

Bringing Forth the Spirit of Astronomy by Using Conceptual Maps

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When communicating astronomical knowledge to the public we are sometimes unsatisfied of the quality of our application, making evident that a real efficiency of sharing astronomical concepts and action to the public, needs to be sustained with concepts and actions by the "outside", such as concepts from mathematics, physics, philosophy, etc.

On the another hand, different categories involved (researchers, professors, students, graduate students, media, etc,...) do not have the same purposes in manipulating astronomical information, the researchers are more interested in details and strictness, the professors in the pedagogical aspects, the media searches for the simplest way to explain complex/inter-dependent phenomena. Thus, searching a cohesion factor between several domains and tendencies in communicating astronomical knowledge became obvious and necessary; this factor has to reflect directly that what we can finally call "the spirit of Astronomy". The easiest way of searching for this factor is the analysis of relations between facts and concepts of several domains involved, by using the method of Conceptual Maps, already presented by the authors. The use of Conceptual Maps shows more than the simple anchorage of Astronomy among the exact sciences; it makes evident the eminently creative statute of Astronomy, which is, from the methodological point of view, the origin of modern sciences. This is a fundamental epistemological statute which requires, especially from the astronomers, a more appropriate investigation and afterwards to become the basis of their efforts to communicating astronomy, efficiently, to "the others".