

Supporting the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment

Top Access Tips: Maps

- ◆ Offer child opportunity to view the map before the lesson with explanation to support understanding
- ◆ Break complex maps into component parts. Use overlays to gradually rebuild the map. A base map may only show simple contouring and rivers, and acetate overlays may add the features relevant to the study topic.
- ◆ Use a similar approach with tactile maps, bearing in mind that the size of the map should not exceed a hand span.
- ◆ Use a CCTV or low vision aid to access a map, or access the map online. Support child to develop systematic scanning approaches to access the map.
- ◆ Develop scanning and tactile skills to support tactile access to maps. Commence at an early age. Child needs to understand how to track effectively, follow verbal instruction and search independently.
- ◆ Support access to maps by developing child's listening and memory skills; their spatial and orientation skills; their mental mapping skills
- ◆ Identify the skills within map work which are of value to a blind or partially sighted child, e.g. reinforce cross curricular skills used in maths and science

Advice Point

It is often difficult for a child to pick out the detail on a map, and extremely tiring. It is unfair to expect them to maintain the intensive level of concentration required for any

Advice Point

Enlargement of the map can help access but equally can make it increasingly difficult to grasp the wider view of the map. Locating grid references is equally difficult and time consuming

Practical guidelines for adapting maps

- ◆ Forward plan, between Teacher of VI and the class teacher, to establish the learning objective and identify the key parts of the map to be adapted.
- ◆ Adopt a consistent approach to the preparation of simple maps. For example, with the title always at the top and the key in one corner.
- ◆ Begin with simple diagrams to teach skills and basic concepts
- ◆ Be clear about what is important and prioritise to avoid visual overload.

- ◆ Each diagram may be quite easy but studying many diagrams will be extremely tiring
- ◆ Be clear about the time available for production. A simple diagram which works may be far more effective than a beautiful diagram which is too complex
- ◆ Diagrams take a long time for a student to access, ensure that the task set is achievable
- ◆ Ensure that the exercise is enjoyable; huge levels of concentration are required to piece together information to create an overall mental map
- ◆ Photocopy the extract and highlight and identify the features to be retained
- ◆ Trace these features and build the map up from there
- ◆ Produce a simple sketch map of the whole area to aid orientation, taking out all extraneous detail
- ◆ Provide individual modified enlargements of specific parts of the map depending on the task set
- ◆ If scale is required, ensure that a new linear scale is shown on the modified map
- ◆ Make a modified key to the map
- ◆ Use clear, contrasting colours, keeping number of colours used to a minimum.
- ◆ Avoid overlaying text on a coloured background. Add numbered key
- ◆ Presenting the number in black on a white label in the appropriate location on the map
- ◆ Test what you have done before you give it to the child

Advice Point

Visual Fatigue: “Seeing” requires a good deal of effort and concentration, which may affect motivation, due to the visual fatigue experienced after prolonged periods of close work.

Their eye condition may fluctuate meaning they ‘see’ better some days than others, impacting on their access to the curriculum.