ПРОБЛЕМЫ ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

PROBLEMS OF GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION

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CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The geography includes rich, diverse and comprehensive themes that give us an understanding of our changing environment and interconnected world. It includes the study of the physical environment and resources; cultures, economies and societies; people and places; and global development and civic participation. As a subject, geography is particularly valuable because it provides information for exploring contemporary issues from a different perspective. This geographical information affects us all at work and in our daily lives and helps us make informed decisions that shape our future. All these facts result in a wide discussion on many topical issues in contemporary geography didactics. Subjects of research are the new geography and economics curriculum as well as construction of modern learning process. The paper presents briefly some of the current trends and key issues of geodidactics. As central notions we consider and analyze the training/educational goals, geography curriculum, target groups and environment of geography training, training methods as well as the information sources used in geography education. We adhere that all the above-mentioned finds its reflection in planning, analysis and assessment of education and thus in its quality and effectiveness.

KEYWORDS:

geography, environmental education and intercultural learning, geography curriculum, global learning

INTRODUCTION

The main question for the goals of geography training is associated currently with a prior coordination of "key qualifications" which are required from modern society, with environmental education and intercultural learning, global learning and ensuring value orientation (e.g. key issues of present and foreseeable future, "key qualifications") [Köck H., 1993, pp. 14–22]. Moreover, main purpose and contribution of geographic education is development of spatial key qualification, i.e. the competence for activity and proper behavior in geographic space. For geography and economics curriculum it implies a strong orientation to activities and tasks for the students, which should be in sync with their present and future life and work. In particular, in schools there must be developed pupils' subject-thematic, methodological, social and moral competence as well as different activity competences.

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MATERIALS, METHODS AND RESULTS OF RESEARCH

According to prof. Holtz [Basha S.A.S., 2004] geography education and training has the following two sets of aims.

Practical aims

- Knowledge of the land through geography
- Using geography knowledge it is possible to bring about industrial and agricultural development
- To have a proper idea of various geographical factors that influence our life
- To have a correct idea of the geographical references that occur in the books and newspapers
- To inculcate in pupils/students a desire for undertaking travelling and tourism

Cultural aims

- To develop the feeling of patriotism
- To develop love for nature and capacity to understand and appreciate the natural beauty, physical forces, etc.
- To develop the ideal of world citizenship, universal brotherhood, cooperation amongst human beings and sympathetic outlook for others
- Adjustment of human life according to the geographical circumstances

Geography science plays a leading role in development of environmental education objectives and students (pupils) learn basic issues related to environment and sustainable development (e.g. climate change, deforestation, land degradation and desertification, depletion of natural resources, biodiversity loss, overpopulation, food security, drought, poverty, and urban decay). Environmental issues suggest a stronger alignment and compliance of environmental education with geography training and scientific exploration of "sustainable development" concept. And it is not a fact to increase the number of environmental topics but to encourage teaching and training the relevant knowledge and skills so to build environmentally relevant values and point of view, to stimulate specific environmental experience and environmental activities [Haubrich W., 2002, pp. 161–166].

Intercultural learning is an area of research, study and application of knowledge about variety of cultures, their differences and similarities. Intercultural learning involves stimulation of understanding of foreign cultures, as well as their reflection [Kirchberg, 1998b, p. 86]. The geography as curriculum subject is closely related to intercultural and international education [Flath M., Fuchs G., 1994]. Intercultural learning includs (as theoretical and academic approach) the practical applications such as how to learn to negotiate with people from different cultures (e.g. "Geography of business communications").

Global learning and nature conservation as leading new ideas in geography education coordinate the increasing global interactions and interrelationships, and also the idea of uniting the world, to reduce the distance between spaces, limiting the imbalance in global development [Kirchberg G., 1998, p. 86]. Global learning supports the geography education with new topics such as social justice, conflict resolution, human rights, global citizenship etc.

The starting point for conscious and responsible behavior in space is to develop value orientation in geography training and education [Böhn D., 1999]. In geography training as educational objectives and curriculum the following values are defined:

- Universal value (e.g. understanding between nations);
- Critical-emancipatory value (e.g. maturity);
- Ecological value (e.g. nature conservation);
- Religious values (e.g. awe of creation);
- Political value (e.g. democracy).

Considering content matter contemporary geography didactics discusses issues such as the ratio between the general and regional geography in curriculum, regional differentiation of the globe,

increasing importance of the homeland/fatherland and Europe/European space in geographic science.

Regional geography focuses on regions of various sizes across the earth's landscape and aspires to understand the unique character of regions in terms of their natural and cultural attributes. The subject of discussion is the role of general and regional geography in geography curriculum. The focus is on spatial relationships within any field of study such as regional economics, resource management, regional planning and landscape ecology. According to some authors the regional component should be more strongly presented in current geography curriculum, and on the contrary – other researchers point out that general geographic approach is more fruitful in dealing with geographical issues considering the intensive contemporary globalization. The approach that combines both concepts is the "regional-global" [Rinschede G., 2007, p. 32].

Regional differentiation of the globe and the criteria under which it is studied within geography and economics curriculum are another topical issue of modern geography didactics. It is discussed above all distinctions based on level of economic development (industrial, reforming, developing countries), according to cultural traits (10 cultural spaces), according to the "community" as a living space for all people (one world for all) [Engelhard K., 1995, pp. 107–118].

In contrast to the increasing globalization in modern geography didactics the notions of "home" and "homeland" are being rediscovered [Frank F., 1993, pp. 113–122]. This is due to the fact that the surrounding area is the region in which pupils (students) mostly and with priority experience geography. This is the space for implementation of "geographic activity" and to gain "geographic experience" in learning process. This is the space in which geography could find immediate application [Kirchberg G., 1998b, p. 87]. Above all, it is the important neighboring space which allows implementation of spatial transfer in the learning process and thus the best comparison between close and distant world could be achieved [Rinschede G., 1998, pp. 245].

The topic "Europe" (considering the European integration) has gained an increasing importance. Thus the need to limit the study of European regions (as distinct spatial areas) as well as the detailed study of states is being discussed. In contrary, we have to seek the possibilities for geographical representation of Europe in educational curriculum as an entirety, as a complete cultural and economic space which has undoubtedly its regional differences. It is estimated that each general geographic theme in educational programs should be supplemented by its European dimension, to be related to European perspective, cooperation and relationships [Kirchberg G., 1998, p. 87].

When speaking about general geographic educational content, the understanding of natural geographic systems and processes comes to the fore which in turn leads to substantial neglection of social geography. However, many authors (here and abroad) enhance the idea of a strong overlap of natural geography in training process of geography teachers, and also in geography curriculum [Kirchberg G., 1998, p. 85].

It is important for modern geography didactics (when we discuss the question of the target group and environment of geography training) to study the following factors such as changed childhood and adolescence, the changed "outer" world of children and young people (family, games and free time, specific of information society, experience in space, etc.). These changes force children and young people to be more independent and achieve "complete personality", to be more informed and interested, to become more conscious, active and full of ideas [Kirchberg G., 1998, p. 86]. As a consequence of mentioned above the impact on geography education results in seeking opportunities for "dissolution" of training, for its practicing outside schools, to its orientation to business.

The important question about methods of modern geography didactics enhanced serious discussion on issues such as cooperative learning, change of perspective in education, aesthetic education of Postmodernism. Inter-subject cooperation, interdisciplinarity and development of cross-curriculum interrelations in geography training are of a particular interest for geography didactics. This is due to the fact that geography can not and should not be studied in isolation from other subjects, and to the fact that the world and everyday life are not "divided" in subjects. Inter-subject cooperation should be clearly outlined in the curriculum by "unifying line" and the methodological

guidelines for unification with other relative to geography subjects. That could be achieved, e.g. by using guidelines for implementation of the cross-curriculum projects, and also for the implementation of bilingual education.

The change of perspective or multiple perspective are key words for geography teaching and their meaning is to view space, topics and problems not only from a single perspective. The methodology of change of perspective directs students (pupils) to other points of view on other cultures, environmental issues, tourism (both as travelers and those who accommodate visitors) or on urban planning.

The Postmodernism puts forward a universally valid truth in science – pluralism and multiplte perspective. Individual life experience and personal life world are at the center of postmodern geography didactics. Postmodern geo-didactical scientists adhere to the idea of rediscovering the sense of a new unification of rational and emotional, understanding and feelings. The so-called aesthetic education/training comprises multiple sensory perception marked by sensations and feelings of our consciousness [Birkenhauer J., 1993, p. 216–230].

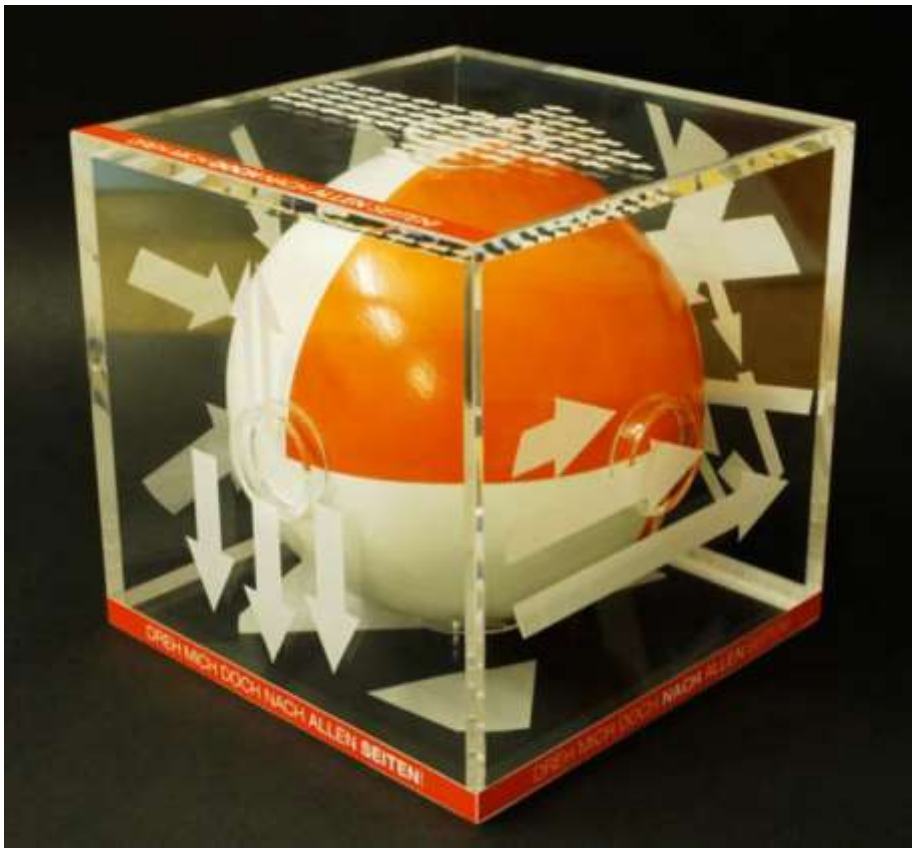

Figure 1. *"Cube Jena" [Schneider A., 2011]*

Considering the above-mentioned it is worth analyzing the concept of "Cube Jena" which adaptation and implementation in Bulgaria will be useful in three main areas (figure 1):

1. In didactical and methodological aspect the concept can be used as a basis for the introduction of "key problems" of contemporary society in geography curriculum and they are the main research object (and goal) of geography education in secondary schools and universities.
2. The concept proposes the steps for planning and implementation of problem-oriented (problem-centered) educational process in geography training.

3. The concept provides real possibilities to study geography objects in their entity and simultaneously "rotating the Cube" – a real possibility to research all "hidden" aspects and features of geographical objects.

The presented concept is an object of thorough study in another publication [Vasileva M. *et al.*, 2016].

In the future there is a strong need of cultivating specific methodical competence and respectively in geography training it must be also implemented and improved precisely because it enhances the efficiency of training [Flath M., 2004, pp. 68–71).

A question of interest is the role of information sources in teaching geography. This is due to the fact that the issuing and processing of information as well as communication forms change and develop globally. Inevitably geography training has to respond as students (pupils) are anyway faced with new technologies in their everyday life. That is why new sources of information and technology should find their place in the new curriculum in geography and economics so that students can learn to work being competent, critical, conscious and responsible with them [Schleicher Y. (Hg.), 2004].

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it should be noted that the geographical education should provide knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable students to understand the human-environment-society processes and interaction in the world. The main goal is to achieve comprehensive geographic literacy. Geography education should provide knowledge and skills through which students act as responsible citizens in terms of complex key issues that are of great ecological, social, cultural, economic and political importance. Geography teachers are encouraged to use various innovative tools in training process and thus to ensure a higher quality of geography education. These goals can be obtained by continuous research, constant efforts to improve the existing situation, finding new ways and forms of education as well as continuous monitoring and evaluation of school geography. Nowadays we are witnessing a parallel change in teaching and learning geography science in secondary schools and universities. Geography curriculum in secondary and higher education must conform to the expectations of business and science and that's why students need to acquire knowledge and skills that make them competitive. And finally, all highlighted above is the main reason to deepen our future research on issues related to geography didactics.

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КИБЕРНЕТИКА И ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ: КИБЕРНЕТИКА ОБУЧЕНИЯ И ОБУЧЕНИЕ КИБЕРНЕТИКЕ

АННОТАЦИЯ

В работе современного географа значительное место занимают компьютерные и медиатехнологии, а в географическом образовании важное место занимает обучение кибернетическим дисциплинам и дисциплинам, предполагающим применение компьютерных технологий. Современное географическое образование предполагает широкое внедрение инновационных технологий, позволяющих обучающимся полно и глубоко понимать предмет и способы профессиональной деятельности, а также эффективно и продуктивно действовать, опираясь на это понимание. Компьютерные технологии выступают как важное условие получения качественного профессионального образования, а также важное средство профессиональной деятельности современного специалиста-географа. Статья посвящена сравнению трёх современных подходов к изучению и оптимизации обучения кибернетике и программированию в рамках географического образования: 1. подход, посвящённый исследованию «стилей обучения», 2. метакогнитивный подход к обучению кибернетике и программированию и 3. интерсубъективный, эвергетический или собственно кибернетический подход. Отмечаются их достоинства и ограничения в контексте географического образования, их внешние различия и внутреннее единство как форм повышения продуктивности и условий осуществления диалогического взаимодействия ученика и учителя в контексте получения качественного географического образования.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:

географическое образование, кибернетика, контекстное обучение, интерсубъективное обучение, метакогнитивное обучение.

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