

WWGE Research Fund



ncge
National Council for
Geographic Education

Program Title

What Works in Geography Education

Program Focus

With a focus on K-12 education, the “What Works in Geography Education” (WWGE) program supports empirical research on student cognition and learning behaviors in geography education. The goal of the program is not to “address big questions,” “develop a new curriculum,” or “restructure a course.” The aim is to take a rigorous look at a multitude of “little” research questions focused on specific geography education materials being developed or already in use in classrooms across the country. For example, research questions may include: What kind of digital math activities increase map reading skills (and vice versa)? How can a classroom-mapping activity be leveraged to help reduce letter-reversal and letter-position errors by struggling readers? What kind of student digital atlas activities can most improve young learner’s understanding of their state’s geography?

Defining Geography Education

For the purposes of the WWGE Research Fund, NCGE defines *geography education* as activities and/or materials designed to improve K-12 understanding of geographic concepts and mastery of geographic inquiry skills as defined in consensus documents such as the C3 Framework, the National Geography Standards, and various state standards. The term *geographic* refers to a mode of inquiry that has its primary focus on location as a causal influence. This spatial perspective involves investigating the importance of conditions at a specific location and its connections with other places. Beyond simple determinism, the focus should be on appreciating and then analyzing the complex web of two-way interactions between humans and environment, where “environment” can include economic, social, political, and cultural features as well as physical and biological conditions and connections (and changes over time).

Measuring the Effectiveness of Innovations in Geography Education

Research proposals should present a contribution to modern understandings of how children learn. Specifically, methods and materials must be informed by recent research on how human brains perceive, process, and use geographic information (especially from maps and other representations). The WWGE Research Fund supports measuring the effectiveness of materials that already exist or are being developed by others, not on creating new materials. The Fund also supports the development and testing of better ways to evaluate spatial-reasoning skills.

All proposals should utilize a sufficiently detailed methodology that could be faithfully replicated. NCGE encourages proposals that develop and test hypotheses based on current research in geographic education and related fields that may include psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics, among others. Given the current educational climate in the United States, NCGE also encourages proposals that focus on links between geographic education and math or language-arts learning objectives. Successful proposals will include partnerships between investigators and school educators.

* The NCGE Board of Directors specifies that the initial deadline for proposals should occur at least 90 days after the release of the call for proposals. Decisions on proposals are to be made within 90 days of the deadline. The Board of Directors will determine the timeline for future releases of the notice of availability, pending results of the first call for proposals.

TO APPLY

Application Deadline*

Complete applications must be submitted through your NCGE member dashboard no later than **1 October 2024**: Detailed submission instructions are provided below:

1. Navigate to <https://ncge.org>
2. Click the "members" tab located in the upper right-hand corner of the page
3. Input your user name and password when prompted
4. Click "File" located on the left-hand side of your dashboard's home page
5. Select "upload" and follow the prompts

Proposals will be reviewed by NCGE WWGE Committee and decisions communicated to applicants by **15 October 2024**. Project start dates should be January 1, 2025, or later.

Please direct inquiries to Dr. Lisa Tabor (lisa.tabor@uni.edu).

Funding Limit

Applications should have a budget no larger than \$25,000 across the research period which is not to exceed two calendar years. Matching funds are not required.

Who May Submit Proposals

The Fund provides grants to 501(c)(3) organizations and educational institutions only. The PI shall be a NCGE member at the time of application. NCGE Board Members and others with NCGE appointments (journal editors, ad hoc committee members) are ineligible to apply while serving.

Proposal Limits

No more than one proposal may be submitted per PI or institution in any awards cycle.

Eligible Expenses

The WWGE program supports research fellowships for graduate students, especially to support MA or PhD thesis research; stipends for faculty sabbatical support; funds to compensate assistants, student interns, research subjects, or cooperating teachers.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible costs include administrative indirect, food and beverages, and conference travel. Travel necessary for the research work (e.g., travel to and from school or other field sites) is allowed.

Proposal Contents

Complete proposals should be no longer than 5 pages, single-spaced with one-inch margins,

12-font, in PDF format (e.g. last name_first name_WWGE_2024.pdf) inclusive of:

1. Principal Investigator(s): Names, Affiliations, Contact Information
2. Project Summary
3. Specific Research Question and Supporting Literature
4. Description of Methodology
5. Description of Teacher, Grade level, and School (intervention group)
6. Budget and Timeline
7. List of Key References

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