

# **“Maps and their Stories” Spatial Thinking and Teaching A Teacher Summer Institute Summer 2010**

**Presented by:  
the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance (MGA) and  
the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center (NBLMC) of the Boston Public  
Library**

5 days: Monday June 28 - Friday July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 9am -3:00pm

A 5-day intensive professional development program for teachers:

To be held at Boston Public Library and at Bridgewater State College

15 teachers

3 graduate credits through Bridgewater State College

GEOG.520: Special topics in geography: Spatial thinking and teaching.

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## Institute goals:

Maps are increasingly important tools for representing, describing, and analyzing our world, providing us with important information not easily presented in any other form. But a map, as a human-created entity, is also only a partial view of reality reflecting as it does the biases, goals, and world views of the mapmaker. It is therefore essential as we attempt to unravel the stories that maps tell us, that we - teachers, citizens, and students - develop some mastery of the knowledge and skills involved in this process.

The primary goal of this institute is to train a corps of teachers in the critical skills needed when interpreting maps both ancient and modern. Participants will be guided in exploring the social forces underlying maps throughout the ages. The purpose is to reflect on maps not merely as paper or computer images, but as social and historical documents that enliven our understanding of the world.

The program brings teachers into contact with the primary documents of the Norman Leventhal Map Center, a major repository of many significant original maps that reflect

changing views and realities not only of Massachusetts, but of the world. Participants will be in discussion with experts in the field of map interpretation as they explore the vital intellectual and political role played by maps. In addition attention will be paid to modern-day maps that, while using 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, continue in the tradition of revealing parts of reality in particular ways.

Teacher-participants will also be presented with model teaching strategies that can be used in their classrooms and they will be guided as they develop their own creative approaches to teaching map thinking skills in varied subject areas.

Map interpretation exercises, case studies, and directed readings will guide participants with the models of best practices in spatial thinking so that they can produce lesson ideas at an exceptionally high level.

Participant requirements:

- Attend all sessions and contribute to discussions
- Submit one original lesson demonstrating understanding of material presented in this institute
- Complete all assignments
- Each teacher participant will present their lesson plan at teacher workshops during the following school year

Funding provided by the Massachusetts Global Education Consortium

Institute staff:

Director

Vernon Domingo, co-coordinator, Massachusetts Geographic Alliance  
Professor of geography, Bridgewater State College

Presenters

Ronald Grim, Curator, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center  
Debra Block, Director of Education, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center

Marsha Alibrandi, Associate Professor of Curriculum & Instruction, Fairfield University  
Kathy Babini, Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator, Plymouth  
Phil Birge-Liberman, Adjunct Professor, Bridgewater State College

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