

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN THE BALKAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This paper intends to examine how contemporary geographical education is clearly present in the Geography programmes of the Balkan countries. A comparative analysis was conducted on the Geography guidelines of Southeast European countries, looking for answers regarding the duration of compulsory education, the name of the subject, its organisation, aims, curricular guidelines, education cycles, as well as the interdisciplinary trends in Geography teaching. There are indeed comparative patterns which make it possible to streamline and synchronise geographical education in Bulgaria with the other Balkan countries

Keywords: school geographic education, situational analysis, syllabuses, curriculums, situational and content analysis.

Resumo

O presente artigo pretende dar a conhecer como a educação geográfica contemporânea está patente nos programas da disciplina de Geografia dos países balcânicos. Neste contexto, procedemos a uma análise comparativa das orientações programáticas existentes nos países do sudeste europeu procurando dar respostas relacionadas com a duração do ensino obrigatório, o nome da disciplina, a sua organização e objetivos, as orientações curriculares, os ciclos educativos, bem como a tendência da interdisciplinaridade patente no ensino da Geografia. Existem efetivamente padrões comparativos que permitem agilizar e sincronizar a educação geográfica na Bulgária com os restantes países balcânicos.

„Geography enables students to understand their world locally to globally, make wise decisions about the planet and its resources, and become critical thinkers”

Joseph Kerski

1. Introduction

Joseph Kerski passionately believes in the importance of geography in the curriculum in studying geography, as a reflection of future responsible and critically thinking citizens of the world. According Kerski geographical education is the heart of the space through research thinking and problem-based

learning, enabling decision-making in a changing world. Kerski determined that it was geography as a school subject in an already-crowded educational curriculum is *„It underpins, in my view, the critical-thinking skills, technology skills, citizen skills, and life skills that underpin all other disciplines. It is essential for grappling with the essential issues of our time.”* [1]

The linguistic and cultural diversity in the European Union is one of its fundamental values. It represents a serious challenge to professional competence and skills of every citizen. Strengthening the links between the educational systems in a way such as to develop the potential of young people is the basis of the cooperation process. The Part of this diversity is and geographical education.

The synthesis of the concept study can be represented as follows: the global, European and national trends in geographic education compared to the state, problems and results in this area, require research and application of the modern methodological solutions to improve the final product that is the geographical picture of the world and its culture.

For various reasons the geospatial (geographical area) of the XXI century is characterized by trends of increasing dynamic and difficult to predict development of growing crisis of social and environmental phenomena, danger of local conflicts that can escalate into regional and global crises. The formation of geographic culture and values may contribute to prevent these negative characteristics and may also form geographic culture and values. And this is an opportunity that can be used mainly by teaching geography, i. e. the tasks of geographic education change. These tasks are in a way a responsibility, aimed at building geographical culture among students and providing them with knowledge, skills and competences.

By the comparative geographical education and the study of the foreign educational experience, the specific dimensions and its links with the situational and educational events are revealed in connection with the resources of a given country or a group of countries.

The comparative analysis between the countries is an expression of mutual knowledge of the system of the school education and geographical analysis of their achievements in geographic education. It gives examples, shows solved problems, outlines trends and prospects in the development of school geographical education.

The subjected curricula in geography compulsory education are analyzed and compared as follows in the following countries: the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Romania, the Republic of Greece, the Republic of Turkey, FY the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Serbia, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Montenegro.

The analysis answers questions related to the duration of compulsory education, the name, organization, position and objectives of the subject, classes and education cycles or periods curricula, methodological guidelines, interdisciplinary trends in the teaching of geography.

The conceptual framework of the study is built from the perspective of different geographical conceptions of relations in the system „man-society-nature”. It covers the geographical context of education for the formation of literacy, skills, attitudes and patterns of geographical behavior. An attempt was made to outline the didactic - methodological foundations of the formation of educational content in Geography.

The comparative analysis follows the study of the geography of the countries concerned. It offers grouping them according to criteria and indicators. The situation analysis is presented for the countries in alphabetical order - the Republic of Albania, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Romania, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Montenegro.

2. Comparative Analysis In Different Countries.

2.1- Geography At Republic Of Albania

Education in Albania is reformed in the last ten years. Changes in the structure of curriculums and syllabus is made in the direction from the theoretical to the practical development of the educational process, including geography.

The structural model of school geographical education is 4 +3: four school years are studied in primary education (6, 7, 8 and 9 class) and three-years in high education (10, 11 and 12 class). The total number of classes for the seven-year geographical school education is 456 hours.

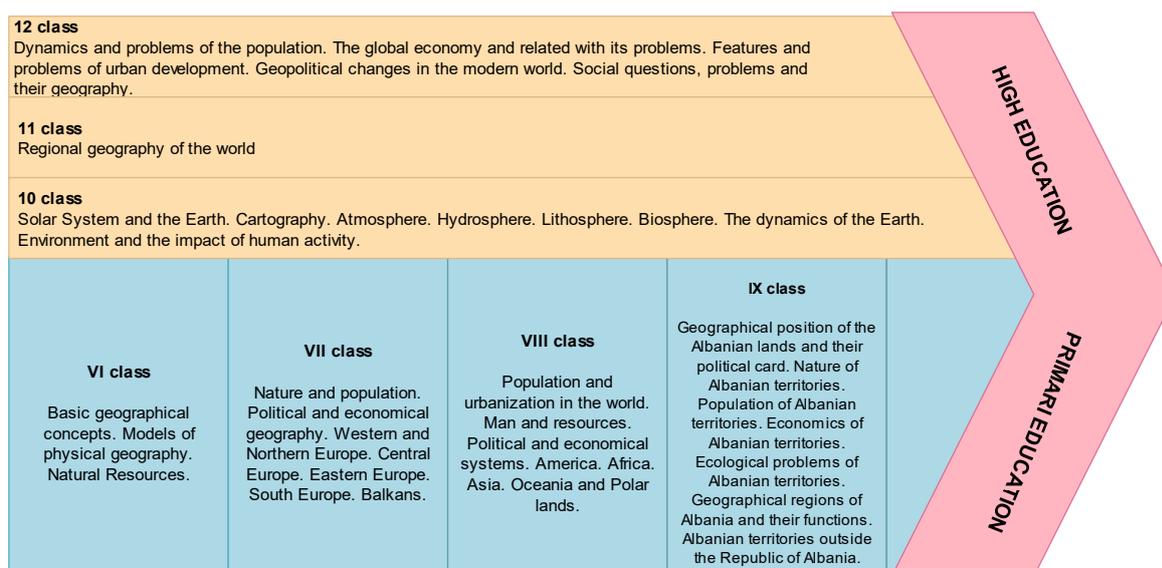


Figure 1. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Albania

2.2. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The education system of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a result and reflection of the democratic changes in 1993 and the introduction of generally accepted universal values of a democratic society, in accordance with the specifics of national, historical, cultural and religious traditions of peoples and national minorities living in the country.

The structural model of compulsory geographical school education is 4 + 2. In primary education, geography is taught with a total of 209 hours with a duration of 4 school years, and in high schools - 2 school years in compulsory training with a total of 140 hours. [10, 16] The total number of school classes for six years of school geographical education is 349 hours.

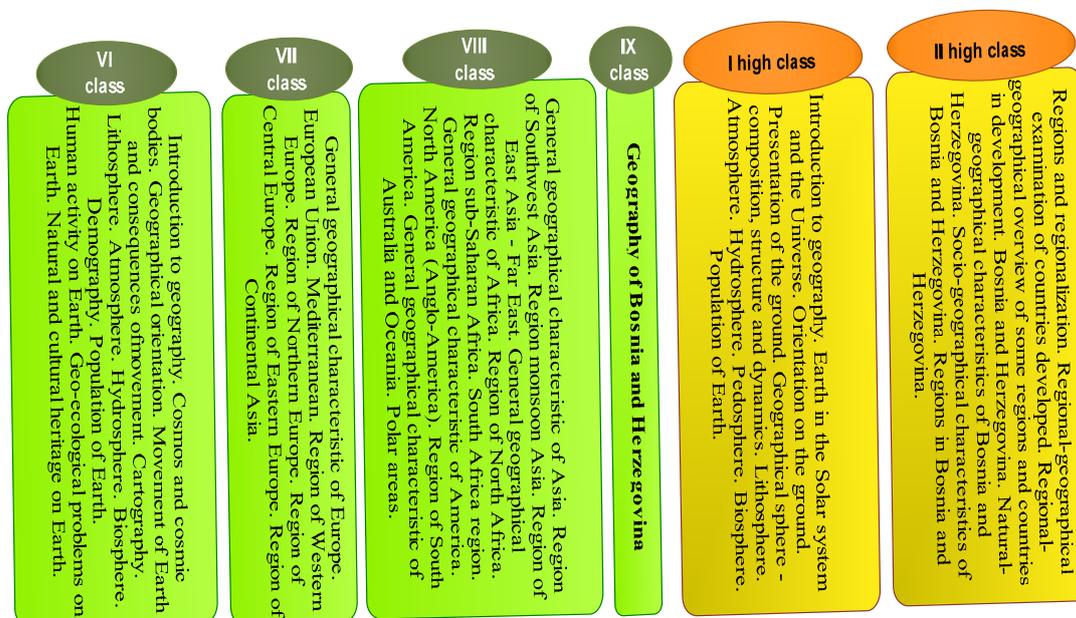


Figure 2. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.3 -The Republic of Bulgaria

Bulgaria has introduced a new educational law in force from August 1, 2016 - *Law on pre-school and school education*, and new curriculums that will be enacted in the school year 2016/2017. Projects are prepared on syllabuses in *Geography and economics*. The education reform in Bulgaria was started after 1990, but to this day still has not ended.

The name of the subject is *Geography and economics*, but that is not explained in any regulatory document that name. The school subject *Geography and economics* in cultural and educational field

belongs to the *Social sciences and civic education, religion*. The school geographical education began to be studied as a separate school subject in V class.

The structural model of compulsory geographical school education is 4 + 2. In primary education, geography is studied in four years with a total of 207 hours with a duration of 4 school years, and in high schools - 2 school years in mandatory training with total of 126 hours. The total number for six years school geographical school education is 333 hours. The structural model of school geographical school education curriculums and syllabuses will be changed with the entry into force a new law education after August 1, 2016.

Studying *Geography and economics* in V class, as a separate school subject is preceded by a set foundations for learning school subjects *Man and nature, Man and society* in III and IV class. Both school subjects have integrative and interdisciplinary character, although they belong to different cultural and educational fields. Part of the foundations of the school subject *Geography and economics* in V class are placed by the school subjects *Homeland* in I class and *Environment* in II class. These school subjects are a prerequisite for the successful start of learning in *Geography and economics* in V class and reduce it's abstractness.

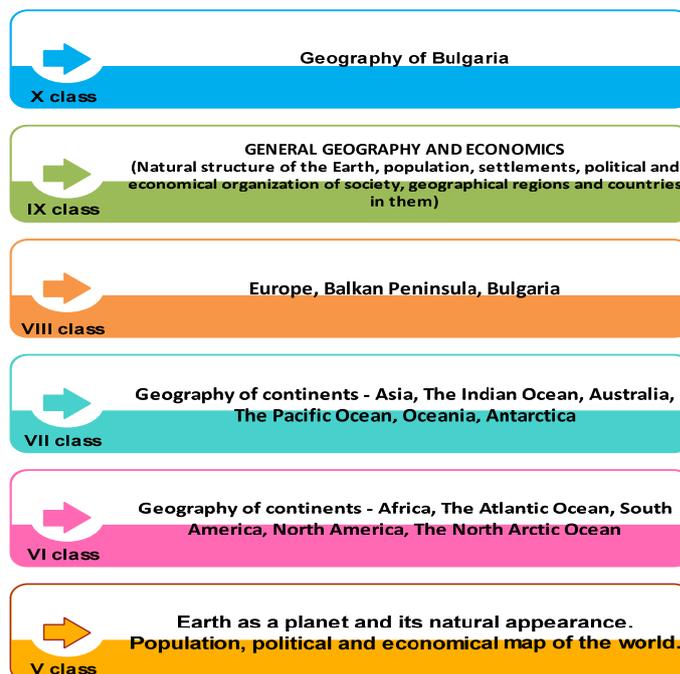


Figure 3. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Bulgaria

A traditional primary and high geographical school education completed by studying native geography in VIII and X class.

Regional geography is studied in VI, VII and VIII class of primary school education and in IX class of high school education. Regions and countries are studied on regional-territorial and typological principle and through the problem-countries approach with typical countries representatives for the region. The course in geography in IX class builds knowledge about nature, population and human activities across the countries, regions and continents, educational content with studied in VI and VII class, but a new qualitatively and different level. Studying in IX class regional geography develops ideas, regularities, knowledge and concepts from the previous geographical courses. The course is a logical end of the cognitive process of geography at school. It's built in the following from a single, specific to the general, global, planetary. Accent in the syllabus is a comparative geographical characterization using typological approach in the form of directions and rules. [47, 49, 50, 51]

Syllabuses in primary school education focus on the application of working in a small groups, team work, using interactive techniques - brainstorming, role play and others, and the use of modern educational technologies. Another important moment is updating the acquire knowledge and skills, referencing, comparison of knowledge with different degrees of generality implementation of cognitive activity with creative elements (in new situations), linking the curriculum content with his native land, with the realization of surveying activity. [47, 48, 49, 50]

In IX and X class of high school education is studied *Geography and economics* in mandatory training. On the syllabuses accent in geographic education should be application of independent work and geographical analysis of the contemporary processes and phenomena in the world, logical and critical thinking, observation, memory, speech and more. An important moment in the of geography studying should be the formation of skills for working with regional geographic literature officially accepted international and state documents; drafting, preparation and analysis of maps and statistical sources and other informational materials about nature, population, global economy.

Educational content of the syllabus in geography for primary and high school education are classified based on the model of hybrid - linear spiral.

2.4. The Republic of Greece

Geography education in Greece is based on three main pillars: consistent and sufficient knowledge; formation of values, attitudes and behaviors models that make up modern democratic citizenship; acquiring skills needed by society in the 21st century - key competencies.

The structural model of geographical school education is 2 + 2 with a total of studying geography - 192 hours.

A special place in the syllabuses in *Geography* is given to ICT for the learning process. The program directs teachers to apply the ICT in modern geographical lesson that by it's very nature requires the using of many different school textbooks of classical traditional type as a map, but modern studying

requires the use and application of ICT because it has proven in practical benefits and the positive effects of the manifestations of this sector in the learning process. The syllabus recommends using maps and images from the Internet, analyzing the satellite maps and identify the location of certain phenomena and objects. Recommended ICT, GIS, Internet applications, hypermedia applications, virtual environments, simulations, visualizations and others. [42, 45]

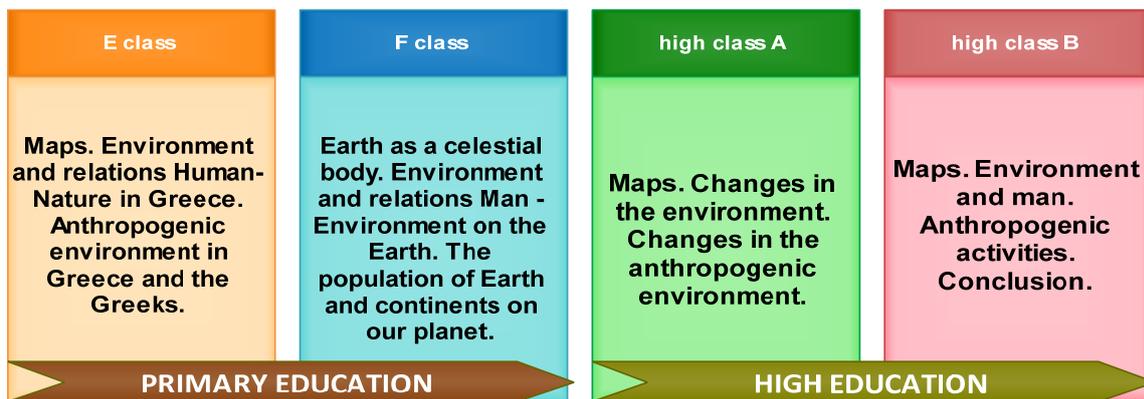


Figure 4. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Greece

2.5. The Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia

Macedonia inherited after the 1991 federal education system. The primary school education is compulsory, free and lasts nine years. And now in the country continued educational school reform, which is aimed at the full implementation of the concept for nine-year basic education. From the academic 2015/2016, there were approved new curriculum for the primary education, according to which geography is studying in VI, VII, VIII and IX class (with a total of 288 hours). Geography began to be studied as a separate course in VI class.

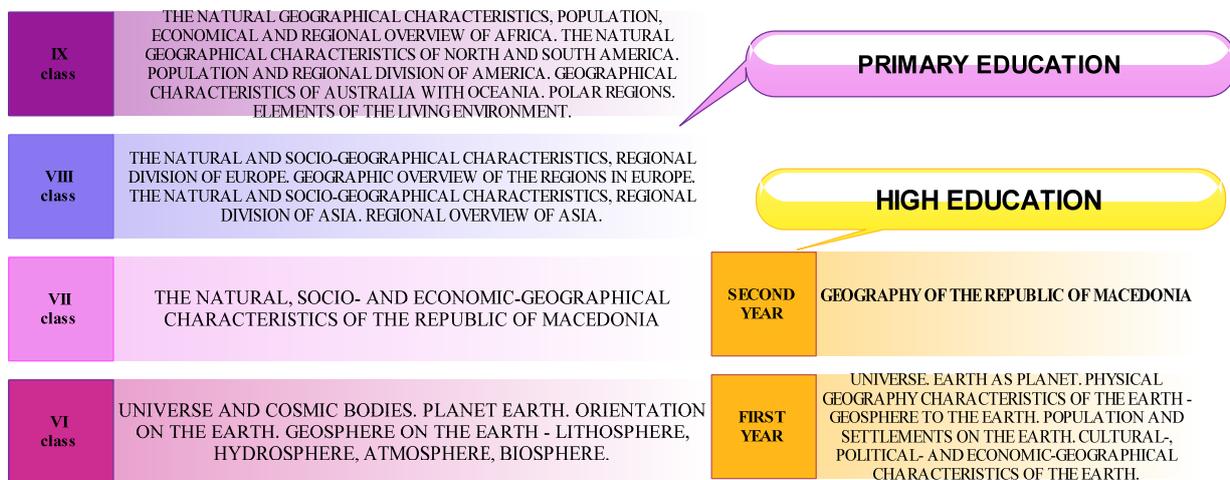


Figure 5. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Macedonia

2.6. The Republic of Romania

The geographical school education is characterized by specific **structural model 1 + 4 + 4**, which is covering the last year of elementary school education. The study of the school subject *Geography* in their own course in the Romanian school starts in the IV class of elementary education.

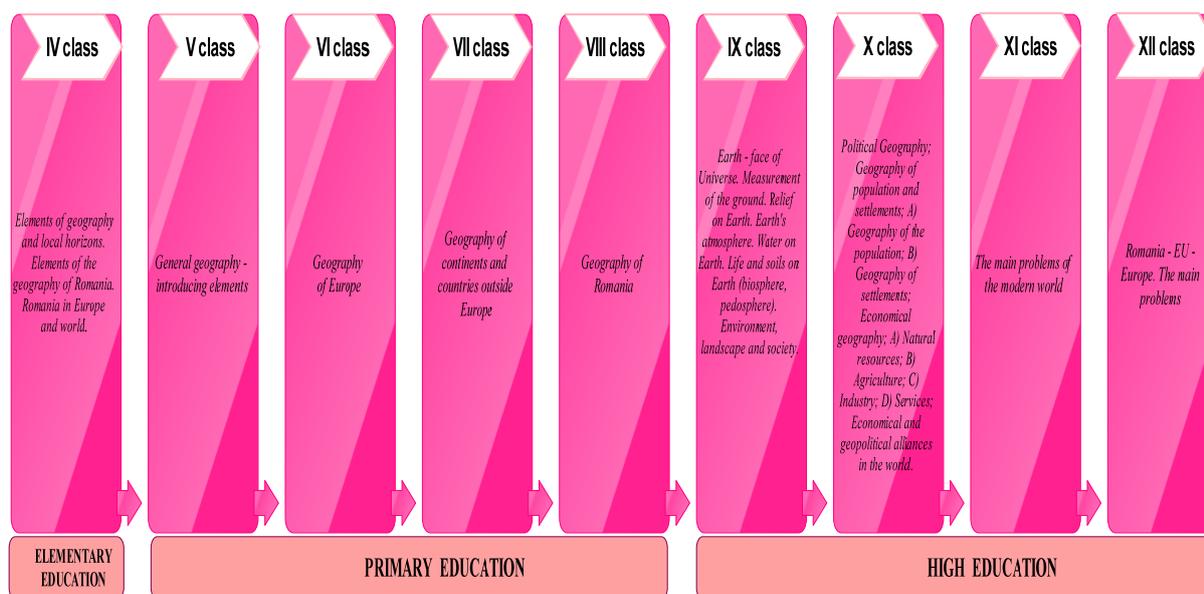


Figure 6. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Romania

2.7. The Republic of Slovenia

The school education in Slovenia is one of the main priorities in national policies of the country. The system of geographical school education as part of the entire education policy is characterized by democracy and good opportunities to create an educational environment that provides equal access to quality education. Changes to the syllabuses of *Geography* are from 2011 and 2013 and they are part of the educational reform in the country, evidence of the importance of education in recent years and the reflection of new European educational dimensions.

The name of the school subject on the curriculum and syllabuses is *Geography* and it's self-study is from 6th grade. **The geographical school education has structural model 4 + 3** and has a total of 431, 5 hours. In the compulsory training geography is studying from 6 to 12 class. Training in *Geography* covers two of the three educational-training courses on basic level, part of the compulsory training of students and starts from 6th grade and continues until 9th grade - generally it's studying for 4 academic years with a total of 221.5 hours.

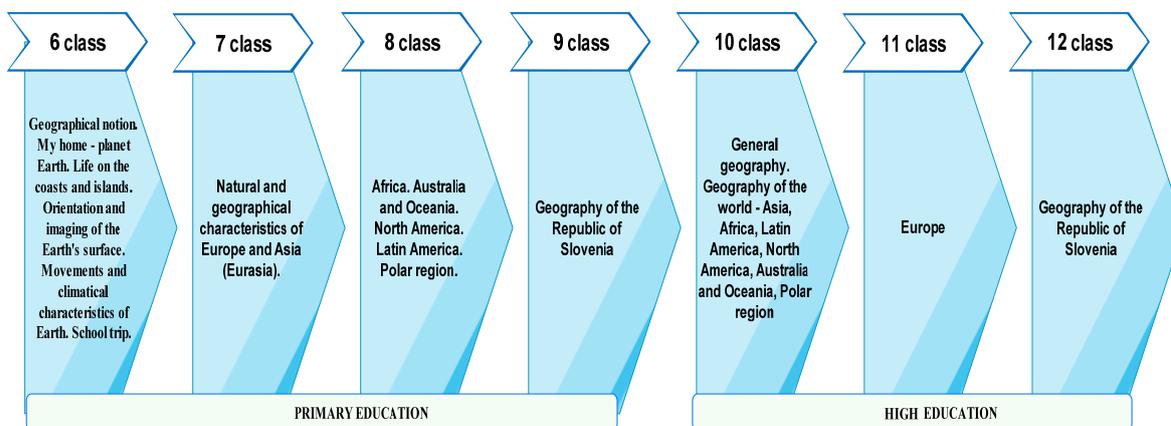


Figure 7. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Slovenia

2.8 - The Republic of Serbia

The educational school system of Serbia is undergoing reforms after the democratic changes after 1993 which were aimed at keeping the positive experience, educational achievements and traditions. The education school system has a herald of different elements of inherited federal education system.

The duration of primary education and upbringing in Serbia is eight years and is held in two educational cycles - *first cycle*: includes 1 to 4 class; *second cycle*: includes 5 to 8 class.

Geographical school education has structural model 4 + 3. The model of constructing educational content is mixed (spiral form). The total primary school geography is studied in four academic years with a total of 248 hours, while in high education in three years with 216 hours. The total of seven school years geographical education is studied of 464 hours.

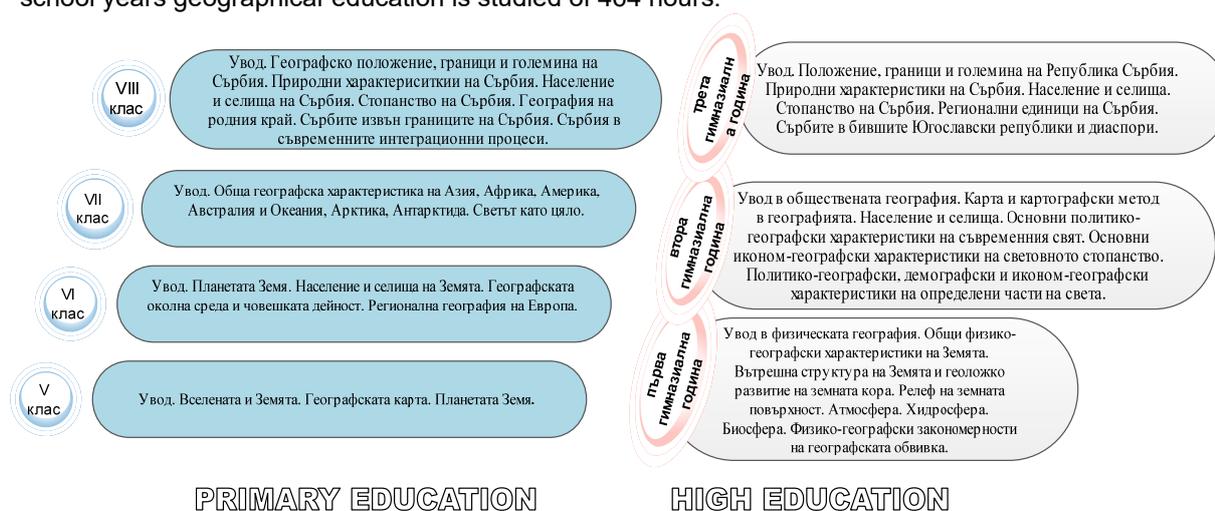


Figure 8. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Serbia

2.9 - The Republic Of Turkey

Education school reform in the country is by 2005. In Turkey education is one of the main priorities of the country and under his complete control. The study of the school subject *Geography* is totally in high education in 9, 10, 11 and 12 classes.

Studying *Geography* at 9 and 10 is part of the compulsory training in 11 and 12 class – elective schooling. In four classes of high education in geography can be studied as an optional subject. **The structural model of geographical school education is 0 (5/3 *) + 2 (2).**

From 4 to 8 class including study school subject *Social research*, which is partly geographical content, which in the last three years of primary education is entirely geographically. This determines the acceptance of the structural model to be 3 + 2, whatever the school subject.

In Turkey the school subject *Geography* does not appear as a separate course in primary school. In primary school in the country studied a large number of school subjects that have a strong integrative treatment for placement on a geographical basis. Integrative school subjects in primary education in Turkey are:

- ⊙ *Life sciences: 1, 2, 3 class;*
- ⊙ *Science: 3 class;*
- ⊙ *Science and technology, Social studies; Course projects: 4 class;*
- ⊙ *Science and technology, Social studies: 5 class;*
- ⊙ *Social research - mark/materials of all units, Science and technology - problem solving, Science and technology – list with tasks: 6 class;*
- ⊙ *Social Studies, Science and technology: 7 class;*
- ⊙ *Social research – ecological questions, Science and technology - problem solving: 8 class.*

Studying *Geography* in four classes is structured in five modules, each module is studied in every class and has written topics, expected results by topics, themes and patterns of perception, description.

The modules have a certain sequence:

- ✎ *Natural systems - Module A;*
- ✎ *Anthropogenic systems - Module B;*
- ✎ *Spatial fusion - Turkey – Module C;*
- ✎ *Global environment: regions and countries - Module Ç;*
- ✎ *The environment and society - Module D.*

2.10 - The Republic of Croatia

Croatia has accepted *National training framework for pre-school upbringing and education and*

generally-binding and high education for transition to system competence staff and student performance, unlike the existing ones, which was oriented to the content.

The structural model of geographical school education is 4 + 4. Geography is studied in primary and in high education for four school years, with a total of 536.5 hours. [12]

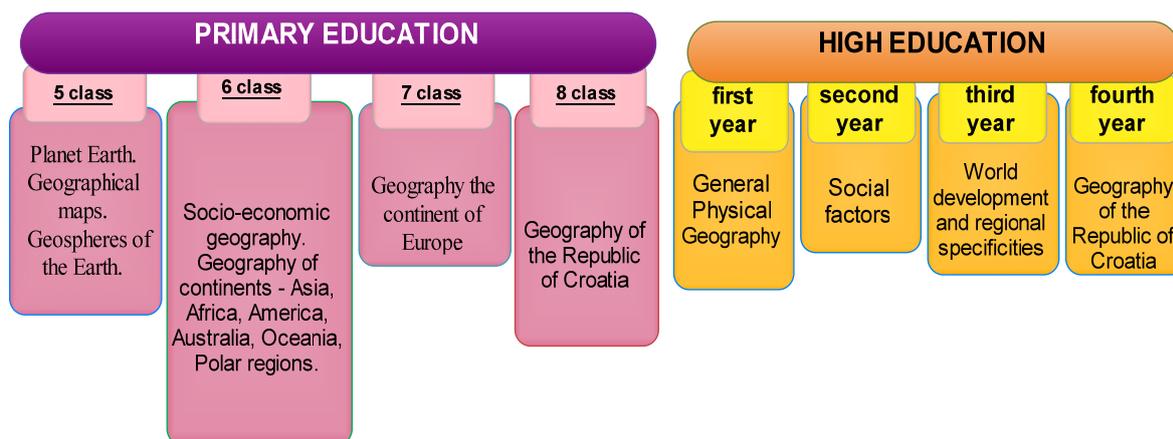


Figure 9. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Croatia

2.11 - The Republic of Montenegro

The structural model of geographical school education is 4 + 2 with a total 368 hours. [13, 38]

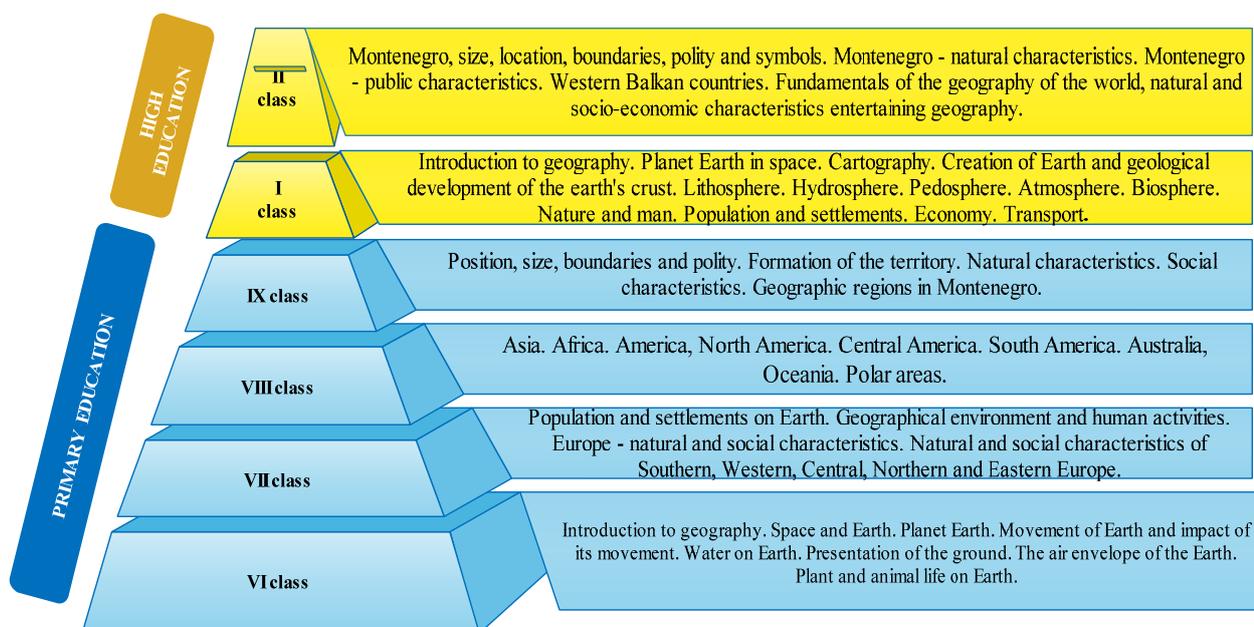


Figure 10. - Content macro-frame of school geographical education in the Republic of Montenegro

The school subject *Geography* began to study in the second cycle - VI class and throughout the third cycle - VII, VIII and IX class. Geography syllabus for nine-year primary education in Montenegro is from 2013 and focuses on integrative relationships with other school subjects. Important accents in the syllabus are placed on the importance of school geography to form a global picture; understanding of processes and phenomena in society and the environment; technological development, information revolution and globalization processes affecting people's lives in different parts of the world; avoid conflicts and preservation of cultural diversity and others. [38]

3. Conclusion

From the exposed situation and content-analysis of geographical school education, eleven countries can be grouped by those at the beginning of the article indicators.

The educational reforms after 90's of the 20th century started in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro.

Educational changes continue at the moment in any of these countries - Macedonia, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. In Greece and Turkey (every 5 years) is observed systematic in the updating of syllabuses and educational school reform in Turkey from 2005.

In terms of compulsory primary and high school education countries can be grouped into two groups:

☞ countries with compulsory primary education: Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia, Montenegro;

☞ countries with compulsory primary and high education: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Romania.

Self studying geography at school began to different countries and classes of primary education. Countries can be grouped on this indicator:

☞ IV class – Romania;

☞ V class – Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Croatia;

☞ VI class – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia, Montenegro;

☞ IX class – Turkey.

Geographical school education in the countries studied is **part of the subject area of natural sciences and society sciences**. *For example:* the school subject *Geography* is to „*Social sciences*” - Bosnia and Herzegovina; „*Society and environment*” - Albania; „*Social sciences and civic education, religion*” - Bulgaria; „*Man and society*” - Romania; „*Natural sciences*” - Greece; „*Natural area*” - Croatia; „*Natural-mathematics, Language-Arts and Social-humanistic*” - Macedonia and others.

All 11 countries aimed basic **national priority** the country's education. Accent on avoiding the

accumulation of encyclopedic knowledge and mechanical memorizing evidence is particularly strong enshrined in the syllabuses of Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Montenegro. Teaching geography has led by the development of functional literacy - geographic, cartographic and information.

Curriculums and syllabuses were developed in the direction **from the theoretical to the practical development** of learning process in geography in countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Turkey, Romania, Slovenia and Montenegro.

Especially strong is the influence of geographical school education of **European education trends and integration** as well as the preservation of **traditions in geographical school education** in the countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro.

In all countries surveyed studied **school subjects with integrative character** before studying geography alone. Some of the school subjects are taught in parallel with the study of geography - Table I.

Table I - School subjects of compulsory school preparation that put integrated foundations of the school subject Geography until it's self-study in school curriculums and countries

No	COUNTRY	CLASS	NAME OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS WITH INTEGRATED FOUNDATIONS OF GEOGRAPHY
1.	The Republic of Albania	I, II, III, V	Natural science
		I, II, V	Civil education/Citizenship
		I, II, III	Public education
2.	The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	I, II, III, V	My environment
		V	Nature
		V	Society
3.	The Republic of Bulgaria	I	Homeland
		II	Environment
		III, IV	Man and society
		III, IV	Man and nature
4.	The Republic of Greece	I, II, III, IV	Environmental research
		V, VI	Social and political education*
5.	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	I, II, III, IV, V, VI	Natural sciences
		I, II, III, IV, V	Society
6.	The Republic of Romania	III	Civil education
		III	Natural sciences
7.	The Republic of Slovenia	I, II, III	Acquaintance the environment
		IV, V	Society
		V, VI	Household*
		V, VI	Nature*
		VII, VIII	Patriotic and civil culture and ethics*
8.	The Republic of Serbia	I, II	The world around us
		I, II	Civil education - knowledge of self and others
		I, II	Health upbringing
		III, IV	Nature and society

9.	The Republic of Turkey	I, II, III	Life sciences
		III	Science
		IV	Course projects
		IV, V, VI, VII, VIII	Science and technology
		IV, V, VI, VII, VIII	Social studies
10.	The Republic of Croatia	I, II, III, IV	Nature and society
		V, VI	Nature*
11.	The Republic of Montenegro	I, II, III	Nature and society
		IV, V	Knowledge society
		IV	Nature and technology
		V	Nature
		VI	Nature*
		VI, VII	Civil upbringing*
		VII	Biology and ecology*

*Note: The school subjects have an integrative character and learn parallel with the study of geography.

Source: all curriculums and syllabuses - Bibliography

Eleven countries can be grouped by index **name of the school subject** – Table II:

- ☞ „Geography” – Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Montenegro;
- ☞ „Geography and economics” – Bulgaria;
- ☞ „Geography/Zemleopisanie” – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia.

Table II – The name of school subject on countries and syllabuses

No	COUNTRY	NAME OF SCHOOL SUBJECT (ON SYLLABUS)
1.	The Republic of Albania	Geography
2.	The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Geography/Zemleopisanie
3.	The Republic of Bulgaria	Geography and economics
4.	The Republic of Greece	Geography
5.	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Geography
6.	The Republic of Romania	Geography
7.	The Republic of Slovenia	Geography
8.	The Republic of Serbia	Geography
9.	The Republic of Turkey	Geography
10.	The Republic of Croatia	Geography/Zemleopisanie
11.	The Republic of Montenegro	Geography

Source: all curriculums and syllabuses - Bibliography

In syllabuses for high geographical education of Croatia since 1993 and the school subject is named *Zemleopisanie*, and syllabuses for primary education is geographically named *Geography*. Currently the country is holding educational reform. Since 2005, a decision of the *Minister of education*

and science is defined in the educational school system of Croatia to use the name *Geography*.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina in high school syllabuses the school subject is named *Geography/Zemleopisanie*. The painting of the subject is thus the result of inherited federal education system and is based on the history of the development of geographical science, etymology and the essence of the word geography (from Greek γαία - land and γράφω - grafos, write, describe) meaning description the Earth or zemleopisanie. The Croatian language also appears in syllabuses is *Zemleopisanie*.

In Bulgaria the name as a phrase - *Geography and economics* of 2009 become educational change but has no analogue in other countries and is not explained in any legal document and imposition of that name.

The conceptual framework of geographical education applies to all countries surveyed - **the active role of students** who are at the center of the school process. Also it's changed the role of teachers - to be leaders and creators of creative pedagogical situations by developing a process of co-operation between all participants in the school process.

The only one country in which it is given a place on **the entertaining geography**, in the last course of teaching geography high education is Montenegro. Instigating and continuation of the interest in geography is part of the education policy.

In terms of **structural model of geographical school education**, countries can be grouped as follows:

- **0 (5/3)+2 (2)**: structural model **4+4**: Croatia;
- structural model **4+3**: Albania, Slovenia, Serbia;
- structural model **4+2**: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Montenegro;
- structural model **1+4+4**: Romania;
- structural model **2+2**: Greece;
- structural model Turkey.

The structural model of geographical school education has distinguish lineament in three countries - Romania, Greece and Turkey. In Romania the study of the school subject *Geography* in their own course in the Romanian school starts in the IV class of elementary education in force since the 2006/2007 academic year, composed of inductive to deductive development of school content, from hometown to planetary and global development. In Greece is the equal in both levels of education, as provided for his study as an elective school subject. In Turkey the study of geography with this name is only from 9 to 12 class, 9 and 10 class is part of the mandatory training, in 11 and 12 class - elective. At the primary education is not studied as a separate school subject geography. From 4 to 8 class including study school subject *Social studies*, which is partly geographical content, which in the last three years of primary education is entirely geographically. This determines the acceptance of the structural model is a 3 + 2,

whatever the name of the school subject.

Countries can be grouped by index - **the year of introduction of syllabuses:**

- ⊙ countries with syllabuses from 2006 to 2010: Bulgaria, Albania, Romania, Serbia, Croatia (for the primary geographical education in Croatia);
- ⊙ countries with syllabuses from 2011 until today: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Greece, Turkey, Macedonia (without high education - Macedonia), Montenegro.

In Croatia, syllabuses for high school geography are since 1994, and those for high education in Macedonia are from 2001.

The principle of patriotic strongly present in the syllabuses of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. The geographical school education contributes to the formation and development of national identity, the recognition of cultures, interdependence, peaceful coexistence and tolerance especially in the syllabuses of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Romania, Turkey and Croatia. Permanent task of teaching geography is the love of nature and natural phenomena; desire for the preservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage; ecological awareness and conservation of flora and fauna; sense of beauty, love of country with a strong presence in the syllabuses of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey.

Regional native principle studies generally present in the syllabuses of Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bulgaria.

In terms of organizing **excursion into nature, field observations and field work, accompanied by carrying out practical activities**, organizing visits to different production centres, farms, etc., but consistent with the objectives of the program features educational programs of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Turkey, Croatia and Montenegro.

In syllabuses geography has a big number of topics in teaching units for **practical work (exercises)** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia. Lessons openly recommend in the syllabuses of Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia.

In the syllabuses of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro are presented interdisciplinary connections.

In terms of **the recommended literature to students and teachers** are differ - Greece, Montenegro, Macedonia. In syllabus geography of Greece contains a large number of links to official sites. In the syllabus of *Geography* in Macedonia is defined literature for teacher and students, but without specifying the particulars of the author, title, publisher. In the syllabuses in *Geography* in Montenegro an extensive list of recommended literature for students (12 editions) and for teachers (37 editions), which contains - name, author, publisher, location, year of issue, every teacher has the freedom to supplement this list. The list has been cited scientific literature, science-popular literature, textbooks, atlases,

methodical literature.

A serious drawback is recommending the use of the **Internet** for scientific research, to make educational projects without formal recommendation sites, which defines the use of geographic information from unconfirmed different resources of information, including not official - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and others.

In terms of **studied the native geography** in primary and high education research countries are divided into the following groups:

- ✎ traditionally studying native geography in the last class of primary education: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Croatia;
- ✎ traditionally studying native geography in the last class of high education: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Croatia;
- ✎ specific structure and content of studying native geography: Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Albania.

The last group of countries are differ Greece and Turkey, because the study is modular with yearly recurrence during each school year. High education in Turkey include the study of native geography in recurrent *Module C – „Spatial Fusion – Turkey”* and during the four years of high education. In Greece there are radically different conceptual framework with recurrent units where there is no element of completion of the individual degree of geographical school educated by studying native geography.

Primary education in Macedonia does not end with studying the native geography and is placed in the second year of study of the school subject (VII class), as an independent, immediately after laying the foundations of a common course in geography in VI class.

Geographical high school education does not end with studying the native geography and in Albania. Studying the home country is at a new regional concept, which for the first time focuses on all the lands inhabited by Albanian population - Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Greece. Accent in content is the search for historical reasons for this defragmentation.

This historical inherity and the reasons for **the large diasporas outside of the country** is the focus of the syllabuses of Serbia. Traditionally primary and high education is completed with the study of native geography - VIII class and third year high education, but raises the issue of Serbs in the Former Yugoslav republics and diasporas, continuing development of the principle of patriotism.

Educational content in the syllabuses of geography have spiral-concentric and linear structure. The application of **the mixed model for constructing** the themes of geography is well established in international and European practice – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia and Montenegro.

Geography syllabuses are aimed at implementing **interactive methods** of teaching, as well as problem and research method, brainstorming, discussion, etc .; the use of geographical maps, atlases,

globes, charts, graphs, etc .; to further develop the practical skills; the use of literature with geographic content and application of geographical knowledge, skills and competences to solve problems and formation a critical attitude; project work and research tasks; implementation of individual and group work; implementation of role-playing and problem solving - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia. Educational syllabuses are aimed at activating the practical and individual work, identifying and classifying, analyzing and interpreting the relations and interactions between nature, people and the economy - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, Montenegro.

Exclusively focuses on the implementation of **the project training** in Turkey, Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia, and to solve research tasks - Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Greece and others. Mental maps are recommended in teaching geography in Greece, Turkey and Croatia.

The study of **regional geography** based on regional-typological and problem-countries principle, focused on the complex study of the region and country in particular to the algorithm but displaying the specifics differ - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Turkey. In many syllabuses recommended viewing country or countries typical representatives for the region - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia. The choice of country or group of countries is the choice of the teacher, depending on the interests of it's students and in some training programs will set out such a study or units - Turkey, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria.

In some syllabuses are recommended **the use of ICT** - Albania, Greece, Slovenia, Turkey, Montenegro and others. Threat to geographical school education is the use of unconfirmed information from the Internet.

In the syllabuses of *Geography* of Turkey is exclusively contain numerous examples of **test and practical tasks**.

Knowing the education systems and the development of modern geographical education in the selected countries on the threshold of the new reform in Bulgarian education, will open doors to get to know educational phenomena and their issues, trends and perspectives on the basis of comparison.

Some of the challenges facing the Bulgarian educational system are aimed at the strategic application of new technologies and innovative methods and teaching techniques in the classroom and at the utilization of the knowledge, skills and attitudes for practical use. This requires all of the education system to be guided by the principle of lifelong learning and the use of ICT in the teaching process.

Realization of responsible and active individuals through the formation of geographical knowledge, skills and competencies in students by teachers is the pillar of development. It defines the importance of the Bulgarian geographical education for the education and development of the young people. This requires each teacher to differentiate and define goals and objectives, methods and forms of training to assess and diagnose learning outcomes precisely in studying the geography of the countries as an

educational platform for prosperity of learners and their successful implementation.

The existing conditions of geographical education in the Balkan countries and the development of the methodology of teaching geography provides streamline and synchronizing the system of geographical education in Bulgaria. The realized situational analysis by countries for geographical school education is an opportunity for exchange and comparison of ideas and decisions making; contributes to a clear common goal of geographical school education and understanding of the factors for success; systematization and priority application of factors led to success, and analyze these questions that led to failure in the past. This would mean that all involved in the process of learning and teaching of geography can use the opportunity of the resources of comparative geographical education to influence the above trends.

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