The present poster is the result of many years of informal gathering of advertisements based on cartography aspects. These are maps and globes as well as a series of projections emphasizing the utilization of maps and of cartographical instruments in advertising.

Why shouldn’t we use this rich material in our geography classrooms? Why shouldn’t we, geographers, be the first to use and to disseminate these messages as didactic material?

I remember that the first time I saw an advertisement based on cartography, I kept it in order to show and discuss it with my students. As a matter of fact, we have nowadays a vast collection of cartographical advertisements. It allows us to illustrate most of the topics in geography teaching with specific advertisements. This presentation shows the most relevant of them.

“Advertising is a social communication technique aiming to inform about a product or a service which is for sale in order to obtain an economical benefit” (Nova Enciclopédia Barsa-pag.108). On its turn, cartography is the science of preparing maps and globes for different purposes and with different levels of information and complexity. For this task, different scientific, technical and artistic elements, sometimes very sophisticated, are used to express the results of direct observation or the results of documents analysis.

Why are so many specialist in advertising using the theme of cartography in their promotion campaigns? One of the reasons seems clearly to be that companies wish to show the geographical scope of their activities. For their advertising activities, companies working only nationally or locally use national or local maps. Worldwide enterprises show the wideness of their activities. It is possible to perceive clearly here the effect of the “globalisation” concept which is getting more and more popular. Not only transport companies but many other multinational enterprises wish to give this “globalised” dimension to their activities. The use of national or world maps in advertising represent a good approach to scale. For most of the people also, the world seems to become smaller and smaller.
The main objective of a map is to present in an easily workable format (i.e.: a sheet of paper) the reality of a globe in three dimensions. It is impossible to see the whole world in a glance on a globe. This becomes possible when we project this globe on a 2D format. The art and poetry used in some advertisements help to perceive it easily in a very pleasant way.

Even if not totally accurate, all main kinds of projections (cylindrical, conic or azimuthal) can be found in advertisements published in the media. Some projections are not in 2D but on rather surprising objects like a computer mouse or an apple, showing that it is possible to project a sphere on any object, with of course different levels of distortion or even inaccuracy. The global “look” and aesthetics, and not accuracy, are normally the main concern of advertisers. For a geography teacher, this can become a good subject of discussion in a classroom, when explaining the different types of projections and respective distortions, to identify the specific distortion due to the artist eye on a map in an advertisement. On another hand, image 7, by itself, gives an idea of a practical exercise about projections to be run in a classroom with oranges.
UNDERSTANDING PARALELS AND MERIDIANS

When the time comes to explain to our pupils or students how one can localise any point on the surface of the globe by using the concepts of parallels and meridians, why not to use some advertisements further to the traditional maps and globes? It certainly brings some originality in the explanation and, through a pause in a traditional and “serious” explanation, it might open a window to fantasy and imagination. Image 9, for instance, not only shows what could be the Equator but it also helps to introduce the concept of time zones, with of course the need of explaining that the 360º of the circle represent 24 hours and not 12 hours as seems to indicate the clock.

Image 9: Christina Santa Coloma

UNDERSTANDING LEVEL CURVES

One good way to explain level curves to young students is to show them a set of superposed wooden plates (image 10). This allows a better understanding of the 3D format of a hill which level curves are drawn on a 2D support. It allows also to show that the same plate can offer different landscapes with varying steep, according to the nearness of the plate edges.

Not with the same details and possibilities, level curves are also shown in the advertisement for the Sugar Loaf of Rio de Janeiro shown on image 11.

Image 10: project “didactic material” - UFF, by Marli Cigagna
Image 11: Varig, programa Smiles
THE WORLD IN OUR EYES

No matter the way we make projections or present models, these are all different ways of seeing and perceiving the world. The merit of advertising is to bring non-usual ways of seeing the world, often based on art and poetry with the aim of catching the attention and surprising the reader or the observer.

Advertisements based on cartographic themes are nowadays easily found in any magazine, on out-doors or other dissemination means. They often bring new points of view about maps and globes. Prepared by advertisers, many of them being real artists, the presentation of globes and maps in advertisements messages can be usefully utilized to teach geography for young students and also to be discussed by not-so-young researchers at the university as different ways of popularising geography among a wide public.

A collection of advertisements based on cartographic themes can be seen as only a curiosity or as a university research theme (“maps and globes seen by advertisers”, for instance). It can also be seen as a different way of making cartography and geography more popular by giving unusual support means to cartographic and geographic concepts.

Some advertisements, carefully chosen to illustrate some of those concepts can also be easily introduced in didactic books of geography, helping to make them more user-friendly.
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Marli Cigagna is natural of Niterói, in the State of Rio de Janeiro. Her interest in teaching led her to attend the teachers training school (escola normal) after ending her secondary level. She became teacher in the primary school from the La Salle Educators in Niterói before graduating as geographer at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF).

She began to teach geography as student-monitor at UFF and just stayed as teacher after her graduation, becoming head of the Cartography Department a few years afterward. She obtained her Master and PhD degrees in Geography at University Paris III (Institut des Hautes Études de l’Amérique Latine) where she developed researches on urban geography and particularly on the development of the city of Niterói in the middle of the urban agglomeration of Rio de Janeiro, which was the main focus of her thesis.

In Montevideo, Uruguay, together with Institute of Urban Theory of the faculty of Architecture of the University of the Republic (UR), she had the opportunity to participate in the research about the impact in Uruguay of the foreseen big bridge over the river Plate, joining La Plata in Argentina to Colonia in Uruguay. She has negotiated a cooperation agreement between UFF and the Uruguayan University of the Republic and become the first teacher of UFF to work in the UR.

In 2004, we find her coordinating the 1st National Seminar of Thematic Cartography on UFF’s campus in Niterói. She has also coordinated extension projects for the preparation of didactic material for the teaching of cartography and astronomy for children of primary and secondary schools.

Currently, she continues regularly to teach cartography to graduating students, at UFF’s Geosciences Institute where she also leads different researches in urban matters, landscape studies and also in the teaching of geography for children. The present poster presented in La Coruña is part of this last activity.