

1998 iGeo – Lisbon, Portugal Evaluation Report

Evaluation Paper about the International Geography Competition in Portugal 1998 written by Henk Ankoné (the Netherlands) & George Camacho (Portugal)

Content

Geography curricula differ from country to country. In '96 and '98 the content for the competition was decided on by the host country. In both cases the main theme of the IGU-congress has been indicative for the content of the competition. Alternatives:

1. The Geography Syllabus of the International Baccalaureat Organisation (IBO) in Geneva: it is a detailed syllabus that is being used by International Schools in about 80 countries in the world.
2. The Charter on Geographical Education of IGU. The charter describes characteristics of good geography curricula. It is widely supported internationally, but it does not contain attainment targets for students.

Proposal:

- adopt the Geography Syllabus of the IBO

Relative weight

The relative weight of the components of the competition. There are two alternatives, depending on the inclusion or exclusion of a quiz.

Proposal: (written test, fieldwork, quiz)

- alternative a: 50 % 50 % 0%
- alternative b: 40 % 40 % 20 %

Organisation

The relationship to the IGU

The idea for an International Geography Competition was launched by the Commission on Geography Education of IGU. IGC however has no formal organisational structure. The IGC travels from country to country and the organisation in a host country is in the hands of a temporary committee.

Proposal:

- to assure continuity and the passing on of experience, a formal structure is needed, for instance under the Commission on Geography Education
- form an international co-ordinating committee with (at least) representatives from the present, past and the future host-country of the IGC. In that context it is advisable to decide soon which country will host the IGC in the year 2002.

Location

The previous IGC's have been part of an IGU-congress. This seems to be a good formula: a congress generates a lot of activities and it is easier to raise funds. A host country of an IGU congress that does not have its National Geography Competition (or Olympiad as it is commonly called) is stimulated to do so. Since the IGU congresses take place all over the world, there are good opportunities to prevent IGC from becoming a regional affair. On the other hand, during an IGU Congress there is a heavy workload already.

Proposal:

- organise IGC during an IGU Congress
- since there is a regional conference in South Africa in the year 2002, South Africa could be asked to consider hosting an IGC. It would be a good thing to include Africa and it could be a stimulus for geography education in southern Africa.

Financial contribution

Apart from the travel costs from the home country to the Netherlands, no fee was asked from the participating countries in '96. In '98 the teams had to pay a fee of \$ 300 per person on top of the travel costs.

Proposal:

- keep the fee as low as possible
- create a fund for less rich countries

Frequency

IGC is a bi-annual affair. As long as a limited number of countries participates, it is better to keep it that way.

Proposal:

- decide what number of participating countries would justify to make IGC an annual affair

Multi-media test

The main reason to make the quiz part of the competition is the opportunity it offers to involve the participants of the IGU congress and to promote geography education. In '96 in The Hague there were over 400 geographers from all over the world in the audience; in '98 in Lisbon there was only a handful of interested colleagues in the hall.

Proposal:

- only organise a quiz if it is certain that a considerable number of colleagues attending the IGU-congress can be present

In '96 the quiz questions and resource materials (maps, graphs, etc.) were presented to the candidates in their national language on a computerscreen. The computer program however proved to be vulnerable: it collapsed during the quiz and it took several minutes to get it started again. In '98 transparencies and an OHP were used to present the questions and resource materials; the questions were also read out in English by a member of the jury. The candidates could ask for an oral translation if they did not (fully) understand the question.

Proposal:

- an OHP and/or a slide projector is advisable, since it is less collapse-prone
- with respect to the translation of the quiz questions, the remarks regarding the translation of the written test are applicable

Written Test

Formulating the questions

Until now this task has been carried out by the organising committee of the host country. This approach is based entirely on confidence and confidentiality. Proposal: Form an international working group, consisting of members from non-competing countries, that formulates and/or edits the written test. Request all participating countries to submit two questions to the working group.

Translating the written test

The written test is submitted in English. Each participating country will provide a team leader who will translate the written test in the official language of the respective countries. Until now these team leaders were not kept separate from the contestants. Proposal: Keep the team leaders that translate the written test separated from the contestants until after the beginning of the written test and see to it that no communication between translators and contestants can take place.

Marking of the written test

During the past two IGC's the written test consisted of essay questions. The results were marked by a teamleader of the same nationality as the candidate. In some cases a double check took place: Belgian and Dutch teamleaders marking the results of each others candidates Alternative: the test will consists of closed questions only. This type of questions offers high objectivity in marking, it is however less suited to test higher order skills for instance problem solving.

Proposal:

- offer a test that consists of open as well as closed questions
- see to it that the results of candidates will be marked by a teamleader from another country

Fieldwork

The fieldwork assignment in '96 was more physical-geographical in nature; in '98 the emphasis was on human geography. The problems regarding the fieldwork assignment are similar to those of the written test.

Formulating the test questions

Developing a fieldwork assignment requires regional specific knowledge of the fieldwork area. The major part of the work needs to be done by a committee in the host country; confidence and confidentiality will remain factors to deal with.

The translation of the written test

The translation of the fieldwork assignment (see the remarks about the translation of the written test)

The marking of the written test

The marking of the results (see the remarks about the translation of the written test) The marking will be easier and more objective when candidates have to present results using graphic representations f.i. maps, diagrams, photographs or in a numerical way.