

DIDACTIC PROPOSAL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC SPACE: THE CITY OF SEGOVIA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

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PRESENTATION AND WORKING APPROACH

This work is motivated by the interest in developing a useful tool for primary school teachers who want to innovate in the teaching of geography and their teaching methodology. From today's perspective, didactics of the geography school is founded on the participation of children in the construction of their own knowledge and the acquisition of basic skills through interaction with the environment that surrounds them.

Taking the closest geographical space to the student as a field of knowledge, this didactic proposal is based on the contents of geography that establishes the curriculum of primary education, and it delves into the explanation of this space through the design and development of a set of itineraries throughout the city of Segovia and its immediate surroundings. Fieldwork, or guided tour, specifically adjusted to the school level, was introduced in our country for educational purposes at the end of the 19th century by the "*Institución Libre de Enseñanza*"; this is the method par excellence for the teaching and learning of geography: direct observation of spatial processes and forms in the field. This observation constitutes an available primary educational resource to teachers, which can be used in all educational levels, from school to University. In our case, according to the cognitive development of the students and to the principles of the curriculum, the presented study pursues two objectives: providing guidelines to be considered when we make educational routes, as well as materials and planning accompanying them; and making available a series of itineraries to the educational community of Segovia to "guide" teachers and students in the spatial

knowledge of their immediate space: the city and its immediate surroundings. To do this, we must bear in mind, as a starting point, a certain way of understanding the geography in primary education.

GEOGRAPHY IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Geography is the science of relations between people - society - and nature - the environment-. That relationship is always manifested in a particular space -a territory- whose appearance gives rise also to a landscape; this landscape is, at the same time, a cultural product. Environment, space, territory or landscape are different theoretical formulations that have referred to the object of study of this discipline: the geographic space.

Nature and society are, therefore, the two fundamental dimensions of geographic space. The history of geographic thought and epistemology, as well as the geographical practices, including teaching practice, from school to university level, emphasize this holistic view, of synthesis and integration, inherent to the object of study of geographical science.

With varying degrees of success, school geography is not limited to a game of space on a map locations, as it did almost in exclusive in the past, but that raises the geographical reflection to give an orderly explanation of different spatial configurations of the Earth's surface at global, regional or local level.

It is necessary to analyze the curriculum that organizes the contents of primary education to understand the importance and the place that geography has within compulsory teachings that taught at this level of education, as well as to specify in detail the varied set of aspects and issues having to do with school geography.

The list of contents, obtained from the different normative documents, represents an outline of geographical knowledge that we have to adapt to the initial formative stage of primary education. These contents are matters of a "geography of the physical or natural environment" that connect with the knowledge of the components of the geographical environment, of landscapes, from the closest to the furthest, and the situation and problems of the environment; and issues of a "human or social geography" which addresses issues concerning the territorial organization of the fields concerned (municipality, province, region, state and European Union), population, economical resources and activities; and we can not forget what may be called as elemental "culture or geographic knowledge", as the aspects of representation, orientation and spatial location. Thus, from the relationship of the content comprising curricular school geography in primary education, we can articulate the design and the development of the didactic itineraries through the city of Segovia and its surroundings, for a meaningful teaching and learning process of them.

It is therefore essential to define basic principles for making both didactic routes as accompanying material and planning.

THE ROUTE AS A TEACHING RESOURCE FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC SPACE: THE CITY OF SEGOVIA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

How should we address the teaching and learning of the contents required by the curriculum out of the classroom, taking as a teaching scenario the own environment in which we study? How can we explain, in an understandable way, the elements, factors and processes that form the geographic space, to the teachers, in the first place, so they can transmit it better to their students after? These are fundamental questions that arise; the guidance given to this didactic proposal from university geography can serve as a response.

So, we started with a thorough analysis of Primary Education Curriculum; then we set the theoretical and methodological principles on which our geographical discourse is held; in addition, we have started a thorough study of the geographic space of the city of Segovia and its surroundings. With this foundation, we have made progress in the identification and documentation of didactic routes that allows us to practice teaching and meaningful learning.

The model used in this study, which is inspired by the indicated bibliography and we have perfected in successive experiences, is as follows:

1. Route description. Characterization of the most relevant geographic content. Natural and social components of the space, the type or types of space based on the key elements or the functions that predominate, the organization and social transformation processes, and the different cultural and environmental values observed are clearly indicated.

The description is accompanied by a map guide, in which both the route as the start, end and location of the elements of greatest interest points are represented. It must indicate the exact information of distance, duration and level of difficulty.

2. Methodological tab of the route. This tab contains essential aspects that link each route designed with the contents that we have previously to work in the classroom. Logically, these contents present a close relationship with the objectives of teaching - learning set for three grades of primary education. The tab also identifies planned activities, both of initiation or motivation, prior to the field trips, such as those that have to be made during the trip, intended to “scan” and to the construction - individually and collectively – of the knowledge and the promotion of responsibility and participation - as

well as the acquisition of habits of social conduct - as well as the subsequent activities of reflection and synthesis. We always have to be clear that the purpose is meaningful, functional and comprehensive learning of the space studied by potential recipients. We have to be aware of the age of the participants, the level of training and the most relevant content that motivate the route.

Routes or itineraries are formed by a set of key points or stops. At these stops, students perform activities, coordinated with the objectives of teaching and learning and with the content designed. The number of stops should allow the assimilation of elements, processes and meanings which shapes the spatial reality chosen, and their frequency will be consistent with the characteristics of the class group and the depth with which we will carry out the didactic approach.

3. *Expository screenplay and preparation of teaching materials.* It is the final phase of the proposed route. The formal and systematic writing of speech that we want to convey and the preparation or compilation of teaching material that we want to contribute, either for the activities or for the illustration of some aspect deemed to highlight. It has a great educational significance, in terms of his creative conception and formal expression.

The itineraries we have chosen keep close ties with the geographical attributes of Segovia, so what his logic and his speech, from three main sections, are a useful "Guide" with which the segovian teachers can count to understand territorial reality, at the local level. Therefore, we present this guide the most finished and most complete as possible.

The organization of these itineraries is based, ultimately, on three main headings. These are related to the key elements, stages and cohesive spatial construction processes of Segovia: the urban environment, the historic city and the modern development.

The first section is entitled to the itineraries 1 and 2, which run through the valleys of the Eresma and Clamores rivers and the "Lastras"; the second section corresponds to the routes 3 and 4, they go through the "Centro-Intramuros" and the wall; finally, routes 5 and 6 correspond to the third section, and they run through the "Centro-Extramuros" and the latest residential and industrial estates.