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Examining the Publications of International Studies in Geographical and Environmental Education Over the Past 18 Years

Gillianrs Kidman
(Queensland University of Technology,
Brisbane, Australia)

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Abstract

The long-term viability of the IRGEE Journal is the focus of this article. The papers published in the Journal "International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education" (IRGEE) offer an evaluation of the evolution of geographical and environmental education. Five hundred and twenty-six pieces covering the period from the publication of Volume 1, Number 1 in 1992 to the present have been subjected to a content analysis. The approach used was a content analysis, which uncovered topics that have either gained or lost popularity during the 18 years of IRGEE's publication (1992–2009), while other topics have stayed relevant. Articles about geographical education (sensu stricto) were more numerous than those about environmental education, according to this analysis's main findings. Researchers are increasingly interested in the themes "syllabi, textbooks, curricula" and "values, attitudes," and new subjects like sustainability and geographic information systems (GIS) have emerged in recent years.

Key-words: Content Analysis, Geographical Education, Environmental Education

Introduction

"Inform educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action" (Bassey, 1995, p. 39) is the stated goal of educational research. Conducting educational research to assist tutors in improving their work is crucial, however It's crucial to be aware of previous research as well as potential areas for future studies. Investigating the educational reform movement (de Jong, 2007) or the development level of the academic environment (Fensham, 2004) are two possible avenues to study the evolution of Geographical and Environmental Education (GEE). Another option is to track the publication dates, topics, and article counts to see how they evolve over time. We hope that this kind of study will help us better understand the topics covered by researchers over the years that IRGEE has been published, as well as the degree to which these themes are related.

Editorials by Lidstone and Stoltman (2002) state that the first issue of IRGEE appeared in August 1992. From 1995–1996, with Volume 5, IRGEE published three issues annually; beginning in 2000–2001, with Volume 9, the magazine has published four issues annually. Editorials, main articles, forums, and sections reviewing books and other related publications are staples of each issue. All of these things add up to a mountain of text, ideas, and pages that provide a picture of a

research era that is full of life and energy.

Therefore, this paper provides an explanation of the publishing history and classes the articles based on their substance.

Methods

First, we see that, according to White (1997), a keyword analysis may show changes in the focus of research subjects, even if keywords aren't always accurate descriptors of article content. Consequently, the whole journal collection was examined to provide a comprehensive picture of the GEE developmental patterns as reported in IRGEE from 1992 to 2009. We read and categorized every article, editorial, and forum that was published. The topics, themes, and clusters that emerged were based on the methods used by Chang et al. (2010). Rather than using a pre-set framework to match each published item,

deductively, as they arose from the whole corpus of the eighteen books published between 1992 and 2009. A grounded approach, as described by Chang et al. (2010), "overviews the structure and evolution of the field" (p. 318), which is useful for educators, researchers, and policy makers. subjects were assigned to each published item, and themes were formed from those subjects. In subsequent rounds, topic clusters formed. It must be admitted that this categorization endeavor is certain to include some degree of imprecision. The absence of crucial terms linked with an object made it impossible to remember literal meanings, despite attempts to do so. As a result, this paper's structure and content are reminiscent of a funnel: an expansive introduction followed by a detailed analysis of the subject matter.

Results

There were 59 issues published between 1992 and 2009. You may see a list of all the articles published in IRGEE in Table 1.
The content analysis uncovered 10 topics, which have been grouped into three categories. Two topics, one concerning geography and the other the environment, make up the first cluster, Published Focus. The name of the journal suggests this outcome. The second grouping has five topics, and it is called Curriculum and Pedagogy. The final set of topics addressed student attributes and abilities. The number of prominent themes covered by IRGEE throughout each of its two-year publication cycles is also shown in Table 1.

Table 1 may be found here.

You can see the correlation between major subjects and time in Figure 1. The number of articles covering these issues rose by more than thrice throughout the years. Thirteen editions in 1992 and 1993 covered a total of twenty-nine distinct subjects. By the end of 2009, there were eight issues covering well over a hundred different subjects. At the time

while looking at each issue separately, the range of themes conveyed in each issue throughout time is between seven and twelve. Items in the lower price range were published in conjunction with the special issues and extensive forums in Volumes 11–14. With the passage of time, both the quantity

and quality of articles have grown.

PUT FIGURE 1 IN THIS SPACE
Figure 2 shows that since the first issue of IRGEE, the geographical and environmental focuses have been steadily increasing. As the journal's fame and readership increased, this was inevitable. Most notably, Geographical Education produced more articles than Environmental Education for the vast bulk of the period. Except in volumes 3–6, when the emphasis is mostly on environmental education. There can be two possible causes for this. To start, these four volumes include a number of Forums that deal with Environmental Education. Secondly, Environmental Education is not considered a part of geography but of scientific education in some parts of the globe, such as North America (Lidstone & Stoltman, 2002), which is why geographic education is more often used. Therefore, it's possible that academics from North America have been submitting their research articles on Environmental Education to publications other than IRGEE, such as their own national magazines devoted to scientific education.
Here is Figure 2:

A special edition (Volume 15, No. 4) is responsible for the apparent rise for Volumes 15 and 16. The Geography group at London's Institute of Education highlighted their research interests in this special issue. Looking at the five pieces in this issue, it's clear that most of the concepts are about geography education. Figure 3's Curriculum and Pedagogy cluster bears witness to this emphasis with its Teaching and Teacher Education peak.

Here is Figure 3:

"Teaching and Teacher Education" is a dynamic issue in the area, as seen in Figure 3. It accounts for 18% of published themes and 15% of topics related to Syllabus & Textbooks, Curriculum, and Assessment. The increase from five pieces in later volumes to nine in volumes 9 and 10 does not seem to be associated with any discernible occurrences. It should come as no surprise that studies using GIS and computers started to surface in journals around 2001. Volume 15, Number 3's GIS forum and the widespread use of computers in classrooms are congruent with this. subjects related to sustainability, pollution, and climate change have been on the rise, accounting for 10% of all published subjects. Teaching challenges related to these subjects are brought to light by the research that falls under this category. Such studies are so common that they need their own section. The concept of Syllabus & Textbooks, Curriculum, and Assessment encompasses teaching concerns pertaining to several subjects, such as physical geography.
Figure 4 shows the last set of items related to student skills and characteristics. Within this cluster, three distinct motifs emerged. Despite a rise in Volumes 7 and 8, the themes of visual and spatial intelligences and mapping (representing 9% of published works) seem to remain rather constant throughout time. Upon careful examination of these two volumes, no explanation for the unexpected and short-lived surge in students' interest in visual talents can be found. Capabilities related to inquiry and problem solving accounted for 15% of published subjects, another unsustained surge. Inquiry learning was experiencing a renaissance in the scientific education literature in 2006 and 2007, the years in which volumes 15 and 16 were released (Kidman, in press). A cross-fertilization of ideas may have taken place since several academics labor in both fields. Scholars in the GEE domains are showing growing interest in subjects related to values, attitudes, and student choice, which make for 19% of published topics.
Figure 4 may be found here.

Discussion

The results of the content analysis showed that, from 1997 onwards, geographical education has had more publications devoted to it than environmental education. Teachers of geography may start to question the connections between the two disciplines as a result of this. Not only that, but our data shows that geographical education papers are growing at twice the rate of environmental education papers (0.66 papers per annum vs 0.33 papers per annum for environmental education), which is quite intriguing.

The distribution of papers within a certain scientific subject inevitably reflects disparities in perspectives of the same discipline (geography in this example) throughout various nations, which might bring us to another problem to explore. Such variations have been recorded in the instances of Japan (Tomatsuri, 2001), the Czech Republic (Hampl, 1998), and Hungary (Pecsi, 1988), and the results might be quite surprising. During the years 1989–1998 in Czech geography, for example, the distinctions between physical and human geography were emphasized (Hampl, 1998).
"The very strong English-language bias of well-cited journal articles creates a geographical bias in study site selection, which may in turn bias geomorphic theory," Dorn (2002:667) said after compiling a comprehensive analysis of geomorphology publications. Would the same hold true for geography classes?

Is it possible that an English-language bias might lead to an inflated opinion of geography classes? Considering IRGEE's really worldwide coverage, it is unlikely to (Papadimitriou, 2001; Tan & Chang, 2008).
Geographic information system (GIS) education is another area of geography that has shown tremendous growth in recent years (Papadimitriou, 2010). It was really about the same time (Kidman & Palmer, 2006) that early indications that this might occur began to emerge.

Lidstone and Stoltman (2006) noted that GIS education gained popularity in IRGEE. A possible contributing factor to the upsurge in interest in teaching GIS and geospatial technology is the June 2005 release of Google Earth. The topic of "visual & spatial intelligence, mapping" peaked between 1998 and 1999 and thereafter fell; yet, it is intriguing to note that these technologies seem to have supplanted it. After this subject almost vanished in 2006, the "GIS" theme emerged, reigniting the argument over whether environmental and geographical education are ahead of the curve or behind when it comes to global challenges (Lidstone & Stoltman, 2007).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our content analysis provides intriguing insights into the publication standards held by the editors and reviewers of IRGEE. Geographical research has almost continuously outpublished environmental research for the last 18 years, as seen in Table 1, indicating a wide interest. Over the last three years, the number of publications authored by IRGEE academics has more than tripled. The publication rates of the following topics have been rising:

- Syllabus & Textbooks, Curriculum, Assessment
- Sustainability, Pollution, Global Warming
- Values, Attitudes and Student Choice

Topics which have maintained a steady publishing rate include:

- Visual and Spatial Intelligence, Mapping
- Inquiry, Problem solving, Knowledge & Understanding.

There have been no topics that have decreased in popularity over time. All topics are still relevant to modern publishing trends, having been published in earlier volumes. This is in part due to the renewed interest in the Western tradition of education among academics and students in emerging nations. Among all the issues published by IRGEE, the one new subject that has gained traction is Tools, GIS & Computers. It seems that the rate of increase in GIS education has been rising at an exponential rate since 2006. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that this publication is a premier venue for academics and professionals to share their findings. The goal is to maintain the high standard of research that researchers in the fields of geography and environmental education submit.

Educators and researchers in the area of GEE are encouraged to reflect on current trends and concerns, deepen their knowledge of the subject, and investigate their own teaching and research techniques via this study.

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