
Teaching Geography to new generations

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Abstract

When we talk about Geography, society in general does not have a clear knowledge about what it is. Everyone believes that Geography is only based in the knowledge of cities and countries. This is what we have been taught since we were little in schools. Nowadays, throughout technology we have maps and we use them, either in a right way or in a wrong one, in order to know how to move from one place to another. It seems that people are interested in this. Therefore, we should consider using these technological tools in order to learn and analyse the land.

Based on this approach, I have been working in several schools doing research on the amount of shops, architectonic barriers of the city and the distribution of street furniture. The main objective of the activity is for students to be able to create an online map on the issue they are studying by using technological tools.

Therefore, in the first part of the activity the students go out and take a census of the issue they are investigating. This is done through mobile phone or tablets with GPS and the application Catalunya offline created by the Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya. After an hour and a half, they go on to the second part of the activity, which is based in copying all the data into a computer and creating their map that can later be published in social media sites. This activity is done through another tool, Instamaps, created by the Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya.

The result is to see motivated students working with maps, in order to learn and analyse an issue from their city or town, from an innovating side. When the lesson finishes the feedback from students is, 'I was not expecting to like this so much' or 'I did not know that geographers also did these things'. Thus, if we introduce small activities where digital technology has an important role, we could motivate the students' interest in Geography, even from the younger ones.

In the Societat Catalana de Geografia we are betting for the new generations of geographers and for this reason, we have been adapting ourselves to them and we have been planning similar activities for the last year. For example, several courses have been offered around the use of Geographic Information Systems through free software (QGis). Also, at a university level, two editions of a GeoQuiz using the Kahoot application have been organised. For the next course, we are planning to create a Geocatching for all ages. In addition, some prizes will be awarded for geographical projects done by students from secondary school and university.

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