



Mapping the Future of Indigenous Teaching

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My love of maps grew from childhood trips spent with my family, navigating our way through cities and highways. As a teacher, I looked for ways to bring map reading into the classroom. If a kindergarten student expressed an interest in the TTC, I brought in route maps and cardboard subways. When reading *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis with Grade 8s, we consulted online maps. As a teacher-librarian, I borrow giant floor maps for collaborative learning with all grades and I'm always looking for ways to bring in engaging resources that provide meaningful learning experiences.

One resource I would like to highlight is the new *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Giant Floor Map* available from Canadian Geographic. This map and four-volume atlas (in both English and French) are the result of a partnership between the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and Canada's national Indigenous organizations, inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action.

The Specifications:

The map measures 11 metres by eight metres and is delivered in a giant hockey bag with a teacher's guide and activity cards. It comes with an 11 metre timeline of residential school history and can be borrowed for a three week period for free. Borrowing information: canadiangeographic.com/educational_products/ipac_floor_map.asp. Access the four volume atlas online at: indigenoupeoplesatlasofcanada.ca.

Map Introduction:

Students are immediately excited when they see the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Giant Floor Map*. We start with the rules of no shoes and walking only and then students are given a few minutes to explore. Almost instinctively, students look for a familiar place, either Toronto where they live, a community where a family member or friend lives, or a place they have visited.

We then talk about the elements of a map, its importance and how we read and understand the information conveyed. We discuss how maps have titles and authors like books and this activates schema about what they are going to read and

whether the source is reliable. We discuss the border and legend, considering how these are like the cover and table of contents of a book, providing information about what is contained in the map. We also talk about the date the map was produced and how this information provides us with an historical context.

The compass rose provides an interesting discussion because north points along the longitudinal lines which are not parallel. Students walk the longitudinal lines and we discuss how the giant map is a two-dimensional representation of a sphere.

Geography and History from the Perspective of First Nations, Métis and Inuit:

After talking about the various elements of the map, students often ask: "Where are the provinces and territories?" This map represents the re-mapping of Canada to assert the ongoing Indigenous presence and does not include those political boundaries. As a result, the map uses colour to demonstrate the traditional territories and language families of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

In the introduction of the four-volume *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*, Adam Gaudry describes the long tradition of map-making by Indigenous people of Turtle Island and how these maps were represented in story and used to regulate land use and governance. Gaudry also emphasizes that map-making is a deeply political process and that it is important to distinguish between the maps that hide Indigenous conceptions of space and those that establish a world of ongoing Indigenous nationhood.

"How we draw maps goes hand-in-hand with how we understand the world we live in." — Adam Gaudry

Canadian Geographic Education has provided many activities within the resource binder that accompanies the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Giant Floor Map*. Additionally, they are available online: canadiangeographic.com/educational_products/ipac_floor_map.asp. On the next page, I highlight some of my favourites.