Understanding the Project

Designing Maps for Purpose

• What is the purpose of the map?
  – There is usually more than one
  – Usually more than just the obvious purpose, too

• What/who is the audience of the map?
  – Linked with purpose, determine the main audience
  – What other, secondary audience(s) could there be?

• At what distance will the map be viewed?
  – Goes back to purpose and use
  – Size needs to be determined
Designing Maps for your Medium(Media)

• Distance and Size are also components of what medium the map will be displayed with
  – Most uses will be multi-media

• Questions:
  – Resolution and media is now important – Digital or analog? Desktop printing or printshop?
  – 4 color or multi-color? / Grey-scale or black and white
  – Duotone?
    • A half-tone reproduction where one contrast tone is (usually black) is imposed over another tone (can be blue, red, etc.
    • Can also produce tritones, quadtones, etc.

Linking the Map (design) to the Purpose

• Determine what themes are necessary for purpose
  – Also determine what themes are necessary for reference

• After themes, determine the visual hierarchy of the layout
  – Visual cues of content based on importance
  – Very important element to help audience process the information
  – We (humans) do this in everything

• Decorative Elements
  – Is there an overall theme (refers to purpose) of this map where certain decorative accents would help in creating a visual learning moment

• Map Projection
  – Choosing the appropriate projection can be very important
Visual Hierarchy is achieved by using images, map elements, color and text.
Figure-ground in Map Design

Key concepts of figure-ground in map design:

- **Differentiation** - ability to easily discriminate the main figure from the ground
- **Closure** – making discrete objects discrete (no dangles, no gaps)
- **Centrality** - the object located in the center of a map is most often assumed to be the figure
- **Articulation** – using texture to differentiate figure from ground
- **Good Contour** - the viewer’s ability to continue the line throughout the map, differentiating figure from ground

Figure-ground Concept

- Cognitive ability to separate elements based upon contrast, that is, dark and light, black and white
- There are three types of figure-ground problems:
  1. The figure and the ground compete
  2. The figure should be the ground and the ground should be the figure
  3. The figure and ground create an optical illusion

Faces-vase, Rubin
Figure-ground in Map Design

*What do you see here?*

Mark Monmonier

*How to Lie with Maps*

Second Edition

With a new Foreword by H. J. de Blij

*Here?*
Here?

Here?