

**Title:**                   **What do we Learn When we go Outside the Classroom?**

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

- Discuss the issues involved in teaching and learning on field courses.
- Analyse the implications for student learning when they go outside the classroom.
- Review and revise their own practice in formal learning, teaching and assessment beyond the classroom.

#### **Session Outline**

Fieldwork remains a key (if not compulsory) component of a number of degree courses, although its place is being questioned in terms of expense, academic time away from research and deteriorating staff student ratios. What are the knowledge, skills and aptitudes we intend to develop in our students when we take them out of the classroom? How can staff derive benefits from getting involved in field course activities? Issues around researching field course activities will be addressed from the sparse literature base and preliminary data from an ongoing project investigating teaching, learning and assessment in field course settings (interviewing staff and students, prior- during- and post-field courses) will be examined. Information to date has indicated that there are useful implications from this study of fieldwork for other types of learning and assessment activity outside the classroom, including learning on placements.

#### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

- 5 minutes – Introductions
- 15 minutes – Time to think about an extra-classroom learning experience, and generate a list of key learning and teaching issues arising from this.
- 15 minutes – input on current evidence base and preliminary findings from ongoing research
- 10 minutes – plenary on implications for student learning, the assessment of activities outside the classroom and the impacts on academic staff.

#### **References**

Cousin, G. (2005) Case study research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. **29** (3) 421-427.  
Higgit, D. and Bullard, J. (1999) Assessing fieldwork risk for undergraduate projects. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. **23** (3) 441-449  
Nairn, K. Higgit, D. and Vanneste, D. (2000) International Perspectives on fieldwork. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. **24** (2) 246-254.