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Development and present situation of slovenian didactics of geography

Introduction

The quality of teaching and presenting geographical science depends on the knowledge of modern geographical science and teaching abilities and skills used in the educational process. The didactics of geography has evolved in line with the development of pedagogical sciences upgraded with the needs of modern geographical science. As an independent scientific discipline, it has evolved from “the methodology of teaching geography” through “the theory of geography lesson” and finally to “the didactics of geography.”

The history of Slovenian didactics of geography

Medieval education and pedagogy on the Slovenian territory

Planned and conscious upbringing, which included adults and children in the Slovenian territory, began with Christianization of Slavs. Charles the Great ordered that every Christian had to learn the Faith and the Lord's Prayer by heart. Illiterate people repeated the words until they knew them by heart. The main aim of education was to achieve obedience. The first schools on the Slovenian territory were faith schools located within the dioceses. Students were divided into two groups – the nobility and the poor. The content they were to learn was determined accordingly to the social position. Noble students learned grammar, rhetoric, and elements of law, while the poorer students were taught the Doctrine of the Faith, reading and singing. In the 15th century faith schools gradually disappeared, fell to an average level of parochial schools or were replaced by medieval town schools (Schmidt 1988).

Girls, noble in particular, received proper education only in convent schools, which had a modest role in the development of education. Later the noble girls were joined by girls from the ranks of wealthy middle class. Just like the faith schools in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, convent schools also declined due to the general crisis of church life. All that led to a great decline of the level of education.

With the rise of the middle class, the purpose of schooling changed. Due to the new demands the bourgeois schools appeared on our territory. They began to supplant religious monopoly. The quality and quantity of the content started to change, and this led to the improvement of the education process. Gradually, in schools, the mother tongue started to prevail over Latin. For Slovenes this meant the introduction of German as a language of instruction, while the Slovenian literary language was fairly underdeveloped at that time and, in addition, we also did not have our own country (Schmidt 1988).

At this point, two important pedagogues from that period need to be mentioned: Nikolaj Kempf and Peter Paul Vergerius. Nicholas Kempf was born in Strasbourg. He studied at the University of Vienna and later on joined the Carthusian order and became Prior of the Jurgklošter. His pedagogic work was *Pravi smoter pouka* (The Real Aim of Teaching). He was convinced that there was no need to spend a lot of time on the acquisition of science and that it was more important how one performed in practice. Accordingly, in his work he didn't discuss different teaching methods or techniques.

The second one was Peter Paul Vergerius. He wrote *O ljudskem značaju in humanističnem izobraževanju* (On human character and Humanistic Education). Vergerius took into account child's individuality. According to him, a young person should choose a profession and strive for glory. For him, history and science were part of education. However, his views were not democratic, because his interest simply aimed at raising a noble child (Schmidt 1988).

Education and Pedagogy at the time of Humanism and the Renaissance

The basic feature of Renaissance artists and scholars (Vittorino Ramboldini da Feltre, Francois Rabelais, Michele Montaigne and Erasmus of Rotterdam) was a belief that it is necessary to prepare a human for life in this world, and therefore to educate him. The curriculum grew in importance. Astronomy, geography, history, mechanics were introduced. Pedagogy, which still included general didactics, experienced an extraordinary development. Education of an individual became important, which led to a deeper understanding of different notions, moving from deduction into induction. New teaching methods were developed, while the learning content expanded and became more connected with a science.

Education and Pedagogy at the time of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation

At the time of the Reformation, the peasants rebelled against feudal lordship and feudalism, which also led to changes in the development of education (while previously the emphasis was on learning by heart, now, understanding was stressed). The attitude towards students changed. Humanists and Protestants began to consider a child as an individual and started to notice differences in the perception and character among children. Humanists began to supplant priests' monopoly in the field of education. Some Protestants got closer to the idea of elementary school. For Slovenes, Martin Luther, with his ideas of obligatory school irrespectively of status and gender, was very important. Among other important men from this period were Philipp Melanchthon, who did a lot for the development

of the Latin schools, and Johan Sturm, who founded his own high school. They also need to be mentioned.

Until the Reformation, there were no primary schools on the Slovenian territory. The Protestants believed that everyone should be able to read a Bible by themselves and that every child should go to school. That is why they created the foundation for the primary school. One of the most important Protestants on our territory was Primož Trubar. He wanted every Protestant priest to teach children in primary schools, from both rural and urban areas, catechism, reading and writing in the Slovenian language. Apart from him, Adam Bohorič also has to be mentioned. He wrote the first Slovenian educational document in 1575, entitled *Šolski red* (A School Order). According to this document, school had only four grades. For more talented students who wanted to continue their studies at university, the school offered extra lessons in the following subjects: rules of dialectics and rhetoric, readings of ancient authors, and introduction to geography. According to Bohorič, these were the subjects that belonged at the university level (Schmidt 1988). Protestants on the Slovenian territory established the grammar school. Its methods and the content of instruction were strictly controlled.

The role of the Jesuits

Due to the victory of Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church regained monopoly for education and upbringing, and, consequently, Protestant grammar schools were replaced by Jesuit colleges. The Catholic Church teaching duties included mainly care for a clerical offspring and concern for the religious education of children. Since the beginning of the 17th century, secular clergy and the Jesuits were sharing the educational work. The former was in charge of religious education, and the latter of academic studies. The Jesuits founded colleges in Ljubljana, Maribor and Gorica. The only grammar school that was not established by the Jesuits was founded by the Franciscans in Novo Mesto, but they based their work on the model created by the Jesuits. The Jesuits organized boarding schools with the aim of isolating their students, as much as possible, from their home environment. Jesuit colleges were divided into two levels: lower ones, which lasted six years, and the senior ones, which lasted three years. The lower sections were meant for all the students, while the higher ones prepared students for university studies.

Although education was strictly submitted to their religious aims, the core content instruction nevertheless consisted of seven liberal arts (the Jesuits also included the science), which included geography and history. Teaching methods relied on a direct contact between a teacher and a student, although the repetition of subject matter and memory training were still of high importance. The Jesuits worked out the perfect schedule (the content was assigned to specific dates), as well as all the necessary methodical instructions. Great emphasis was put on the education of well trained teachers. Those teachers came exclusively from the Jesuits' circle (Schmidt 1988).

The teaching and learning in the Jesuit College was similar to the academic ones. The teachers lectured or dictated, while students were writing that down, and in the end, they were gathered in groups to repeat the content. Jesuit schools had the highest number of students in the second half of the 17th and in the early 18th

century the number was reduced due to the Jesuits' lagging behind, not being able to keep up with the social needs of their times.

Progress in the field of pedagogy and didactics in the 17th and 18th century

Major cultural, economic and political progress of that time was also seen in education. Even at the very early stages of development, the desire to educate a healthy, mentally qualified person was present.

Didactics experienced a revolutionary change in the teaching process, forms and methods, content and tuition organization. The church was losing influence over education, which went back under control of the state. The state started to decide about the establishment of schools and their regulations, it materially supported teachers and took care of the school organization. Learning content in primary schools was expanded. In addition to religious education, writing, reading and numeracy, in some schools also geography and history were taught. Slowly, the mother tongue became a school subject. Teachers sought to make their lessons more vivid, more inductive, thus promoting the pupils to take initiative (Žlebnič 1978). Among the most important men of this period were Jan Amos Comenius, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Johann Friedrich Herbart and Georg Kerschensteiner.

The beginnings of teaching geography on the Slovenian territory

The origins of the idea of geography as a school subject on the Slovenian territory dates back to the second half of the 16th century. In 1550 Primož Trubar wrote the first book in the Slovenian language – *Katekizem (Catechismus in der windischen sprach)*, to which he added *Abecednik* for all young people to learn to read and write. He is considered the founder of the elementary school on our territory. Geography was not mentioned as a subject at that time (Pavlič 2000).

In 1575, Adam Bohorič, in his first Slovenian educational document, entitled *Šolski red (A School Order)*, indicated that the introduction to geography should be obligatory (Schmidt, 1988). In Ljubljana, he taught gifted students the basic concepts of geography and even the basics of astronomy (Južnič 2007). He made two maps, which were part of his work *Poskus zgodovine Kranjske in ostalih dežel južnih Slovanov* on history of Carniola and other countries of South Slavs. The first map included the regions between the river Drava and the Adriatic Sea in ancient times, while the second was a map of Carantania before the Frankish occupation (Južnič 2007).

Apart from grammar schools the Jesuits (1599) also organized the Advanced Studies (theological and philosophical ones). During the second year of those, students had physics with mathematics and geography. In 1736 discussions on history and geography began, although no written documents about them are available.

Shortly before the disbanding of the order, the Jesuits founded a chair of mechanics and drawing. They introduced an exam from cosmography which was primarily based on mathematical geography of the Earth (Južnič 2007). During the Enlightenment era, dominated by Empress Maria Theresa, the state intervened in the

content of the Jesuit college classes and from 1752 requested that geography should be included among the subjects.

Therefore, in the Slovenian Jesuit colleges, two new subjects, history and geography, were introduced.

In 1754, in Trieste, the Jesuits established a two-year maritime school, where geography was included among other subjects. Due to poor attendance, the school was re-located to Reka in 1774. However, when in 1785 Pompey Brigido became the governor of Trieste, it was re-established in Trieste.

In 1772, Blaž Kumerdej prepared a plan for the organization of the Slovenian primary school in Carniola. Kumerdej suggested that the Slovenian peasant children should learn to read and write in the Slovenian language for the purpose of being able to read books translated into the Slovenian language.

The General School Edict of 1774, prepared by Ignac Felbiger, introduced general and compulsory education. Compulsory education was provided for children from 6 to 12 years of age and was more preferable than the one provided by the Orders, because it allowed exceptions and the child's absence from school did not entail any penalty. Three types of primary school were established (*normalke*, *glavne šole* and *trivialke*). *Trivialke* operated in small towns and rural areas. Religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, secular morality and the basic concepts of economy were taught there. To the curricula of the other two types of schools the following subjects were added: German grammar, elements of Latin, science, economics, history, geography, basic geometry, architecture, mechanics, and drawing. *Normalke* were founded in the major towns. The potential future teachers were also trained there (Schmidt 1988). Matej Ignac Hess prepared a draft version of study improvement with the main aim of transforming grammar school into a general high-school educational institution. In general, he expanded the curriculum and proposed the introduction of teachers, who were professionally trained at universities. His draft was not adopted. The curriculum in a five-year high school proposed 128 lessons, out of which 18 were history and geography. In 1775 Gratian Marx reformed high school studies from six to five years. He included history and geography in the curriculum (Schmidt 1988). The new primary school scheme came into force in 1804. This plan was the core of "Political School Constitution", the second Austrian primary school law, and was valid until 1869.

At that time teacher education was not beyond the requirements of the Theresian legislation. The main form of the education of a teacher-to-be were still teaching courses attended by the candidates for school teachers (e.g. at least a six-month course in order to teach at *normalka* and a three-month course in order to teach at *trivialka*). The principals of *normalka* and *glavna šola* were mostly priests. Prospective teachers of *trivialka* had lectures in pedagogy of religious education, writing, spelling, pronunciation, grammar and numeracy, German grammar, special methodology of letters, spelling and reading, calligraphy, spelling and handwriting on dictating. They also learnt about writing using the Latin alphabet, geography and special geographical teaching methodology. A candidate was allowed to apply for a teaching exam after one year of teaching.

On the Slovenian territory there were *normalka* schools in all major provincial towns, while *glavna šola* were in Celje, Maribor, Novo Mesto, Kamnik and Idrija. At

glavna šola and *normalka* geography of the Habsburg Monarchy, foreign countries and other continents was taught in the 4th grade.

The new primary schools plan also reformed grammar school. In towns with a university or high school lyceums grammar schools were six-year schools (e.g. in Ljubljana, Klagenfurt and Gorizia), while five-year schools remained in Maribor and Novo Mesto. Due to the state regulations, the position of history and geography generally was strengthened. They were taught 3 hours per week in all classes in both types of grammar schools.

The French occupation of our territory in the early 19th century led to new reforms in education. The French introduced a single four-year primary school, where students gained general education, while vocational knowledge could be obtained at vocational schools. Education was separated from the church and placed under the secular authorities, so that the clergy could not teach. With Marmont command the Slovenian language was recognized as the language of instruction in primary and secondary schools. On the Slovenian territory two types of secondary schools were introduced – grammar schools in Ljubljana, Kranj, Novo Mesto, Postojna and Idrija, and lyceums in Koper and Ljubljana. In grammar schools students learnt about the basics of French, Italian and Latin, arithmetic, the systems of measures and weights. In all lyceums teachers also taught logic and moral philosophy, Latin and French grammar, French and Italian literature, Mathematics and general physics. There were no teachers of history and geography, although Marmont included both subjects in lyceum curriculum (Schmidt 1988).

In February 1811, Napoleon made a statement that the organization of Illyrian education was too expensive and required cutting costs. The attitude towards the maintenance of schools, the school system, the content of teaching and the teaching language was constantly changing in the time of the Illyrian Provinces.

After the departure of the French, the Habsburg authorities returned the education into the hands of Church and re-established the Sunday Church school, which, in 1816 became compulsory for all children from the age 12 to 15. *Trivialke*, *glavne šole* and *normalke* were re-introduced. Schools were adjusted to the needs of the middle class of the society. In 1847 bishop Anton Wolf worked on the establishment of institutions specializing in educating female teachers. There were to be located in capital cities of every country, or at least in the cities, where the seat of the government was. At those institutions geography, didactic and pedagogical sciences were also taught.

The reform in 1818 and 1819 was a major setback in the history of high schools. Due to the emperor's decree, geography and history could be taught by any teacher. The six-year grammar schools taught geography and history for three hours a week during the first four years, and two hours in the last two years (Južnič 2007).

The year 1848 was the year of revolutionary changes which, in the field of education, produced obvious results. The Ministry of Education appointed a new committee to prepare a plan for the reorganization of education. They issued a draft of the basic principles of public education in Austria. In primary schools, the curriculum was expanded and special care was given to the mother tongue. The importance of knowledge of the world and domestic history, as well as geography was emphasized. The Ministry issued a decree outlining the qualifications of teachers. Prospective teachers were required to attend a one-year teaching course, where they also learnt about geography contents and teaching. Now, an eight-year grammar

school was no longer a vocational school, where it was necessary to know Latin, but became a general educational institution. A high-school graduation exam (*matura*) was introduced. The number of teaching hours has doubled. Geography was taught alongside history, both of them 3 hours per week in all classes, except in the fifth year, where it was taught 4 hours per week (Schmidt 1988). The language of instruction was changed from Latin to German and Italian.

At that time, geography textbooks were either written for the first time or translated. Fran Malavašič wrote *Zemljopisje za boli odrašene in podučene učence v šolah na dežel (1849)*, Hicinger wrote *Popis sveta s kratko povestnico vsih časov in narodov*. In 1861 and 1863 respectively, Matej Cigale translated two textbooks: Heufler's *Kratek popis cesarstva Avstrijanskega sploh in njegovih dežel posebej* and Antona Schubert's *Početni nauk o zemljepisu*. In 1865 Janez Jesenko wrote *Zemljepisna začetnica* (Schmidt 1988).

In 1870 four Teacher Training Colleges were founded, with geography being a separate subject there. Further progress of geography occurred in 1878, when a new curriculum for the secondary school came into force. Geography became an independent subject of study in 1909 in all secondary schools.

The year 1919 was the time of the great success of the Slovenian geography. The University of Ljubljana established a Department of Geography (physical geography, human geography), but it was not until April 1920 that Artur Gavazzi was appointed the first professor of geography. Work began the following year (Vrišer 2002). In 1922, students and graduates founded the Geographical Society of Slovenia. Among them were Valter Bohinec, Roman Savnik, Franjo Baš, Ivo Rubič and others.

It the beginning, the geography studies were similar to the Austrian ones. In 1927, Artur Gavazzi went to Zagreb to the newly established chair of physical geography. Anton Melik was elected to take his place. He and Svetozar Ilešič shaped the study and academic orientation of Slovenian geography until the end of the 1960'. Melik, and later Ilešič, made a big step forward, in teaching and academic research in geography, which resulted in the constant increase of the number of students.

In 1925 the Geographical Society began to publish *Geografski vestnik*, which is considered to be the oldest Slovenian professional geographical journal. In scientific research the emphasis was still put on geomorphology, demography and agrarian historical-geographical study of genetic morphological and physiognomic-direction. In 1946, the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts established the Geographical Museum of Slovenia and the Geographical Institute.

Eventually, the Department of Geography acquired new faculty teachers and staff (Vladimir Klemenčič, Igor Vrišer, Marjan Žagar, Darko Radinja, Vladimir Leban, Jakob Medved, Ivan Gams, Mirko Pak, Jurij Kunaver and others). In 1966 post-graduate studies began.

In 1957, under the name of geography teaching methods, the didactics of geography became a university subject for the first time. Academic research and pedagogical activity began with the establishment of the Institute of Geography in Ljubljana. Later on, it was extended to other geographical institutions. Remarkable progress was made with the establishment of Departments of Geography within Ljubljana and Maribor Teaching Academies.

Slovenian school geography reformers

In table 1, the work of seven great Slovenian geography reformers is presented.

Tab. 1. Slovenian school geography reformers

Name and surname	Period	Important works
PETER KOZLER	1824–1879	<i>Zemljevid slovenske dežele in pokrajin</i> , 1853
MATEJ CIGALE	1819–1899	The editor of Wolf's <i>Nemškoslovenski slovar</i> , 1860 <i>Znanstvena terminologija s posebnim ozirom na srednja učilišča</i> , 1880
BLAŽ KOČEN »The father of the school atlas«	1821–1871	First geography textbook <i>Osnove geografije</i> , 1858 <i>Vodič po geografiji</i> , 1868 <i>Zemljepis za ljudske šole</i> , 1869 <i>Geografska učila (Geographische Lehrmittel)</i> , 1861
JANEZ JESENKO »One of the first geography textbook writers«	1838–1908	An essay on earthquakes, 1881–1882 <i>Zemljepisna začetnica za gimnazije in realke</i> , 1865 <i>Zemljepis za prvi razred srednjih šol</i> <i>Občni zemljepis</i> , 1873 <i>Prirodnoznanstveni zemljepis</i> , 1874
FRAN OROŽEN	1853–1912	With the help of Simon Rutar he prepared the first Slovenian school atlas <i>Haardt's zemljepisni atlas za ljudske šole</i> , 1899 <i>Metodika zemljepisnega pouka</i> , 1891 and 1898
JAKOB MEDVED	1926–1978	<i>O geografiji kot znanosti in o geografiji kot učnem predmetu</i> <i>O geografskem proučevanju slovenske podeželske pokrajine</i> <i>Veliki atlas sveta</i> , 1972
MAVRICIJ ZGONIK	1910–2002	<i>Nazornost v geografiji</i> , 1958 <i>Metodika geografskega pouka</i> , 1960 <i>Metodika nastave geografije u osn. školi i školama II. stupnja</i> , 1967 <i>Zgodovina v sodobni šoli</i>

Blaž Kocen

His most important didactic work is *Geografska učila/Geographical Tool Kits* (*Geographische Lehrmittel*), which was published in 1861. It explains the basic principles of geography lessons and evaluates useful teaching tools (especially atlases for teaching geography found on the Austrian market). He highlighted the importance of writing textbooks and atlases, as well as taking into account comments from teachers and adapting teaching methods to individual subjects. According to him, geography lessons should happen first through pictures and images, which then should be followed by descriptions using words and technical terms. He considered the understanding of maps as the most important part of geography lessons. Kocen also said that images and language had to be explicit and clear, of appropriate length, while teaching material and textbooks needed to be properly selected. As the most common errors he considered the lack of representation and description, incorrect pronunciation of foreign names and exaggerated metaphors. He also emphasized the usefulness of atlases during the entire schooling (Kunaver 2009).

Fran Orožen

He considered reading and understanding of maps to be extremely important. His book on the methodology of geography teaching is 32 pages long. It describes the way in which the teacher explains geography to students and the purpose and style of drawings in geographical teaching. He writes about maps, analytical and synthetic method, the initial geographical teaching in the classroom and geographical teaching in the field (Južnič 2007).

Jakob Medved

He was the first professor who taught the didactics of geography at the Department of Geography at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He believed that didactics of geography belonged to a separate academic discipline, and he wanted to establish an independent chair for didactics, because he believed that it is not only a teaching technique but a simplified transfer of scientific knowledge into school. At that time (after the Second World War) unresolved position of the didactics of geography among geographical sciences and general didactics led to the situation in which the didactics of geography in our country could not develop as an independent discipline.

Mavricij Zgonik

Between 1956 and 1959 he taught the methodology of geographical teaching at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, and in 1963 the same subject at the Academy of Education in Maribor, where he got a permanent position in 1964. In his academic activity, he was committed to modernizing, updating and simplifying (in terms of clarity) modern geographical instruction at all educational levels. He knew that it was necessary to follow the development of the core discipline, all its research directions and established achievements. He gave initiatives for renovation and changes towards modern geographical teaching in our schools. Through research, professionally dedicated work and commitment he set a solid scientific foundations and frameworks for today's modern didactics of geography in Slovenia.

The development of the didactics of geography in Slovenia

Like in every science, the didactics of geography have their own basic scientific components: the subject of research, research resources and methods, system potentiality and scientific terminology. As an educational discipline, the didactics of geography has two meanings. Based on empirical knowledge and experience and on its own theoretical starting points, it gives meaning to, and resolves, didactic phenomena, thereby perfecting its theoretical system. On the other hand, the didactics of geography is also a highly applied science and, as such, a fundamental guideline for practical learning activities. In the past, it was limited mainly to the questions of 'what', 'how' and 'who', as concerning the teaching process. Later on, the questions have gradually spread to the WHO, WHEN, WHERE, WHY ... do we teach and learn geography? The conceptual background and differences of how to respond to practical teaching issues have multiplied. Besides that, teachers have differing views on the learning process and different experiences, reflected both in the understanding of the fundamental tasks of teaching geography, as well as in the theoretical bases for solving those tasks (Resnik-Planinc 2011).

On the Slovenian territory, the desire for implementing a didactic mode of instruction dates back to the 19th century. The year 1869 when a new state-school law was adopted was a major turning point. It introduced a compulsory eight-year primary school. The lack of qualified and trained teachers led to the emerging of colleges of education (*učiteljišča*) which educated teachers-to-be. The colleges of education for male teachers were established in Maribor and Ljubljana and the one for female teachers was established in Ljubljana. This laid the foundations for professional teaching training (Kolenc-Kolnik 2008).

The first curriculum in the Slovenian language was prepared in 1899. In 1905 in Gorizia, Gabrijel Majcen published a textbook on geographical teaching in the primary school. It is 175 pages long and it is an extremely comprehensive guide (Kunaver 1989).

There was a difference in the perception of the didactics of geography between Medved and Zgonik. Medved believed that the didactics of geography should deal with the educational objectives and the selection of materials, methods and teaching materials. Zgonik said that the key issue of the methodology of geography were the guidelines on how to provide the selected subject matter in a logical causal relationship, while for the didactics of geography the important issue was setting the standard for the selection of teaching and learning materials, i. e. the choice of material in accordance with educational objectives.

The didactics of geography as an academic subject has undergone major changes over the decades.. Initially it consisted of 60 hours of lectures and 60 hours of tutorials. After the reform of the programme in 1960, the didactics of geography was divided between first and second degree. 60 hours were added to the second level of studies, so that the subject was a 180-hour course. Further changes came in 1964, when lectures and tutorials were cancelled at the first level. In 1968 students of the 4th year had only 30 hours of lectures and 30 hours of exercises (Kunaver 1989). For a brief period, there was a new subject at the Faculty of Arts called Organization of students' activities (60 hours). It was dedicated to the education of future teachers of extracurricular activities, but this subject is not taught anymore.

The year 1986 was an important one for the development of didactics of geography. It was then, that the Department of Geography got a permanent professorship for didactics. First theses, master works and doctoral theses were written. From the period of the last 23 years (starting with the 1991) the following experts in the field of Slovenian didactics of geography need to be mentioned: Jurij Kunaver, Karmen Kolnik, Maja Umek, Tatjana Resnik-Planinc, Sabina Popit and Eva Konečnik-Kotnik. The establishment of the professional journal – Geography in the School (*Geografija v šoli*) in 1991 – also contributed to the development of the didactics of geography.

The didactics of geography in Slovenia developed alongside with the changes in educational sciences and psychology, with the needs of society and the development of modern geographical science, becoming an independent scientific discipline. Following suit, the name has also been changing – from “the methodology of teaching geography” through “theories of teaching geography” into the “didactics of geography” (Zgonik 1995). However, in Slovenia the didactics of geography is not completely formed yet. As a young discipline, it is still developing. The didactics of geography builds its own identity in accordance with the development of modern, complex geography and general didactics. Therefore, nowadays the didactics of geography

in Slovenia (as in many other countries around the world) focuses on the research processes, the development, transmission and acquisition of knowledge of practical, theoretical and scientific knowledge. Unfortunately, the very few people who are involved in the academic aspect of the didactics of geography in Slovenia are not able to cover all the needs connected with the modernization of teaching geography. Therefore, it is not surprising that Slovenian well known psychologist and pedagogue Marentič Požarnik (2005) suggests that it would be beneficial if the in-depth research on the permanent effects of geographical teaching was done by geographers (rather than by psychologists, didacticians and pedagogues). Such action would later on enable development of a strategy of improving the situation. We agree with her that one of the prerequisites is to limit the content, preventing an overload of data – both in the primary and secondary school geography curricula and in university programmes for teacher education – instead focusing on the in-depth approach and more active methods of teaching and learning (Resnik-Planinc, 2011).

As a consequence of the changes in society, teachers need to adopt some new roles and modify or abandon older ones. Readiness to change and transform the traditional roles into new ones (mentoring, the organization of teaching and learning, integrating students) and the adoption of certain new roles and the integration of new technologies into teaching are all of crucial importance. At the same time, teachers are faced with a growing number of learning difficulties and difficult behaviour of, which require different teaching methods, as well as having to adapt to the increasing number of external forms of assessment. The fact is that the qualifications that the teachers have obtained during their studies are no longer sufficient. Teachers are confronted with the necessity of co-operating with other teachers, practitioners and parents, and must be capable of reflection, exploration and evaluation of their work. For the successful uptake of these new roles a teacher must be open to change and motivated for a lifelong learning process, as well as for constant professional development (Resnik-Planinc, Kosten-Zabret 2006).

Geography teacher's competencies and geography study – the teacher-to-be programme

Nowadays, perhaps even more than ever before, geographical education faces significant changes. In addition to professional geographic content, the prospective teacher, in the context of professionally-oriented studies that will effectively combine theory and practice and allow access to the teaching profession, has to familiarize themselves with the sociological, psychological, political and cultural aspects of learning and teaching geography.

Practical experience can only develop from close co-operation with schools, while not necessarily excluding the nursery. Studies should therefore follow the needs of future teachers of geography and offer a stimulating academic programme of study, mixed with practical vocational experience. Students must be able to develop their own knowledge, skills and confidence, especially in terms of employment in occupations related to geographic education. The nature, purpose and content of geographical education, with emphasis on equity, lifelong learning, internationally comparable education and work-based learning are of utmost importance, as they must respond to a rapidly changing world of new opportunities, and

to learn throughout their lives and careers. Training future teachers of geography is therefore a complex process of accomplishment for a young person, who should be prepared for the demands of the profession which, in the near future, they might perform.

At both Slovenian faculties (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana and Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor) that educate geography teachers-to-be, students familiarize themselves with the content of geographical education, such as teaching and learning and the geographic curriculum. They develop communication and critical thinking skills, the ability to deal with information and become familiar with the various aspects and segments of instruction. During teaching practice or internship their work should be practical, in accordance with the school environment, and focused on "the learning one" so that students acquire the skills and knowledge needed for employment, personal growth and career planning. We try to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values that promote a self-reflective approach to professional activities and lay the foundations for continuing professional development (Resnik-Planinc, Kosten-Zabret, 2006; Resnik-Planinc 2011).

Along with the aims of the didactics of geography in Slovenia there is a constant tendency towards permanent involvement into different projects. In the past two decades the Department of Geography, the Faculty of Arts, the University of Ljubljana have been involved in numerous international and national projects, among which the following need to be mentioned: R.A.V.E. Space (Raising Awareness of Values of Space), HERODOT, PAM-INA (Perception, Attitude, Movements Need Action), project on Sustainable Mobility among young people, project on Perception of landscape among young people, etc. The results and new recognitions are well incorporated into present courses on the didactics of geography.

Bologna reform and the education of future teachers of geography in Slovenia

The Bologna reform of the university curricula brings many changes, but at this point we wish to focus primarily on the changes related to the education of future teachers of geography. Within the faculties at all three Slovenian universities (Ljubljana, Maribor, Koper) we managed to achieve an understanding and to a large extent mutually harmonize our programmes within the Pedagogical module (60 ECTS), which is included in the new teacher-to-be Bologna programmes of individual studies. It has to be mentioned that before the Bologna reform, there was no common pedagogical module for different pedagogical studies (e.g. geography, history, sociology, biology, foreign languages, etc.). It was up to each department to organize the study for their teachers-to-be students and, consequently, there were huge discrepancies.

Pedagogical module at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

In his compulsory pedagogical module, a two-disciplinary pedagogical programme, a student has to acquire a total of 60 credits, which means that within each discipline they have to obtain 30 credits. A pedagogical module comprises of two parts.

Tab. 2. Common part of the pedagogical module at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Subject
Psychology for Teachers
General Didactics
Pedagogy – educational theory and andragogy
Observational practice in general didactics*
Observational practice in psychology for teachers*
Observational practice in pedagogy and andragogy *
Compulsory elective subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities and Social Sciences • Slovenian language for teachers • Exploration of the learning process

*Observational practice¹: A student can choose from any of the common pedagogical subjects, i.e. the general didactics, psychology for teachers or pedagogy and andragogy

Special part, planned by individual departments at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Subjects
Special didactics
Teaching practice as part of special didactics

Evaluation of individual learning units with credits

Subject	Credits
Psychology for Teachers	7
General Didactics	5
Pedagogy – educational theory and andragogy	6
Observational practice in general didactics*	1
Observational practice in psychology for teachers*	1
Observational practice in pedagogy and andragogy *	1
Exploration of the learning process **	5
Slovenian language for teachers **	5
Humanities and Social Sciences **	5
Special didactics 1***	18
Special didactics 2***	18
ALL TOGETHER	60

*** Students choose one of the objects

*** Students choose one of the objects

*** To each special didactics in two-disciplinary study come 18 credits

Each special didactics module is individually tailored, depending on the number of class observation and evaluation performances. Given the current situation, it is difficult to predict whether uniformity between all the faculties will be possible. We believe that it is necessary to provide students with at least the minimum

standards: a week of observation practice in the frame of the common part of the pedagogical module, and two or three weeks of teaching practice in the context of individual special didactics.

The importance of teaching practice

The requirements of modern times and reformed schools, different educational paths, the difference in training teachers for these requirements and the fact that there are no selection procedures on entry to pedagogical studies, which could be used to select potential candidates for the most demanding tasks, all clearly indicate the expectations that our society has towards teachers. On the one hand, we must provide students with a quality education. On the other hand, both teacher educators and teachers themselves should regard the target list of competencies they must attain in expertise, psychological, pedagogical and didactic knowledge as being the level of skills they need to work in the classroom, school and wider community (Resnik-Planinc 2011).

In the area of teaching and teacher education, a shift in the theoretical or conceptual level regarding educational practice has occurred over the past two decades. The traditional scientific approach is giving way to a more reflective approach, in which an important role is given to experiential learning, and research work in an environment where teaching and learning are ongoing. In the contemporary teacher-to-be education programmes, teaching practice should have an essential role of a link between the theoretical and practical part of the curriculum (Čagran, Cvetek, Otič 2006). Teaching practice enables students to enter pedagogical work gradually, and in a controlled environment, and therefore to learn how to teach one, two or more subjects. In doing so, the student develops a general intellectual ability that enables them to be able to adapt to changing work environments (Cvetek 2006).

With the Bologna process, teaching practice will become a mandatory and integrative element of the education programme of future teachers. Through educational practices, students learn how to design, implement and evaluate the teaching of selected subjects and other pedagogical work in the classroom, school and beyond. They also learn basic skills in communication and how to use various teaching forms and methods. Additionally, they are introduced to the preparation and implementation of knowledge assessment and to all the tools that are available to teachers in their work.

An experienced and trained mentor should be responsible for a student during their teaching practice. In Slovenia, unfortunately, neither an official network of mentoring schools nor comprehensive training for future mentors exists. So far, mentoring is the responsibility of each discipline and individuals. We hope that we'll soon be able to overcome this extremely inappropriate situation and move towards quality training of future teachers and their mentors.

The student's personality and that of the student's mentor have a big influence on the quality of teaching practice. Students obviously differ in personalities, and in their professional, psychological and technical-didactic knowledge, learning style, their conduct and social skills and also in their rate of professional development. Therefore, a mentor is obliged to consciously establish a relationship of support that is tailored to the students' individual needs.

At both Departments of Geography (in Ljubljana and in Maribor) the system of classroom visits, performance evaluations and teaching practice for students, has developed over more than two decades. We must realize that, in the given (unregulated) conditions, this would not be possible without the exceptional and selfless teachers of geography at elementary and secondary schools across Slovenia, who have, during those years, accepted a number of students. The Slovenian authorities should be aware that even the most powerful pedagogical fire of eagerness can eventually burn out. We hope that with the confirmed Bologna programmes (and in spite of the difficult financial situation we are facing nowadays) we will be able to convince the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport to finally institutionalize the system of teaching practice.

Conclusions

It is necessary to ensure that students in all subject areas enter the teaching profession with the necessary knowledge, skills and values that will arise from their current academic experience. If we are to meet the professional and individual needs of students and introduce these features into their practice and constant development, it is necessary to promote active and participatory learning styles among students, and involve them in active forms of training and education.

From the perspective of future geography teachers, as in other disciplines that require high quality and highly qualified educators, there is a challenging task, although not impossible to meet. But this is only possible with mutual horizontal and vertical integration and the participation of all educational institutions and bodies responsible for the future of the teaching profession.

Following the last revision of the curricula in Slovenia in 2008, the educational objectives of teaching geography still require a teacher to master and use different approaches, methods and techniques. Many of the objectives guide students towards independent and co-operative learning; towards a broader range of activities in search for solutions; the development of argument; and both group and individual work. But although the learning content and educational objectives are clearly defined, they do not automatically tell us how to achieve them. A geography teacher should be trained not only to understand the knowledge, concepts and skills required by the subject of geography, but also to know the position of this subject in school curricula. Today it is not sufficient to just know the information that we collect from different sources. We must be able to understand the situations we are experiencing, and formulate our own opinions. Furthermore, good or even perfect geographical knowledge does not guarantee a good geography teacher.

We are aware that it is not sufficient to just update and recast geography teaching in Slovenia in accordance with the social needs and objectives and following the principles of curriculum reform, knowledge of standards and skills. The real reform begins in school, among colleagues and at the individual professional level of each teacher.

Only through continuous research work, aspirations to improve the existing situation, by finding new ways and forms of work, constant scrutiny and evaluation of school geography, will we manage to achieve the set goals and give meaning to our desire for high quality geographical education.

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Abstract

The paper presents the development of Slovenian didactics of geography in the frame of the development of geographical education from the Middle Ages until nowadays. Important milestones are discussed through the prism of the work of important men who influenced the development of geographical education from its very beginning.

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