



Some keywords of J-Reading

Gino De Vecchis^a

^a Dipartimento di Scienze documentarie, linguistico-filologiche e geografiche, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy
Email: gino.devecchis@uniroma1.it

In the editorial of No. 0 of the Journal of Research and Didactics in Geography, which came out in December 2012, the aims and objectives were defined of this new online six-monthly magazine that from its very first issue has been met with great appreciation and encouragement. We therefore continue with the course undertaken then with enthusiasm and energy, going full steam ahead with this new number.

The aim to contribute to the construction of a well-established link between didactics and research, deemed as strategic for the development of the discipline, (as already highlighted at the launch of J-Reading), is at the basis of this new editorial project, hinged on the coherence and balance between the scientific aspect and the educational-didactic one, which are both fundamental as they give a sense and meaning to the information, skills and knowledge.

J-Reading first all aims at the international diffusion of the results obtained in this specific context. The comparisons and exchanges of information among researchers, lecturers and experts in the various countries constitutes the backbone to pursue new goals and to foster an essential advancement of research. Within the

context of the aims and objectives of J-Reading at least three keywords are worthy of particular mention: international comparison, interdisciplinarity and geospatial technologies.

The first makes it possible to evaluate, from a comparative point of view, the state of the art relative to the teaching of geography at the various levels of school and university. It is important to build whole frameworks on common aspects: the main themes of teaching, progress in geographical research to efficiently translate into teaching practice, interdisciplinary possibilities, didactic continuity among the different levels of teaching, links between secondary school and university, access to advanced technologies, teaching aids and instruments able to facilitate research and geographical education, university education of teachers etc. All this makes it possible to better highlight the strong as well as the weak points characterising the teaching of geography in various countries. Many analyses and in-depth studies in such a comparative viewpoint have been realised in this, but there is still a great deal of work to be done; J-Reading sets out to offer a significant contribution by uniting many expert opinions. In this sense the magazine – and the Italian Association of Geography Teachers (AIIG) which promotes it full-heartedly – needs

the maximum collaboration with the other associations (national and international) and with other similar magazines, above all those that deal with the didactics of geography (for example, the close collaboration with the Review of International Geographical Education Online - RIGEO).

It is with this spirit that the Italian Association of Geography Teachers is greatly involved in the fourth EUGEO Congress (Association of Geographical Societies in Europe). The Congress, entitled: *Europe, what's next? changing geographies and geographies of change*, will be held at Sapienza University of Rome (5-7 September 2013). In particular, a whole session is foreseen which will be entirely dedicated to didactics and which promises to be at a significant level: *Geography education's challenges in changing geographies*. In this session the AIIG is involved as promoter of the event (and will coordinate the opening and the first time slot), together with EURO GEO (which will take the floor in the second slot, with its president Karl Donert) and the Commission of the International Geographical Union, which deals with didactic (Commission on Geographical Education, whose President, Joop Van der Schee, will chair the meeting in the final session). In fact, the reciprocal support to achieve these common objectives is fundamental, even if everyone is working according to their own specific aims and objectives. It is necessary to give vigour and visibility to topics that require a network of relations and a common force in joint project-making and for this reason the idea has been to gather together a number of contributions in No. 2 of J-Reading.

Secondly, as was seen in No. 0, J-Reading sets out to foster interdisciplinary collaborations as much as possible to reach results, and these require joint planning among the various sectors of scientific research. In this number for example, as well as geographers, geologists, archaeologists, experts in geotechnologies and geomatics have given their precious contribution. Interdisciplinarity is fundamental to search for common pathways to pursue

together and create strong relations; the enrichment is reciprocal.

Thirdly, the magazine also sets out to take into consideration the different orientations and approaches of contemporary geography; in this context the geospatial technologies like GIS and remote sensing should be mentioned separately. In fact, the use of dedicated instruments, digital cartography software, the analytical interpretation of satellite images represent a crux of a geography in *progress*, the scope of which is to unite theoretical-methodological skills with practical-operational ones. In this perspective the support of ESA (*European Space Agency*) and Esri (*Environmental Systems Research Institute*) represents a definite step of great importance. Both in didactics and research the rigorous use of such instruments represents added value that is now unavoidable and international exchange in this constitutes a keystone to foster high level progress. It is in fact necessary to find innovative contexts of research and to promote laboratory applications where to merge a multiple series of skills to show the true face of geography.

In order to go ahead at the level of actual usefulness it has been decided to start new types of columns, putting them alongside those already proposed in No. 0 (*The language of images* and *Teachings from the past*) other features, such as:

- “Referred papers for remote sensing”, which thanks to an interdisciplinary approach aims to give useful guidelines, in terms of research and didactics, on the importance and use of remote sensing, each time examining a different theme, for which specific examples are given;
- “Mapping societies” in which geopolitical issues can be dealt with, by means of the language of geographicity;
- “Geographical notes and (practical) considerations”, where notes and comments coming from experts and associations can merge.