

# CGE Webinar 2021: Opportunities and Challenges for Geographical Education around the world during COVID and post COVID times.

Date: 16 April 2021

Time: 0700 (GMT)

Platform – Zoom and Facebook Live

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## Speakers

Gillian Kidman, Monash University, Australia

Duan Yushan, East China Normal University, China

Martin Hanus, Charles University, Czechia

Jongwon Lee, Ewha Womans University, South Korea

David Örbring, Malmö University, Sweden

Moderator: Chew-Hung Chang, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

This is part 1 of a 2 part- webinar on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on geographical education around the world. Part 1 include examples from countries in Australia, Asia and Europe. Each webinar includes a 5-10 minute talk by each panel member describing the issues in their respective countries and this is followed by a Q&A session.

## Australia

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented global crisis. As I watched my television, or looked for updates online, I saw that Australia's health and economic response has been impressive – we looked for advice from the experts, we acted quickly and decisively and closed our borders to stop the spread of COVID, and our opposing political parties came together for the good of the nation. Yes, we did have deaths, and many people lost their jobs, but together our collective response lived up to the well-known Australian idiom “no worries, mate, she'll be right”. This reflects an Australian stoicism that suggests everything (she) will turn out fine in the end, so there's no point in worrying about it. But I do worry. I worry about the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the education of our young. We are in a state of educational crisis - globally over a billion children and youth are out of school, many will fall further behind, with the disadvantage gap widening. We need to determine how to make the best of this unprecedented situation. We need to look past the Australian idiom of “no worries, mate, she'll be right”, and not leave education to return to a sense of normalcy on its own. We have a unique opportunity to re-envision and re-imagine education via an appreciative inquiry. Instead of continuing to focus on the negative aspects of the pandemic, we can use the education disruption to redesign and revise current curriculum in light of pandemic learnings. We can build back better if we permit the pandemic to serve as a catalyst for the strategic development of a new integrated curricula. We need to capitalise on the momentum of

educational change from the crisis and use this as an appetite for reform. We can reshape Geographical education, not only in Australia, but globally. This reshaping needs to be bold and innovative. It needs to recognize the words of those seeking the education, and to promote resiliency in times of risk and uncertainty. This presentation will explore the responses of 10 young Australians to the question “What aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic are you curious about, and what don’t you understand?” The responses indicate reforms need to include Geographical knowledges of data literacies and fake news, an understanding of common humanity, and of one’s self in a social and political world.

#### About the speaker:

Dr. **Gillian Kidman** is an Associate Professor from Monash University, Australia. She is a Science Educator, has research and teaching interests in the Science and Humanities disciplines. Gillian is particularly interested in inquiry-based processes, and the potential inquiry has for the integration disciplines. She is the Co-Editor of the journal International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education (IRGEE). Gillian is the Australian representative on the Steering Committee, International Geographical Union-Commission Geographical Education (IGU-CGE).



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## China

Challenges and Opportunities for geographical education due to the COVID-19 pandemic are described in relation to the example in China. In terms of challenges, there are four main categories of challenges: education level, normative framework conditions, students' socio-economic background and exchanges. The advent of big data and the improvement of Internet technology promotes online geography education. Compared with offline teaching, online geography education is more autonomous, flexible and convenient. As a result, it has become the first choice for schools to guarantee teaching tasks during the COVID times. Digitization is the clear and most positive impact of the epidemic, such as increase use of Google Earth, GIS, and digital maps. However we must consider the construction of a "learning society". The presentation will discuss the context and challenges of the COVID-19 crisis mentioned above.

#### About the speaker:

Dr. **Duan Yushan** works in geography and sustainability education. His expertise is in geography curriculum and assessment. He is a professor and doctoral supervisor at the School of Geographical Sciences, East China Normal University. Dr. Duan is a member of the IGU CGE Steering Committee, the Chairman of IGU-CGE China Committee. In addition to being the Deputy Director of the Geography Committee of the Elementary Education Teaching Commission of the Ministry of Education. Dr. Duan is also the Director of the Chinese Geographical Society, the Vice President and Secretary of the Shanghai Geographical



Society Director, the Director of the Chinese Education Society, the Director of the Geography Teaching Professional Committee.

Prof Duan is a Member of the Ministry of Elementary Education Course Textbook Expert Committee, a member of the Ministry of Education College Entrance Examination Reform Expert Committee. In addition to being the Director of Shanghai Education Society and the Geography Teaching Professional Committee, Prof Duan is also the Director of Shanghai Geography Education and Teaching Research Base of Shanghai University "Lide Shuren" Humanities and Social Sciences Key Research Base. Prof Duan is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Geography Teaching", he is the key member of the Team for the Development and Revision of National Geography Curriculum Standards in Junior and High School. Currently, he is the Editor-in-chief of Geography Curriculum Standard Edition of Shanghai High School Geography Textbook.

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## Czechia

The COVID-19 pandemic primarily affected Czech education by the long-term closure of schools and moving students to distance learning at all levels of education. Such changes revealed many weaknesses in Czech education - too much emphasis on encyclopedic knowledge, inflexible work with curricular aims, insufficient digitalization of education, excessive adherence of teachers to textbooks. However, this "crisis" in many education areas (policies, schools, teachers) has acted as a development booster. It has accelerated digitalization, rapid professional development of teachers, the setting up of new educational procedures/systems at schools, and parents' interest and participation in the educational process. This can result in a qualitative leap in (not only geographical) education. The presentation will discuss the context and challenges of the COVID-19 crisis mentioned above.

### About the speaker:

Dr. **Martin Hanus** is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Geographical and Environmental Education, Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague. His research activities focus mainly on map skills and related aspects of geography education (including curriculum, teaching, strategies, and educational outcomes). He is interested in research in geography education in general, such as geographical and spatial thinking, world-mindedness of young people, geography skills, geocapabilities, and geographical disparities. Martin is, inter alia, the head of the Geography Teachers' Network in Prague and a member of the Steering Committee of the Commission on Geographical Education of IGU.



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## South Korea

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the way teachers approach the teaching and learning experience at an unprecedented speed. When I asked geography teachers (N=12) about their experience with the online teaching during the pandemic, interaction, engagement and

feedback were identified as the biggest loss when comparing it to face-to-face education. What is also difficult to replicate is participation in fieldwork activities, collaborative learning and peer learning. This change has been a challenge in many ways, but it has also been an opportunity to improve new skills regarding online teaching and to re-think changes in school education in the future. Some geography teachers responded that because students are connected to each other online, online collaborative learning using Google Earth or Padlet is easier than in the past.

#### About the speaker:

Dr. **Jongwon Lee** is a Professor of Social Studies Education (geography education major) at Ewha Womans University, Seoul. He completed his Ph.D. (2005) in geography education at Texas A&M University, developing the Spatial Thinking Ability Test (STAT) and assessing the impact of GIS learning on spatial thinking abilities. His current research interests include inquiry, fieldwork, and technology. He is also passionate about developing and sharing new geography teaching ideas and best practices. Jongwon has served as Secretary of the Commission on Geographical Education (CGE) of the International Geographical Union (IGU) since August 2016.



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### Sweden

In Sweden, The COVID-19 pandemic has affected school and teaching in many ways. Teaching in compulsory school and in upper secondary school has been partly digitized, but continued as usual at younger ages. In teacher education, teaching has been completely digital. Many pupils and students have had to work with schoolwork at home, so even younger ages, which has led teachers to make new plans or sometimes double plans. This has meant that teaching takes place in new ways and that the place for teaching shifts from, for example, classrooms to digital rooms. The challenge for teachers to conduct geography teaching digitally entails both, for example, creative solutions and communicative challenges. This presentation will discuss teaching geography in relation to a more digital teaching where students are at home.

#### About the speaker:

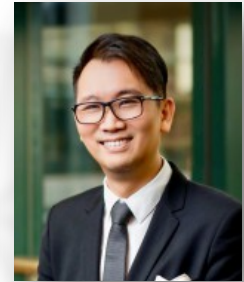
Dr. David Örbring is a geography educator at Malmö University. He completed his Ph.D in educational sciences February this year (2021) at Lund university. His research concerns curriculum theory and geography education. Örbring has been chair of the geography teacher association in Sweden between 2017 – 2021 and recently became editor for the journal *Geografiska Notiser*, which is Swedish journal about geography education for teachers. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Commission on Geographical Education of IGU.





#### About the Moderator:

Dr. **Chang Chew Hung** works in geography, environmental and sustainability education. His expertise is in curriculum and teaching within geography education, with a focus on climate change misconception diagnostics and technology-enabled instruction. Chew Hung is the Dean, Academic and Strategic Development at National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, looking after academic quality, innovations in teaching and learning, strategic planning, and international partnerships for the institute.



He is also an elected Senator to the Academic Council of the University, serving as the Chairperson to the Senate Committee on Education. He is also an Adjunct Professor of East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. He has published widely in the areas of geography, geographical education and environmental education. He is the President of the Southeast Asian Geography Association, and the Co-Chair of the International Geographical Union Commission on Geographical Education. He also previously served on the Executive Committee of the Geography Teachers' Association of Singapore and is an active member of the Education Research Association Singapore and American Association of Geographers. He is the Co-Editor of the journal International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education (IRGEE) and is the International Editor of the journal Review in Geographic Education online (RIGEO) for the Asia and Oceania region. He also serves as a member of the editorial board of the journal Humanities and Social Studies Education online and is a member of the scientific committee of the journal J-Reading - Journal of Research and Didactics in Geography.

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