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GOOGLE EARTH HELPS PUPILS LEARN

A recent survey conducted on behalf of Digital Explorer shows that Google Earth has a significant positive impact on teaching and learning. The survey was sent out to 481 geography teachers across the UK who had attended Google Earth training courses.

80% of respondents noted an increase in pupil attainment and their understanding of geography since using Google Earth in the classroom. Similarly, 80% stated that their pupils were more engaged and 90% were likely or very likely to recommend Google Earth as a teaching tool.

"These figures are fantastic and back up what we have heard from teachers anecdotally," commented Jamie Buchanan-Dunlop. "When we first started using Google Earth and training other teachers, we thought it was an amazing way to engage young people in environmental and global issues and we now have the evidence to back that up."

Digital Explorer first used Google Earth on an expedition to Morocco in 2006 and since then has trained over 500 teachers to use Google Earth on their own field trips and in the classroom. The software has the ability to make "international learning more real" and "brings the wider world into the classroom" according to teacher comments as part of the survey. Others mention that they "can't use it enough" and through it "geography is made more accessible and personal".

The survey was not all positive. Several teachers highlighted the barriers that still exist, preventing the widespread use of technologies like Google Earth in the classroom. "I loved the Digital Explorer training and was full of ideas when I came back to school. The number one factor holding me back is the school network. Images loaded into Google Earth do not load in time and if I put a class on Google Earth it grinds to a halt. All very sad! I have high hopes for better results when we get a new school!" explained one course participant. This was not an isolated comment and of the 87 comments made on the ease of use of Google Earth in the classroom as part of the survey, 31 mentioned wider ICT issues in school.

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Notes to editors

About the survey

The survey was designed and conducted by Sandy Beatty of Sandy Beatty Services Ltd on behalf of Digital Explorer. 481 survey invitations were delivered to the email addresses of the participants of Digital Explorer Google earth training courses held between January 2007 and July 2009. At the close of the survey on 18 September 2009, 187 visits were registered with 38 partial and 145 completed surveys tallied. This represents a 30.15% response rate for completes and a 38.87% response rate for all visits.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded from: <http://digitalexplorer.co.uk/press/google-earth-in-the-classroom.pdf>

About Digital Explorer

Digital Explorer *is a pioneering social enterprise working to develop young people's emotional engagement with the wider world through technology and exploration.* Digital Explorer believes that current educational methods and traditional media are failing to foster a sense of care and responsibility for the wider world, and there are not enough resources to take every young person out into the world to experience it firsthand.

<http://www.digitalexplorer.co.uk/>

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