. **S10**) and many radio appearances.

Overseas influence: Since 2008 Lambert has been invited to give keynotes to geography teachers’ conferences across the Far East, including in Singapore, Vietnam, China and Japan, in Australia and for the Herodot European geography teacher education network. Lambert’s writings are cited in Australia’s National Curriculum documents (e.g. **S9**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact ⁵ (indicative maximum of 10 references)

S1: Tim Oates: Cambridge Assessment, chair of the Government’s 2014 National Curriculum Review Expert Panel (testimonial available)

S2: <http://www.geography.org.uk/getinvolved/ncconsultation>

S3: Sir Jim Rose (testimonial available); *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum*

<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2009-IRPC-final-report.pdf>

S4: Statement from David Gardner: formerly of QCDA and now of Goldsmiths

S5: DfE (2013) Geography GCSE Subject Content and Objectives

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/206145/GCSE_Geography.pdf

S6: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/geography-learning-make-world-of-difference>

S7: Geographical Association: Action Plan for Geography: Final Report and Evaluation (2006-11)

http://www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/82F00DE8-A7A3-4411-B111-E6A3610317EF/0/APG20062011_FinalReportandEvaluation.pdf

S8: Statement from Alan Parkinson: school teacher and independent author, blogger and consultant (available)

S9: Australian Geography Teachers Association website: <http://www.geogspace.edu.au/core-units/years-7-8/understandings/years-7-8/y7-understandings-y7-illus2.html>

S10: <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6055960>

⁵ All web links accessed 13/10/13