

EXPERIENCES INVOLVING TACTILE CARTOGRAPHY IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION OF TEACHERS

Ribeiro do Carmo Waldirene
Universidade de São Paulo
walcarmo@usp.br
Brasil

Scholastic Cartography is at the crossroads between Cartography, Education and Geography, and it is taught with the aim of developing map teaching and learning methodologies, and children's conceptualization of space.

NCPs (National Curricular Parameters) in Brazil emphasize the importance of "knowing how to use cartographic language in order to obtain information and create a spatial representation of geographical phenomena", through the teaching of Scholastic Cartography as one of the objectives in the Geography teaching program in the primary education system. NCPs also suggest thematic blocks, listing content that includes "the assessment and interpretation of information expressed in cartographic language".

Cartographic activities in Geography classes are important to aid analyses and develop spatial abilities of an observational, perceptual and representative nature. Thus, the importance in the handling, reproduction, interpretation and creation of maps.

Graphic representations are essentially interpreted using the faculty of sight, but they may also be analyzed by touch, as long as they are designed with this purpose in mind. The presence of visually-challenged students in regular class rooms requires schools to make cartographic material that may be adapted for touch reading available to these students and to prepare teachers to deal with this reality.

As for the training of teachers, it can be stated that the quality of teaching, educational reforms and pedagogic renovations are fundamental elements in the initial and further education programs for these teachers.

This study analyzes the importance of further education courses for teachers and their application to the teaching of Cartography in primary education, particularly for visually-challenged students, both in specialized schools for these kinds of students and in the regular schools of the educational system in the state of São Paulo, Brazil.

Courses and workshops on Tactile Cartography and the teaching of Geography for the visually challenged, held between August 2006 and November 2008 in Brazil and Chile, were selected for description and analysis in this study. This is part of an international project developed in conjunction with the University of São Paulo and the Metropolitan Technological University. Through these courses, it was possible to reflect on the difficulties that teachers face in working with Cartography, and especially Tactile Cartography, in the classroom.

Further education courses can signify an advance in the quality of teaching of visually-challenged students and the dissemination of techniques involved in the creation of adapted didactic material, in the same manner that guidelines for their use may represent significant pedagogic renovation that will increase the use this material by all students.

Key Words: Teacher Training, Scholastic Cartography, Tactile Cartography