NEEDS CONNECTED WITH SPECIAL MAPS FOR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS ON PRE–SCHOOL, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STAGE OF EDUCATION IN POLAND

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Abstract

The paper presents the specific period in Polish educational system connected with introducing of a very new structural organisation of the obligatory stages of schooling.

The authors noticed that it is necessary to pay more attention for such consequences of the reform as using many different school aids. Some of splendidly edited handbooks and atlases are not on proper scientific as well as perceptual level for the determined stage of education. In this paper the authors show the share of needs regarding to professional cartographic materials among Polish pupils attending in primary and secondary schools of various types.

Key words: education, school maps

One of an immediate result of last political transformation in Poland is the fundamental reconstruction of the Polish school system. Reform was introduced on September 1, 1999.

The basic change is concerned with one year prolongation of obligatory period of students attendance in schools. The former primary stage of education has been shortened from eight to only six school–years, than all pupils have to continue their obligatory schooling on three years lower secondary stage.

The mail goal of the structural transformation of the school system in Poland is to enlarge the list of ways given for personal student's disposal to receive the education adequate to his own type of interest and aptitudes. The right development of modern society depends on such organisation of education system that each student may realise the school–program providing the basic knowledge for his well–qualified profession in the future.

The discussion on superiority of more general or more specified type of education has been taken between famous European universities since 1850. As regards obligatory stage of education in Poland contemporary proposal can be recognised as the compromise between both standpoints. Even so there are many types (Table 1) of primary as well as secondary schools all of them have to realise the homogenous "programme minimum" established by the Ministry of National Education. This programme has been built as blocked system of subjects resulting more complemented knowledge of the world than pervious one. Children aged from 10 to 13 will be educated according to a completely new program. A block of natural sciences, called „NATURE" consists of the subjects taught formerly as: biology, chemistry, physics and geography, where some elements of cartography were included. Within three years the pupils are taught 9 hours a week. A usual plan assumes 3 hours a week in each year. In the next two years the children will study cartography as a part of the subject "geography". The

experiment with “nature” as a subject should allow the pupils to combine the knowledge taught in different classes and to give them the foundations to learn more difficult subject, such as geographic grids and projections.

The Polish system of basic education [1, 3] **Table 1**

Stage of education	Type of school	Number of: * Schools	peoples/students	(%)
one year pre-school (right)	nursery schools	8 733	291 511	**62,0**
	pre-school sections of primary schools	10 152	177 872	**38,0**
six year primary (obligation)	primary schools	15 429	3 833 910	**97,0**
	special schools	801*	59 397	**1,5**
	branch schools	1 431	35 132	**0,9**
	sports schools	46	21 718	**0,5**
	1st level art schools	36	7 829	**0,1**
	*and 384 special sections by primary schools (with 4654 handicapped pupils)			
three year lower secondary (obligation)	lower secondary schools	5 332	596 289	**98,8**
	special schools	699 *	3 232	**0,5**
	sports schools	39	2 612	**0,4**
	2nd level art schools	29	1 000	**0,2**
	Job-training schools	12	479	**0,1**
	*and 61 special sections in lower secondary schools (with 656 handicapped students)			

For cartography the “dark side” of the solution proposed in the new education programme can be however appeared, because of not enough rigorously determined requirements concerning with the level of teacher’s multi–qualifications and — with the essential and perceptual correctness of cartographic materials applied in a school. Like most innovative ideas this project requires that the teaching staff should complete their own education as soon as possible and the school programs should be elaborated in details. It is important to keep in mind that each constructive approach to education can be verified very careful. Our times are

named “pictorial civilisation period”. Because of the broad applicability computer mapping techniques and rapid methods of book editing the market of different kind of school aids has been significant enlarged. But ... not always the most attractive offer appears the best one. It is a very important question for the teachers who have to recommend only one school atlas or one handbook among many ones.

The discussion held in 1999 during the conference in Poland [2] devoted to “cartographic education after school programs transformation” pointed on necessity of precise recognition of the specific needs (in the cartographic school aids) of determined sub–populations of pupils/students. The professional scientific as well as social bodies and organisations have to determine the share of needs and the ways to solve the problem. We have to follow the American Cart. Union that many years ago officially decided to eliminate using conformal Mercator projection for global maps to prevent creation, specially in early stage of schooling of wrong mental notions of relations between such great areas as for instance Australia and Greenland.

The idea of ICA to prepare the Atlas presenting determined groups of people named “underrepresented” or “of non–equal chance” has been accepted by the Surveyor General of Poland and some age groups of children have been chosen as “potentially users of special maps”. The authors owing to financial support of the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography started to prepare the collection of thematic maps. Up to day there are finished in both paper and electronic form below listed maps:

1. Children attending in pre–school education establishments (in thousands) in 1999.
2. Children attending in pre–school education establishments (in thousands) per 1000 children aged 3–6 in 1999.
3. Children aged 6–7 in pre–school education establishments in urban and rural areas in 1999/2000.
4. Children in special pre–school education establishment in 1999/2000.
5. Pupils and students in the school year 1999/2000 by basic age groups.
6. Gender structure of pupils aged (7–12) in the school year 1999/2000.
7. Gender structure of pupils aged (13–15) in the school year 1999/2000.
8. Disabled pupils in classes I–VI of schools for children and youth in the school year 1999/2000.
9. Ratio of disabled pupils in classes I–VI to whole group of pupils in the school year 1999/2000.
10. Ratio of disabled girls to whole group of disabled pupils in classes I–VIII in the school year 1999/2000.
11. Intellectually disabled pupils of primary school in the school year 1999/2000.
12. Pupils in religious-oriented schools.
13. Pupils educated in special primary schools — urban sub–population in 1999/2000.
14. Pupils educated in special primary schools — rural sub–population in 1999/2000.
15. Visually impaired pupils in special primary school in 1999/2000.

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3. Statistical yearbook of the regions — Poland. Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2000.