

HEADING WEST FOR AGTA 2013

Luke Naivasha, International Grammar , Broadway

One of the most formative experiences, which led to me becoming a Geography teacher was travelling around Australia as a young child between the ages of 7 and 9. While my family and I were away for a total of 18 months we still didn't get to Western Australia. Almost 20 years later I finally made it to the nation's largest state to attend the Australian Geography Teachers Association's biannual conference, which was an exciting and highly educative experience.

Geography is a dynamic subject that is constantly being reviewed and contemporised. As a teacher of Geography it is important to keep up with these changes and ensure students are learning what will be most useful and relevant to their current and future lives.



*Professor David Lambert presenting at the AGTA Conference 2013
Source: www.agta.asn.au*

The first keynote speaker of the conference, Professor David Lambert addressed the current nature of Geography, with reference to its historical progression, the British context and current paradigms. He spoke about the importance of core geographical knowledge such as the concept of place and mapping. This can be considered the "vocabulary" of Geography, allowing for further depth of inquiry, which remains an important element of the subject. He concluded by discussing Geography as a means to increase student capabilities and prepare them for the challenges of the future. Professor Lambert's words



*Professor Peter Newman presenting at the 2013 AGTA Conference
Source: www.agta.asn.au*

along with those of the various other speakers, plus the array of workshops left me with a much greater idea of the current state and future direction of the subject.

A critique of the current nature of Geography could not be more appropriately timed as we enter a new frontier with the highly anticipated Australian curriculum soon to be released by ACARA. Not surprisingly this was a hot topic throughout the conference, being addressed by speakers, conference organisers, workshops, fieldtrips, and social media. Many of the workshops allowed for conference attendees to gain a deeper understanding of the Australian curriculum and provided ideas on how it can be best taught. Professor Peter Newman's presentation touched heavily upon the cross-curriculum priority of sustainability and many significant geographical topics, as he provided significant evidence to suggest we are moving towards more sustainable cities. Professor Simon Catling explained the importance of teaching Geography in early childhood and through the primary years. On the final day of the conference AGTA announced that Geospace is due to be launched in March. This will provide online resources to support teachers in the implementation of the Australian Geography Curriculum.

The role of technology in teaching Geography is ever increasing and the AGTA conference clearly displayed this. I was initially a little embarrassed

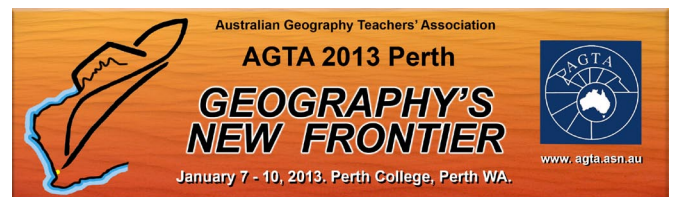


*Professor Simon Caitling presenting at the 2013 AGTA Conference
Source: humsteach.blogspot.com.au*

platforms. I have no doubt that these new skills and tools will increase the effectiveness of my teaching.

The AGTA 2013 conference brought Geographers and educators from all around Australia and overseas together. The GAWA organising committee are to be congratulated for their superb effort in making the conference a great success. The structure promoted socialising and the strengthening of professional connections. There were two days of fieldtrips, several 'happy hours', the final dinner and other organised social events. The traditional AGTA games were a particularly fun filled affair with the home state taking the cup in a riveting game of lawn bowls. Being in such an entertaining and social environment provided the perfect context for some serious learning to happen.

AGTA 2013 Conference presentations are available at www.agta.asn.au/conf_presentations/index.htm



GTA NSW ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday 30 August 2013

**Rydges World Square Hotel,
389 Pitt Street, Sydney**



The conference will cover topics relevant to the Australian Curriculum: Geography and using achievement standards and work units. Rebecca Nicholas, from AGTA, will present on Using Web 2 Tools for Geography