

## Education, Geoscience, and Databases – the Value of DLESE

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The Geoscience Information Society has formed a task force to raise awareness of problems associated with a lack of preservation and subsequent loss of geoscience data and collections. The Task Force on Citation of Geoscience Data has created a Web site (<http://www.geoinfo.org/TFGeosciData.htm>) with examples of how data and collections should be cited along with other resources. While these efforts are mainly directed at physical collections such as rock and sediment cores as well as mineral and fossil collections, it also includes digital information such as various forms of geophysical data.

As authors develop instructional materials based upon digital or physical data collections, I strongly encourage them to fully reference these databases. The National Research Council identified the citation patterns of geoscientists as a contributing factor in the lack of preservation of collections. Their report states “it is essential for the geoscience community to follow the lead of other sciences and begin to cite (i.e., acknowledge) use of and reliance upon data and collections”.

Fortunately, as geoscience educators we have at our disposal an outstanding community-based repository and database of digitally-based Earth system education materials in the form of the DLESE database (<http://www.dlese.org>). I am certain most readers are intimately familiar with DLESE and make use of it frequently. For those who might not have had an opportunity to explore DLESE it is useful to list the ways in which the Library supports geoscience education:

- in the development of reviewed collections of high-quality materials for instruction at all levels and covering all components of the Earth system
- by providing access to Earth databases and imagery, including the tools and interfaces that will enable their effective use
- through the development of discovery and distribution systems and support services that allow users to find, create, and use materials easily and efficiently
- through new communication networks to facilitate interactions and collaborations across all aspects of Earth system education

A recent search of the DLESE library returned 242 results for the keyword “database.” Information available ranged from paleobiology, to tsunamis, to minerals, to major earthquakes, to global river discharge, to noxious weeds. Clearly, DLESE provides a portal to a very wide-range of databases, and supplies the geoscience educator with suggestions and information on applying the database to classroom instruction.

Thanks to visionary leadership and a lot of hard work on the part of the creators of DLESE, we can say with great satisfaction that the geoscience education community leads the rest of our colleagues in the creation of accessible database catalogs. I strongly encourage all of you to take advantage of this outstanding resource.

Carl N. Drummond - Editor