

TIMES OF CHANGE FOR GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

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Key words: geography, education, student, Slovenia, knowledge, skills, practice

Slovenia has recently undergone many rapid and profound changes.

- differences in culture, in behaviour, in values and standards

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enrichment and strengthening of a society



... it is important to create a dialogue about the social, economic, political and cultural contexts within which geographical studies occur.



The recent changes and development of Middle, South Eastern and Eastern European countries are the results of European integration and globalisation.

From the geographical standpoint these processes and changes demand immediate action regarding the creation of new curriculum structure and contents.

Simplified version of school system in Slovenia

TYPE OF SCHOOL	AGE GROUP	CLASS/GRADE
Primary school	6 -15	1 – 9
Secondary vocational school	15 – 17 (18)	1 – 2 (3)
Secondary technical schools	15 – 19	1 - 4
Grammar school	15 - 19	1 - 4

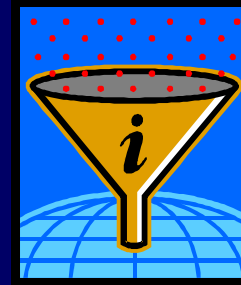
Geography contents and the quantity of geography school hours per classes in 9-year primary school in Slovenia

CLASS	GEOGRAPHY CONTENTS	SCHOOL HOURS
6	The planet Earth	35
7	Regional geography of Europe and Asia	70
8	Regional geography of America, Africa, Australia and polar regions	52
9	Slovenia – our homeland	70
All together		227

Geography contents and the quantity of geography school hours per grades in grammar school in Slovenia

GRADE	GEOGRAPHY CONTENTS	SCHOOL HOURS
1	General geography	70
2	Regional geography of the world	50
3	Regional geography of Europe and Slovenia	50
4 (not obligatory)	Slovenia + final exam preparation	40 + 35 (general examination)
All together		170 or 245

???



Syllabus changes always raises difficult questions and comments relating to unnecessary contents.

HOW AND WHAT SHOULD BE REDUCED IS A GROWING DILEMMA NOT ONLY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION BUT ALSO IN THE UNIVERSITY COURSES.

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Developing important concepts of geography in education needs considerable cooperation between subject experts, researchers and authors from different countries.

- an arrangement about the methodology
- a modernisation of syllabi and educational aims
- a modernisation of textbooks and other teaching aids
- interesting contents, new knowledge, experience and methods with real and applicable value

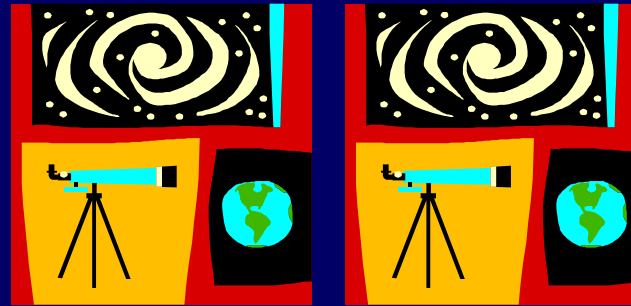
Competing tensions (Naish, 1996):

- the call for an emphasis on basic skills, vocationalism and instrumentalism **versus** the view of education as humanitarian, liberal and progressive, of intrinsic value in its own right
- academic **versus** child oriented education
- traditional **versus** progressive approaches
- didactic teaching **versus** enquiry learning

Four main orientations (McNeil, 1977, Naish, 1996):

- humanistic
- academic
- technological
- social reconstruction





"There is no such thing as a neutral educational activity. Any action that one takes in the classroom is necessarily linked to the external economic, political and social order in either in primarily integrative or a creative fashion. Either a teaching activity serves to integrate children into the current social order or it provides children with the knowledge, attitudes and skills to deal critically and creatively with that reality in order to improve it."

Grant and Zeichner, 1984

The struggle can be seen in teachers' roles in 4 main ways (Hargreaves, 1996):

- The teacher's role expand ...
- Innovations multiply ...
- Moral certainties collapse ...
- The methods and strategies that teachers use, together with their underlying knowledge base are constantly criticised ...

The important assumptions for the future development of school geography in Slovenia:

- The quick and effective flow of information.
- Geography teachers will be better organised regarding contacts with other countries.
- There will be vertical and horizontal flow of information between the institutions.
- Self sufficiency will be avoided.



"Our own search for knowledge and that which we encourage in our students should be directed towards regaining enchantment with geographical stories within the context of a global geographical culture. Only thus can we retain and renew our professionalism as geographers and geography teacher."

Lidstone, 1996