

Abstract

The present study deals with, in Czechia, still poorly investigated topic, namely the level of map skills of pupils of different age groups. Specifically, the thesis is concerned with map skills of pupils aged 11, 15 and 18 years, so pupils at the end of the first, second and third education level. Selection of pupils of these ages allows us to compare map skills with the requirements for pupil performance contained in the official curricula.

Firstly, there are map skills defined. Subsequently, an analysis of Czech curricula was made. Then the results were compared with the results of the analysis of curricula of Slovakia, Finland and the U.S.A. to assess the concept of map skills in these documents. The results of this comparative analysis show that the Czech curricula in terms of map skills requirements indicate some randomness and lack of clear, legible concept of their development at different levels of education. Using results of this analysis, core map skills were identified – the ability to locate objects on the map, to use map as a source of information and to create maps. The following research was aimed at the first two groups of map skills. A level of pupils' map skills was observed using a map skill test that was composed as a difficulty-graduating test.

Results of this testing, in which 1323 students were involved, have clearly demonstrated that map skills develop according to the age and depend on intellectual maturity of students. Students are more eligible to those operations with maps that are more often practised in the classroom, i.e. to locate objects on the map.

Furthermore, it was identified that the requirements for the map skills of 11-year-old pupils are greatly understated, students of this age are able to successfully deal with more difficult tasks. On the contrary, the fact that students of all age groups do not manage with map skills that are strictly prescribed in curricular documents is very alarming.

It was also identified that gender of the respondents considerably influences their success because boys solved most tasks with a higher success rate than girls. Among other characteristics affecting the success of students in the test, the type of school, the popularity of the subject and also school assessment of pupils can be named.

Keywords: geography, geographical education, map skills, test, comparative analysis, curricular documents, Revised Bloom's taxonomy, skill, map, educational level, curricular reform