

Social Contexts of Child Development



Editors

Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc, Barbara Dudel

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Reviewer:

Elżbieta Jaszczyszyn, Ph.D., Professor of the University of Białystok

Project covers: Roman Sakowski

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Introduction

Human development takes place in a particular yet unique context. That is why it is difficult to imagine researching or stimulating a child's development in a world isolated from all social influences. The importance for the child's development of social environment has been researched and described in numerous volumes. The rapidly changing reality on the one hand forces on the researcher and educational practitioners its permanent observation and penetration and, on the other hand, offers enormous possibilities of verifying once established facts or opinions. Important, although not unquestionable conclusions drawn from various theories inspire a search for new ways of interpreting relationships between cultural and social conditions and the results of child development achieved. Important changes in the area of child socialization, taking place due to the processes of pre-school socialization and education constitute important developmental achievements at the moment of his/her introduction into the school system. Children become more independent and autonomous, they enter more deeply into the familiar and more courageously explore new social environments and more responsibly undertake attempts at facing the challenges brought about by social contacts with peers and adults. This book's authors intent is to analyze and explain the various problems pertaining to getting to know and organizing the social environment of the child's development.

The book comprises thirteen chapters. In the first chapter Jacek Górniewicz analyzes children's dreams concerning their future social and professional activity in adult life. He undertakes an attempt

at defining to what degree children's clues are probable and profitable from the social perspective and seeks possible determinants of children's expectations depending on their sex and age. In the second chapter Monika Miňová draws the image of the child as presented by pedagogues over the course of centuries as well as nowadays – seen through the eyes of professionals and amateurs. The author also presents various, often completely dissimilar ways of defining and understanding childhood. In the third chapter its author, Barbara Dudel, seeking an answer to the question of possibilities of developing emancipational competences in pupils attending grades 1–3, discusses assorted contexts of educational environment. The next chapter, authored by Anna Kienig, is devoted to the rights and responsibilities of the child. In her text, the author brings up some of the notions inscribed in the Chart of the Rights of the Child. The aim of the fifth chapter, the work of Aldona Kopik, is to present the results of research concerning children's preparedness to begin school education in the basic spheres of their development. In the sixth chapter Małgorzata Głoskowska-Sołdatow tackles the issue of kindergartners' pro-social behaviours analyzed in the context of the motivations behind their actions. In the seventh chapter of this book, Marta Krasuska-Betiuk and Olga Bambrowicz present the problems of intercultural approach in the process of teaching the Polish language and literature in kindergartens and beginning classes to Polish children learning outside their own country. Anna Młynarczyk-Sokołowska, in chapter eight, shows the possibilities of introducing intercultural education in teaching various age groups. She conducts her analysis against the specifics of the Podlasie, one of the regions of Poland. Underscoring the weighty role of patriotic education in contemporary schooling, Emilia Jakubowska in chapter nine presents the results of her analysis of assorted curricula in the first grades of elementary school from the perspective of educational content benefitting regional education. The next author, Joanna Szymanowska, conducts an analysis of the family

home as the most familiar environment of social development in the life of the handicapped child. Chapter eleven, authored by Adrijana Visnjic Jevtic, Eleonora Glavina and Silvija Pucko deals with the opportunities for developing communicative skills, social relations and cognitive capacities in autistic children by including them in the educational process in preschool or early school implemented in peer group. In chapter twelve Jørgen Boelskov shares his reflections regarding the practices of teacher training and shows that it can be perceived as a process of implementing a socially constructed meta-theory of education which is a reflective rather than merely a descriptive and normative science. The chapter that follows, authored by Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc, deals with candidates for teachers of little children. The author focuses on identifying the level of individual elements of artistic competences treated as one of the dimensions of personality competences in candidates for the job of teachers to little children.

The book's editors wish to offer their thanks to all the co-creators of this book, whose engagement and thoughts constitute an inimitable quality and enrich the knowledge in the field of the pedagogics of early education.

Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc, Brabara Dudel

Jacek Zbigniew Górnikiewicz

University of Białystok

The Importance of Young Children's Dreams about Being an Adult

ABSTRACT

Children's dreams can be treated as naturally frivolous, ill-considered, unreal, etc. On the other hand, the dreams of the period of childhood are originally expressed acts of will that reveal the seeds of authentic needs of young people. Those dreams, expressed with the characteristic emotions make the children and their environment aware of the possible shapes of their adult lives in the future world. This paper discusses the degree to which children's dreams about their adult lives are elusive and accidental and how much attention they require. It should be emphasized that children's dreams about their roles in the adult lives are significantly less influenced by the impact of social environment and the pressure of personally experienced situations. Unlike their adult guardians, children are not determined by the financial situation of the family.

They do not feel affronted even if they belong to stigmatized or excluded social groups and cultural communities. They make use of impulses and imagination in the process of choosing friends and preferred activities. All the more, they do not use etiquette to do so. The successes and failures in everyday life do not chape their about the possibilities and limitations at this moment. In the first years of life, it is equally easy to see them selves as future bricklayers, priests or cosmonauts, a person living in Poland or anywhere else in the world, in the forests or in the cities.

To learn about the children's dreams Concerning their place in the future adult lives we have gathered a collection of drawings on this topic Every drawing has been commented on by the young author regarding its contents and message. This graphic and written material was made by children from several educational institutions in the selected towns in the north-eastern region of Poland. We have also referred to

the selected conditions of the discussed visions about their adult future considering some of the individual features of the children and their environment. The preliminary analysis of the material collected enabled us to prove the accuracy of the assumptions about the wishful thinking of the children surveyed as regards their position in future adult lives. This thinking is optimistic and happy, with a hope that in the future world anything will be possible

Key words: children's drawings, fantasies, dreams of herself/himself as an adult, preferred future job activity.

Introduction

Young children's dreams are associated with emotionality, clear intentions, and directness in expressing wishes, while the dreamers can dissociate themselves from their own individual abilities, and from the restrictions assigned them by people representing their closest environment. Both dreams and nightmares can become driving forces shaping the image of oneself now and in the future. As such, dreams and nightmares may act as self-fulfilling prophecies. Hence, on the one hand, it is worth it to note the predictive importance of life aspirations both in case of children and their caregivers, and, on the other hand, the importance of such declarations for the personal development of children's dreams of adulthood.

In the context of the above statements the words of Korczak: *Children! Have bold dreams. Some of them are bound to come true* are worth remembering. On the other hand, the causative value of young children's dreams of adulthood is often underestimated, which finds reflection in the fact that there is rather little literature on the subject. Authors are more likely to be interested in teenagers (cf. Skorny 1980; Lewowicki 1987; Sikora 2006). Perhaps this situation results from

a common belief that a child's thoughts about the future cannot be serious and as such cannot be treated seriously.

When children are asked by adults who they want to be when they grow up the adults arrange situations which encourage cognitive sensitiveness on the part of the children and help them identify their specific features. When they ask questions, they focus the children's attention on the child's own needs, personal desires, growing up into the adult world and playing active roles in that world. When asking young children about their place in the future adult life it may be a good idea to give them an opportunity to express themselves by drawing images. This will make it easier for them to give an answer which, additionally, may be associated with their favorite and well-rehearsed play activity. In turn, children's drawings, which are marked by their impulsive nature and "ad hoc" associations, provide a wealth of meaning and enable one to put multipath interpretations on such creations. Unlike in adults' drawings, in children's drawings one can relatively easily discern content that is included unintentionally, and learn not only what their authors wanted to express, but also what the child's mind produced unconsciously.

Using the term 'dreams', we should also clarify the meaning of other concepts relating to personal projects conceived of by people trying to determine their own place in the world, such as fantasies, plans, and life aspirations. In terms of their meaning, fantasies are closest to dreams but, while dreams usually have positive connotations, fantasies can generate multi-directional emotions. Sometimes fantasies are used to visualize scenes representing possible realities of which the child is afraid and with which they are trying to become familiar in conditions under their control or, in other words, to experience horrifying moments in perfect safety. The subject of my research are, therefore, dreams and fantasies the child experiences while s/he is awake, not during his/her sleep when will gives way to the subconscious mind.

Both dreams and fantasies can transform themselves into visions representing goals to be achieved. When this is so, they represent life plans drawn up with varying degrees of generality, including, to a varying extent, concrete steps on how their targets are to be reached. It can be assumed that the more mature a person is, the more his/her dreams take the form of viable life plans. On the other hand, 'pure dreams', devoid of thinking about how to realize them, are characteristic for all people regardless of their age or degree of psychosocial maturity. Life aspirations, in turn, can manifest themselves not only in fantasies and dreams but also in life plans, indicating one's willingness to be successful in achieving more than the present position in individual areas.

When one describes children's dreams about their future life it is a good idea to extract the important areas of their dream projections. They usually relate to people from the closest environment (especially their parents and siblings) and children's everyday life situations. These will usually include typical situations that occur repeatedly. However, unusual situations generating strong emotional sensations, both positive and negative, will also be included here. Children easily indicate what would make them happy and what would make them feel sad. Children's drawings reveal both their inclinations towards protective actions resulting from fear and other negative emotions as well as transgressive actions generated by positive emotions and hope as described by Koziellecki (1987a, p. 43-60). Hence, any artistic creations by children depicting themselves and their lives can be interpreted as clinical material suitable for research analysis (see for example the fundamental work of Hornowski, 1970) and as creative acts associated with (not always conscious) attempts to express the Self (cf. Janowski 2002, p. 153-159).

When one analyses the meaning of children's dreams it is a good idea to consider the following issues:

- dreams and fantasies of children as an act of forming the will,
- dreams and fantasies of children as an act of confidence in themselves and the world at large,
- dreams and fantasies of children as an attempt to express the Self,
- dreams and fantasies of children as an overview of their possible life aspirations,
- dreams and fantasies as defense mechanisms in tough situations in life when children give in to negative emotions or destructive forces of their nature,
- deficits in actual reality becoming apparent,
- dark corners of the world experienced by children becoming apparent,
- development of substitute personalities, diverting attention away from the real characteristics of the Self .

Transience and importance of young children's dreams

On the one hand, children's dreams are characterized by high transience and volatility affecting them in relatively short periods of time and, on the other hand, by the significant importance of learning about themselves and the surrounding world, developing forward-thinking skills and trying to see themselves in the context of an altered future reality.

The transience of children's dreams results from their characteristic properties:

- resolutions, thoughts and plans – corresponding to the state of an immature mind undergoing quick changes, sometimes felt both as dramatic events and as events of great importance,
- variability of children's moods, whims and ideas of themselves,

- children's living in the present – dreams as a phenomenon of the present,
- children's fantasies as an easy, momentary escape from harsh reality.

Children's dreams can be considered important because they exhibit the following features:

- children's dreams as an act of will and a manifestation of growth transgressions,
- children's dreams of their future as an act of building knowledge about themselves, about who I am and who I want to be,
- life signposts and catalysts in childhood fantasies of adulthood future life plans indicated in "ad hoc" dreams and fantasies.

A simple and forceful argument for dreams having a driving force in human life was also presented by the poet and bard Kořta (2004) in his message: *if you want something to happen, to make it possible, you must dream*. What is also worthy of note here are the words of Dauzenroth (2012): *Children! Take pride in your intentions, dream lofty dreams and strive for fame – some of your goals will surely be attained* – a message similar to that of Korczak.

Favorable and unfavorable determinants of children's projections of their adult life

Among the determinants expressed in drawings of children's appetites for adult life one should differentiate those that favor positive dreams, becoming an incentive for future ambitious aspirations in life, and those that direct children towards less daring dreams and create less ambitious future plans. Circumstances identified as conducive to children's aspirations would include both a lack of biological or psychological burdens and the influence of their social environment and civilization – which is favorable for personal maturation (Kunowski

and other representatives of social sciences favoring the humanistic orientation; cf. Kunowski 1981, p. 183-214). Circumstances that lower children's aspirations, on the other hand, would be associated with a combination of unfavorable individual characteristics, inappropriate influence of their socializing environment, and random events with an unfortunate impact. In such circumstances children's dreams and fantasies can be thought of as an area where defense mechanisms such as: fantasies, projections, transference, compensation and others are displayed.

External determinants of children's dreams about adult life, which, because of their importance for the child's personal development, can be seen both as beneficial and detrimental, are: pressure from the environment – especially their caregivers' regular behaviour, home environment, family's living conditions, performance at school, position among peers, and other random life experiences.

Unfavorable external factors include: negative influence of family and school caregivers, pressure resulting from complexes, impulses, and a lack of knowledge (for example: geniuses thought of as lacking intelligence, instrumental treatment of the future job of the child, school education traditions), as well as fanciful programs and their shabby implementation (for example: two biographies of men freed from the HMS Beagle).

Internal determinants of children's dreams about adult life, which can be beneficial or detrimental to their development are: types of mind, talents, learning abilities, temperament, sensitivity, ability to cope with difficult experiences, creativity and will.

Adverse conditions include: poor knowledge of the Self, submission to defense mechanisms, decision not to recognize the Self for convenience's sake and/or in order to reap various benefits from not revealing one's will, giving in to instinctual pleasures and temptations, accepting assignments and generalizations that are not valid, conformity, and, finally, passive learning from the environment.

Who I am and who I will be – what provides directions for young people

To put it simply, young people's efforts to reach adult life (who and what I will be like) are accompanied by references as to, firstly, who they are and what they are like and, secondly, their awareness of who they used to be and what they used to be like. Of course, such information about who and what they were like in early childhood is not necessarily obtained from their own memory; it is often obtained when people in their environment recall certain events or when their closest family members provide suggestive attributions.

Since the first years of children's social lives, various people in their environment familiarize them with expectations which concern them and use different levels of pressure to tell them what roles they think suitable for them, as well as what social positions they should reach in terms of these positions' characteristics, status, level, and associated demands.

In a young person's thinking about themselves such references (yet not present) can be represented as follows:

Table 1. Dreams about adult life and life plans – depending on the variety of references to the Self which is constructed using various perspectives

Past – birth and early childhood	Present time of a young person	Future – waiting for adult life
Self – what I was like	Self - what I am like Projections, dreams, plans: Self – what I can be like Self – what I want to be like Self – what I am to be like Self – what I do not want to be like	Self – what I will be like some day

Among the above variants of the imagined Self we should focus on: Self – what I want to be like, and Self – what I do not want to be like. The literature on the subject often focuses on the importance of people thinking about themselves – who they are (real Self) and who they want to be (ideal Self). This has the purpose of creating the cognitive dissonance that motivates one to act to bring about beneficial changes. The change is meant to make the real Self more similar to the ideal Self (cf. Łukaszewski 1974).

It is probable that such a mechanism operates in case of a certain percentage of people oriented towards dynamic, authentic personal development as understood by Maslow and other followers of personal development to be fostered by efforts aimed at self-actualization (Dąbrowski 1975). However, it also seems that a substantial part of the population is oriented towards relating the real Self to the “what I do not want to be like” Self, conducive to the pleasant feeling of “I am not as bad as I might be”. Furthermore, it does not produce a sense of cognitive discomfort, nor does it force people to take efforts aimed at personal change.

The aforementioned Self states crystallize in young people’s minds in close relation to their worldview. There is an important link between thinking about oneself (Who am I? Who did I use to be? Who will I be like? as resulting from the perceived characteristics of the surrounding world) and one’s imagined place in that world. It can be assumed that an average young person defines the characteristics of his or her Self by answering the following questions about his or her reality: What is it like? What did it use to allow me to do? What is allowed now? What will be allowed in the future? To what extent does the world favor me? What can I expect from the world? To what extent and how does it make me unique among others?

Young children, often including adolescents, tend to notice their place and activities in the next, adult stage of life, rather than their positions in social structures. Hence, children tend to present

themselves in “simple” jobs allowing them to take independent action rather than present themselves in varieties of professional authorities and socio-professional ranks.

Effects of distortions in children's vision of themselves

If children's visions of themselves in the future adult life are inconsistent with their actual mental and social aptitudes, if they are oriented towards fulfilling an artificial form of the Self created in their minds by their own adverse experiences and inappropriate influences from the environment, they will be led to show a tendency to become someone other than themselves: someone who will not fulfil his/her genuinely important needs, who will not use his/her potential abilities and capacities, and will overestimate or underestimate his/her life plan with understated or overstated aspirations (which, however, will be consistent with the intentions of his/her environment). Examples of psychological and social consequences of a false image of the Self – what I will be like – are: an internal consent to marginalization of his/her place in social structures, submitting to socio-professional exclusion, submitting to stigmatization, and using a captive mind for assessing needs and strengths.

Berne's concept of transactional analysis (1987), enriched with new content by his followers and successors, includes multi-aspect examinations of biographical consequences of forming the Self in a way that does not correspond to genuine possibilities and needs while ignoring the young person's wishes and his/her will. This concept is valuable if one wishes to consider the psychological and social consequences of the environment's improper influence, as it is based on empirical, cognitive and psychoanalytic approaches. An adult regularly yielding to the inner pressure of Me-Parent (and, at some point, his/her closest environment) will provide him/her with a biography that is not beneficial, as is the case with an adult who

tends to give in to the inner pressure of Me-Child and, particularly, that of Me-Rebellious Child.

Working to develop Berne's concept, Harris (1987) drew attention to the fatalistic (and, at the same time, disastrous) consequences of negative strokes: evocative messages directed at a child, which, coming from his/her caregivers, point out his/her defects, guilt and inabilities – on personal biography. According to Harris, people who receive more negative than positive strokes, or who lack any strokes, usually form negative attitudes about themselves: they assume that the world, they themselves or both are generally bad and/or lacking purpose. With such beliefs formed and fixed already in early childhood such people will provide themselves with evidence that theirs is the right and true understanding of the world and themselves. Similar consequences for the functioning of human beings in adult life were described by Rogoll, who proved that negative childhood experiences can shape the next, adult stage of life, leading to a general conviction that one's life is wasted, to a disbelief in the success of individual endeavors, and to living in a play-it-safe mode in the shadow of others (for the essence and meaning of *life script* see Rogoll 1989, p. 77-101).

Forms and ways of revealing childhood dreams of adulthood

Methods considered appropriate for organizing children's activities in order to obtain research material on dreams are: themed play, staged activities, and team work. Popular ways of encouraging children to express their dreams include: interviews, focused conversations, essays and letters, drawing, modelling, cutting out and also pantomimic self-presentations during genre scenes (cf. Janowski 2002, p. 153-159). Visual arts are a form of expressing wishes that helps both children under assessment and the researcher analyzing such material to feel comfortable. Drawing usually means fun for children and allows the researcher to get results quickly and rather

easily. The researcher can use different approaches such as: scientific/quantitative and humanistic/qualitative.

Focused conversations can be used in combination with activities aimed at getting drawings from children or may be used independently from other data collection methods. Such conversations are useful when trying to understand the child's perspective of the world and themselves. Children's opinions may surprise the researcher if he or she has detailed and preconceived expectations as to what a child is going to share or what truths the child is going to reveal. The reason is that children do not yet feel compelled to use conventional patterns of thinking and formulating statements but rather rely on needs emerging on impulse and base their expressions on free connotations and temporary emotions. On the other hand, an analysis of school and family documents can be used as an independent research method or as a method used to support other methods of collecting empirical material. Under such circumstances its validity in studying children's dreams would result from the fact that it can provide information about the possible determinants of such dreams, especially in terms of objective factors.

The idea behind the survey

It was decided to initially study dreams of adulthood ("what I will be when I grow up") of children of early school-age who are pupils of grades 0–3 (5–9 years old) and compare them with life aspirations demonstrated to them by their parents, taking into account also their age and gender as factors which may cause variations in the indications and comments obtained under such study.

The study's objectives were: to discover children's dreams concerning their future, adult-life social and professional activities; to determine how likely and socially beneficial children's indications are; finally, to identify whether the children's gender and age determined

these indications. Questions considered to be worth answering (research queries):

- What profession does a child consider as his/her occupation in adult life?
- What are the usefulness and prestige of that occupation?
- What is the level of qualifications required for the occupation?
- How actively and in how much detail does the child describe his/her presence in the chosen occupation?
- With whom and with what does the child possibly associate the job?
- What background can the child see around him/her when imaging him/herself as a professionally active adult?
- How does the child explain the choice? Why has s/he chosen the particular vocation over others?

Planned data collection techniques and method: it was decided to use the projection method based on an analysis of drawings made by the children. Hence, the source for obtaining information about the children's dreams would be their drawings on the subject: "Who will I be when I grow up?" and their own comments on them.

Research tools: to ensure the availability of research material, use was made of a prototype suite of tools called *Children's dreams about their place in adult life*, including a sheet of A4 paper, a set of pencils, crayons, felt-tipped pens, and a spreadsheet template for the data obtained.

During drawing, or immediately after finishing their drawings, children were to be asked the following questions: What is your drawing about? What is it? Who are you in this drawing and what are

you doing? Do you know someone who does such work and who is that person? Why did you choose this job? In which country would you like to live as an adult ... (insert the job shown in the drawing) and why?

Depending on what happens during the drawing activity other possible questions are also to be asked: about the colors, size, emotional aspects of the drawing etc. There will probably be no more than 10–15 questions.

In addition, items of interest within drawings can be marked in our database inside an MS Excel worksheet, by combining two areas – the content and significance of the drawing itself and the content of the child's comments on their drawings. In other words, this is to juxtapose what the researcher could see as a viewer and the message of the author as expressed in his/her own words. Information from such analysis was to be entered using a 1-2-3-4-5 scale, where 1 = no indication/absence of the feature covered by the analysis; 2 = weak indication; 3 = average indication; 4 = rather clear indication; 5 = clear indication/occurrence.

Comments on drawings were to be given using the following keywords (Table 2).

It was decided that the Likert Scale would be used for interpretation and coding of any analyzed content and messages with the following assignment values: 1 = No! 2 = probably not, 3 = hard to say, 4 = probably so, 5 = Yes! On the basis of these choices the database can be populated with answers to the questions: How prestigious is the profession? How high is the income? What education does it require? Other questions could be used giving them a quantitative form, which in turn enables one to make calculations and determine the statistical properties of the data collected.

Table 2. Template covering the main elements of a drawing and individual questions for quantitative analysis

Main scene in the drawing	Main character in the drawing	Other characters in the drawing	Background of the drawing	Atmosphere of the drawing
1. To what extent does the author of the drawing represent its main character?	1. How large is the figure? How much space does it occupy in the drawing?	1. How big?	1. How precisely is it marked?	1. How precisely is it marked using colors and icons (e.g. smiley emoticons)?
2. How clearly is the main character marked in his or her profession?	2. How precisely is the main character drawn?	2. How many?	2. How much detail in relation to their selected job?	2. How dynamic is it?
3. How active is the main character in his or her job?	3. How precisely is it marked in their job (clothes, accessories, materials etc.)?	3. To what extent are they connected with the occupational role of the main character?	3. How precisely is it related to the occupational role of the main character?	3. How cheerful – considering the emotions of character no. 1?

Elements of analysis: main scene – what is the drawing about? Main character – who is it? How important are they? What are they doing and why? Other characters – who are they? What are they doing and why? Image background – what is it like and what is its meaning? Atmosphere of the drawing – what is it like and what is its meaning? Method of analysis: 1-2-3-4-5 scale for checking the degree of intensity of the characteristics that are expressed numerically; description of the content of drawings; words deemed to be of key importance by their authors and concise descriptions to facilitate categorization.

Table 3. Template covering children's clarifications and comments regarding the main elements of drawings under assessment to be used for qualitative analysis

Note – what is the drawing about?	Who is that? What are they doing and why?	Who are they? What are they doing and why?	What is it like and why?	What is he/she like and why?
1. About what occupation?	1. Who is the main character?	1. Who are the other characters?	1. What is the background/ in the background?	1. How happy is the general atmosphere of the drawing?
2. About what occupational situation/event/scene?	2. What are they doing?	2. What are these characters doing?	2. Is it relevant for the presented scene of occupational activity and if so, to what extent?	2. How cheerful is the main character?
3. About what occupational activities or behaviours?	3. Why are they doing this?	3. Why are they doing this – why does it make sense for the main character and for them?	3. Is it relevant for the main character in their occupational role and if so, to what extent?	3. How cheerful are the other characters?

In addition, a questionnaire survey was conducted among the parents of the children surveyed, in which the fathers and mothers were asked about their life aspirations in relation to their children. Among other things they were asked about their expectations in terms of jobs, income status, and the future permanent place of their children's occupational activity. The gender and age of the parents were considered to be factors worth checking, potentially differentiating the opinions of the fathers and mothers, and the parents and their children.

In order to determine the prestige level of the professions chosen by the children (in terms of public opinion), the results of the CBOS survey carried out in 2009 were used. The purpose was to find out the prestige level of the occupations that the children chose for themselves as adults, without any knowledge of the ranking and its results.

The intention was to use the data contained in the report to see how prestigious were the jobs chosen by the fathers and mothers for their children. Having access to this information it is also possible to compare the choices of the children and their parents in terms of how frequently they choose professions that are most popular and respected in Poland.

Report – initial information on how the survey was carried out

The task was not difficult to complete but it required time as visits to the homes of the children's parents were necessary to get the information specified in the questionnaire. The children were asked to make their drawings while they were in their school's day care room.

The mother of one of the children surveyed played the role of the pollster and the person managing the drawing session. She was properly instructed on how to perform her role and was personally interested in the results of the survey. She had often taken care of the children in the school's day care room. She knew them and had a good rapport with them.

Short description of the children surveyed

The study included 45 children and 40 parents. Therefore, when comparing convergence levels of indications for pairs of children and their caregivers no analysis was conducted for the 5 cases where

Table 4. Social prestige of professions according to the CBOS data from 2009 s – percentage of choices representing the highest prestige for the given occupations

84 University Professor, Firefighter	58 Factory Manager
78 Miner	54 Journalist
77 Nurse	53 Policeman
73 Doctor	47 Cleaner
71 Plant Engineer	46 Voivod (Province Governor)
70 Teacher	45 Shop Assistant
69 Bricklayer/Plasterer, turner	42 Priest, Mayor
64 Accountant	40 Builder
63 Officer – Captain+	38 Stockbroker, Starost (head of an administrative district)
62 Judge	36 Minister
61 Bus Driver, Farmer, IT specialist	31 Municipal Councillor
60 Lawyer	24 Member of Parliament
	19 Activist of a political party

Source: Michał Feliksiak, http://www.solidarnosc.uni.wroc.pl/dokumenty/PRESTIZ_ZAWODOW.pdf, [access: 2.03.2012].

children were not paired with their parents.

Table 5. Children surveyed as pupils in their school grades, taking into account their gender

Grade and sex of pupils	0	1	2	3	Total	Total %
Boys	7	10	4	8	29	64.4
Girls	11	2	2	1	16	35.6
Total	18	12	6	9	45	100.0
Total %	40.0	26.7	13.3	20.0	100.0	X

There were various boys to girls' percentage ratios in the individual classes and the classes themselves were also of various sizes. Grade 0, which was large and dominated by girls, was particularly unusual.

What I will be when I grow up - children's indications as shown in their drawings

Table 6. Occupations in their future adult life as indicated by children of school grades 0–3, N = 45=100.0%

Profession	L	%
firefighter x 6, firefighter + guard x1, firefighter + truck driver x1	8	17.8
teacher	6	13.3
singer	5	11.1
policeman	3	6.7
nurse	2	4.4
farmer	2	4.4
driver – machinery operator x1, ambulance driver x1	2	4.4

Rare indications, given by fewer than every third pupil: archaeologist, hairdresser, cashier, astronaut, physician, painter, sailor, gardener, fisherman, sportsman, super-discoverer, scientist, and soldier.

Social prestige of professions indicated in children's drawings

Having compared professions present in children's drawings one can note that they are often occupations that are traditionally recognized as highly prestigious by the general public in Poland, at least if one takes into account the annual CBOS ranking, including

Table 7. Expectations of mothers of children surveyed. N = 40 = 100.0%

By mothers of children 6 to 9 yo.	L	%
doctor	6	15.0
teacher	5	11.1
dentist	4	8.9
lawyer	2	4.4
IT specialist	2	4.4

that for 2009 (Social prestige of professions according to CBOS data from 2009 and children's indications Source: Feliksiak http://www.solidarnosc.uni.wroc.pl/dokumenty/PRESTIZ_ZAWODOWY.pdf, [access: 2.03.2010]).

Figures in brackets correspond to percentages of those respondents who strongly indicate prestige in relation to individual socio-professional categories: fire-fighter (84), nurse (77), doctor (73), teacher (70), bus driver and farmer (both 61), policeman (53) and shop assistant (45).

On the other hand, none of the children indicated that they might be, among others, a professor of higher education, factory manager, stockbroker, minister, voivod (province governor), councillor, Member of Parliament or another politician, IT specialist, journalist, builder, mayor or priest.

The children surveyed indicated professions associated with public prestige, which, in their opinion, involved being active and useful to people around but, at the same time, ignored the jobs that were important because of such factors as high income, high position, or privileges. Hence, boys indicated the relatively highly popular status of fire-fighters and doctors versus those of voivods, ministers or MPs.

The parents indicated jobs outside the top twenty of the ranking slightly more often than their children. Some parents revealed no specific expectations as to the future profession of their child.

Other answers given by mothers were: an architect, clerk, technician, fire-fighter, pilot, model, trader, land surveyor, and farmer. Every fourth mother would like her child to be a doctor or dentist (but none wished her child to be a nurse) and every tenth mother would like her child to be a teacher. The mothers rarely indicated jobs associated with good and stable source of income such as a lawyer and IT specialist.

Table 8. Expectations of fathers of children surveyed. N = 40 = 100.0%

According to fathers of children 6-9 yo.	L	%
university education to guarantee a good salary	8	17.8
IT specialist	4	8.9
secondary education is enough if the pay is good	4	8.9
farmer	3	6.7
lawyer	3	6.7
attorney	3	6.7

Other jobs listed were: an engineer, inspector, physical therapist, doctor, teacher, marketer, prosecutor, and fire-fighter. Fathers more often than mothers indicated jobs not requiring a university diploma. They were more direct in emphasizing the overriding importance of pay. The majority of fathers were not university educated and the same was true for their wives. One may suspect that compared to the fathers of the children surveyed, the mothers found it easier to think about the future profession of their children independently of their own status.

Why will I be him or her – the content and meaning of children's comments

Out of the total of 45 children who made drawings, 30 gave answers about their professional role in adult life. One third of the children surveyed did not know how to answer the question: why did you choose this particular occupation?

Individual children surveyed declared that they would choose the occupation shown in their drawings because they wanted to act (in one case – following the example of the teacher) or (less frequently) to have: “I want to explore planets”, “I want to build large wind farms”, “I want to be like the teacher in our class at school”, “I would like to drive a fire truck”, “to be a man with a cool dog”, “make various discoveries”, “have a cool job”, “slap fines on people”.

What is worth noting is a lack of uncertainty on the part of the children in marking their willingness to take on various difficult and unknown tasks, especially if one takes into account the realities of their daily lives. The boys had no doubts as to their intentions to explore the unknown corners of the Earth and even outer space. They would also like to take on jobs that adults typically associate with serious challenges and threat to life, like extinguishing fires, towing helicopters, and if they were to drive vehicles it would be, for example, a fire truck. The girls were interested in challenges of a different nature, related to winning the respect and admiration of their social environment, e.g. the career of models, singers, etc.

According to some children, they would choose the job shown in their drawing because it would be a source of pleasure for them. Those children often used the words: “because I like”. For example: “I like to comb and do my mom's hair”, “I like other children”, “I like driving a car”, “I like helping people”, “I like singing and dancing”,

“I like teaching children,” “I want to catch thieves,” “I want to catch a lot of fish”, “I want a boat with an engine to be able to sail it”, “I may be on the sea, because I really like sailing”.

Apart from the word “like” these explanations included the word “want”. One can pre-suppose that in addition to following the rule of pleasure the children also tried to use their will. Here is what children would like to do as adults: teach children various good things, help others, heal, save lives, sell things, explore the world of dinosaurs, volcanoes and cacti, teach children and play with them, teach children various games, give fines to people who speed, and act on stage. Unique indications in the children’s statements were: to help, save, teach, punish, and act.

Inspirations in children’s indications

Examples of being inspired by others with direct indications: my dad, my mom, our teacher. However, the children surveyed rarely referred to adults. Instead, they represented their choice as an act of will (“because I want to”). In addition, the content of some of the drawings indicated that their creators were inspired by: comic books, computer games and movies.

Determinants of children’s and parents’ indications

It can be assumed that the indications given by the individual children were generally not related to the expectations of their parents. Children got carried away by their imagination and joy of life and their belief that anything was possible. As expressed in the aforementioned quotation by Korczak, these children have not as yet been taught to doubt themselves and feel ashamed of bold dreams about themselves and their lives. Their decisions were autotelic, unlike those of their parents, who showed an instrumental attitude

(to gain a position in the environment, settle down, have a safe job and earn good money).

Final remarks

My review of the research material collected allows me to state that children's ideas about their future occupation and social activities are often autotelic: they are an end in themselves. One child was unique in this respect when he stated that he wanted to be a policeman 'for the money' to be had by giving fines to people. The indications were generally related to what the children liked doing, and sometimes to what they wanted to do; this is related to a number of active senses, including the sense of movement, often associated with the intention of helping people, and - in general - with giving pleasure to themselves and others. The indications were often related to jobs of high social status guaranteeing employment (like: fire-fighters, teachers, doctors, nurses or drivers.)

The children surveyed drew themselves almost exclusively as the foreground actors with rich details presented on their clothing, and with attributes related to their jobs and to actions taken. The background drawn by the boys included the physical world in its vast expanse (up to the level of the stars) and a variety of technical inventions, while the girls' drawings' background often included scenes of other people gathered in groups (audience, concert participants, pupils etc.). Some of the drawings were very original as compared to others. For example, a boy who was fascinated by the sea and therefore interested in a maritime job, filled an entire sheet of paper with waves of blue shades without any extra items.

Children's ideas about their future social and professional activities turned out to be differentiated mostly on the basis of their gender and only to a small extent based on age differences. The majority of the boys associated their working life with technology and its tools and

devices, and with a general setting or space-time of human life – up to the infinity of space. Girls often indicated jobs related to the people around them who could help others, such as doctors or teachers, and where they could be useful in various ways, such as shop assistants or singers performing on stage. Children's indications differed from those of their parents, and were probably less realistic (considering the reality of the living environment of the children surveyed), but generally associated with being able to nicely settle down and earn good money.

Fathers more often than mothers indicated the supreme importance of income, contributing to the common belief that although artists can be famous (while their work gains in monetary value usually only after their death), it is better to be a tailor or a farmer. Generally speaking, the older the parents, the less pressure was present in their expectations relating to the child and their expectations were closer to their own socio-professional position.

It would be worth checking the prognostic value of the children's indications and those of their fathers and mothers after a dozen or so years since the survey, when the children surveyed become adults and have stable jobs. It would be a good idea to ask each person what they think of their early childhood dreams or possibly what caused them to fail to realize them.

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Monika Miňová

University of Prešov in Prešov

The Child through the Eyes of Professionals and Amateurs

ABSTRACT

Who is the child and what is childhood? This issue has been addressed by various experts (teachers, psychologists, sociologists, economists, etc.) for several centuries. Kindergarten teachers as well as ordinary people, parents and grandparents who do not have professional qualifications, know this question and are not indifferent to it. They educate their children and grandchildren in the most beautiful and most sensitive period of life that is the basis for future of those children's living and being. It is important to realise how the child and childhood are looked upon by a very important document that is the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the accompanying literature. To better understand our children, we should realize that we were children too and a child is still a part of us. We need to rediscover the child in ourselves and the world will become much nicer and better.

Key words: child, childhood, Rights of the Child, pre-school.

The child and childhood as well as the ways they are viewed have always been influenced by the culture of a given society with its principles and traditions. In the past the child was understood as an incomplete individuum, an object of upbringing and, also today, in

the 21st century, it is, surprisingly, a common child and childhood idea – an idea which speaks about the child and as an immature “little manikin”, an unequal partner who is only just getting ready for admittance into society. Childhood should be, in today’s postmodern society, understood as a social, historical phenomenon, and the child should be accepted as an active, authentic, competent, autonomous (relatively independent and individual), emotionally and cognitively committed subject.

The psychological view of the child and childhood remain adultocentric also nowadays. The notion that dominates is that of evolution – it is psychological, especially in psychoanalytical and cognitive-psychological thought. Pedagogical opinions on the child normally draw from philosophical sources and, in particular, from the approaches which depend on psychological explanations.

Attempts to conceptualize the topic of the child and childhood may be found in opinions of those authors who systematically apply themselves to the scientific study of children. The basic aim of their studies was to apply scientific methods from more disciplinary points of view (e. g. from the view of developmental biology and psychology, pediatrics, pedagogy, sociology etc.) to the research on the child. Within these attempts was (Kašćák 2008, p. 28) “research of the child’s evolution from complex points of view: from biological through mental to social, and a review of its problems and troubles”.

From the historical point of view there exist several conceptions of the child:

- **the concept of the child as a primitive**

The concept arose at the beginning of the 20th century. Its representatives are Prever and Hall. It is a strictly biological concept characterised by a strong inclination towards darwinism. It understands the child as the primary form of human existence which retains signs of the previous phases of human-

kind's development, and which loses these in the process of development. The recapitulative statement comes to the fore (e. g. according to this theory the development of the child's movement should proceed from crawling, through climbing to sitting, that is the same way as humankind's development towards an upright posture during evolution: from walking on all fours to walking on two feet. A similar interpretation was accorded the development of speech, language, and the motoric competence).

– **the concept of the child as an imitator**

It arose in the 1920s and 1930s. The child, resembling *tabula rasa*, is understood as a passive imitator (simulator) of adult behaviour. This conception was influenced especially by Watson and other representatives of psychological behaviourism. They pointed to the child's formation by his/her environment and his/her ability to respond to external stimuli.

– **the concept of the child as a practitioner**

Dating back to 1930s and 1940s, this conception understood the child as a socially incompetent, practically inexperienced subject, who is incapable of social life. It pointed out the fact that the child should be socialised and that s/he should gain social practice especially in school environment.

– **the concept of the child as an ape**

In 1960s and 1970s, the development of ethnology and the so-called new biology brings about the return of evolutionary theories. These perceive the child as a part of the evolution process. Representatives of the abovementioned theory (e.g. Portmann) sought connections between childhood expressions and the expressions of creatures and animals at a lower level of evolution than the human (primates and higher mammals). The most significant similarity was found in the behaviour of the child and the primates. Kařák (2008, p. 34) writes: "latest

ethological and bio-anthropological studies have confirmed a specific biological «primitivism» of the forms of the child's existence”.

– **the concept of the so-called critical child**

The conception dates back to the 1970s and 1980s. Its basis was the idea that children do not learn passively, but that they are active participants of their lives. This conception is related to constructivism in psychology and to Piaget. Children's opinions and images of their world are studied, children's preconceptions, children's naive theories and children's perspective are taken into account.

– **the concept of the child as an architect**

It arose in the 1980s and presented the child as an organiser of his/her experience. It understands children as (Kaščák 2008, p. 34) creators of their own autonomous peer culture with its own values and preferences, as a social group influencing adults and the “architecture“ of society, and at the same time, as a social group which has an influence on different social sectors, whether it is lifestyle, fashion, cultural preference or social life.

The status of the child is more important nowadays than it was in the past. The fact that, in relation to other generations, children exist as a relatively independent social group is an expression of the child's gaining his/her own social position as compared with their role in the past, traditional society. This means that children differ from adults in their specific behaviour and activities: that they do not “coincide” with them. Our society sees children and treats them differently than it treats the “mature”, adult individuals. This is why we should consider questions that pertain to the child and childhood: What space is needed for the children in the contemporary society? What is the best way to raise and educate them?

Childhood nowadays, as stated by Uhrová (2008, p. 535), is becoming an “ambivalent social phenomenon”.

This is a world in which the child cannot remain passive; s/he has to integrate, which means that s/he has to enter into a relationship with it. Nowadays children have many more opportunities to autonomously interfere in and observe socio-cultural practices realised in his/her interactions with others. This means that children are not only passive consumers of adult culture. Children do more than merely perceive the rules of adult world, and their life is not only a passive cultural adaptation but it is, instead, an active cultural participation. Nowadays the child does not stand on the edge of social happenings (as was the case in the past) only because s/he is (has the status of) a child. These days the child has more opportunities to participate actively in socio-cultural events because s/he is their active subject whose participation in these events is not insignificant.

One of the basic needs of contemporary society is the necessity to characterize the child as an active, authentic, competent, autonomous (relatively independent and unique), emotionally and cognitively involved subject of his/her own learning and development, capable of transforming his/her environment in the process of his/her integration into it.

Postmodern society exposes children to the same social changes as it does adults and, as the society changes, the forms taken by adulthood and childhood change as well. “If we want to understand the social worlds of today’s children at school and outside the school, it is necessary to understand the wider macro-social movements which influence everyday lives of the children, their parents and pedagogues” (Uhrová 2007, p. 535).

Kostrub (2008, p. 10) writes that:

– “Childhood is a social construct – constructed for children as well as by children themselves – inside of which social relationships

are actively discussed. Although childhood is a biological matter, its interpretation is determined socio-culturally.

– As a social construct, childhood is always situated contextually in relation to time, place and culture, and it varies according to social classes, gender, and other socio-economic conditions. There is no natural or universal childhood, but there exist different childhoods and children.

– Children are social actors who participate in constructing and determining their own experiences and the lives of others – the ones who are close to them and the society in which they live and to which they contribute by learning and their own actions.

– Children have their own voice which must be heard and taken seriously. Children need to be involved in discussions of democratic decision making.

– In their own ways children contribute to social production and thus are not merely a burden.

Moreover, it is necessary to realise that childhood is the time of development potential:

– Childhood is the time of increased vulnerability, increased danger of missed opportunities, increased probability of blocking potentials, of suppressing the creative, original élan.

– Childhood is the time of internalizing the patterns in immediate surroundings, predominant interactions and communications (Myers 1991).

In general, we can accept the claims that in today's society the child is respected in his/her social otherness as resulting from his/her behaviour and from typical childhood roles while differentiation among children may have social or ethnical subtexts. "Their specific activities, duties, and also rights create in them a specific generational optics of perception of the world, different also from the previous generations of children" (Mišíková, Uhrová 2001, p. 37).

Remarkably, that the pioneer of such thinking was the modern author Rousseau who, in his times, expressed the thought that (Kařćák 2008, p. 12) “childhood has its own way of perceiving things, thinking, feeling, all of which relate to it; nothing is more unreasonable than wanting to replace it with our way”.

Consequently, it is necessary to realise that children are “here and now”: they are a generation which is present in our society and is not waiting to be “accepted by adult society!”

Miříková and Uhrová (2001, p. 37) understand the child in today’s society as “a generation of the children here and now in the time when they are children“. Therefore, it cannot be forgotten that it is necessary to allow the children their childishness, since they are, above all, human beings. A childish human being should be perceived as equally a human being, with all his/her needs and interests provided by society.

We agree with the opinion of Kikuřov (2001, p. 100) who states that childhood is today “valued as an equal phase of human life, of the same importance, ... and the child has the right to live an authentic childhood. The child is a member of community and s/he has his/her rights and freedoms, s/he becomes our partner. Children’s opinions, thoughts, ideas about life are accepted, and the child’s efforts are respected. The adult cooperates with the child, and encourages his/her process of decision making, regulation, personal responsibility and self-control”.

Children, as a specific social group, are able to represent and interpret their own view of childhood. The proof of it is for example individual children’s culture (various games, free time activities) or individual, differing aesthetic tastes and lifestyles.

Research

The aim of the research was to find out the specialists' and amateurs' opinions on the subject of the child and childhood. Both specialists and amateurs were involved in the research. Among the specialists there were colleagues from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Education, an independent institution, as well as nursery teachers. Among the amateurs there were grandparents and students of pedagogical faculty. Nursery school children made a separate group. Authentic answers from particular groups are presented.

Specialists:

VIERKA HAJDÚKOVÁ (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport SR)

The child and childhood is like the sun: kind, nice, pleasant, shiny and always mysterious.

ILONA UVÁČKOVÁ (State School Inspection)

Childhood is a part of life research: experimenting, searching, wild, turbulence, games, happiness, but also of a little pain and responsibility. If we have nice memories from our childhood, and our childhood smile, playfulness, empathy and responsibility have remained in us, we are "children" also in our adult life. Not without a reason is it said that as long as we have parents we are still children. When we lose them, we become adults. We shall remember that once we were children and the world will be more beautiful and maybe even better.

KATARÍNA GUZIOVÁ (State Pedagogical Institute)

The child surprises us every day with his/her tireless desire to want to learn everything.

From one's own childhood, full of meaningful games, one may draw through all one's lifetime as if from a fountain of wisdom.

DUŠAN KOSTRUB (Pedagogical faculty of the Komensky University, Bratislava)

The child as a cosmopolitan citizen of the future. The child cosmopolitan is not born: s/he is created.

Childhood is the time of developmental potential. There is no natural or universal childhood, but there are different childhoods and children.

These specialists are recognized personas in the area of pre-school education in Slovakia and in no small measure have they contributed to the quality of pre-primary education in Slovakia in the last decade and during the present school reform.

Nursery teachers:

The child is

- Happiness and elixir of life,
- Everything that I have in the world, my life,
- The magic of life, the continuer, parents' reassurance, a well of sincerity and love, a little scented bundle,
- a human being with all his/her rights; a free, active, and independent individual, able to act on the basis of his/her knowledge, experiences and attitudes.

Childhood is

- the most beautiful and carefree part of life,
- a carefree period /after some time/, a complete and loving family, games, sports, friends, a period of absorbing great amounts of information,
- a beautiful introduction to an unwritten book,
- a period of human life, a period where children live in the here and now; childhood has its culture, its rights, its mode of communication, games, learning, and behaving.

We have mentioned some opinions on the subject of the child and childhood as given by the nursery teachers who are also mothers in their private lives and, therefore, we can sense in their statements their emotionally-subjective view.

We already know the point of view of specialists, but how is the child perceived from other perspectives? Opinions of the laymen (grandparents, students) about the child and childhood are interesting and, of course, various. In those opinions, the child and childhood are:

Grandparents:

A beautiful childhood is the time which people can remember with love not only in their adult lives but also in their declining years.

The child is a remarkable creature and an endless source of happiness, positive energy, fresh wisdom and original ideas.

Students:

The child is:

- marvellous, a creature as yet unspoilt by the world,
- the most honest human being in the world,
- a unique creature, a human being younger than 15 or 18 years of age; in a broader sense – any descendant of a parent,
- a human being who can make you rich without owning property or money. To give once is sufficient for receiving twice.

Childhood is:

- the most beautiful period, now long gone,
- experiences, laugh, purity, love, innocence,
- experiencing life as momentary in its physical, mental, and emotional dimensions...in the early years of life. Adults can also experience childhood, but only in their memories,
- a period of fairytales and dreams, and a gigantic duvet which was so safe!

These authentic student responses are important from the emotional perspective. According to these responses, sometimes students had difficulty answering these questions because “they were children only some time ago and it is only a little while since they have abandoned their childhood”.

We should look upon the questions of the child and childhood from the children’s perspective. A discussion on children’s perspective refers to the subject of childhood research where children’s perspective is defined as a reality experienced and created by children. Children’s perspective is the keyword of the children’s social world. What ways of gaining information from children will we use? Heinzel (1997) states that the children’s perspective differs from the adult perspective and while the way children think and behave is foreign to adults, both are understandable within the framework of childhood research.

The child is:

- a person,
- a boy or a girl,
- the one who is not adult,
- the one who sleeps in a cot,
- when a little person is born s/he is a child,
- a little person who needs mother and father,
- člověk [a human being].

Childhood is:

- the fact that we are little and then we grow up,
- the fact that they are children and their parents tell them what to do to be happy,
- when parents play with me,
- little children have childhood,
- when we are little and we cannot prepare food for ourselves, nor wash, nor can we be alone because we cannot take care of ourselves and someone has to cuddle us before going to sleep.

The answers given by children from their own perspective are outstanding. Some of them could not answer, others were thinking and only after a long while did they say what idea they had. Some children gave one-word answers but other's answers were descriptive. We publish one more statement about what a child thinks childhood is: **"Childhood is over because we go to school"**.

What is the opinion of the students of pedagogical faculty, future nursery school teachers, on the child and childhood?

They answered the question of what their first impression was on hearing the word "child":

Every person; a little, innocent person; a person since their birth until the age of 18; a person without age limits; every person who can play; a person who has a mother and a father, etc.

Their opinions about childhood were as follows:

memories; a period in the life of every person; a beautiful period of life; a carefree period of life; etc.

On the basis of the CINQUAIN method (French; a five verse poem), students of the fourth year of pre-school pedagogy created their own definitions of the child and childhood.

The child
 beautiful honest
 inspiring loving playing
 the best person in the world
 angel

childhood
 joyful playful
 fulfilling surprising amazing
 inseparable part of human life
 life

From all the ideas which arose while using the abovementioned method we chose these original examples. Students captured what they considered as the most important determinants and definitions of childhood.

Finally, we would like to point out the ideas of Uhrová (2007, p. 539), which remind us that “children have to be protected to a large extent nowadays, whether socially or legally, from the dangers of the outside world, but in a way that encourages, not restricts their independence in decision making. To learn this ambivalence is a challenge of these days”.

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Barbara Dudel

University of Białystok

An Early School Student on the Way to Emancipation – a Possibility or a Dream

ABSTRACT

The article examines some of the opportunities to develop emancipatory competence among early school students of grades I-III. The author reviews the results of educational research in selected publications in the context of emancipatory pedagogy assumptions by Czerepaniak-Walczak.

Key words: emancipatory competence, early years education, emancipatory pedagogy.

Education is a process of maintaining the system by introducing new members and keeping the existing ones in an unchanged condition, while emancipation is a process involving the more or less dynamic changes in that system (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 67). In a few years' time today's students will face the need to take bold,

creative, rational decisions and actions. Their time at school, at every level of education, cannot be devoted only to the realization of the educational program, but should also be used to develop their potential. This idea was stated in the document *Core Curriculum* (in Polish: *Podstawa programowa*) and must be respected by all teachers. According to the current core curriculum, the aim of early school education is “to support the child’s intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical and artistic development. It is also important to prepare the child, to the extent possible, to live in peace with oneself, other people and nature (*Podstawa programowa* 2012, p. 12).

In addition, as established by the legislator, “in favourable conditions, the process of education can be organized in the way that enables students to learn a lot more in the first learning stage” (*Podstawa programowa* 2012, p. 12). The permission/recommendation formulated does not limit teachers in the diagnosis of conditions, providing, also, the opportunity to be creative in their daily work with students. This is not a new idea, since, as already declared by Pestalozzi, school should do more than bring young people to the state in which they can function in society. School must help them develop as personalities to their full potential (Brühlmeier 2011, p. 31). “Education and learning do not serve only the present and current times, but they also serve man in general. Education and teaching are like ‘programming’ the human being for the rest of his/her future life” (Nowak 2005, p. 105). Therefore, as emphasized by Kwieciński (2007, p. 120), “no other way leads to public participation in individual and social development besides education for critical reflection”. The means to obtain a modern, open, and dynamic identity, adequate to one’s understanding of current historical situation, and to undertake independently a targeted effort to achieve new rights and new fields of freedom (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2009, p. 79) are provided by organizing the educational process based on the assumptions of emancipatory pedagogy. The validity of such thinking in the first stage of

education is confirmed by the work of Klus-Stańska, who authored a characterization of social practices in early school education as recognized in five discourses¹ (Klus-Stańska 2009, p. 25-78). The idea of critical-emancipatory education refers to the sociological theories of conflict, as well as to critical, emancipatory and resistance pedagogy, where the teacher is required to recognize and implement the rights of children to think, to have and to express their own opinions and judgements, and to build relationships between individuals involved in the educational process **at the symmetry position** (Klus-Stańska 2009). This particular idea presents education as “closely linked to the practices in the surrounding world, the practices initiated by children, the practices initiated by them (also by means of the mass media), where they learn to be critical, committed, responsible for their own point of view in positions taken and potential actions” (Klus-Stańska 2009, p. 71). As highlighted by the author, schools open to the world events and the surrounding reality should ensure that students in the classroom have the right to their own judgement and evaluations, as well as opportunities for their expression, as well as their ideas, plans of action and their implementation. The results of critical-emancipatory education are affected by the interpersonal atmosphere in the school and the curriculum as well as by the **ways of developing maths and science contents** (Klus-Stańska 2009, p. 72).

¹ “Discourse”, according to D. Klus-Stańska, who refers, among others, to J. Habermas and M. Foucault in her interpretation of this term’s meaning, is explained as a communication activity present in social practice, making sense of reality and participating in its construction (Klus-Stańska 2007, p. 93). Identified and described are five discourses present to varying degrees and in different ways in school practice: functionalist-behaviouristic, as the author mentions, “seems to be the hardest for a possible change” (Klus-Stańska 2009, p. 46), humanistic-adaptive, constructivist-developmental, constructivist-social, and critical-emancipatory. The author believes that the last one is the least present in school reality, since it is “perceived as dangerous, based on faulty assumptions and leading to chaos and the collapse of social order” (Klus-Stańska 2009, p. 47).

This study is an attempt at creating an overview of some of the fields of the educational reality at the level of primary school grades 1–3 through the prism of current research in this area and its interpretation in the context of the feasibility of the idea of emancipation.

The term emancipation (from Latin: *emancipatio*) in the ordinary sense of the word is explained as: (1) process of releasing individuals or groups from dependence, e.g. economic, political or legal dependence, and acquiring a new, better position in the social structures; (2) in the ancient Rome: the release of a son from his father's power (Bańko 2005, p. 339). Over the centuries, the concept of emancipation has changed its meaning (Zielińska-Kostyło 2003, p. 394-414). Czerepaniak-Walczak (2006), the mother of emancipatory pedagogy, introduces its essence, discusses the origins and merits of the idea, and refers to the original meaning stated in the Roman legal code. Presenting the evolution of the idea of emancipation, from the act of creating a free man to the achievement of liberation, she indicates philosophical concepts that have played a major role in the conceptualization of emancipation. The author states that “an analysis of emancipation as a social process can identify two perspectives in its interpretations, that is: a teleological perspective (emancipation is the goal of human effort), and an instrumental perspective (emancipation is a means: an instrument of human development and self-realization). Although these two perspectives complement each other, each of them reveals different areas of reflection on emancipation and on other fields of emancipatory action. In the first, teleological perspective, the human being discloses his/her own rationality and divergent thinking, whereas the instrumental perspective emphasizes innovation, entrepreneurship, and courage to use symbolic and material means inherent in the world of life” (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 31-32). The author also mentions the fact that the concept of emancipation is ambiguous and therefore it is impossible to exhaust the scope of its interpretation. The multiplicity of its meanings is reflected in the ways

of understanding the concept of emancipation that have been included in the seven trends: radical-liberal, progressive-liberal, integrated-functional, integrated-democratic, orthodox-functional, orthodox-radical and progressive-democratic (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 34-36). All of these approaches take into account the strong relation between education and emancipation. Moreover, each points to the possibility of preparing the human being to make efforts to change. "The common feature of these trends is the (self-) defence against slavery and oppression, as well as colonization and appropriation, whose origins lie in the daily agenda defined by either the decisions of defined and identified power, or by other forces which are confusing and difficult to identify. As a result, the human entity (individual or collective) takes actions which may reduce their dependence and expand her/his field of activity" (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 36). In terms of emancipatory pedagogy, which constitutes the basis of these theoretical considerations, "emancipation is a process of conscious rejection of stereotypes and myths, overcoming difficulties caused by human activity or the forces of nature" (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 33). Achieving the level of intellectual, emotional and behavioural activity which will allow you to consciously and responsibly construct your reality requires that an individual possess a number of features/proficiency in all areas of his/her functioning. Emancipatory pedagogy considers education to be the basis of emancipation (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 65), and emancipatory competence, understood as "a dynamic skill learnt by a human entity (individual/collective), and expressed in perceiving and understanding the limitations and deprivation symptoms, their conscious rejection, choosing ways to overcome them, and achieving new rights and freedoms, as well as making a responsible use of them to improve ourselves and our environment" (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 130). It is a "tool" used by an individual in making independent and courageous decisions of change, and in their consistent and responsible implementation

(Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 131). As suggested by the author, the realization of this idea in school situations is promoted by the following conditions: first – the content of education and upbringing should facilitate learning opportunities and modes of behaviour in situations of conflict and oppression, along with learning the consequences of being free; second – the methods of education and upbringing should result in the knowledge and understanding of one's own potential in relationships with other people and the elements of the world; self-discovery of the facts and phenomena should prepare one to deal with previously unknown issues; and third – student's work in the classroom should be organized so that they have the opportunity to confront his views with others, to experience moderation and responsibility, which are the basis of rational and conscious overcoming of limitations (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 69).

However, as stated by Szumigraj, education “perfectly fulfils its assigned function of socialization and selection, forgetting about the emancipation tasks. The school under conditions of coercion and slavery is a very competitive training ground, preparing one to act as a slave in adulthood, **and whose basic activity so far is working**” (Szumigraj 2005, p. 282).

Educational space, that is what “here” and “now” surrounds a student and, as emphasized by Klus-Stańska (2009, p. 35), “tells you where legal knowledge comes from and who it belongs to (...), spatial arrangement of students' and teacher's desks is a statement conveying the distribution of communication and authority over it, as well as social relations prevailing in the classroom”, creates conditions of students' functioning in the classroom. Research (Dudel, Głowska-Sołdatow 2009) quite clearly presents the image that forces one to wonder whether in these conditions implementing the idea of emancipation is at all viable. It is true that more and more teachers of younger grades ensure that the placement of furniture in the classroom is functional, and change it according to their needs.

There are arrangements of desks which allow students to work in groups (segment setting), or traditionally in rows, when the attention of students is directed to one side. Students sitting in the “active zone” (the middle and front of the class) are usually more likely to draw the teacher’s attention than the students sitting in the “peripheral area”. Setting desks in a circle, allowing direct communication and undisturbed independent work is much less frequent in the classroom. Desks are assigned students by the teacher and the choice depends on the student’s height, or sometimes their behaviour. These simple organizational activities clearly show the teachers’ preferences – students are “placed” in a structure previously prepared by the teacher. Rooms for grades 1–3 are mostly colourful and rich in various decorations. There are two types of exhibition: either posters with important educational information managed by the teacher, or space for children’s work, the latter being relatively often changed. Very often children are to decide which of their work will be displayed. It may be said that this is the time when students are in the area proposed, one that allows them to make their own decisions, and to express their attitude to the subject (Dudel, Głoskowska-Sołdatow 2009). Therefore, we should ask how often students have the opportunity to choose, and how often students’ assessment is taken into account when making a choice of works for the exhibition. For now, these are rhetorical questions.

Another part of the educational space is the area of course books, which students have daily contact with. A very important role in the educational process is assigned to the course books, and the variety of their functions creates great opportunities for using them when working with a student. Drawing on the results of the analysis made by Klus-Stańska and Kalinowska (2004, p. 27), for instance, of a course book for mathematics designed for early school education, one can discover that students have no chance to learn independently while using them. A student captivated by the course book abandons the analysis of the task in order to remember each step he is told

to make. Similar conclusions were drawn by Semadeni (2011). The research carried out by a team under his command proves that the list of main disadvantages of textbooks for mathematics used in early school education is long and covers many issues. The researchers stress that the tasks included in the course books do not teach thinking, and are not selected to properly fit the students' intellectual capabilities and cognitive needs. In this case, the reality in which the student ought to feel good and to develop correctly was also designed and structured by an adult. The learners' autonomy has been reduced to a minimum. The analysis of core curricula and course books proposed for the classes I–III conducted by Zalewska (2009) shows their diversity, which were the criteria for their overview and led the author to formulate important questions: how current are the aims and recommended topics and how is the idea of complementarity and complexity of the overall picture of the world implemented. Zalewska notes that the answer to these questions provides no indication that, based on educational materials available on the market, it is possible to achieve the idea of emancipation at the stage of early school education. Perhaps the idea of a course book presented by Swoboda² at the International Congress "A new era in the teaching of mathematics" will start the process of changing the traditional construction of textbooks aimed at teaching students through an interpretation of the surrounding world at the discretion of the book's author. The new approach in designing textbooks corresponds with a look at the educational reality of elementary school students of future teachers of grades 1–3.

² At the International Congress "A new era in the teaching of mathematics", which took place in Warsaw on 22 October 2011, Ewa Swoboda in her speech titled "Let the children be active in mathematics", presented examples of the tasks included in a coursebook for students in grades 1–3, developed by a team under her command. Questions and commands, such as: *why? How do you imagine? What more can you ask? Present in any way, suggest...* etc. are designed to encourage the student to engage in independent enquiry and "to create his/her own maths".

A study, carried out on a 72-person group of students, examined their vision of mathematical education and revealed the respondents' open attitude to the needs of students – among others, they emphasize the importance of differentiating tasks given to students according to their capabilities. The participants in the research recognize the value of learning methods that require active and independent learners, and prefer methods based on independent inquiry, such as problem solving (Dudel 2010). Hopefully, their position will not be an empty declaration and will be reflected in their future daily work.

Group work is the form of organizing tasks used from the very first stage of education and allowing children to function in a situation of a social-cognitive conflict, synergy and communication; simultaneously, it is closely related to the social dimension of group functioning. Social-cognitive conflict situations allow students to cope with the conditions in which different ideas to solve the same problem are generated. Finding yourself in a situation where there are approaches and proposals different than your own promotes a reorganization of the current thinking, and thus stimulates development. Students working in small groups have a good opportunity to gain experience that constitutes a foundation for the construction of emancipatory competence. The concept of synergy refers to the energy created in a group which, according to Bauman (2005, p. 26), is the multiplication of individual possibilities that make “a joint search for a solution more fruitful”. However, synergy is not present in every group. According to Oyster, synergy occurs when there is communication promoting such interactions, which causes “the group to function as something more than the sum of individuals” (Oyster 2009, p. 193). Pawlak's interest in the effects of group work in the early school classes has led to interesting results in the context of students' development of emancipatory potential. As shown by Pawlak's research, unfortunately, “teachers are only interested in the didactic effects of collaborative learning. They do not initiate conversation with the students [that

could lead to their] analysing the course [of work] or the engagement of the team and its members in co-operation. They do not discuss the reasons for their problems, their consequences, or the possibilities of preventing or overcoming them” (Pawlak 2010, p 469). Perhaps the reasons for this are to be found in the methodological publications that teachers use, printed in guides or manuals as an integral part of the educational package intended for teachers. The analysis of selected materials for teachers conducted by Pawlak (2010) proves that the proposed models of teachers’ conduct are far different from those specified by the author of the concept, Badegrubera, who promotes gradually introducing children to working together.

Communicative competence is a prerequisite for achieving freedom and justice. It is the basis of participation in coordinated activities (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2006, p. 135). Referring to the research on the communicative competence of six and seven-year-old children entering early school education conducted by Kuszak (2012), it is possible to state that children have developed communicative competence, but some of them are afraid to present it in front of the teacher and peers (Kuszak 2012, p. 327). Having conducted the analysis of different situations, the author claims that “probably the more competent persons interpret social situations as more favourable (they can turn them to their own advantage), while the children of low competence see similar situations as negative (they cannot change this situation)” (Kuszak 2012, p. 324). The findings of the study suggest the need for an interest in the possibilities of changing this state of affairs. An opportunity for transformation is to propose the implementation of critical-emancipatory discourse (Klus-Stańska 2009, p. 68-74), which assumes taking into account children’s right to “think their own way” and proclaim their “intellectual decisions” in the “discussion forum” which is their classroom.

The research conducted by Nowicka (2010) is also interesting from the perspective of the subject discussed. She made an attempt

to identify the socializing offer proposed to children by schools. The results of her extensive research based on qualitative observation and its deep analysis leads the author to conclude that the “participation in the process of socialization in the classroom tends to “produce” a student dominated by the power (polite), with simple needs/requirements (modest), unobtrusive (average), acting according to set standards (unified), and not very wise (childish)” (Nowicka 2010, p. 390). As stated by the author herself, this ”socialization does not correspond to the modern dynamic reality” (Nowicka 2010, p. 390).

Emancipatory competence, which is a tool in individual decision-making and in implementation of activities, constitutes three integrally interrelated elements: critical thinking, speaking and acting boldly, and bearing the consequences of your own actions. Czerepaniak-Walczak (2009, p. 131) points out that one cannot talk about the level of importance of any of them. They are all possible to learn (Czerepaniak-Walczak 2009, p. 133). A suitable and well-organized process of education and upbringing may be a way for students to gain experience that constitutes a foundation for the construction of emancipatory competence. The importance of creating a situation that enriches the child’s educational experience is emphasized in the literature devoted to infant education. And yet, for a child, any contact with reality brings new and enriching experience. Holt (2007, p. 37), presenting the possibility of using children’s natural curiosity, their need for action and the recognition of their right to choose the course of action, shows the ambiguity of the term “learning experience”. He highlights the fact that, on the basis of education, it is assumed that there are two types of experiments - one through which the individual can learn something, and those that do not teach anything, while in fact the experience not enriching human knowledge simply does not exist (Holt 2007, p. 37). Holt claims that “we draw lessons from every action, every experience that is ours, from everything that happens

to us. Thus, we become smarter or dumber, more or less informed, stronger or weaker, but we always learn something. What we learn, though, depends on what we experienced, and above all on our feelings in a given situation”. The quality of our experience plays an important role too (Holt 2007, p. 38). The effect of a teacher’s taking an emancipatory perspective is the lack of absolute certainty, no final authority on any matter; it relies on dialogue, on their own maturity and awareness (Zielińska-Kostyło 2003, p. 413). Szymański’s postulate to implement not only the concept of a “learning at school”, but also of a “learning teacher” in the space of the contemporary school education seems reasonable (Szymański 2009, p. 19), because it influences all the planned or incidental experiences students share. As regards the question posed in the title of this chapter, one can hope that the present dream of a graduate of early stage education who is capable of an independent interpretation of the surrounding world, making autonomous decisions and innovative activities, might have a chance to be achieved in the future.

On the margins

The school year 2012/2013 has been declared the Year of Safe School. Included in this concept is the paying of special attention to enhancing the students’ sense of security. This refers not only to preventing physical violence. Taking care of safety and education must be interpreted widely, including: promoting a safe environment that helps students to develop, guarding them from physical and psychological violence or **stimulants**, building a sense of security by shaping social attitudes, teaching cooperation and responsibility for oneself and others, as well as promoting voluntary work (<http://bezpiecznaszkola.men.gov.pl/>, access: 19.01.2012). The realisation of this idea actually requires that students possess emancipatory competence: rationality, innovation, and courage in thinking and doing.

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Anna Kienig

University of Białystok

Early Childhood – Only Rights or Also Responsibilities?

ABSTRACT

The theoretical framework for the study was the Bronfenbrenner's Ecology of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). According to Bronfenbrenner's theory in the pre-school setting children experience a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations (a microsystem), as well as learn skills connected with development of responsibility in early childhood education.

The aims of this study were:

- to examine the understanding of the terms “child's rights” and “responsibilities” by preschoolers, their parents and teachers
- to analyse the role of pre-school curriculum in developing and promoting understanding of children's rights,
- to analyse different childhood activities and skills connected with developing responsibilities.

The sample included sixty 6-year-old children from two early childhood settings, their parents, and pre-school teachers. The data were collected by distributing questionnaires to parents and teachers to assess possibilities of promoting child's rights and developing child's responsibilities within early childhood settings.

The data also includes the results of the observation of children's behaviour (children's activities and interactions with peers and teachers) and children's narratives about their rights and responsibilities.

Key words: early childhood, the rights of the child, responsibilities.

The Polish Context

In Poland pre-school education is treated as the first level of the educational system. Pre-school setting is an independent educational and teaching institution for children aged 3 to 6. Children are admitted to pre-school setting at the age of 3, after they have only been brought up by their families. The kindergarten, attached and related in terms of organisation to the primary school, admits children at the age of six and is open for an average of 5 hours a day. The largest number of pre-school settings operates for 5 to 11 hours a day. One teacher does shifts, and cares for an average of 23 children at pre-school settings and 16 children in kindergartens.

The aim of pre-school settings is to provide families with day-care support, to help children with their social and emotional development, to provide children with academic skills and to prepare them for school. The preparation consists in stimulating children's general development and teaching them primary reading skills and basic mathematics. The most important part of pre-school education is the child's development, that is his/her needs and abilities. The modern Polish pre-school is striving towards the construction of an expression-based model of education concentrated on the development of child's positive self-image, building of the child's inner world and the ability to express oneself, leading to self-control.

Theoretical framework

Early childhood is a special time in lifelong learning. As Woodhead (1996, p. 12) has suggested, "each young child has a unique potential for development of human capacities, for communication and cooperation, for skill and feeling, for reason and imagination, for practicality and spirituality, for determination and compassion".

Citizenship Education

“Education is not just concerned with the education of those who are about to become citizens, but with the education of those who are already citizens. We work in schools and centres with children who are citizens, who have rights and responsibilities, and who are entitled to an education for the present and the future” (McGettrick 2004).

According to Moss (2007), citizenship education should begin in early childhood education – an early introduction of children into the functioning of the social and political world, or into an understanding of the rules of democracy will enable them to fully exercise their rights, but also to carry out their responsibilities from an early age.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (<http://www.unicef.org.uk>) treaty spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere – without discrimination – have. Those include the right:

- to survival,
- to develop to the fullest,
- to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation,
- to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

Early education makes a vital contribution to developing and broadening the range of children’s learning experiences beyond the home and community. Early education plays a vital role in education for citizenship. It includes support for young children:

- to participate in discussion and decision making,
- to learn effective means of self-expression,
- to broaden their experience beyond the immediate locality by involving families and communities in their education.

Through Citizenship Education, children are encouraged to develop their awareness of (Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: Final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998):

- social and moral responsibility in and beyond the classroom,
- the life and concerns of the local community,
- the institutions, issues, problems and practices of our democracy (elements of ‘political literacy’).

According to McGettrick (2004), the vision of citizenship is based on service and on the development of habits, attitudes and ways of thinking concerned with peace, as well as the care of self and of others. Education for formal citizens is centrally concerned with developing those attitudes and dispositions that promote service in society – helping each other and developing friendships.

There are many ways to help children develop social skills and encourage positive behaviour (Patten 1992):

1. to establish a set of rules or standards for acceptable behaviour in pre-school setting.

The rules must be repeated often and made very clear to the children. These are broad categories:

- we need to respect ourselves
 - we need to respect others
 - we need to respect things.
2. to model the behaviour – children learn by watching and practicing what adults do.
 3. to teach children specific social skills. One important skill children must learn is to consider the feelings of others. They also must think about how their behaviour affects others.

The theoretical framework for this study was the Ecology of Human Development of Bronfenbrenner (1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979, def. 6, p. 26) states that “an ecological transition occurs whenever a person’s position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting, or both”. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem is the first element of ecological environment.

“Microsystem” is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with

particular physical and material characteristic (Bronfenbrenner 1979, def. 2, p. 22).

The developmental importance of ecological transitions derives from the fact that they almost invariably involve a change in role, that is, in the expectations for behaviour associated with particular positions in the society.

The child's going to pre-school setting or kindergarten is a big role change. *A role is a set of activities and relations expected of a person occupying a particular position in society, and of others in relation to that person* (Bronfenbrenner 1979, def. 14, p. 85). (...) *the concept of role involves an integration of the elements of activity and relations in terms of societal expectations* (Bronfenbrenner 1979, def. 2, p. 22). *Roles have a magiclike power to alter how a person is treated, how she acts, what she does, and thereby even what she thinks and feels* (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 6).

Aims

The aims of this study were:

- to examine the understanding of the terms “child’s rights” and “responsibilities” by preschoolers, their parents and teachers,
- to analyse the role of pre-school curriculum in developing understanding of children’s rights and in promoting these rights,
- to analyse different childhood activities and skills connected with developing responsibilities.

Method

The sample included sixty 6-year-old children from two early childhood settings, their parents, and 20 pre-school teachers.

The data were collected by distributing questionnaires to parents and teachers to assess possibilities of promoting child's rights and developing child's responsibilities in early childhood settings.

The data include also the results of observation of children's behaviour (children's activities and interactions with peers and teachers) and children's narratives about their rights and responsibilities.

Results

I. KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHILD'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The analysis of the knowledge of the child's rights and responsibilities showed that most children and parents find explaining these terms challenging.

Children's narratives

Have you heard about child's rights?

– *No (100%).*

What rights do children have?

– *I need to clean my room, throw out the garbage.*

Is it better to be a child or an adult?

a) It is better to be an adult:

– *Because small children can't cook, go out alone, go to work, go abroad.*

– *We have kindergarten, then school.*

– *Adults finish work late.*

b) It is better to be a child:

– *We can play and we don't worry about anything.*

– *We can walk and slide down.*

What would you change in your world/life?

- *I wish that my parents were rich and had a lot of time.*
- *I wish there was peace on earth.*
- *I wish I had a magic pencil.*
- *I wish my mother never argued.*
- *I wish my mother was good to me and didn't shout at me.*
- *I wish there were no conflicts.*
- *I wish I had a warm winter jacket.*

Parents

In Poland, using the term “parental control” is common. Most parents (90%) only “hear” about children’s rights but they do not have detailed information. According to 25% of parents, children should first of all have responsibilities – they should help in cleaning their rooms and in taking care of pets.

The most important children’s rights – according to parents’ opinion (60%–100%)

- *Art. 6. All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.*
- *Art. 32. The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous, or might harm their health or their education.*
- *Art. 33. The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.*
- *Art. 34. The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.*
- *Art. 35. The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.*
- *Art. 25. Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly.*

– Art. 26. *The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.*

– Art. 9. *Children should not be separated from parents unless it is for their own good.*

– Art. 23. *Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.*

– Art. 24. *Children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.*

– Art. 28. *All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.*

Teachers

All teachers (100%) declared that they know and realise Children's Rights.

Promoting of children's rights (Art. 12 – right to participation):

25% of preschool teachers consult with children about nursery facilities and activities and 75% of preschool teachers promote positive behaviour in children.

II. THE ROLE OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN DEVELOPING THE UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THEIR PROMOTION

Kindergartens provide care, education and learning in an atmosphere of acceptance and security. The aim of kindergarten education is to foster and direct the child's development in harmony with his/her innate potential and developmental competence as relating to his/her socio-cultural and environmental surroundings;

1. ***Getting to know and comprehending oneself and the world.***

Arranging situations allowing the child to learn about his/her own and other people's capabilities, e.g. resulting from their sex, age, health condition and experience. Imparting knowledge which concerns a healthy lifestyle as well as the ways to assess behaviours as beneficial or hazardous to health.

2. ***Acquiring skills through action.*** Supporting the child's independent actions. Enabling the child to make choices and to experience positive results of his/her actions. Helping the child to notice problems, as well as to plan and fulfil tasks. Facilitating the child's learning about and implementing various problem-solving strategies. Supporting creative acts in various fields of activity.

3. ***Finding one's own place in the peer group and the community.*** Teaching the children how to create close, friendly relations with other people. Helping to form a positive image of "self" and to satisfy the need for safety. Teaching the ways to deal with one's own emotions, to react appropriately to other's emotions, and to control one's own behaviour. Inculcating socially-accepted behaviours, introducing to the rules of *savoir-faire*. Ensuring the conditions in which to acquire experience in speaking, listening and being listened to. Creating opportunities for an exchange of information, teaching discussion skills, and reaching compromise. Creating opportunities for the child to play different roles in interpersonal relations, with emphasis on the child's role in his/her family. Creating opportunities to undertake and fulfill various tasks and to solve problems together. Supplying examples of and experiencing solutions to conflict situations through compromise and acceptance of other people's needs.

4. ***Building up of value system.*** Taking advantage of every-day situations to undertake attempts at self-evaluation and at assessment of other people's behaviour. Creating opportunities for the child to make choices and become aware of their consequences. Developing the sense of responsibility through independent, careful, and

conscientious execution of tasks undertaken, as well as the sense of respect for one's own and other people's work.

Pre-school Settings: Aims and Objectives

1. Pre-school settings work focuses on:

- a) fostering and directing the children's development in accordance with their innate potential and developmental competence in relation to their socio-cultural and environmental surroundings;
- b) providing the children with psychological and pedagogical help;
- c) ensuring that the children can sustain their sense of national, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity;
- d) taking such care of the children which is both appropriate to their needs and to the pre-school setting's resources, as well as organizing special care for the handicapped;
- e) co-operation with the family through supporting them in the education of their child, diagnosing his/her developmental potential and, as/if needed, undertaking an early specialist intervention, as well as preparing the child for further schooling.

2. The teacher's didactic and educational activities focus in particular on:

- a) ensuring care and fostering the child's development in a friendly, safe, and healthy environment;
- b) considering the child's individual needs, care to ensure equal chances, strengthening the child's trust in his/her power, ability to achieve goals and undertake responsibility for him/herself and his/her immediate surroundings;
- c) creating conditions in which to develop independence, the drive to achieve goals, and to take responsibility for oneself and one's immediate surroundings;

- d) developing moral sensitivity;
- e) building up the powers of observation, facilitating the comprehension of phenomena happening in the child's environment – in the natural, social, cultural and technical surroundings;
- f) stimulating cognitive curiosity, encouraging to investigative activity and the expression of one's thoughts and emotions;
- g) developing aesthetic sensitivity and creating conditions for the development of imagination as well as for artistic, musical and motoric expression;
- h) creating conditions for a balanced physical development, as well as safe and health-conscious behaviours.

III. CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS CONNECTED WITH DEVELOPING THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Pre-school turn of duty

A duty is a responsibility involving watching over or executing something within a given time-frame and according to a prescribed procedure, as well as the period during which such responsibility is fulfilled. The turn of duty performed in pre-school settings constitutes a form of teaching the child to work for the benefit of other people, as the children involved:

- develop both the need to serve others and the quality of persistency,
- build up sensitivity to social evaluation,
- satisfy their need for social approval,
- stimulate trust in their own abilities,
- deepen social ties with other children.

2. Features of pre-school turn of duty:

- a. The character of duty work results from having undertaken a responsibility. Such a task involves great responsibility, as it is connected with accepting a designated role. The activities connected to the given duty must be executed, i.e. they cannot be avoided and constitute a responsibility.
- b. Each type of duty must follow a certain pattern. The child on duty must know not only what s/he is supposed to do, but also how it should be done, and must therefore have certain previously acquired skills.
- c. The length of the turn of duty can vary, depending on the kind of work and the child's age (permanent, temporary and circumstantial duty).

Types of duty:

- permanent turn of duty – is connected with the established timetable, and is performed by children over the period of 1 to 3 days (younger children) or a week (older children),
- temporary turn of duty – can be assigned just once as a way to help the teacher,
- circumstantial turn of duty – assigned as the need arises (e.g. during festivities or activities involving the parents).

Examples of duty: mealtime duty, classroom duty, help at the cloakroom or in the bathroom, or in the various types of play areas.

The stages in the implementation of duty:

- a. deciding on the type of duty, designating its name, acquainting the children with the kind of activities required, demonstrating and explaining the successive actions,
- b. trial turn of duty,
- c. designating the pre-schoolers on duty who are skilled in and can be responsible for the given work.

Conclusions

The results of this study should have implications for parents and pre-school teachers. There is a growing need for a direct, close contact between families and pre-school teachers. The important questions are: How to develop the knowledge about children's rights and responsibilities? How to promote understanding of children's rights?

A child in early education should enjoy all the rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the right to:

- a) properly organized care and educational-didactic process in accordance with the regulations governing the hygiene of mental work;
- b) respect for all his/her needs, and friendly treatment reflecting the child's equal status;
- c) protection from all forms of physical or emotional abuse;
- d) respect for his/her personal dignity;
- e) respect for his/her property;
- f) care and protection;
- g) conversation on equal terms and on any subject;
- h) acceptance of his/her self.

Teachers and parents should consider (e.g. A Curriculum Framework for children 3 to 5 Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1999).

- the extent to which contexts of learning coincide with children's experiences at home and in the community,
- the range of opportunities provided to develop social awareness and willingness to cooperate,
- the extent to which children feel included in activities and experiences,
- whether children are helped to be aware of differences and value them.

It is necessary to develop special pre-school programmes to make knowledge about children's rights more common.

Children's Rights and Responsibilities

(From an illustrated guide issued by the National Children's Rights Committee, South Africa, <http://www.cyc-net.org>).

- * Children have the right to be taken seriously... and the responsibility to listen to others
- * Children have the right to quality medical care... and the responsibility to take care of themselves
- * Children have the right to a good education... and the responsibility to study and respect their teachers
- * Children have the right to be loved and protected from harm... and the responsibility to show love and caring to others
- * Children have the right to special care for special needs... and the responsibility to be the best people they can be
- * Children have the right to be proud of their heritage and beliefs... and the responsibility to respect the origins and beliefs of others
- * Children have the right to a safe and comfortable home... and the responsibility to share in keeping it neat and clean
- * Children have the right to make mistakes... and the responsibility to learn from those mistakes
- * Children have the right to be adequately fed... and the responsibility not to waste food

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Aldona Kopik

The Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce

A Six-year-old Child Among Peers. Implementing Social Roles

ABSTRACT

Children's ability to adapt their behaviour to the requirements of their social environment is an important achievement of the period of preschool education and development. Gaining social skills is only possible through the experience of active participation in social groups. New forms of children's social interactions emerge in the final period of their preschool education. Six-year-old children are able to cooperate and collaborate as well as to obey the rules and requirements established by others. They also show the ability to engage in pro-social behaviour and empathic understanding of their peers and of adults' needs. The research presented in the study was conducted as a part of the national research project "Six-year-old child on the threshold of school education". The aim of the research, which involved the main areas of child development, was to assess the degree of preparedness of six-year-old children for beginning school education. During the first stage 34225 children completing their preschool education were evaluated. In the second stage 33616 children beginning their preschool education were assessed. Each time 10% of six-year-old child population in Poland was researched. The level of children's social and emotional development was evaluated by means of the *Questionnaire for the evaluation of social-emotional development of the six-year-old child* written by Klimaszewska and Kopik.

Key words: six-year-old child, social and emotional development, social roles, peer group.

1. Introduction

The ability to adapt their behaviour to the requirements of social environment is one of the most important developmental achievements of preschool-age children. “Social environment is the source of all human-specific traits which are gradually developed by a child. In other words, social environment is the source of child’s social development” (Wygotski 1987, p. 897). “Social development can be understood as (1) integrating into a social group, often defined as socialisation, and (2) creating an identity within a group which denotes a process of developing unique patterns of experiencing, thinking and acting in different situations” (Kielar-Turska 2000, p. 113). Children gain their first social experiences in their homes and families, then in peer groups. Acquiring social skills is possible only through gaining experience when interacting within social groups. “The process of socialisation enables an individual to acquire knowledge about social groups and social roles as well as to conform to the standards and values accepted by a certain social group” (Kielar-Turska 2000, p. 113). A social role is a set of rules or regulations to be complied with by a group member who takes a specific position in the group. To enter a social role an individual needs certain knowledge, skills and abilities, while, in order to play his/her role, s/he must have an insight into the emotions and feelings inherent in it . The knowledge of roles involves the knowledge of relationships between the person who occupies a certain role (daughter, student, friend, class monitor) and their social group. It also defines rights and duties of any one actor, that is, an individual who occupies a certain role (Kielar-Turska 2000, p. 113).

“Main developmental processes in preschool children refer to their control over internal and external factors affecting their actions. These actions should enable children to satisfy their needs without causing conflicts. Acquiring skills necessary to act or behave in a peaceful way gives children a chance to establish relationships with other people

and with objects” (Smykowski 2005, p. 184). This stage of child development is characterised by the change in roles of parents and peers. A child tends to spend less time with parents (vertical relationships) and more time with peers (horizontal relationships). In this period relationships with friends significantly affect children’s behaviour and beliefs. “The main function of vertical relationships is to provide children with safety and security as well as to enable them to gain knowledge and necessary skills. The function of horizontal relationships, however, involves acquiring skills which can be developed only among those who are equal” (Schaffer 2006, p. 136). Toward the end of preschool years children participate actively in new forms of social interactions. Six-year-old children are able to cooperate with others as well as to accept orders and requirements. They are sensitive to other people’s needs, can evaluate their peers’ behaviour and often take the initiative when interacting with others.

2. Research material and methodology

The research discussed in this article was conducted in 2006 as a part of the national research project “Six-year-old child on the threshold of school education”. The aim of the research was to assess whether six-year-old children were prepared to begin school education. The assessment involved the main areas of child’s development. The research was conducted in two stages. During the first stage (April – May, 2006) 34 225 children born in 1999 and finishing their one-year preschool education were tested. During the second stage (September – October, 2006) 33 616 children born in 2000 and beginning their one-year preschool education were tested in the same educational institutions, the same environment, and with the use of the same tools.

Each time approximately 10 % of the entire population of six-year-olds in Poland were examined. As a research tool, stratified random

sampling without replacement was applied including such strata as sex (split into boys and girls), the type of educational institution (split into school and preschool) and the place of living (split into urban and rural areas) (Kopik, Walasek 2007, p. 12-13).

Most of the methods widely used to assess social maturity are based on observation of the child's behaviour in a group. Emotional development, however, is assessed through projection techniques. In the research, the level of the children's social and emotional development was evaluated by means of the *Questionnaire for the evaluation of social-emotional development of the six-year-old child* written by Klimaszewska and Kopik. The questionnaire involves the teachers' knowledge of their students. Assessing the level of social and emotional development requires describing the research subject's selected qualities and actions. The questionnaire consists of two parts, the first of which concerns the assessment of social development, while the second enables the assessment of emotional development. The assessment of social development comprises five categories: independence (I), peer interaction (II), compliance with rules and standards accepted by the group (III), cooperation (IV), and attitudes towards assignments (V). For each skill, children were rated by their teachers on a five-point scale. Children with high competencies were rated 5 points, as opposed to those with low competencies or lack thereof – 1 point (Kopik, Zatorska 2010, p. 58-66).

To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency was used. The relevant coefficients calculated in the first stage were the following: for boys – 0.945, and for girls – 0.943; in the second stage they were: for boys – 0.948, and for girls – 0.947. Bearing in mind the fact that the value of Cronbach's alpha equal to 1, the above-mentioned coefficients were considered to be high, apart from the category IV – cooperation, for which the coefficients of internal consistency were the lowest, approximately 0.730. Content validity was measured by means of subject matter

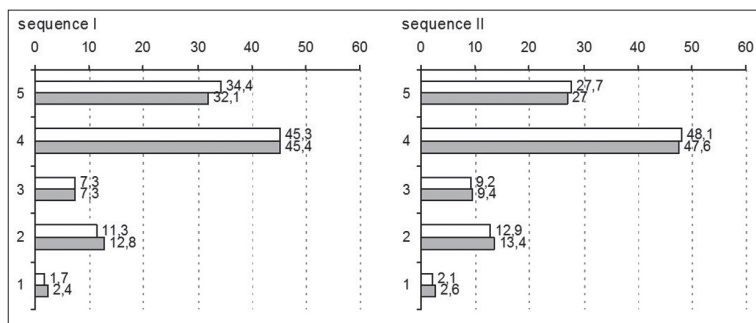
experts (SMEs) evaluating test (logical validity). The locus of control, the concept developed by Rotter in his social learning theory, was used as an external criterion of validity. The relationships seemed to be statistically significant at the level of 0.1 (p -value < 0.001). The validity of the questionnaire used for evaluating social and emotional development was proved by the examination of the internal structure of the questionnaire (the relationships between questionnaire items were measured at the level of statistical significance 0.6 and higher, p -value < 0.001) (Kopik, Klimaszewska 2007, p. 27-30).

The study concentrates mainly on the two categories of social development which best reveal how six-year-old children interact in their peer groups and how they perform their social roles. In category II – peer interaction – the following aspects were determined: interpersonal skills, helpfulness, drawing attention to themselves, initiative as well as attitude towards weaker and younger children. In category IV – cooperation – elements such as the ability to compromise and cooperate, submissiveness, position taken in group hierarchy, as well as the ability to evaluate other children's behaviour were assessed. The abovementioned aspects were already discussed in an earlier study (Kopik 2008, p. 67-84). The analyses focused on students' behaviour during classroom peer interaction. The research findings were compared in groups of boys and girls. This article focuses on the results collected for children attending preschool institutions and schools.

3. Research results

Undoubtedly, good interpersonal skills have a significant impact on children's peer relationships. It has been assumed that six-year-old children are able to make new friends easily and quickly. Making new friends was the first skill to be assessed in the category of peer interaction. The analysis of the research findings revealed that the majority of children (both in sequence I and sequence II) had excellent inter-

personal skills. However, there were some children who had difficulty making new friends. It may be noticed that children examined in sequence I, that is those finishing one-year preschool education, obtained higher results as compared to children examined in sequence II. High results (5 points and 4 points) were achieved by 78.5% of children examined in sequence I and 75.5% of children examined in sequence II. The lowest results (1 point) were found for about 2% of children which proved that not many children had difficulty interacting with their peers. Having compared the research findings for the group of preschool children and the group of school children, it was established that, both in sequence I and sequence II, children attending preschool institutions were rated higher than children attending schools. Preschoolers achieved a larger number of higher results (4 and 5 points) and fewer lower results (1 and 2 points). The details are shown in Figure 1.



Legend for Figures 1 – 10: □ preschool institution; ■ school.

Figure 1. Peer interactions (II A) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

Helpfulness towards other children (II B) was also evaluated, since it has a significant impact on the quality of everyday peer interactions. Data analysis revealed that the teachers considered six-year-old

children to have been really helpful. More than 80% of the students were very helpful, always ready to give a hand or share with others (5 points). Higher results were achieved by children finishing their one-year preschool education (sequence I) in comparison with those beginning their preschool education (sequence II). Having compared the data collected for the group of children attending preschool institutions and for the group of children attending schools, it was noticed that in terms of helpfulness preschoolers achieved higher results than school children. The details are shown in Figure 2.

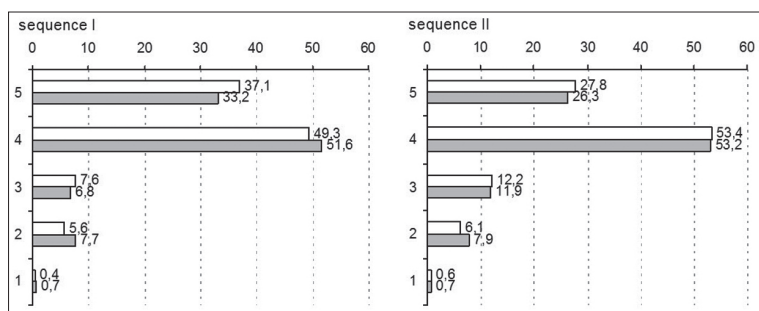


Figure 2. Helpfulness towards other children (II B) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

In their family homes children are usually the focus of the attention of other family members. Entering a peer group is a new experience which involves fitting into the group and adapting to the new situation. A child needs to know that (s)he may no longer be in the centre of attention and accept the fact that other children will also focus other's attention. The teachers were asked to assess how children adapted to such a situation. According to the research findings, the children enjoyed drawing attention to themselves as well as being in the centre of attention. However, more than half of the children tested could easily accept the situation in which their peers were in the centre of attention. In contrast, a significant number of children (more than

20%) were not able to adapt to such a situation. In sequence I, more children achieved high grades (5 points), but also more children were rated low (1 and 2 points). The research findings for children attending preschool and school institutions proved that preschoolers more willingly accepted the situation in which their peers were the centre of attention. The details are shown in Figure 3.

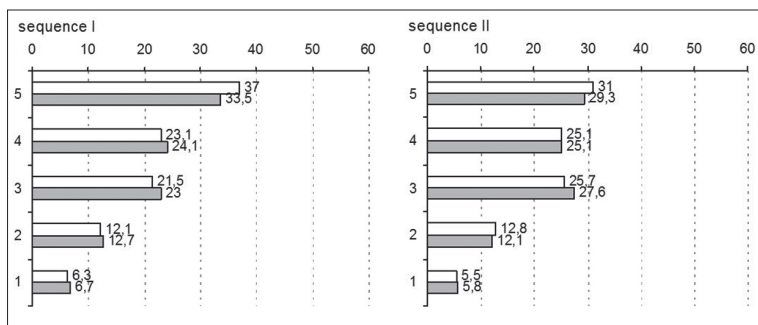


Figure 3. Drawing attention to themselves (II C) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

Another aspect assessed in category II was the children's ability to take the initiative when interacting with peers (II D). Children who are spontaneous and able to initiate action win recognition from their peers quickly. They are assigned responsible tasks and attractive social roles by their teachers. The research findings revealed that children were spontaneous and showed initiative. As much as 68.9% of children in sequence I and 63.9% in sequence II were rated high (4 and 5 points). It needs to be emphasised, however, that there was a large group of children (approximately 20%) who showed no or little initiative. Having compared the research findings obtained in the group of preschool children with the results collected for the group of school children, it was established that actions and initiatives of children attending preschool institutions were rated higher than those

of children attending schools. In the group of preschoolers there were more high grades (5 points) and fewer low grades (1 and 2 points).

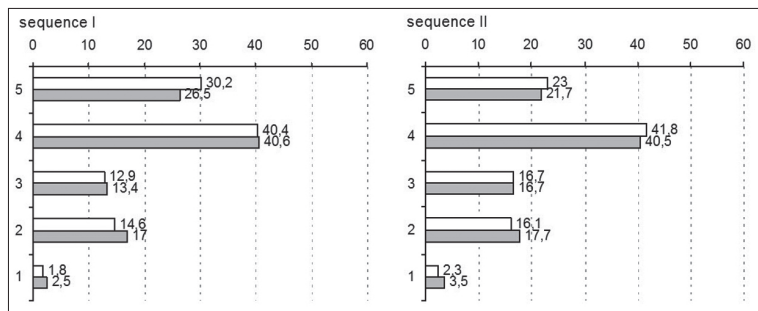


Figure 4. Initiative in peer interactions (II D) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

Apart from mutual acceptance, such qualities as loyalty and willingness to help and support others are also essential for maintaining good social relations between children. Children's attitude towards their younger or weaker friends (II E) was the last skill assessed in category II. The analysis revealed that six-year-olds were sensitive to other children's needs and willing to help: 79% of children in sequence I and 73.2% in sequence II were rated high (4 and 5 points). In each sequence, approximately 4% of children were proved to have shown improper attitude towards their younger or weaker friends. The comparative analysis of the research data for children attending preschool and school institutions revealed that preschoolers were more protective. In both sequences, children attending preschool institutions were rated higher than their friends from schools (by 3.7% and 3.4% respectively). In this category, not many children from preschool institutions received low grades. The details concerning children's attitude towards their younger and weaker friends are shown in Figure 5.

The ability to reach agreement and compromise (IV A) was the first aspect to have been assessed in category IV, concerning cooperation

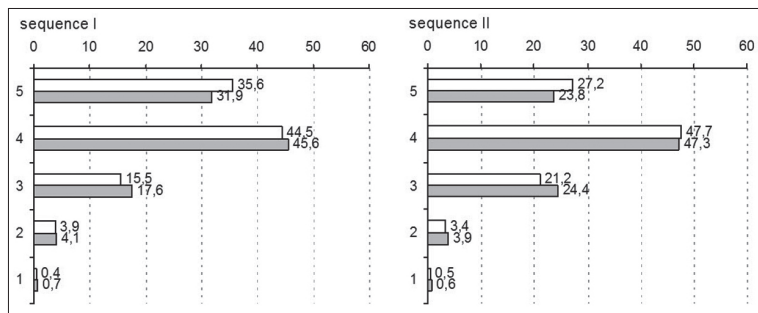


Figure 5. Children's attitude towards their younger or weaker friends (II E) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

within a group. The ability to reach agreement is significant for good peer relationships. The analysis revealed that the majority of children (70%) was open to reaching agreement and compromise. However, there was a group of children who refused to agree or compromise. Instead, they wanted to gain control over their peers and impose their will on other children (17.8% in sequence I and 15.6% in sequence II). Children attending preschool institutions received higher results as compared to children attending schools. The details are shown in Figure 6.

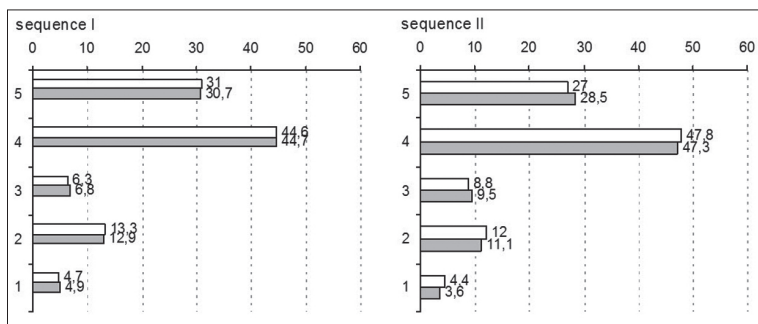


Figure 6. Ability to reach agreement and compromise (IV A) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

In terms of cooperation (IV B), children were rated very high. As much as 83.1% of children evaluated in sequence I and 80% of children evaluated in sequence II were willing and ready to cooperate with their peers. In both sequences of the research only a few children, more often from school than preschool institutions, refused to cooperate. In this category, preschoolers were evaluated similarly to children attending schools. The details are shown in Figure 7.

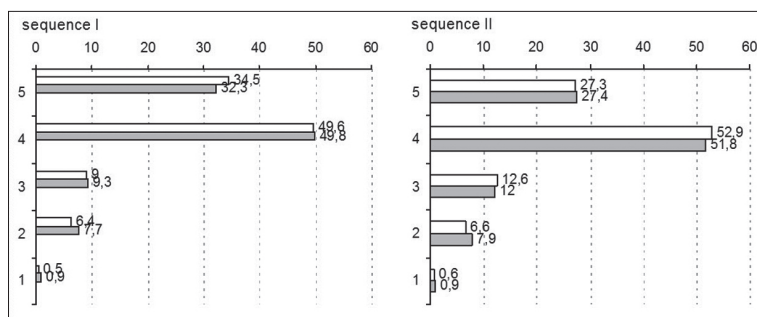


Figure 7. Cooperation (IV B) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

When interacting with peers, children develop their social competencies as well as expand their knowledge about themselves and about other children. They also realize that people may have different opinions on any one topic. It is important that children can express their own views and not always be influenced by their peers. According to the research findings (IV C), the majority of children were able to express their own points of view. Children finishing one-year preschool education (sequence I) achieved significantly better results. It can be assumed that peer group interaction contributed to the development of this ability. Having compared the results of children attending schools to the results of preschoolers, it can be claimed that children attending preschool institutions were rated higher. The details are shown in Figure 8.

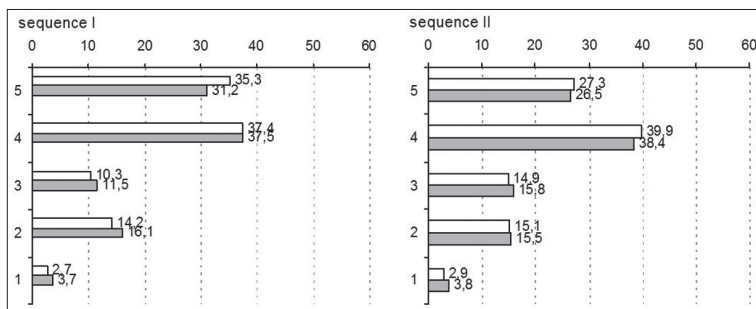


Figure 8. Submissiveness toward other children (IVC) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

The position taken within peer group is important for everyday interactions since it influences children's roles. The teachers assessed children's position in peer group through analysing whether the children cared about being liked by their peers. Based on the research findings, it might be assumed that over 80% of children, in both sequences, desired to be liked. The teachers also observed a group of children who did not care about being liked by others (approximately 10% of children in each sequence). Having compared the results of children who were assessed in both sequences, it may be noticed that students finishing their one-year preschool education were rated higher. The comparative analysis of the results collected for children attending preschool and school institutions revealed that higher results were obtained by preschool children. The details are shown in Figure 9.

The ability to assess other children's behaviour (IV E) (category IV) was the last element to be evaluated. It was found that the majority of children could properly assess their peers' behaviour. The competencies of children examined in sequence I were rated higher. In sequence I more children (by 5.7%) than in sequence II were always able to assess their peers' behaviour properly. Having compared the results of children from preschool institutions to the results of children attend-

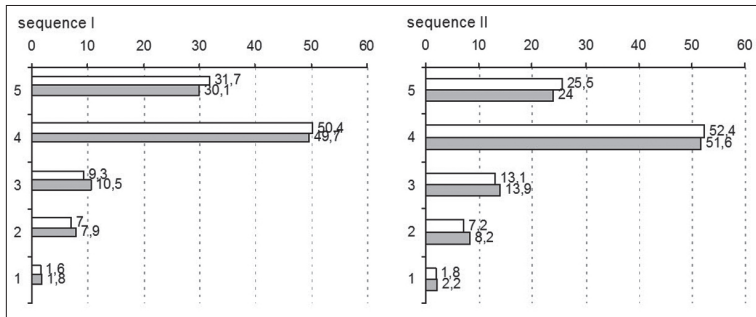


Figure 9. Child's position in the group (IV D) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

ing schools, it may be noticed that preschoolers proved better abilities to assess their peers' behaviour. The details are shown in Figure 10.

In category II – peer interactions – helpfulness towards other children (II B) received the highest assessment ($\bar{x} = 4.13$ in sequence I and $\bar{x} = 4.01$ in sequence II), similarly to children's attitude towards their younger and weaker friends – II E ($\bar{x} = 4.08$ in sequence I and $\bar{x} = 3.95$ in sequence II). The ability to accept the situation in which others are the centre of attention – II C – received the lowest assessment ($\bar{x} = 3.68$ in sequence I and $\bar{x} = 3.63$ in sequence II).

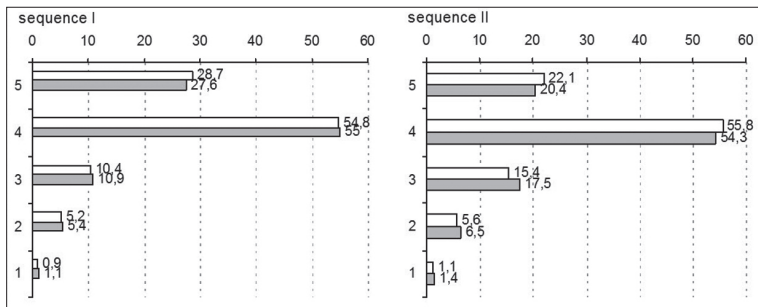


Figure 10. Ability to assess peers' behaviour (IV E) by the type of educational institution (5-point scale).

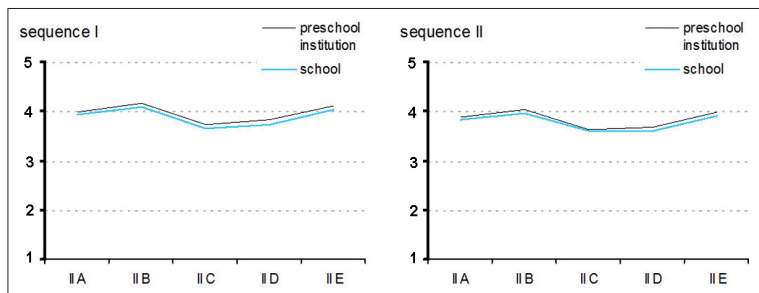


Figure 11. Profiles of peer interactions (II) in sequences I and II by the type of educational institution.

Comparative analysis of the research findings concerning the abilities included in the assessment of peer interactions in the groups of children attending preschool institutions and schools revealed significant differences in the level of children's abilities (Figure 11). In all cases, preschoolers received higher grades than children attending schools. The profile of characteristics concerning peer interactions (II) – Figure 11 – was similar in the group of preschoolers as well as in the group of school children (in both sequences). The correlation of profiles between the preschoolers and school children was positive, regardless of the sequence. It means that in terms of peer interactions, preschoolers were characterised as similar to school children.

In category IV – cooperation – the highest grades the children received concerned their ability to cooperate with their peers – IV B ($\bar{x} = 4.09$ in sequence I and $\bar{x} = 4.00$ in sequence II). The lowest results were found for submissiveness – IV C ($\bar{x} = 3.83$ in sequence I and $\bar{x} = 3.72$ in sequence II) as well as for the ability to reach agreement and compromise – IV A ($\bar{x} = 3.84$ in both sequences).

The comparative analysis of the results for cooperation, in all its aspects, revealed that children attending preschool institutions received higher grades than school children (Figure 12).

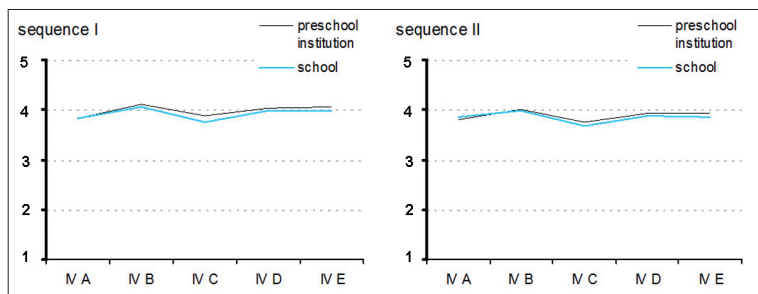


Figure 12. Profiles of cooperation (IV) in sequences I and II by the type of educational institution.

The characteristics concerning cooperation (IV) – Figure 12 – indicate a high similarity in profiles of preschool and school children in both sequences, which means that, in terms of cooperation, within their peer group, preschoolers are similar to children attending schools.

4. Summary and Conclusions

Having assessed children's behaviour in their peer groups on the basis of the results collected for peer interactions (II) and cooperation (IV), it may be noticed that:

1. The majority of children had good relationships in their peer groups. According to the research findings, children finishing their one-year preschool education (sequence I) showed a higher level of social skills than the children beginning their one-year preschool education (sequence II). The analyses revealed that children assessed in sequence I received better grades compared to children assessed in sequence II in all the categories.
2. In category II – peer interactions – in each sequence of the research, the highest results were found for helpfulness towards

other children (II B) as well as for attitude towards younger and weaker peers (II E), as opposed to the ability to accept the situation in which others are in the centre of attention (II C) receiving the lowest assessment.

3. As far as category IV – cooperation within the group – is concerned, in both sequences the highest results were found for peer cooperation (IV B) in contrast to submissiveness (IV C), which received the lowest assessment.
4. Comparative analysis of the groups of children attending preschool institutions and schools revealed that social skills of preschool children were assessed higher. It might be assumed that children in preschool institutions were provided with more opportunities to develop social skills. What is more, social interactions appeared to be more varied.
5. The research findings proved that six-year-old children from preschool institutions and schools were similarly characterised in terms of peer interactions (II), including: interpersonal skills, helpfulness, drawing attention to themselves, initiative in peer interactions and attitude towards younger or weaker friends, as well as in terms of cooperation within their peer group (IV), including the ability to reach agreement and compromise, cooperation with others, submissiveness, position in a group and the ability to assess other children's behaviour.

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Małgorzata Głoskowska-Soldatow

University of Białystok

Pro-Social Behaviour and Motives of Conduct among Preschool-Age Children

ABSTRACT

The text regards the motives of pro-social behaviour among preschool children. The results of the research were described following a presentation of the course and accuracy of children's social development in light of relevant literature. The research conducted among five- and six-year-old children revealed that age is a factor determining children's pro-social behaviour. Internal motives, influencing children's social behaviour, are more often present in case of behaviour not approved socially, whereas external motives dominate the reasoning behind pro-social behaviour.

Key words: pro-social behaviour, motives, preschool children.

Introduction

Psychological and educational literature often stresses the importance of the child's first experiences in the development of his/her personality, as well as emphasizes the extreme sensitivity of a small

child to stimuli from his/her immediate surroundings. The first social contacts outside the family environment are of great importance to the development of a child, and their course can be considered as one of the indicators of child's social skills. Szuman (1999, p. 236) believed that "social development could be examined from two points of view: as an integration of the children into a social group, often referred to as a socialization; or as a case of forming a unit inside the group, that is, the process of achieving unique patterns of living, thinking and acting in different situations".

As stated, the social development of a child can be approached from various angles. And yet, the ways of its recognition are not mutually exclusive, despite their different interpretations. These approaches are demonstrated in the chart number 1.

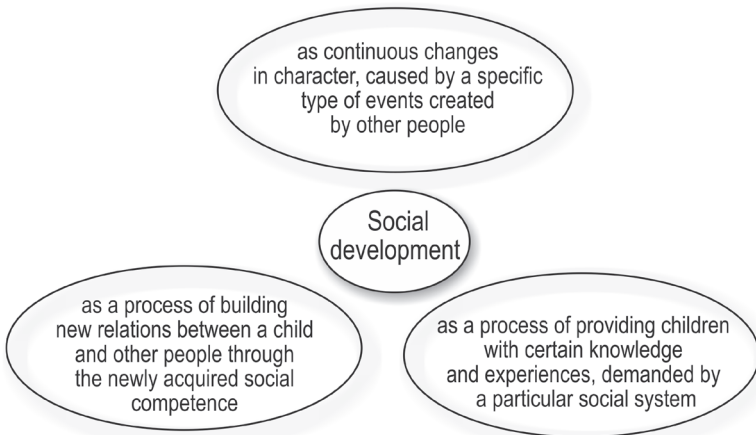


Chart 1. Concepts of the child's social development

The child's social development can be interpreted as a directed social process, resulting in the continued growth of certain variables, which are critical from the point of view of his/her environment (Hurlock 2000). A purposeful sequence of changes taking place in the child that are beneficial to the community is referred to as children's social progress. On the other hand, a purposeful sequence of changes that are disadvantageous to a particular society is called child's social regress.

As a result of social development the child becomes ready to perform different social roles, that is, all the expectations of the child and the rights s/he is entitled to according to the position occupied in the group. The child is required to comply with the course of actions resulting from the standards accepted by the group. The concept of social competence is also connected to the child's social development. It is often referred to as "relatively stable personality characteristics of the child, acquired during his/her social development, which prove to be indispensable in order to exert the desired effect on others in various social situations" (Kowalik 2002, p. 76).

The child's social competence is built upon his/her life experiences. It could be stated that it is the child's established social experience that in later stages of life stabilizes the child's social development, individualizes him/her, and provides him/her with a relative autonomy against external influences. Social competence is a prerequisite for a young (wo)man's participation in various areas of social life without losing his/her autonomy. Another category, akin to the child's social development, is his/her social knowledge, which determines the degree of integration into social practice. This category can be divided into three sub-categories: colloquial knowledge, known as a set of views in a particular field; institutional knowledge, defined as a series of formal and informal rules; and scientific knowledge, which is a set of beliefs that describe and explain the course of social practice (Kowalik 2002, p. 76).

Child developmental changes always involve the acquisition of social behaviour, social competence and social knowledge. However, in the first phase of their development, children mainly broaden their repertoire of social behaviour. Social competence is developed in the second phase, while in adulthood people develop and expand their cognitive functions, referring to their practices and knowledge. The child's social development should be treated as the loss or creation of a new social phenomenon, or a transition in the basic elements of its structure.

The child's behaviour, indicating the degree and level of socialization, is affected by various elements, such as: the educational culture of his/her family environment, parental attitudes, the financial status of the family, family relations and the prevailing atmosphere, and the way the child is being taken care of. In addition to his/her family environment, the child's preschool and his/her teacher also play an important part in his/her socialization. Preschools introduce and instill social and moral standards of conduct and ideals, thus aiding in the development of worldview, attitudes, and beliefs. At the same time, they prepare children to live and work together. The child's social development is important for the formation of those psychological mechanisms which constitute in him/her a source of pro-social behaviour, undertaken for the benefit of other people. Those mechanisms are not yet fully developed in preschool-age children. However, it can be observed that those children understand other people's needs and are able to help selflessly.

Pro-social behaviour is a type of social behaviour. In everyday life it is the society and the environment we live in that cause us to behave in a certain way. Opinions about different types of behaviour vary. "There is a number of psychologists who believe that our tendency to pro-social and antisocial behaviour is innate (as a part of our genetics); and again, there are psychologists who claim that all pro and

antisocial behaviour is taught by parents and other people important to us” (Clarke 2005, p. 5).

Desirable pro-social behaviour takes mainly three forms: sharing, cooperating and helping, which means supporting and taking care of. These are referred to as altruism. Before children begin to show altruism, though, they must develop cognitive and emotional abilities. These include the ability to take someone else’s perspective, that is, the ability to perceive a situation from someone else’s point of view, and empathy, i.e. the ability to experience the emotions of another person.

Taking the Other’s perspective and empathy are still poorly developed among preschool children or even children at the early stage of elementary school. Nevertheless, studies prove that a child, early in his/her life and probably at home, can experience giving and taking in a relation with another person (Reykowski 1992).

According to Goleman (1997), a crucial factor in the child’s social behaviour in terms of cognitive development is the ability to judge a situation from another person’s perspective. Taking such a perspective can take many forms, such as: physical, social and emotional. To take the other’s physical perspective means to accept his/her – another – physical point of view. However, it does not necessarily represent pro-social attitudes. On the other hand, the ability to adopt the social perspective, that is, an ability to identify other people’s views and attitudes, is more often connected with the understanding and the acceptance of or even empathy towards another and, thus, has an impact on social behaviour. The child’s empathic skills build his/her pro-social behaviour. An empathic child, when observing a person in need, feels anxious and relieves his/her anxiety by providing assistance or compassion. Such a child is able to experience joy and happiness that pro-social activities bring to another person. In the early years

children cannot clearly distinguish the feelings of others from their own. In the course of cognitive development children build their understanding of what others feel and why. Real empathic reactions happen at the age of 2–3. Later on, empathy develops fully, allowing children to generalize empathic reactions to whole groups, e.g. the poor.

The child acquires knowledge in the course of social development. Clarke believes pro-social behaviour can be learnt as any other behaviour (2005). The main factor, “realising the learning process means learning motives, and it results in an increase in the possessed knowledge and skills, in influencing attitudes, beliefs, and in an overall development of an individual learner, that is, his behaviour” (Kupisiewicz 2005, p. 20). Motives are external or internal stimuli provoking action, arising from the experience of the individual. A person is able to influence his/her motives and guide them, but only on condition that s/he is aware of them.

Motives play a decisive role in determining specific actions. However, decision-making involves a kind of motives battle. Some of them speak for performing the task, others advocate against it. Motives cannot be captured directly, but only through the accompanying circumstances and purpose that has been achieved. It could be stated that a motive works as long as the unit does not reach the intended purpose, or until before he reaches it and there is not some other, stronger motive, taking the place of the previous one. Typically, after achieving the aim of a certain action motives disappear, so that they can reappear in different situations and circumstances. Motives derived from the external environment of the unit or resulting from his/her internal life, determine, respectively, the outer and inner type of motivation (Franken 2005; Gasiul 2007; Brophy 2002).

Research presentation

The research was conducted on individual units. A pictorial test prepared by Głuskowska-Sołdatow (2002) was used. The test takes the form of illustrated pictures. The diagnostician is the narrator here, and his/her role is to tell a story about different social situations. Children are supposed to act as characters from the story and show how they would behave in this particular situation (by choosing one of the two pictures illustrating different endings of the story). Afterwards, each child explains the reasons for his/her choice. Two illustrations were designated for the presentation.

The research was conducted on 30 preschool children, that is, two groups of five- and six-year-olds, each consisting of 15 pupils. The analysis uses the results of quantitative methods (presenting choices made by children) as well as qualitative methods (necessary to provide and interpret motives for the decisions made).

The first story referred to the ability to feel compassion and to help others, especially the old, ill and disabled. The children listened to an illustrated story about a boy who is going home tired. Soon the bus gets crowded and there are no seats available. Two old people stand next to the boy. Children were asked if they would give their seat or if they would remain seated. The answers given are presented in chart 2.

The vast majority of children participating in the research chose to give their seat on the bus to an elderly person. Almost all of the six-year-olds would behave this way. In the five-year-old group there were fewer children who decided to give up their seat, and more children who did not understand why they should give up their seats to old people. What arguments did children give for behaving according to accepted social standards? The answer: *because one must* prevailed. When asked: what does “one must” mean?, they usually said: *Our parents(teacher) tell us to* (Children’s responses are marked in italics) which indicates they were obeying the rules from outside and there

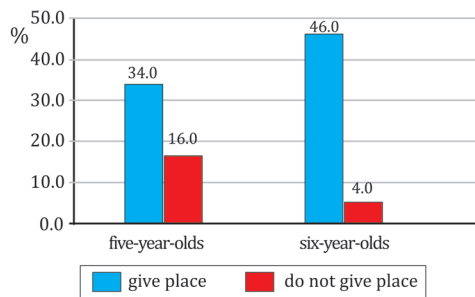


Chart 2. Results for story number 1 (Source: prepared by the author)

was no inner motive to prove their ability to feel compassion. Other answers were: *Because old people are simply tired; Because my grandmother complains about not giving up the seat for her*; which could be interpreted as showing the ability to take the other's perspective in judging a situation, or empathy. One five-year-old child said: *when I am old they will give their seat to me too*. However, this statement should not be regarded as a manifestation of anticipation, but rather as a kind of warning from the elders, a piece of advice that probably the child has heard. Children also gave reasons that could be treated as evidence of obeying the rules of social coexistence and, simultaneously, as proof of selfishness: *Because I prefer to stand on the bus; I like standing on the bus because it is easier to look through the window; or Because everybody stares at me*. These are the indicators of those children's inner motivations. It is worth emphasizing that there were no significant differences between the statements of five- and six-year-olds.

The motives behind the decision of not giving up one's seat on the bus were as follows: *Seats are not only for the elderly; I can be tired too*. That shows some egocentric attitudes among the children tested. The children sometimes tried to justify their negative choice by saying: *After all, I could not see this old lady because I was looking through the*

window; Because my legs always hurt. There was also one answer given by a five-year-old boy who claimed he would not give up his seat, and yet his motive raises doubts about the way his decision can be classified. The boy said: *My mum always tells me to sit on the bus.* Even though this child does not comply with socially accepted norms, he is obedient to his parent, who probably cares about the child's safety. Among six-year-olds there were two arguments that proved their understanding and mastery of some social rules of coexistence; however, their application to the situation given was inappropriate: *Whoever gets first on the bus wins; I took this place first.* The reasons cited suggest that the child is aware that specific rules exist and he should comply with them according to the standards of social coexistence, but he cannot apply them correctly in a specific situation. One of the children stated that *A child has the same rights as an adult.* And yet, when asked for further explanations, the child was unable to clarify his thoughts and used only meaningless clichés.

The other story used in the research tells of a girl who was asked by her parents to play with her younger brother in the playground. At the same time, two of her friends were playing ball outside. The question was: what should this girl do – stay with her brother or play with her friends?

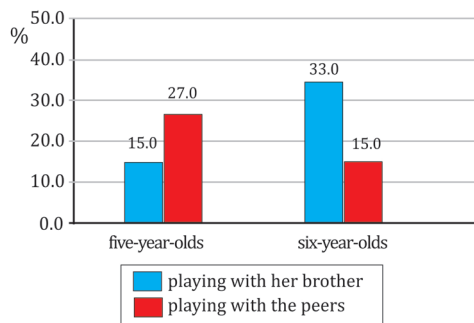


Chart 3. Results for story number 2 (Source: prepared by the author)

In this case the results were divided differently. The discrepancies between the choices made by five- and six-year-olds are major – the arrangement of answers was inversely proportional. The majority of younger children opted for leaving the brother so as to have fun with friends, whereas older children showed a different attitude – most chose to play with the brother instead of playing with friends. Five-year-olds have not yet proved to be protective towards others as a sign of social development.

The decision to stay with their younger brother was mostly made for fear of facing unpleasant consequences. *If I left him, they would scold me; I would be punished; Mum and dad would get angry. I'd rather not say what could happen; He (the brother) would complain about me.* Those statements were prevailing among five-year-old children. The action declared agreed with the norms of coexistence, but the fear of punishment expresses the children's external motive. The arguments given by six-year-olds demonstrated greater social maturity and awareness of existing rules and regulations: *You have to take care of your younger brother; I can help my parents too; The older children should play with the younger.* Answers such as: *because he would cry; or he would feel sad* are evidence of using the other person's perspective while judging the situation. There were also some statements that rationalized this situation: *I can play ball some other time; I can call my friends later.* In this group of children there appeared also arguments that confirmed their internal motivation for some activities: *I like playing with my brother; I don't like playing ball.* Internal motivation was dominant among the children who chose to play with their friends as well. The most common reasons were as follows: *I prefer playing with my friends; I like playing ball; I don't like playing with babies.* Looking for pleasure and avoiding unpopular actions constituted motives behind those actions. Three children were willing to explain their decisions: *My brother always destroys everything in the playground; Maybe he prefers playing alone?; It is not that far though;*

I don't have a younger brother (5 children noted a lack of younger siblings). Older children accounted for their choices by referring to their sense of justice and rules, e.g. *Playing with my brother is as important as my needs; Parents shouldn't tell me to be with him (brother)*. A few arguments demonstrated someone else's point of view (the brother's): *He would probably cry if I left him*; or differently: *My brother would feel sad that I play ball*; and friends': *My friends would feel sorry that I didn't want to play (ball)*. There were also some fears of unpleasant consequences present among the answers: *They would be offended if I didn't play with them*.

The children aged six were trying to find a compromise in the situation and not to clearly decide about their behaviour, suggesting other solutions: *Now I would play with my brother and then my mum would let me stay longer; After all I could play ball and look at my brother; He can sit in the playground and I could play ball next to him*. Older children can have some experience with setting a social contract and establishing mutually beneficial ways of functioning. The awareness of having such a possibility demonstrates these children's social competence. On the margins of the research exploring motives for children's social activities, other behaviour, indicating further social development achievements, could be observed. Some children showed evidence of the ability to control emotions of other people. Those children hugged the observer or made some comments which were supposed to win the adult's sympathy. They were willing to communicate with the stranger, and showed no fear of the new situation.

Even though the children were to act as characters of stories for the sake of the research, they had no problems doing so. Moreover, children stated that they had never taken the bus on their own and that they always travel with an adult. In all cases except one, the children were encouraged to talk when asked to imagine that they were taking part in the story.

Summary

The child's socialization, that is, adapting the forms of his/her behaviour to the requirements of his/her social environment, is an important developmental achievement of the pre-school period. Children become more independent and autonomous. They cross previous social limits and relations, they get more deeply involved in their environment and make more courageous attempts to meet the challenges they face in their relations with peers and adults (Chilińska-Karpowicz, Jaworska 2006). The author's intention was to examine children's pro-social behaviour. The results collected during the research (partly described above) allow one to draw a few conclusions about the group studied:

- the discrepancies between results from six-year-olds and five-year-olds were easily noticeable in both situations analysed. In the first study the results were only slightly varied; in the second one, however, they were very significantly varied – which may probably be explained by the differences in the children's life experiences (a few children answered that they have no brother or do not travel by bus);
- internal motives are far more often considered as reasons for anti-social behaviour and for not complying with generally accepted social norms, whereas external motives mostly dominate in argumentation for pro-social behaviour. External orders are respected by most children;
- the evidence for accepting another person's perspective in assessing a situations are rarely present, and are more likely to occur among six-year-olds. Older children took more time to decide which ending to the story is more suitable, and explained the reasoning behind their choice. They responded thoughtfully, often asking for additional details. Younger children's answers were rather quick and laconic.

Preschool children are in a period of intense social development, largely resulting from the expansion and the growing importance of social contacts connected with spending time at preschool. A child who begins to function without parental supervision learns to evaluate situations and to control his/her behaviour and actions. Changes in the child's motivation are essential to this process. The child's egocentric behaviour gradually transforms itself into pro-social behaviour. Desirable pro-social behaviour takes mainly three forms: sharing, cooperating and helping. Children begin to understand other people's needs and are able to provide selfless help. There are even children who manifest some type of altruistic behaviour.

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Marta Krasuska-Betiuk

The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw

Olga Bambrowicz

Stendhal University in Grenoble

Dialogue of Cultures in Teaching Mother Tongue to Children of Parents Migrating From Poland to France

ABSTRACT

The paper tackles the problem of interculturalism in teaching Polish to the children of Polish immigrants in France. The first part of the theoretical frames of the issues undertaken constitutes an outline of the main notions: dialogue of cultures, intercultural communication and competence, the role of language as the tool for shaping the identity of a child and for getting to know the Other, as well as an intercultural approach to Polish glottodidactics, emphasizing the function of a teacher as the promoter of intercultural communication. In the second part, the possible planes for a dialogue between the Polish and French cultures on the level of contents and methods of teaching were indicated. Finally, empirical verifications of the performance of the meeting of cultures were presented with reference to practice in teaching Polish to children in the Polish school in Grenoble.

Key words: teaching mother tongue, dialogue of Polish and French cultures, intercultural communication.

Introduction

The paper tackles the problem of interculturalism in teaching Polish to the children of Polish immigrants in France. In its first part, the theoretical frames of the issues undertaken have been outlined, explaining the main notions: *dialogue of cultures*, *intercultural communication and competence*. Moreover, the role of language as the tool for shaping the identity of a child and for getting to know the Other was described, and the intercultural approach to Polish glot-todidactics was explained, emphasizing the function of a teacher as the promoter of intercultural communication. In the second part, the possible planes for the dialogue of the Polish and French cultures on the level of contents and methods of teaching were indicated, followed by a presentation of empirical verifications of the performance of the meeting of cultures with reference to practice in teaching Polish to children in the Polish school in Grenoble.

The dialogue of cultures and intercultural communication – conceptualizing main notions

The theoretical grounds for the considerations undertaken herein can be found in chosen concepts of the idea of the *dialogue of cultures* and the theory of intercultural communication and intercultural competence it implies. The notion of the *dialogue of cultures* is conceptualized in various ways, both in the humanities and in social sciences, and the idea of interculturalism as a global educational challenge is the current subject of detailed interdisciplinary research.

20th-century philosophers developed several concepts of *dialogue*. Habermas's theory of (1999) communicative action is important for the present consideration. According to the philosopher, the paradigm of the communication as well as performative attitude of interaction participants heading towards consensus is significant. To

make it possible, and to make discourse free and equal, each participant of the communicative action must formulate universal validity claims controlling the conversation, and assume that these claims can be fulfilled. These claims apply to the clarity and truthfulness of statements, legitimacy of norms, and sincerity of intentions. Communicative action must authorize its claims in the form of a discourse. They are expressed by an ideal communication community in which each interlocutor has the same possibility of expressing themselves and is free from external and internal pressures. Only communicative actions, oriented at reaching an agreement, will allow a community to convey correctly its cultural contents, thereby integrating groups and socializing individuals.

The concept explaining the encounter of different cultures was presented by Ricoeur (1994), an enthusiast of cultural integration. He assumed that the most important task was the transformation of mentality affecting the ethos of individuals, groups and peoples, and primarily the combination of identity and otherness in many planes. Among them, he indicated three integration models. In the first of them – the translation model – he drew attention to the multilingualism of Europe, and that is why he postulated the rule of “universal translatability”, i.e. translating both the contents from the source to target language, as well as approximating cultural notions of another culture. In the second model – remembrance exchange – he emphasized that transposing the present culture to other categories is connected with meeting others’ ethical and spiritual categories; that is why, to Ricoeur, it is necessary to relate the question of European culture to one’s own past. In the third model – forgiveness – he postulated the so called “breaking of debt”: a release from the punishment for debt.

Berry (1989) proposed four types of acculturation and hence types of identity, simultaneously claiming that the integration strategy gives clearly positive consequences for the psychical functioning of people undergoing the process of acculturation. An individual employing an

integration strategy opts for maintaining their own cultural identification but, at the same time, believes that it is beneficial to maintain the connections with the culture of the opposing group. For the issues discussed in this article, cultural integration, understood as the ability to understand and adjust to cultural norms, acceptance, adoption and observing the rules, patterns and values, the knowledge of the language and tradition of the host country (e.g. science, religion, entertainment, ways of spending free time, and interpersonal contacts), is important.

The semantics of the word *dialogue* reveals an active, dynamic and two-directional model of interaction between entities who are in different cultures or between texts being the products of those cultures. The essence of dialogue can be boiled down to the meeting of two cultures, as a result of which a new cultural quality can be created (Nocoń 2009, p. 288). According to Paleczny (2009), dialogue is an organized form of interpersonal and intergroup communication which also takes place on the grounds of art, literature, film, political and social institutions, and many other elements of the social and cultural infrastructure. The idea of the dialogue of cultures is, among others, a significant context for searching for and forming of cultural identity, a source of self-cognition, auto-reflection, the possibilities to enrich individual personality, as well as an integral element in linguistic communicative efficiency.

When communicating with people or groups who speak other languages and have different beliefs and different identifications, we deal with *intercultural communication*: a complex, multi-dimensional, dynamic, and one of the most significant contemporary social phenomena. Such communication takes place between nations as well as civilisations; it has, however, a primarily interpersonal character. It is not so much the cultures that come into contact, but rather the people representing those cultures, and it is on their *intercultural communica-*

tion competences, understood as “acquired abilities which appear on the ground of knowledge, the skills to use two or many languages, and the readiness for two-cultural contacts” (Parfieniuk 2006, p. 80), that the course and effect of that communication will depend.

As already mentioned, intercultural communication and exchange takes place both between social systems as well as between individuals. Intercultural exchange is today a universal and common phenomenon, and one of the ubiquitous aspects of interpersonal cultural activity. The requirements put forth by the functioning of multicultural societies impose on individuals the attitude of respect for others’ dissimilarity, and determine cultural norms inducing people to enter intercultural relationships as well as to mutually exchange spiritual values. The subject of the exchange includes, to an increasing extent, ideas, values, traditions, aesthetic canons, patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, trends or elements of religion and cultural entity (Paleczny 2009). Korporowicz (2011, p. 146) presents a transgressive look at intercultural communication, defining it as: “recognizing and transferring to one another the resources embedded in every culture, as their accumulated heritage, then exchanging the abilities and talents (skills) in the dynamic process of transferring and searching for interactive forms of coexistence”. Intercultural communication is going beyond your own cultural system in the direction of identifying the semantic resources of different cultures, then attempting to trigger their exchange, recomposing them, and creating effective channels of their flow.

Due to the interdisciplinary and dynamic character of the notions discussed, it is difficult to define them explicitly, as defining them causes interpretative discrepancies. It is similar in the case of the following notions: *intercultural competence* and *intercultural communication competence*. This paper consciously skips, due to the lack of space, the detailed terminological findings, whereas defining

considerations are limited only to the selection of concepts presently used in available studies research and reports. Exhaustive material was provided in the dissertation by Białek (2009), in which the researcher describes, among others, Gardner's (1962) concept of "a universal communicator", Hanvey's (1979) concept of intercultural competence, focused around the aspect of consciousness, as well as the concepts of: Pusch (1994), Lusitg and Koester (1999), Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Scholz (1994), Pedersen (1994), Paige (1993), Samovar and Porter (2001), Sercu (2002), Byram and Zaraf (1996). The author of the study quoted concludes his review of theoretical concepts by claiming that the majority of definitions in the structure of intercultural competence include: skills, knowledge, attitudes, awareness and motivation. The above view is supplemented by explicating the definition of intercultural communication competence by quoting Chen and Starosta (1996), where it is presented as "the ability of correct communication behaviours in a culturally foreign environment, with the simultaneous preservation of one's own identity", then the definition of Wiseman (2002) and Kim (1992, p. 371-381), who in turn present it as "the ability to adjust, distance oneself from stereotypical ways of thinking and acting, and the ability to adapt correctly to the new patterns".

Summing up, it can be stated that the notion of intercultural competence includes: (a.) noticing foreignness / otherness (the sensory and perceptual dimension); (b.) analysing it, and considering it (the cognitive dimension); (c.) tolerating it (the affective dimension); (d.) integrating the noticed otherness with the currently existing knowledge on the subject (the pragmatic dimension).

The role of a teacher in the process of shaping intercultural competence

The Council of Europe in the Treaty of Accession of 2003 emphasizes the importance of *intercultural competence of a teacher*. A modern teacher does not have to know how to perform the roles that are necessary from the point of view of fulfilling intercultural education – mediator, advisor, partner and manager of human resources, cultural intermediary, how to introduce pupils to the universe of symbolic culture, or to perform the role of a “porter”, regulating the flow of cultural contents and access to them. An important function fulfilled by a teacher in the dialogue of cultures however, is shaping the attitudes of tolerance towards otherness – the ability to deal with complexity and variety of local cultural surroundings (Parfieniuk 2006). A teacher who knows how important it is to shape intercultural interlocutors and tries to accomplish that objective during a language lesson with the use of different methods and techniques is an interculturally sensitive teacher (Zarzycka 2008).

Nikitorowicz (2005) concludes that a teacher functioning in the process of the “meeting of cultures” can break the barriers of communication code and contribute to shaping the attitudes of openness and tolerance. The factors important for creating intercultural identity are: preserving the connection between the elements of family, and of regional, national, European and world cultures (the role of a teacher is to tone down cultural conflicts); the ability to reach outside the framework of one’s group; bilingual competence; communication competence in the space of cultural diversity; finally, readiness for multicultural contacts. According to the author, in the process of shaping the doubled, dispersed identity of multicultural societies, the mother tongue cannot become the lost language as a result of transformation, modernization, globalisation and integration. Teaching it in Polish schools allows the creation of a special forum on which

“fellow countrymen” and “foreigners” communicate. It also enables learners to get rid of complexes and – sometimes – humiliation, and to achieve a dignified acknowledgement and a sense of pride and trust in oneself and in one’s ancestors. It is characteristic that when adults find themselves in alien cultural surroundings, it is the children who become the teachers. Emigrants’ children create a double cultural identity: they become proficient in the culture of their school mates and the language of their new homeland. They are also proficient in the culture of their parents and speak their mother tongue. In both cultures, they can fully use the forms of non-verbal communication (Magala 2011).

From people undertaking work with children of Polish origin living abroad, who come from different environments and have varying language skills, most probably it will more and more often be required that, as written by Arends (1994, p. 32), “they have a repertoire of effective strategies and teaching methods that (is) much broader than ever before. They will also face the necessity to acquire the ability to adjust the syllabus to students’ abilities for whom school may become totally difficult or far from their ordinary life”. That is why the teachers in Polish schools (so called Saturday, supplementary schools) on the one hand try to fulfil consistently the program of sustaining the knowledge of Polish and bringing students up in the Polish culture, while, on the other hand, they must consider and use children’s educational experiences acquired in the local school, operating in an educational system that is different than Polish. Teachers of mother tongue in schools (in the countries in which Poles settle down) in which the Ministries of Education guarantee teaching in Polish (in Denmark, France¹, Sweden, Norway, and Germany) have

¹ In France, there are, for example, international divisions, also Polish, in which Polish is taught as a foreign language or a mother tongue in the form of extra-curricular activities.

better chances for the fulfilment of symbolic and communicative dialogic interactions between cultures, for integrating the contents, objectives, methods, forms of teaching, for they know, at least in practice, the national curricula, and must prepare their original syllabuses in relation to them.

There is no doubt that Polish schools and classes operating outside Poland have perfect conditions for fulfilling the postulates of intercultural education. Paradoxically, it might turn out that the provision of the act on the educational system saying that “educating and bringing up serves the task of developing in young people the sense of responsibility, love for their homeland, and the respect for the Polish heritage, with the simultaneous openness to the values of European and world cultures” in can only fully be accomplished abroad. This applies also to European schools which operate pursuant to the convention drawn up on 21 June 1994 in Luxembourg. Such schools gather within their walls students coming from different countries and speaking different languages. That multicultural community of young people creates favourable conditions for spreading the postulates of cultural equality and opening to otherness with the simultaneous affirmation of the heritage of the country of origin.

Language policy in the European Union

Promoting ethnic languages is one of the elements of the policy of the European Union. The EU actively supports national minorities in their fight for the right to learn national languages understood as a significant element of identity. There are two facets to the problem of protecting the rights of people who are in the minority – claims Janusz (2006). One can be discussed at the level of European Community, the other – at the level of international obligations of member states. It is assumed that the latter should apply a two-way policy in relation to emigrants’ children. On the one hand, they should teach the official

language of the host country, whereas on the other, as far as possible, they should aim to teach mother tongue in order to help preserve students' cultural heritage, cultivate their connection with native culture, as well as equip pupils with knowledge and the skills necessary for people planning to return to Poland (Mazińska 2006). The consequence of such an approach to the problems of national minorities and ethnic groups is the creation of a model of intercultural education which requires a different approach to some aspects of the teachers' work, because their tasks are substantially different from the tasks of teachers in the country (Szczurek-Boruta 2012).

From the moment of its accession to the European Union (i.e. May 2004), Poland has witnessed increased migration of our countrymen to the EU countries offering beneficial conditions of learning and working, high standard of living, as well as health care and public assistance which are better than in their homeland. The new conditions have been so beneficial for the so-called new migration that – temporarily or permanently – whole Polish families remain outside Poland. Some of them leave with their children, some have had their children abroad. Both in the past and now, a big part of the Polish diaspora expresses their concern about the children's possibility to get to know the language, the history and the culture of Poland in educational institutions in the countries of their actual stay. Constant transformations are taking place in the area of shaping the network of Polish schools abroad. First of all, new institutions and new forms of teaching, adjusted to the needs of the youngest emigrants² have appeared. Both in the places with large Polish populations, such as

² Such schools include: schools created in the framework of the Polish educational system, supervised by ORPEG; schools belonging to educational systems of other countries; e.g. in Denmark, Sweden, France, Norway, Germany; schools operating in the framework of the legal system of a given country, but outside its educational system.

London, Dublin, or Paris, as well as small, provincial towns, there is a possibility of having/continuing Polish education (for the latter places, education takes the form of e-learning).

The fulfilment of the schooling obligation in the country of residence, with a simultaneous attendance at a Polish school, naturally creates favourable conditions for the fulfilment of intercultural education: on the one hand, it teaches an openness to the world, while, on the other, it brings students closer to Poland (Bambrowicz 2008). This rapprochement takes place on two planes. Language is the first of them. And though, according to many scholars, the knowledge of Polish is not decisive for the sense of Polish national identity (Dąbrowska 2000), there is no doubt that often for young people who are emigrants, it is the Polish language that to a great extent is the carrier of culture and constitutes the bridge between generations allowing for the transfer of not only everyday information, but also tradition (Dąbrowska 2000). In Polish schools abroad there is the reversal of the tendency common in Poland, where teachers tend to put literary analysis above linguistic education. In educational institutions abroad, due to the necessity resulting from students' needs, much time and attention must be paid to teaching grammar, word formation and/or phraseology, pushing the knowledge of literature into the background. It is the language that constitutes the most "ontologically" and historically important area of Polish education (Walczak 1988).

Another important plane of dialogue is teaching the broadly understood Polish culture and the culture of the country of current residence. Only the knowledge of heritage of the home country allows pupils to take a suitable position in relation to other cultures and – as observed by Nikitorowicz (1995, p. 124), to "assess them not in terms of better – worse, but in the categories of: other, incomprehensible, interesting, puzzling". In the specific reality of living abroad, it is the easiest to transmit to students the knowledge about many cultures, national histories, languages, etc.; such teaching leads to smart and

mature reflections over one's own culture, as well as teaches one to respect signs of otherness. In spite of the appearances to the contrary, the complex situation of young emigrants favours tolerance, showing them that the world cannot be divided into countrymen and foreigners, the people from here and from the outside.

Intercultural approach to glottodidactics

The intercultural approach (that is the one which perceives language as closely connected with culture) is becoming more and more popular in teaching Polish as a foreign and native language in Poland, though with a delay in comparison with other European countries and the USA (Zarzycka 2008). In the *European system of description of language teaching*, the intercultural approach manifests itself in the idea of propagating the mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identity and cultural diversity through efficient communication between nations, and in promoting the idea of 'becoming multilingual'. In this paper, intercultural skills are elaborated as:

- noticing the connection between one's own and foreign culture;
- cultural sensitivity and making the right choices of communicative strategies and their
- proper use in contact with people from other cultures;
- mediating between one's own culture and a foreign culture as well as dealing with intercultural misunderstandings and conflict situations resulting from them;
- attempts to overcome stereotypes.

On 18 September 2008 the European Commission adopted a new strategy on multilingualism. The document is entitled: *Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment*. An approach to language contained in it allows a creation of attitudes according to

which maintaining linguistic diversity is becomes a valuable and unquestionable value. Its goal is to ensure students' development in their mother tongue as well as in the language of the country to which they emigrated, as well as make it possible for them to take advantage of language classes offered by educational systems of their new country. Different aids are being prepared for educators. One of them is, for instance, an educational package, *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, prepared at the request of the Language Policy Division, in the response to the recommendations of the Council of Europe included in the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, living together as equals in dignity (<http://www.coe.int/dialogue>). Another interesting undertaking was the project of preparing *IDIAL* (Skorupa 2010) textbooks for teaching foreign languages. Its originality consists in offering the reader a chance to participate in intercultural communication in the form of dialogue thanks to which a culture, which had previously been foreign, will become familiar, better understood, accepted and respected. Interculturalism, i.e. topics of particular importance for *the culture of the country presented* and *the culture of the country with which dialogue is conducted*, will have a prominent place in textbooks.

Intercultural training aims to raise students' awareness of how we can differ, and to teach the methods of dealing with troubles caused by cultural differences. Hence, we can say that glottodidactics is familiar with the notions of *meeting*, *sensitizing*, and *cultural and contract activity*. Contemporary education that has an intercultural component increases the chance of fulfilling of the following socio-cultural assumptions:

- it has a positive effect on shaping a child's identity,
- it broadens the perspective on common fate and diversification of cultures,
- it directs the acceptance of the Other (Chromiec 2004).

Polish glottodidactics vs. the idea of interculturalism

For more than 35 years Polish glottodidactics has developed in connection with the processes taking place outside our country, especially together with the activities undertaken by the European Union so as to foster multilingualism and heteroglossia. Miodunka (2010a) and other scholars from the Center for Polish Language and Culture in the World of the Jagiellonian University, made the most important terminological decisions concerning the didactics of teaching mother tongue. They propose coining a term: *Polish as a second language* (2010b) to describe the teaching of the Polish language to Polish children and youth learning Polish all over the world. Scholars coming from that circle, Seretny and Lipińska (2012), define the Polish language used abroad, in the environment in which a different code is an official communication system, with the term: **heritage language**. Its learning is done naturally, by hearing and speaking, and the aim is to satisfy basic communication needs in such language domains as: home, work, school, family, neighbourhood and church (Dębski 2009). It also constitutes an important link in the connection with the homeland and national heritage, and determines the identity of its users. The same scientific environment developed, also, the curriculum of teaching Polish culture to foreigners, whose significant aim is to sensitize the learners and to develop their ability to create the so called bridges of communication between cultures.

As emphasized before, both the teacher and the learner of Polish abroad should be prepared to perform the role of a cultural mediator between the Polish culture and the culture of the host country. Communicating the contents connected with one's culture and realities means an active confrontation or discussion with foreign cultures. A peculiar catalogue of socio-cultural issues was prepared by Gębal (2010). It refers to culture, tradition, behaviours of people and relations between them in Polish everyday reality. Individual elements of

that catalogue can be considered comparatively. It is used by authors of curricula for emigrants' children.

Multi-culturalism and interculturalism in France

Polish settling in France has been favoured by historical conditions: France was settled by multi-national and multi-faith people, accustomed to the inflow of guests from other countries, who have permanently left their mark on shaping the French culture. The French are a people who, in comparison with other nations, have been considered open to everything that is new and different. On the one hand, they strongly defend their identity; on the other, however, they accept – and are willing to get to know – new cultures.

Although, as many scholars emphasize, the descendants of emigrants are unavoidably bound to gradually assimilate into the society of the country in which they stay, the newcomers from Poland did a lot to slow down the process. The efforts undertaken by the Great Emigration³, which we would today call the learning of functioning in two cultures, became the model for consecutive generations. Polish schools, which from the 19th century onwards were created in France, usually enjoyed full freedom. The history of Polish education in France, following the example of a systematization of history of the Polish diaspora on the Seine proposed by Śladkowski⁴, can be divided into three periods. The first period lasted till 1918 and is distinguished by political emigration. The second period, dominated

³ First in France, where the majority of refugees went, then in Great Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and the United States.

⁴ Due to the nature of emigration, W. Śladkowski proposed the following classification: – till 1918 – political emigration; – 1918–1945 – diaspora of work; – 1945–1999 – diaspora of transformation. W. Śladkowski, *Polska diaspora we Francji 1871–1999*, [in:] *Polska diaspora*, Kraków 2001, p. 178.

by economic emigration, ends with the end of World War II, after which the environment of Polish emigrants in France is transformed.

Barring a few exceptions, there was no pressure from the French authorities to speed up the assimilation of Polish students.

This created favourable conditions for creating a model of intercultural education. In Polish schools established by the Great Emigration⁵ already students were prepared to function in the French society with the simultaneous respect for the heritage of their homeland. Several factors contribute to the introduction of the intercultural education model into Polish schools in France. One of the most important ones is the openness of the French and their natural tendency to enter dialogue with other cultures. Historical conditions are the second important issue. The history of the Polish and the French nation share many common areas dating as far back as the Middle Ages. The reign of Stanisław Leszczyński or Jan III Sobieski, the Napoleonic era, the period of the Duchy of Warsaw or the Great Emigration are the moments in which mutual fluctuations can be seen particularly clearly. One should remember that the impact of the French culture on the Polish one was incomparably bigger. Of course, in the course of mutual relations, there are difficult moments. However, it needs to be emphasized that there is actually more that separates the Polish and the French than they have in common. Apart from the sense of historical community, the membership of the European Union is also quite a strong bond.

⁵ An example of such an institution may be the famous Paris Batignolles school, among the authorities of which sat Adam Mickiewicz himself (the sons of the poet were among the alumni of the school).

Empirical examples

The basis for the reflections described above article was qualitative research conducted on an unrepresentative teacher sample; that is why it was impossible to extrapolate and generalize from the results as to the situation in all Polish schools abroad which are attended by the children of Polish emigrants in France. An explanatory deductive model was used (Gibbs 2011), while, on the basis of the analysis of certain studies (Grzybowski (2009), Pugacewicz (2009, 2010, 2011), Malewska-Peyrie (2009) concerning the general tendency in the European policy, the general hypothesis was formulated:

Polish schools in France implement the idea of interculturalism; it is confronted with the facet of educational reality which is the teaching of their native language to the children of Polish emigrants in a school in Grenoble.

The main research question was: Is (and in what way) the teaching of their native language to migrating children included in intercultural dialogue?

The main research method was a survey with interviews, conducted directly on Polish language teachers working in France or with the use of an Internet survey form. Moreover, the available teaching materials (curricula and syllabuses) were analysed. The data collected was qualitative in nature and, therefore, it underwent qualitative analyses.

Research results

a) Scientific assumptions – the analysis of documents and teaching materials

The curriculum base for Polish students learning abroad, prepared by a team of experts from the Polish MEN in 2010, is the document used to create local syllabuses for teaching Polish language, history, culture, geography of Poland as well as the contemporary knowledge on Poland, and for creating teaching materials needed.

In the area of objectives, contents and methods, it contains the recommendation to confront and integrate the skills acquired in schools of the current residence with the skills developed in Polish schools. In accordance with the provisions of the document, the educational aim in the age group of 5–9 years of age is to broaden and consolidate the knowledge about the Polish culture, society and geography, as well as to strengthen the process of the students' identifying with home traditions with the simultaneous respect for cultural otherness and traditions of the country of residence.

The following syllabuses include the specification of chosen provisions of *The curriculum base... Rok Polski* – syllabus for students 5–9 years of age learning abroad, *Własną drogą* – a syllabus for students 10–13 years old studying abroad and *Moja polska kulturoteka* – a syllabus of the Polish language for students above 14. In the first of the syllabuses mentioned, among the specific objectives in the scope of the knowledge of the Polish culture, history, society and natural and geographical environment, we can find the following references to the idea of interculturalism:

- becoming accustomed to respecting Polish diversification of cultural traditions with a simultaneous respect for traditions and culture of other nations;

- indicating the uniqueness of home culture, also in the context of the host country;
- shaping the attitude of tolerance in relation to other nationalities;
- sensitizing learners to the fact that appearance speaks about us, as well as influences the way Polish people are perceived among other nationalities.

The curriculum basis for Polish schools abroad was created on the basis of two documents: *European System of Description of Language Education* as well as the curriculum base currently used in Poland, from which were extracted the contents taught in schools in the country of student's, current residence. The division of language skills – following the example of *ESDLE* – into three levels of advancement proves that the authors of the document were aware of the fact that the students in Polish schools have different levels of Polish language competence, and those differences will be visible at every stage of education. This remark does not apply, however, to the degree of familiarity with literature, culture, history and geography of Poland – regardless of how well they have mastered the language, the students should learn the same information at the Polish school. This sounds like a serious accusation. One should remember, however, that the document in question was created bearing in mind the schools over which there is no pedagogic supervision, and it does not have the status of a legal act, but is merely an auxiliary document. Also, it was prepared in such a way that it could be used in many countries. That is why the authors tried to leave as much freedom of choice to the teacher as possible. A cursory reading reveals that the curriculum for Polish schools abroad is not connected in any way with the educational systems of the accepting countries. However, it was designed to allow teachers to on their own adjust it to fit the curricula binding in the countries of residence. At the same time, it needs to be firmly emphasized that the

problem of intercultural education is almost completely absent from the educational documents (curriculum basis, curriculum framework, syllabuses, teacher books) prepared by ministerial institutions methodically supporting the teachers working outside Poland. None of the abovementioned documents suggests combining/using local syllabuses in teaching in a Polish school. This may provoke accusations of the Polish side's attempts to maintain the model of monocultural education.

b) Towards practice – promoting the idea of interculturalism as exemplified by a school in Grenoble

As already mentioned, in the scope of intercultural education – which is a peculiar *novum* in the domain of Polish education outside Poland – a lot depends on the awareness and invention of teachers (textbooks for teaching Polish and the teaching materials prepared by the institutions responsible for teaching Polish outside Poland offer little support), support from parents, financial possibilities, flexibility of students and their interests etc. Students at Polish schools come from mixed families and very often (in the Polish school in Grenoble: usually) one parent is not of Polish origin. In such a situation, the dialogue of cultures, apart from Polish and French elements, also includes components of Russian, Greek, Spanish, Algerian, Tunisian, Egyptian, American or another culture. Such a cultural melting pot frequently confuses the teacher (how to talk about Easter or Christmas traditions with a student coming from an Islamic family?). However, with a bit of creativity and courage combined with a respect for otherness, one can prepare interesting and involving classes. In the Polish school in Grenoble (which, let us add, is a community school fully financed by students' parents) the assumptions of intercultural education are rarely discussed. The elements of many cultures are combined all the time: usually as planned activities but, sometimes, naturally and

spontaneously, as if casually. From the statements of school employees it can be inferred that there is something natural in this combination of two cultures. It appears in many areas during lessons, most often, however, in the fields of literature, culture, tradition, history and in project work. Below are a few specific examples of how the idea of interculturalism is fulfilled:

Literature: When fairy tales are analysed with children, the name La Fontaine is of course mentioned. His works can be compared with fairy tales written by Polish poets, and one can refer to common motifs or compare morals. The teachers admit that they happened to work on the translations of fairy-tales by Ignacy Krasicki and Adam Mickiewicz.

Culture: The impact of the French culture on the Polish culture is unquestionable. It is worth it to show it to students, explaining, also, the origin of that phenomenon. The question of “fashion for France” can be discussed for instance when discussing Krasicki’s *Żona modna* or when discussing fragments of *Pan Tadeusz*. When working with dictionaries and encyclopaedias, one can of course mention the French Encyclopaedists. A much more ambitious undertaking will be to convince students that Poland also left its mark on the culture of France. The figures of prominent Poles, such as Fryderyk Chopin, Krzysztof Kieślowski, or Roman Polański can help here.

Traditions: Students, especially those in younger grades, will be eager to get to know Polish traditions. It is also easy to encourage them to look for parallels (e.g. the Polish *Prima Aprilis* is celebrated in France in a quite complex form as *Poisson d’avril* – also on 1 April). A good (also linguistic) exercise will be to compare Christmas dishes in Poland and in France, creating a Christmas menu or writing letters to peers in which the introduction in Poland of the most interesting French traditions is proposed (or the reverse– in this case the students usually write about *Smigus Dyngus*, *Dzień Wągarowicza*, and two days of *Christmas* which in France is over on 25 December). Such tasks

encourage students to search on their own, but also to reflect on Polish traditions and to learn to be proud of what is Polish.

Language: The fact that the students in the Polish school attend French schools every day is extremely helpful in linguistic education. Taking the schedule of the teaching material fulfilled in French schools as one's basis, one can easily plan the introduction of new topics. Of course, it would be best if they first appeared in the local school, and then in the Polish school. In this way the few, hence so precious, didactic hours are not lost on explaining to children the universal grammatical categories, such as: verb, preposition, past tense, etc. The teacher's task is to refer to the knowledge and skills possessed by students and to equip them with the terminology in the Polish language. As it was aptly put by one of the Polish teachers: *What is a subject, or who was Molier – I do not need to explain. I know they were taught that in the French school. I only ask if they can explain those concepts in Polish.* During lessons devoted to grammar, conjugation of Polish and French verbs can be compared. Attention should be paid to the fact that in Polish in third person singular there is a neutral gender and that we only have three tenses: present, past and future (a nice surprise in comparison with the intricacies of the French language).

When developing students' language skills, one can (or even should) refer to French vocabulary. An accurate teaching move, whose aim is to enrich the active vocabulary and to raise the students' linguistic awareness, is to pay attention to their use of Gallicisms and to determine the areas in which there are the most borrowings from French (and analysing why it happens). The French language is also useful when teaching Polish spelling.

History: It is impossible in Poland to teach the history of Poland without mentioning France, not to mention in France! During lessons in Polish schools, the history of Poland is constantly interweaving with the history of France which, though it is not Poland's direct neighbour,

influenced the fate of our country. So, for instance, when discussing the reign of Mieszko I, the students at the age of 10–11 are able to quote the benefits derived from Christianity by comparing their knowledge of pagan Slavic tribes with what the France of those times looked like. Focusing, together with the students, on the changes which were brought about in Poland by the Enlightenment, we remember its origins, hence – France. When discussing the period of the Partitions of Poland and the hopes for regaining independence, one should refer to the knowledge about Napoleon which the students acquired in French schools. *Mazurek Dąbrowskiego* can be compared with *La Marseillaise*, and the visit of the children from Grenoble in the nearby Villard de Lans, where during World War II a school for students of Polish from all of France was located (and until today the association gathering its graduates, which is responsible, among others, for the Polish part of the exhibition in the Museum, operates dynamically), can become a starting point for discussing the difficult fate of the Poles who were at that time emigrants in France.

Projects: The intercultural education in the Polish school in Grenoble consists of course not only in individual lessons, but also in bigger-scale undertakings. In the school year of 2009/2010 the institution (thanks to the financial support from Poland), implemented an original teaching program devoted to Fryderyk Chopin. The students learned the biography of the artist, his creative output and his reception in Poland and in France, as well as the impact he exerted on the culture of both countries. In the framework of the program, lessons were conducted by teachers, as well as by Polish and French historians, musicians, enthusiasts of Chopin and his music, and Polish activists abroad. The crowning event was the Chopin Competition (organized together with Lyon Conservatory) and the trip to Paris, where the students, placed flowers on the grave of the pianist at the Pere Lachaise cemetery. The aim of the program was to introduce to students the

figure of the artist who lived and created at the intersection of the two cultures. The program was to support the process of forming children's identity and to awaken their pride in their Polish origin.

Next year, it was decided for the second time to prepare and carry out the author's program, this time devoted to Maria Skłodowska-Curie. Familiarising themselves with the biography of the scientist, the students learned how difficult was the life in Poland before the Partitions, and what Skłodowska-Curie's life was like after her arrival in France. Only with disbelief did the students accept the fact that under Russian rule knowing the French language was desirable, as it was the language of the elites. They were also fascinated by the news that Maria took walks with her friend, Albert Einstein, in the Alps, visible from our classroom windows.

Within the framework of the program, the children met Polish and French physics and chemistry professors and researchers, they learned about the phenomenon of radioactivity, they wrote a recipe for a scientific success, they created a genealogical tree, a mental map, a timeline, and they wrote essays in which *Maria* wrote about her connections with France and Poland. Those interviews comprised the screenplay of the movie called *Na tropie Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie*, which was shot (indeed!) with the help of a professional filming team, and then presented during the vernissage during which the students' works were presented. The film was created in two language versions: Polish and French, and the authors were of course the students from the Polish school.

Conclusion

An intercultural approach in the area of teaching the Polish language and literature at the stage of kindergarten and early-school education is only now beginning to develop. In humanistic (culture,

linguistics, literature) and social (psychology, sociology, pedagogy) theories, it is already established; in practice, however, it is not always noticed and present. The reasons for such a state of affairs are as follows: the teachers working in Polish schools often participate in the dialogue of cultures in a natural, imperceptible, intuitive way, and they do not share their experiences widely. Besides, in each country to which families with children emigrate, the dialogue of cultures is conducted differently. There is a need for monographs for the teachers of mother tongue which would in a comprehensive way present the determinants of intercultural education of children at pre-school or early school age, and would also bring forth specific educational propositions. Nevertheless, some hopes can be seen in modern technologies which are now more and more often used in teaching Polish in the world.

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Anna Młynarczuk-Sokołowska

The University of Białystok

Intercultural Education: from Theory to Practice¹

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present the idea of intercultural education as a lifelong process and to indicate the practical possibilities of its implementation. Three educational initiatives, which the author designed conceptually and practically, are discussed in reference to the premises of lifelong intercultural education and to the studies on attitudes to 'otherness.' The initiatives are: the Programme for the Development of Sensitivity Toward Otherness *The Adventures of the Other*, as well as two educational projects *Towards Ethnic Diversity* and *Immortalize Atlantis*. The abovementioned ventures aim at meeting the needs of the residents of the Podlasie region, taking into consideration the character of the pre-school and school environments in the region. The initiatives are examples of the implementation of intercultural education through innovative, based on active participation teaching methods.

Key words: multiculturalism, interculturalism, lifelong intercultural education, intercultural education project and programme, activating methods.

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Introduction

Cultural diversity has long been a challenge for broadly defined education. In times of dynamic political, social and cultural transformations, finding optimal educational tools for a culturally diverse environment has become particularly significant. Since Poland's systemic transformation and admission to the European Union, it has been an important priority for Poland as well. Apart from indigenous minorities, more and more foreigners from different, even the most distant, parts of the world have been settling down in Poland. Moreover, the mobility of modern man has increased. Therefore, encounters with the Alien/Other have become a natural element of human life, which requires developing competence to function in a culturally diverse environment.

The purpose of this article is to present possible tools for intercultural education, taking into account the theoretical premises. In this paper, I will characterize the idea of intercultural education as a lifelong process. As examples of the implementation of the idea, I will describe three educational projects carried out in the Podlasie region. I had the opportunity to develop the projects conceptually and to implement them into practice.

1. The Idea of Intercultural Education

In the 1990s, intercultural education started to appear in Polish public discourse, along with the systemic transformation and socio-cultural transitions. Nikitorowicz writes that *intercultural education is a peculiar response to multicultural society, constant migrations, the flow of information, changes in the value systems of individuals and groups, the disintegration of behaviour patterns, identity dilemmas,*

giving importance to the cultural identity of a group, and identity ambivalence (Nikitorowicz 2003-2004, p. 934). Intercultural education is more than education adapted for *the phenomenon of multiculturalism*. *Multiculturalism* is treated as a fact, whereas *interculturalism is a task and an educational challenge* (Nikitorowicz 1999, p. 25). In terms of intercultural education, a multicultural society is a society where different national, religious, language etc. groups live side by side. Social relations are limited to re-actions, being far from any constructive inter-actions, which is a result of numerous unverified and negative stereotypes and prejudices. Diversity in a multicultural society is often perceived as a threat, which leads to hostility and discrimination. In an intercultural society, on the other hand, interactions establish and regulate social relations and consequently intercultural communication². Existence of such a society is enabled by the intercultural competence developed by its members in the course of broadly understood education. Intercultural competence includes knowledge, skills and attitudes that facilitate establishing friendly relations with Aliens/Others.

² This type of differentiation between the concepts of intercultural and multicultural societies can be found in the works of intercultural education theoreticians, i.e. in the works of L. Korporowicz, J. Nikitorowicz, P. P. Grzybowski. See: L. Korporowicz (1997), *Wielokulturowość a międzykulturowość: od reakcji do interakcji*, [in:] *U progu wielokulturowości. Nowe oblicza społeczeństwa polskiego*, M. Kempny, A. Kopciak, S. Łodziński (eds.), Warszawa; J. Nikitorowicz (2009), *Edukacja międzykulturowa i regionalna*, Warszawa; P. P. Grzybowski (2009), *Od wielokulturowości ku międzykulturowości. Koncepcje edukacji wielokulturowej i międzykulturowej w kontekście europejskim ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem środowiska frankofońskiego*, Kraków. A similar definition of “multicultural society” can be found in the documents of The Council of Europe and the European Union. See: *Uczenie Międzykulturowe*, Strasburg 2000, Polish edition, Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, p. 98.

Intercultural education refers to the concept of culture and presupposes an equality of cultures. In the process of the transmission of values and behaviour patterns, all the cultures undergo certain transformations and any way of learning about the Other from the perspective of one's own culture boosts one's development (Nikitorowicz 2009, p. 290). Intercultural education abandons the idea of *the colonization of consciousness* by one particular culture and finds all cultures equal (Lewowicki 2000, p. 31). The basic category, typical of postmodernism, in the theory of intercultural education is *the irreducible difference* (Lewowicki 2000, p. 31). From the perspective of intercultural education every socio-cultural feature may be simultaneously a criterion for defining oneself and others in terms of differences, and a factor of alienation/otherness. One can distinguish the following categories of features. Biological features will include gender, age, skin colour, eye and hair colour, mental and physical abilities/disabilities. Economical features are financial status and its consequences, whereas social features include national or ethnical affiliations and their related status. Cultural features are about one's own religious and cultural identities and the autonomy associated (Golka 2010, p. 168). Hence any educational activity should be designed with cultural and interpersonal differences in mind.

In intercultural education, difference is not treated as a value in itself but as a constitutive feature of every human being and a factor influencing mutual development (Grzybowski 2008, p. 60). Intercultural education is not about eliminating differences. It is about increasing one's awareness of existing differences as well as learning about and accepting the elements of different cultures (Lewowicki 2000, p. 31). Intercultural education is seen as the educational meeting of cultures or as the education of conflict (Lewowicki 2000). This refers both to a dialogue between the meeting cultures as well as creative attempts to resolve conflicts. The idea of intercultural education is based on

the paradigm of coexistence which presupposes *the possibility of one's personal growth as a result of the ongoing internal processes of dialogue, rapport, negotiations, and cooperation. It restores our faith in the internal power of every human being and their awareness of the needs of the Other. For an individual to stay among cultures, it requires accepting the normative function of culture, relying on one's own creative abilities, using one's own mind and heart and their creative power* (Nikitorowicz 2005, p. 26). The paradigm of coexistence constitutes the basis for intercultural education. It also determines its main goal, which is to prepare society for living in the post-modern world, where diversity is inherent (Lewowicki 2000, p. 31). An important task of intercultural education is to develop multi-faceted identity of an individual and to stimulate the process of self-discovery, thereby implementating the postulate that the discovery of one's true identity should underlie every intentional action. Human self-awareness, sense of dignity and identity are the criteria used to evaluate Others and to show readiness for communication (Olbrycht 2006, p. 117). Intercultural education means staying in a relationship with oneself, with one's own culture and with Others.

The process of defining intercultural education is complex. Establishing the model of intercultural education is an important educational problem and the subject of a number of studies (Ogrodzka-Mazur 2009, p. 137). The literature on the subject is rich in descriptions of modes of intercultural education. Various elements of education are emphasized: its content, its goals, and the process itself. Local, regional or global perspectives are used³.

³ Definitions suggested by D. Markowska, J. Nikitorowicz, J. Lewowicki, M. Sobec-ki, E. Orgodzka-Mazur, A. Szczurek-Boruta.

2. Intercultural Education as a Lifelong Process

Intercultural education can be a spontaneous process, happening within a family or a local community, and not regulated by the curriculum. Intercultural education can also be of a formal character, happening at school or in the mass media and curricularly organized by state social policy. Regardless of how it is implemented, the idea remains the same (Maj 2005, p. 279). Considering intercultural education as a lifelong process, one can distinguish three types of intercultural education that interpenetrate and complement one another: formal intercultural education (at school), non-formal intercultural education (out of school), and informal/incidental intercultural education (spontaneous). It has become common practice to emphasize the lifelong intercultural education approach whereby intercultural education is a process of developing intercultural competence that encompasses the whole of society.

Szczurek-Boruta points to the fact that *intercultural education does not go along the traditional division into primary and secondary education. The following dimension of education should be regarded as a transcultural teaching-learning process. It is a lifelong cognitive and practical experience of every human being as an individual unit as well as a member of society. This allows the participants of the teaching-learning process to acquire tools for understanding, to affect their environment, to participate and cooperate with others in every sphere of human activity* (Szczurek-Boruta 2009, p. 152). Lifelong education, as Nikitorowicz (2012) suggests, should be acknowledged as the leading strategy for education, once the changeability, dynamism and unpredictability of multicultural societies are taken into account. Lifelong education with its premise of lifelong learning allows for shaping and modifying human attitudes according to the following guidelines:

- *To be yourself*: learn to be yourself, know yourself; value your own sense of identity; work on the ability to manage your personal development, personal fulfillment and identity.
- *To experience the presence of Others*: through interactions, learn to live together with them; perfect your skills in peaceful coexistence and interaction; use cultural diversity for mutual enrichment; notice others, get to know them, cooperate, try to understand them and communicate with them.
- *To learn about yourself and Others*: learn about each other and be able to overcome negative emotions; learn to understand cultural diversity and to comply with social norms and the rules of culture contact.
- *To cooperate*: learn to work for peace preservation, and create conditions for life in peace; develop your ability to work effectively under conditions of cultural heterogeneity (Nikitorowicz 2012, p. 72-74).

Fulfilling the abovementioned prerequisites contributes to the construction of intercultural society. Importantly, the whole of society should participate in the process. As noted by Grzybowski, *a society, where particular groups, minority groups or majority groups, work within certain boundaries to satisfy their own interests and to achieve their own goals, cannot be called "intercultural"* (Grzybowski 2009, p. 86). Following this idea, it is noteworthy that intercultural education should involve all age groups. However, as written by M. Taylor, intercultural education is mostly concerned with the system of relations between children and young adults. The choice of these age groups is justified by the fact that it is children and young adults that will comprise future intercultural societies (Taylor, as quoted in: Grzybowski 2009, p. 63). The statement is unquestionable when one takes into consideration the results of the empirical research on the development of negative stereotypes and prejudices among children,

as well as the research results that show the level of social distance to Aliens/Others presented by children, young people and adults.

Scientific explorations have revealed that three-year-olds hold an image of the elder that is simplified and imbued with negative valuation, while among children aged between 7 and 13 the stereotypes and prejudices which prevail are based on age, ethnicity, or language⁴. The ability to notice ethnic differences develops in children at the age of 4–7. Therefore, it is the right time to introduce the subject into educational programs (Wygotski 1971, p. 544). Attitude studies point to the fact that young people indicate high level of social distance in terms of nationality, ethnicity, religion. The results show that those who participate in classes designed to increase students' awareness of cultural diversity shorten their social distance toward Aliens/Others (Jasińska-Kania, Staszyńska 2009). All things considered, abandoning the idea of designing activities for promoting equality of people and positive image of the Alien/Other may result in stereotypes and prejudices being crystallized and the level of social distance toward otherness being elevated.

Another challenge facing intercultural education is promoting educational initiatives addressed to those who have already completed their formal education. The initiatives should aim at stimulating interest in diversity, creating possibilities to overcome the limits of negative stereotypes and prejudices, and developing intercultural competence. The results of scientific research show that adults reveal a high level of social distance towards ethnically, nationally and religiously different groups⁵. Educational activities beneficial for adults may include

⁴ See the results of the research by Davidson, Cameron, Jergovic, [in:] B. Weigl (1999), *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia etniczne u dzieci i młodzieży. Studium empiryczne*, Warszawa; See also: E. Chromiec (2004), *Dziecko wobec obcości kulturowej*. Gdańsk.

⁵ According to the research run by the Public Opinion Research Centre that resulted in the following reports: *Przejawy dystansu społecznego wobec innych narodów*

festivals, cultural events, discussions on multiculturalism, as well as all types of courses, trainings, and educational projects.

The idea of lifelong intercultural education is difficult to employ. However, this is the direction set by the modern world.

3. Intercultural Education Implemented: Examples from the Region of Podlasie

In Poland, institutions for formal and informal education more and more often engage in activities dealing with intercultural education. Frequently, both types of institutions work together. Elements of intercultural education appear in the core curricula at all stages of education.

In this paper, I will describe three projects in the field of intercultural education. The projects are targeted at children, young people and adults simultaneously. In the years 2008-2011, pilot versions of the projects were carried out at schools of Eastern Poland. They were implemented by non-governmental organizations, the University of Białystok Foundation and the Foundation of Education and Creativity as well as volunteers: students of the University of Białystok and teachers. All activities were based on the diagnosis of the needs existing in a given institution and the uniqueness of the local environment. The activities were designed according to the theories of intercultural education discussed in this paper. The need for implementation of the theoretical prerequisites of intercultural education resulted from the recognition of the ongoing socio-cultural changes and several years of cooperation with kindergartens and schools from the region of Podlasie.

i religii, (2007), Warszawa; *Dystans społeczny czy tolerancja i otwartość? Postawy wobec wyznawców prawosławia, protestantyzmu, judaizmu i islamu*, (2001), Warszawa; *Stosunek Polaków do innych narodów*, (2001), Warszawa. See <http://www.cobos.pl>, [access: 11, 2012].

The undertakings presented in the paper were primarily designed to develop intercultural competence. In the process, interpersonal or economic commonalities and differences between people were taken into consideration. At every stage of their implementation, the educational projects involve creative work, that is artistic, photographic or verbal ways of expression. The projects are realized as part of extra-curricular or after-school activities organized at schools and kindergartens. Open formula of the projects allows for their realization by other educational institutions. Reviewed methodological publications are the final outcome of the projects. The publications allow further implementation of the projects⁶.

Program for the Development of Sensitivity to Otherness *Adventures of the Other*⁷

The program is designed for children at the age of 5–9 and the pilot program was completed within this age group. The program can be introduced to younger or older groups, provided that certain changes are made as to the contents and time regarding the children's perceptual abilities. The contents of the program refer to different types of people, problems and to the culture of the Other, the distant

⁶ The publications include: A. Młynarczuk-Sokołowska, K. Potoniec, K. Szostak-Król (eds.) (2011), *Przygody Innego. Bajki w edukacji międzykulturowej*, Białystok; A. Młynarczuk, M. Sokołowski (eds.) (2010), *Uwiecznić Atlantyde. Wielokulturowość Podlasia w edukacji nieformalnej*, Białystok; A. Młynarczuk, K. Potoniec (eds.) (2009), *Edukacja międzykulturowa wobec integracji dzieci polskich i czeczeńskich na przykładzie projektu „Ku wzbogacającej różnorodności”*, Białystok. The electronic versions of the books are available on <http://undacja.uwb.edu.pl>, tab: *Publikacje*.

⁷ In 2012, the programme *Adventures of the Other* won the first prize in the international contest organized by the World Organization for Early Childhood Education OMEP and won the title of the Social Initiative of the Year 2011, a competition organized by the governor of the Podlasie region.

and close one. The method is beneficial as it aims at improving the attitude to society as a whole and not to a particular group of people⁸.

The program *Adventures of the Other* is based on the original intercultural stories that present various types of “otherness”. The stories were created by teachers and educators engaged in intercultural education. The stories include as follows. *The Other in the Forest* by Solbut is a story about biological otherness. *The Other and the Fear of Darkness* by Stanisławska deals with the issue of physical disability. *The Other and the Treasure Hunt* by Szostak-Król refers to economical differences. *The Other Meets the Thoughts Keeper* by Rusiłowicz discusses religious otherness. *The Other Visits A Gypsy Camp* by Rusiłowicz focuses on ethnic differences. *The Other On a Refugee Trail* by Szostak-Król describes the otherness of the refugees and the problems they encounter. *The Other Travels to the Land of the Dragon* by Rusicka-Karoui delves into the subject of cultural otherness/the distant Other and shows the problems of immigrants.

Intercultural stories belong to the canon of psycho-educative stories, as well as fit within with the trend of educative (developmental) bibliotherapy. An intercultural story is targeted at children. Its main objective is to develop children’s sensitivity to differences between people in all the aspects of human existence: biological, economical, social and cultural. These differences are embedded in every social reality⁹. The contents of intercultural stories present children with problems the Alien/Other encounters and help them

⁸ For further reading see the guidelines for designing educational programmes: B. Weigl (2008), *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia etniczne u dzieci i młodzieży – istota zjawiska i przesłanki zmian*, [in:] *Edukacja przeciw dyskryminacji*, K. Białek, T. Halik, A. Marek, R. Szuchta, B. Weigl (eds.), p. 104-105.

⁹ The term “intercultural story” has been defined for the educational program *The Adventures of the Other*. For further reading see: K. Potoniec, *Bajki w edukacji międzykulturowej*, [in:] *Przygody Innego. Bajki w edukacji międzykulturowej...*, op. cit., p. 12.

understand that everybody has the right to their 'otherness'. Moreover, the stories enable the target group to notice the diversity of the world, and develop their cognitive curiosity. They also motivate students to interact with the Alien/Other.

Running classes with the use of intercultural stories is not limited to passing on the contents of the stories. It entails the use of a wide range of activating and expository teaching methods, which engage all the spheres of child's activity and add variety to the learning process. Working with intercultural stories proceeds according to a pattern. Every story is introduced with activating teaching methods, which is followed by reinforcement classes that aim at consolidating and expanding knowledge of related contents. An important role in the program is played by additional meetings with Aliens/Others, which aim at direct interaction. Apart from the methodologically planned teaching-learning process, they give opportunity to ask questions, get used to other languages and people belonging to other cultures. They also help to overcome fear and to fight with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

The program assumes the use of individual, collective and group-work activities, with particular focus on the latter, as they help to develop the capacity for team work, sharing experience and cooperation. The implementation of the program was preceded by the introductory lesson, whose aim was not only to introduce the discussed issues to the participants and to integrate the group, but also to run the preliminary diagnosis of the image of and the attitudes toward the Alien/Other with the use of discussion or drawing. The program ended with a concluding lesson that helped to revise the acquired knowledge and skills, and identify the changes in the perception of the Alien/Other – with the use of the same methods as in the introductory lesson.

In the school year of 2010/2011, the pilot program *The Adventures of the Other* was completed by volunteer students from the University

of Białystok Foundation and teachers from seven educational institutions in the region of Podlasie (kindergartens and grades from 0 to 3 of the elementary school)¹⁰. 121 pupils took part in the pilot program. The groups were very diversified. Apart from interpersonal differences, there were also biological, national, and religious differences. The pilot program included three classes with Chechen children, a significantly diversified class in terms of religious affiliations (the class included Orthodox Christians, protestants and Jehovah's witnesses), and a group of six-year-olds from an integrated kindergarten (the group comprised a few children with the Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities or autism).



The class: The Other Travels to the Land of the Dragon

The pilot edition of the program was conducted in a safe and friendly atmosphere, in an active and meaningful way. The project was carried out in the children's natural environment (classroom), where various differences appeared (in terms of mental and physical fitness, nationality, religion, communication), which fostered mutual

¹⁰ A. Młynarczuk-Sokołowska i K. Szostak-Król provided theoretical background for the volunteers, adjusted the stories and scenarios and coordinated the pilot program in kindergartens and primary schools (October 2012-February 2011).



The workshop with the puppet of the Other



The team of the programme

respect (respect for the close Other). In realization of the program, the puppet called *the Other* played a significant role. The Other was present at every lesson. It was a figure of a twelve-year-old boy who told intercultural stories.

The lessons based on intercultural stories and the subsequent reinforcement classes allowed children to share their opinions and to include elements of their own cultures in the learning process. The extracurricular classes about the culture of Aliens/Others in the

form of meetings with the Chechen children from the dance group *Lowzar* and a volunteer girl from Germany were actual encounters with people of different cultures. The meetings helped to overcome the negative stereotypes and prejudices, thus contributing to creating a positive attitude towards the Alien/Other in a process of positive interaction. The extracurricular classes allowed for active participation of parents. Teaching methods used in the implementation of the program created favorable conditions for free and creative work and were thought-provoking. The children were eager to participate in the lessons. They listened to the stories carefully, took part in educational games, did arts and crafts as well as physical exercises, and expressed their opinions about the activities performed.

Educational Project *Toward Enriching Diversity*

The project included a series of workshops on interculturalism targeted at Polish and Chechen children living in Białystok. Moreover, the initiative encompassed additional meetings that engaged parents, teachers and members of the local community. Educational activities were aimed at fostering integration through intercultural sensitivity. The core principle of the project was the equality of cultures. The assumption was made that diversity is a value, hence every encounter with the Other may be fruitful, and that through integration we learn about ourselves and about our cultural identity. The project was carried out by volunteer students of the University of Białystok. It was addressed to 120 pupils of 2 Białystok primary schools attended by Chechen children. Pupils in first and fourth grades – a total of 81 students, including 12 Chechen students – participated in the intercultural workshops. The groups were chosen as a result of discussions with the headmasters and school counsellors, who decided which target groups needed this type of intervention. The proficiency level of Polish among the Chechen children who took part in the project

varied. The Chechen students in fourth grade handled communication quite well, while children in first grade exhibited a limited range of vocabulary.

In the project, activating methods typical for intercultural education were used. The lessons were based on educational games that motivated students, fostered creative energy and were thought-provoking. They helped students to go beyond stereotypes and develop the ability to perceive the Other as interesting and important. They also were an excellent opportunity to bond.

In the lessons, the potential of cultural diversity was incorporated into teaching-learning process. In an intercultural atmosphere, the lessons were conducted on the basis of workshop scenarios designed by university students, teachers and educators. The first lesson, *Refugees* (Szostak-Król)¹¹, was to sensitize the children to refugee issues. The children learnt the term 'refugee' and found out about the problems their classmates may encounter. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, the Chechen children did not participate in the lesson. The main purpose of the second lesson *Let's Get to Know Each Other Better* (Kamińska, Kiryluk) was to integrate the class and let the teachers get to know the children. The second lesson was organized in a form of classroom games, which made it possible to notice interpersonal similarities between children. The third lesson *We Have a Lot in Common* (Mościcka, Radziejwicz) focused on discovering similarities between the children and developing the ability to discern these similarities. The lesson was a direct introduction to the fourth lesson *Cultures Far and Near* (Mioduszevska, Młynarczuk). In the fourth lesson, focused on similarities between people, the students' attention was drawn to the cultural diversity of their own region and of the world. The lesson aroused the cognitive curiosity of the students, giving importance to otherness in cultural terms.

¹¹ The names of the authors of workshop scenarios are provided in brackets.

The three meetings that followed were devoted to selected elements of Polish and Chechen cultures. They emphasized the uniqueness of either culture, pointing to the similarities and differences between them. The meeting *Among the National Symbols* (Chodorowska, Sienkiewicz) was designed to familiarize the children with the Polish and Chechen flags, coats of arms, legends, and anthems, and to teach the pupils respect for national symbols of other countries. In the following meeting *Music and Dances of Polish and Chechen Cultures* (Chodorowska, Sienkiewicz), children learnt the basic steps of the polonaise, a Polish dance, and of the lezginka, a Chechen dance. During the workshop, children experienced the extraordinariness of traditional foreign dances, and learnt about the traditional costumes the dancers wear. The subsequent meeting *Our Religions* (Kamińska, Kiryluk, Potoniec) was devoted to the dominant religions in

Poland and Chechnya, Catholicism and Islam respectively. The children learnt about similarities and differences between the two religions. The artistic workshop *The Poles and Chechens – What We Have In Common* (Mościcka, Radzewicz) concluded the eight-hour series of classes. In this workshop, children made works on the cultural and individual similarities they noticed between the two cultures.



The intercultural workshop

The events concomitant with the series of workshops

were significant for the project. They included Chechen dance workshops, culinary workshops, and a trip to the places of Białystok cultural heritage. All the additional meetings happened after the lessons and complemented the series of intercultural workshops. The abovementioned activities made integration occur spontaneously, in a safe and friendly environment. The project permitted the children, parents and teachers to spend some quality time together and, as a result, get to know each other and acquire new skills. Some of the effects of work were presented at the meetings that concluded the project. The meetings were open to the local community as well. At those meetings, the elements of Polish and Chechen cultures were shown. There was an exhibition of children's works made during the workshops. The events were organized to celebrate World Refugee Day.

The project was an attempt to cater for the need of integration through intercultural education that is implemented at schools



The cooking workshop



The sightseeing tour of Białystok

attended by Chechen children. In the realization of the project *Toward Enriching Diversity* all the activities concerning intercultural education were carried out as part of in-school or after-school classes. Activating teaching methods were used, therefore the children willingly participated in the lessons. The children skillfully drew meaningful conclusions and noticed the enriching quality of diversity both in cultural and interpersonal terms. The integration process was particularly effective during after-school classes, especially during the Chechen dance workshop. With the supervision of a professional dance teacher, children learnt traditional Chechen dances. Exploring dancing was facilitated by a friendly, hierarchy free, atmosphere filled with team spirit.

Educational Project *Immortalize Atlantis*

The project *Immortalize Atlantis* was initiated by a group of students, teachers, educators, who are enthusiasts of the multiculturalism of the Podlasie region and who work or intend to work with young people. The project was designed for the junior high school students from various, often difficult, educational environments of Wasilków

and Krynki, two little towns in the Podlasie region. Both towns have a rich multicultural heritage. This potential created the learning space for the youths, the organizers and the experts running the classes. The main purpose of the project was to draw the participants' attention to the multicultural character of the Podlasie region in an interesting and enticing way.

The project started with an integration meeting for the young people. Then, there was an outdoor photography workshop, where the participants learnt to use a professional camera. Then a series of multicultural workshops was organized. The workshops revealed the secrets of the multicultural character of the region and they proceeded according to the following scenarios: *Traditional Belarusian Wedding Reception* (Charytoniuk), *Clash with the Past. Polish Romanies Seen From the Perspective of Culture, Migration and Place* (Markowska-Manista), *Oriental Mosaic of the Podlasie Region* (Szostak-Król), *At the Białystok Jewish Cemetery – a Field Trip* (Poczykowski), *Shabbat Shalom* (Sztóp-Rutkowska). After the workshops, the teenagers participated in a trip that was to trace the multiculturalism of the Podlasie region. During the expedition, the participants immortalized the multicultural heritage of the region with their cameras. They visited Tykocin, Kruszyniany, Bohoniki, Krynki, and Święta Woda.

At every stage of the educational project *Immortalize Atlantis*, interesting forms of work were intentionally used – a workshop, a field trip, to name a few. Moreover, activating teaching methods were employed – the impressionist method, expressionist method, and educational games. The participants could experience the multicultural character of their region. The young people contemplated Atlantis of the Podlasie region by learning about the Hebrew alphabet, reading the inscriptions on tombstones at one of Białystok Jewish cemeteries, discovering the symbolism of the synagogue in Tykocin, and learning about the history and architecture of the mosque in Kruszyniany. The pictures taken allowed the participants



In Kruszyń



The field workshop on the symbolism of *matzevas*

to keep record of the places visited, and later on rediscover them and experience the past anew.

Every co-creator of the project partook in the process of creative learning. The participants had the opportunity to expand their knowledge, experience multiculturalism through interactions with people from other cultures, and develop their interests or even passions by creative work. The young people appreciated the professionalism of experts and the practical skills they acquired, such as different pho-

tographic techniques, which triggered their cognitive curiosity. The teaching-learning process was boosted by the relaxed atmosphere and ubiquitous team spirit. Consequently, some of the participants prided themselves on being rooted in the multicultural community of the region. Pivotal for the project was the fact that the students of two different towns, schools and educational environments integrated naturally and spontaneously.



The project conclusion meeting

The educational project *Immortalize Atlantis* closed with an event held for the local community. As part of the event, there was a lecture on the multiculturalism of the region. The young shared their opinions on the project. An exhibition of the photos taken in the course of the implementation of the project was prepared as well.

Conclusion

Meeting the Alien/Other, both the close and the distant one, has become a natural element of contemporary socio-cultural reality. The character of the meetings depends largely on education. Education is a factor that can make diversity important. It can help abandon the

perception of people as dangerous Aliens and see them as inspiring Others. It can also counteract all types of discrimination that are ingrained in every multicultural society. Therefore, it is of great importance to prepare the whole of society, children, teenagers, adults, for interactions with Aliens/Others. On the basis of the results of scientific research as well as personal experience, one could say that the process of developing intercultural competence should start at an early age. Finding interesting and effective ways for intercultural integration is a challenge for contemporary education. Nowadays, intercultural education is considered to be the best educational model that allows one to develop intercultural competence in the culturally diverse world. The abovementioned initiatives illustrate ways of implementing the idea of intercultural education into the teaching-learning process at kindergarten and elementary school, engaging adults, parents and the members of local communities, into the process. The initiatives created interesting possibilities of intercultural education by means of personal experience and creative work.

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Emilia Jakubowska

University of Białystok

Patriotic Education and Regional Studies on The Example of Kurpie Region of Poland

The education of the younger generation in a spirit of love for the homeland is of great importance for the future of the nation. In fact, it is not possible to serve the nation well without knowing its history, its rich tradition and its culture. Poland needs people open to the world, who love their own country.

John Paul II, Łowicz, June 14, 1999

ABSTRACT

Patriotic upbringing has a long tradition not only in Poland, but also in other countries. After joining the EU, Poland – now more than ever – needs national identity and European identity. Values like patriotism, tolerance, solidarity and civic courage, which have become part of Polish history and culture, should be protected. Patriotic education calls for modern methods, whose main idea is to awaken students curiosity, so that they become historical researchers themselves.

Key words: patriotic education, early years education.

Political, social, economic and cultural changes which took place in Poland after 1989 triggered a radical change, especially in young people's approach to universal and timeless values. The joy at having regained freedom, in time gave way to an admiration for consumerism and a liberal style of living. It concerns especially the young generation, and therefore, it is crucial that we reach out to children and teenagers and their notion of homeland through patriotic education (Knapik, Lobos 2007, p. 5). Patriotic education may be carried out by allowing students to participate in the process of discovering their homeland, shaping their views and their own opinions on what they see, notice, read and take part in (Ratajek 2007/2008, p. 5-6).

Patriotic upbringing has a long tradition, not only in Poland, but also in other countries. After joining the EU, Poland – now more than ever – needs both a national identity and a European identity. Values like patriotism, tolerance, solidarity and civic courage, which have become part of Polish history and culture, should be protected.

What seems to be a significant issue is the weakening of natural and family, local and school patriotic education. Extremely worrisome is the fact that patriotism has lost its 'civil right' in the popular culture and, therefore, an even bigger responsibility to carry out patriotic education rests on the state and, especially, on schools, public media and cultural institutions. Patriotic education calls for modern methods, whose main idea is to awaken students' curiosity so that they become historical researchers themselves (Nikitorowicz 2009, p. 8-9). Patriotism, as a kind of positive attitude towards homeland and its problems, should be a founding value of education work, not only for history, civics and Polish studies teachers, but also for class tutors. Out of concern for historical truth, teachers should show students not only glorious and commendable events in history, but also those shameful ones. One should remember that patriotism means not only appreciating one's country's independence, sovereignty and momentous events,

but also shaping one's universal attitude, obeying and respecting law and fulfilling obligations conscientiously. Educational negligence of this area becomes apparent for instance when students do not know how to behave during school or state celebrations. It is essential we create educational situations which will serve as examples in shaping the pupils' patriotic attitudes. Patriotic upbringing should be associated with many situations in public life. Situations occurring in social and economic life prove that the teacher's role in patriotic upbringing demands a huge cognitive effort. The teacher should follow current changes in the so-called pedagogical principles as well as in the changing laws of the educational system. Patriotic upbringing is a constant and ongoing process. The teacher should analyse the patriotic education tasks and consider them together with all the components included in the process – family, school, public service organizations including youth organizations, the state, Church and the pupils' closest environment (Stańczak 2007/2008, p. 35).

Considering the significant role of patriotic education in today's school, it is justified to carry out a kind of analysis of educational content of chosen patriotic education curricula for classes I–III.

In curriculum *Z ekoludkiem w szkole*, the author discerns the need for patriotic education from the very first class. All sections of the curriculum include a considerable amount of content with patriotic character, especially: *I am a member of local community. Local authorities, districts and provinces. Authorities of my district and my province. The capital of the province. Participation in public, school and community life.*

I am a member of universal community. National culture – literary works, musical compositions, works of art. Profiles of great Poles.

The oldest cities in Poland. Historical capital cities of Poland. Warsaw as a seat of the oldest state authorities and centre of culture. Sights of Warsaw.

Poland in Europe. Poland's neighbours (Kitlińska-Pięta 2004).

Patriotic content is included mainly in the third grade curriculum; in lower classes this topic does not appear so frequently. Curriculum *Z ekoludkiem w szkole* allows shaping core abilities, which assures completion of patriotic education tasks by the youngest students. Methodological approach to introducing this content should also be mentioned, e.g. interesting design of the student's worksheets, which may be used either as a test or as homework; or the student's book, which combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills. After a careful analysis one may have an impression that the curriculum contains too little content requiring active teaching methods, which, in result, does not allow the child's own activity and initiative and does not trigger the need for independent activity.

In the curriculum for integrated education *Przygoda z klasą* patriotic references appear in all seven fields of education.

Among the content of Polish studies, the most important of those references center on the issue: *Child and his/her social environment* and are focused around the topic: *Homeland, its symbols and national holidays, international holidays, fairy tales and national legends*. There is an abundance of curriculum entries such as: the meaning of the word „homeland” and its origin, Gniezno and the origins of Poland as well as legends and historical facts connected to it, national symbols, location of Poland, national holidays, ways to celebrate holidays, international holidays, and local celebrations. Patriotic content also concentrates on the issue: *Child in the world of culture* and the following entry is discussed: *Culture, cultural heritage and its diversity* (meaning of the words: culture, work of art, the oldest kinds of art, national, regional and ethnic culture).

In the educational content of social and environment sciences concentrated around the issue of *the child and his/her social environment*, the entries helpful in introducing patriotic topics are as follows: *Family home – child as a member of a family* (family traditions, holiday

customs etc.) *Child as a student, friend; close and distant neighbours, life of children in other countries presented in pictures* (Poland's neighbours, location of Poland in Europe and in the world, life and culture in other countries), *Place of living – town – life of its inhabitants, region, country, continent* (location of the town/city where the student lives, its history, important buildings, places and institutions of public life in the student's town as well as in the country's capital).

Important patriotic messages are also introduced into the curriculum of music and art education (songs, patriotic and historic literary works, profiles of great Polish artists, scholars, politicians, soldiers, family traditions connected to music and singing, national anthem – its lyrics and history).

To sum up, one may state that the curriculum „Adventure with the class” contains an abundance of patriotic topics and enables the teachers to extensively introduce noble principles of patriotic education to the youngest students.

Curriculum *Moja szkoła* (Faliszewska et al. 1999) intends to introduce patriotic content and conduct patriotic education by shaping family, social, national and international ties. It is especially well highlighted in social and geographic education. The curriculum introduces the abovementioned issues through the following topics: family: structure and age of family members, organization of life; history of our town, its sights, history, national memorials and our town; the city and the country, Polish capitals, etc. Throughout the process of learning on the integrated education level one may observe constant links to patriotic messages, which introduce the world of our homeland – the closest one. The student learns about his or her country, its sights, nature, history and the closest environment, place of living, as well as culture and customs of its region. A broadly understood notion of patriotism is shaped, which becomes a foundation for further knowledge about the country and its international position, which greatly influences the process of shaping the students' worldview.

In order to shape the love of 'what is ours', the education process should include children and teenagers on all school levels. Patriotism is often associated with local patriotism and our 'little homeland', the one where we were born, where we grew up and where we can find our roots. Therefore it is important we connect all the elements into one, specific whole. The education process should start at a very young age by learning native language, family history and the history of the closest neighbourhood (Ziołowicz 2007/2008, p. 42-43).

The education process should build local and national identity and should draw attention to family values in everyone's life and their responsibilities towards the nation. Regional studies - which shall be taught through values and affection for the region - should begin as early as possible. It should start with matters close to the student's heart like: 'I' - as an individual, my family, my kindergarten and school, my school community; my friends - neighbours, local community; my town - cultural region e.g. town, province, my country as a region of Europe, closest neighbours, continent, world (Ziołowicz 2007/2008, p. 44).

The main aim of regional studies is to develop and shape respect for one's own cultural heritage, system of values, language, traditions and customs. Regional studies should equip students with knowledge; they should familiarize, sensitize, support, strengthen and protect the world of core values. They should introduce students to the custom of cultivating tradition and undertaking special actions to develop a loving and affectionate attitude, to develop ties and bonds. Regional studies should teach students how to intentionally develop bonds with their 'private homeland', with the world of their origin. The content of regional studies should be connected - by actions - with the knowledge of local heroes and important events, local customs, the landscape, architecture, monuments of spiritual and material significance, local dialect, folklore, legends, folk art and handcraft; with history, with an

interpersonal and intergenerational contact, and by living according to the rules and rhythm of nature. Mother tongue, national language, direct and indirect contacts, a written account – literature, magazines, daily papers etc. – are all sources of message transfer. The forms of the transfer vary and may be individual, group, mass (e.g. meetings, trips, participation in different celebrations, organization of games, ‘culture corners’, traditions, places of cultural heritage, regional song contests for children and for parents, ‘knowledge of the region’ competitions, work for the benefit of the local community, exhibitions with local themes, symbolism, customs, and traditional costumes) (Nikitorowicz 2009, p. 218-220).

The main aim of regional studies is to enrich the student’s knowledge with facts about their region, which is a part of Poland, Europe and the world. Knowledge of one’s region, its history, traditions and culture develops the notion of ‘little homeland’, which is a component of ‘the great homeland’ (Gogolewska-Toska 2011/2012, p. 83).

Introducing the content of regional studies into the nationwide curriculum starts in early school years, even in kindergarten. Raising students’ awareness that each and every one of them is a member of a community such as the village, city, region, country, and continent – and has certain duties – is one of the main objectives of modern school (Gogolewska-Toska 2011/2012, p. 83-84). Gogolewska-Toska presents a proposal of introducing regional topics into the first stage of learning, which may be used in every part of the country.

T as a resident of the region:

- a. My family home:
 - Role and function of the family,
 - Family memorabilia, traditions and customs,
 - Family structure, genealogical tree,
 - Everyday life now and before.

- b. My town:
 - Geographical location,
 - Names of closest towns and villages,
 - Fauna and flora of my region,
 - Seasonal changes in nature,
 - Legends and tales,
 - Traditions and ceremonies,
 - Folk art,
 - Sites and national memorials,
 - Cultural centres and public interest institutions.
 - c. My school:
 - Its history and its present day situation,
 - Profile of the patron,
 - School traditions.
1. 'I' as a Pole
- a. My Homeland – basic information:
 - National symbols,
 - Capital cities of Poland,
 - Geographical location,
 - Our neighbours.
 - b. Poland – such a beautiful country:
 - Division into geographic regions
 - Mountains,
 - Uplands,
 - Lowlands,
 - Coast.
 - Division into regions – 'little homelands'
 - Folk costumes,
 - Folk dialects,
 - Historic songs and dances,
 - Folk customs and traditions,
 - Proverbs and sayings,

- c. Profiles of famous Poles:
 - Writer – Henryk Sienkiewicz,
 - Musician – Fryderyk Chopin,
 - Painter – Jan Matejko,
 - Discoverer – Mikołaj Kopernik,
 - Pope – John Paul II – Karol Józef Wojtyła.
2. 'T' as a European
 - a. European Union – basic information:
 - Symbols (flag, anthem, euro, mascot – Sirius),
 - Area and population,
 - Natural environment and climate.
 - b. Trips around the Member States of EU:
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Spain, Holland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Hungary, United Kingdom, Italy.
 - c. Profiles of famous Europeans:
 - Writer – Hans Christian Andersen,
 - Painter – Vincent van Gogh,
 - Musician – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,
 - Discoverer – Jan Gutenberg,
 - Pope – Benedict XVI – Joseph Ratzinger.

One may notice that the issues connected to regional studies and patriotic upbringing are very similar. In order to be a Polish patriot one has to be a regional, 'little homeland' patriot first.

Educational value of the Kurpie region of Poland

The Kurpie region is an area which is very rich in educational values. It is obvious that teachers fulfil an important role in the process of learning those values. Due to the teacher's initiative, commitment

and passion for the region, they help the student ‘take root’ in their region.

In many schools in the Kurpie region regional education – the knowledge of the region, its present and past – has only been taught for a few years now. Students discover the values of the Kurpie region not only during classes, but also during after-class activities, bike, trekking and bus trips, and also by participating in folk celebrations and religious celebrations of the region (Jakubowska 2010, p. 388).

Schools should consider introducing the following issues into the curricula of the subjects such as Polish studies, history, biology, art, and during tutor’s lessons:

- traditions and ceremonies in the Kurpie region,
- cultivation of old, regional traditions,
- the beauty of the Kurpie region in songs, art and literature,
- history of the Kurpie region, its location and character,
- flora and fauna of Kurpiowska Green Forest,
- Kurpie life now and before.

At schools the tradition of preparing palms for Palm Sunday still exists. During art classes students – supervised by teachers or folk artists - prepare palms from pine or juniper springs and decorate them with colourful paper flowers and ribbons. Usually, those palms take part in competitions, for which there is a 30-year-long tradition.

Folk traditions are also cultivated. There are children’s groups which present folk dances, songs and dialect. A few elementary schools in the Kurpie region can boast of such groups under their roofs.

Other forms of promoting and learning about the Kurpie region are also undertaken (e.g. some schools open a ‘Kurpie chamber’).

One of the schools is an organizer of the Regional Culture Day. On this day students and their parents come to school dressed in Kurpie costumes, they meet folk artists, and they learn folk handicrafts while listening to folk songs.

In another school a Kurpie Day is organised. On this day – instead of lessons – activities connected to folk traditions and history of the region are organised, with participation of the members of the Kurpie Association.

Many schools include in their education agenda trips around the Kurpie region. During the trips students discover places worth seeing and knowing in the Kurpie region. It is an interesting way for students to learn about the region and they very much enjoy those excursions.

During the trip students not only rest, but also learn about the present, history and traditions of the region, town, and area. They visit local monuments and nature reserves with different fauna and flora.

The Kurpie region is one of the most interesting – ethnographically – regions in Poland. It is distinguished by a picturesqueness of its culture which should be protected and preserved at all costs.

Conclusion

Patriotic education is one of the elements of intentional development of student's personality, his/her individual attitude towards his/her society and this society's place among other nations. Patriotic education has its own issues, which comprise the feeling of national affiliation, the respect and attachment to one's national traditions, national accomplishments, culture, language, and people who live in our homeland (Stańczak 2007/2008, p. 35). However, only an effective and successful protection of what is important, raising awareness of our own roots and our own identity gives the young generation a chance of natural growth and development from the 'little homeland' to the 'great homeland'.

All the actions undertaken by local communities should be focused on propagating knowledge about one's region and popularisation of folk culture.

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Joanna Szymanowska

University of Białystok

Home and its Meaning in the Life of a Disabled Child

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the issue of the family home as an area of interest of modern social pedagogy. The author has undertaken an analysis of the functioning of families raising a disabled child and the difficulties experienced in the correct shaping of internal family relations as well as the relations with a broader social surrounding which, in consequence, influence the image of the family home created by children and their perception of their own childhood.

Key words: family home, disabled child, childhood.

The nature of home in the light of theoretical background

Human life is strictly bound up with the family home, which has, since the dawn of ages, had a great meaning for every human being. The home appeared as a result of a need to create a space that was meant to give shelter against adverse atmospheric conditions, a space which could be given a character of its own and that ought to be a safe haven, the basis of geniality, security, privacy and intimacy. The human being has always organized the surrounding environment

and located his/her family at its center. At first it was a cave, then a shack, followed by a tent and, finally, a house. Nowadays, the term *house* has many meanings, i.e. “a building for dwelling, a building for an establishment or an institution, etc.

A brick house, a bungalow, a multiple-story house, a corner house. A modern house, a classy, old-fashioned, or historic one. A single-family home, multi-family home, one's own home. A house with a porch or a veranda. (...) a flat, living premises, permanent dwelling. Decorated in a modern, old-fashioned, cozy, luxurious, frugal, poor style” (Szymczak 1978, p. 422). Once the modern man moved into a house, s/he settled down, created a certain order in his/her living space, in the surrounding environment and in his/her relations with the wider world. The house began to signify something more than just a mere dwelling place and something different than a simple place of the family's presence. It was gradually gaining a certain symbolism that, as humankind developed, was constantly being supplemented. The house, taking new and various forms, constantly gives one food for thought concerning human beings, their situation, experiences and activities (Dyczewski 2003, p. 50-51).

The image of the family house, with its positive atmosphere as well as frequent difficulties and problems, leaves a mark on human psyche, remaining in their memories as an important place. The family home is created by its inhabitants; however, its atmosphere is constructed by their common feelings, variously presented emotions, discussions, collective participation in a variety of events, and the traditions and habits they cultivate. All the above mentioned elements form a strong and unbreakable inter-generational emotional bonds. As stated by L. Dyczewski, a person without a home is deprived, also, of people close to their heart, as well as deep experiences and magnificent memories; s/he does not have his/her roots, nothing and no one to come back to (Dyczewski 2003, p. 51). The house constitutes a human being's “own territory”, a particular center in which various

dimensions of human life converge. Having a strictly drawn border, it becomes a “symbol of a social group living in it. There is a bond between a human being’s personality and their home. Home is (...) a form of personality emanation, the prolongation of thought, ideas and pleasures (Spieralska 2004, p. 18). The family home may also be investigated as a synonym of a certain life standard that fulfils the following functions (a) security (as a place where one can take root since it allows a realization of the need for security and protection); (b) recreation (relaxation and regaining strength); (c) emotional (home as a synonym of warmth and a development of emotional life); (d) communication (the place for an exchange of thoughts, confessions, and mutual influence); (e) separation (understood in a positive sense, it enables individual autonomy of its inhabitants) (Wilk 2002, p. 64-65). The family home, as a well-organized physical space, constitutes also a collection of items to which its dwellers are not indifferent. Appliances, furniture, and everyday objects have a particular meaning and value for household members. As stipulated by Izdebska, a child, recognising these items since the earliest moments of his/her life, gets to know them, grows up with them, and remembers various situations that happen in their presence or owing to them. Only the family home, the author states, may become an environment in which one creates the specific management of objects that, apart from being useful, have a symbolic meaning as well as embody memories and history of the family and its members (Izdebska 2006, p. 28).

An analysis of contemporary research into the meanings of the family home allows one to postulate that the issue has so far attracted attention of few scholars. The most prominent academic achievement has been made in the area of social pedagogy; nevertheless, this pedagogical sub-discipline devotes most attention to the family and not the family home, proving that the explorations undertaken have had a polymorphic and versatile nature. The dominant approach was sociological and it indicated the social character of the family, the

roles its members are prepared for, the functions fulfilled, and the family's broader social surrounding (Tyszka 1978). Psychological deliberations on the subject focused mainly on the analysis of the inner mechanism related to the functioning of family home, its meaning, and the values expressed from the individual perspective of each family member and from the point of view of the family environment seen as a separate community. The exploration of the subject of the home initiated in the field of pedagogy touched upon the questions of changes occurring in the family homes due to social, cultural, economic and political transformations. Thus, they include the context of unemployment, the impoverishment of Polish families, disorganization of inner structures caused by a temporary incompleteness of families due to one parent's emigration and, finally, manifestations of destructive (i.e. alcohol abuse) and pathological (i.e. physical, emotional, and economical violence, child abuse) behaviours. Rembowski (1986), Braun-Gałkowska (1990), Łukaszewicz i Siciński (1992), Izdebska (2006), Dymara (1998), Dyczewski (2002), Haward (1978), and Winnicott (1986) can be listed among the native and foreign scholars who deal with the subject of family home. Significantly fewer theoretical and empirical works dealing with the issue of the family home touch upon the situation of the families with disabled children. Previous analyses of the subject have been concerned mostly with the questions relating to the family situation, social aid granted, its members' quality of life and/or the perception of disability as a stressor or an abnormal crisis-cum-fate situation (Nawrot 1990; Obuchowska 1995; Pisula 1998; Szymanowska 2008; Firkowska-Mankiewicz 1999).

Family as a basic environment for the life of a disabled child

The perception of the family as the first and irreplaceable educational environment, for the process of transmission of values and the rules of social life constitutes the main interest of social pedagogy. The role of all family members, and parents in particular, is clearly predetermined in the family upbringing. Its fundamental functions are to teach the child to be sensitive to the surrounding environment as well as expressing concern regarding the correct atmosphere of the family life as based on common benevolence, support, and care, devoting one's time to the child and a clear presentation to him/her of one's feelings, working together to achieve common goals and to enable the fulfilling of one's needs. In the family home which is so interpreted one may expect the correct shaping of the child's psychical and physical development, based on emotional relations, familial care, and protective behaviours. The basic qualities of the family home may be enumerated as follows: closeness, intimacy, security, openness, hierarchy, privacy, the collection of significant objects and, finally, unique and exceptional familial emotional bonds (Izdebska 2006).

As stated by Wilk, the characteristic atmosphere of each and every family home stems from "the natural bond of love that connects parents and children, or siblings with one another. The feeling of responsibility for the family's entirety and for the welfare of each individual among its members stems from this natural emotional foundation of a positive character" (Wilk 2002, p. 65). Seen from this perspective, the home manifests itself as a place of meetings, dialogue and transmission of cultural values, traditions and family celebrations.

The family home is where the child grows and learns, and it has a special role in the periods of childhood and youth. It is the place where the natural upbringing takes place as well as the shaping of interpersonal relations and the defining of the child's

identity. It is at home and owing to direct interactions between family members that the child acquires elementary knowledge of the world, values, moral and social norms, family home culture, and where s/he becomes familiarized with the means of satisfying his/her needs and shapes his/her individual interests (Izdebska 2001). Belonging to a family and having a home satisfies the child's need for the feeling of love, happiness and fulfillment. As stated by Ogryzko-Wiewiórska (2001, p. 117), the family is considered by many „an oasis, a little motherland that fulfills the feeling of security and emotional sustenance, and an environment that fosters a positive state of mind”. The first years of human life, according to psychologists, are the critical period for his/her emotional development, and the lack of indispensable sensory-emotional experiences may lead to psycho-motor development disorders, including in the sphere of sensual-social development. In a properly functioning family home one should encounter elements of reflective upbringing based on planned and purposeful educational actions. Kawula enumerates the following types of influences as well as the situations that trigger them: unintentional influence which is neutral from the educational point of view (situations well known to a family: usual, daily occurrences, that do not trigger new experiences); unintentional influence which is not neutral from the educational viewpoint (it may have a positive or a negative impact on shaping the child's personality); the parents' intentional educational influence on their child, oriented towards the realization of family goals; and, finally, the parents' (elder siblings' or relatives') intentional educational influence oriented towards the realization of educational aims in the global society (Kawula 2004). The child's upbringing in the family home is meant to enable him/her to become a person to the fullness of his/her humane, spiritual and social scope.

Family environments dealing with chronic diseases or a child's disability function by far differently than families with healthy children. Assuming that disability constitutes one of the main factors determining family dysfunction (Tyszka 1995) while the realization and conditions of the family's protective and educational functions together with other basic and derivational functions are the subject of social pedagogy, one may specify the family roles that are indispensable for correct development of a child and for satisfying his/her needs. They refer to the following areas: (a) material and health-related (teaching the skill of worthwhile time organization and ensuring the conditions essential for the child's correct physical development, i.e. feeding, hygiene, accommodation, relaxation); (b) emotional (teaching the child how to express his/her feelings, teaching understanding, communication and cooperation with others); (c) intellectual development (creating situations conducive to broadening the child's knowledge, providing conditions for learning, development of interests and aspirations as well as shaping the motivation for continuous learning); (d) cultural heritage (introducing the child to the world of values and norms of social interaction as well as social and political issues, and shaping patriotic attitudes); (e) instilling work ethics (creating the feeling of responsibility and teaching team work); (f) preparation for independent family and social life (Szpiczko 1981, p. 59). However, one should bear in mind that it is not possible to implement all the components enumerated above in the family which deals with the problem of child's disability. Disability has far-reaching consequences in the economic and domestic situation of any given family, it brings about changes in the organization of family life and in family's functioning. Disability disorganizes inter-family relations and its social relations, and results in the home becoming less open to the needs and expectations of all family members.

Family home from the point of view of a disabled child

Is a frequently emphasised aspect of bringing up a disabled child. The privacy of the family home. Maintaining intimacy in a family dealing with a child's disability may involve a reluctance to open onto strangers, an unwillingness to visiting, a lack of hospitality and of positive relations with cousins or other people outside the family circle. The family home becomes the only place where the disabled child spends his or her free time, both as a place of relaxation, entertainment, and personality development.

Parents' efforts do provide a positive impact and experiences for the household members and foster integration of individual members but, due to its home-centered character and efforts to find inexpensive solutions, those efforts are mostly directed towards a realization of passive forms (Szymanowska 2008). From the perspective of the child's experiences, the image of the home which emerges as a result of the above is that of a place where the child cannot find the joy of creation and fulfillment of the needs related to the development of his/her interests.

The importance of a childhood characterised by a mosaic of experienced events stems from its massive impact on the following periods of life. The legacy of experiences that shape adulthood, but first and foremost one's youth and childhood, is reflected in every biography. The atmosphere of childhood years has an intimate, private and subjective character, and "is a transmission of oneself in the form of thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Wisdom and benevolence, understood as kindness and acquiescence, endow these actions with geniality, emotion and depth. It teaches the child how to exist in a broader social environment – in the human family" (Dymara 1998, p. 144).

Treating the child as a subject rather than an object begins with recognizing him/her as a human being, responsible for his/her

actions, possessed of dignity and freedom, and capable of leading his/her own life. The parents' task is not only to shape the child, but also to transmit to him/her the values helping him/her in "becoming a self-reliant being who aims at self-definition" (Pecyna 1998, p. 66). As accentuated by Satir, an eminent contemporary family therapist, for the correct progress of childhood there are four aspects of family life that define the quality of childhood, namely: the feelings and beliefs of family members regarding the child's value, the forms of communication within the family and the means of agreeing on the meaning of notions, the rules followed, and social reactions of the family (Lachowska 2001). In case of disabled children, a childhood spent in the family home is an exceptionally important time, instrumental in teaching the child to deal with his/her own problems, in shaping their attitude towards their own dysfunctions, in adapting to the limits placed on their functioning by architectural, communicational, and technical barriers. Out of the numerous limitations in the psychical, cognitive and social spheres, the origin of which can often be traced back to the family home, there may emerge the image of a suffering child who is helpless in the face of his/her disability. The relations and attitudes in the family home and the parents' attitudes appear to be of a great importance. Emotional emptiness rooted in a lack of bonds between household members may lead to a sense of apathy and isolation. A child that suffers painful experiences in his/her family home loses his/her sense of security and personal worth. The family home seems to him/her a place of solitude, lack of love, acceptance, support, and proper care (Szymanowska 2008). Such a situation may especially be observed in case of an acquired disability and the parents' sense of helplessness and inadequacy that follow. The changes stemming from the family's new life situation may encompass a variety of spheres: they can "trigger positive and negative phenomena, make it internally coherent and well-organized or weaken and destabilize it in various spheres" (Maciarz 1998, p. 35).

Negative perceptions of the family home in disabled children may stem from: a lack of or constraints in everyday contacts with relatives, separation from important people, frequent experiences of distressing emotions, incorrect relations between household members, lack of parental support, lack of time devoted to the child due to the demands of employment, destructive phenomena (a parent's alcohol abuse), but also from the sense of inadequate social relations (Szymanowska 2010, p. 132-139).

“Discovering” the family home – several methodological remarks

In pedagogical research into the issue of the family a social orientation is clearly outlined that allows pedagogues to conduct quantitative, analytical and empirical analyses that refer to the assumptions of positivist pedagogy and enhance the outline of notions characteristic of a family, of family environment, and a stipulation of relations between various factors (Izdebska 2005; 2006). The traditional approach of social pedagogy towards the family has been the subject of numerous critical comments formed by pedagogues that posit the necessity of resignation from the institutional-environmental orientation in favor of a homocentric-familial one allowing for the analysis of a family and family home functioning on the ground of humanistic epistemological-explorative paradigms (Winiarski 2003; Matyjas 2007). The techniques of quality survey, such as observation, free interview, narrative interview, analysis of children's activity products, projection techniques allowing for a direct attainment of

interactive episodes, and analysing life experiences of the people tested should all be utilized in the research on the family home. They facilitate learning about a variety of family homes and the value granted them by their members as well as their external evaluation.

The results of studies into the family home clearly indicate a substantial deterioration of the atmosphere in contemporary Polish families. The surveyed adults aged 25–67 (75 per cent) define the family home as a place in which they felt loved and understood. On the other hand, almost half of the respondents below the age of 25 (47 per cent) did not feel understood in their family homes and treated it as a place “where one used to eat and sleep” (Izdebska 2000). Any interpretation of these results must, however, take into consideration the fact that the adults polled idealized the lost family home. It has survived in their memories as a dream-like vision of a carefree and happy childhood rather than a reflection of reality. A child’s vision of his/her family home seems to be more reliable, stemming from the projection of the child’s needs, aspirations and desires. Dymara (1998, p. 140), analyzing the notion of the family home in children’s poetry, reveals that in their poems children define their homes as a place of happiness and joy but also yearning, solitude and scarcity.

Fairy-tale-like elements, taken from movies or books, are often to be found in children’s works. The family home is seen by healthy, disabled, and chronically ill children alike through the prism of its atmosphere created by an everyday life full of specific relations with parents and siblings, as well as through participation in numerous situations from family life.

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**Adrijana Visnjic Jevtic,
Eleonora Glavina,
Silvija Pucko**

OMEP Croatia

Grow up Together! The Project of Introducing Personal As- sistants to Encourage the Inclusion of Children with Autism in Preschool

ABSTRACT

Modern educational systems are based on the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular educational institutions – preschool and school. Children with disabilities cease to be marginalized and become part of peer group. When children with disabilities are included in regular educational institutions it is very important to pay particular attention to those whose problems interfere with their ability to achieve desirable social interactions – children who have disorders of the autistic spectrum. Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by difficulties in several areas – communication skills, social relationships, cognitive skills, sensory integration; all this results in difficulties in relations with the environment. In order to assist these children in their inclusion into preschool education, a project was designed in Croatia to introduce personal assistants for children with disabilities of this kind during their stay in preschools. This paper outlines the project in Medjmurje to show how these positive experiences can be used to contribute to a better (re)habilitation of children with this disorder and to increase their involvement in the institutions of early and preschool education.

Key words: autism, personal assistants, children with disabilities, preschool.

Introduction

Preschool institutions are places where children from different religious, national and social family environments meet. Therefore, all preschool institutions face a challenge – to integrate all child experiences so that all the experiences previously acquired will be included and respected. At the same time, it is the earliest involvement of children in the educational systems that provides them with an equal starting point. Comparing the groups who are more reluctant to engage in educational systems, we can speak of socially deprived families. Not taking part in the educational system in the early and preschool period hinders the development of social skills and dispositions which allow an easy integration into the school system. The responsibility lies on the parents and preschool institutions which should ensure equitable participation of all “marginal” groups. Preschool institutions are the first educational institutions which, alongside the family, take care of children’s education. Educators who work in these institutions are insufficiently prepared to work with the children with special needs. In some children the special needs can be very early detected, whereas in others they are only noticed later.

Research shows that the inclusion of children with special needs into regular preschool programs benefits their development (Kostelnik et al. 2003, p. 14; by: Allen, Schwartz 2001; McDonnell, Hardman 1988). The subject of this paper is the inclusion of children who have difficulties in achieving and maintaining satisfying social relationships. But is the inclusion of children with such difficulties, i.e. difficulties from the autistic spectrum, into regular programs, what these children really need?

Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Most authors state the child's inability to achieve communication and interaction with other people as a basic characteristic of autistic disorder (Bujas Petković et al. 2010; Targ Brill 2008; Frith 2008). The same authors also report that children with disorders of this kind have delayed speech development, repetitive and stereotyped games, and an obsessive respect for order. At the same time, children with this disorder show a lack of emotional response to their social and material environment. This developmental disorder begins in early childhood and lasts throughout one's life (Bujas Petković et al. 2010).

Autism ranges from mild to severe. It is exactly this range that is called the autistic spectrum disorder (Targ Brill 2008). Frith (2008) states that every autistic disorder is unique and depends on the development of one's brain. Here are mentioned *highly-functioning* forms such as Asperger's syndrome, in which the child shows behaviours similar to those of children without disabilities. Serious autistic disorders include disorders in learning and behaviour (Targ Brill 2008). Regardless of in which part of the spectrum a child is, the disorder includes various difficulties in communication, social interaction, behaviour and sensory integration. Behavioural disorders prevent a child adjusting to the rules that of peer groups. Fuentes (2007) states that systematic planning, which should lead to changes in behaviour, is required. Such a plan should include an individual approach to each child, as well as strategies for developing communication and social skills. In order to succeed, the cooperation of parents, educators, rehab people, and other experts is also required. Targ Brill (2008) points out that a child with autism often needs an assistant throughout their education. The area of social skills is one of the most important areas that children must master. The role of the assistant and educator is not to further isolate the child, but to include him/her in group learning and to encourage his/her independence (Bujas

Petković et al. 2010). The inclusion of children with autistic disorders into institutions of early and preschool education is difficult due to a lack of persons who would have time to individually assist children. Educators in groups cannot accept the responsibility for these children's inclusion due to their lack of expertise in this area. This situation provoked a discussion of the possibility of introducing assistants to children with such disabilities in institutions of early and preschool education. The former Ministry of Family, Veterans and Inter-Generational Solidarity has opened the possibility to finance this form of assistance through various projects. The following describes the implementation of one such project by documenting statements of participants and the implementation process itself.

The Integration of Children into Institutions of Early and Preschool Education

An analysis of the inclusion of children with special needs into the regular educational system should distinguish between the term *integration* and the term *inclusion*. *Integration* implies including children with minor disabilities into the regular educational system, while the term *inclusion* implies the process by which we place in the same environment the children of the same chronological age with and without special needs for the purpose of playing games, socializing and learning together. Inclusion is, therefore, the process in which children with special needs learn together with children who do not have such needs. These children have equal opportunities to develop their physical, emotional, social and other skills. Inclusion enables children with special needs to observe, imitate and establish contact with children who are normally developed.

Inclusion into preschool educational institutions means including children with special needs into the regular program as implemented in groups of children without special needs – without separation, but

with the provision of necessary assistance. Inclusion is considered the most acceptable form of including children with special needs into preschool educational institutions, since it has a positive impact on all participants.

Earlier in this paper, I have discussed the difficulty of including children with autistic spectrum disorders into educational groups because of their lack of emotional and social contacts. Although the children of early and preschool age are open to peers regardless of their abilities, children with autistic disorders, because of their difficulties, remain isolated.

The interview with an educator V. N. (51) offers an insight into the process of including children with autistic spectrum disorder.

“P. B. is a child who attended our institution since the age of three. The child’s adaptation period was extremely difficult and long, which had repercussions for the entire group of children. The boy was loud, destructive, and prone to self-injury, with repetitive, stereotyped patterns of movement. These patterns of behaviour scared other children in the group who, instead of establishing communication with the child, began to run away from him. P.B.’s undesirable behaviour kept the educator’s attention focused solely on the boy and ignoring other children. The atmosphere resulted in an increased aggression among other children. The entire time of P. B.’s stay in the group there was cooperation with experts of various profiles – a special-education teacher, a psychologist, and a speech therapist, but it was not enough”.

This is one of many similar stories that happen when children with these disorders are included into groups. Contemporary literature suggests the introduction of assistants for children with autistic spectrum disorders.

The problems anticipated at the start of the project were:

- how to choose an assistant,
- what kind of education should an assistant have,

- how will educators accept an assistant,
- how to organize cooperation between the team of experts, educators and assistants,
- wishes of parents.

To ensure transparency in the selection of assistants, a public invitation for the position of assistant to children with special needs in institutions of early and preschool education was issued. During the eight days the contest lasted, there were 31 candidates: aged 18 to 37, male and female, of different educational profiles, from skilled workers to graduating students of different social sciences (psychology, philosophy...). All the candidates submitted to a selection interview. The candidates were then assessed in two more ways – their behaviour in a group in which the child was included, and their ability to establish communication with him/her. A total of 9 assistants were selected for 12 children. Assistants underwent preparation and training, attended demonstration classes, and entered their groups according to schedule. Introductory education classes held a special-education teacher, a specialist in autistic spectrum disorders, and psychologists and educators who work in groups in which children with these difficulties are included. Given the differences in the assistants' education and their differing previous experiences, the program offered workshops which aimed at helping assistants to find their way during everyday communication with children for whom they would be in charge, but also with other children in the group as well as educators. A total of nine educational-supervisory workshops for the assistants took place, where they discussed the difficulties encountered during their work with children, teachers and parents. The topic of each workshop was related to these issues. Two of these workshops, involving the teachers from the groups in which assistants worked, were held with the aim of strengthening communication skills and improving relations and working conditions.

Assistant in the Group

The aforementioned child (P. B.) was 5 years old when he received his assistant. His educator's (V. N., 51) view on the relationships in the group and the developmental progress of the child after the introduction of his assistant are as follows: "the assistant became involved in working with the child at the beginning of the school year. He had clearly defined tasks:

- to take the child through activities,
- to distract the child in the event of inappropriate behaviour,
- to separate the child from the group when the child needed it (excessive auditory stimulation),
- to help the child when the child needed it,
- to help the child to engage in activities with other children.

The introduction of the assistant in the educational group quickly raised the quality of group relationships. The child P. B. began to show greater ability to regulate his emotions. Other children in the group perceived the assistant as a positive model of another adult in their environment. The assistant enabled the educator to do his job, and to devote attention to each child regardless of the current mood or inappropriate behaviour of the child with disabilities".

The educator also states that it is good that the assistant had at least a basic pedagogical education in order to more easily get involved in activities with children and, more importantly, to understand the children's developmental potential.

The assistants' good preparation is a precondition for the prevention of one of his/her undesirable behaviours – excessive reactions to children's needs. Good preparation is also the foundation of good cooperation between educators and assistants. Additional training and education are necessary both to assistants and educators.

Problems during project implementation

Real problems that arose during the project, which were not anticipated, were:

- giving complete child care to the assistant,
- greater isolation of the child from the group,
- discomfort and a hostile attitude of the educator towards the assistant,
- rejection of tasks set by the assistant,
- parents acting as “supervisors” who try to control the assistant’s time and mode of work,
- unrealistic expectations (expecting the assistant to solve all the problems in child’s functioning),
- different expectations of parents, assistant and educators regarding their roles in the process,
- considering the assistant as a child therapist.

Most of these problems can be solved by additional training of all participants in the process. However, prejudice toward another person’s presence in the room, which some educators perceived as an attempt at taking control, can be solved only by strengthening awareness of the importance of helping the child with difficulties, other children in the group, and educators. The educator V. N. (51) is satisfied with the assistant’s presence in the group and perceives him as the key person in raising the quality of not only P. B.’s time in the institution but also that of other children’s. The biggest problem noticed during the implementation of the project was the further isolation of the child, with the view that s/he is now the “care of his/her assistant” and that it is not necessary to try to include him/her in the activities carried out by the group. This problem may also be dealt with by an assistant’s continuous presence in the group and by raising the educator’s awareness of the assistant’s tasks.

Parents have responded positively to the introduction of assistants, but they felt that as the child's primary legal guardians they should have an impact on the choice of time that the assistant spends with their child, as well as on the description of the tasks s/he deals with. To reduce the need for parents to manage organizational work, parental skills and education workshops were introduced that focused on the basic issues and functioning of children with autistic spectrum disorders.

Conclusion

The project was implemented in order to achieve two goals: providing support to children with disabilities of early and preschool age so that they could successfully be included in kindergartens and other programs and to prevent those children's exclusion from preschool programs.

The Medjmurje County has a growing number of children who have developmental difficulties and who are excluded from institutions, but the educational system does not recognize the need for the introduction of assistants as part of educational institutions. Assistants to children with difficulties remain associated with short-term projects.

It cannot and should not be so, because of the children who, without this kind of help, cannot function in educational groups.

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Jørgen Boelskov

University College South Denmark,
Campus Kolding

They Contributed to Something New

ABSTRACT

In 1985 an in-service programme of preschool teacher training was initiated for the rural areas of Norway. The clash between the theory based, professorial teaching and the daily life in kindergartens caused a change in the didactics and in the meta-theoretical construction of 'Education' as a science. The criticism rooted in practical teaching contributed to the emergence of a social-constructive understanding of educational meta-theory among Scandinavian teacher trainers. The meta-theory of education started out as a normative theory, based upon philosophical determination of justified aims. As this understanding could not be upheld within a pluralistic understanding of society, a descriptive meta-theory of education emerged. It was devoted to mere description of best practice and relied upon developmental psychology and general sociology. As this position cannot be entertained within a social-constructive understanding of science, the meta-theory of education in Scandinavia is thus at the present changing into a reflective science.

Key words: meta-theory of education, teacher training programme, reflective education.

I started at Bodø Teacher Training College, North Norway, in 1985, a year before we had been faced with the fact that we did not have the required number of students to start two classes within the ordinary programme, and we initiated the preliminary efforts needed

to start a part time pre-school teachers' programme (abbreviated as DELF). Most of us had never taken part in the creation of a brand new educational programme.

We wanted to create an education for experienced untrained teachers living so far away from Bodø that studying would only be possible on correspondence terms. Holding heavily packed lesson assemblies two weeks at a time allowed us to squeeze more than 55 percent of the lessons into the schedule. The rest of the programme consisted of assignments and self study. Fortunately, the new programme was sought after by teachers which was very positive as not all organisations have colleagues lining up to teach a programme which includes:

- a radical change in the selection and sequence of material,
- the transfer of large parts of the curriculum to assignments (with letter-based feedback),
- condensed tuition twelve days in a row including Saturdays/Sundays. The assemblies at Bodø were organized into two-week blocks and tuition took place from the first Monday to the last Friday only breaking for church and gift-shopping for the children back home in the village on the last Thursday afternoon,
- tuition from eight o'clock in the morning to eight in the evening. One summer night we even continued till eleven o'clock.

I am sure that there were many different motives behind this eagerness to teach at DELF. Education as a subject in Scandinavia was facing a number of challenges which seemed to originate from a meta-theoretical level (Boelskov 2005). I personally saw the work regarding DELF as a way out of a dead end. This is what this article is about: DELF contributed to something new.

Education as a normative science

Pedagogy became a university subject in 1809 when a professorship was established for Herbart (1776–1841). Certainly, Kant had spent his philosophy professorship writing textbooks on education, but not until Herbart's professorship did pedagogy become a university subject in its own right. Of course, a new subject causes a high tide. The first high tide is about setting goals for education. The Danish philosopher and historian Grundtvig (1783–1872) was involved early on. New norms were needed for completely new types of society. A science that wants to set goals and norms is called *normative*. As a normative science education was primarily based on philosophy (especially moral philosophy). Psychology and sociology were used as assisting sciences. When we had established goals and norms philosophically we would collect funds from psychology, and the knowledge about group processes from sociology. The consequences of this first wave can still be felt. When Stig Broström refers to the discussion about the so-called “paradigms of education” (growth-, learning-, dialectically structured-, critical/liberating social education) at festive occasions in Denmark, he calls it – with a bit of irony – ‘the Great Nordic Paradigm’ War. Educators of that generation justified their actions by referring to the goals they wanted to achieve. The problem is that it is impossible to set the correct goals in terms of education as a university subject. We do not know enough about the future of this ever changing world in a hyper modern society this much was already visible during my youth.

Education as a descriptive science

The aforementioned generation of educators was also equally influenced by the next great movement. In the wake of the great results of psychology as well as the advance of sociology, these previously

mere “assistant sciences” actually became the dominant ones. Piaget *describes* how we learn. He does not concern himself with whether we learn how to assemble a landmine or a bicycle. Bourdieu sees social reality as a symbolic reality, and he analyses cultural patterns accordingly. He does not consider alternatives or present ways of possible educational intervention.

Since then, students of education at all levels have studied these cultural patterns and concepts. Young people say “habitus” to one another and feel important. However, they will not find actual suggestions of actions in Bourdieu’s work. They collect them, instead, from Piaget; whose explanations for educational actions could be summed up as follows: “Because that is how children think at this and that a cognitive stage”.

Forgive me for viewing this as the absolute low point of education. Even my own early teaching at Bodø Teacher Training College is not exempt from this criticism. That type of explanation for educational action is valid in so far that the theories are true. Education was reduced to “applied psychology”. When reality disproved the analysis, the “stages” educators would adjust the age brackets. But in 1982 already, Donaldson (1982) was published in Danish. She proves rather thoroughly that Piaget was mistaken – not in terms of the age brackets – but in the theoretical structure of children’s thinking which does not evolve in clearly defined stages.

The era of great theories came to a close with the onset of hyper modernity. The theories that claim to describe the development of all children and present clear schedules and stages are disproved (Piaget) or fade away because they were written for a different time (Erikson directs the attention to his own limitations in *Childhood and Society*). Daniel Stern said repeatedly when he visited Copenhagen during the autumn of 2002: “The theory is not important, the relation is”.

In 1985 this development becomes noticeable (Boelskov 2005, p. 79); I, however, did not personally succeed in breaking with the

predominant perception of educational science. My compendium for my teaching in education in the summer term of 1986 shows that I may have taught the criticism of Piaget, but the size of the compendium alone shows the unreasonable amount of space which I allocated to general theories of development and perception psychology.

Naturally, the DELF-students were hungry for theories and eager to learn now that finally there was a training programme suited to their way of life. However, they did not buy just anything. During an assembly they would sit quietly taking notes on the true Freudian or Allportian wisdom, but before the next assembly (there were approx. three assemblies each semester) protest letters would flood the teacher because the fancy theories were impossible to implement in everyday reality in the villages. Of course, there were situations when the teacher might be able to argue convincingly for the usefulness of learning the material presented, but with such experienced students there was no point in exerting its infallible nature. The teachers soon began to view DELF as their own private training course. A reflection room was established where students and teachers could discuss the subject together – each from their point of view. The teachers' group also got a chance to expand their fine cooperation across subjects. The condensed outline of the assemblies forced through e.g. experiments with teaching methods and imaginative ways of being interdisciplinary. Jarvis uses the expression "The practitioner-researcher" (Jarvis 2002, p. 17) about a nurse teacher who goes on to work on a Ph.D. after graduation. However, a lesser level of training may also qualify as practitioner research. Jarvis also describes "sandwich courses" (Jarvis 2002, p. 27) where years of practice are placed in between years of study. This type of training should be particularly conducive to increasing the responsibility of the students during the process of training and practice. It also makes the universities accountable regarding

the process of training and practice because it is a premise that the professors visit the students during their placements. Referring to Schön, Jarvis thinks that “sandwich training” precisely is a prerequisite for training “a reflecting practitioner” (Jarvis 2002, p. 29). The type of education presented by Jarvis very much resembles the Scandinavian training of educators for the past 120 years (Boelskov 2005). However, what was special about DELF was that not only did the students participate in the “sandwich” process of practice and training at the college but, at the same time, they kept their normal jobs: jobs from which they had gained years of experience and jobs they were likely to stay in for many years to come. This created a sense of obligation regarding practice which rendered any kind of pretence impossible when a cognitive imbalance during a lesson occurred. Students faced discussions within their own heads every time there was a discrepancy between practice and theory and their reflections were frequently externalised. As a result, the lessons were characterised by a number of discussions between the teacher and the students.

Education as a reflexive science

After low tide comes high tide. What happened with DELF was a sign that the next wave was on its way, which brought in a completely new perception of the meaning of education.

Today, the practice of education is characterized by the fact that we document everything we do so that it may be discussed and enable further development of practice. We try and we see. Not fumblingly but, rather, in the same way as it is done in medical sciences, where documentation and development go together. Education as a subject has become an extensive development task. Educators and teachers are no longer consumers of theories; rather, they are individual theory producers

We reflect on our actions and we are inspired by discussions in the lunch room, by the developmental work of other institutions, and by a large array of literature from more or less all genres and university subjects.

The following chart is for the sake of simplicity:

Normative education	Descriptive education	Reflexive education
Philosophy as a starting point (justifying goals)	Psychology and/or sociology is the basis	Practice is the basis
Assistance from psychology (regarding the means) Assistance from sociology (regarding the child's environment)	Class-room research. Description instead of discussion	All sciences can be used for assistance. "Science is an ongoing trial- and development process"
Science suggests goals and methodology (secondarily)	Science establishes methods	Science discusses results

Large parts of early normative literature on education had the form of novels and stories. At the same time that Kant and Herbart wrote the first university textbooks on education, Pestalozzi wrote the novel *Wie Gerturd Ihre Kinder Lehrt* and Rousseau wrote his books about *Emile*. Descriptive education lacked narratives.

The return of the narrative/fictional theoretical descriptions is a sign of the new high tide. Stern, with his *Diary of a baby* in 1992, can serve as a prominent example. One might call it semi-narrative textbooks. I think that even the DELF students would have been a little surprised at first. The reading is somehow too easy. Later, the system becomes apparent to the reader and the reflections only become balanced and "true" when the picture ceases to be painted in fixed colors. The fact is that not every aspect of education can be explained – some things have to be understood. It is in the story that the understanding is disseminated. At first, the DELF students were looking for explana-

tions but, as many theoretical explanations regarding everyday life in small village pre-schools failed, they sought to articulate the understanding of education which emerged as a social construction in class. They called it attaching words to silent knowledge. To me it seemed that they were trying to recapture the balance between understanding the sphere of life and explaining the sphere of systems .

There was a cheerful entrepreneurial spirit surrounding DELF. Naturally, there were problems now and again. A few of the students experienced serious difficulties reading theoretical material. A few students also met resistance from their families concerning the demands of the program. Online and electronic media which are available today for keeping a decentralized programme together were not available to DELF. Certainly, a lot of time was spent talking on the phone between assemblies, which were organized in local groups, albeit with several different ferry rides between group members. Even so, dropouts were rare and attendance at assemblies was the highest possible. I have since been corresponding with some of the participants. A few have also visited me in Denmark. Of course, on these occasions we refreshed old memories and talked about the unique atmosphere among the DELF students. What all of the students talk about are a sense of personal liberation and a process of empowerment for which they credit their teachers' commitment in class. I agree that the teachers were very committed. However, I do not think that the process started there. In my opinion, it was the students' deeply rooted commitment towards the field of practice which created a unique challenge for the ambitions of those highly trained teachers. Jarvis also describes teachers who are more involved in interpreting knowledge and moderating discussions between practitioners involved in training practitioner scientists. The students are no longer merely clients in a classroom but are involved in the training programme in terms of planning and implementation (Jarvis 2002, p. 174). This was certainly the case with DELF.

Quadraphonic teaching

In response to the unity and joy of studying demonstrated by the DELF classes, a similar spirit emerged within the teachers' group. The students often had to push themselves to the limit in order to meet the demands of the programme while working full time and caring for their families. Similarly, teachers began to bring money to work, i.e. they worked for free. Sometimes we allocated funds for two teachers to teach the same class at the same time; it is, however, too expensive to have four teachers – one in each classroom corner – discussing Christian preamble, the transition from pre-school to elementary school, or views on humanity and society. So we did that more or less for free. I do not remember how often that occurred but there were epic moments when the students gradually became participants in the teachers' quadraphonic forum, thus creating a reflection room free of hegemony. When the teachers disagreed unequivocally – and not just in terms of the pros and cons, but with four different views – there was room for the students to express their opinions. To a degree, it was the teachers' way of responding to the students' criticism of the practical relevance of theories. If the students did not think that we taught "the truth", we invited them to a debate club where the professional level left a student or two breathless. Personally, I needed a shower after each of these sessions.

In hindsight, much of what we did seemed impossible. We succeeded with most of it and when we messed up, we were able to get the class safely back to shore due to the continuous dialogue between the class and the teachers regarding the organization and contents of the programme. During every assembly we discussed the short term and long term aspects of the programme. If something had gone wrong during one assembly, we would organise the next assembly differently. If a subject matter had been neglected, assignments were organised between assemblies or it was given more time at the next assembly.

Long-term planning actually included a margin that allowed us to correct imperfections. In discussions with students later on, they claimed that they had experienced a high degree of equality between us and them. The students felt that we listened to them and asked their advice regarding the programme to an extent which made them feel equal regarding the planning of the programme. What made this equal relationship possible?

The students who were admitted to the programme were skilled practitioners with many years of experience and lots of dedication. Several of them had been preschool teachers for many years although they were untrained. In those years, it was difficult to fill positions in pre-schools in the outlying districts and less populated municipalities. In the late 1980s, quite a few small communities in North Norway were still rather isolated. In these small communities a practical competence was built which was frequently followed by a hunger for training. At the college this manifested itself in that the DELF-student was committed and eager to learn the material with which we presented her while, at the same time, she could proudly claim that for many years she had worked as a preschool teacher to the complete satisfaction of both children and parents.

The programme was exported to Denmark

My conclusion regarding my experience with DELF is that it is a type of education which is as important to the teachers as it is to the students. To me it also meant an acknowledgement of a new meta theory concerning education as a subject in terms of a reflexive practice science where the two forms of acknowledgement – “explanation” and “understanding” – strike a balance. Less than a year after I had returned to Denmark we introduced a specially organised education programme. It has spread to numerous university colleges and is commonly known as the “credits programme” because – contrary to

the Norwegian model – credits are given for parts of the placement periods. As with the DELF programme, they have fewer face-to-face lessons but they do just as well as students attending the ordinary programme in terms of both their exams and when we meet them later as placement supervisors.

An in-service teacher training programme is desirable in most countries but especially in countries with large rural areas. This might grow into a teacher training based upon ‘practitioner research’ if the right combination of hunger for knowledge, mutual respect, and engagement among students and trainers are present.

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Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc

University of Białystok

Creative Abilities and Capabilities and Creative Attitude as Basic Determinants of Pre-School Teachers' Personality Competence¹

ABSTRACT

Social transformations going on in the latest decades in Poland have created a need for seeking new, alternative means of preparing specialists for working with children in various preschool institutions. The need to transform the stereotype characteristic for teachers' training from that of adaptive education doctrine into what we call critical-creative education calls for new requirements on the part of university education and, among others, for stricter criteria for the candidates for pedagogic studies. Therefore, empirical research on the suitability of candidates for the profession of preschool teachers' was undertaken. This paper deals with one out of three competence groups, namely personality competence. It was assumed that the candidate for pedagogic studies has already got some components of this competence group and that these competences can only be extended slightly in the course of university education. Practical-performative competence as well as scientific one, both acquired during the course of study, were not included. Personality competence is treated as an indispensable feature of a teacher, as it enables him/her to perform his/her tasks in all stages of educational activities – preparatory (organizing and decisive activities),

¹ This text was published in Polish in: "Nowy Test. Pismo Naukowe Wydziału Pedagogiki i Psychologii Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku" 2000, No. 1, p. 44-58.

realization (organizing and communication activities) and control-correcting stage (evaluation and improvement activities). It was assumed that skills, abilities and a creative attitude are the crucial elements of a preschool teacher's personality competence.

This paper is an attempt at creating a systematic survey of creative abilities seen as a complex feature connected with individual personality. The aim of the study is to analyze the differentiation degree of skills, abilities, and creative attitudes as well as to determine to what extent these features are specific for candidates for preschool teachers. The study refers to the interactive theory of abilities by Renzulli (1977), Mönks (1990) as well as to the model of creative capabilities by Popek (1991). Popek's model of creative capabilities covers the potential dimension, namely the present and future possibility, determined on the basis of creative thinking level assessment in a chosen field of activity. The potential capabilities acquire their realization shape due to personal motivation and the emotional sphere of personality in the favorable conditions of the social-cultural environment.

The study was carried out on 120 persons representing 4 groups:

- students of the 5th year of preschool pedagogic (University of Białystok),
- students of the 1st year of preschool pedagogic – (University of Białystok),
- students of two other non-pedagogic faculties (Construction Department at the Białystok Polytechnic, Academy of Music).

Empirical data was obtained due to application of the method of creative works analysis, Torrance's creative thinking test (1962), and Popek's Questionnaire KANH for testing creative attitudes (1991). The results of the study made it possible to elaborate both on the basic assumptions on selection and recruitment of candidates for pedagogic studies as well as on the model of university education concerning acquisition and development of personality competence necessary for positive self-realization in the teaching profession.

Key words: creative thinking, creative abilities, creative attitudes, personality competence, university education.

Introduction

Social transformations in Poland make necessary a search for new, alternative ways of preparing specialists to work with children in various pre-school institutions. Numerous publications emphasise especially the need to change the stereotype of teacher training. Among others, the necessity to alter the education doctrine is suggested, i.e. the substitution of the doctrine of adaptive education for that of critical-creative education. This process requires introducing stricter selection of university candidates and emphasising the development in students of different kinds of competences than have been focused on so far.

In this study I discuss one of three competence groups, i.e. personality competence. I assume that some elements of this competence group are already considerably developed in the candidate for teacher training and that they can only slightly be improved in the course of study. I ignore the practical-executive and scientific competences, which are acquired during the training. I consider personality competence as an indispensable feature that enables the teacher to realise educational tasks in all the stages of educational activities: preparatory (organisational and decisive activities), realisational (organisational and communicational activities) and control-corrective (evaluation and improving activities) (Kwiatkowska-Kowal 1994).

The range of personality competence is quite wide and can be determined depending on assumed degree of generality. I have made an assumption that one of numerous, but also crucial and indispensable personality competences of any pre-school teacher is his/her creative competence, namely: abilities, capabilities and creative attitude. It cannot be denied that a teacher's work with children is primarily the process of creation and autcreation.

In this paper I refer to a systemic understanding of creative abilities as a complex value which correlates with individual personality. The

theoretical basis for the research that led to the results I present here goes as far as the Renzulli's (Renzulli 1977, 1986) and Mönks' theories of abilities (Mönks 1981) and Popek's model of creative capabilities (Popek 1991).

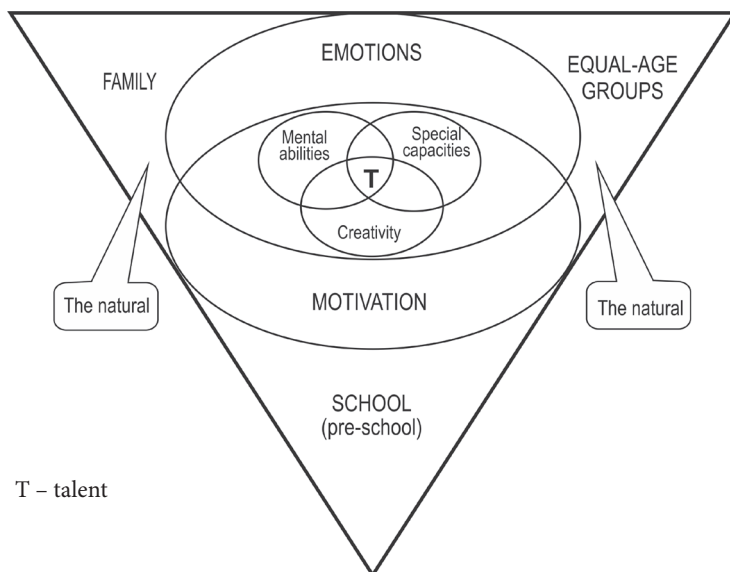


Figure 1. Interactive model of development of abilities (Popek 1991)

Popek's model of creative capabilities encompasses a potential dimension in the form of the present and future ability, determined on the basis of creative thinking level measurement as well as the realizational dimension determined on the basis of actual creative achievements in a chosen field of activity. Potential abilities take the realizational (active) shape, that is, become visible, thanks to motivational and emotional spheres of personality in favourable conditions of socio-cultural environment. Creative attitude is a much more extensive concept. In this paper it is understood as the cognitive and characterological feature of human beings which indicates their

tendency, disposition or willingness to transform the world of objects and phenomena as well as their own „selves”.

Method

Aims

The aim of the research was the analysis of the degree of abilities, capabilities and creative attitudes presented by various groups of students. I also tried to determine to what extent these qualities are distinctive for the candidates for teachers.

The questions are:

1. To what extent are the features of creative personality distinctive for the group of students who are candidates for teachers?
 - Is there a differentiation in the image of creative attitude of student youth depending on what their chosen major is?
 - Is there a differentiation of creative thinking level of students working towards various majors?
 - Is there a differentiation of creative attitude level of students working towards various majors?
 - Does the kind of major chosen influence the differentiation of preferences in choosing the subject of one’s own artistic activity (both creative and reproductive)?
 - Does the kind of major chosen influence the differentiation of preferences in choosing the subject of artistic activity (both creative and reproductive) suggested to pre-school children?
2. What are the relations between creative attitude creative abilities and capabilities, and preferences in choosing the kind of own artistic activity and that proposed to pre-school children?

Sample

The research was carried out on students of three universities in Białystok, namely the Academy of Music, Białystok University of Technology, and University of Białystok. The kind of university is understood here as an educational unit whose functions conform to preparing a certain model of graduate. Choosing groups of students for examination I assumed that due to various educational profiles in these universities, the students will differ fundamentally in their creative capacity level.

The research included 120 students divided into 4 groups. Each group comprised 30 people aged 20 to 24 and consisted of:

- 1st year students of pre-school pedagogy – candidates for teachers studying at the University in Białystok (N=30),
- 5th year students of pre-school pedagogy – candidates for teachers studying at the University in Białystok (N=30),
- students of the Construction Department at the Białystok University of Technology – non-educational major (N=30),
- students of the Academy of Music – non-educational major (N=30).

Procedure

In my work I made use of the following research tools:

- Torrance's Circle Test – for potential creative ability (creative thinking) assessment
- "Unfinished drawing" Test by Uszyńska-Jarmoc – for actual, real creative capacity assessment
- Questionnaire of Creative Behaviour – KANH by S. Popek – for creative attitude assessment
- "Choose a title" Questionnaire by Uszyńska-Jarmoc - for specifying the kind of preferences in choosing one's own artistic activity and that proposed to others.

Torrance's Circle Test is a graphic test used to assess potential creative ability (creative thinking). Creative abilities are understood as mental predispositions that enable attaining high creative achievements in a given human activity. Elementary creative abilities include the factors which condition divergent thinking, namely fluency, flexibility and originality.

Torrance's Circle Test enables a researcher to assess figural smoothness (the ability to generate multiple visual – artistic – ideas inspired by a task situation). Flexibility of thinking is the ability to generate ideas of different quality, in this case drawings, numbered among different conceptual categories, due to the ability to change the direction of search. Originality of thinking is the ability to generate ideas that are unusual, atypical, uncommon in the statistical sense. In this test, the persons tested are asked to fill out 20 circles that make the basic frame which enables them to create many different drawings. The results obtained in the Torrance's Circle Test in the range of these three abilities taken together show the level of creative thinking – an individual's creative potential. The person tested can obtain up to 60 points.

The "Unfinished drawing" Test is a method of assessing creative capabilities that manifest themselves as a result of artistic (drawing) activity. Creative capabilities are understood here as abilities not potential but actual, realizational. On the basis of some lines that make an unfinished picture the person tested is to complete the image so as to create an interesting drawing. The originality of the content and the form of their creative expression is assessed by competent jurors. The total of 9 points can be obtained.

The Questionnaire of Creative Behaviour by Popek (1990) is a tool used for examining creative attitude. The questionnaire is based on the assumption that creative attitude is a feature of human personality and is a much wider idea than abilities understood as intellectual fea-

tures (those state only one's creative potential). (The research results indicate that individuals who during an examination can present inventiveness and originality and obtain high results in fluency, flexibility or originality, in everyday life, in natural situations, do not display significant creative features or behaviour). Creative attitude consists of two spheres: firstly, cognitive, resulting from intellectual dispositions, but conceived of more broadly than creative (divergent) thinking itself and, secondly, characterological, enabling active realisation of potential human cognitive features. The cognitive sphere consists of two opposing scales. They are algorithmic (A) and heuristic (H) behaviours. The characterological sphere consists of conformism (K) and nonconformism (N).

The scales measuring of nonconformism and heuristic behaviour determine the features characteristic for creative people. The scales of conformism and algorithmic behaviour determine reproductive attitudes. The determinants of cognitive and characterological spheres can be considered independently.

The structure of the questionnaire consists of 60 statements divided into 4 subscales. Each subscale contains 15 features arranged as continuous features. The system of responses is divided into 3 categories. The respondent reads every statement, applies it to him/herself, and takes a position on them by marking one of the alternative figures: 0 – when the statement does not characterise the respondent's behaviour and is completely false; 1 – when the statement is partially true; 2 – when the statement gives an exact description of the respondent's behaviour, i.e. is completely true.

Rating a person along the creative or reproductive scale is made on the basis of the total of all scales results. In case of my present work, I estimated the differences of the results in N – K and H – A scales. In both scales the possible results range from -30 to +30 points. A plus sign in front of the numerical result indicates an intensification of behaviour typical for creative attitude. A minus sign indicates the

domination of behaviour typical for reproductive attitude.

The final decision concerning my determination of a teacher's creative attitude and its intensification degree depends on the numerical result obtained from the formula $(N - K) + (H - A)$. Possible results range from -90 to +90. The plus sign indicates creativity, while minus - re-creative nature of a teacher's attitude. The numerical value determines the intensification degree of the behaviour typical for the given attitude.

The "Choose a title" Questionnaire is used for specifying the kind of preferences in choosing one's own artistic activity. It contains 16 subjects of artistic work, half of which are so-called creative subjects, giving extensive creative possibilities. The remaining 8 are reproductive subjects, requiring copying and reproducing certain aspects of the reality presented. The respondent's task is to choose 5 subjects s/he would like to draw. The second part of the test consists of the same 16 subjects, but the student's task is to choose 5 he would propose to a 6-years-old child. Every subject chosen is marked 1. Creative and reproductive subjects are added separately. It is possible to score a maximum of 5 points in every category. Both categories taken together, it is possible to receive from +5 to -5 points. A positive result indicates creative, negative - reproductive preferences.

Results

1. The structure of creative attitude of the four examined groups of students does not show considerable differences. The results obtained by each group (Fig. 2.) indicate the percentage of maximum points possible to score within the range of each of the four scales when taken separately. Within these scales the respondents achieve significantly higher results in creative than reproductive scales. It is worth it to mention that, as far as the reproductive attitude is concerned, the students obtain much higher results in the intellectual sphere than

in the characterological sphere, while there is no such disproportion within the creative sphere, where students obtain nearly identical mean values both in intellectual and characterological spheres. The standard deviation values in all scales for all examined groups do not differ significantly, which means that these groups are similarly differentiated with respect to feature intensification in all scales and spheres. The differences within groups are quite clear (standard deviation takes the value from 3.1 to 4.9 indicating considerable dispersion of the results), while the differences among groups are minute. It must be stressed that there are no statistically significant differences of mean results within each scale: Conformism, Nonconformism, Algorithm, Heuristics. There are no significant differences between the group of student candidates for teachers (N=60) and the group with a non-educational major (N=60). Empirical value of the t-Student test for the assumed level of significance 0.01 is higher than the theoretical value. It means that both examined groups belong to the same population.

2. The analysis of values obtained as a result of combining the scales of characterological and intellectual spheres and consequently

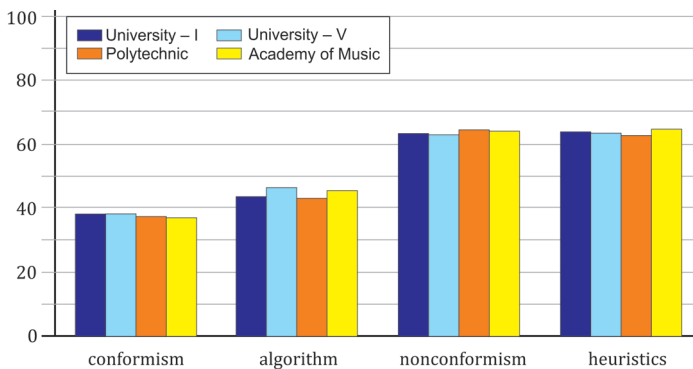


Figure 2. The structure of creative attitude

creating two dimensions of creative (N+H) and reproductive (K+A) attitudes give a clearer picture of the attitude structure of the examined groups of students. As presented in Figure 3, all the groups examined present a clear domination of creative behaviour over reproductive behaviour. (The arithmetical mean of groups for the reproductive attitude ranges from 24.2 to 25.4). Inter-group differences are minute and statistically insignificant ($t > 0.01$). On the other hand, attention must be drawn to considerable result differentiation within examined groups. The results of standard deviation range from 5.6 to 6.8, which suggests that the differentiation within each group is similar, and indicates quite a considerable result dispersion. The analysis of intensification level of creative attitude revealed that the results are nearly identical. (The arithmetical mean range+ from 37.8 to 38.6 points out of 60 possible). Inter-group differences are also statistically insignificant (in every case the value of Student-t test indicates a lack of statistically significant inter-group differences, $t > 0.001$). On the other hand, the rate of standard deviation points to a considerable differentiation within groups ($6.2 < sd < 8.2$).

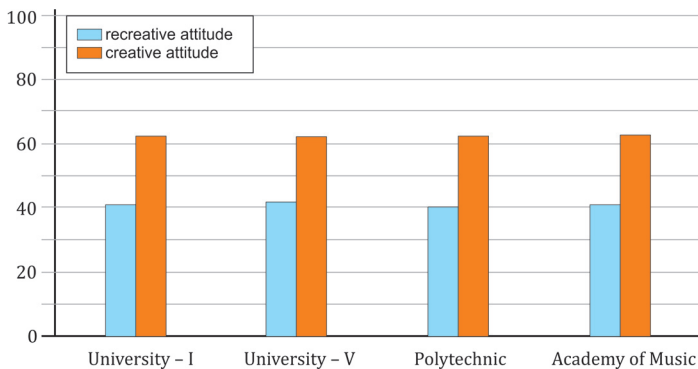


Figure 3. Results of creative and reproductive scales

3. Figures 2 and 3 present the structure of student attitudes indicating the participation of each subscale of characterological and intellectual spheres in the general picture of creative and reproductive (noncreative) behaviour. Figure 4 presents the level of creative attitude in the examined groups. As already stated, the final decision regarding evaluation of the type of dominating attitude (creative or reproductive) in the person tested and the intensification degree of this attitude depends on the value of the result obtained from the formula $(N-K)+(H-A)$. Possible results range from -90 to +90. The plus sign indicates creative and the minus sign – recreative attitude of a teacher. The numerical value determines the intensification degree of behaviour typical for the given attitude. As the figure shows, each of the groups of students tested obtained positive results, which points to the dominance of creative attitude. Inter-group differences are scant and statistically insignificant. The value of Student t test calculated for the student candidates for teachers and a group of students with a different major is higher than the theoretical value at the assumed level of significance $p=0.01$. On the other hand, similar and quite extensive differences can be observed within all the examined groups.

4. Another variable in question, concerning creative personality features of the students-candidates for teachers and students-candi-

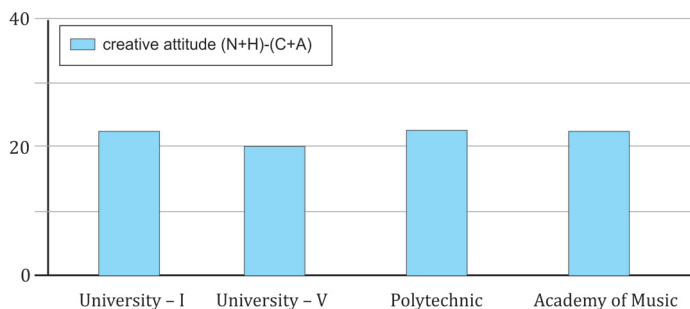


Figure 4. Results of creative scales

dates for other professions, are creative abilities indicated by the level of creative thinking. Creative thinking, described by such features as fluency, flexibility and originality, is presented in Figure 5. The analysis of the figure reveals that as far as fluency is concerned all the groups of students obtain high percentage of the possible number of points.

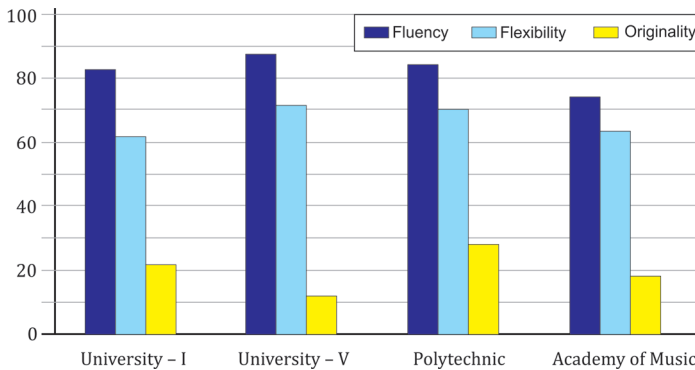


Figure 5. Results of features of creative thinking: fluency, flexibility and originality

There are no considerable inter-group differences, and the calculated t value indicates that these differences are statistically insignificant, $p > 0.001$. The differentiation within groups is also similar in subsequent groups and it is considerable, which is indicated by the values of standard deviation. Similar parameters, however, slightly lower, were obtained in the second indicator of creative thinking, namely flexibility. Inter-group differentiation is lower than in case of fluency and also statistically insignificant. The lowest results are obtained in the originality of thinking category. Inter-group differentiation of this feature is also the highest, but, as is the case of the other parameters, statistically insignificant. On the other hand, differentiation within the groups varies. The least differentiation can be observed in the group of students of the 5th year of pedagogy, who also obtained the lowest

mean value. The biggest differentiation as regards originality of thinking is the group of Polytechnic students.

5. The three features: fluency, flexibility and originality taken together, give a general picture of creative thinking. The levels of this feature in subsequent groups are presented in Figure 6. As the figure shows, all the groups obtain an average level in this field and the inter-group differences are scant. The calculated value of Student t test of difference significance for the group of pedagogy students (N=60) and non-pedagogy students (N=60) is not significant on the required level $p=0.01$. It must, however, be stressed that, with very close mean values of the creative thinking level results in all the groups, the standard deviation values differ considerably ($7.2 < sd < 12.8$). The least differentiated internally is the group of 5th year pedagogy students, and the most – the group of Polytechnics students.

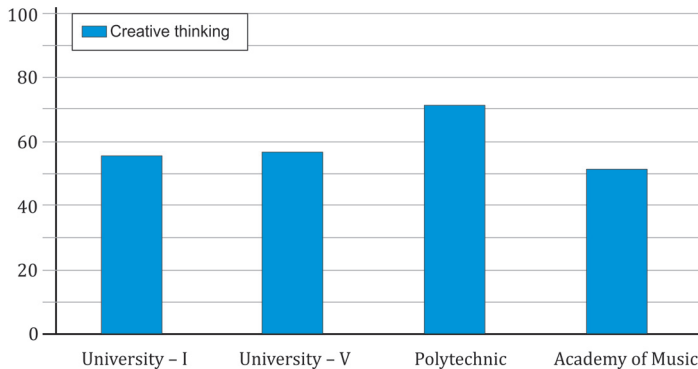


Figure 6. Results of creative thinking

6. Another variable I want to discuss is creative capability, understood here as an actual, realizational quality that reveals itself during every-day creative activities. The level of creative capability of the examined students is presented in Figure 7. In case of this variable, the

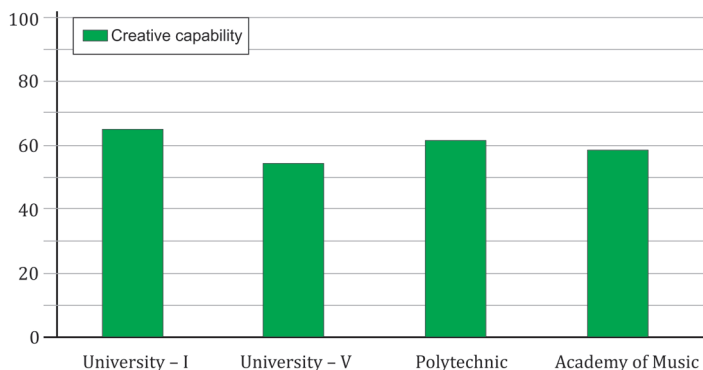


Figure 7. Results of creative capability

consecutive groups achieve more differentiated results than in the case of creative attitude. The greatest differences can be observed between the groups of students majoring in pedagogy. Nevertheless, the group of students of the 5th year of pedagogy obtained the lowest results in the category of creative capability. The analysis of standard deviation value invites the assumption that differentiation within the groups is very similar. On the other hand, the inter-group differences are statistically insignificant ($p > 0.01$) in case of every pair of compared groups, which means that they originate from the same population and creative capability is not a distinctive feature of any of the groups of students.

7. Another aim of the work was to find out whether the students from each university differed in the scope of preferences in the situations requiring choosing the kind and subject of artistic activity for themselves and in what they proposed to pre-school children. The results are presented in Figure 8. The analysis of the figure indicated that the consecutive groups obtain quite differentiated results within this variable. The highest preference for creativity is presented by the group of 5th year pedagogy students. Thereby the tendencies to

one's own creativity are also stronger than the tendencies to propose artistic activity to children. The lowest and most balanced proportions between one's own preferences and given propositions can be observed among the students of Polytechnic. Inter-group differences are high and comparable, which is reflected in high and similar values of standard deviation calculated for each group. The results of Student t test for all possible pairs indicate that the groups belong to one and the same population and the mean differences are not statistically significant. ($p.>0.01$). Therefore it can be assumed that creative preferences are not a distinctive feature of pedagogy students.

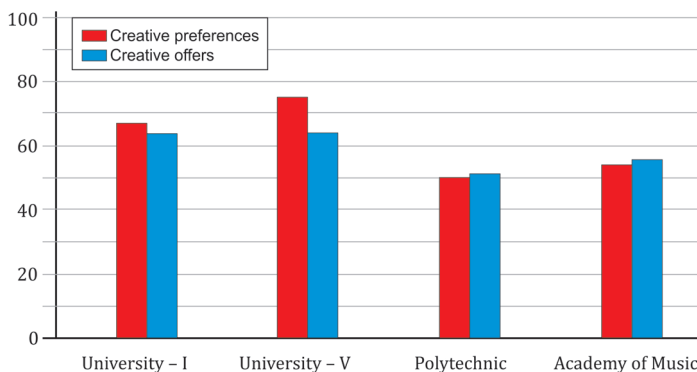


Figure 8. Results of creative preferences and creative offers for children

8. I want to end my paper by presenting a collective comparison of the values of all variables for consecutive groups of students. In Figure 9 you may see that the most balanced results in the scope of all variables were obtained by the group of Polytechnic students, while the most differentiated results are characteristic for 5th year pedagogy students. Considering the percentage value of all variables (measurement of creative personality) it is clear that all groups of students obtained the lowest results in the sphere of creative attitude

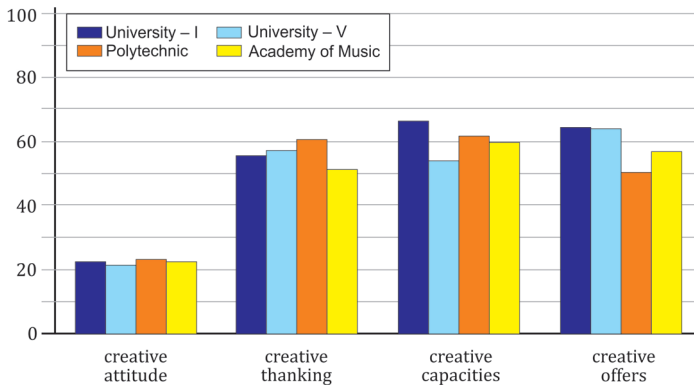


Figure 9. Comparison of the values of all variables

and the highest in their own artistic activity preference. The differences between the level of creative abilities (potential) and the level of creative capability (actual) are scant. Three groups presented higher level of potential abilities than actual capabilities. Only in the group of 5th year pedagogy students do capabilities achieve a higher level than abilities. Therefore, it can be assumed that the abilities of this group of students are not completely taken advantage of, probably muffled, suppressed in the course of study.

9. The other research problem concerns the relation between the students' creative attitude and their abilities, capabilities and artistic activity preferences. To find the answer I calculated the correlation between the examined variables using Pearson's r formula. Then I checked if these relations are statistically significant at the level $p=0.01$.

The results of the correlation analysis indicate that in most cases these relations are characterised by low or very low correlation and not all the factors achieve the required statistical significance ($p=0.01$). It must be emphasised that creative attitude correlates positively with

abilities, capabilities and creative preferences, while reproductive attitude correlates negatively. I also want to stress that the correlation rate is only a measurement of relation between compared values of variables and does not allow for drawing any conclusions about the link between them. Moreover, in case of a small research sample (comprising 30 people, as is the case), only the value of correlation rate $r > 0.35$ obtains generally accepted statistical level of significance. Therefore, I have not expected many relations to appear, but their extent and significance may create the basis for clear-cut and reliable interpretations. Thus, the rate values obtained should be looked upon as a relative measurement of relations with respect to research circumstances.

Conclusions

On the basis of the material analysis collected I can conclude that none of the variables describing the aspect of creative personality examined is a distinctive feature for any given group of students. Despite their internal differentiation, the groups of students tested do not present considerable inter-group differences in the scope of creative attitude level, abilities, capabilities and artistic preferences. Therefore, there are no significant differences among the groups. However, it must be said that in the scope of all variables the students of consecutive universities obtained a rather high percentage of possible results. It can be concluded that, generally, the students tested have creative capabilities and more frequently present creative rather than reproductive behaviour. On the other hand, considering the differences within each group, quite a numerous new group could be created including students with high and very high level of creative abilities or high intensification of qualities indicating creative attitude.

The knowledge of the characteristics of the teaching profession and of personality features necessary for performing the profession is quite extensive. Nobody questions the assumption that only highly creative individuals should become teachers. A teacher working in constantly changing situations is somehow „sentenced” to creativity. Educational situations are non-standard and therefore to participate, create and control them you need creative competence within both intellectual and characterological spheres of human personality. Without creative competence the teacher will have difficulty in recognising and understanding whatever will happen within a group of children and inside each child. Understanding the child, oneself and the whole world often requires contradicting well-known, established, traditional forms of interpretation.

The new model of pedagogy graduate is a postulate lacking a wide application in the recruitment of candidates for this profession. According to the research it is pure chance and negative selection rather than purposeful and conscious choice that rules the enrollment of new pedagogy students with regard to their creative attitude and capabilities.

Making a substantial difference should consist in an elaboration of new forms of recruitment for pedagogy faculty, especially if we consider the fact that that the number of candidates is usually several times higher than the number of students who can be accepted. It is an optimistic conclusion and the pedagogy faculty should be open only to highly creative individuals.

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Wydział Pedagogiki i Psychologii
Uniwersytet w Białymstoku



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