



Weather training for UK secondary geography teachers

S. Knight

Royal Meteorological Society

In the U.K., weather and climate is largely taught through the geography curriculum, where it is an optional topic at GCSE (14-16) and A level (16-18). Yet, many geography teachers are reluctant to teach the subject, either because they themselves did not cover it beyond the age of 14, or because they feel that their science skills are not sufficient. This is concerning, partly because the weather is the one area of physical geography which affects most individuals and industries, but also because it offers easy fieldwork opportunities to all schools.

Since 2011, the RMetS has offered trainee geography teachers (who already hold a geography degree) a one day subject knowledge course, delivered through their Universities. The course focuses on mid-latitude weather, touching also on the wider climate system, and uses a combination of talks, practical activities, online resource investigation and field work.

Feedback from the 17 courses delivered in the 2012/ 2013 academic year has been extremely positive, both from course tutors and over 250 students. Many students indicated that they would be more likely to choose to teach about the weather as a result.

It is too early to tell whether this training is having any impact on the amount or quality of weather teaching in U.K. schools. However, radical changes to both the English national curriculum and the way that teachers are trained will have an impact on the course in the future.

In this talk we will outline the information we have received from questionnaires to student teachers before and after the training day, as well as discussing the content of the course and some of the issues associated with delivering it.