

# Geography teachers could save the world

## geography

*By Irena Barker*

GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS have so much power to influence people beyond their classrooms that they could be the key to saving the world from global warming, according to an academic.

Professor William Scott has come up with a "power of one" algorithm that calculates a single key stage 3 geography teacher could reach up to 1,200 people beyond the classroom in just one year.

Using the same formula, a science teacher for the same age group could reach 800 people. He concluded that the teaching profession as a whole could touch 18 million people in a year.

Professor Scott, who led the research for Bath University's centre for research in education and the environment, said: "The power of schools and teachers to encourage sustainable behaviour presents an opportunity that should not be overlooked. Yet often such endeavours rely on a simplistic model, whereby teachers teach and children go home and are expected to pass their learning on.

"This misses the point, because the potential for teachers to engage people beyond the classroom is greatest when the family and the wider community are receptive to the issues, and engaged in activities so that they feel empowered to make a difference and participate."

The research coincides with the launch of the new Generation Green project, supported by British Gas. Under the initiative, schools and local communities will be rewarded with vouchers for green behaviour, such as turning off lights and computers.

Lesson plans and materials will also be available to download from a website.

Schools will then be able to redeem the vouchers, called "green leaves", for prizes.

These will include items such as bicycles, renewable energy science kits, and even wormeries.

Gearóid Lane, the managing director of British Gas New Energy, said: "While big names in the cinema, politics and music raise awareness via the media, teachers can make an incomparable difference via the whiteboard."

● [www.generationgreen.co.uk](http://www.generationgreen.co.uk)