

Chapter 3

Current Status and Issues in Junior High School Geography Education

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Abstract The National Curriculum Standards for junior high schools in Japan were made public in 2008, and fully implemented in April, 2012. The key areas that were revised include the strengthening of regional geography, where students learn about the geographical characteristics of world regions and of Japan. This is combined with fostering student recognition of Japan's geographic regions and its national land, an area that has been emphasized in the geography component of junior high school Social Studies. In regards to the nation's land, the revisions call for dynamic learning in order to avoid an over-emphasis of learning facts in regional geography education. Investigative learning is another area emphasized in the new curriculum, where a survey of the local area conducted at the end of the geography field incorporates a social participation element. In order to respond to the new learning activities that come along with these revisions, the active promotion of well-planned training for educational administrative bodies, schools, and for Social Studies teachers will be needed.

Keywords Geographic skills • Social participation • The National Curriculum Standards • World recognition

3.1 Introduction

The National Curriculum Standards for junior high schools in Japan were announced in 2008 and fully implemented in April 2012, after a 2-year transition period that began in 2010. The new National Curriculum Standards retain the basic principles embraced by that of the 1998 version (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 1999). These included firmly instilling the basic fundamentals of geography, and in the process foster the 'Zest for life' that includes studying and thinking independently.

Changes made between the two versions are in the lesson content of the geography component within Social Studies. Until now, the usual practice at the beginning of the school year in April has been to distribute textbooks to first year

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students, including one each for the geography and history fields as well as an atlas, while the civics textbook is given to third year students. With the new curriculum, a new geography textbook is now distributed to second year students.¹ This new measure ensures that the newly revised geography content will be covered, replacing old textbooks that were distributed in earlier grades which would not have been sufficient for second year students.

The writing of the 2008 National Curriculum Standards was influenced by a report authored by the Central Council for Education (2008). Among the report's 'specific items for revision' in the Social Studies area, those related to the content of the geography field can be summarized in the following four points:

1. To deepen students' geographical recognition of the world, units will be added to introduce the relationship between people in various parts of the world and the environment, as well as about the diversity of the world's various regions.
2. To deepen students' further understanding of Japan's national land, content will be improved to highlight geographical characteristics that relate characteristic of regional phenomena to other phenomena across various regions.
3. To support students' geographical skills, such as reading and creating maps, these will be further emphasized throughout all of the content.
4. To foster students' competence and attitudes in solving various issues and developing the region, they are introduced to a survey of the local area.

The new school geography curriculum was based directly on these 'specific items for revision.' The following six points can be cited as key to the 2008 National Curriculum Standards (MEXT 2008):

- A. Re-examination of the geography field's goals
- B. Re-examination of the composition of learning content
- C. Emphasis on geographical recognition of the world
- D. Strengthening recognition of the nation's land through learning in dynamic regional geography
- E. A greater emphasis on fostering geographical skills
- F. Study on the local area that incorporates the viewpoint of social participation

The schools accept that every 10 years a revised National Curriculum Standards will be implemented. This recent introduction of standards makes big changes that affect the Social Studies and Geography courses much more than the History and Civics curriculum. Nevertheless, education groups and teachers within the Social Studies area are enthusiastically adjusting and making use of the accumulated teaching materials, developing instruction resources that align with the new content.

Educators are responding with different solutions during the transition period until the complete implementation of the 2008 National Curriculum Standards. The classes that will be taught with the fully integrated curriculum are just beginning in 2014. Keeping this point in mind, while describing the important points in the

¹ In 1969, free distribution in the elementary and junior high schools for the entire year was completed and continues up to the present.

revisions of the 2008 National Curriculum Standards, the author describes how lessons are actually being put into practice in the junior high schools in the geography field of Social Studies.

3.2 Current Status of Junior High School Geography Education

3.2.1 *The Objectives and Content Structure of the Geography Curriculum*

There are four objectives in the geography field:

1. About geographical recognition,
2. About grasping geographical phenomenon and regional characteristics/issues,
3. About thinking and understanding geographically, and
4. About geographical skills and attitudes.

The first objective indicates the basic goal of the geography curriculum, which under the current revisions is to cultivate students with a geographical recognition of the world's various regions (MEXT 2008).

Since the 1977 National Curriculum Standards (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 1978), the geography instruction in junior high school has two goals: (1) to cultivate a foundation for geographical ways of looking and thinking, and (2) to foster a recognition of Japan's national land based on a broad perspective. In the 2008 version of the National Curriculum Standards, to these, 'a geographical recognition of the world's various regions' was newly added. Up until now, within the mandate of 'geographical recognition,' the 'knowledge content' of geography learning has been, in principle, to emphasize 'local area recognition' in elementary school, 'national land recognition' in junior high school, and 'world recognition' in high school. However, under the current revisions, students will learn both 'national land recognition' and 'world recognition' in junior high school geography.

Although the second objective was related to viewpoints and methods for investigating geographical characteristics in the 1998 version of the National Curriculum Standards (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 1999), this part in the revised curriculum has been changed to emphasize geographical characteristics and regional problems. The reasoning is that the current revisions have taken into account learning on the world's geographical characteristics and Japan's regions, highlighting regional problems in the survey of the local area. This point can be seen as a lessening of the relative emphasis on 'strengthening lessons on methods of study' that were meant to instill viewpoints and methods for grasping geographical characteristics, one of the basic principles of the revisions in the 1998 National Curriculum Standards.

The third objective is indicating ways of thinking about the peculiarities and nature of geographical characteristics, followed by objective four, which is indicating the

Table 3.1 Content as indicated under the 1998 National Curriculum Standards

(1) Regional composition of the world and Japan
A. Regional composition of the world
(a) Locational relationships on the earth and distribution of land and water bodies
(b) Make-up of countries and regional divisions
B. Regional composition of Japan
(a) Japan's location and territory
(b) Make-up of prefectures and regional divisions
(2) Surveys appropriate to a region's scale
A. Local area
B. Prefectures in Japan
C. Countries of the world
(3) Japan as compared to the world
A. Japan examined from many different aspects
(a) Japan's geographical characteristics seen from the natural environment
(b) Japan's geographical characteristics seen from population
(c) Japan's geographical characteristics seen from resources and industries
(d) Japan's geographical characteristics seen from livelihood and culture
(e) Japan's geographical characteristics seen from linkages between regions
B. Japan as seen from the interrelationship of all these characteristics

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (1999)

desirable skills and attitudes that should be instilled in students through geography learning. The intent of these two goals has carried forward to the revised curriculum and their descriptions have not been changed.

By accepting these changes in the geography field's objectives, the three content heading areas in the 1998 National Curriculum Standards (Table 3.1) [(1) regional composition of the world and Japan, (2) Surveys appropriate to a region's scale, and (3) Japan as compared to the world], have been reworked under the 2008 National Curriculum Standards into two major headings, (1) The various regions of the world, and (2) Japan's many different regions (Table 3.2).

Under the major heading (1), the topics are to form an axis for understanding the world's regions, world's regional make-up, diversity of different people's livelihood in various parts of the world, characteristics of the various regions of the world, and finally, descriptive geographical knowledge, perspective, and methods obtained through understanding world regions. The latter is learned through a process of exploration, and surveying the world's many various regions.

The major heading (2) is composed of the topics in the major heading (1), as listed above, as a strategy to develop and to deepen the lesson content and learning activities in progressive steps, based on the model of 'learning-utilizing-exploring' (Central Council for Education 2008). Through this pedagogy, students learn the fundamental vocabulary, knowledge, concepts and skills related to societal phenomena, and they are able to apply them to explore issues.

Along with the re-examination of the goals and content make-up of the geography field, changes were also seen in the number of classroom hours. Over the course of

Table 3.2 Content indicated by the 2008 National Curriculum Standards

(1) The various regions of the world
A. The world's regional make-up
B. People's livelihood and the environment in various parts of the world
C. The world's regions
(a) Asia
(b) Europe
(c) Africa
(d) North America
(e) South America
(f) Oceania
D. Surveys of the world's many different regions
(2) Japan's many different regions
A. Japan's regional make-up
B. Japan's geographical characteristics compared to the world
(a) Natural environment
(b) Population
(c) Resources and energy and industry
(d) Linkages between regions
C. Focus on Japan's regions:
(a) Consideration centered on the natural environment
(b) Consideration centered on historical background
(c) Consideration centered on industries
(d) Consideration centered on environmental problems and environmental protection
(e) Consideration centered on population and urban and rural settlement
(f) Consideration centered on livelihood and culture
(g) Consideration centered on linkages with other regions
D. Survey of the local area

MEXT (2008)

3 years, junior high school students have 350 classroom hours in Social Studies. The geography field's share of these under the 1998 National Curriculum Standards was 105 h, but under the 2008 version of the National Curriculum Standards this was increased by 15–120 h. However, the basic structure of Social Studies as a discipline has not changed. Geography and History remain compulsory for first and second year students, with an additional Geography course required in the third year, and students must study civics after their first History course.

3.2.2 Study About the World's Various Regions

In the School Education Law that was partially revised in 2007, among the goals of compulsory education, it is explicitly stated that, "Through an understanding of foreign cultures, to cultivate an attitude that respects other nations and contributes

to the peace and development of international society”. It is especially critical at the present time, with the spread of globalization, that it is extremely important to instill in students the basic and fundamental knowledge related to the world’s regional diversity and to foster a geographical recognition of the whole world. Given this situation, the units focused on geographical characteristics of the world’s regions have been restored in the 2008 National Curriculum Standards.

Major heading number (1) which deals with a geographical understanding of the world is divided into four sub-headings, of which three consist of newly established content. The first of these is ‘(B) People’s livelihood and the environment in various parts of the world’. This can be seen as responding to the ‘emphasis on learning about many different traditions, cultures, and religions’ that was spelled out as one of the basic principles in the revision of junior high school Social Studies, by more or less restoring the content of ‘people’s livelihood and the environment’ from the 1989 version of the National Curriculum Standards (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture 1989).

The second is ‘(C) The world’s regions’. In this heading, geographical phenomena provides a context through which one can solidly grasp the pattern of the livelihood of people living in the six major regions of Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, South America, and Oceania. The learning is positioned as regional geography education that will support students’ understanding of the geographical characteristics of these regions. In the interpretation of the 2008 National Curriculum Standards, ‘topics’ are themes to be decided by the teacher while considering other factors, such as the geographical phenomena being dealt with, the content previously covered, the ease or difficulty of the topic, the student’s life experience, the projected learning activities, and the classroom time involved. Teachers will need to consider whether there is sufficient time to cover the proposed topics as well as teach an overview of each region’s geographical characteristics from many different aspects. For that reason, one should focus on only one or two topics for each major region. Also, when setting out the topics, it is necessary to decide whether they lend themselves to drawing comparisons or relationships with Japan, and whether the pattern of human life in the world’s regions are seen from the many aspects. Topical study is excellent in that one can pick and choose from among the immensity of geographical phenomena. However, the main emphasis should be on making geographical themes clear, so if a mistake is made in the choice of topics then the regional nature will be unclear (Kobayashi 2009).

The third sub-heading with new content is ‘(D) Surveys of the world’s many different regions’. Although only partially, the content of ‘instilling the perspectives and methods for grasping geographical characteristics,’ which is emphasized in both the 1989 and the 2008 National Curriculum Standards.

As far as the topics for the six major regions are concerned, many examples from the National Curriculum Standards’ interpretation have been incorporated in the textbooks, so lesson plans are created in alignment with these. However, the order in which they are taught differs across teachers. For example, at the 2010 National Junior High School Social Studies Education Research Association conference in Sendai-Miyagi, a lesson plan proposed to begin the course with North America first.

The rational takes into consideration the students' developmental level and asserts that learning about Asia, which is so broad, complex, and diverse as the first of the 'regions of the world' would be difficult for them. In contrast, North America was seen as a coherent region and an easy one to compare industrial models. The lesson proposed to then move to Asia, Europe, Oceania, and then to Africa. The author planned Africa to be taught last because it was reasoned that it would be difficult for students to learn about African monoculture so early on in the first year of junior high school.

Then again, at the 2011 National Junior High School Social Studies Education Research Association's Tokyo conference, in focusing on whether or not it would be easy for students to construct an image of the world, a lesson plan was proposed that began with the Oceania region (Tokyo Metropolitan Junior High School Social Studies Education Research Association 2011). The interest level and concern for Australia, which is a core region of Oceania, would be high among the students making it easy to show the relationship between people's livelihood and the natural environment. For this reason, the author thought it appropriate to deal with Oceania at the beginning of the 'world's various regions,' and focus on immigration as a topic. The lesson moves on to Europe, North America, South America, and then to Africa. After learning about Africa, students would study the Asian region and the range of different climates, ethnicities, cultures under the topic of 'population problems.' Having outlined the geographical characteristics of the world's various regions, the lesson focuses on Japan and its local regions.

3.2.3 Study on the Various Local Regions of Japan

In geography, the study of Japanese regions has tended to fall into an encyclopedic treatment of each heading, and moreover there has been a tendency for students to memorize facts about the regions being studied. In the 1998 National Curriculum Standards, it aimed to strengthen the ways of studying such as by investigating topics in classes in order to move away from memorization, rather towards nurturing students' abilities to respond to the changes in society. In contrast, the 2008 National Curriculum Standards emphasize the acquisition of basic and fundamental knowledge and skills as a means of cultivating a base in geographical ways of thinking. This will be achieved through students pursuing and explaining the relationships between phenomena. From this perspective, study on the various local regions have been revived. What is needed, after dividing Japan into regions, is the development of dynamic regional geography learning that help students grasp the geographical characteristics by focusing on key characteristic phenomena in each of the regions and relating them to other phenomena.

Under the major heading that deals with the geographical recognition of Japan, (2) 'Japan's many different regions,' a new sub-heading has been established, (C) 'Japan's regions.' The content of this is to divide Japan into a number of regions, and to help students grasp their geographical characteristics based on seven different

means of considerations or avenues of approach to each of the regions: (a) the natural environment, (b) the historical background, (c) industries, (d) environmental problems and environmental protection, (e) population and urban and rural settlement, (f) livelihood and culture, and (g) linkages with other regions.

Each of the seven consideration or approaches should be chosen for each of the regions studies, which means that at a minimum Japan should be divided into seven regions. Moreover, taking into account the instructional perspective and geographic location of the school, educators could conceivably divide the country into more than seven regions, but in whichever case, teachers are directed to be able to deal with all seven of the approaches (a) through (g) in the course of covering all the regions of Japan.

In studying Japan's local regions, it is necessary to first think about the regional divisions and the order in which the regions should be taught. General textbooks and other materials often begin with the Kyushu region (including Okinawa) and proceed northward, in order. However, the National Junior High School Social Studies Education Research Association (2010), at their 2010 Sendai-Miyagi conference, proposed a lesson plan in which the order of instruction begins with the Tohoku region, and proceeds through the regions of Kyushu, followed by Chugoku, Shikoku, Kinki region, Chubu region, Hokkaido, and Kanto, before finishing with a survey of the local area. The order in which regions are taught follows past tradition where the study of the local area came before the study of the other regions of Japan. From that period on, with the perspective of creating a linkage between regions, the instruction of the various regions commenced with the Tohoku region. The study of Japan's regions ends with Kanto since it is where Tokyo, the destination for most school study-trip excursions, is located. This order was proposed giving consideration to that historical background and regional circumstances.

Next, in order to clarify the characteristics of the individual regions, it is important which geographical phenomena are chosen as the core topic. At present, there are four companies that publish geography textbooks.² Table 3.3 shows the combinations of each of the seven approaches along with the regions in which they are associated with in the various textbooks. The Tokyo Metropolitan Junior High School Social Studies Education Research Association (2011), proposed the combination that matches example 1 in Table 3.3. The purpose is to heighten students' interest and enthusiasm while guiding their grasp of geographical characteristics. To begin with, the Kyushu region would be studied through an approach centered on (a) the natural environment, which is the basis of the geographical way of looking and thinking. Finally, the Kanto region, where one third of Japan's population is concentrated is dealt with under (e) population and urban and rural settlement. The rationale for putting the Kanto region last among the 'various regions of Japan' is that by studying about a region with a large settled area last, the geographical characteristics and issues that were highlighted there could be organically tied to

²The four publishers of junior high school Social Studies (with geography content) textbook passed the 2011 textbook approval process are: Tokyo Book Publishing, Inc.; Educational Publishing, Inc.; Teikoku Shoin, Inc.; and Nihon Bunkyo Publishing, Inc.

Table 3.3 Combinations of geographical approaches and regions to be addressed in textbooks

Geographical approach perspective	Example 1	Example 2
(a) Natural environment	Kyushu	Hokkaido
(b) Historical background	Hokkaido	Kinki
(c) Industries	Chubu	Chubu
(d) Environmental problems and environmental protection	Kinki	Kyushu
(e) Population and urban and rural settlement	Kanto	Chugoku & Shikoku
(f) Livelihood and culture	Tohoku	Tohoku
(g) Linkages to other regions	Chugoku & Shikoku	Kanto

Based on the textbooks of four publishers (see footnote 2)

the ‘survey of the local area’ to create a close continuity between ‘Japan’s various local regions’ and the ‘survey of the local area.’ Also, having piqued students’ interest and increased understanding in the learning content, it was thought that it would be possible to carry out a ‘survey of the local area’ and that this would be effective as well in ‘nurturing a consciousness of social participation among the students,’ simultaneously reaching the aims of ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ (ESD) in creating a sustainable society.

Ushigome (2009) proposed three methods to teach the core phenomena of geography topics: (1) to focus on all core phenomena, 2(2) to focus on select core phenomena, and (3) to use “window” method by studying phenomena of human and physical geography topics across different regions.

3.2.4 Study of the Local Area

The Basic Act on Education and the School Education Law, partially revised in 2007, clearly states that ‘an attitude will be cultivated by participating as an actor in the formation of society and contributing to its development, based on public spiritedness.’ The nurturing of a social participation attitude also means to cultivate a foundation of civic qualities, a goal of Social Studies. Learning geography also deepens an understanding and interest to participate in the development of the local area where students live. This objective is under the content subheading (2)–(D) ‘survey of the local area’ in the 2008 version of the National Curriculum Standards. It emphasizes investigative learning that incorporates social participation on local regional issues in students’ communities giving them opportunities to participate in local community formation and to cultivate an attitude of students’ desire to work for their region’s development. ‘Local regional issues’ are defined as geographic phenomena with a location or an areal extent. It is necessary to distinguish these from local regional issues such as regional fiscal budgets, etc. that are related to content taught in civics classes.

Classes, not limited to geography, emphasize the incorporation of surveys and observation, study trips, and experience. However, according to the survey results³ of Research on Specific Issues (Social Studies), only 20.8 % of schools confirmed that field work and questionnaire surveys were included in the topic ‘survey of the local area’ (National Institute for Educational Policy Research – Curriculum Research Center 2008). The reasons that local area surveys are not carried out very much, as seen from the standpoint of the schools, is that teachers are overburdened with work in addition to their instructional duties. Moreover, in the high school admissions exams, it is difficult in reality to pose questions related to the ‘survey of the local area,’ so questions related to geography are usually limited to those testing the ability to read topographic maps.⁴ Because of this testing format, many teachers focus on teaching map reading in the classroom, another reason that local area surveys are not often carried out.

As a way of promoting the ‘survey of the local area,’ Matsuoka (2010) leads a program called ‘One-Point Geographical Excursions.’ It is a geography education excursion focusing on select phenomena in the vicinity of the school, equivalent to a one credit hour. Through this implementation, the exercise leads to an increase of students’ observation skills and fosters their interest to be aware of local phenomena. The goal is that students will independently explore similar phenomena outside of school.

From the perspective of strengthening language-related activities, Harigaya et al. (2008) conducted a survey of the local area using maps and in the process devised activities where students could collect and communicate their findings from the exercise. In this case, when presenting the results of the survey, they create a ‘guide map to introduce the area’ where students make an outline map, with catch phrases that are explained, of the administrative divisions at the scale of city, town, and village. In order to make active use of geographical and communication skills, a series of presentations titled ‘Rediscovery of the local area through presentations’ provide a summary of the field survey.

The Saitama Prefecture Social Studies Education Research Association (2009) have proposed putting into practice activities that incorporate social participation. One example asks students to imagine their local community 30 years in the future and what they want it to be. Students present the results of their imagined local area survey, based on projections of the issues, illustrated on a map. Through this project, students learn to take notice of the positive features and issues of the local area, and it is an attempt to heighten their awareness through participation in the society. As an example to bring about awareness of societal participation, the annual teaching plan of the Tokyo Metropolitan Junior High School Social Studies Education Research Association (2011) are trying to

³Made public in June, 2010; survey conducted on January 24, 2009; 9,394 third-year junior high school students at 301 schools participated.

⁴According to the *Analysis of National High School Entrance Exam Questions for 2013 Exam Takers—Social Studies*, published by Obunsha Press, 27 out of 47 prefectures had questions related to topographic maps on the 2012 high school entrance exams.

understand the thinking of forebears who created a better community and heightened interest in the local area through studying the boundary adjustments that were made in the past.

3.2.5 The Nurturing of Geographical Skills

In the geography field, the importance of utilizing large scale maps and atlases has constantly been pointed out. Simply, maps as tools, map reading, and map making are indispensable skills for understanding geographical phenomena and for advancing the fundamental geographic ways of looking at and thinking about the world. By using maps effectively to explain phenomena, in the meanwhile adding one's own interpretations and making arguments, and exchanging ideas, are all elements to fostering skills (e.g., abilities to think, make judgments, and to express oneself) unique to map learning. From this standpoint, along with Social Studies courses in elementary school and Geography and History in high school, to classes in the geography field of junior high school Social Studies, much emphasis is put on nurturing geographical skills that are focused on the utilization of maps.

Geographical skills, including the geographic way of looking and thinking, are not something that can be instilled through one class or a single experience, but rather developed through the process of repeated learning in which the level of familiarity gradually increases. Towards that end, as teaching materials intended to foster geographical skills, the Saitama Social Studies Education Research Association (2009) proposed the creation of study cards. First, they created a list of the basic knowledge, concepts, and skills related to the geographical expectations outlined. Then, as teaching materials that would foster the geographical skills on this list, they created study cards in color that explained, for example, the reading and interpretation of rank-division maps, or the methods for creating a population graph.

Harigaya et al. (2008) attempted to systematically arrange learning about maps and topographic maps in elementary, junior high and high schools by focusing on three points: 'learning content and aims,' 'how to read maps and express things in maps,' and 'suggestions for the use of maps and topographic maps.' However, while the importance of similar mapping skills have been pointed out (e.g., Ida (2008)), the curriculum for learning these skills at four different levels, from elementary through high school, has yet to be implemented. The learning of skills in incremental stages is something that should be implemented in the future.

Given the advancement of globalization, increasing geographical recognition, and the enhancement of geographical skills, it is now more important to cultivate the basic resources and skills so students can appropriately make use of available information and information technology. From this standpoint, it is desirable to actively devise ways of utilizing computers and information and communications networks. The Fujisawa City Education and Culture Center (2007) leads training with mapping information acquired from geographic information systems (GIS) for the creation of maps and graphs. They are assisting in the implementation of classes at each of the elementary and junior high schools in the city.

3.3 Future Issues

This chapter described the important points of the current revisions in geography as well as the current status of geography education. A number of issues remain. To begin with, due to the newly added content in the current revisions, the increase in learning content is greater than the increase in the number of hours that are allotted for. In order to prevent a shortage of hours from creating the impression that ‘geography is a memorization subject,’ it is necessary to further advance the development of teaching materials and the improvement of teaching methods and strategies. For this reason, it is particularly important to promote active learning and to strengthen learning that deals with relevant issues to student interest in order to further cultivate their abilities in problem solving. Promoting such learning enhances their thinking, judgment, and expressive abilities which are necessary to confront issues of the twenty-first century and beyond.

A pressing task is creating ways to promote teacher training. Based on teachers’ geographic learning from the courses they have taken, those in their 30s and younger did not study about world regions when they were in junior high school. To mediate teacher knowledge, models of professional training exist. For example, Saitama Prefecture provides newly hired teachers 30 h of training but among those, no more than 3 h are dedicated to field work (Saitama Prefecture General Education Center 2012). Moreover, the total number of teachers in Social Studies who majored in geography is small, relative to history, politics or economy. One can easily see how these factors contribute to low implementation of map use, outdoor observation, and local area surveys. The current issues are compounded by limited teacher initiatives such as asking other teachers at the workplace for instructional materials or voluntarily participating in the study training courses offered by research groups or academic associations.

Given the demands on teachers, it is necessary for the educational administrative bodies to actively promote the development of teaching materials and systematic training on the knowledge and skills important to geography field instruction (e.g., map reading and local area surveys) as well as to further increase the number of teachers who enjoy teaching geography. At the school level, it is important to build a collegial environment that facilitates the sharing of the latest research through courses, to include external support and resources, to create and introduce new teaching materials. In the future, teachers should actively participate in in-service training to learn new geographic skills and teaching content as well as develop confidence to reconstruct new and existing materials that conform to the National Curriculum Standards.

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