

Why the Name "Dwarf Planet" Works in Education!

Aquilar

While recently promoting my new National Geographic book, "11 Planets", I met with numerous elementary and junior high teachers across the country as well as adults here and abroad. Universally, they all felt Pluto and now Eris should be part of the planetary family and not be excluded into some obscure, non-defineable category akin to irregular 'lumpy' asteroids (aka 'plutoids"). The argument that there would be too many new names for kids to remember just didn't resonate with them. In fact, the younger the audience, the more invested they became in this new research and the ensuing discoveries. They wanted more smaller planets to be added to our solar system. As these new dwarfs are found AND given proper names, they add to the richness of our solar system. So, let's let "Dwarf planets" be dwarf planets and stop the illogical semantics or excuses that translated into German or other languages, "Dwarf Planets" means something else than what it does in English. My favorite? EL-61 - "Eggland". Everything changes in science, it's time to add more planetary members to our stable of classical planets! How better to excite new young learners!