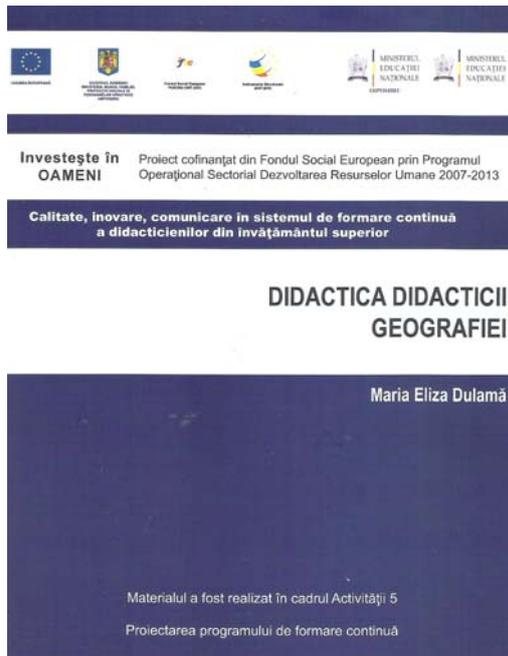


DULAMĂ Maria Eliza (2013). *Didactica didacticii geografiei* [Didactics of Geography Didactics]. București: Matrix Rom Publishing House, 446p., ISBN 978-973-755-981-4



The book *Didactics of Geography Didactics*, published at Matrix Rom Publishing House in 2013, is the result of the project Quality, Innovation, Communication in the Continuing Education System of Higher Education Didactics Experts, financed jointly by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 and by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The book is divided into seven chapters, which the author calls themes, in accordance with the thematic organization of the book: Introduction to the Didactics of Geography Didactics, Aims of the Didactics of Geography Didactics Discipline, Curricula of the Didactics of Geography Didactics Discipline, Learning Situations and Integrative Learning Situations for

Competence Building, Modern Training Methods Used in Geography Didactics Lectures and Tutorial Classes, Evaluation in the Geography Didactics Discipline, Coaching Methods and Techniques Used During the Teaching Practice Internship.

The first chapter enlightens the reader as to the choice of the title and to the general principles of the education process. While most of the books published on this topic are entitled Geography Didactics and are intended to help teachers teach in class, the book of Ms. Maria Eliza Dulamă, Reader at Babeș-Bolyai University, is essentially aimed at educational specialists (didactics experts), the persons who train future teachers and, secondly, to teachers, due to the themes tackled: educational curricula, competences, learning situations design, teaching methods, evaluation methods and techniques. The Didactics of Geography Didactics aims at showing how the didactics of geography should be taught at the higher education level. Thus, the academic didactics of a discipline (geography in this case), a topic which concentrates on the analysis of higher education teaching system at a specific discipline and represents the study object of a special type of didactics, is in the limelight. *The Didactics of Geography Didactics studies the teaching process in the geography didactics discipline in terms of the relations established between teaching, learning, evaluation, between the*

*pedagogical conducts of the action subject and students' means of implication or response, in order to achieve an agreement and harmony between the components (Dulamă, 2013:41).*

The didactics of geography didactics' object of study is mainly oriented towards the teaching process and the conditions in which students', future teachers', and didactics experts' different competences are formed. They have to form and develop competences linked to geography, their field of expertise, as well as competences linked to the psychopedagogical science (how to motivate and rise pupils' awareness to the subjects taught, how to adapt their speech according to pupils' age and knowledge level etc.) and pedagogic practice (how to make different curricula planning such as the annual planning of the contents to be taught). Under these circumstances, the pedagogic internship in college, high school and university is very important because it allows students to gain teaching experience and face real problems and obstacles that occur in education and schooling.

In this sense, in chapter two and three, the Romanian educational context and system are presented, together with the education aims that, since 2011, are based on forming and developing competences, according to the National Education Law. In chapter two, the concept of competence is defined, its attributes presented and then, its structure and classifications. The author draws up a theoretical presentation of the concept of competence, which has an internal and an external structure (see figure 2.1. The Concept of Competence, p. 31). The inner structure of the competence comprises the individual's resources (descriptive knowledge, procedural knowledge, skills, and abilities) which allow him/ her to act competently, proficiently, in a given situation. The external structure includes the context and the task, or the learning situation that the individual is confronted with.

Within the classification of the exhaustive competences presented by the author, our attention is drawn by Brien's classification (1997) according to their usage. He divides competences into virtual competences and competences in act. Such a differentiation is highly pertinent in the geographic field, since geography is an applied science. The author highlights this specificity of geography by coming up with an example: the competence of using a compass. The pupil may know how to use a compass, or what a compass looks like, may be familiar with its divisions, their meaning and its usage. However, if the pupil has as task to determine the point he/ she is in and to locate it on the map, he/ she will not be able to accomplish it if he/ she does not possess the procedural knowledge, called by Brien the competence in act: how to calibrate the compass, how to fix it on the map until the northern direction showed by the compass meets the map meridians showing north, how to rotate the compass and the map until the magnetic needle of the compass is parallel to the meridians on the map. Therefore, the difference between the virtual competence and the competence in act is related to putting into practice the theoretical knowledge and gaining practical abilities for field orientation.

The author considers that a teacher whose competence does not equal expertise cannot transmit and help forming it in his pupils. Therefore, chapters four and five are aimed at all the persons who wish to develop their competences of planning and designing educational activities in the field of geography. The book abounds in well selected and minutely explained examples of how to build specific competences in the geographic field, under the form of lesson sequences or even entire lessons (see p. 59– Rainfall Formation Processes on the Earth Surface, p. 61 – The Forest, p. 128 – The Interpretation of a Climograph, p. 145 – Sea and Land Breeze Formation Process, etc.).

Chapter six focuses on how to evaluate results in the didactics of geography. The concepts of performance, assessment criteria, different evaluation forms, assessment methods and techniques, evaluation item types and how to build an assessment instrument are tackled. The tables that contain the descriptive assessment grids of different competences (e.g. the presentation competence, the written explanation of a geographic process competence, etc.) represent the most evocative examples of competence assessment. Self assessment and feed-back are also taken into consideration, reinforced and developed in chapter seven, which focuses on coaching techniques.

Coaching is a process which means training beginners by professionals, that is by persons with a wide theoretical and practical experience, willing to work with apprentices in a specific activity or profession (students/ beginners) by providing them with efficient practice tips (procedures, techniques, rules), by observing them during their work, putting them in contact with the resources needed in their professional exercise, by giving them a constructive feed-back and asking them to reflect upon their actions and results (Dulamă, 2013:234). In didactics it is very important to adapt scientific knowledge (*savoir savant*) to the knowledge taught to pupils (*savoir enseigné*), something that beginning teachers do not do with ease, because they come from the academic environment that functions according to different principles than the college and high school environments. Hence, they need help, advice, and examples provided by both their mentors and tutors.

The Didactics of Geography Didactics emphasizes the relation established between the internship coordinator (the academic who has taught the didactics of the discipline) (a tutor), the college or high school teacher (a mentor), and the student, a future beginning teacher. This book guides all these three actors in unravelling the characteristics of the teaching and learning of geography didactics, of the competences built and of their use in the didactic activity, in assessing educational activities and results, as well as in their relationship.

*Antoaneta-Carina POPESCU*

Faculty of Geography, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca