

## OUTREACH EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendees Name and Report Writers:

**Joseph Kerski, Geographer:  
Education/GIS, USGS, Denver, Colorado.**

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USGS, Denver, Colorado.**

Location: San Antonio, Texas

Event:

**Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.**

Dates: 8-11 March 2002

### Background

A significant part of our outreach and communications efforts each year emphasizes USGS exhibits at conferences. Outreach staff from each discipline meet each May to decide which conferences most closely match USGS themes and emphases for the next fiscal year. During our May 2001 meeting in Reston, Joseph suggested the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), ([www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org)), an association that he had then recently joined as a member. The group approved participating in ASCD because the group felt that it targeted a different educational sector than most educational associations. While we do work with organizations such as the National Council for Geographic Education and the National Science Teachers Association, these are comprised largely of in-class teachers. The ASCD was selected and added to the National Mapping Discipline's sponsored list of events because it is comprised largely of school

superintendents, state department of education staffpersons, and principals. It offered us a chance to work with a different group of educators than we have traditionally worked with.

The ASCD, therefore, comprised of school district officials, is concerned with the question—how can we make schools better places for learning? The association's emphasis, through their publication *Educational Leadership*, their other publications, workshops, and annual conference, is on school reform and change in the curriculum at all levels. They are concerned with such issues as national and state educational standards and testing. Therefore, we emphasized *how USGS resources can be used for inquiry-based, standards-based education*.

The ASCD was founded in 1947 and has a membership of 165,000 members and affiliates located in 145 countries. This is an astounding number, considering the membership of the AAG is around 7,500 and the NCGE is around 6,500. The ASCD three-day conference had an attendance of 10,000.



*Gene Jackson and Joseph Kerski staff the USGS exhibit at the ASCD conference.*

The mission statement of ASCD states that

the association is a diverse, international community of educators, forging covenants in teaching and learning for the success of all learners. The slogan of the ASCD, displayed on banners throughout the conference, was “Choosing To Dance—Taking Bold Steps for the Sake of Our Children.” Fundamental to ASCD is their concern for people, both individually and collectively. As stated in their documents, the individual has intrinsic worth, and all people have the ability and the need to learn. All children have a right to safety, love, and learning. A high-quality, public system of education open to all is imperative for society to flourish. Diversity strengthens society and should be honored and protected. Broad, informed participation committed to a common good is critical to democracy. Finally, humanity prospers when people work together.

ASCD also recognizes the potential and power of a healthy organization. Healthy organizations purposefully provide for self-renewal. The culture of an organization is a major factor shaping individual attitudes and behaviors. Shared values and common goals shape and change the culture of healthy organizations.

### Observations

The attendees at the ASCD are highly educated, committed to their profession, and almost always are researchers. They usually are not new to education. As evidenced by their questions at the exhibit, and especially during the presentation that Joseph attended (see below), they ask the important questions of curricular reform, how to improve teaching and learning, and how to make schools, teachers, and students successful.

Visitors to our exhibit, more often than not,

did *not* know about the USGS. Therefore, we felt that we were reaching our goal of working with an educational audience that was unfamiliar with us. If they did know about the USGS, they did not typically realize that we have so much to offer them as a member of the educational community.

The educators at the conference are doing amazing things, such as teachers we met from a Washington DC international school . These teachers are taking their *Grade 5* students to Costa Rica!



*The San Antonio Convention Center, site of the 2002 ASCD conference.*



*We were astounded at the size of the conference's exhibit area. Nearly 30 aisles of 12 exhibitors per aisle occupied the convention center. This size rivals the size*



*of any educational conference we have ever seen, including the National Science Teachers Association. That is over 350 exhibitors! These included resource and textbook publishers, makers of lab equipment, standards and assessment organizations, and educational organizations.*



*Despite the large conference attendance, we felt that the booth traffic was lighter than expected on Saturday. This may have been because the bulk of the attendees were in one of the dozens of concurrent sessions, and also due to the sheer volume of exhibitors present. To even make the briefest walk through the exhibit hall required over an hour—an adequate visit required three hours. There was a marked improvement by Sunday.*



*By mid-morning on Sunday, we had a clearer sense that many of the visitors to our exhibit were curriculum developers, superintendents, and principals.*



*Gene Jackson assists a visitor to our USGS exhibit. Often, the inquiries were from those who wanted to bring information back to the practicing teachers in their school districts, or to those who wanted to use our materials for science and social studies curricula.*

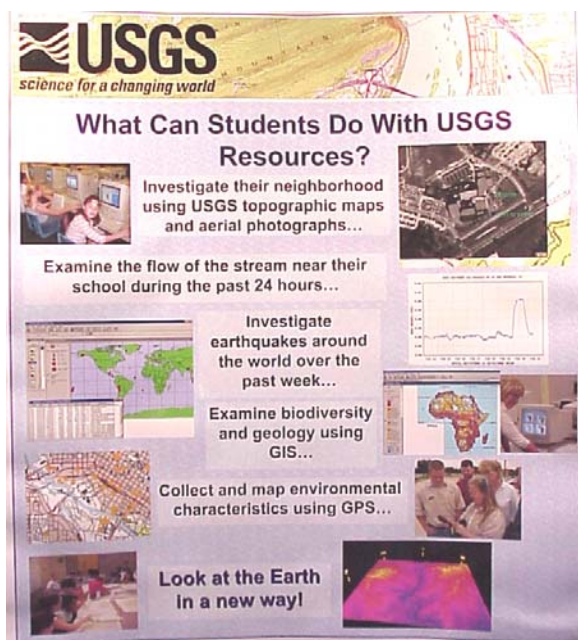
### **USGS Exhibit**

Our exhibit was at the end of a cross-corridor and at the beginning of another, which allowed us a “corner” space of high visibility. The convention center is very large, and therefore, we were thankful that we had lights with the exhibit. The set-up of the exhibit was tense for about two hours when our materials for the exhibit were not there when we arrived. They were located several hours later, much to our relief, although we had to haul them over from a different part of the exhibit hall to our exhibit.

We shipped and distributed educational materials to this conference: teachers packets, GIPs, sample maps, fact sheets, circulars, and posters. A flyer for the National Atlas – Electing The Presidents map and another one for the new Learning

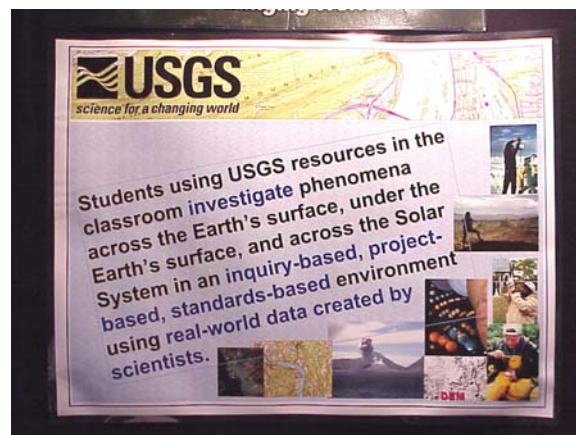
Web were very popular. We displayed these on a display rack, a low table, and a high table in an arrangement that encouraged people to stand inside the exhibit and visit with us. We used the C&R curved display with custom-made posters and 2 maps (This Dynamic Planet and Tapestry in Time).

The ASCD attendees are very careful about what materials they pick up, perhaps because they are oftentimes not practicing teachers, and do not need as many curricular materials as practicing teachers. They would often ask, “what are the one or two most appropriate items for me to share with my district, or to help me develop curriculum?”



For this conference, we created a number of materials that addressed the ASCD attendees’ needs--to illustrate how USGS data and products can be used to change what is taught for better retention of standards-based content and skills. This included an information sheet entitled “GIS in Education,” and an update of the

guidelines on “Map Mysteries” and “Teaching with Topographic Maps.”



The materials we created included three posters (above, and below). These were entitled:

1. What Can Students Do with USGS resources? Gene had a good suggestion that for the future, we create small posters for each major item, so we can arrange them however we wish on the backdrop. The goal of this poster was to provide a good introduction to some things that teachers and students can do with USGS resources in the classroom.
2. A statement that students using USGS resources do so in a way aligned with school reform and national standards.
3. A print of the DOQ for the Alamo (near the convention center) from Terraserver.





## Contacts

We made a number of exceptional contacts, most notably:

1. United Nations Global Teaching and Learning Project. The UN is working on a project called CyberSchoolBus, an online curriculum that is heavily map-based. We believe that the USGS can make a contribution, and the UN representatives seemed eager to work with both us and ESRI. We will pursue these contacts.
2. MidContinent Research for Education and Learning. While we've had a bit of contact with MCREL on Lewis and Clark-related issues, we will pursue partnerships related to curriculum that MCREL is developing in science, technology, and geography. MCREL is located in Aurora, Colorado and is a private, nonprofit organization for improving education through applied research and development. MCREL provides products and services, primarily for K-12 educators, to promote the best instructional practices in the classroom. Established in 1966, MCREL maintains a staff of 100 employees.
3. The Association of Career and Technology Educators ([www.acteonline.org](http://www.acteonline.org)). This would be the best organization for us to work with to work

with vo-tech and school-to-career, and possibly exhibit at their conference in FY 03.

4. The North American Association for Environmental Education ([www.naaee.org](http://www.naaee.org)). With BRD, we should pursue exhibiting and conducting a workshop at their conference in FY 03.

5. Lab Resources, Inc., in Houston. They spent at least 40 minutes in our exhibit over a two-day period. Like others we talked with, they are putting together a new school and library.

6. Once again, we enjoyed an excellent working relationship with ESRI. Their educational staff referred many attendees to our exhibit, going so far as to personally guide visitors to our exhibit, six aisles distant from their own. In turn, we referred those interested in GIS and spatial technologies to their exhibit.

7. We also found out that ESRI Press has published a book entitled *My Community, Our Earth*, about sustainable development projects. It looked quite impressive!

8. We made some contact with the National Council for the Teachers of Mathematics; we had adjacent booths, which will be helpful for Joseph's speech to NCTM teachers in May 2002 in Missouri. The keynote address is entitled, "Map-ematically Speaking," and will emphasize the bridges between geography, technology, and mathematics.

## Larry Cuban's Presentation



*Joseph Kerski attended a lecture by Dr Larry Cuban, above, from Stanford University. The lecture was entitled, "Why is it so Hard to get Good Schools?"*

Dr Cuban's points were that schools have always been and will continue to be political entities, that there are multiple definitions of good schools, and these definitions include traditional, progressive, community-based, and democratic. The business-led definition of school success has resulted in an overemphasis on standardized test scores as a measure of "goodness." By overemphasizing standardized tests, we do a disservice to the diversity of these schools. We have seen this in our USGS educational work, where teachers have told us that they often cannot "fit" some of the things we offer in their curriculum because it is not directly "tested" on the standardized test. I have wanted to meet Dr Cuban since 1996 and was glad to have the opportunity to do so. I told him briefly about what the USGS does with educators.

### **Recommendations**

The ASCD is an excellent organization to work with. The value-added in our involvement with educational outreach is

that we work with educators to demonstrate **how** our products can be used in conjunction with national science and geography standards. It is not enough to communicate **what** products are available. The educational community usually already knows how to find most resources and they have access to a great deal of material. When we get involved with teachers--getting their input and working with them--we can understand how to best meet their needs.

The 2003 conference is in San Francisco March 8-10 and we highly recommend that we attend again. We believe that if we skip a year, we will lose the momentum established at the 2001 conference.

We also recommend that we work with the board members of the ASCD, and do something extra with the association besides just exhibit at their conference. Joseph did submit a proposal to discuss GIS in the curriculum, but stiff competition prevented 2 out of every 3 proposals from being accepted.

### **Acknowledgements**

Joseph: I appreciated the USGS' support of the time for my attendance at this event. I thank Gene Jackson for his professionalism, good-naturedness, and expertise in preparing for and during this conference, and for working the exhibit while I attended Dr Cuban's lecture.

We also thank Dan Fossen for helping us track down the missing materials at the conference, and Butch Urquhart for laminating the posters.

\*\*end of report\*\*