



GEOGRAPHY nEtQUIPMENT to study geography: the homepage and reflections from the users

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The main objective of the GEOGRAPHY nEtQUIPMENT is to convey structured information to teachers and pupils, as well as, professors and students of geography. This learning aid is a homepage, first published in Hungarian still in 2006 (<http://netszkozkeszlet.ektf.hu>), to help in orientation among the rapidly growing information on the Internet, to provide extra digitalized professional materials that are not yet available digitally and to share experiences of the teachers and professors working in the same area of interest and language environment. At present, its English version is already prepared and partly available at the same address.

The GEOGRAPHY nEtQUIPMENT can be used free after registration, at present the homepage counts 2807 registered users. The interested user first enters a virtual office where the entries of the Menu can be opened by clicking at the drawer, shelf, wall map, globe, laptop, TV-set, etc. These entries are professional lesson plans using digital technology, photos, video clips, animations on physical and social geography. The homepage also mirrors pieces of music, maps, collection of minerals, database links, diagrams, bibliography, lecture notes, dictionaries, scientific and popular journals, geography games, web pages, etc. The whole set of appliances is based on Dreamweaver MX program.

During the past 2.5 years some experience has been gained about the GEOGRAPHY nEtQUIPMENT in use, mainly from teachers of geography, who downloaded and responded to the questionnaire. Another source of information is the group of students in the College, where future teachers of geography are trained in a one-semester course on application of the Info-Communication Technology. From the first group, i.e. 59 active teachers of geography, 54 % use the Internet “always” or “frequently” in the classroom, whereas 75 % of them rely on it for preparation to the lessons. Before trying the homepage, these numbers were 25 % and 54 %, only. From among the listed answers to the question, how the active teachers use the homepage, 98 % collect illustrations for the lessons, 71 % obtain new professional information from there, and 47 % of them enjoy the games on geography. The median of their age is ca. 36 years.

The College students were asked about the competences being developed by using the GEOGRAPHY nEtQUIPMENT. The most frequently mentioned competences as successfully developed by the aid were (i) ability to visualise (i.e. to memorise and to reconstruct) the pieces of knowledge, (ii) ability to reconstruct the patterns in space (based on their 2D images), (iii) ability to explain the matters (images and documents) in their own words and (iv) ability to work in cooperation with each-other, thanks to the commonly elaborated tasks in the classroom. The nEtQUIPMENT is designated not only for geography. Having retained the structure of the above specified homepage for geography, there are other homepages in preparation, too. They are environmental sciences, chemistry, physics, mathematics, informatics, biology and sport, again for teachers and pupils of the above listed phenomena. In case of hands-on possibilities during the session, these branches of the homepage were also be introduced.