

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to reveal certain misconceptions of astronomical phenomena and of celestial bodies that lower secondary school pupils have and which might represent an obstacle in the process of acquiring knowledge of astronomy, geography, and physics. We applied a questionnaire to a group of 26 pupils in the 6th grade at Colegiul Național Pedagogic „Gh. Lazăr” (“Gh. Lazăr” National Pedagogical College) in Cluj-Napoca, in the school year 2010 – 2011. The questionnaire consisted of six independent topics: the alternation of day and night, the seasons, the Moon, the solar system, the constellations and the speed of light. Pupils’ answers to these questions emphasize the importance of the study of astronomy as a school subject in order to facilitate building up appropriate mind constructs of the highest degree of objectivity about the world, about the environment we live in.

Keywords: *mind construct, planet, seasons, the movements of the Earth, tipping of the axis*