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Global Citizenship: What does this got to do with me?

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Introduction

Patriotic and civil consciousness are two important characteristics of an individual and of a nation and are therefore necessary for the working of a country as a whole and for the individual as a citizen. Adequate circumstances, conditions and environment for forming responsible citizens are made by different factors, amongst which the educational system is highly important. It is crucial that teachers of different school subjects are aware that they can and must co-create pupils' civic role.

Acquisition of geographical education is included in primary and secondary school programmes in Slovenia. In some cases it is an independent subject and in some its topics are sadly only a part of another subject or activity. Similarly geographical skills and abilities such as space orientation, forming of spatial ideas, understanding of varieties in natural facts, exploration of a link between nature and the working of a human, cause–consequence argumentation, education of tolerance, multiculturalism, human rights, and ecological education are all an integral part of geographical curriculum. Geography education can offer quality in connecting scientific and humanities knowledge of local and global problems of the modern world and encourage the students to respond to them.

Our basic research question was: What kind of knowledge and skills can be acquired and developed by the students in geography education, so that they as adults will be able to make decisions that will enable prosperity for people and nature. We tried to encourage sensibility to recognize co-responsibility in solving global problems in students/future geography teachers.

The recommendation of the Commission for geographical education (IGU, 1992) says that contribution of geography to education should be based on three groups of goals:

Goals of knowledge and understanding include: knowledge of locations and places, for them to be able to place national and international events in a geographical frame and understand the basic spatial relations; understanding of the main natural systems of the Earth and main socio-economic systems on Earth with the intention to gain spatial feeling. This includes understanding of the influence of natural conditions on human activities and various methods of forming of environments according to their cultural values, religion, technical, economic and political systems. Getting to know varieties of people and societies on Earth with the intention to appreciate cultural wealth of humankind; understanding of structures and processes in domestic regions and in the country; and understanding and searching for answers to the challenges and possibilities within the framework of global co-dependencies.

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Goals of skills and abilities encourage: the use of verbal, quantitative and symbolic information; use of methods such as terrain work and making maps, surveys and interpretation of secondary sources and use of statistical data; and use of communicational, mental, practical and social skills for research on geographical topics on local and international level.

The pupils will be able to: identify questions and results, collect and structure information, analyze data, interpret and evaluate information, generalise, use generalisations, form opinions and evaluations, solve problems, cooperate in a work-group, make decisions, work logically and in harmony with acknowledged values.

Educational goals (development of values and relationships), which contribute to: their interest in the surroundings and natural and social characteristics of the surface of the Earth; appreciation of the beauty of the physical world and various living conditions; care for the quality and planning of the environment and care for the life of future generations; understanding of the importance of relations and values when making decisions on different spatial locations; readiness for responsible use of geographical knowledge and skills in personal, professional and public life; respecting the right for equality of all people; and solving local, regional, national and international problems according to the International declaration of human rights.

All three groups of goals are directed not only toward geography, they also have important cross curricular effects, which influence pupils' qualification and their civic competence.

Example of teaching practice in students' seminar work

Three kinds of education are necessary to acquire the skills of exercising democratic citizenship: acquisition of knowledge, acceptance of shared values, learning of practical skills involved in the instrumental and operative exercise democracy. (Bezenšek, 2001, p210)

We wanted the senior class of geography students to obtain such learning experience that would motivate them to plan and use creative ways of teaching and incorporating all three bases of citizenship education. Our students, the future geography teachers, were given a task to try to find an answer to a research question as a teaching goal - Can we teach about places to develop a sense of global responsibility?

The students worked in small groups for four weeks and prepared a couple of different ideas for project work on the subjects of common problems of the modern world and stimulating a socially responsible citizenship through geography learning.

The whole methodical procedure was carried out in the following order, shown in the table:

Table 1: Scheme of the geographical project - Teaching about places to develop a sense of global responsibility

Contents and activity	Date
1. Initiative and motivation - group forming (creative reading, group discussion, brainstorming, pro et contra)	- Final week of February - First week of March
2. Goal determination, choice of contents of project work and timetable: - Following media reports on global problems - Sketching the idea, introduction and evaluation - Detailed plan (Collecting data, analyzing data, time planning, decision-making)	-Second week of March
3. Performing the plan and conclusion of group work (Collecting data, analyzing data, forming a report/product)	- Third week of March
4. Presentation of results and evaluation of the work (Role play, decision-making)	- Final week of March

Initiative

How can geography teaching educate on responsible citizenship of the world? The first step was meant to form the initiative and motivation.

A group of students was given a task to find answers to the following questions: Why do we take on this educational content and why do we use this teaching method? The answers to these questions should motivate their fellow students to co-operate and work further on. Motivation was done with the help of articles, which open *socially responsible citizenship through geography learning* and represent the experiences of good teaching practice from abroad. The following three articles were chosen from the magazine 'Teaching Geography' (No....., 2005): What's this got to do with me? (Fren, 2005), Place, identity and global interdependence (Vatish, 2005) and Global identity (Turner, 2005). Fellow students were motivated to thinking through group discussion with directed questions, such as: What has the article brought to me on a personal level and what on a professional? Forming of groups was done on the individual wishes of the students and each group chose their own coordinator.

Goal determination and choice of contents of project work

With the help of analysis of geographical curriculum for Secondary school – common educational program Gymnasium (1998), each group found educational goals and contents that were linked to knowledge of global problems of the world. In order to check if the chosen goals and contents were up-to-date and global, they followed reports of various home and foreign media for a week and made notes on which global problems were reported about. They collected information on the world's present events and searched for possible contents ideas for their project task. They presented the results on media follow-up with commentary to other groups.

Table 2: Example of Media Reporting of Global Problems (assembled by team Sunshine)

Date	Media			
	TV	PRESS	RADIO	INTERNET
1 March 2006		Večer: A cat in Germany infected with deadly H5N1; Asbestos and its victims Dnevnik: The war in Iraq has increased the likelihood of terrorism		www.rtl.de/news : A cat in Germany infected with H5N1
2 March 2006	CNN: Has virus jumped the Atlantic? CNN: Nuclear agreement between India and the USA	Dnevnik: Spring is here: Do we have genetic mutable seeds? Delo: Bush against terrorism	Radio SLO: National Assembly about bird flu	www.rtv slo.si : Bush was warned on the potential dangers that Katrina could cause
3 March 2006		Večer: Nuclear agreement between Iraq and the USA; Iraq: conflicts between Sunnis and Shiits; Bird flu	Radio City: Law on Asylum	www.24ur.com : USA would sell weapons to India
4.March 2006	SAT 3: Bush in Pakistan RTV SLO: A 3-year-old boy from Indonesia died of bird flu	Večer: The Kashmir problem; Iran: Nuclear program; Darfur Crisis	Antenne Steiermark: Protest after church attack in Nazareth	www.24ur.com : Serious environmental consequences? Italians to build a liquefied natural gas terminal
5.March 2006	SLO 1: Bomb attack in Iraq RTV SLO: Bird flu in Poland		Radio Plus: Pakistan blocked many internet sites	www.24ur.com : China to narrow the rich-poor gap
6.March 2006		DELO: Bird flu in Poland Dnevnik: Urgent preparations for an outbreak of bird flu in a human; Bird flu in Poland	SLO 1: Iran: nuclear program	www.24ur.com : Denmark reopens embassy in Jakarta www.usatoday.com S outhwest suffers historic drought www.axiofjustice.org Antarctic Ice-sheet is melting rapidly
7.March 2006	POP TV, 24 ur: Explosions in the holy city of Varanasi	Večer: Virus found in cats in animal shelter in Graz	Ö3: Bird flu transmission to cats HRT 1: Strikes in Germany and Austria	http://news.bbc.co.uk : Indian temple city hit by blasts

8 March 2006	Deutsche Zeitung: Russia rejects Iran compromise Delo: Mariborians separate rubbish carefully
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According to the collected data each group formed a title, a research question and goals of their project and made a timetable of the work

Performing the plan and conclusion of group work

The groups went on to work on their project. Most of the groups analysed the work on individual or tandem tasks. Some groups needed mid-stage coordination (adjustment checks with the planning, changes, additions, plan corrections), which were led and discussed about with the professor by the group leader. All groups finished their projects on time.

Each group also had to choose a title and striking research question for its learning project. The chosen titles and research questions reflected the versatility in teaching approaches:

Title of the project	Research Questions
1. Genetically engineered food.	How can my snack be a global problem?
2. Bird vs. Man.	Is the bird flu threatening the Slovenian and world economy?
3. Global climate changes	When will we start drawing new climate charts?
4. Polar ice meltdown	Why should the Slovenian youth also take care of the polar bears?
5. Natural disasters -our common problem.	Did President Bush know that my house will be blown away?
6. Every seventh earthling starved.	Who will live to see his/her next birthday?
7. World - the junkyard.	Why should exactly I care about the garbage?

Presentation of results and evaluation of the work

At the final stage all work groups presented their work in limited time (the time of presentation was 20 minutes), yet without any technical or spatial limitation. The emphasis of the presentation was on argumentation of the idea, and the creativity used when presenting the results of their work.

In the fourth stage the groups assessed one another. They assessed three fields: the quality (consistency regarding the methodical procedure) of planning, the originality of the idea and the creativity used in the presentation of their results. Their grading had to be argued as well.

For most students the final part of the project work, meaning evaluation, seemed to be the most difficult. Each group compared their own work plan with the results and by that defined common results also as individual's contribution. In the final word group leaders presented opinions of students involved in the project, interesting examples, problems they came upon and could not be solved. They also presented some possibilities of further

work and evaluated the adequacy of their chosen topic and methods of seminar work and also the importance of education on common global problems and their role in them.

All participants have assessed the results of entire seminar work, lasting one month, as a good learning experience and the students also assessed the significance of such work for acquiring pedagogic experience.

Conclusion

In a desire for understanding and various interests in decision-making on different levels of deciding it is necessary that already in the process of education the 'future world leaders' are qualified for difficult and responsible roles as citizens. That in making decisions in everyday life they will be able to build and defend their own standing-points, which will be based on reasonable judgment as of when personal, local or national interests come first and when global ethics and international solidarity. Geography teaching can contribute significantly to learning (knowledge), understanding and respecting (evaluation) one's own homeland, national space and their co-dependent connection with the world. Geographical education can substantially collaborate in teaching citizen competences and civic culture. Bringing global problems of the world up to date can educate pupils on awareness of their own rights and also of their responsibility for the future. All pupils need to be given a chance to develop skills for social and political participation on different levels of decision-making and stimulate empathy for common problem solving, solidarity, searching for balance between individuality and community. Naturally their teachers have to be adequately prepared for such education.

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