

DEVELOPING SCHOOL ATLASES FOR LOCAL STUDIES

Rosângela Doin de Almeida

Department of Education - Universidade Estadual Paulista

Avenida 24-A, 1515

13506-900 - Rio Claro - SP - BRAZIL

Phone 55 15 19 526 4151

Fax 55 195 340009

E-mail: labengeo@rc.unesp.br or doin@claretianas.com.br

This study consisted in designing Municipal Atlases pedagogically adapted for elementary school learning. The study was hindered by the scarcity of work in Brazil related to the use of Municipal maps by pupils in the 9 to12-year age range that could be useful for outlining the cartographic profile required for this type of didactic material. Atlases were prepared for three municipalities, namely, the townships of Rio Claro, Limeira and Ipeúna.

The Municipal Atlases that resulted from this study are based on space representation psychology and modern cartographic technology. They are intended to steer pupils towards the study of their near environment, thus contributing to their awareness of the relevance of preserving natural resources, and retrieving local memory and historical origins.

The researchers gathered the information on the various themes covered in the Atlases, building up a bank of thesis, articles, maps and images, filed at the Laboratory for the Teaching of Geography. This material was analyzed and systemized in texts, tables and graphs, maps, timelines and photographic sequences, to prepare the thematic pages of the Atlases. Complying with current syllabus requirements, teaching activities were developed and applied at schools, in order to check whether the material was adequate for its end users: elementary school teachers and pupils.

The Atlases cover themes such as: Where we are on the Earth; Political-Administrative Division; Road Network; The Boroughs of my Town; Boroughs and Rural Nuclei; Archeological Sites; The First Inhabitants; The First Settlers; Land Occupation; Coffee and Railroad; The Town in Other Days; Urban Expansion; Economic Activities, Hydrographic Basins and Morphology; Natural Resources; Basic Sanitation; and Toponymy.

The result of this research was not restricted to merely producing the atlases but also, via the associated school penetration, has provided guidelines as regards the most adequate language for communicating with the pupils, as well as on the more attractive activities enabled by Municipal maps.