



EDITORIAL

Textbooks and Educational Media

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The Covid-19 pandemic induced change of unprecedented magnitude in many facets of formal education. Educational media constitute one of the most impacted elements as they remain at the heart of all forms of communication.

In an exploratory study carried out across Germany during the early days of the pandemic, BAGOLY-SIMÓ ET AL. (2019) showed various ways in which Geography teachers struggled to adapt to the digital and, later on, the hybrid classroom. The novel communication formats required other ways of integrating content and communication. While teachers may have embarked on the journey towards more digital educational media integrating smart boards and digital whiteboards into their daily routine, only a fragment of secondary schools reinvented the ways to present, access, use, and store educational resources. Similarly, digital alternatives to copybooks and collections of loose copies of individual lessons remained the exception. Despite several waves of considerable funding for research and development, educational media usage remained traditional. Indeed, publishing houses played an important role in securing the advantages of the broken textbook market while similarly favorable alternatives were yet to be negotiated.

One of the most striking findings of BAGOLY-SIMÓ ET AL. (2019) was the redefinition of teachers' self-perception during digital communication. The results showed

that establishing communication formats, including all students, and replacing the social ecosystem of the classroom seemed more difficult than predicted by numerous studies. Also, the results showed a dramatic decrease in the role of geographical knowledge during instruction, with teachers' attention shifting towards aspects traditionally covered by social workers and school psychologists. One of the most striking findings was the return to analog textbooks as the standard collection of knowledge and tasks accessible for low-income and socio-economically challenged households and for students experiencing reduced parental attention and support during their academic work.

While such findings are one facet of many crucial ways educational media shape teaching and learning in Geography classrooms, Geography educators' interest in textbooks and educational media has been episodic at best. As meta-studies showed (BAGOLY-SIMÓ 2019; 2021), most studies explore the impact of curricular changes in revised textbooks. Additionally, studies tend to explore the representation of specific processes and structures with the finality of evaluating the aptness of educational resources. Mainly caught in a post-modern self-referential framework, such studies remain blind to the educational objective textbooks and educational media cater to, namely to support the stakeholders of the teaching-learning process. Such



support needs to be target-group-specific and requires, in most cases, the implementation of well-tested strategies to adjust the content.

The present special issue continues with the tradition of previous contributions (cf. BAGOLY-SIMÓ &

STÖBER 2016) to further research on Geography textbooks and educational media. There are two main ways this special issue wishes to make a contribution.

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