



Teaching Geosciences In France - An Inquiry About Teachers And Students During Fieldwork Courses

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A widely shared opinion is that a student has to do things by himself and to reach the reality of the geological objects in order to learn geosciences. As a result, in the French curriculum, teachers are encouraged to organize geological field courses. It is expected that fieldwork have the following effects : to motivate the students, to acquire specific geological and technical skills, to carry out observations, to formulate problems, and to come to the reality and complexity of geological phenomena. We have carried out an inquiry during the year 2005. This inquiry aims at focusing on the place devoted to fieldwork for the teaching of Earth science in the French secondary schools and giving an insight about how teachers prepare the field course and make links between fieldwork and school work. 68 teachers who have organized a geological field course for their students in the Alps have answered our questionnaire. Their responses show that students are not well prepared before the trip and that the observations carried out on the field are not frequently used when students return to classroom. Our results also show a lack of technical tasks and the small place devoted to collaborative tasks. Despite the asset of the emphasizing of fieldwork in the French geosciences curriculum there is a risk that teachers provide knowledge during open air courses rather than organize learning based on inquiry and lead students to be active to learn by being engaged in solving problems.